

This recording is an interview with former ILWU local 502 longshoreman Danny Amaro who worked along the New Westminster waterfront. The main topics discussed include longshoring, family history, transgressions, and handling cargo.

Interviewer: Joe Breaks

Interview Date: January 29, 2013

Date Range: 1960 – not specified

Sound Recording Length: 00:11:23

Danny Amaro is a retired longshoreman and member of International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) local 502. His family is one of the few families of which four generations worked in longshore in New Westminster. When he first started longshoring at the age of 17, his grandfather, father, uncles, and cousins were already working on the waterfront. During Amaro's longshore career he worked in New Westminster, Vancouver, Fraser Surrey Docks, and the cannery docks and rice mills. Some of the companies he worked for were Pacific Coast Terminals (PCT), Westshore Terminals, Fraser Mills, Empire, and Canadian. He worked at Westshore Terminals as a machine operator for 27 years until his retirement. Amaro states that it was a pleasure to work on the waterfront. That there was never a dull moment, and he would not trade his experience working on the waterfront for anything, and that he if he could do all over again if he would.

#### Section 0:00 – 3:15

- In this portion of the interview Amaro discusses how he got kicked out of high school, at the age of 17, and started working at PCT. He states that from his work station at PCT he would see longshoremen who were making \$2.50 to \$2.78 an hour, while he was only making 55 cents an hour. Like many other members in his family, Amaro's father was a longshoreman, so he told his father that he got fired from PCT, and his father took him to the longshore dispatch hall to find a job. His first job was at Fraser Mills loading crossing ties. In this section Amaro tells a funny story about how his father would bring him lunch at work and how the longshoremen would tease him about it.

#### Section 3:15 – 4:40

- In this portion of the interview Amaro describes how the work of longshoremen was manually done, the special clothing they wore to work, and the cargo he handled such as lumber, lead, zinc, nickel matte rocks, hides, canned food, flour, and fertilizer. In this section Amaro also lists some of the companies that he worked for and how he got paid multiple cheques from his different employers.

#### Section 4:41 – 8:15

- In this portion of the interview Amaro reminisces upon his experience working on the waterfront. Amaro states that it was a pleasure to work on the waterfront because the longshoremen he worked with were "a good bunch of guys". In this section, Amaro tells a funny story about one time he and his fellow trapped a longshoreman by trying sacks of peas to him, while drinking scotch, and teasing him. He also briefly describes the longshore hall dispatch system, and the different terminals that he worked at such as Vancouver, Fraser Surrey Docks, cannery dock, and rice mills.

Section 8:16 – 11:23

- In this second of the recording Amaro goes describes the type of machines he worked with throughout his whole career, off and on the waterfront. He worked his last 27 years, until retirement, at Westshore Terminals as a machine operator. In his final years he worked part-time there in the warehouse. In this section Amaro discusses transgression by longshoremen. For instance, when there was a ship full of liquor, the longshoremen would often take a box for themselves, and that longshoremen would be watched while they unloaded salmon due to the high incidence of theft. Lastly, Amaro describes the work that his grandfather did as a longshoreman, who had to manually load timber on from one end to another on sailing ships. Amaro states that he thought his grandfather was crazy for doing that type of work, but also states that his grandfather was physically strong and big, and even lifted into his 90s.