

This interview is of Louisa Bertok who is the head maintenance worker on the *M.V. Native*, the paddlewheeler used by Paddlewheeler Riverboat Tours, in New Westminster. The major themes discussed are the New Westminster waterfront, the River Market, and her work. The interview was conducted while the boat was underway.

Interviewers: Leigha Smith and Oana Capota

Interview Date: 21 September 2013

Date Range: 2000s-2013

Sound Recording Length: 00:23:13

Louisa Bertok has worked for Paddlewheeler Riverboat Tours and on the *M.V. Native* and for 7-8 years. She first started by doing the maintenance on the *Native*, but now also she also serves, does tour narration, cooks, and bartends. At a young age her father and 4 brothers taught Bertok how to work with tools. At the age of 11 she learned how to do autobody work on cars, her brothers showed her what to do. Bertok has never received any formal training. She first did marine restoration work on the *Samson V*, which is docked beside the *Native*, and was asked by the Leaney's, the owners of the *Native*, if she could help them with a task, as they knew she was mechanically inclined. They liked her work and has worked for them ever since. When Bertok is not working on the *Native* she is both volunteering and working at the Fraser River Discovery Centre, as an on-call receptionist, or on the *Samson V*, which she has worked on for 11 years. Bertok volunteers at all the places she works because she believes in giving back, and feels a deep connection to the waterfront. Her goal with the *Native* is to get her marine first aid certification and an engineering ticket, to be "the first Native on the *Native*".

The sound quality of this recording is poor.

Section 0:00 – 4:12

- In this section of the interview Bertok discusses her role on the *Native* and how she started working with Paddlewheeler Riverboat Tours. Eleven years ago she did restoration work on the *Samson V* and got to know the owners of the *M.V. Native*. The owners, the Leaneys, needed work done on the *Native*, asked her if she could do the work, and she has been with the company ever since. Bertok's father was an ironworker and he used to take her to his job sites, and she also worked on the house together with him. Bertok is the youngest of 6 children and her 4 brothers taught her how to fix cars at a young age.

Section 4:13 – 8:16

- In this section Bertok discusses the differences between working on cars and houses to ships. She has never received any formal training; all of her training has been on the job. Bertok also discusses her work routine, stating that she never knows what the day is going to be like. She feels that there is a family atmosphere working on the *Native*.

Section 8:17 – 14:21

- In this section Bertok describes the differences between working on the *Samson V* and on the *Native*. She also discusses daily preparation process of setting up for a cruise. Working on the *Samson V* is a totally different experience from working on the *Native* for Bertok because the *Samson* is a stationary museum ship. On the *Native* she gets paid two different hourly wages: a serving wage and a maintenance wage. Bertok also talks about her involvement with the Fraser River Discovery Centre and *Samson V*.

Section 14:22 – 23:13

- In this section Bertok discusses her relationship to the waterfront. She believes that the waterfront brings out something different in people, as she sees that everyone is happy who works on the waterfront. When she is on break at work, together with her other coworkers they sometimes go shopping or have lunch together, and feels that it is important to support local businesses. A change that Bertok talks about is wildlife; the Fraser River used to be full of salmon and that it is rare to see harbour seals today. Bertok discusses her disappointment in the changes to the River Market. She mentions the lack of diversity in shops and places to eat, reflecting upon how the market used to be packed with people and different vendors. She states “they have taken the public out of there.” She feels that her life has been very much involved on the waterfront and loves New Westminster. Bertok also discusses her interest in formal certification, and the certificates that she is in the process of completing.