

This interview is of Elve Morrison (pronounced Elvie) a long time resident of New Westminister. The major themes discussed are her Finnish immigrant parents, high school job placement, the King Neptune Restaurant, local history, and current municipal issues.

Interviewer: Pamela Stern

Interview Date: 22 February 2013

Date Range: 1930s - 2013

Sound Recording Length: 01:07:02

Elve Morrison lived in New Westminister for all but 8 years when she lived on the border of Coquitlam and Burnaby. Both of her parents were Finnish immigrants. Her mother came to New Westminister unmarried with a friend from Finland. Her parents came from the same area in Finland and met in a Lutheran church in New Westminister. Her father worked at Fraser Mills, and eventually became the superintendent of the lumberyard. Her mom worked at Gilley Brothers. Morrison's first husband worked the river boom at Fraser Mills, later Canadian Western Lumber, and eventually owned by Crown Zellerbach. When Morrison was in high school, it was common for schools to send their top students to find jobs. Morrison, being the top student, was offered two jobs along the New Westminister Waterfront. Her first offer was an accounting position with the Gilley Brothers. She rejected this position because she did not like the dress code. The second position that she was offered was with the Royal City Cannery. Morrison also turned down this position. Throughout the interview Morrison recounts the large companies that existed along the New Westminister waterfront, such as Brackman-Ker and Pacific Veneer. Morrison currently lives in a low-rise condominium on the New Westminister Quay.

Section 0:00 – 11:21

- In this section of the interview Morrison provides background information about her life and family members. She has been married twice and has two children. She tells how her mother landed at a train station (the Keg Restaurant at the time of the interview). The stationmaster told her mother to go to Hagens on Front St to get help with finding accommodations. She was then told to go to a 3-story house owned by a family on Ash St., where immigrants could stay. Morrison also tells a story of how her parents would go to the Swift slaughterhouse to get blood, which was used to bake into special Finish bread, a dish that Morrison thought was gross. In this section Morrison tells how, as a Grade 12 student, she was sent by her high school to 2 potential employers on the New Westminister waterfront. She was first offered a job in the accounts department at Gilley Brothers, but she declined this job. The second job, which she also declined, was at the Royal City Cannery. She was then offered a full-time position at the law office she had been working at parttime up to that time.

Section 11:22 – 19:19

- In this section of the interview Morrison describes the large companies and mills that used to be along the Fraser River in New Westminister. She mentions that a couple of mills along the waterfront that burnt down, and mentions that her father would pick blackberries that grew on the charred remains along the Brunette area in New Westminister. She describes how people would buy fish directly from the fishing boats,

and that a Japanese man would walk into her neighborhood, of 8th Avenue and Sherbrook, selling fish, and another man would drive into the neighborhood with vegetables in a truck, since there were no large supermarkets then. She reports that her father would walk to work at Fraser Mills. Morrison describes the railway station in Sapperton that was operated by the BC Electric Company. She also tells a story of how her mother was really upset when she discovered that their butter had been stolen from their outside cooler, during a time when butter was scarce.

Section: 19:20 – 30:09

- In this section of the interview Morrison tells about taking an overnight boat trip on a tug with a neighbour and his daughter when she was a child. The neighbour worked for Gilley Brothers. She saw the barge that was attached to the tug get loaded with gravel and sand, which was then deposited in the north arm of the Fraser River. She enjoyed the experience because the kitchen staff on the tug baked chocolate cake. Morrison also discusses changes she has witnessed in New Westminster and asserts that the Fraser River is still a working river. She still sees materials being transported on barges and houses being towed down the river. She briefly mentions how her father would buy liquor from foreign sailors who docked at the waterfront. Morrison talks about the names and places of importance that are shown in Pier Park. She mentions how her father-in-law was in the famous “Wait For Me, Daddy” photo.

Section: 30:10 – 32:30

- In this section of the interview Morrison describes the King Neptune Restaurant, which was one of the few restaurants when she was growing up, other than the Royal City Cafe. The King Neptune had dining room and buffet section, and going there would be a treat for the family for a nice dining experience.

Section 32:31 – 56:36

- In this section of the interview Morrison discusses current municipal issues, such as truck traffic and the proposed development of a coal port at Fraser Surrey Docks, and the development of New Westminster. She talks about the infrastructure of New Westminster, such as railways and bridges. Morrison believes that the Fraser River has not been taken care of; she feels that the river needs more dredging, as naval ships used to be able to go through.

Section: 56:37 - 1:07:02

- In this section of the interview Morrison describes the abundance of wildlife that she used to see in the Fraser River, such as sea lions that would bark all night long. Morrison attributes the lack of sea lions to the pollution in the river. She also discusses the historical figures depicted at Pier Park, and comments further about municipal issues.