

This recording is an interview with Doug Kelly, a 43 year employee of the City of New Westminster, who also grew up in the city. He currently reads gas meters for the city. Major themes include the City Market, Columbia Street, local businesses, and changes to New Westminster.

Interviewers: Oana Capota

Interview Date: February 21st, 2014

Date Range: 1970s - 2014

Sound Recording Length: 46:36

Doug Kelly has worked a variety of jobs with the City of New Westminster, from a labourer, to a clerk, to a meter reader, and even the manager of the City Market. He describes the Market in detail, and also lists various businesses that used to occupy Columbia Street. Doug feels that the changes to the New Westminster waterfront are bringing new life to the area.

This interview was conducted in conjunction with Hist451: Oral History Practicum taught at Simon Fraser University during Spring 2014.

Section 00:00 – 05:04

In the first portion of the interview, Doug Kelly talks about the various jobs he has had with the City of New Westminster over the years. His first job was as a labourer in a city park. He talks about the City Market, which he started managing in 1976. It ran two days a week, on Friday and Saturday. The city took over a café that served the market.

Section 05:05 – 08:20

In this section, Doug talks about the various stalls in the market, and the goods that were sold. There were plants, food, clothes, appliances, doll clothes and other toys, household goods, ceramics, and more. All products had to be made by hand in order to be sold.

Section 08:21 – 09:50

In this section, Doug talks about the produce sold at market. He notes that in the 1940s and 50s, there were live cows, chickens and ducks available, and the market was only open on Fridays. Vendors would come by boat or train.

Section 09:51 – 18:33

In this section, Doug talks about the vendors at the market during the 1970s and '80s. Vendors came mostly by car or bus, and it was sometimes more of a social venture than a money-making one. He names particular vendors, such as Vivian Sinclair, Pauline Moon, Betty & Eva Worth, Ginger & Mike Leswick, Continental Sausage, Maple Farms, and others. They also had a room where people could donate used clothes on Fridays, for a rummage sale. There were anywhere between 50 and 75 vendors in the market, depending on the time of year. In the winter, there were more like 30-40. Vendors would apply or connect through other markets.

Section 18:34 – 21:44

In this section, Doug talks more about churches, legions and other groups hosting rummage sales, Bingo Nights, and other events at the Market.

Section 21:45 – 24:30

In this portion, Doug describes an average day managing the City Market. Responsibilities included managing supplies, banking, contacting vendors, and more. The Market would open at 7 am and run until noon.

Section 24:31 – 26:50

In this section, Doug talks about how the regular vendors and customers were upset when the City Market closed down. Some vendors relocated to other markets, swap meets, and craft fairs. He went out to dinner with the vendors a year after the market closed.

Section 26:51 – 36:10

In this section, Doug talks about the various stores along Columbia Street that have relocated over the years. He talks about the Eatons, which was in the location of the current Army & Navy. He names Regal Clothiers, The Windjammer, The Best Hotel, The Paramount Theatre, Kresge's, Woolworth's, The Windsor Hotel, The Dunsmuir Hotel, Wright's Furniture, and describes various fires that occurred to businesses in New West. His very first job was as a pin-setter at Olympic Lanes Bowling Alley, and was paid 50 cents per game.

Section 36:11 – 39:49

In this section, Doug talks about his sister, who worked in a waitress in the café portion of Kresge's. He describes the goods sold in the store. He remembers other department stores that were in New West, such as London Drugs and Zellers, and travelling by bus to shop with his mother as a child.

Section 39:50 – 41:15

In this portion of the interview, Doug describes more of the businesses that used to occupy Columbia Street. He recalls the King Neptune Restaurant.

Section 41:16- 43:50

In this section, Doug describes Pacific Coast Terminals, where his father worked as a janitor for several years in the 1970's. He remembers gates where you had to be let in or out. He also recalls the Fraser River Market, which was built right on the wharf, and operated prior to the opening of the current River Market, for a year or two. You could see the river flowing beneath the floor. He also mentions the Royal City Cannery, which employed many high school students.

Section 43:51 – 45:45

In this section, Doug talks about how there was less access to the river in the past. He mentions the fire at Rayonier Mill (Alaska Pine) in the 1960s, and remembers seeing the water bombers.

Section 45:46 – 46:36

In this section, Doug talks about the changes to the waterfront. He compares it to the revitalization of Columbia Street. He says that it has brought some life back to the area, and he hopes it is for the better. The recording cuts off abruptly.