

SD: Giving a little bit of a background on, just, can you tell me your name, your age, and yeah, those two things.

PB: Okay, Pearl Barrington, 73.

SD: Okay, and um, where were you born?

PB: Saskatchewan. Battle Creek, Saskatchewan. That's just off Maple Creek.

SD: Where's that?

PB: Southern Saskatchewan. Right down next to Montana.

SD: Did you grow up on a farm there?

PB: A ranch.

SD: OH, and how long did you live there.

PB: Till, I was about fourteen.

SD: Was it a family farm?

PB: Grandfather. ~~here~~

SD: Who all was there?

PB: Just Aunts. And my Grandfather.

SD: Can you tell me just a little bit about living on the farm, and what your life was like?

PB: I was a tomboy. (Laughter) And, I had a good time. I was always the boss, regardless. I had to sleep in the haystacks more nights, than enough. Cause, I was a bad girl.

SD: Did you used to work outside sometimes?

PB: Uh, I used to ride fences. About fourteen miles a day.

SD: What does it mean to ride fences?

PB: To make sure that its tight for the cattle, and no breaks in it.

PB:(cont'd) And, if you found a broken fence, you had to get off your horse and fix it.

SD: So, when you were fourteen, why did you leave?

PB: To be a hair dresser.

SD: What got you interested in that?

PB: Cause, I was always setting peoples hair, and doing things with their hair. And, I worked at that for twelve years.

SD: Where did you get training?

PB: Calgary.

SD: So, how did you get the money to go to school? That must have been.. What year was that?

PB: Oh, my grandfather was a multi-millionaire. So, he could well afford it. And, they were glad to get rid of me.

SD: Uh, Uh. So, he made money off his ranch, did he? Or.

PB: Oh, he had a huge ranch.

SD: Right, okay.

PB: Cattle horses.

SD: So, you worked as a hairdresser for fourteen years. What year does that bring you up to around. So, you must have been around twenty-eight.

PB: Somewhere around there.

SD: So, you are 72 now. That would be 38 or so eh?

PB: Yeah. Then I got married. And, I never knew my husband. And, he joined the army, and went overseas, and never came back.

SD: So, he died overseas.

PB: Yes.

SD: Did you stop working when you got married?

PB: I stopped.. Yes. Yes.

SD: When did you decide you were going to go back into the work force?

PB: Not till I came out to Vancouver.

SD: When was that?

PB: 1934.

SD: And, did you come out here alone?

PB: All by myself, with frozen legs. I'd been curling the night before and it was so cold, that my coat flew open and froze my legs. And, the next time I got the train, I couldn't sit. And the gosh darn street car, on the train, I had to stand most of the way.

SD: So, that was 1934 or 44?

PB: 1934.

SD: Okay, I just wanna.. You got married when? In 38?

PB: Not the first time.

SD: Okay, go over that for me, I think that I got the dates wrong.

PB: Uh, I was eighteen, when would that be, I don't know.

SD: Okay, lets figure it out, it's 1938, and Oh, 1928 you got married, okay got it.

PB: Yup, that's more like it.

SD: Oh, no that's not right, its 1938. Yes, it was 1938 you got married. So, you got married in Saskatchewan?

PB: No.

SD: In Vancouver?

PB: No.

SD: Where? (Laughter)

PB: A little place called Senate. A church wedding.

SD: A church wedding. And, where was Senate?

PB: Uh, right, oh no that's no good. It's just right on the border of Montana and Canada.

SD: Okay, and then where did you live after you were married?

PB: Uh, Admiral.

SD: And, is that in B.C.? Or, is

PB: No, that's in Saskatchewan.

SD: And, your husband went overseas, when? In 1939?

PB: OH, I don't remember.

SD: Was it towards the beggining of the war?

PB: Yes.

SD: And, what did you do when he went overseas?

PB: I went back to my grandfather.

SD: And, can you tell me a bit about what you did there? Were you living on the ranch, or..

PB: Yes, and they had a hotel too. One Aunt looked after the hotel, and one Aunt looked after the ranch. And, we had three hired girls, and, I'd have to show them what to do. And, I worked harder than they did. Cause, I would show them, and then I would have to show them all over again, and by the time it was all fininshed, I had done all the work.

SD: So, you were sort of the supervisor at the hotel.

PB: At the ranch. I wasn't I was jack of all trades.

SD: Okay. And, when was it that your husband died? During the war?

Do you remember that?

PB: Oh, I came to Vancouver then, anyway, after he died.

SD: Okay, but somewhere around 1944.

PB: Yes.

SD: Okay, so what did you do when you came to Vancouver, with your frozen legs?

PB: I had a sister-in-law living here, and I went to live with her. And, then I put my application in to work at the post office, and, also the street cars. And, the street cars came first. So, that's how I happened to be a conducterette, on the street cars.

SD: How did you hear about the job?

PB: Oh, I don't know you just hear about them. Or, it's what I wanted to do, either one or the other. And, I rode the street cars a lot and the people just reminded me of cattle. They all lined up and then they stampeded to the doors. And, I thought hey, "If I can herd cattle, I can herd this." And, that's what I did.

SD: (Laughter) That's great. Okay, uhm, why were they hiring women?

PB: All the men were over seas in the war. They had one class before me, they was eight girls before I went on, and then I went on, I was the second class. And then, all totalled, it was

PB: (cont'd) One hundred and eight~~-teen~~ women, at one time.

SD: Oh, when you say class, what was that training or?

PB: Yes,

SD: Can you tell me a bit about it?

PB: Well, you had to have a 118 hours, and they'd put you all together, and take you out on a street car and make you do all the things that you ~~did~~ when you were really trained. Like open the doors, pretend the passenger got on and charge them, and .. So, that's how that all happened. It's been so long ago, I've forgotten funny parts of it. Although, I'll never forget one woman, when they first ^{put} the red line on the ^{buses} And, everyone had to stand behind there, and she got on and she was pretty well souped up. And, she said, to me, "Why aren't you home looking after your kids, instead of on the street cars?" And, I let her talk herself out and I said, "Your not too much of a Valentine yourself! Are you?" God, she disappeared in a hurry! (Laughter)

SD: Was that during the war?

PB: Yeah.

SD: Boy oh boy. So, people weren't always friendly.

PB: Well, she was a little bit looped anyway.

SD: So, you ^{would} go through the training, ~~did~~ most women make it through the training?

PB: Most of them. But, when it came to the ^{buses} alot of them fell down.

SD: So there was a while there where you were conductor^{ettes}.

PB: Yes.

SD: Okay, can you tell me what you do as a conductorette? You told me a little bit, but can you describe (it in detail) a bit more the actual work?

PB: Oh well, you are supposed to be in charge of the street car. And, if there is any excitement or people quarelling or anything, you put them off. And, you stand there and make sure they put the money in the box. And, answer any questions that they wanted if they want to get off at a certain place, they'd tell you. And then, you call out the streets, ^{as} you are coming to them.

SD: Okay. So, what kind of personality did you need to do that work?

PB: Uh, I don't know I was good at it, and, I don't know what you would call it. I guess ^{like} people. That would be the main thing.

SD: Right. So, you would need to like people, and would you need to sort of stand up for yourself, at all, or.

PB: Not really. Because you had a uniform on and they respected the uniform.

SD: That's interesting. So, how long did you work as a conductorette? How long were there conductorettes?

PB: Till I went on the buses and in all ^{total}, I was on the, . Worked ^{the company} for twenty-eight years.

SD: What happened at the end of the war? What happened with women working there?

PB: They stayed on. We had to join the union and so they didn't dispose of us.

SD: So, what kind of status did you have in the union? Did you have full (rates or rights?)?

PB: Yes, oh yes. I became a shop steward, looking after the other girls. And, they would come to me with their troubles, and I would take it up with someone else. Like, one of them her husband come back and, in due time they had a baby, and they fired her. And, so they had been married ^{for} fourteen years. And, I went to the guy that was in charge of the girls, and I said, "Just because she had an accident, that's no sign that you should fire her!" And, he says, "She's pregnant!" And, I says, "If it isn't an accident after fourteen years, I don't know what you call it!" And, she got back on.

SD: That's a question I had. When B.C. electric was hiring women what kind of women did they hire?

PB: All kinds that would take the job. Some of them lasted, some of them didn't.

SD: So, it didn't matter if you were married or single?

PB: No, no. I guess the first few classes you had to be a certain height, but ^{after that} they forgot about that. '

SD: Okay, at the end of the war, was there any did they try and push married women to leave those jobs?

PB: No. One guy came back from over-seas, and we were senior to him. It all went to ⁱseniority, by according to how long you'd been on. And, he got up in the union meeting and said, "These women have

PB: (cont'd) to go!" And, all the rest of it. And, so I got up and I said, "What being the cashier and you want to put us out of our job?" He said, "Cashier? You are a conductor!" I said, "Yes, but all I do is collect money, it's the first time I ever heard of men wanting to take over cashier jobs." So, that's the last we heard of it.

SD: So, was there a difference in attitudes, between men who had come back from over seas, and not actually worked with women?

PB: Not much, no. Because, you by the time we had worked three or four or five years. We were good at it. And, we signed up according to seniority. If this guy, you liked working with him well you put your name down. If you didn't like him, you put your name down with someone else. And, no one could rub you off.

SD: Okay, so its the end of the war, and what happened then, that women became bus drivers? How did that process happen?

PB: Well, the buses came on and..

SD: What was there before then?

PB: Street cars. And, if you felt you could drive a bus, you went and drove it.

SD: But, you women had only been conductorettes before then. How did you actually become drivers?

PB: They had to retrain you of course. You had to take a bus and be able to drive it. And, pull in and stop, and start up without jerking.

SD: When I spoke to Edra, she said that the company at first didn't want to train women, as drivers.

PB: I don't believe that. They had to because they didn't have any-one else. They might have been a few, but, then I never heard of them.

SD: Okay, so it was pretty well easy that you applied for the jobs.

PB: No, according to your ~~seniority~~^{seniority}. If, you wanted to be a bus driver, you said you wanted to be.

SD: You just said that you were one of the people who pushed other women to become bus drivers.

PB: Well, ^{so} many of them were afraid. And, I asked them if they drove a car. And they said, "Yes." I said, "It's the same thing." There was no difference. They were used to handling the people. All they had, was to steer the gosh darn thing, and that was it.

m Well, there was no difference really.

SD: So, what did you do? Did you go around and talk to women?

PB: Oh, you always talked, we have a,, chose your work every three months. And, everyone of the same seniority would be there. And, so sure you would get talking about it.

SD: So, what happened did the women as a group decide to..

PB: Uh, no ~~alot~~^{alot} of them quit. I think that it was only twenty-one ^{women} that went through with it, the rest all quit. Out of one hundred and eighteen.

SD: So only twenty-one women tried to become drivers.

PB: Did become drivers.

SD: So, did all the others try to become..

PB: No, they just quit.

SD: Okay. What year was that? Was that around, do you have any idea, when that was?

PB: Oh jeez.

SD: How long after the war it was?

PB: Very shortly after.

SD: And, what did you have to do as a driver? *Can you describe it?*

PB: Well, you had to drive the bus, and everyone got on the front, paid their fare and went and sat down.

SD: Did you ever have problems with people, on your bus, the way that they behaved?

PB: No, on the street cars I did though. One time there was a soldier standing in the back of the street car and this guy got on and he was using all the four letter words he knew, and I up and hit him and knocked him cold and the soldier helped me set ^{him} by the telephone pole, and I jumped back in, and the soldier jumped back in, give the bell and away. I didn't say thank you or anything to him.

SD: Was he harrasing you?

PB: No, he went to get on the bus and was cussing and swearing, and, all the rest of it. But, that was the funniest thing that ever happened.

SD: Do you have any other stories of..

PB: Oh, that's the best one. (Laughter)

SD: Did you ever have other people come on the bus after the war, and say to you what are you doing here, driving? You are taking a guys job. Or, anything like that?

PB: Just this one woman that's all.

SD: What kind of attitude did you experience from customers, when they found that there was a woman driving the bus?

PB: Very nice. They went out of their way to be nice. No complaining, nothing. And, this one little old lady, that's when they put the fares from seven cents ^{up} to ten cents, and, I told her that she owed me three cents more. And she said, "You see this dime? You see the queeny on there?" And, I said, "Yes." "Well I'll squeeze her 'till she farts." (Laughter) *She was so stingy.*

SD: Cute, she didn't want to pay the extra three cents. When did the company stop hiring women? Did the company stop hiring women?

PB: Well, when the war was over. Yes. And, then they started again just recently so I understand.

SD: Did you ever ask them why they weren't hiring women?

PB: No. Edra was the last one on. And, after she came on the men started to come back, sure they took her place, they didn't need any more.

SD: When they hired new groups of drivers, why didn't they hire women?

PB: Because there was so many men came back. And, if you were a returned man, you got *preference.*

SD: What about through the fifties, though, because surely they must

SD: (cont'd) hired, even new people on.

PB: Well, some of the old run down men that couldn't get a job, yes. There was only six of them though, inbetween the groups of girls.

SD: So, there wasn't alot of hiring then.

PB: No, no.

SD: Okay. What were the men like, in terms of working with women? Do you want to talk about that a little bit? The drivers.

BP: The drivers? Or the men that we worked with?

SD: The men you worked with?

PB: They liked it. They liked us. They preferred us, because we never went up and bothered them, like the men did. It was very very seldom that the moter men ever called us up to the front, very seldom. It would have to be something quite important. If you'd had to go up and talk to the motorman.

SD: So, and the men would bother them, in what way? Like, they would ask them..

PB: Well they would go up and tell dirty stories, and things and stuff. Take their mind off their driving, and you can understand that. Especially if you had a long way to go between stops.

SD: And, the women didn't?

PB: No, the women stayed in their own place.

SD: How about when you became drivers? How were the other men drivers ^{towards} to you then?

PB:

PB: They couldn't do anything, because, we were better than they were.

SD: Oh yeah?

PB: Yeah.

SD: What do you mean by that?

PB: Well, ~~they~~ ^{we had} was just starting and ~~they~~ had all this experience.

One guy upset a bus one time, and I came along behind him And, he was out there with tears in his eyes, he had upset his bus, And I said, "Tough luck!" And, I drove on. Why he'd tell me about it? It wasn't my fault he upset his bus. So, we were senior to the men that they hired after, you realize that and it all went according to seniority; And, the ones that came after, sure they resented us getting good work. But, we resented the senior men taking all the best work too. So, it was six of one, and $\frac{1}{2}$ a dozen of the other.

SD: How would that resentment come out? Like, what would be said?

PB: Oh, I don't remember.

SD: The women that stayed on, and drove the buses, Were they a mixture of married and single women? Or, were most of the women single and needed to support themselves?

PB: Both. About fifty-fifty I would say. I didn't have to work, of course I didn't. But, I liked to have a job. And, I stayed with it. Edra, she had to have a job, so she liked it, and she stayed with it.

SD: What did you like about the Job?

PB: Oh, I don't know getting up and going to work. And, finishing early. I'm a morning person myself, I'm not a night person. I used to start at 4'o'clock in the morning. I'd finish at twelve. So, if I wanted to sleep, I could sleep, if I wanted to go out I could go out.

SD: So, you had your whole day.

PB: Yup.

SD: Were there other things that you liked about the job?

PB: I liked the people. I liked the going. And, I guess that's about all.

SD: Okay, how, why did you become interested in becoming a job-steward?

PB: Because, I'd never been in a union before. And, they did such crazy things. I had to find out what.

SD: What do you mean by crazy things?

PB: Well, like firing this women because she had become pregnant. To me, that was foolish.

SD: You mean the company.

PB: Yes.

SD: When did you become a job steward, for the women?

PB: Oh, after I had been on for two or three years.

SD: So, '47, or so?

PB: Just about then, yeah.

SD: Had you been in a union before?

PB: NO.

SD: Had you become interested in trade unions before?

PB: No.

SD: So you were interested in this union because of the company *attitudes?*

PB: We had to join it. We had to. And then I could see so many things wrong with it, that I decided I had to help.

SD: Okay, why was there a steward for the women?

PB: Because we had so many of them. And, the girls were shy about going to the men supervisor. So, they would come to me and I would listen to the story and then I would tell it word for word to the supervisor myself. I'll never forget one guy, he was kind of against the women, and he got up in the union meeting, and he was talking for a long time, and the longer he talked the madder he got. And, finally he gets up and he goes out, and he opens the door and he was standing there, and he says, "What's good for the geese is good for the geesees."
(Laughter) And, then he disappeared and he never came back.

SD: Why was he so upset with the women?

PB: I don't know. Never did find out, he was kind of a kook anyway.

SD: So, was there some hostility amongst the men about women keeping jobs?

PB: No, oh no.

SD: That was unusual.

PB: Yes.

SD: Okay, what kind of problems did the women have? You mentioned

SD: (cont'd) one about being pregnant?

PB: That's about the only one. You took your, we never asked for any favours and we never got any.

SD: What about things like washrooms?

PB: We had our own.

SD: Had you always had your own?

PB: Well there was always two. And, one had women and men on it.

SD: And,,

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

START TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

SD: What about women with kids? Did they have problems?

PB: No, not much. They'd always get a babysitter of course.

And, they worked nights mostly. But, there weren't too many of those.

SD: How would you get on a night shift? Would that be..

PB: According to your ^{seniority}seniority, or your choice, either one, or the other.

SD: So, you could like bid for night shift.

PB: Yeah. Well, sometimes it was the only thing left.

SD: Uhm, lets see what other things women might have as problems.

Did women ever get maternity leave?

PB: No.

SD: Did the women get the same wages as men?

PB: That's right. The same thing. No difference whatsoever.

SD: And seniority lists, they were on the same seniority lists?

PB: Yeah.

SD: And was there ever any sexual harrass ment of women?

BP: No. Not to my knowledge! (Giggle)

SD: What other things did you do as a job steward? Can you describe what might come up in a day?

PB: No, it was over a period of time.

SD: Okay, what would come up then?

BP: Well like a girl would have an accident or run over something, and break a little something on whatever vehicle they were driving, and, they'd be afraid to report it! Which it had to be reported, because you couldn't turn a damaged vehicle over to someone else. You had to report what you *had* done. So, I'd go and help them.

SD: Any thing else that might come up?

BP: Not really.

SD: What about things like being disciplined or critibized by supervisors? Would you go with them?

BP: No, no. They had to fight their own battles there.

SD: Okay, so the job steward didn't go in with them?

BP: No.

SD: Did you. How happy were the women in the union?

BP: Not very.

SD: Why?

BP: They were afraid. I think that I was the only one that ever spoke at a union meeting. Because, I always did speak my mind, and I still do it!

SD: What were they afraid of?

BP: Of everyone hearing them! They were just shaking you can't imagine what they would be like.

SD: Why do ^{you} think that was?

BP: They weren't used to speaking in public. And in a union meeting you'd have a

BP:(cont'd) a hundred men or more sitting around. And they was afraid they would get laughed at I guess.

SD: Would the men laugh at them?

BP: Sometimes, if they seen they were nervous they would. Call them sissy cats and all the rest of it.

SD: Why were you different? Why were you not afraid? What do you think?

BP: Cause, I grew up as a tomboy, I guess. I had three brothers and I was the only girl. So, I used to fight the men all the time. I wasn't afraid of them.

SD: What issues would you speak on in union meetings?

BP: Anything that happened to come up. Like we had Mr. Stop Sign, everytime at a union meeting, he would complain about stop signs. And,

SD: What would ^{he} you say?

BP: Well, too many of them or not enough of them, and all this. So, we called him "Mr. Stop Sign. And, one time it was a meeting, and he got up on the floor. and before he could open his mouth I got up and I said, "Oh Mr. Stop Sign again, here we go!" (Laughter) I wasn't afraid of him.

SD: What kind of union issues would you speak on? Did you have any that you thought were especially important,

BP: Oh, just whatever happened to come up. I've forgotten now, what all happened.

SD: What about contracts?

BP: No. We had a special group that did that.

SD: Were you ever on the executive?

BP: No.

SD: What about strikes?

BP: Only one.

SD: Could you tell me about it?

BP: Yes. My job was, that's when we had white margarine, and I used to mix colour in it. And, we'd make sandwiches for those going out on strike. And, boy did they ever keep me busy!

SD: So, you did sort of some of the kitchen work around.

BP: Well, on strike the girls took over feeding the men and stuff like that.

SD: Did you ever do picket duty?

BP: Yes.

SD: Tell me about it. What was it like?

BP: ~~Boring.~~ You didn't do anything. You just, you were there and if a street car came along, or anything that came along that wasn't supposed to be there. You went and stopped it. And, that was all, there was to it.

SD: Where did you picket?

BP: At the various garages.

SD: What ^{were} the issues in that strike?

BP: Money, was one of them. But, other than that I don't know.

SD: How long were you out?

BP: Thirty days.

SD: That's a long time.

BP: It was, it was the longest strike that they ever had, I think.

SD: Was that hard?

BP: It was on the people when they couldn't have a street car to go to work on, and stuff. Sure.

SD: So when you were picketing, was there a lot of hostility from the public?

BP: You never seen the public. Because there was no street cars, you didn't meet them.

SD: What about the people on strike, that length of time was it hard on them?

BP: Well, we got strike pay. So they couldn't have suffered too much.

SD: How did that strike turn out? Did you win it?

BP: Yes.

SD: How did you win it? Like did the public end up supporting you or..

BP: No we just did it by not running the street cars and buses.

SD: And it was an important service.

BP:

PB: Why sure!

SD: Was there any talk in the union about trying to do publicity so that the public would support you.

BP: No.

SD: Was there a shop steward structure in the union?

PB: Yes, each group of 100 people had a shop steward. And, we used to have meetings. And, talk things over. What each one had. And, if it wasn't worth taking up with the executive, we didn't do it.

SD: You mean a grievance?

PB: MM. MM

SD: How did you find at shop steward meetings being a woman? What was it like being a woman at those meetings?

PB: They respected it. No bad talk or anything. Otherwise, if a woman hadn't a been at, I'm sure dirty stories and everything else would have flew around. And men were very careful with their language.

SD: Do you think that part of why you got. Okay I will ask this question first. Do you think that men who worked with you generally respected you?

PB: Yes.

SD: Do you think that part of that was because you were involved in the union.

PB: Not all together. But, partially, I suppose.

SD: Did you being active, help other women?

BP: Sure.

SD: Get respect?

BP: Sure

SD: And what was the attitude of union officials towards women working?

PB: Very nice.

SD: What would they say?

PB: Well, they were glad that we were there, and, that we had joined their union. And, any complaints that we had was carefully looked into.

SD: Did they encourage women to come to meetings and be active?

PB: Well, you were supposed to go to meetings, whether you were active or not.

Everyone was supposed to have so many meetings, in a year.

SD: What happened if you didn't go?

PB: I don't know.

SD: Were they fined, or?

PB: I don't know.

SD: Okay, what kind of things did the union deal with? Like when, did you have a sense of the union always being there on the job?

PB: Not really. Just if anything happened you knew that you had someone to go to.

SD: Okay, were there any contract demands that women seemed to think were particularly important? Let's say more than the guys?

PB: No.

SD: How about benefits?

PB: We got the same.

SD: Did you get equal

pensions!

PB: Yes.

SD: You did eh, okay. Did the women in the union ever meet as women? Either socially or..

PB: How do you mean?

SD: Did you guys ever get together and go out for a beer or did you ever get together to talk about an issue that you wanted the union to take up?

PB: No, not at all. When the meeting was over you went home and that was it.

SD: Did you ever train people to drive?

PB: No, they had special men for that. Four I think, yeah.

SD: And, How about political involvement in the union, were there any political organizations involved?

PB: No.

SD: The CCF wasn't active or.

PB: No.

SD: What about your family, how did they respond to you?

PB: I'm all by myself.

SD: Okay. How did your family feel about trade unionism?

PB: I don't know. My family was out in Edmonton.

SD: Did you remarry while you were working or after?

PB: After.

SD: So you were a widow most of the time. And, ... Do you remember any ways that work changed, over the time that you were there?

PB: It got better.

SD: How.

PB: Or maybe you just become more experienced I don't know. I remember one time going up 10th avenue to ^{Sasamat} ~~the street~~, I didn't know the streets, I had them all wrote down. And, I give the guy a bell every street I called out, and he'd stop so I'd know where I was. It was a foggy night, and, I didn't tell him for quite a long time. He said, "I'm sure that we didn't have that much of a load, but I stopped everytime." That's so I wouldn't get lost.

SD: How would you learn a route?

PB: Oh well, you should know them. You went over them in your 118 hrs. training.

SD: You learnt every route in the city?

PB: Yes.

SD: Did the routes change, as you..

PB: Once in a great while.

SD: And then how would you learn the new route?

PB: Well, you'd know it.

SD: Was it physically hard work?

PB: No.

SD: Driving a bus?

PB: No.

SD:

SD: It wasn't hard on your shoulders?

PB: No. Come on in! Here's an old bus driver.

Man: Nobody on that line.

PB: Yes there was, I know because they sent me out to Richmond, and I didn't know Richmond. And, I was supposed to go down ^{no} 2 Road and come back NO.1, I went down NO.1 and came back NO.2. (Laughter)

SD: Okay, so we have you learning the streets, and it wasn't physically difficult work, eh? What about government cut backs, did they have an effect in the number of people? Did you have speed ups, in the amount of work that you would have to do?

PB: Not that I remember.

SD: Do you remember any other stories about work then?

PB: Oh, I could go on for days and days and days. (Laughter)

SD: Go ahead, go ahead, tell me!

PB: No. No, it don't matter.

SD: Oh no, its interesting because I think it gives people a sense of what it was actually like to do the job.

PB: Oh no.

SD: Tell me what a day was like, like how you would start your morning, and what it would feel like as you went through it.

PB: Well, you was just glad to get it over with.

SD: Okay, what would you do when you got to work first thing in the morning.

PB: We had a big round table, and you had your transfers, and your card that you made out. And, you sat down and you filled these all out. And, then you would go out and get in your bus. And, warm it up, and away you'd go.

SD: What was the card that you would fill out? What was that for?

PB: For the company.

SD: To say that you clocked in or?

PB: NO, to say that you were on the job, I guess. That was the main thing.

SD: And, then you'd get on your bus and you'd go, so. After you became bus drivers, there wasn't a conductor or conducterette?

PB: No.

SD: How often did you get breaks?

PB: You didn't. Not for lunch not for dinner, not for anything. You did your eight hours and that was it.

SD: So, for that whole time that you worked there was no breaks?

PB: No.

SD: What about split shifts?

PB: Well they were what we called AM _ PM'S. And, you would do the one and then you would go home, and then you would come back and then you would do the other.

SD: How many hours were there?

PB: Oh, some was 4 hrs., some was 3, some were two. And, you had to work the full eight hours. So you would work 2 hrs., and then you go home for maybe two or three hours, and then you would come back and finish it off.

SD: Okay, so you would work through for eight hours. What about supervisors? Were there supervisors?

PB: Yes.

PB: And ,you always had to be on time, you couldn't be late, or ahead of time.

SD: Where would the supervisors be?

PB: You never knew.

SD: Were you ever late?

PB: Oh, sure, sure. Lots of times, but, I was never ahead of time. One time a supervisor was out of his place. He was supposed to be at Thurlow, and he was at Robson, and he says your "two minutes sharp," and, I says, "Look at the traffic ahead of me, I bet when I get down there I will five minutes late". I was seven minutes late.

SD: Would you get in trouble, you got into more trouble for being early eh?

PB: Yes.

SD:

SD: Why was that?

PB: Because. you were too clâse to the guy ahead of ya. And, the guy behind you took a beating.

SD: What about rush hâur? What was that like?

PB: Not too bad. Because they had so many more buses on. So, first one in the rush hour, would go through quite good. The second, and the third would take and awful load. The fourth and fifth would go through good. So, you got smart after awhile and signed on to the first one. Or, the fourth one.

SD: What was it like when there was lots of people? What was the difference between driving with a really full bus, and a ..

PB: None.

SD: Could you see at all? Would you worry about the passengers?

PB: No. They were supposed to be either hanging on or standing up or sitting down.

So, you didn't worry about them. You'd drive good though. No sudden stops.

SD: Did you feel as a bus driver, sort of responsible for the well being of the..

PB: Never thought of the people. If you didn't have the tape on I'd say "To the hell with them." (Laughter)k Once they got on and paid their fare, it was their responsibility and not yours.

SD: Did you always feel that way? Or did you feel it..

PB: Yes.

SD: What kind of skills do you think that you learned as a kid that helped you be a bus driver?

PB: Being born on a ranch.

SD: Why?

PB: Cause, cattle and people are the same. They all rush and none of them going anywhere.

SD: Did that turn out to be true..

PB: Yes. That's like one time when I was on the Kitsilano run, where all those soldiers used to be. And, they would just stampede to get on. So, one

PB:(cont'd) day after we got started, I said, " Is there a ^{sergeant on} here?"

And he came back, and I said, "Line your men up, I can take two at a time, but I can't take six." And ,he did. Because they used to come in both doors. Put the money in and go and sit down. And, when they all rushed there, this one pushing that one, and that one pushing this one, out of the road. And you couldn't get them loaded at all.

SD: What about people with kids? When you would get to a bus stop, and there'd be children there, or someone with groceries in their arms or something like that. Was it hard? Did you worry about being late, or.

PB: No, you never worried about being late. You'd pull the break on and help them if you could. And other than that you didn't do anything. There's like a woman got on one time with a bunch of grapefruit and oranges, and her bag broke. And ,she started screaming, I just pulled the break on and I stopped. And, I said, "What seems to be the trouble?" There goes my oranges." she said. I said, "Go pick it up!" When she.. No, I can't say that.. TURN IT OFF. No, Our union was good. I don't know anything about any other union, and I would never belong to one. But, Our union would always give you consideration.

SD: What do you mean by that?

PB: Well, if you had a story to tell, they would listen.

SD: Was that the leadership you are talking about?

PB: Yes.

SD: How were they elected?

PB: By ballot.

SD: And most people who worked for the union had the come up through the ranks of the union? Or were they hired on/.

PB: They were just ordinary people. They were popular, or they wouldn't have got in a union. That is to be the directors and the president and the secretary.

SD: What kind of skills did you need to be a union rep.?

PB: None.

SD: Did you need to be able to talk well? Or,

PB: Not necessarily.

SD: How about the way you felt towards management? What kind of attitude would you need?

PB: They were always your enemy. Regardless, whether they were or not is a different thing. Which you treat them like an enemy.

SD: So, lets say that you had a grievance and I was management, how would you talk to me?

PB: Just normally.

SD: Would you go into a meeting alone? Or did you always go in with another union representative?

PB: No, unless it was serious. And then you had the president in there with you. But, I never had to.

SD: What about for when that was women was fired? Did you handle that alone?

PB: Yes.

SD: Were there any other union people who were, like other unions that your union worked with?

PB: No.

SD: So, mostly it dealt with people on the job.

PB: Yes, our union was only a company union, ah, well we were the union of the company.

SD: And, what was the company like? It was B.C. electric in those days?

PB: Both.

SD: When did the change happen?

PB: When all the street cars went into all buses.

SD: It became B.C. Hydro. And what was the company like as an employer?

PB: Good, I guess.

SD: What do you mean by good?

PB: Well, I didn't have much to do with them.

SD: Were there like baseball teams, and social activities?

PB: Oh yes! They had baseball teams but they were all men.

SD: Were you ever on any union committess? Other than being a shop steward?

PB: Sick committee.

SD: What did that do?

PB: When there was any one that was sick, seeing that they had enough food. But,
other than that no.

SD: Did you guys used to joke around at work alot? Would you tell jokes to
each other?

PB: If you were friendly with a person, yes, I suppose you did. But, if you
weren't you just tend to your own business and that was it.

SD: Were you as a bus driver isolated alot? Did you work alone?

PB: No, not really. You'd wave everytime you went by a bus. That;s what you
meant was it?

SD: Is there anything else you want to say?

PB: No.

SD: What is the difference between a steel car and a PCC Car?

PB: A steel car had two people on it and a PCC only one.

END OF INTERVIEW
