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October 18, 1974.

Captain Buchanan

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Reel I

Mr. Buchanan: B  
Evelyn: E

Case No. 2  
Code: 1/1/511

B: I was born in Wales, in 1896, I am now 79 years old you see.

I sailed myself for 49 years and 49 months.

E: What sort of things did you do as a child?

B: Oh, as a child I did the average, kids do you know played and I always wanted to play with boats, always, I was always interested in the water, always. Of course I had two strikes on me when I was born, both my mother and father were sailors.

E: Oh well, thats a good way to start.

B: My mother was stewardess on one of the passenger boats and my father was mate on the ~~Brown~~ steamships running out to China. This ~~one~~ you see up here, is a sister ship to the ~~one~~ and my father was on her going around Cape Horn on his seventh trip past the horn on his twelveth birthday, thats how young they used to put them to sea in those days.

E: Did you have any education? Like what uhm, how far did you go through school?

B: I only went to grade four.

E: Mhm.

B: public school.

E: And you learned as you went along, about boats.

B: I went to navigation school, in Toronto and took up some navigation there, particularly ~~ashore~~ navigation there. Of couse we had a number of years then on the lakes or on the coast, its all what we call dead wreckoning.

E: What year did you come to Canada in?

B: 1907.

E: Did you come over with your parents, or?

B: I came with, my mother and my father had come prior and got a job here.

E: And what sort of occupations did your parents or...

B: My father was always a sailor and his last job was captain of the  
mages...

E: Really.

B: .. which is now the ~~mand~~ she is now the ~~and~~ and runs  
between Owen Sound and the ~~too~~ <sup>Sault</sup> I think, I think thats where she runs  
now. That was his last job before he died.

E: Well, maybe you could tell us about uhm, about some of the experiencies  
you had, as a captain.

B: Well, you don't have many, its just a job you know really, your brought  
up to it...( discussing of pets, Mr. Buchanan mentions that the sailors  
often had a dog on the ship with them and they always..)

Spoiled the dog, because they had nothing else to do only spoil the  
dog, and run it around.

E: Did you start out like as a sailor like you know cleaning decks and  
stuff like that before..

B: Oh yes, I started, I come up as they say through the hosspipe.

E: What sort of ranks were there?

B: Oh there was deckhand, lookout, watchman, and then the passenger boats,  
I was on the passenger boats first and I could see that the passenger  
traikt was dying fast so I changed over to the freight ships and went  
with the ~~mand~~, she had just come back from the West Indies, and  
had been carring

E: Do you, go ahead.

B: Oh she stunk, she had taken a load of grain down in her, and some water  
had leaked through into the builders and the builders were water trains  
... and there isn't anything that smells as bad as wet grain, after  
it gets wet.

E: I wouldn't know.

B: No, I hope you never have an experience that I had.

B: Thats terrible, well we had to clean that up and then we were in the trade and the package freight trade here, the package freight westbound and we ran eastbound. Well, we had one very, very bad trip across Lake Superior. In fact when the skipper said get the life boats ready, well there was one boat that had gone out the White Fish Bay ahead of us with a friend of his on it and he said I want to follow that ship, because he said so and so was on there and he has a friend of mine and we had a good sea worthy boat. And we watched the boat go ashore and all the crew were drownd, every man had drownd.

E: It must have been an awfull experience.

B: It was, and the captain was drownd, and the captpin of her was the friend of our captain. And one of our life boats was on its end down in the cold water,

E: Oh.

B: thats where the sea had put it.

E: Where were you sailing at the time?

B: Lake Superior...

E: Oh yes, right.

B: at a sight between Port Huron and with flour from the head of the lakes mostly with flour down from the, I think its the, the , the up there , for the mill up there, and we carried flour down to the Point and went back, package freight.

E: Could you tell us some of the aha, things that you carried, like as freight?

B: Oh, I remember one year we carried one full load of shelled walnuts, beleive it..

E: Mhm.

B: .. to the <sup>Sault</sup>  ~~Soo~~  for Christmas.

E: Oh.

B: And we took these from Montreal transshipped from another ship at the Montreal harbor. we took them on our boat and took them up for the Christmas season. And the boys were on so anxious to get into these nuts you know.

E: mhm mhm.

B: And its, its pretty stiff, the penalties, and for any broken laws on a ship are so much different then they are ashore. For instance, ashore its only a mild penalty if they steal anything under twenty-five dollars or something like that, well on there its barrettry you see.

E: oh.

B: And it comes under a different law all together, and they can get up to ten years for it. And one of them was carrying a box of these walnuts on his shoulders and he dropped it on the dock on the corner and it burst. Well of course everybody was eating these shelled walnuts... coaldust and all, but it didn't make any difference. Well the captain said "Who has been eating walnuts," nobody would admit it, but he could tell because nobody could talk. You eat a lot of shelled walnuts and your voice goes.

E: I never knew that before.

B: Neither did I till then, your voice goes very, very husky and then it will disappear altogether, you can only whisper. They finally got so bad, there was so much pilferage up there at the head of the lakes that they used to ship shoes north, west to the west and they'd ship all the left shoes in one shipment on one boat and all the right shoes in another so they could, could pair you see. And one time I was on duty watching the freight go to shore and we lost seven womens fur coats and we never knew how they got those ashore because I never left the gangway all the time when the stuff was going ashore. But they got ashore with it some how or another. I don't know how. They found the coats in the homes. They searched the homes in along , along the shore.. They found the coats, most of them anyway.

E: Do you remember much about the history of Belleville?

B: No, we only moved to Belleville in 1932.

E: mhm mhm.

B: The reason we came to Belleville in 1932, you remember that was the depression years. My boat, I was sailing a boat called the Northton, and she was a canal side boat and a very small carrier for her size and weight. So they notified me that they weren't going to bring her out and I would, would have to go mate with a man named Kirkwood in a brand new upper lake boat they were building called the "Royalton". And Kirkwood and I had never got along, we couldn't even walk on the same side of the street without fighting. I knew I wouldn't last a week with Kirkwood, I'd be fired. So captain Knudsen came up to me this, this company had just got the cement carrier, this Canada Cement Company and they wanted a man to go with Captain Knudsen who knew the canals and had trailed a boat as mate master.

B: So I applied for the job and got it and moved to Belleville. And they were so nice to my wife while I was away that we have never moved away. People have been so kind to her here.

E: What were some of the routes that your um ship took?

B: Well, during the war I carried ammunitions from Boston to Greenland. And the funny part of it was that the only time I ever ran into my own home port was the year we built this house and I carried coal that year from Sydney Cape Breten into Point Anne.

E: Oh thats a long way.

B: Well, for every two weeks, and they'd be twenty-four hours or thirty-six hours unloading the boat in Point Anne. So I had lots of time to be home.

E: How fast would the boats go at that time?

B: Oh, well I was in a very slow one. Imagine going from Fort William to Halifax at seven miles an hour.

E: Hmm that'd be a long trip.

B: Wasn't it, slow trip, she was the first converted, she had been a towbard and was converted to a diesel vessel called a cross. The only steam she had on her was a little small boiler for to use for to operate the steering gear. The rest of it was all diesel, not just electric. I have traileed too, from the head of the lakes to Halifax and from Toronto to Montreal, Toronto to Three Rivers, Toronto to Quebec, Quebec to Forestville and to ~~Culpeper~~ <sup>Forestville</sup> thats a nasty trail.

E: Which route did you like the best?

B: Oh, I think the long ones, the longer the better, because you see your only aloud to take your wife one trip a year.

E: So you took her on the longest one there was.

B: So we used to try and figure out the longest trip to go on.

B: So I always figured the trip from Fort William to Halifax was the one. And I was, we were talking about fish at noon, the difference in the fish down there. We think our fish here is good. It isn't anything compared to salt water fish.

E: Salt water fish is a lot better aye?

B: Much better. I bought one hundred and ten pounds of fish in Halifax when I started back up on one trip. And by the time we got to point the boys had had fish nearly every day and I thought they'd be pretty tired of it so I said to the cook "Have you any meat" he said "Yes, I 've got a lamb hanging up". I said "Well cook a couple of legs of lamb and the vegetables to go with it." Well he said "I have peas and new potatoes." Well I said they couldn't wish for anything better than that which they couldn't. So, when the boys sat down at noon and looked at the menu the first thing they said was "What no fish." Can you imagine after having fish all that time. One very funny night when I took my wife down, I had a Nova Scotia man for a cook and he could cook fish, theres no question about it. And we had herring there one day and my wife praised his cooking for the herring. The next day he cooked salmond and he cooked a herring for her. She never forgot that.

E: Can you remember any of the prices of fish at that time?

B: Well yes, I was getting halibut in Halifax harbour at the dock for five, eight cents a pound.

E: What a difference.

B: Isn't it, and I used to come up here and when I was trailing from Sydney to Point Anne, I used to come up here and bring Halibut with me. And then I would invite my friends from Belleville down for lunch. And we'd have fresh Halibut you see. We had a big walkin refridger-, big walkin refridger-ators. .... wouldn't you know it "Fresh halibut away up here," I said "Thats not fresh, its four days old." "Well it tastes fresh to us." But it didn't taste very fresh to us though. And there was one day there was a cod fisherman out in the Gaspe Gulf.

B: And he was fishing there so I pulled along side of him and I said, "Have you had any cod fish?" "Yes sir." I said, "throw me a couple of dollars worth aboard will you." He said "Yes." You know I had to stop him throwing any more. And I said "Now thats enough, don't throw any more." He said, "You haven't anymore than a dollars worth yet." I said "I cann't help it all I want, all I wanted was enough ... Well he told me that all he could get was five cents a pound. And he said, "Send down a big pail." So I sent down a big pail on the end of the line to his little boat down there and he filled it full of lobsters just for the balance...

E: Were lobsters very expensive?

B: Oh, I forget now what the price of lobsters were, I think about seventeen, sixteen cents, sixteen cents a pound.



#### DEATHS

**BUCHANAN:** Captain John Albert (Jack) of 178 Dufferin Ave., Belleville, Ontario at the Belleville General Hospital on Sunday, Nov. the 5th, 1978 in his 83rd year. Son of the late Mr. and Mrs. John Buchanan. Beloved Husband of Pauline Conder. Friends are invited to call at the Thompson Funeral Chapel, 38 Everett St., Belleville from Monday at 2:00 PM. Funeral Service to be held Tuesday, Nov. the 7th, 1978 at 3:30 PM in the Chapel. Interment, Glenwood Cemetery, Picton. Rev. Leslie Dean officiating. Memorials to the Ontario Heart Foundation would be appreciated. Parking entrance off Cedar St.

**THIFFEN:** Frank at the Cobourg

Striker. Interment was at Frankford Cemetery.

**CAPTAIN JOHN ALBERT  
(JACK) BUCHANAN**

Funeral was conducted Nov. 7 from the Thompson Funeral Home by Rev. Leslie Dean for Captain John Albert (Jack) Buchanan of Belleville who died Nov. 5 at Belleville General Hospital in his 83rd year. Interment was at Glenwood Cemetery, Picton.

Bearers were Keith Day, Bernard Wright, Allan Gardiner, Larry Johnston, Arthur Charleton and Captain Harry Palen. Honorary bearers were Dr. Bruce Cronk, Larry Kells, Captain William Wright, Clifford Templer, Ed Buchanan and Robert McCulloch.

Son of the late Mr. and Mrs. John Buchanan, Capt. Buchanan is survived by his wife Pauline Conder.

Capt. Buchanan had given 45 years service in his career. He was a captain of the Great Lakes Passenger Boats, Niagara Navigation Co., and

later Canada Steamship Lines running from Toronto to Niagara on the Lake. He was also captain of freighters running Halifax to Duluth, Min. He held a Captains Certificate for both Great Lakes and Ocean Boats. He was a past captain of the City of Belleville (McCreary Boat) and also the Glenora Ferry with the former department of highways.

Mr. Buchanan attended Tabernacle United Church and sang in the old John Street Church Choir.

Capt. Buchanan was a veteran of the First World War having served with the Canadian Bantam Light Infantry. He also entertained the troops after the war as a vocal tenor. He was a life member of the Prince Edward Masonic Lodge of Picton, receiving his 50 years Jewel.

**CITIZENS POURED IN**

Some 17 million future U.S. citizens were processed through Ellis Island, N.Y., from 1892 to 1954.