

2003.02.164

T976.09

INFORMANT: HECTOR LEMER

SUBJECT: autobiography
Mr. Lemer's life
as a merchant

PERIOD: 1903 - c1948

LENGTH OF TAPE: 1 hr. 10 mins.

INTERVIEWED BY: Margaret Bradfield
June 7th, 1976

003 - 020

Hector Lemer, born St. Albert, Ontario, June 30th, 1903
Came to Alberta with his family by train to Strathcona,
then to St. Albert by wagon.

[Many long pauses]

021 - 033

Lived in Morinville, first home in St. Albert was on St.
Anne Street, across from Veterinarian Clinic. House was
heated by wood and coal, water from a well.

034 - 045

Went to Revelstoke, B.C. (1909) for two years, returned
to St. Albert. Lived in another house on St. Anne Street.

046 - 098

Took some schooling in Morinville, then in St. Albert at
the Brick school.
Description of the slough in Mission Park.
Teachers: Miss (Tibedore) (?) then the Grey Nuns; about 35
children per classroom.
School heated by coal, lighted by a pressure gas.
Boarders from the convent attended the school.

Thibedeaux

099 - 118

Tractor mishap on bridge in 1913. - crashed through
bridge

119 - 126

First World War and effects on St. Albert. - Took farm boys

127 - 137

Death of Father Lacombe: remembers no effects on St. Albert.
1915 'bc he had not been living there

138 - 146

Activities as a child: skating on the river and the slough,
bobsledding.

tapping sound

~11 min.

147 - 153

Not much travel to Edmonton, there were good stores in
St. Albert.

154 - 163

Automobiles:

164 - 336

Graduated from school with no ceremony.
First job was in Lechambre's Store in the Dawson Block.
Store sold dry goods, furniture and groceries: lighted
with Pitner System (description of).
Well behind the store serviced the whole Dawson Block.
There was a suite upstairs in the corner of the building,
the rest of the space was used for furniture. Mr. Lechambre
had a bedroom upstairs and kept 2 or 3 Great Dane dogs for protection
The store employed about 6 people.
Hector made deliveries about 4:00 pm using a horse and buggy
from his father's livery barn. (This was part of the arrange-
ment of his hiring)
Obtaining of supplies. - very well connected i.e. Revillieux
& Métris supplies

337 - 340

Roads were dirt, (mud or slush)

341 - 404

1922
Contract was given for the building of the present church
but there was an understanding that as much local labour

as possible be used. Discussion of the steps going up to church. 40 or 50 steps.

405 - 453 Prohibition in St. Albert: has personal knowledge of 3 or 4 stills that made liquor. *One by station, one by Bruin Inn*

454 - 519 Dawson Block burned down on Sunday, Feb. 12th, 1928. It started in Lambert's Store about 9 or 10:00 in the morning. The town had a contract with Edmonton for firefighting services but only a limited number of people in St. Albert had authority to call them. It was winter, the river was frozen and a hole had to be made in the ice. Pressure, which should have been about 100 pounds was limited to about 30. Veness now owned the Block and Lemer had his own store there, which was the furthest from the fire. He was able to remove much of his merchandise.

52 - 595 Moved their merchandise that same day to an empty building, across the street on Perron. Stayed in that location until September 1st, 1931 when they moved into their new store on the corner of St. Anne and Perron (present St. Albert Pharmacy) He laid the first concrete sidewalk in St. Albert in front of his store with materials left from the construction of his building, buying only two wagonloads of gravel.

*~37m.
loud hum
change in cassette
(recorder) volume?*

596 - 645 Married Catherine Kennedy of St. Albert on April 6th, 1931. They had three children. Their first home was in a block on Perron street for about 6 months. Built a house at 22 St. Anne Street (present veterinarian clinic) In 1944, Hector bought a farm from Mr. Roualt.

*BG noise
(cars)*

646 - 659 Traced the ownership of this land. Originally HBC land, sold to Lawrence in 1887 and paid with by HBC script earned by this man.

660 - 702 Cold winters, ^{not too} dry summers. 1930 - very bad winter

703 - 726 Boating on the Sturgeon River, canoes and flat bottom boats.

End of Side I

SIDE II

Interviewer's Q is on side A.

001 - 060 The second World War; upgrading of the roads and building of the highway c1948. *building of rd. to Edmonton*
Alaska Water put into St. Albert about the same time.

061 - 084 In the fall of 1947 the merchants got together to pave the main roads in St. Albert. A dance was held to help raise money for this.

085 - 090 Building of the little chapel at the bottom of the hill and Mrs. Bouchard.

091 - 117 Flooding of the Sturgeon River. *It would get high but not dangerously so.*

- 118 - 127 Newspapers were brought in from Edmonton. Hector may have been the first "paper boy". For awhile the papers came in on a bus, when this was discontinued he would go to the Dunvegan Yards by horseback or dog sled to pick them up.
- 128 - 156 The Interurban railway: ran for 6 to ~~7~~ months, down Perron Street to the Bank of Montreal. It would then back up 5 or 6 blocks to a turn table situated about where Safeway is now. It would then travel up the hill part way on its own power but had to be pulled the rest of the way by a gas motor which was located near the St. Albert Drive In theatre.
- 157 - 204 The Canoe Club building, located on the south side of the river west of the railway bridge was there until c1928 but the club folded about eight years before. Means of getting to the club building (chartered bus)

End of Interview.

- 205 - 234 Additional notes by Mrs. Bradfield on June 8th, 1976.
- Hector's father and a Mr. Gibeau made their first trip to Alberta in 1905. They brought a car load of cattle from Ontario to be used for breeding stock (CPR.) They liked the country so returned to Ontario and brought their families out.
- The 1913 bridge accident: planks were placed across one side of the bridge for the children to cross. The driver was going to Duggan's farm and was an uncle of Mrs. Bellecourt.
- Lemer's second house on St. Anne Street was located where the present Dance Studio is. It was built of logs and covered with siding. Prior to Lemer's buying it, it was the telephone office.
- Building of the little chapel: Father Bidault and Mrs. Bouchard were discussing the difficulty of the older people to get to church on the hill, Mrs. Bouchard said that if Father would see to the building of the chapel she would pay for it.