

Lucy DAMIANI, Apr. 20/72

7:00 - 9:00 - 2 hours -

1. Orville Tanner

2.

3. 166 Earl St.

4. 679-5916

5 Stock keeper for Hydro

6. Cawood, Ontario.

7. Mother and Father born in Quyon, Quebec.

8. Married with two children

9. About 58 years old.

10. Cobalt in my estimation will never be a ghost town even though some people have already called it this. I'll tell you I've seen it much worse. Why around the '50's they were selling houses down on Russell Street for \$50 just to have people take them away. In a way this was a good thing because it helped clean up some of the old shacks that were left. And another good thing that happened to this was the release of Mastermet Property after many years of haggling and arguing. Now that people own them outright they have started to make repairs and clean up their premises. As for education I think this is a good system we have of regional schools. One big school to go to means better facilities, possibly more courses going for the students and a better grade of teachers. I know we are having a big argument right now about keeping grade 13 at Cobalt High rather than send students to Liskeard. This is different. Our High School here has always had a high caliber student and good teachers. There are some big school facilities which are very good for a school this size/ think we should keep it going. We could have the students coming here from Latchford, North Cobalt, Temagami, its quite central rather than go to Liskeard. Now I also feel that amalgamation of certain towns and townships is very good. I would say we would do well to amalgamate with Township of Coleman, but a Tri-Town amalgamation I don't go for at all. Really we have wonderful facilities in our little town and I would hate to see them go.

Our municipal government is doing a good job with garbage collection, snow removal, keeping up our sidewalks - they are slowly putting up new ones where needed and also our water rates and taxes are very reasonable. The parks certainly add to the town and it's nice to see all the building going on. They tell me about 10 more people are building new homes again this summer.

I'd like to see the old town go ahead. My wife and I are happy here. The boys are married and one lives in North Bay and the other in Coldwater. We're not too far away. My home is here and my friends are here. live always

found it a friendly town. We have a cottage on the Matabitchewan River. Both love to fish and hunt and the outdoors, its the nicest part of the country. I was married at Shawville, Quebec in August 1938 and in February 1939 I went to Kirkland to work in the mines. I had a chance to get on with Hydro so I took the job and came to Matabitchewan in 1942 and worked as an operator. For about 5 years I drove a team of horses bringing mail and orders out of the "Mat" and bringing in mail, supplies, groceries, and other necessities. Matabichewan was a small little settlement. No stores but a small school. the peak attendance was some 22 children and also the Blair's lived there, McConnell's, Martin Johnson, Mont Petit, Bernache's, McLarens, Bonins and Israel

Welsh. We worked for \$95.00 a month, 6 days a week, Every second week we got 8 hours off. It was community minded and we made our fun. The kids always had a rink to skate on, later years they put sheets of ice in for curling, play cards, the gang used to come in from Cobalt to join us and sometimes would come out here. It was a beautiful spot in summer. Did a lot of fishing and went on portage trips to get in the good lakes or trout creeks. In 1952 I moved to Cobalt, so the two boys could go to school here. Bought the house I am now in completely remodelled, panelled walls added a glassed in verandah, new furnace, new foundation and today its very comfortable. You know I have a 1953 Hydro Staff News Book and I'll show you some pictures, its in the Vol. 6, No. 38 February 1953 issue. There's Keith Reid, He's a first operator at Upper Notch relaying information while Doug Orr takes it off the board. And there's Pete Bonin, foreman for the compressed air station at Ragged Chutes. Here's one of operator Eddie Tucker and Chief Operator Wes Rice looks on as floor man Ken Carman greases turbine gate arms. Here's some of the fellows taking a coffee break at the Hound Chutes Plant, I remember Paul Nadeau, he's since passed away and there's Bill Mallett, Bill Manderstom, Norm Bain, Johnny Baillik and Ray Sutton. There's our area manager W/E. Anderson and "Til" Speck area operating supervisor. Now don't forget this is 1953 and some of these jobs are now obsolete and some of the fellows are now in other positions.

You know many of our Hydro operators have kept watch at lonely outposts aver Ontario Hydro flow. The stations around Cobalt which include Hound Chutes, Fountain Falls, Upper Notch, Ragged Chutes, Indian Chutes and Matabitchewan were called Montreal River Circuit, now Fountain Falls is flooded and Upper Notch is flooded with new dam project. Some families have spent the part of their lives going around the same group of stations or on one particular colony. Mr. and Mrs. Wes Rice have spent 29 years at Matabichewan. They moved out of there in 1965. The chief operator at Upper Notch was Keith Reid who had been there some 30 years before he got moved to the new Dymond Transformer Station. Jim Keon, maintenance man at Ragged Chutes has logged about 40 years of bush time in the Ragged Chutes, Cobalt area. Foreman Pete Bonin was born and raised at Matabitchewan and spent the better part of his life there. And Ross McDougal, Chief Operator at Fountain Falls says work may get dull but a good operator has to be able to act fast in an emergency or he may get a surgeon the lines that might cause thousands of dollars worth of damage. Ross is now working as chief operator in Kirkland Lake. Entertainment on the colonies is home made and you have a variety of bridge clubs, knitting sessions, house dances, visiting, skating parties are popular and of course in the summer everybody grabs a rod and goes fishing. We have two camera bugs in Wes Rice and Ken Carmen whose professional like pictures are decorating many walls and photo albums. The colony wives as they are called have to be cut out for this type of life. You carefully plan a grocery list because if you forget a pound of margerine, Johnnie can't run to the store and get it, the distance is often 20 miles to a town. The colony population changes and shifts as children are school age, you move to a town. This is a life in our far north. population which today are almost extinct because of cars, easier travel and many plants today are automated which relieves man power, therefore progress —is taking its course.

Well Lucy that's my history of Hydro life and I hope you've enjoyed it.

Just a minute Orville, didn't you get your 25 year membership with Hydro? OH, yes, I did there's my certificate to prove it and I also received a 25 year pin and a purse of money.

In 1968, we (the 25 year members) were all treated to a trip to Toronto and at a banquet at the Royal York Hotel we were presented with our certificates pin and money. Howard Taylor was another Cobalter who received his same time as I did.

It was very interesting to have this interview with Orville Tanner and I want to thank both he and his wife Gladys for their co-operation. She was most helpful with paper articles which I will enter later as history on the air plant at Ragged Chutes and also history of beginning and completion of Hydro Dam Project at Lower Notch.