

Julius Horvath

**JULIUS HORVATH**

**Interviewed by Klaus Hueneke**

**26 November 1986**

This is an interview with Julius Horvath by Klaus Hueneke on November 26, 1986, at Hackett in Canberra. Julius worked as a surveyor's assistant with the Snowy Mountains Authority from 1952 to 1955 and then worked with an American contractor for some time. He was a single man at that time and lived in tents. He worked at Tumut Ponds and stayed in Sue City for a while and originally came from Hungary.

KH: Is that right?

JH: Yes, that is right. Well, I mean when you said I worked on the Tumut Ponds and stayed in Sue City for a little while. That is only two of the many places because we were roaming all over the mountains really. I had a permanent room in ~~Cabrumba~~ in Jindabyne, in Cooma, so whenever we went to one of these major camps then we always had accommodation, our rooms.

KH: Can I start at the beginning - I will start a little bit earlier than that.

JH: Okay.

KH: What is your full name, do you have a middle name?

JH: No. Julius Horvath, that is all my name was.

KH: And when were you born?

JH: 7/7/1928 in Hungary.

KH: Whereabouts in Hungary?

JH: Well, that's a very difficult name, *Lengyelország* we call it. That is very close to Lake Balaton. That is one of the biggest lakes in Europe.

KH: And what are your parent's names?

JH: My father was called Pole. He was born on 29 June, that is the ..... name. My mother was called Elizabeth Jetman(?).

KH: And where did you go to school, in the same place <sup>where</sup> you were born?

JH: No. We moved up to a place they call *Charkva(?)* near the *Vetis(?)* mountains and that is where I went to school.

KH: And what level did you reach at school?

JH: I think it is the equivalent of high school. After the primary school, which was in that time, 6 years, I did 4 years, which is equal to the same as high school <sup>level</sup> in Australia.

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KH: So you did 10 years of schooling all together. And what did you do after school, did you get an apprenticeship?

JH: No. After I finished school I was lined up to go to a technical college, but the war came and that finished everything. We were living just between the two fronts and everything was lost.

KH: You would have been 12 when the war broke out, I suppose, 1928.

JH: I was 11.

KH: So you still had schooling during the war?

JH: Yes.

KH: But were able to finish schooling during the war?

JH: Correct, yes.

KH: What happened then after the war?

JH: Well, after the war, in 1944, before the war come to our place the young people had the option to leave and go to Germany and I was one of them. I stayed in Germany for about 6 months, the end of the war. In 1945 I come home but the conditions there are all changed. I couldn't see any future for me in Hungary. There was only work in the field and it was not to my liking, you know. We couldn't afford to go to school any longer, we lost everything in the war.

KH: Your family lost everything?

JH: Yes. So I just left in 1948, immigrated, of course, like everybody in that time and I stayed in Austria for about nine months then migrated to Australia. And I'm still here.

KH: So you were one of the early migrants?

JH: Well, 1949. I would say, yes.

KH: So you did not learn a trade whilst you were in Hungary?

JH: I did not, no.

KH: So you came to Australia in 1949?

JH: Yes.

KH: And you came by ship, I suppose?

JH: By ship, yes.

KH: And were you assisted, assisted passage?

JH: Yes. I came as a displaced person.

KH: That wasn't assisted by some international fund?

JH: I think that was assisted by the government itself.

KH: The Australian Government?

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JH: Yes. We had to sign a contract in that time, before we came to Australia, that you are going to work wherever the government will put us for two years.

KH: I mean, Australia was an unknown place?

JH: True, yes.

KH: What were your thoughts of Australia, what did you know about Australia before you came?

JH: Well, I never had the chance to a far place, a foreign country, before I left Hungary and I was really looking forward, excited, to come to the other side of the world. It was terrific, yes.

KH: But what was your idea of Australia, what did you know in your mind, what did you think when you thought Australia, what did it mean?

JH: It was only with a passion you know, a new country.

KH: Did you think of sheep?

JH: No.

KH: Or did you think of the sun?

JH: The sun, yes, it was nice and warm. Even in the winter time when I arrived here in the <sup>Bonagilla</sup> it was still nice. We were looking very much forward to get a job and the work.

KH: But had you heard something about Australia before you came?

JH: Not much, just what I learned in the school, you know, in geography.

KH: And then you went to Bonagilla Migrant Camp?

JH: Yes.

KH: How long did you spend there?

JH: I was there about nine weeks. Most of the friends who I came with they got a job within one or two weeks, but I had a disability problem. I have only one sight in one of my eyes and they thought I can't go to work in a factory because I am an accident risk, so I might finish up as a watchman in a park or looking after <sup>a</sup> cemetery. Finally they send me to a farmer, to a farm near Orbost.

KH: In Gippsland?

JH: In Gippsland, yes.

KH: I see. So you started where the Snowy runs into the sea?

JH: Exactly, yes. In that time - I would finish up on the other end of the Snowy River. I stayed on the farm for only <sup>thirteen</sup> days. I didn't like the job very much so I went to Sale and they gave me a job in Maffra, that is near Sale. Maffra, there is a <sup>Nestles</sup> milk factory there, making

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condensed milk and reduced cream. So I stay there for two years. After I went to Cobar and tried the gold mines for two months and they<sup>were</sup> just about closing down, then I came to the Snowy.

KH: That is a great contrast between the East Gippsland which is very green and wet, and Cobar.

JH: Yes, dry country, yes.

KH: Then you started on the Snowy?

JH: I come to the Snowy in 1951, I think, in December. They gave me a job. I was a surveyors ~~chainman~~. They sent me to Tumut Pond at that time and within two days they assign me to a survey party with a German surveyor called Adolf Janssen. Well, he just came to this country from Germany. He did not speak very good English and I spoke a bit German, you know, so we always conversed in German. In the end I finished up learning German and he learned a bit of English too.

KH: Was there much of that where people from different backgrounds spoke in another language in order to communicate?

JH: Well everybody spoke English, at least to a certain degree, there was no problem. Most of the migrants, they spoke German, especially ~~the displaced persons~~ who came in 1949/50s. Because they all came from Austria or Germany so we had no problem. If you couldn't speak English, we change the word to German, it was all right.

KH: Could one say that - you know, in New Guinea there is pidgin English. Did you develop some sort of pidgin: German or pidgin international on the Snowy scheme?

JH: I don't know. Well, people used to tell me that my German is pretty good. They didn't tell me that I speak with a very ~~foreign~~ accent, you know. And English, well, we just learn it as it came. In the camps I don't think you can hear very high class English, you know. People had a very rough type.

KH: So you started as a chainman, where was that?

JH: We started from Tumut Pond and we were three in a party at that time; Mr Janssen, there was a Lithuanian boy, Peter - I forgot his other name - and myself.

KH: Where did you go on to?

JH: From Tumut Ponds we went to Tumut, Tumberumba, to a place they call Greg Greg, it is near Tooma. We came there and we were taking measurements, height measurements. That's right, <sup>we were only taking</sup> height measurements at that time. Above sea level measurements.

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KH: You were located at various places in the mountains; you were determining the height?

JH: Yes. I forgot now what we call that instruments, you know. It is not ..... or a surveyor levelling instrument. It was a special sort of an instrument, a ..... instrument.

KH: Like an altimeter, like they used in ~~air~~ planes.

JH: Something like an altimeter, yes. We have to get alongside hills and taking different readings of different spots. That is where we started.

KH: So where you were based, you were based in tents; is that right?

JH: Always, always in tents. We had sometimes the good luck that we could stay in one of those huts. But most of the time it was tents.

KH: Did you stay in farm houses at all?

JH: Not in farm houses. Except one place near Moorbah, Jindabyne, at Grosses Plain. There was an abandoned farm house and we stayed there for a while.

KH: So you moved about a lot by sound of it?

JH: Always.

KH: Every few weeks?

JH: We were always on the move really, always on the move.

KH: How long was that for, how long did you keep moving?

JH: I stayed with Mr Janssen for about one year. Part of that job was to set up small observation point trig stations for the main network, <sup>triangulation (?)</sup> network for the Snowy. That involved us to get into places which would fit into these network and do some clearing and putting up observation point, trig stations. And that go all over the Snowy Mountains really.

KH: They were metal trig points?

JH: <sup>construct it</sup> No. Usually only we did them from timber. It was more convenient to ~~construct it~~ from timber. But they were only temporary ones, not the major trig stations, <sup>that</sup> You've got on the very highest peaks of the mountains.

KH: Right, because now they tend to be metal.

JH: Most of them are metal ones, or a lot of them still are built from rocks. You have got a centre pole with a disc on the top. Many times I had to go up there and pull it down. <sup>again, vertical,</sup> Put it <sup>up</sup> so that you can observe it.

KH: Did you do much overtime?

JH: In that time, yes. We did quite a bit of overtime, yes.

KH: So it was good money?

JH: Compared to what people were earning away from the snow, yes, we were quite happy.

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- KH: Was it hard work?
- JH: It was not hard work. The hardest part was climbing mountains, really. But we were in good shape, fit, and we really enjoyed it. I am the outdoor type person and it fit me perfectly well.
- KH: You didn't have tracks all the time, did you?
- JH: Tracks?
- KH: Yes.
- JH: You mean travelling?
- KH: Yes.
- JH: Many times you follow your nose. We had some air photos, of course, with us and following the air photos or maps with contour lines or - it was a bit difficult - difficult to navigate but we managed it.
- KH: Did you mainly travel by landrover?
- JH: Landrover all the time.
- KH: You didn't use horses?
- JH: On some occasions, yes. We use horses first near Ingebyra, we hire horses from the farmers. Ingebyra then to the Jacobs River, then to the Snowy River. Then we hired horses near the ACT, where the present Tantangara Dam is - they call the place Currango, Mr and Mrs Taylor. They are very hospitable people. We hired horses from them and we always engaged his younger son - I think his name was Ted Taylor - and we used the horses to go up to Mt ~~Simberi~~ and ~~Mt. Morgan~~. This was the only two occasions when we hired the horses.
- KH: You hired them down on the Jacobs River, did you say.
- JH: The horses were hired, originally, in Jindabyne from a farmer and we travelled with the horse to Ingebyra and then from Ingebyra down to part of the Jacobs River and towards the Snowy River.
- KH: The Barry Way wasn't there then, was it, there was no road?
- JH: In that time there was still the Barry Way which goes right across to Victoria but not in a good condition like it is now.
- KH: The track, was it?
- JH: You could still travel down on the track to the Jacobs River.
- KH: You didn't go down Jacobs Ladder, you went down where the road is now, did you?
- JH: Yes. We went down where the present concrete bridge is, crossing the Jacobs River now.
- KH: So it wasn't the old bridle track?

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- JH: No. I don't know exactly what you call the old bridle track because we branched off in Ingebyra and cut across bush country - it is pretty rough country. That was mainly a horse track, you could not travel on that one with a four-wheel drive vehicle. But that was an old mining track, I believe, because in some part of the bush you could see the cutting, what they - where the original track was.
- KH: I understand that the Barry Way wasn't open to vehicles until 1960, I think.
- JH: Oh yes, but you could travel with a four-wheel drive there until the present Jacobs River crossing, the bridge, no further.
- KH: Did you ever go into the Tin Mines?
- JH: No, we never go to the Tin Mines.
- KH: You didn't meet Charlie Carter?
- JH: No, we did not.
- KH: So the two times you hired horses was at Jacobs River country and Currango and the Brindabellas, or the back of the Cotter?
- JH: Yes.
- KH: Did you use the old stockman's huts at all for sleeping in?
- JH: The stockman's hut?
- KH: Yes.
- JH: We used near Currango - it was very difficult at that time to go in with the jeep. I was at that time with Mr Georg, another German surveyor. We stayed there at Oldfields Hut, which is now nearly in ruins.
- KH: No, it has been worked on.
- JH: It is still standing?
- KH: Yes. We have had parties in there doing restoration.
- JH: The last time I was there was two or three years ago. It was still standing but in a pretty shaky condition.
- KH: There has been a bit work party there and it has been restored; new posts, new slabs.
- JH: Yes, we stayed at Oldfields Hut. I think there was another hut, they call it Pockets Hut, but they are not the same what they have now. I think the original Pockets Hut probably has been - in ruins now, is it?
- KH: No, it has been restored too.
- JH: In 1952, is it the same hut, standing there?
- KH: It is the same Pockets.
- JH: Is it?
- KH: Yes, it has been there for 50 years or more.

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- JH: Well, I haven't been there for a long long time except for about three years ago. Some how it looked to me that it is a different hut.
- KH: Not that I know because Molly and Tom Taylor lived there at one stage, back in the '40s. No, I think it is the same hut, it is quite like a little home.
- JH: Yes. Somehow I - I could be mistaken because we lived in quite a few different huts you know. I probably mixed them up with another one. We stayed at Coolamine and we meet <sup>an</sup> old gentlemen there, Bung Harris.
- KH: Did you?
- JH: Very interesting character, yes.
- KH: What was he up to.
- JH: He was still running the station in that time. That was in 1952 and he was in charge of the Currango station. I remember we stayed in a room which was on the wall - they stuck up all <sup>the</sup> newspapers and it was very interesting to read some of these newspapers back-dated to 1930.
- KH: Was that the room that had all the Womens Weeklys? There was one room that had Women's Weekly.
- JH: No, I can't remember the Women's Weekly but all through newspapers I think they had on the wall.
- KH: Yes, I counted 13 layers in one of those rooms. Was Bung Harris living with anyone else there, or was he by himself?
- JH: As far as we know, he lived there only by himself.
- KH: And he was still looking after cattle?
- JH: He was looking after the station. We only stayed there, with Bung Harris, only on one occasion. That was with Mr Janssen. He told us all his stories about the First World War in France - he was everywhere probably, in Gallipoli, too.
- KH: Who?
- JH: Bung Harris.
- KH: He was in France?
- JH: Yes, in the First World War. That is what he told us. Then we heard he was a good storyteller.
- KH: What other stories did he tell you, is there anything - - -
- JH: Mainly his exploits in the First World War.
- KH: Yes, people tell me all sorts of things about Bung Harris, he was quite a character apparently.
- JH: He was, yes.
- KH: Was he a tall man or how would you describe him.
- JH: I don't think he was very tall but he was a thin built person.

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- KH: He was already in his 50s or 60s when you met him?
- JH: Yes. Well in his sixties, I think.
- KH: You only met him the once?
- JH: Only the once, yes, we stayed there.
- KH: So when did you get married? Did you meet your wife - - -
- JH: In 1955, I left the Snowy and I changed over to the American contractors. I was driving the concrete trucks in Tumut Pond which were carrying these six cubic yard blocks. on to the cable way from the ..... plant. From then on I changed over to ..... to Tantangara then. I was in the survey party there, doing the survey of the tunnel. Then in 1961 I went to Europe and that is when I met my wife and got married.
- KH: So you were on the scheme for about nine or 10 years, in the mountains?
- JH: Yes. On the Snowy, till 1967.
- KH: For 16 years?
- JH: Yes. In 1967 I went to New Zealand with the contractors and continued on with the tunnelling job in .....  
.....
- KH: Right. But you took a holiday to Europe in 1961?
- JH: That's right, yes.
- KH: That was very convenient that you met your wife as well?
- JH: Yes, that's where I met my wife.
- KH: It worked out very well. She was happy to come back to Australia?
- JH: Yes, she was. She is quite happy here, yes, she is quite happy.
- KH: And you have got some children?
- JH: Yes, we have three children, one girl and two boys.
- KH: Yes, it was your son that I met at Canlab when he was there.
- JH: Yes, that's right, the youngest one.
- KH: He told me to come and interview you, you see.
- JH: He did not say anything.
- KH: Didn't he? He suggested - because he knew that I had written the book about the huts.
- JH: Yes, I've got the book. It is very interesting to read.
- KH: He was very eager to tell me that his father had worked on the Snowy.
- KH: Did you work in ice and snow at times?

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JH: Yes. After I was transferred to Mr Georg's party, he did triangulation survey. That involved climbing the major mountains where they have got <sup>observation</sup> trig site points. On one occasion I remember we used skis - I have got some pictures here - on Mt Adaminaby. We had to use skis to go up there.

KH: At Adaminaby.

JH: Mt Adaminaby. That is very close to the dam site.

KH: Which dam?

JH: The Eucumbene Dam.

KH: It is not also called Bald Hill, is it? Is it on the western side?

JH: It is on the western side, yes. I only know it as Mt Adaminaby. Bald Hill, I think, it is very close to the edge of the lake now, Bald Hill.

<sup>member the old road</sup> going from Adaminaby to Jindabyne, Bald Hill, I think, was on the left hand side about three or four miles out from old Adaminaby on the way to Jindabyne. But other men, in my time, I think, it always called Adaminaby. If you were coming up from the Eucumbene ~~Porta!~~ camp, on the hill top there is - at that time there was a small information place, they build it from rocks which came out from the tunnels.

KH: It overlooks the dam?

JH: Just very close to that one you venture off to the left and on the ridge, that will take you to Mt Adaminaby, about three miles further away.

KH: Do you go across the dam wall?

JH: No.

KH: Back on the - that is on the eastern side of the dam wall towards Adaminaby?

JH: No.

KH: It is between Lake Eucumbene and Adaminaby?

JH: No. No the Eucumbene ~~Porta!~~ - they called it Eucumbene ~~Porta!~~, didn't they?

KH: The tunnel from Tantagara Dam to Eucumbene?

JH: No. Down from Tumut Pond to Eucumbene Lake, the outlet to Eucumbene Lake, they call Eucumbene ~~Porta!~~, isn't it?

KH: I don't know, I don't know it well enough. It was a very big camp before you come to the dam wall on the left, there is the big main Eucumbene camp.

JH: They call it ~~Eaglehawk~~ camp.

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KH: Yes. I don't know where this other one was. But I'll look it up, I'll look up Mt Adaminaby on the map. Mt Adaminaby wouldn't get snow very often?

JH: Well, not very often. I think there is snow every year but in that time we had pretty heavy snowfall and there was no chance to go up with the landrover. In summer time you can go up with the landrover and you could drive to Tolbar but in that time, very heavy snowfall, we had to use skis and take our gear on our back.

KH: That is Bald Hill. Is it on the way to Happy Jacks Plain, Tolbar?

JH: Yes.

KH: There is Far Bald Mountain and Bald Mountain. You go across the dam wall and the road winds up and up and up over Bald Hill and then you go into Happy Jacks Plain or across to the Tolbar.

JH: Probably. You know it by the name, Bald Hill. The name, you know, is not that what we climbed but I only know it as Adaminaby.

KH: Yes, I think that is it.

JH: If you are crossing over from Eagle ~~hawk~~, the old Eagle ~~hawk~~ camp, you are crossing over the dam, then you climb up really to Adaminaby Mountain.

KH: Yes, that's it. That is good skiing there, good cross country skiing.

JH: Well, in that time there was plenty of snow, snow drifts on the tops.

KH: But were you a skier, did you learn to ski?

JH: No, I wasn't a skier really. That was the second time or third time I had skis on my feet.

KH: Did you keep any pets, like a cat or a dog?

JH: No, never. That would have complicated the transfer. <sup>animals -</sup> All ~~of~~ leave them in the camp by themselves.

KH: Did many other people have pets?

JH: I don't know. I don't know anybody who had pets.

KH: You didn't see many dogs in the camps?

JH: No, I can't remember seeing pets in the camps.

KH: Did you ever have a garden, did you ever stay long enough to - - -

JH: No, never. No chance for a garden.

KH: You didn't stay long enough anywhere to plant anything?

JH: No.

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KH: What are your earliest memories of the mountains? I am thinking here of what the environment was like. Was the country being grazed by sheep and cattle?

JH: In that time, yes. When we start in the mountains, yes. I think in that time the farmers were allowed to <sup>drive</sup> with the cattle - the stock over the mountains and they use it there for - I don't know how many months during the year. I remember, especially around Nimma, these - the Nimma Hut at that time was occupied by a person who was taking care of the stock. And also I remember farmers - farmers in the mountains - I have forgotten the name of the hut but it was very close to Jagungal - you might call it Pretty Plain Hut.

KH: Yes, there is a Pretty Plain Hut. It was made of logs, a big hut, big roof.

JH: The Pretty Plain Hut is in the end of a valley, is it?

KH: Yes.

JH: No, that is a different one. We were there too, yes. But we did not see the farmer there or anybody occupying that place. When you cross the Toolong River - we stayed at that time in the Toolong hut - when you cross the Toolong River and we were travelling on a very rough track towards Mt Jagungal - just a minute, I'm getting mixed up here somewhere. That's right, you were travelling towards Mt Jagungal and a slight range, not a very high range, I think at the Tumut Pond River - there is the eastern side of the Tumut Pond River and travelling towards Grey Mare Hut. That was a very old hut and farmers were still living there and we meet cattle, grazing.

KH: Was that O'Keefes?

JH: I can't remember the name. We didn't stay there, we only passed it. We were driving further down, using four-wheel drive vehicle - we did not have any tracks, only horse tracks. We were driving towards Grey Mare and turned back under the foot of Mt Jagungal and crossing over the range and we came out somewhere near ..... I believe in that time that we are the first one probably who are crossing the mountain by four-wheel drive vehicle.

KH: What year was that?

JH: That was in 1952, with Mr Janssen. It was very rough going, bogged and go, bogged and go, and again bogged, God. At that time I seen - there is still grazing going in the mountains.

KH: Did you see much burnt country?

JH: You could see there was another bushfire, <sup>bushfire signs</sup> old ones or fresh ones.

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KH: Signs of bushfire?

JH: Signs of bushfire, you could see everywhere.

KH: There was smoke in the air a lot of time?

JH: Some time, yes. We had a very savage bushfire situation near Tooma. That was in 1952 and we had to wait to fight bushfires between Tooma and Tumbarumba. That was very bad.

KH: Do you think that was accidental fire or do you think somebody lit it?

JH: We don't know that. It was burning like hell, really.

KH: So did it threaten - did it endanger some of the Snowy camps?

JH: No. All camps were situated in a safe place, near Greg Greg.

I think they call that river Tooma River or Greg Greg River, I forgot it now. We had to go from there and fight the bushfires.

KH: Did you meet any stockmen?

JH: No, this is the only place where we met - I have forgotten the name of this hut but it was a very - not in very sound condition. It was very close - opposite Mt Jagungal, <sup>on</sup> a slight ridge.

KH: It sounds like O'Keefes or Bogong Hut. That is right below Jagungal.

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- JH: Bogong Hut?
- KH: Yes, that is right below Jagungal. I mean, there is a hut called Farm Ridge but Farm Ridge was already in very poor condition then.
- JH: It was in very poor condition.
- KH: Was it? Did it have stockyards around it?
- JH: I think it had some stockyards, yes.
- KH: Was there a shed? You see there is only two huts there.
- JH: There could be, there could be.
- KH: It has to be either Farm Ridge or O'Keefes.
- JH: Well, when you came from Toolong hut, crossing the Toolong River - I'm going back over 30 years now - you came into a valley, there was a small hut over there, a small hut. Going further up - that was the farmer, the stockmen - there was another hut. That was in pretty good condition. But continuing on, on to this ridge that I mentioned, which is just about facing Mt Jagungal, there we found this hut which was in very poor condition and we met stockmen over there.
- KH: Who was there, do you remember who it was?
- JH: No, I can't remember the name.
- KH: Do you think there was very much interaction between men who worked on the Snowy and the stockmen, do you think they met very much?
- JH: Well, with our party - I don't know whether it is two, may be three, that we met. I don't know other ones.
- KH: Was the country - was there much bare ground, was there much erosion of the soil?
- JH: No, we didn't notice it.
- KH: It was burnt but it wasn't - - -
- JH: Bushfire signs you could see everywhere really, everywhere. Old ones or fairly new ones, but soil erosion, we don't notice it.
- KH: Were there many dead trees from the fires, dead snow gums?
- JH: Yes, on some places, yes.
- KH: Do you think that the construction of the Snowy caused much soil erosion?
- JH: I can't remember seeing the sign of it. I mean they had to do new roads or tracks. Probably there was some soil erosion, but I think they patched it up after, very well that they could. I could see some of the work they did on some of the new roads. I think that was only temporary.
- KH: Did you ever see much silt or mud in the rivers?
- JH: No.

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- KH: They were mostly clear?
- JH: No, it was clear. I can't remember seeing mud in the rivers. No, I can't remember it.
- KH: Are you a fisherman?
- JH: No. But I tried it once because the Mr Georg was a very keen fisherman. He was also a very keen mountaineer. When I was working with Mr Georg - he was a great guy.
- KH: What was his Christian name?
- JH: Fritz Georg. I think he climbed Mt Matterhorn in Switzerland and the Jungfrau. He was a very keen mountaineer, you know. We had to climb a mountain always twice, sometimes more often. First we had to put the trig station in order, you know, because some of them - the pole was not vertical, they had to pull it down and level it again. After when the weather was good we had to climb up again with the <sup>instruments</sup> and do the observation. But being a very keen mountaineer he was always looking for the steepest side to go <sup>UP</sup> the mountain, you know. It was all right from him because we had to carry all the gear. He was always mentioning sometimes, rope, you know, we could use ropes. That never happened of course.
- KH: No, you wouldn't need ropes.
- JH: He was a good guy.
- KH: And he was a fisherman?
- JH: Well, he was a keen fisherman, yes, but not a very successful one. The first time I seen him fishing, when you are using horses from Currango. We were going down to Oldfields hut and from Oldfields hut we used to go up to Mt Morgan. There is a small creek, I think they call it Murray's Creek or Murray's Creek. It is very close to - it is only ..... wide, three or four feet wide in some places, but there are plenty of fish in it. Not big ones, of course, smaller ones. He tried his luck there very often. And the ..... Mr Taylor's son, Ted, from horseback he always had a fishing line in his pocket. He just got a branch from a tree, you know, put the line on it and just hang into the creek from the horseback, you know. And just one, another one, <sup>after that</sup> Mr Georg didn't want to believe this and he tried his luck.
- KH: Was there very much fishing by people on the Snowy?
- JH: Well, in our party I don't think we did very much fishing, but we were, again, not camping, most of the time, places where - there was some fishing possibly but Mr Georg was the only one who was interested in fishing, Mr Janssen was not and other ones I worked with, I can't remember they were very keen fishermen.



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- KH: Did they do other things, like go rabbit shooting?
- JH: I did a bit of shooting myself because I always carried a rifle in that time. I didn't know in that time if there was Kosciusko National Park or not. But I always carry the rifle in the jeep and I did a bit of shooting, foxes, rabbits.
- KH: Did you whistle up foxes?
- JH: I did whistle up foxes, yes.
- KH: Did you eat the rabbits?
- JH: No, never. No we were sort of afraid of this myxomatosis. It looked - you looked at those poor rabbits, you know, you just lost your taste for rabbit meat.
- KH: Did you ever go kangaroo shooting?
- JH: I did a bit of kangaroo shooting, yes, now and then.
- KH: What about snakes, snake shooting?
- JH: Snakes, yes, I shoot a couple of snakes and killed a few snakes.
- KH: That was because you came across them in your work?
- JH: Yes.
- KH: What was your last visit to the mountains, what was the last time you went?
- JH: The last time? I used to go regularly to the mountains, you know, camping. I got the two boys and the wife. We used to go camping. Many times we used to go to ..... and we used to go down to the Ravine. We used to go to Ingebyra and over the Brindabellas, they call it Broken Cart Clearing. I used to go there because there was good pig hunting there.
- KH: You went pig shooting, did you?
- JH: I did quite a bit of pig shooting, yes.
- KH: Did you eat the pigs?
- JH: No. Once I cut up but it was an old boar and the flesh was very yellow and I sort of lost taste for it. I think on one occasion a friend of mine he cut out the hind leg but it was very tough, very tough.
- KH: So you went pig shooting for the sport?
- JH: Yes, for the sport.
- KH: For the challenge. There are a lot of pigs, aren't there? Were there a lot of pigs then?
- JH: Especially now, yes, there a lot of pigs.
- KH: What was the last time you went pig shooting?
- JH: I think about three years ago.

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- KH: And did you go pig shooting years ago when you worked on the Snowy?
- JH: Occasionally, yes.
- KH: There were pigs then?
- JH: Oh pigs then. I met the pigs first time when I was with Mr Georg on the mountain ~~Junama~~ I have a picture here somewhere of the pigs, the first pig I shot really.
- KH: Mount?
- JH: At the foot of Mt Junama.
- KH: Yes.
- JH: It is a very interesting hill to climb.
- KH: I would be interested to see that photograph.
- JH: I got some colour slides with the boys because I went up again. That was about three years ago that we shot pigs at the foot of Mt Junama, and we climbed up again with the boys. They thought it was a great day. It is very difficult to go up and come down. It is very unusual. On the top you have got this huge rock, the size of half a house, just laying on top of each other, right on the peak and it would be very difficult to climb right on the top of the - - -

End Side 1, Tape 1.

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Side 2, Tape 1.

KH: Mt Junama, that is - - -

JH: Mt Junama, you go from Kiandra towards Yarrangobilly, the old Yarrangobilly village. If you pass through old Yarrangobilly village about a mile half track, that is <sup>transmission line</sup> track really. You turn off to the right and you come to the clearing. We call it Metal Hole clearing. We used to pick up stones which was really as heavy as - you could see the iron on it, you could put a magnet on <sup>to</sup> it. You used to pick <sup>up on</sup> the edge of the <sup>hole</sup>. Anyway, the transmission line track goes through this clearing towards Peak River. It goes right down to - what they call it - Goobragandra River. It is passing very close to Mt Junama.

KH: I see.

JH: You are passing about two miles from Mt Junama.

KH: And you went pig shooting there 30 years ago?

JH: I did not do exactly pig shooting but we just happened to meet the first pig over there and I shot it coming down from Mt Junama with Mr Georg. In that time we didn't realise that it was good country for pig shooting. I used to go back and three years ago I went back there with my eldest son. I have got some pictures here somewhere, he shot - he shot two and I shot one.

KH: There are a lot of pigs now, I believe.

JH: A lot of pigs, yes, and dingoes. There are wild dogs around there.

KH: You have seen them?

JH: Yes, I've seen the wild dogs. There was an old hut - she is now in ruins - they called Long Flat. There, too, we meet the stockmen. In that time that hut was in very good condition but now only the four corner posts are standing - Long Flat.

KH: Long Flat?

JH: Long Flat. We came over from Currango by horseback, by horseback passing through - where it goes to ~~Peppers~~ Hut you cut across to Pidgeon Square and from Pidgeon Square that is about a mile, a mile and a half where Long Flat starts.

KH: Not Long Plain?

JH: Long Plain.

KH: Where the Murrumbidgee starts?

JH: No, I am sorry, that is not the Murrumbidgee. The Murrumbidgee starts at the end of the plain near ~~Rules~~ Point.

KH: Yes, that is Long Plain.

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JH: Oh, you call it Long Plain. But there is another Long Plain - or Long Flat. I think they call it Long Flat.

KH: I don't know about that. And there was a hut on Long Flat?

JH: There was a hut on Long Flat and stockmen and horses and cattle grazing on Long Flat. In that time it was in very good condition. We stayed in that hut for two or three occasions.

KH: Where was Pidgeon Square?

JH: Pidgeon Square is just before Long Flat, coming - - -

KH: You leave Currango?

JH: Coming from Long Plain - if you remember - there is a transmission line hut now, presently, painted bright orange. If you are travelling from ~~Rules~~ Point towards Brindabella, at the end of Long Flat you have got a forestry part <sup>a</sup> hilly part. You climb over and the next flat section there is a very bright orange coloured transmission line hut. Well, just before that one we cross to one with the horse towards old Yarrangobilly village and you come to Pidgeon Square. And from Pidgeon Square it is only a short distance when you come to Long Flat.

KH: And from the time from your first visit to the last time, how do you think the mountains have changed the environment? Is there more tree cover now or less?

JH: I think there might be more tree cover because I remember very well the tracks, what we were following with jeep or with the horses, especially between Long Flat and Pidgeon Square. And I try to locate those tracks now and I couldn't find it any longer, I just could not find it any longer, you know, there is no trace of it at all because of the scrub, extra growth, or what, I just could not find it. I used to cut across many times from Long Flat to Mt Junama and I could not find the track any more - that was only a horse track - but there is just no sign of it.

KH: Did you go to Cooma and other local towns for a drink from time to time?

JH: We used to stop sometimes to have a drink, you know, when we had the chance, but only when we were on the road. Most of the time we had no chance to get to the <sup>beer</sup> drinking places.

KH: Did you have any parties?

JH: No parties, sir, no parties. <sup>Our</sup> Social life was really nil. Well, in the mountains it was not possible to get anywhere.

KH: Did you see any films at night time? Apparently someone from the Snowy would travel around.

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JH: Occasionally when we came into Cooma, or Cabramurra or Jindabyne, they used to have regular film shows. Yes, we have seen sometime films, but that is the only time when we were in major camps.

KH: Was there any gambling?

JH: I think there was gambling, yes, <sup>there was</sup> very heavy gambling in every camps. Some gamblers, they came from outside the Snowy area, from the cities, just to the gambling on pay days. It was definitely on.

KH: What sort of gambling was it?

JH: I think I heard - manille. I never did any gambling in my life but the manille was mentioned quite often. I don't know what sort of a game it is, really.

KH: Was there two up?

JH: I can't remember seeing any two ups but I think there must have been, also, gambling going on in the mountains. *Cards...*

KH: Some people, I suppose, lost most of their pay packet?

JH: A lot of them lost a lot of money, yes.

KH: Make it quickly and lose it quickly.

JH: That's the way it goes in gambling.

KH: Do you remember - apparently there were prostitutes who came sometimes, do you remember that?

JH: Oh yes. They come - there was a mobile unit in Tumut Pond. It was parked where the gate houses where they tunnel out, that is into the Tumut Pond Dam. It was parked very close to that one. I heard people were visiting the unit very often.

KH: It was a mobile unit?

JH: A mobile unit, yes. It was a nice van. It had been - it went on there for some reasons. I know it was, for two years, parked over the road but unoccupied.

KH: So they did a good trade, do you think?

JH: I think they must have done a good trade, yes. I have seen some girls coming up from somewhere from the cities to Cabramurra. In all the camps, I am sure, were regularly visited by these good time girls.

KH: A mobile unit sounds like a good idea.

JH: The only mobile unit that I have seen, that was at Tumut Pond.

KH: Bring your bed with you, that sounds like a good idea.

JH: Probably. It was well equipped.

KH: Did you go duck shooting at all?

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JH: No, because I don't have a shot gun really. But with a rifle - I did some duck shooting for Mr Janssen.

KH: Did you eat the ducks?

JH: He ate the ducks, yes.

KH: He ate the ducks. They are supposed to be nice.

JH: And some hare shooting, yes. The hare is very common in Europe, it is a delicacy, I would say. You do not come across hares very often, very easily, in Europe, but here there was no problem.

KH: Was there a lot of hares in the mountains?

JH: Not in the mountains, in grassy fields mainly.

KH: Were there any fights on the job in the camps?

JH: I can't remember - in our party I can't remember any fights at all. But I heard there were fights somewhere in the camps but the people I was working with, we get along pretty nicely.

KH: Because you had a lot of time with the same people, didn't you? You slept together, you worked together, you saw each other all the time, didn't you?

JH: Yes.

KH: And you had a cook as part of the team too, did you, or did you take turns at cooking?

JH: You can call a cook. I was cooking most of the time in the camps, along with Mr Georg and Mr Janssen.

KH: What about when you worked for the construction company?

JH: In that time, no. Only when we were in the survey party, that is when we were by ourselves and we had to manage our cooking ourselves. But if you were in a major camp then there was the main kitchen and no cooking then for us.

KH: Do you think there was any discrimination between nationalities on behalf of the Snowy Mountains Authority?

JH: No.

KH: Everybody was treated equal, do you think?

JH: Everybody was treated equal. I would never notice it, yes, never. And the same goes for the American contractors too. I mean they judge a person by what he was doing. If you are doing your job nationality didn't count. And the same goes, I would say, for the Snowy Mountains Authority too.

KH: But apparently there was, at times, there was quite a division between the professionals and the people who worked, like the people who worked in offices were sort of a different group to the people who got the

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dirt under their fingernails, who did the hard work in the tunnels and the field. I have heard people say there was quite a difference between the two.

JH: I don't know this. I don't know this, no.

KH: So you think the SMA looked after you?

JH: I think they did a pretty good job, yes.

KH: Did you have any possibility of making suggestions if you didn't like something or you thought that something could be improved, like the work practice. Did you have opportunities to modify things?

JH: Not in our work. <sup>At least, T<sub>A</sub> was a chairman</sup> for the surveyors, no, I could have no say in the work what we carried out. The only time - we were asked about what we think of - or we have anything to complain about was in the main camps, was the food. There you had a chance to complain and put your complaint in writing. I remember these in Eagle Hawk camp.

KH: And was the food improved afterwards?

JH: No, the food - I mean, to my taste, <sup>it</sup> was good. But still, if some people wanted to complain about something you could put it in writing and put in a complaint.

KH: Did you have your wife with you at Eagle Hawk?

JH: No.

KH: Did your wife come and live with you on the Snowy?

JH: Yes. In 1961 when I come back from Europe and I got married I started to work in Island Bend, in the tunnel from Island Bend to Eucumbene and Island Bend to Geehi tunnel.

KH: What were you doing in the tunnel, what sort of work?

JH: Surveying.

KH: I see, to make sure it was on line and - - -

JH: That's right, <sup>on</sup> line and level. And then I had my wife - but not in the camp. We were lucky, we were living in Jindabyne. I had a small place rented in Jindabyne and she stayed there. I was only 15 miles away. I was lucky. Some of the people had to go to Cooma or Nimmitabel or even further to meet their families.

KH: There were some cottages in Island Bend for families, too?

JH: Yes, but that was only for staff accommodation.

KH: I interviewed Mrs Van der Vliet, she is the wife of Dick Van der Vliet and they had a house in Island Bend.

JH: Only for the staff, office workers and then the contractors, they had their own houses, you know.

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KH: But the people who worked on the tunnel, did they stay in barracks there, or where did you stay?

JH: In barracks, yes. Single people only in barracks. You had a single room in the barracks.

KH: And your wife had a house in Jindabyne?

JH: My wife was living in Jindabyne. I could not get accommodation because I was just a low grade worker.

KH: There is a big memorial in Cooma which lists all the people who died on the scheme. I think it is about 120. Do you think it was worth it, do you think the scheme was worth it?

JH: I think, yes, yes.

KH: Did you know any of the people who died?

JH: Yes. One I remember clearly in Eucumbene tunnel there. There was a young chap - he happened to be Hungarian - and he was sitting on one of the service pipes - one was carrying water, one was carrying air and so on - and the pipe <sup>above</sup> him sagged suddenly and he was hit somewhere on the shoulder and slightly on the neck. They took him to hospital - he did not look very seriously hurt - but they took him to hospital and ultimately he had some spine injuries and he died shortly after in hospital. His name was Nemmit(?), he is in the cemetery in Cooma.

KH: That sounds like a freak accident?

JH: That was very freak.

KH: That was a real accident.

JH: Yes.

KH: That was something he couldn't have done very much about. Apparently quite a few people died or were injured in road accidents?

JH: Road accidents?

KH: Yes, running off the road, running off tracks. Is that right or do you think it was more in the tunnels?

JH: More in the tunnels I would say, oh yes. There was a blow up in <sup>Tantangara</sup> Eucumbene tunnel and I don't know how many people died, three or four.

KH: Like an accidental explosion?

JH: Yes, in the face. They blew up at the face, the tunnel face.

KH: Did the gelignite explode early or something?

JH: Well, I mean, everything was loaded up. And when they connected it up with wires. I only heard <sup>them</sup> tell, that somebody was using a torch and these set off the ~~explosives~~ a hand torch. You are not supposed to use a hand torch,

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only a miner's torch. But somebody was using a torch - this is what I heard, if it was the case or not I don't know, but the whole face blew up. There was another one at ..... Again, that was - - -

KH: Where was that?

JH: That was in the Island Bend - Eucumbene tunnel. Just when the shift was changing and people were waiting on the left side, alongside the wall, you know, well, the oncoming shift was getting off from the cars and suddenly - I was standing only 10 feet away - and suddenly the roof caved in. A big slab came down and one man was dead and two were very seriously injured.

KH: In the tunnel?

JH: In the tunnel, yes.

KH: So the tunnel was unlined there?

JH: Unlined, yes. Well, the tunnel is not lined all over. Where the rock is sound they don't line the tunnel, only put a ..... on it, you know. But if you have got a very bad rock formations, they had to put in rings(?) and wherever they got rings that had to be lined. But as the tunnel was progressing forward there is also some safety blokes with a long bar who are loosening the rocks on the roof. But it doesn't matter how safe you do it, but some rocks are still getting looser and they just come down. And in the same tunnel a young bloke, a German chap, was run down by a ~~truck~~ car. He was fixing the wires alongside - there was the lights and he stepped back - there is a lot of noise going on, he didn't hear the car coming down, and he was run down.

KH: It would be a very noisy place?

JH: It was a very noisy place.

KH: Did you wear ear protectors?

JH: No, we did not. I can't see anybody wearing <sup>ear</sup> protection while you are in the tunnel, you know. I don't know why. The place where I am working now, in the Mint, there used to be ear protection because the machinery is a bit noisy in some places. But in the tunnels, oh no. Especially when the charges go off you are only 400 or 600 feet away, or less, when the charges go up.

KH: Did you notice that you were going deaf slowly, or did it happen quickly?

JH: Well, the hearing that I lost in my ear, I lost it due to an accident, it was not the original of noisy factors.

KH: What was the accident?

JH: From Tumut Pond up to the top - they call it Kings Cross in that time.

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KH: What happened?

JH: Well, I was working with another German surveyor called Mr ..... I was his driver and before we started off he asked <sup>me</sup> "Julius, if you don't mind I would like to drive." I was sitting in the middle and on the left hand side there was sitting an Irishman or an Englishman and he was driving. Mr ..... had a very heavy set of glasses, you know, his eyesight, I don't know, must have been very weak, but very thick, very heavy set of glasses. Half way up from Tumut Pond - it is a very difficult, very steep climb - we are coming to a bend and the sun was shining and everybody knew that the road was going to the left, you know. When he came to the bend he made a sharp turn to the right. Why he did it nobody knows. All I remember the young trees, you know, ..... in front of the jeep, just going down going down and I was yelling to the bloke next to me, "Jump out, jump out" - I knew there was a steeper grade coming you know. He was hanging on to the bar in front of the instrument panel. I just remember, I opened the door and I dived out and that was it - I don't know what happened, the jeep passed over my head or a young tree hooked me out from the car, but I got the jaw broken, in this area, and I got the two joints near my ear broken and as a result one of my hearing gone.

KH: Just on one side?

JH: Just on one side, yes.

KH: And what happened to the other two?

JH: Nothing. They went about 150 feet and just before the steepest part came they managed to stop.

KH: It would have been better if you had stayed with the car?

JH: I would have been. I was really good in that time because I knew that road very well. I was travelling a hundred times up and down that place. I knew that if they come to the steep part that is it, finished. I knew I had to get out. I was panicking a bit too.

KH: Do you think it was a good idea to dam the waters in the mountains and direct the water west?

JH: I think it was a good idea. <sup>of water</sup> Australia is very short and they had to do it the best possible way they can to use it, irrigation water. If you have got too much water and <sup>instead of</sup> going into the sea, divert it to another place where they can use it for irrigation or power generation.

KH: Apparently now, 30 years later, they have had had some problems with salt in the irrigation areas because the irrigation, or the flooding all the time, has brought the soil out from underground to the surface and the land is not so productive any more.

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JH: I have read about this in the newspaper some time ago but I didn't read it is affecting, here, the Snowy Scheme. I heard the Darling River area - - -

KH: It is not affecting the Snowy, no, but further down, down the Murray. That is one of the problems of big irrigation. Do you think that the Snowy Mountain Scheme could be built today, like if somebody proposed this scheme today, do you think it would go ahead?

JH: It would, yes.

KH: You don't think there would be too much opposition from the - - -

JH: From the environment?

KH: Yes, the environment movement.

JH: I think there would be opposition today - anything you want to build, there are always people who are against it, but I think the majority would agree that it would be to the benefit of Australia. After all she doesn't have very many areas that are, you know, <sup>where</sup> hydro electric stations could be built <sup>of water shortage.</sup> just because. The alps here or in Victoria are the only places <sup>really</sup> which are <sup>best</sup> suited for this type of project.

KH: Do you think that the scheme was important in terms of a new multi national Australia, like, it was after the war, it was a big development project, it brought in many nationalities. I mean, the nation we have today, do you think it has a lot to do with the Snowy Mountains Scheme?

JH: I think it is, yes.

KH: I mean, it was a very unusual thing to have, in a foreign country, all these different nationalities, all coming to the one place, rugged country, and to do it successfully.

JH: I think it helped. People <sup>civilized</sup> were <sup>really</sup> probably, because they really drew all the different nationalities together there.

KH: Most of the people who you worked with, did they stay in Australia?

JH: I believe so, yes. I know only one, a German, who went back to Germany. That was Mr Janssen that I was working with. I don't know because those people who came out here on contract, because many were recruited overseas at the start of the Snowy Mountain Scheme, to work here on a contract basis. After the contract expired, did they go home or not, I don't know. Probably they see it is a good place to live and they could have changed their minds and stayed.

KH: I think you said you went on to New Zealand for a while?

JH: Yes.

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KH: How long did you go to New Zealand?

JH: Well, I had to sign a contract to go to New Zealand with Utah. Utah was building the ..... project. I stayed there for 18 months.

KH: You were contracted to come back to Australia?

JH: Well I had to come back to Australia because just before I went, we built our house here in Hackett and the family was living, already, in Canberra. In fact, the family was living in Canberra in '65 when I was still working on the Jindabyne/Island Bend tunnel, and when that project was completed in '67 I went to New Zealand. So I had to come back to Canberra. But anyhow I had enough of tunnels after New Zealand. That is all right for a young person, you know, and especially unmarried one, take <sup>the</sup> risk, but once you are married and family, you know, it is risky in the tunnels.

KH: People made a lot of money working in the tunnels, didn't they, I think.

JH: Yes. Well, compared to other places, yes, they definitely pay good money.

KH: I mean, it sounds as though people could have made money and brought a house fairly quickly if they saved their money?

JH: Yes. Well, I mean, many people established themselves who were working on the Snowy scheme and they have their own houses now in Sydney or Canberra just by working up in the mountains. They stick it out for a few years. If you wanted to save, that was definitely a place to save because you could stay in the camps, you had the full accommodation, very minimal expense and you can save most of your earnings, if you were the type.

KH: Did you do any self-education, did you do any courses by correspondence?

JH: I did not. But after I left the Snowy I heard that they were doing courses, for example, especially in the survey section, to bring up the chainmen to assistant surveyors level. But I did this tunnelling survey, levelling and giving lines. I knew that it was going to finish sooner or later and I have to look for a different type of work. But, again, that was only in the Snowy. In the American contractors they did not have this possibility.

KH: I interviewed Frank <sup>Erpic</sup>, he is in Narrabundah, and he did a course, he did a lot of study at night and became a surveyor and then he became staff on the Snowy. So I was just wondering how many people did that sort of thing.

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- JH: I know another one who became an inspector, concrete inspector, who was checking always with the contractors from the Snowy side.
- KH: The quality of the concrete?
- JH: Yes, the quality of the concrete and the placing of the concrete in the tunnels and also checking the quality of the concrete in the ..... plant. And also, I know a friend of mine who is a technical assistant, who used to take the Germans in the tunnel for ..... So people got the chances, I think, to progress.
- KH: What did you do when you came back to Canberra?
- JH: After I came back to Canberra I started to work in the Mint. That is where I am now. That is the end of the line for me, the end of the road. No, I wasn't interested any longer in construction jobs, especially tunnelling, especially New Zealand, that was the worst of all.
- KH: Why was that?
- JH: The water, you know. The tunnel we were working on is started at sea level and then below sea level, 120/130 feet you know. .... and the water... was pouring in at 1,000 gallons a minute, you know.
- KH: So big pumps pumping it out all the time?
- JH: Pumps, yes, all the time.
- KH: Did you have much problem with water in the Snowy?
- JH: Oh the water came there too, but it was nothing compared to tunnelling in New Zealand. Tunnelling is a dirty job, dusty, wet, muddy, just name it, you've got it.
- KH: And nobody wore any ear protectors, even the people drilling up at the face?
- JH: I think they had ear protection at the face.
- KH: You see the Snowy was very advanced in terms of seat belts, apparently everybody had to wear seat belts in their cars.
- JH: At that time there was no seat belt, not in '53, '54, '55. I can't remember ever using seat belts. There was no seat belts in the jeep.
- KH: I've heard that they were supposed to be very tough.
- JH: The seat belt regulation, that came in later on.
- KH: I see, in the '60s may be?
- JH: Probably in the '60s, yes.
- KH: Was there much concern about safety, I mean, people having a safe workplace, or did you just have to be very careful?
- JH: In the tunnels?
- KH: I suppose it is just hard work, it is just dangerous work.

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- JH: It is hard work, you know, the danger is always there, it is part of it really, especially at the face. You can't see properly, you can't hear properly, you know.
- KH: Do you think it is a good thing that the area is a national park?
- JH: Well, I don't know. Just for an example, I used to go and regularly visit some of these camping places, especially old favourite places, the Blue Water<sup>hole</sup> you know. There are some little caves over there, the Mummy's caves - in case you have not been in it, it is very nice and very easy, especially <sup>for</sup> families it is level going and it is very nice inside. But three years ago, first time when I went there, I found the gate locked. Just below the Tantalangara Dam, there is a gate, you can't go in. A year ago or two years ago my son went with a friend to camp at the the Blue Water hole. The gate was open at the Tantalangara Dam but just about two miles before you come to Pocket Hut there is a new gate on the road, you can't go any further.
- KH: But you can go around via Long Plain.
- JH: That's right, that's what they did, they went into - passing through Coolamine. But there is a gate above the camping ground at the Blue Water hole, you cannot drive down to the camping ground. They have toilet facilities over there and it is a nice ideal beautiful spot to camp there. But you can't drive there any longer, you know. I read somewhere they want to give the area a chance to recuperate because the roads are damaged by the cars and so on. But I can't afford to go in there because I can't walk 15 or 20 miles. If you can't drive to the camping spot, how can you take your gear down to the camping spot and all the camping equipment and leave your car 2,000 metres further up. I think the money they are spending on these gates, you know, they should improve the road a bit so that people don't get bogged and they should charge a fee for persons using those camping grounds. But people are getting blocked out, they save it for future generation. What about me, I want to go now. You have no access if you want to go to Pockets Hut, for example, or Oldfields Hut because you have to carry your camping gear three or four miles.
- KH: You can still go to Lobbs Hole and camp along the river there, that is nice.
- JH: You can go there through the Ravine, yes. That is where we go now. We used to go down to the Ravine and camp over there. No, I think they should manage it a bit differently you know, give more chance for people, especially the young ones, to go and see it and enjoy the camping in <sup>the</sup> Snowy, but instead they are shutting people out.

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KH: Do you think that the Snowy still plays a bit part in your life, I mean, do you still think about it a fair bit?

JH: Oh, a lot, yes. That is where I am going, nearly every year, back there and camp.

KH: So it was rather wonderful that you got a job on it.

JH: Yes. I used to say to the family when I go to Tumut Pond Dam, for example - I come through a couple of weeks ago, Tumut Pond Dam. I used to always tell my son, "Look, mate, I took more concrete into this dam than anybody else, on these big <sup>Utah</sup> trucks." I used to point out to him the places when I came through from Victoria to Toolong River, to the present Tooma Dam, there is always a small clearing along the road. I always remember that one. We came there one night with Mr Georg and it was raining like hell and an old tent, with some holes here and there, and we are always shifting the ~~old stretches~~ so we don't get wet. In the morning we were all soaked right through. I always remember the clearing, you know.

KH: That was near Tooma Dam?

JH: It was about three or four miles <sup>further</sup> back from Tooma Dam, on the Corryong side.

KH: That is Walsley Gap, isn't it? Or Clover Flat?

JH: No, that is what they call Yellow Bog Creek. We use that small clearing there to climb up to Mt Dargal. I remember I got wet there, really.

KH: What was your best experience in the mountains? I am going to ask you what your best one was and your worse one.

JH: My best experience? The best really, was it was outdoor type work and I am an outdoor type fellow and I really enjoyed that type of work, climbing of the mountains and going to places where, probably, nobody had been before.

KH: What was the worse experience?

JH: Apart from the accident I had, the lonely weekends which we spent in the camp, in the flying camps I mean, when we came there, time was just killing you.

KH: On the weekends when you didn't have any work?

JH: That's right, yes. Many times the surveyors went home to their families and we stayed in the camp over the weekend, two or three days.

KH: Did you play cards?

JH: Oh no, I never played cards.

KH: Did you read?

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JH: I go a bit of shooting. I had my rifle there and that was the only entertainment I could have.

KH: So it would have been better if you could have worked seven days a week, I suppose?

JH: It would have been better, yes. Sometimes we did, two weeks non stop, staying in the workplace and we went with the surveyor back to the main camp, Jindabyne or Cooma and spend the weekend over there.

KH: That is just about all the questions I have got, that is good.

JH: We had some funny situations, in case you wanted me to mention them, you know. We were camping at ~~Marragle~~ - I don't know whether it was new ~~Marragle~~ or old ~~Marragle~~... now, you know. It is past Tumbarumba, Tumbarumba and Tooma on the left hand side. We set up a camp when we arrived there in the evening. <sup>had been bought in Tumbarumba</sup> All the supplies. The next day we were climbing up to Mt .... and we were spending the whole day clearing - putting the trig station in order and made some clearings so you could see the trig station. And we were dead tired. On the way back to the camp there were eight or ten dogs around the camp eating up all the supplies, all the bread, all the milk, all the butter, only the paper we found there at the camp, all the dogs finished it off. We had to go to the farmer for a bit of milk, a bit of bread and butter and the next day we had to go back to Tumbarumba to get new supplies.

KH: You didn't catch the dogs?

JH: Well, it was the farmer's dogs, what could we do. We went once down - from ~~Cabrumba~~, I think, with Mr Leopard - down towards the main trig station. At that time the road, of course, was not like <sup>what</sup> it is today, a very boggy situation. It was raining on the way when we came up and there was a very boggy section on the road, a steeper climb, and we just could not come up. We had the winch on the jeep <sup>big 3 - 3 1/2 feet in diameter dead tree -</sup> and there was a log lying on that side of the hill and we said, "All right, we'll tie the rope against the log and just winch ourselves through this bad section" and we did it. As the rope got tight the big tree started to slide across the road and Mr Leopard was in the jeep. He jumped <sup>out</sup> straight away because it looks that the tree take all the jeep and everything down to the ~~road side~~ on the steep slope. Luckily it just stopped right in the middle of the road and it was no where. We had to go back to camp, get a big cross cut saw and just saw all the way through the big log. Another time we were camping at Windy Creek, it was a beautiful place.

KH: Up on the tops?

JH: We climbed up from - we were travelling from ~~Murray~~ power station with the landrover up the track as far as we could and then we left the jeep



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there, then on foot over the mountains down to Windy Creek. It took about two hours to go there. We set up camp over there, alongside Windy Creek - a beautiful place, it really is a beautiful place then. We were four in the party and two had to stay back for some reason and follow us the following day. One was a Hungarian..... and another one was a Yugoslav bloke, and we ask them, "Are you sure of which way to come, you don't<sup>get</sup> lost." They said, "Look mate, I was a ~~Partisan~~ I never get lost." Mr McCabe was the surveyor. We stayed out over night and the following day we are waiting for these two, they did not turn up. We were waiting there and it was getting dark, they did not come. I started to shoot in the air, make a big fire, just to help them in case they got lost. They did not come till the next day, they got lost. The ~~Partisan~~ lost his way and he went down somewhere near White River and that is where they spent the night.

KH: So they didn't come over the Rolling Grounds, didn't come over the tops. Did you use Whites River Hut?

JH: No, we did not go right into Whites River. Yes, we come to the top of the ridge and you can look down to Whites River really and then on<sup>our</sup> feet we had to walk to the left and climb up over the ridge and come down to Windy Creek.

KH: There was a hut built there later.

JH: At Windy Creek?

KH: Yes, the Snowy built a little hut there, they made a <sup>little</sup> gauging station. I think on the creek they had a little gauging station and they built a little hut.

JH: There was nothing there in that time.

KH: Did you ever see any deer, in any parts of the mountains?

JH: Deer, never. I think they deer, I heard, they are<sup>further down</sup> in the Jacobs Corner somewhere.

KH: What about wild horses?

JH: Wild horses, yes. I have seen the most beautiful horses you could see. That was near Jacobs River. We were going up to Connors Hill and right on top of the range we have seen a beautiful white one, gelding - a light brown type, you know.

End Side 2, Tape 1.

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Tape 2, Side 1.

JH: I meet a bunch of horse\$ wild horse, brumbies, over there.

KH: Where was that?

JH: Long Flat, or Long Plain, just very close to Ingebyra? I met horses always - I think they were<sup>always</sup> the same group. They were on Broken Cart clearing - do you know where Broken Cart clearing is?

KH: Yes.

JH: Around there. Rocky Plain, Dubbo Flat and I think they were always the same group of horses. Nearly every time we went there we meet these wild brumbies.

KH: Did you ever try<sup>any</sup> gold panning?

JH: No.

KH: Did anyone ever look for gold?

JH: I never trusted my luck. I think Mr Georg tried it once, probably. I am not sure if he was the one, or Mr Janssen, but they tried gold panning.

KH: Did anybody find any gold, did you ever hear of any stories?

JH: I never heard anybody found any gold.

KH: We might have a look at the photographs.

[Looking at photographs - not transcribed]

JH: I was worried you might come here for nothing.

KH: This is a bit like gold mining, my work, you never know what you are going to come up with, you never know. So far I haven't got very many photographs from people - - -

JH: I really don't know if you would be interested in this kind of pictures because for me, okay, it is a personal ..... to me but I said .....

KH: Well, I am interested in this case because that was part of your recreation, to go shooting. I think there is a greater tradition of going shooting on the continent than there is here. A lot of people I know, like my father's generation - not my father - but other people, they came to Australia and they went shooting, or they went fishing, or whatever, they just did it. So I am very interested in what the people who worked on the Snowy did in their free time.

JH: My<sup>main</sup> recreation activities were shooting, hunting. I was very keen on hunting.

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KH: I mean people don't go shooting so much any more, I don't think.

JH: Well, now it is restricted because you are not supposed to carry firearms into the park and - where the best pig hunting areas are, you know, it is out of bounds, you are not supposed to go in there. But I still go because I am certain that shooting pigs is the very debate on what they are talking about, poisoning, <sup>dropping baits from aircraft.</sup> Okay, they are killing the pigs, and at the same time they are also killing something which should not be killed.

KH: Yes, exactly, 10/80 poisoning, I think, is very bad like that. They talk about trapping, I think, on the Brindabellas they have tried to trap them too.

JH: I have seen one trap with one pig in it. It was very close to Nine Mile diggings. Before you get to Nine Mile diggings there is a long plain - what digging is that one there, that is the Six Mile digging or Three Mile digging, or what?

KH: Four Mile digging.

JH: In the middle of that plain there is a cage and there was a dead pig in it. That is the only trap I have seen.

KH: And this photo here is inside - - -

JH: That is inside Murray's cave. Have you been in that cave before?

KH: No. I've heard of people who go in there.

JH: Next time you go you <sup>should</sup> visit it, that is the nicest cave, it is a very easy one. And the interesting part of it is when you come to the end of the cave there is a little water-filled hole and - they did not know it for a long time - probably you know this - but somebody went underneath and come up on the other side and the cave continues further on. But it was 65 years before this person - I think he was called Murray - he was the one who discovered the cave. And for 65 years they didn't know that he was in there already.

KH: Someone wrote I think.

JH: Yes, <sup>someone</sup> wrote, they found the markings on - - -

KH: I think in the last drought, or back in '68, '69, that tunnel was dry and you could walk right through again.

JH: You always had to go down, I mean, you can't stand up. You had to go right down, you know, and probably have to crouch underneath these narrow openings and come up on the other side and you are back to - - -

KH: But every 10 or 15 years when there is a drought you can crawl through, I believe.

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JH: Well, when I visited the place, there was only one occasion that I had to go there in that creek, it was always dry, it was always dry. You know when you come up higher up on the plateau when you are coming in from Pockets Hut and before you start to go down to the <sup>Blue</sup> Waterhole, start <sup>to</sup> descend on the top plateau there are creeks, you know, and they just disappear. Now, my sons last time went to there and they found <sup>the</sup>, because I told them, those creeks they had to go somewhere, they don't come down in the valley, you know. They found where they disappeared into the ground. Well, that area, underground, is full of caves, full of caves.

KH: Yes, that is right.

[Discussing photographs - not transcribed]

End Side 1, Tape 2.

Conclusion of Interview