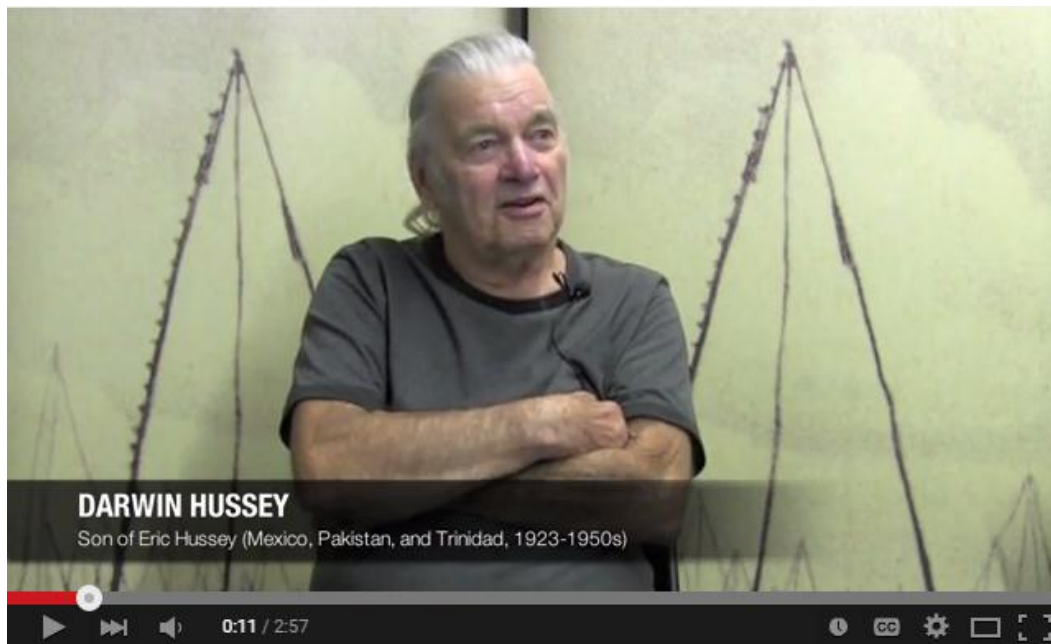


Interview with Darwin Hussey - On Work in the International Oil Fields

Title Text: International Drillers
Oral History Interviews
Oil Museum of Canada, 2014

Text: Working in the International Oil Fields



Text: Darwin Hussey
Son of Eric Hussey (Mexico, Pakistan, and Trinidad, 1923-1950s)

[Darwin sits in front of a background with three-pole derricks on it.]

Darwin: Grandpa was told that he was too slight a man to go down to the oil fields to the south, but he said—used to say, “I showed them.” He was a very slight man, but he knew his job well so he used to get into arguments with Texas drillers and grandpa would tell them, “You’re pulling the casing the wrong way.” “And so why don’t you, W.J., you Bill, show us how to pull that casing?” And so Grandpa would give away his secrets and pull the casing for them. And then he says, “Your father, Eric, he was 17 years old, and when he first came down there with me he had trouble drilling. But when he left there and we went down to Mexico, he could out-drill the American drillers.” He had become that good a driller.

He said that it was—the depression was on, he says, “When I first went to work, I had a full crew of Oklahoma and Texas drillers that had come from the dust bowl and the oil fields in Texas, had come to Long Beach, and they didn’t like a slight, white Canadian driller from India being the driller.” And I had—he said, “I used to have a heck of a time with them, Darwin.” But he said, “Do you know what I did?” He said, “I kept—“ Just for

an example he said, "I would say to the derrick man, 'How do you want me to send them blocks up to you?', to the derrick man, 80-feet up in the air working. He says, 'Send them up any way you want, I'll never miss one.'" Anyway, you know, boasting. And they were very, you know, so, he said, "You know how I over came?" He says, "I kept inviting them, different ones of them home to have a meal with your mother and you and that's how I won them over." He says, "Pretty soon, we were all one big happy family."

Like anything else, but maybe more so in the oil fields, is the competition. There's always some other driller that can out-drill you, and that had more skill than you and could out-drill you. So that would go on the report that went back to England every morning. "This here so-and-so driller only—is out-drilling these other two. What's the matter with this guy, this third driller, he's not—" You know? There's a little bit of competition there and so that comes into the picture. And then the weather, every day is the same, Gary, every day is the same. Like, the sun shines every day, even in the rainy season. When it rains, a half hour later the rain's gone and the sun's out again. And it dries out just like that, condenses.