Abstract – CYRIL FIRTH

Recorded: 27th November, 2001
Interviewer: Patsy Hulse
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24 DATE and PLACE of BIRTH. Primary education – Epsom 1909-12.


112 FATHER encouraged education, although a tradesman involved in construction work.

215 SEDDON TECH a great school. Headmaster George George.

238 TERTIARY EDUCATION - UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND. Building conditions a shock after Seddon Tech’s new buildings.

267 SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING building is an old tin shed alongside the Old Choral Hall.

294 Knew more than the lecturers and given EXEMPTION from the first two years of the BSc degree. Worked part-time for Arthur Gray.

321 Rivalry with FRANK TURNER, an old friend re-met in the old tin shed, 1921.

363 Changed to MSc in GEOLOGY. Professor Bartrum was HOD, Geology and excellent. Graduated 1929.

386 First two WOMEN STUDENTS in Geology, early 1920s. Chaperoned on field trips by Mrs Bartrum.

406 SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING moved to ARDMORE. Cyril lectured in engineering geology while working with MANAKAU COUNTY on the HUNU Aqua water supply.

54 Army buildings at ARDMORE.

464 Students had been through WWII and very keen and motivated.

476 ENGINEERING GEOLOGY lectures in the evening – not a popular time.

END OF SIDE 1
CYRIL FIRTH

06 Worked for AUCKLAND CITY COUNCIL on the HUNUA water catchment, 1943.

44 WATER SHORTAGE in AUCKLAND with American War troops. Auckland nearly ran out of water.

077 U.S. troops liberally used water to wash their trucks.

93 Cyril appointed to look at water situation. His DISCHARGE from New Zealand Royal New Engineers facilitated.

143 Worked at the Ardmore filter station. Titirangi treatment works very good.

155 Designed LOWER NIHOTAPU DAM. His geological experience essential.

190 Worked with ARTHUR MEAD, City waterworks engineer.

200 LOWER NIHOTAPU DAM built – the first major rolled-fill dam in New Zealand.

55 ASSISTANT WATERWORKS ENGINEER under Arthur Mead. Acquainted with Stephenson brothers (contractors). Was trained to use new machinery on the dam project.

300 IN CHARGE of all new dam work in South Auckland, late 1940’s.

306 WAIKATO PIPELINE part of Mead’s long term programme.

321 Concentrated on catching up on MEAD’ Programme - twenty years behind.

331 MEAD BRILLIANT – though not easy to work for.

348 Became CHIEF ENGINEER, Auckland City Council. Involved in site planning for Hunua’s dams. Mead had acquired much land- certainly adequate to fulfil his plan.

371 COSSEY’S CREEK DAM – major project.
388 Appointed ARA DIRECTOR OF WORKS, 1966

388 Much practical training of staff needed in the field, although sufficient designers in the city offices.

428 Worked with cousin RAYMOND FIRTH on setting up Geology displays at the AUCKLAND MUSEUM.

464 Collected dead birds from Muriwai for study by Bob Falla, zoologist.

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