

Abstract –CYRIL FIRTH

Recorded: 27th November, 2001

Interviewer: Patsy Hulse

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Side 1 of 3

- 24 DATE and PLACE of BIRTH. Primary education – Epsom 1909-12.
- 42 School Days – MANGAWHAU, 1913-16 and SEDDON TECH, 1917-20.
- 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 HUNUA 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

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Side 2 of 3

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 BRILLANT – 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.

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Side 2 of 3 (cont'd)

CYRIL FIRTH

- 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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