



Two Generations at Fraser Mills – Interview with David Lyle

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My dad, Walter Lyle, worked at Fraser Mills for close to 50 years. He was the Chief Executive Officer there. Originally from Scotland, he fought for the Royal Westminister Regiment in World War Two in both Italy and Holland. You can actually see him in that famous photograph and now statue, "Wait for Me, Daddy" taken by Claude P. Dettloff. After the war, he married a Dutch girl, and they lived in New Westminister together.

Dad got a job at the Fraser Mills, and through his work there he was able to save enough money to sponsor and bring my mom's whole Dutch family over to live in Canada.

I worked at the mills too from when I was about 16 to 19 years old, and I made about \$13.07 an hour, which was a lot back then. My main job was cleaning the sawmill and plywood mills. I cleared them with a rake, broom and

shovel. Manual labour was what gave so many men work. In the time I was there, because of automation and computerization, I saw the mill staff go from about 200 people down to 20. Many of the men who worked there, like my dad, were lifers; they had held that one job all of their lives.

When I worked there, my favourite job was “clockwatch”. This was before security cameras and the internet. I would walk around with a Westex made of steel that was kept in a leather pouch and patrol the mills from 11:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. There were stations that I would stop at. Each station had a key. I would click the key in the clock and it would punch out the time that I was at that particular station. I loved that shift, because I could watch the wildlife – see the birds and the eagles – and watch the sunrise over the Fraser River.

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