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Tape 50

Dr. Giovando being interviewed by Myrtle Bergren

transcribed by Irene Suessenwein

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Tape 50  
Begins  
SIDE A

→ This is Myrtle Bergren interviewing Dr. Larry Giovando on July 3th, 1979 for the Coal Tyee New Horizons Project.

MB: Dr. Giovando, could you tell me how your father arrived here in Canada?

LG: Yes, my dad came out in 1898 and he landed in Halifax, and he told me his experiences of coming across Canada, not being able to speak English and the only food they could get at the station was milk and bread because they couldn't ask for anything else. So they practically lived on that and they came by colonist cars, which people today don't realize they were just a car with a heater in it and you slept right on the wood. And then he arrived in Vancouver, and then he obtained ~~va~~ a job working in the sewer line, because that was the only thing he could do as he couldn't speak English, and he told me a many a times the fights they had because <sup>they</sup> would call him Dago or Waps. But he said he finally got by and then his sister asked him to go to Cumberland to work in the mines, so he went up there and it was 1899, I believe, there was a big explosion there. Several were killed, and he was in the mine, and then he worked for a while later there and when he became accustomed to the English language he was given so many Chinese to look after. That was a way things were run in those days. You'd get Chinese to work for you and they paid you a little money for <sup>their</sup> your job or percentage. And then around 1900, he went to Ladysmith. His sister had bought a hotel, called the Pretoria, and he went to Ladysmith and worked there for his sister, Mrs. and then in 1900... roughly early 1904, it had to be early because I was born in 1905, he married my mother, who run away from the convent

in Duncan. And at that time, my grandmother run the Europe Hotel wich is in the center of town and has a new name how and my grandmother was a staunch Catholic and never had any use for my dad for taking her daughter away. (chuckle) And then a few years later, he bought a hotel called the Extension Hotel which later was rebuilt. The Extension Hotel was moved from Extension, it was a wooden hotel and then it was rebuilt and now called the Bayview at the end of Ladysmith, just going out of the city limits towards the shopping center. And he run that up to about 1900, oh, for several years, he run that hotel, and then eventuall, he closed it and when my grandmother died, the Europe hotel went to my mother and so my dad run it,

MB: Humhum.

LG: And my dad was in the hotel business right up to the time he died in '42. As a matter of fact, he had two hotels then, the Bayview and the Europe and he also later on became a member of the city council. He couldn't speak English very well but he was a <sup>estate</sup> business man and they had him in and he had... first time he got defeated but after that he was elected and he was there for years. But he was the minister of finance for the city til they cleared all their bonds and he had that position when he died.

MB: Humhum. Could you describe the hotel when he first had it?

LG: Well, the first one was a wooden one .. Extension, and it had rooms and it didn't have facilities like modern hotels. You didn't have a bathroom..., ah, hot and cold water in each room, and just bathrooms on each floor. And then on the modern one that he built they had hot and cold water in every room and several baths and it was a brick building with steam heat. Ya.

MB: What about the drinking facilities?

LG: It was an open bar, really. The bar was the lenght of half the building, and it had a huge oak bar with a big glass mirror behind it



It was really a beautiful set-up. And then the beer taps in the middle of the bar and behind the bar was the liquor bottles.

MB: Well, that would be beautiful. No women allowed, I guess.

LG: No, it was mostly men.

MB: In those days.

t Ya.

W: Was there a rail at the foot.

LG: Ya, we had a rail, and you spit in it (laughter), they had a rail and then though, you just spit in it. Most of the people stood up to drink. They did have tables and they had a little pool hall in the next room. But most, the majority of the people just stood up <sup>at</sup> in the bar.

MB: Oh, they wouldn't stay that long then?

LG: Oh, they stayed long (laughter).

MB: Oh, I've seen pictures of these beautiful...

L: No, they stayed a long time. But then, that was where they had their fun at the bar and spitting on the floor.

MB: Did they play cards?

LG: Oh, in the other room, yes.

MB: Oh, I see.

LG: They never played in the bar itself, really. They had another room where they had a pool table and tables for cards.

MB: And could they order when they were playing cards?

LG: Oh, yes.

MB: Some waiter would bring a ...

LG: Ya.

MB: I see, oh, yes. And where did you live in Ladysmith?

LG: We lived in the Victoria Hotel for quite a few years in the back of the hotel, we had an apartment, and we lived in that.

MB: Can you describe Ladysmith as you remember it?

LG: Well, as I said, there were lots of hotels in Ladysmith. Right in our area, there were about five. There was the Portland, the Columbus, the Pretoria and just above was the New Western which is now the Sportsman

the Temperance is where the doctor's office is, and then up the street was my grandmother's hotel and then the Traveller's and then the Cecil and on the bottom street was the Abbordsford which is Comox Logging place now and the Baby<sup>road</sup> hotel or Frank and the Bayview or Extension which was my dad's hotel. And then on the hill there was about five other hotels, the King, Palace, and Pilot Hotel.

MB: My Godness. And who lived in all of these hotels?

LG: It was mostly miners and people that worked at the mill or smelter. The smelter was <sup>running</sup> then taking the ore from Mount Sicker(?). They had several mines at Mount Sicker. If you look back in history they shipped their coal, ah, their copper to Ladysmith.

MB: Yes. And the town itself, what were the streets like?

LG: Well, where we lived there were high side walks, about six feet high, as there was a swamp on the other side and stumps, and the road was just not too great of a road, dirt and as I say in our area was mostly swamp and stumps...

MB: Would the swamp be on the lower side?

LG: Lower side.

MB: Oh, yes. I can imagine it. Ya. And the six foot high side walks...

LG: Went right from practically the Columbus Hotel up to the Sportsman, right to the bottom of the hill there.

MB: Why would they be six feet high?

LG: Well, on account of the water and... the depth there.

MB: Oh, ya. The water...

L: The buildings were built up, really, compared,

MB: For the ah, rain,

LG: Rain and water comin' down the hills..

MB: Yes. That was quite a hilly place. So, the stumps would be climbing up the hill, then, I guess..

LG: Well, no,, they logged, I guess, and just left there.

MB: Oh, I see.

LG: In the old days. And then when Ladysmith became incorporated, I think



it was 1905, I think, it was. I'm not sure now, but became a city and then they started working on these places.

MB: Oh, yes. And how about houses, private homes. Were there many?

LG: There was quite a few, but they weren't really well built, they were *shiplath* and then paper and cloth, you know, and then they were papered inside. They weren't too well built.

MB: This would be miners...?

LG: Miners' homes, ya. The only few good homes in Ladysmith at that time were up the hill which is still there, where Dr. Bouchere lived. They were built for bank managers and the doctors' building. But the majority of the houses weren't of much value.

MB: No.

LG: Because I can tell you in the depression time, my dad bought ten for about a hundred and fifty or two-hundred dollars each. So, you can see the value.

MB: Ya. Well, what about, did you live near the funeral parlour?

LG: Ya. We were next door.

MB: And what do you remember about the funerals if you saw them?

LG: Well, they used to go in buggies or winter time sleigh and the was a, oh,.. made out of glass, beautiful type of thing and it was *hearse* hauled by two horses and they also had a stable there because my dad would take us to South Wellington or Nanaimo and we would hire a buggy and pony or either a sleigh and a pony.

MB: Yes.

LG: And that's how you travelled in those days.

MB: You didn't have much snow though?

LG: We had a fair amount of snow at times.

MB: Oh, did you.

LG: At one time, we had seven feet, the school caved in. (chuckle)  
So...

MB: Well, that would be unusual.

LG: Ya, it was. But it did happen. We had a fair amount of snow.

MB: How did they remove it. Or did they?

LG: No, they didn't remove it.. You did your own.

MB: ... or anything like that. On the track?

LG: Oh, on the track the trains would do that. But the road, I don't think, they had much.

MB: Oh, ya. And what about the fire engines? Did you?

LG: Well, they just had the ones you hauled at first, and then they became the hores and then the motor. They just had a volunteer fire department for years.

MB: The kind you hauled at first?

LG: Yes.

MB: What do you mean?

LG: Well, they just pulled 'em, you know.

MB: Well. How many men I wonder...

LG: They had four to eight men probably in the fire department.

MB: Mmm.

LG: And then with the motorization coming in... they still have voluntary fire men, for years, and then they organized into a fire department.

MB: When those men.... *pulled it* I suppose they had to get their as fast as possible? Did they run?

LG: They ring the bell. Somebody would. And they would get up there as soon as they can.

MB: And with the horses? How did it go?

LG: The same way. They would have to go up there, and somebody give them

MB: Somebody would be galloping, I guess..

LG: Ya.

MB: How many teams would be...

LG: I think, we only had the one team.

MB: Oh, ya.

LG: And you know, the fire hall is still there in practically the same place on top of the hill on High Street.

MB: Yes.

LG: It's right on top of the hill.

MB: So, did you, do you remember Chinatown?

LG: Yes, we had a Chinatown next to our hotel at the Bayview which the daughter of one of them headmen, Mary Lee, I think we talked about... I think, Mary Lee's father run it and there was one down by the mill and there was another one next to the home what we own now on Esplanade. My sister lives there and she owns the home, and then there was another one down by where the shopping centre is today for little mill (?) that was down there.

MB: Humhum.

LG: There was a Hindu mill down there.

MB: Was there?

LG: Humhum.

MB: That is the first I've heard of any East Indians being...

LG: Ya. They used to stay at our hotel, some of the bosses,

MB: They never worked in the mines, though, eh?

LG: No.

MB: I wonder why. Do you know?

LG: I don't know.

MB: Just the Chinese?

LG: Ya. And sometimes the Hindus had time getting work (?). A lot of people didn't want them because....

MB: And did you say that... where did they live... they lived with the...?

LG: The East Indians?

MB: Ya.

LG: They had their own places around there.

MB: Oh, ya.

LG: That were just the bosses that worked there. Mostly they had Chinese help to.

MB: I see. Hmmm. That's interesting.

MB: Now, why did they have the three Chinatowns?



LG: Well, I think one was associated with the sawmill and where Crown Zellerbach is on the waterfront? There was a big shindle mill down there, And they also had a dry kill. As you know, you buy your lumber all dried and season and they had a big shindle mill there and then some worked on the rail road for the company Extension. See, their engines were left right there where Crown Zellerbach is now. That was the round house for the trains, because the miners left there in the morning to go to work, and then I think, some worked down at the smelter as well.

MB: Humhum. Did they associate with one another?

LG: No, they seemed to be separate and go their own way.

MB: You know why?

LG: No. I always thought, it was maybe their tonge. You know, they are not religious type, but their tonges are different.

MB: I see.

LG: Ya. And...

MB: That's right. Do they have a religious, do you think, the Chinese?

LG: I wouldn't know.

MB: No. That is really something I've never thought about before. And what about ... and you went to Chinatown sometimes? Yourself?

LG: Oh, ya. We used to go down there on Halloween especially. (laughter)

We put wet sacks down the chimney. (laughter)

MB: Oh, boy.

LG: And the Chinese would come running out crying...

MB: Oh, God. I guess, it wasn't very hard to climb up there.

LG: No, not in those days.

MB: Small places....

LG: houses which were just outside. (laughter)

MB: Well, and did you go inside at times. Did you ever...

LG: Oh, there wasn't much in there. They didn't have a great deal, really, They cooked their meals and stayed there and ... but they weren't ... you know, nothing moderate...

MB: Humhum.

LG: Of course, neither did the white people have much moderate stuff at that time.

MB: No, no. Well, were the Chinese houses all attached to one another? Was it that sort of?

LG: More or less, yes.

MB: So, if there happened to be a fire, everything would go, Ya.

LG: Everything goes.

MB: Did you ever get Chinese food?

LG: Well, we had a Chinese cook at the hotel all our life, so... we would get it home.

MB: What about this fast food service story?

LG: That's in Nanaimo. (laughter) We are getting back to Nanaimo.

MB: Oh. I didn' realize that. That was Chinatown Ladysmith.

LG: That was Chinatown Ladysmith.

Ya. We always had a Chinese cook as a rule in the hotel. One or two.

MB: Oh, ya. Where did they learn to cook?

LG: I guess from the old country when they came out here.

MB: Aha. So, they could cook Canadian style and Chinese style.

And as you grew up, what can you remember about the school in Ladysmith?

LG: School was very well organized, and I had good teachers.

MB: Aha.

LG: Like in our first school, we had Miss Hill and Miss Glenn which taught for years and years. And Miss, <sup>Hill</sup> and Miss Glenn, I think, are still living. And then when we got into senior grades, they changed the system now. senior matric and that, when we got up further, then we had Mrs. Robinson who is staff sergeant.... I can't think of his name now. And I told you the other day ... Russel, Inspector Russell, his wife, she was a Robinson girl and she was a real character. You never played around in your class room with her. She had a long cane and she just rubbed you on your knuckles and kept you in line. And then

rapped



we had another one, Mrs. Mc \_\_\_\_\_ was the principal of the school.

MB: Oh.

LG: And she could pick a six foot \_\_\_\_\_ of. She would just come around and lift you out of the chair and give you a \_\_\_\_\_ and she took everybody in control. Nobody ever talked back to her.

MB: So, they were women then?

LG: Ya. Mostly all women til we got to highschool. And then we had a principal there, Mr. Hudson, who was kind of lax.

We could do what we wanted and sneak away and get away with murder.

MB: Who was some of the boys that you went to school with?

LG: Oh, there is Dr. Bickle, Dr. Brian, and Dr. Husherra Parker Williams and became Justice of the Peace and \_\_\_\_\_ and became one of the headman in the bank in California, Parker, which became a major in the American army and Dr. Jack Bickle. I don't know if I mentioned George Brian, he was a dentist. Everyone in our class practically made something out of themselves.

MB:G \_\_\_\_\_ ?

LG:G \_\_\_\_\_ were in our class. And he became head of the liquor ... store, you know.

MB: That is really outstanding for a small town like Ladysmith.

LG: Ya. They practically all, like John, became head of the liquor... store.

MB: Ya.

LG: And ... Stafford became inspector of schools, I would <sup>say</sup> see out of the whole eighteen, ever.. somebody went somewhere.

MB: Yes. Well the Guerle \_\_\_\_\_ boys too, I was told, one of them is the head of the ... oh, some finance department...

LG: The Royal Bank.

MB: Yes.

LG: Ya. That;s right.

MB: So, they would be in your age...

LG: Ya, they were all , you know, the first and three years of school together.



MB: Humhum.

LG: We were all together.

MB: Ya. What would you say the population of Ladysmith was?

LG: About 2,500, then. Then it dropped down to about a thousand during... when they closed.. you know, <sup>the mine</sup> during the depression.

MB: Yes. Well, first of all, before we go any further, do you remember the riots and the strike in 1912? You would be seven, maybe.

LG: Yes. I remember them quite well. Because in ... we had a lot of people in our hotel. We had about fifty living there. But during the strike there was a lot of trouble. They burned houses in Extension and, of course, a lot of them were Italians and some came to our hotel at Ladysmith and we were living in the Pretoria then, and when the union man found them, they just beat them up. It was.. blood was flying. It was terrible. It was really cruel and there was wives with them, everybody. And of course, my father had nothing to do with the strike. He was the hotel keeper, but he was... knew them and they come from the same area and so he let them stay but they didn't stay because they were thrown out and beaten up. I tell you, it was terrible to see the beatings, you know. And then they... I used to hear a rumour from the men in the bar. Then they brought in... closed the bars. When things got too much rioting and things got unruly. They brought in a law to stop the liquor. And they brought in the prohibition at about the same time. And all the liquor was sealed. But it was mostly <sup>on account</sup> of <sup>the</sup> strike and I used to hear the men talk and then they were talking about blowing up places and so then they brought in marshal law and at that time, so Arthur Curry who became the chancellor and Mc Gill. He was the lieutenant in charge of the seventy-two Irish fusileers, and their haead quarters is where the Native Sons' hall is, and they used to parade around and try to keep order.

MB: Humhum.

LG: And it was... used to be fights all the time, really terrible, rock throwing and...

MB: Ya.

LG: So, then, as I say, at one time the ambulance was going up the hill and they tried to <sup>throw</sup> flow it over and... you know .. 33  
 was screaming . But it was terrible. Then of course, all of a sudden, they rounded up the whole bunch, I forget how many hundred and they were all shipped over to Ocalla

MB: Humhum.

LG: And, like I say, so after, eh, lieutenant Curry used to go up in front of my grandmother's hotel with his troops and finally she told him to get the hell out of there because it was spoiling her business. And the funny part of it is, I'm talking about, before I graduated, this is not in this, but I had a letter to go and see Sir Arthur Curry and you don't go and see the chancellor of university unless you have been inserious trouble, so I went around to his secretary, and I asked, what had I done, you know, that I had to see Sir Arthur Curry, and she said, "oh, nothing to worry about." So, I was really upset because I thought I had maybe done something. So then I went to see him and he said, "I know your father," and he said, "a friend of mine who is a <sup>good</sup> friend of your dad asked me to have you here and if you needed any help to come and see me." But he said, ' I've never forgotten your grandmother. (chuckle)

So, he told me the story. She used to sit in the hotel window, typically Italian, black shawl, black... everything black and she  
 her hotel.

MB: I would have like to hear what she said (chuckle)

LG: I would to: (chuckle)

MB: How she said it.

LG: But she was typical Italian. She had the black shawl, but she was not gonna have lieutenat Curry having the soldiers walking in front of her hotel every day.

MB: Well, how large a family did you have. Do you know how many relations you might have had at that time in Canada?

LG: Oh, not too many. Our family was large. There was four girls and



three boys. And the Vancouver family only had one, California family had two, another Vancouver family only had three.

MB: And these were more or less related.

LG: All first relatives, ya.

MB: Ya. Well. I'd like more about the Italian role. But I would have to ask to afterwards because I know it's interesting.

This was your impression of the 1912... businiess.

LG: Ya.

MB: What about afterwards?

LG: Well, the strike ended, you know the strike was '12 to '14, and then of course when they did open the mine in 1914, a lot of them couldn't get jobs and then the war was on. So, I would say the majority of the young people went to the army. And the reason I know, because my dad, we had a lot of boarders there, and when he died, I still had 60,000 dollars on the books from people that lived there in the strike and hadn't paid.

MB: Well.

LG: Because a lot of them had been killed, a lot of them...

MB: Ya.

LG:.. had got married and went away.

MB: Ya.

LG: But Ladysmith was down for years and then what saved us was my dad being on the councils suggested that Crown Zellerbach, or it wasn't Crown Zellerbach, it was Comox Logging, wanted to come to Ladysmith, and he suggested to give them the new, what they call the Abbordsford Hotel as an office and let them do what they want. And that's when Comox came in and then they put the railroad there, and that was the beginning of the resurrection of Ladysmith again.

MB: Hmm.

LG: But during that time, as I say, you could buy houses for \$150.00, 300.00 , and they weren't well built (?) and like the Europe Hotel which I eventually got, my dad, eh, mother put that up for sale for 4,500 furnished. Never got a bit. So, you can see how real estate was

bid



in Ladysmith.

MB: Were people moving out?

LG:                   moving out. And then finally we got the new people in, like loggers. Well, we did have loggers before. In the old days, Ladysmith did have logging, it was called.. Chemainus logging, and there was seven miles from town, we had a railroad running up there, and it was too far to bring the logs seven miles, so they closed it up.

MB: Mmm.

LG: Moved the camp to Lake Cowichan.

MB: These people, the children of the people, who were in the strike, you would also going to school with them. Were there bad feelings among the children?

LG: Yes, there was. And I still think there is amongst the future generation that they had. I know, some time, when you ask people, they don't like to give information . And I noticed that, you know. Often, people make remarks "Oh, his father is a scab." And it seems to linger around.

MB: It was passed from father to son.

LG: From father to son. Even so they had nothing to do with it.

MB: Yes. That was probably very hard on some of the children, I understand.

LG: Oh, it was.

MB: Because children can get very cruel.

LG: Yes. It was. Well, just like ourselves being Italian, we were called everything, you know. It's the same... on the same basis. We were called Dago or Waps and they were called scabs and ...

MB: Yes. And now everybody is intermarried.

LG: Sure. That doesn't matter. (chuckle)

MB: Canadian. At that time too, did you have an Italian organization?

LG: They started <sup>Felice Cavilotti (?) lodge</sup> Gabberocci Lounge.. That was started in Extension in 1900. And my dad belonged to it. And the reason, I know, it was for welfare. Because if somebody got out of work, they had no money, there

there was no compensation, as you know, there was no sick benefits, and they formed that lodge to help each other. And I can remember as a youngster going with my dad on horse and buggy again to South Wellington bringin' food or stuff to people that were sick. And that's how that organization started.

MB: What is Cavelotti mean?

LG: That is just a friendship lodge. A benefit lodge

MB: You mean...

LG: Cavelotti.

MB: I see. Ya.

LG: And of course you had the masons, they helped theirs and then you had the Catholic Church and other churches helping their own.

MB: Did you see many of your relations very often?

LG: No, we didn't have many. (chuckle)

MB: Yes.

LG: I would go to Vancouver, oh, maybe once a year to see them. And that's about all.

MB: Can you describe a get-together of the Italian people?

LG: Well, they would have a big meal, and their was usualy chicken, not roast chicken you know, and spaghetti and wine and vegetables. They really enjoyed themselves. I think, they do. Still have a better time than lots.

MB: Yes.

LG: There is a friendship amongst them that they have.

MB: Yes..

LG: Ya.

MB: They are very warm.

LG: Yes.

MB: What about the women? They would be doing all the cooking?

LG: They would do all the work (chuckle)



MB: How did they dress?

LG: Ah, well, later on in life, they dressed like the modern, but in early years they wore dark clothes and very... not *showy* or anything you know. And, it's amazing, they still, a lot of them go that way.

MB: How did they ever get into... I can imagine the get-together. Where would you have it? You'd have to have a big place or house?

LG: No, just the homes.

LG: And the yard or home.

MB: And did they play Bocci.

LG: Well, that was in certain areas. No, we didn't have too many, you know.

MB: Oh, that wasn't at all the hotels?

LG: No, we never had any. The odd one had it. Not too many. But they'd have places where they could go and play, you know.

MB: And they made their own wine?

LG: Yes, they had to. It was too expensive otherwise.

MB: Where did they get their grapes from?

LG: They imported them from California.

A lot of them still do. you know. They import them from California, because you have more sun and more sugar in the grapes. And I don't think we still get the grapes in British Columbia as good as the California.

MB: What is it? Bob Caposi. He is from California. Well, when there was a disaster, for instance, in 1909, when there was an explosion at extension, there must have been quite a few Italians?

LG: Yes, there was a fair amount. Because it was mostly Italians that came out here worked in the mines.

MB: Ya.

LG: You know.

MB: You would be too young to remember.

LG: No, I don't remember too much.



MB: Do you rememeber as a boy any disasters, you know, or you know deaths happening to people that you know?

LG: Oh, yes. Some, you know. But I don't think... At that time I was too young to be bothered...

LG: If you know what I mean.

MB: Ya. You didn't really understand it, no.

LG: The only thing I hadn't forgotten and I never will was the flu weh had in 1918.

MB: Aha.

LG: You know. I was just a young kid and saw 'em throwen those dead people in. They just threw them into these building. I'm telling you, I never have gotten over it, and I've been scared of dead people ever since.

(chuckle)

MB: Well.

LG: Ya. Because we had a lot of people die, you know. They turned black and...

MB: Is that right. Well, Hmm. And what...

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TAPE L, SIDE 11

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MB: We got to the grapes, didn't we?

LG: Ya.

MB: Getting grapes from California. Now, at the time of the war, in 1914, you only would be nine, I guess. But do you remember anything about, how the war might have changed Ladysmith?

LG: No, I don't recall. Because they already had their army there for a couple of years (chuckle)

MB: Not much different, I guess.

LG: The only way I can remember that changed, was a lot of the people went away, younger people and , you know.

MB: What was your impression then of World War and seeing all this business going on around with the soldiers and everything.

LG: Well, I didn't like it. Because I didn't know enough, you know, to make a valid opinion of it. But I didn't like it.

MB: Mmm.

LG: And I never liked the way the bitterness went on amongst the people and...

MB: And now, when you... when did you first have the idea of going into medicine?

LG: Oh, I was getting through highschool, and we had a doctor Month there, a young fellow who everybody liked. And I always thought if I could be like him, and that's what I would like to be, and I figured... my dad never wanted me to be a doctor. He was against me going for medicine. He figured I should either become a drugist where I can have set hours and live a life but not like this doctor he knew, and other ones we knew, because the hours and you are tied up all the time.

MB: Humhum.

LG: So, I wanted to go and he said, "All right." And as I said before, I mentioned that Dr. Montgomery died in a very early age of diphtheria.

MB: Oh, yes.

SIDE B  
Begins here

MB: But this is something to take into consideration too, when you know that you are going to be on call twenty-four hours a day, especially as a mine doctor.

LG: Ya.

MB: And you didn't ...

LG: No, my father tried his best several times to persuade me to go on.

MB: So, then, how did this come about. So, when you graduated, what happened?

LG: You mean for medicine?

MB: Yes.

LG: Well, I said, I wanted to go and he said, "All right." So, then I went for a year to UBC and that's when we had the university hit. The old buildings were, now, what's the name of that. I can't think of the highschool there, anyway, there was, we were in huts.

MB: Yes.

LG: And then we had to trek to Point Grey from there and then I went to University of Oregon for a year. And then a friend of mine said it was a second rate college and that he was at Mc Gill and he was better and so applied for McGill and they took me. So I went there and.. stayed there til 1930 when I graduated.

MB: And how did you happen to get on to Ladysmith?

LG: Well, I graduated in '30, and couldn't get a job anywhere. So, in 1928, I was out here on a holiday, and Dr. Bisset, who was a doctor a Cassidy used to take me around to the hospital and around to see patients and then 1929, I used to know Dr. Allan Hall and it follows that we were together, Dr. A.B. Manson who is in Vancouver, he came out to Cassidy and then in 1930, Dr. Hall phoned me if I would come out here to work at Cassidy. Because Dr. Manson was moving in town and his brother Earl was going to Vancouver. So, I came out here in 1930.

MB: Humhum.

LG: And I was located at Cassidy, B.C..

MB: As a mine doctor?

LG: As a mine doctor.



MB: And what were your conditions?

LG: Well, the conditions were... I had a lovely home, nine room house for myself (chuckle) and no furniture, but the town,... I knew the town, I had been there before, it was really the best up-to-date mining town in America. They had ... the streets were all lined with mayfloweres, red and white alternating. They had a hotel there for single men. Seventy-five rooms which each room hot and cold water and that was the only mine they had showers for the miners too. And my job was to go to the hospital ... little hospital they had with two beds at the change of shift in the afternoon, that would be about two o'clock, in case there was miner accidents. If there was an accident, they would phone and I would go there. And so... I'd go there every afternoon and if there wasn't anything to do in the mine, the boss, Fitzjohn, used to go down and fire the shots, down there, and I 'ld go down with 'em, used to scare the hell out of me. They would blow... this blast and the dirt would come and smoke and the reason for that they had to do it that way was, several people were killed there. We used to have deaths frequently there. It was really a terrible mine for killing people. They'd have blow-outs and you'd see people dead, not ... just usually one at the time or... but we never knew why they died.

MB: Humhum.

LG: And it was these blow-outs and they passed a law that they could work one shift and they'd go down and blow those shots and then would have to wait next day to go back. And that was the reason I used to go down, because there was nothing else to do.

MB: Humhum.

LG: And they used to call them "blow-outs" and some people say it was due to gas and I think it was. But, it was a sad thing.

MB: Humhum. Well, was this then your first experience as a doctor at the mine?

LG: Yes.

MB: Can you remember your first casualty or anything? You know, the first

mine death or accident or...

How you felt, that is what I want to know.

LG: Oh, I didn't feel very well, because you knew most of the people, it was a small community and it kind of, you know, everybody was sad and it did make you feel very depressed.

MB: Ya. You'd feel quite a responsibility as a doctor.

LG: Well, you couldn't do anything sometimes. You know, other times you did your best if it was an accident where, you know...

but it was one of these blow-outs, that was a sad thing, because all you had to do is to go and explain, nobody knew. It was...

MB: You had to go and tell them?

LG: Ya. We always used to go and tell the people in those days. It's quite different now I think. (chuckle)

MB: Ya. Well, now, if it was a broken leg or a broken back or something, how did you happen... how did you see down there.

LG: Oh, they would bring them up and put them in a hospital. They would bring them up and put them in the little hospital, and we would give them first aid, put a splint, do what we could, shut morphine and then take them to the hospital. If they weren't too bad, we would take them in our car.

MB: That would be the Draeger team, would go down, or the rescue team ...

LG: No, just the men, and the mine would bring them up.

MB: I see.

LG: The other men never went down unless there was a serious accident,

MB: Hum.

LG: And they never went down unless it was real... blow-out or something, they looked for somebody else, you know, caved-in.

MB: Did they have such a thing as first aid men?

LG: Oh, yes. A lot of them. I think, you find, they all had good teams. Well trained and.... you could depend on them.

MB: How did the compensation board enter into this? They'd... they would have certain regulations?



LG: Oh, they had regulations of what you have got to have there and equipment and they would over... you know, foresee that. But they took care of all of that. And then the unions, of course, would force it anyways. So, we had no problems.

MB: And this was in 19... 1930.

LG: '30, 32, ya.

MB: So, you must have attended, how many families would you have to look after, do you think?

LG: Oh, two-hundred families.

MB: And that would be people who lived around Nanaimo...

LG: No, I didn't come to Nanaimo, they were in Nanaimo. Dr. Hall took care of them. I took care of the ones in Ladysmith and Cedar or what they call Cedar District now, and they were a lot of house calls to be made because nobody had cars hardly. And maternities were delivered at the homes as a rule. It was quite a different practice than today.

MB: Yes.

L G: People don't realize , you know.

MB: Everybody would know you.

LG: Oh, ya. You were known by everybody. As a matter of fact, you go in the homes, you get something to drink or something to eat...

MB: Ya. You would be a honoured guest.

G: Ya. You sure would..

MB: What about these night calls.

LG: Oh, we had a lot of them. But at Cassidy, I was very fortunate, we would have quite a few and if they got too many, the boss, you would have to remember our phone system, that was my phone, and the superintendant's phone, the Cassidy Hotel and the mine office. So, if I got too many calls, the superintendant got the same call on his phone and he used to say, if they bother you too much let me know , because we can maybe do something about it. Because he would be wakened every time my phone rang.

MB: Sure.



MB: Well, what about.... did they have a night shift on at Granby?

LG: No, not at the end, no. Just the one. They did at first but then they gave up when these blow-outs occurred too much and people were getting, you know leary to work. So, they just... but the night when the phone rang, superindentant had the same one I had so, he knew how many calls I got.

MB: Yes. And were you here when the Oscar blew up? That ship? I can't remember....

LG: No. I, I can't remember, no.

MB: What was the most memorable experience that you had with the miners? You know, in the line of accidents or...

LG: Oh, I had several I remember, you know. I had... a few of them had ruptured ... broken pelvises and backs and we fixed them up and we got good results and a lot of bad fructures, you know, scull injuries, and you have to remember, in those days, you couldn't ship them to Vancouver because there was poor service. Vic ria had poor service and we had to attend to all emergencies ourselves. It was just a matter of... I don't know what you can say but we had to do it.

MB: Well, you didn't have the drugs and medicine that we have today...

LG: No.

MB: What did you use..

LG: Just Aspirin and cough syrup and that was (chuckle)  
Til 1942 actually there was no medicine except gall pills or heart pills and but nothing modern like, I think sulphur came into being about '42 or '40 and then you had the penicillin later

MB: And what about things like leaches?

LG: Oh, we didn't use them. But they had them. We used them for people who asked for them. A lot of the people that had a black eye and wanted to get rid of it, we would get a leach from the drugist in Chinatown and they just slap it on and when it got full of blood it would fall off. It was quite commonly used for black eyes especially.

MB: Yes.

MB: And what about maggots?

LG: Well, that was used accidentally on my case. A chinese fellow had a bad break. That was later on in life though. I was working in Nanaimo here. You see, I moved to Nanaimo, we are getting ahead, you want to go that way next?

MB: Yes.

LG: So, they had... remember there was a war coming and they were saying that we were shipping our copper and brass to Japan and they are gonna use against us. Well, they picketed. We had quite a few people at that time I don't know, what they were. If they were just Communists or, you know, had different names, and they went up to Chinatown here and had a big Second Hand, lots of junk in there and they were shipping it on this boat to China or Japan rather and somebody threw a bomb in there and busted his leg to pieces and anyway, I got the old fellow in the hospital; and it was really, I don't think it would ever work but we put it back in place and by luck in got in a good position. So, one day in the hospital, a nurse said, "there is some bug crawling here.:" So, I took the cast off and it was full of maggots. And it was really clean and working nicely. As I say, you know, they found that maggot in the war, that people that had maggots in their wounds that were left on the fields for a couple of days, got a better result than the ones that were brought in immediately and cleaned up and treated. The maggots eat the dead tissue..

MB: Ya.

LG: So, we did use them a few times. But the ones I had that time weren't bought, weren't the ones that.... See, we used to buy them.

MB: I see.

LG: But we did have a lot of problems, just before that other war. You know. Because we had a group that was saying the Japs are using all the scrap iron against us which turned out to be true. So.

MB: Yes. That was the Second World War.

LG: Ya.



MB: Also people from Europe I know had some old home remedies.

LG: Well, they used coal oil for gurgle or sore throats and used to use, common in Europe, they put that on. And venir for po<sup>10</sup> and then they used the old plaster, and that wasn't them that was us that used it in those days, for pneumonia we used to put plasters on, one of mustard and three of flower and some so it wouldn't burn. But I don't think, people today would know what you are talking about.

MB: No.

G: But that is what we used.

MB: What about goose grease?

LG: Well, the same principle. That was for pneumonia. Ya. We used good grease rather and these and that was all what they called or iodine the same way, put a lot of iodine and get it burn and bring the fever out, you know.

MB: For heaven's sake.

LG: Did you ever have any experiences, well, you must have, I mean, were it was touching... whether the person was going to live and he lived, the child or the woman or the man, and you know, you go through the, you would go through all the all the emotions of trying to save the person. (laughter) You must have had some of those? You didn't have these proper drugs and everything.

LG: I think, we had a fair amount, and some of them, you can't believe how close death was and whoever saved them, I don't know if it was us or the Lord, but they came by, you know. You have to remember in those days, we didn't have the blood groupings, they have today, or the technique of doing it. And sometimes when we would operate, the patient would be a bleeder and we would have an awful time getting blood and quite tied and everything, you know. And...

MB: Oh, gosh, ya. Well, it must give a feeling. Well, first of all, we should come into Nanaimo now and some of your experience. When did you move on to Nanaimo?

LG: Well, first let me get back to one thing I never forget. Where the airport is now, I had to go out there one night and deliver a set of twins - I didn't know it was twins at the time - . There was a fire house



there where the air port entrance is now. I got up there and there was no light, no water, and this lady was having ... giving birth, and eventually we ended up with twin boys. We had no light, no water, and anyway, everything turned out beautiful. And I got a sack of potatoes and chickens. But another experience I never forget is at Quesnel Lake. This is when I was at Cassidy. I got a call one night to go up there for a woman, she didn't know she was in labour, but she was. When I got out there, it started to snow and we couldn't get in and it's really interesting for two reasons. I had a woman from Brother Twelve there and she was there helping this lady. And anyway, this lady's brother was a doctor in Vancouver and that made it worse for me. So, anyway, she had this baby and it wouldn't come the right way and finally I delivered but I broke the baby's hip, and I told the mother quite extensively, but this woman that was from Brother Twelve said, "don't worry, the stars are right" and everything and she gave me a lot of good comfort. But it just shows how this woman was just going by stars and that and anyway the baby did, is still going around town here and the mother died a few years ago. But we couldn't get by, couldn't get in town because the weather and the ice, so I phoned her brother in Vancouver and he said, I told her, she should be in town where she could be near you." But it was an experience which I never forget.

MB: No. What ever did you do with the child?

LG: Well, we just fixed it at best as we could. It survived and the leg healed nicely and you know.

MB: Yes.

MB: Did you ever ... I shouldn't go into this either ... but I was just wondering if you had anything to do with that group?

LG: Brother Twelve?

MB: Humhum. No, I only took care of them when Dr. Hall wasn't around,

MB: Oh, I see.

LG: He was the official doctor for Brother Twelve. And when he wasn't around I got the odd one to see, you know. So, I didn't have too much

MB: No. So, then by and by you did move in to Nanaimo?

LG: No, I went to Cumberland for about six months.

MB: Oh.

LG: I couldn't get a job. The mine closed in Cassidy and Dr. Hall had... there wasn't enough business for another doctor. So then Dr. McNorton of Cumberland who was elected MLA for the Conservatives asked me if I would come up while the session was on. And I went up there and that's when you mentioned the other day Florence Sell who was the matron of the hospital. And up there in Cumberland was two doctors, Dr. Hicks and Dr. McNorton. Dr. Hicks practiced until he was ninety, I think.

MB: Oh, my...

LG: He just died. His son is a doctor, I think, at Princeton. So anyway, I went to Cumberland and they just had a big explosion, a day or two before I arrived and we had a lot patients there and Florence Sell was the matron and so I used to make rounds and it was quite a little hospital and quite a family affair. We weren't too busy. We would sit down and play crib with the patients, Florence Sell and myself and the a patient, and we had a wonderful time. And I used to live with ... Dr. McNorton's house with his wife. I guess I can say we both did (chuckle), and we used to call her Mary and him Mr. McNorton, but anyway, the phone would ring she always asked the patient, "what is the trouble? Where is your symptoms?" And then she would call me and say; "I think it's so and so, doctor." So anyway, she was good, she taught me how to play bridge, because that was part of my contract.. But I didn't play after or any... So anyway, she taught me the rules, and we used to go to headquarters - I don't know if you know what that is? Headquarters was the headplace for Comox logging.

MB: Yes.

LG: Mr. Furberg was a - who later became the head of Canadian Western Lumber and Crown Zellerbach, he was the boss. Green was the superindendant or the engineer, and my part was to play bridge twice or three times a week, That was in my contract. And we had another teacher, I can't think



of her name, Sell I think, it was. She lived at Cumberland and Heats had the hotel, union hotel, and his daughter used to go but anyway Mr. McNorton, I said, I couldn't play bridge. his gives you a story how my life was (chuckle) And she said, "well every noon I come home from the hotel," and she laid the card on the table and taught me how to bid and so. This night, we were at Mr. Furberg's house and my partner bid too and I said, "Pass," and all of a sudden, I heard, "Didn't I tell you," and I said, "Ya, I know, I got to bid." So, after I left, I never played bridge again. But they had kind of a class distinction up there. I used to have my meals in the union hotel and I with the travellers and the whitel collar men, the miners would go to another room. But when we played cards we played together.

MB: Oh, yes.

LG: But it was a class distinction thing.

MB: Yes.

LG: So, then my job there was to go to Fanny Bay, or, I guess you heard of Bevin, the million dollar mystery. They had a mine they spent a million dollars on and never took any coal out. And I had to go to Chinatown which was right there by Bevin, and I used to go Union Bay, ston, and Fanny Bay and that was my routine once a week.

MB: Yes.

LG: So, I stayed... and then Mrs. Reed, a nurse, would take care of maternity cases at Union-Bay in her home. And I stayed there for about four months.

MB: Did you know Mr. Marr's father?

LG: I wouldn't know. Ya. I used to go there every weekend, you know

MB: Yes.

LG: And that runs there up there. They are the oldest family there.

MB: Oh.

G: And that was my job. And then I came back here and couldn't get a job again. So, then I was offered a job at Telegraph Creek, and so then I wrote to the doctor and he said, "if you got 25 cents in your pocket, don't come up here. You got a nine room house and that freezes at winter and four people and then when you fight, you are in trouble."

\*Note: There is no page 29. Should there be?

LG: Then I was offered one in Tofino and I didn't go and then I said, "Oh, I got a little money, I say around." So Hall took me in again in about 1933 in Nanaimo and that was when I started.

MB: So, you didn't have it very easy, then? In those years?

LG: No, you couldn't get jobs. So, then I came here in 1933 and there was two clinics, there was Hall and myself at that time and his father. And then Norm came and Dr. Williams came and Dr. Emery came and it just seemed to build up.

MB: Oh, yes.

LG: And then the other office had Dr. Brown and Ingem, Ingem dropped dead and then Maneile came here. And Drysdale was the health officer. And that's all there were for years.

MB: Yes. And still, the main industry here was coal mining?

LG: Yes, it was coal mining. And that's again, when Crown Zellerbach came, had a lot of their men living here. And then I got all their work to do when they came, I had the contract for them. Because I knew some of the... men from Ladysmith. That's how I got it probably. But then we used to allow them to go wherever they wanted. But when you are in the mine here, we had a pretty tough time, people don't realize it. They would ... they didn't favour us. And at one time, a patient of mine died in the mine and I went down and everybody told me that he died of carbon monoxide poisoning, but when it come to the inquest, they tried to say, he had a heart attack. And I was advised, when I said he died of that, I had to leave town, I wouldn't get any patients. Then they did, at that time, when we had a patient that got hurt, he never got back to work unless he went to the other office, that's ha tough it was. So, anyway, this paptient, by luck, I took some blood, when they told my it was carbon monoxide and I sent it inþector Vance in Vancouver and eventually, it came back: carbon monoxide. This woman got her pension. She just died recently, but her son and daughter are here and she did get her pension. And another tragic one was... we used



have Daisy Waugh , a great soccer player. He got killed on Newyear's Eve. I was at the dance and had to go down the mine. He got electricuted. But that was an outstanding one, was the carbon monoxide, because they tried to force the issue that it wasn't, you know.

MB: Yes.

MB: These electrical things overhead too, I always thought must have been...

LG: Yes, that's what did it. They would hit them and .... and so...

MB: So, you had to go and....

LG: Ya.

MB: Mike Pluckers told me about that. He was there, He saw it happen.

LG: Ya. It was Newyears's Eve.

MB: Humhum. Ya.

LG: And that was the only time, I was down that mine, was those two occasions, you know.

MB: Humhum.

LG: But... And then, of course, you know how the mines finally started to go down and colonel Willer said, "The grass will go on the streets." And then, of course, the looging came, the mills came.

MB: Yes.

LG: And now we have the pulpmill oh, 25 years ago, came here.

MB: I don't know what the population of Nanaimo is today.

LG: Today is supposed to be with the district 50,000.

MB: Yes.

LG: Well, in those days, the actual 2,500 in town, you know, the town property is only a square mile.

MB: Yes.

LG: It was about 10,000 around the whole area. Now it's 50 (000) they claim. Of course, they take in Nanoose now and...

MB: ya. And there will be Lantzville next, I guess.

LG: Ya. And then, of course, some experience is, when you have to go to an logging accident, you know. They are the sad ones, you know.

MB: Yes.

LG: Last time I went out, it's about three years ago, a young fellow got

hit with a tree and he was hangin' up there. That's kind of sad, you know.

MB: Humhum. Yes, well, you have to have a certain ... sort of constitution to be able to take it, you know. Remain calm and...

LG: Sometimes you don't (laughter). You know how Nanaimo is gone now, it's grown. The original hospital, you know, and then they added on to it.

MB: It's a beautiful hospital.

LG: Now we got five-hundred beds and hundred doctors and...

MB: Oh, my God...

LG: It was four when I came and the health officer.

MB: Aha.

LG: So... is there anything...

MB: Ya. Let's see now. A little bit more. So, you went into politics by and by eventually?

LG: In '52.

MB: Yes. And what kind of an experience was that?

LG: Well, I went actually, it was kind of a thing that I went in to it. The... at that time.... I was not interested in politics, but I didn't like the way things were going. And they had it allready that they were putting in a certain man in a certain job and I said, "Unless you put it up in the open for election," I said, "I run for anybody that asked me. And then I was asked by the Conservatives because they did, what I didn't want, and I had not experience in politics. So anyway, I run and I started to go out and make speeches, and I was like a race horse I start and I wanted to finish before I started (laughter). But anyway, I was elected and I got to Victoria and I tried to do something, I got a lot of things, actually for the people. I got a light (?) for Gabriola and Pearson Bridge and a court house and, well, things, I didn't get them that just were coming anyway. But I got lights for Gabriola and a tresse for kids out by Terminal Park. People gave me a petition that had a hundred names which, you know. But I got kind of... you get better down there, you know (chuckle).

MB: I remember reading in Nanaimo Retrospective how you stood up there and, you know, spoke up against, I guess it was Lilia Arsens.

LG: Yes, she came up with a cure for cancer and she was going to...

So I told her she didn't know what she was talking about. And she upset



me quite a bit. And I had a patient that did actually sell her own home to go to the                      and come back with no result and had no home and that was the thing that I was worried about. It was a false hope that she was given people, you know. Tell them and not to have fluoride in the water because that causes....                      will take us over. That was her theory, you know.

MB: Yes.

LG:                      your brain and the comets (?) will come and take us over and so... and then other things, eh, you want something that should be done and , of course, it's the way of democracy, it's slow and you know.

MB: Well, you certainly shown that you know, you are a popular man around here anyway. The honour the people treat you with.

L: Ya. That's right. Then I can remember at one time a lady came to see me. In the old days, we had a five dollar car license for five years, I don't know if you remember that, so this woman came and said , "her husband died and she had his diver's license." And so I said, "Give it to me, you get four dollars." And she said, "Oh, they won't do that." So I took it on the floor of the House and I did get the four dollars, you know. It was... (chuckle). I thought I should.

MB: Ya.

LG: And, there was a lot of things I tried for, medical                      ,                      homes were one of my pet things. They are started to get 'em extended care.

MB: Yes.

LG: But I had been in Sweden in 1949 and we had seen them there and they were so far ahead of us.

MB: Humhum.

LG: And now we are getting down to it, you know.

(Tape 2, Side 1, of interview with Dr. Larry Giovando. Interviewer Myrtle Bergren.)

Exx Dr. G: The four businessmen who were in Chinatown in those days were Wally Chang and Tom Hing, Chuck Wong, and Wong Foy. You know, I was telling you about the groups. How they lived in special places.

ME: Well the Chinatown in Nanaimo when you became acquainted with it, how did it strike you?

Dr. G: <sup>Oh</sup> Wzkk/it was fantastic! (laughs). Stairways, underwayx places.

ME: Did you have to go up there to attend to the sick?

Dr. G: Yes, I attended most of them. That's how I got acquainted. I attended most of them.

ME: And did you go up there to eat?

Dr. G: Oh yes.

ME: What was that like?

*Tape 51 begins here*  
Dr. G: Oh it was real Chinese food. (Nearby laugh). It was really good Chinese food, you know. But at that time I only had two favourites. It was almond chicken ... and sweet and sour -- that was my two favourites, you know. Course things changed now. Now they have pot roast chicken and other things --- chow mein.

ME: Chinese smorgasbord...

Dr. G: Yeah.

ME: So what about this fast food service?

Dr. G: I'll do that when you come to it.

ME: When you would go in, did you ever see any of the Chinese smoking?

Dr. G: Oh yes, in a lot of the places. Actually when I used to go to Chinatown from 1928, I'm talking from 30, there were really four places that were commercial. Like there was Wallace Chang, who had one store, and Chuck Wong had the restaurant, and Wong Poy had a store and took care of the animals, pigs and that. And Tom Hing had a store plus the End House, which was a cafe. The End House cafe was strictly -- very few white people got in there. It was mostly Chinese. But it was the nicest and that. But the Chinese lived in these hov<sup>el(x?)</sup> -- they were terrible places really. They just had little cubby holes ~~hm~~ and they had their stuff, rice, and pipes and that. And they worked on the mines, or on the railroad, and again, each man up there had a group that they'd take care of. If they came to the office to see us, usually they -- somebody would pay for their service. They were just taken care of. And I used to go up there -- I took care of most of the Chinese for years. So I got to know them all well. And I think we talked about these pipes. Well in the old days,



Chinese or anybody was allowed to buy opium. And I have ads here where you could buy it for a dollar a tin. But the Chinese never abused the dope, or taking opium, like the white man. They'd take a little, and later on, there were two or three that required it, that I usually used to give them a prescription to carry them over. But they would never use more than one pill a day -- not like the white man. So they were very good. But their home conditions were not too good. They were probably warm, and comfortable. It was dark in there, not much light. They'd have ~~kxk~~ these stoves, pot-bellied stoves, and they'd sit around and smoke either, maybe a little opium or the other -- water pipe, you know.

MB: Well would there be -- would it be like a bunkhouse type thing?

Dr. G: Exactly the same, as a bunkhouse.

MB: And their beds would be like -- double deckers, or --

Dr. G: Some places yes. And other places just scattered, you know. Mostly. But they didn't have much. None of them had much, really. You know even my friend Chuck Wong in those days didn't have a great deal. And it's hard to believe you know, how they came ahead so far in the world.

MB: But one person would do the cooking, would they?

Dr. G: No, they mostly did their own.

MB: Oh, I see. And some ship would come in with the Chinese type of merchandise on it?

Dr. G: Oh yes, they imported. They had four importers up there. Like I said before, the four stores that usually imported were Wally Chang, Tom Hing, Chuck Wong, and Wong Poy. Four of them.

MB: I'm wondering what kind of variety they had in their meals.

Dr. G: Well they always have rice. And I found that out when I went to the Orzient with Chuck Wong. Chuck always says if they don't have rice once a day they don't feel well. And it's white rice, not -- (brown). But they eat a lot of vegetables too, as well as rice, and meat.

MB: For instance, for breakfast they might have rice -- they might have it three times a day?

Dr. G: Yes, they could. But they -- chuck says they have to have it once or they don't feel well. At least he doesn't.

MB: And what kind of dishes would they eat out of?

Dr. G: The Chinese dishes, you know, the little bowls, and -- chopsticks, yes.

MB: And how did they go to work? Did they wear Chinese clothing, or --

Dr. G: Oh, in the old days they had Chinese clothing, and the long pigtail, then eventually, the latter part of the life they changed. But for years you could see them. You know, the regular Chinese costume and the pigtails.

MB: And a straw hat?



Dr. G: No, -- some of them had straw hats, yes, but some of them just had that kind of a college cap, I call it. You know the kind I mean? But a lot of them had straw hats, the big straw hats. You can still see them. You can still see a few of them running around with their gray overalls and the straw hat. There's not many left now. I think there's only about 8 or 9 in the old home now.

MB: When they went to work though, was this pigtail hanging down their back or did they wrap it up, or what?

Dr. G: No, just let it down, curl. That's the ones I remember, you know.

MB: You say there was one there who looked after the pigs and chickens.

Dr. G: Well he had a store, but he raised pigs and that.

MB: He had a bit of a farm then?

Dr. G: Yes, kind of.

MB: Because it would have to be very fresh meat, wouldn't it?  
(misunderstanding question for a moment).

Dr. G: /No, he used to go round to the cafes and pick it up. I think that's against the law now, but he used to. I think that's been banned. But he used to go round to all the cafes, or most of the cafes, and pick up the garbage and bring it out to the pigs. But I understand that's changed.

MB: But they butchered their own --?

Dr. G. Oh they butchered their own, and then bring it down, and hang it up in the stores. Or smoke it, I guess.

MB: So you had some experience with this -- fresh meat?

Dr. G: I saw them, yes.

MB: Well what's the story that you told then, at the roast?

Dr. G: We were talking about Chuck Wong, and we used to go up to Chuck's -- I drove taxi for a while when I was home from college, and when the ag ships would come from Ladysmith and come to town -- as you know, there was only two things in Nanaimo -- we had some gay girls on Fraser Street (chuckle), and Chinatown was where they'd go to get drinks, and Chinese food. And I used to go up there. And/when I graduated I came home. I was very friendly with Chuck and have been his friend ever since. And we'd go up and I said, you know, Chuck's the only place where I've seen tea come out of a tea pot taste like k rye whiskey! And of course in those days when they weren't allowed to sell it, they used to put it in a teapot and sell it! --And they talk about MacDonald's fast food -- but I said, Chuck invented that, because I can remember being in Chinatown ~~and~~ at night, and we'd want almond chicken, and we'd hear a chicken scream, and we'd go in the kitchen and Chuck would have the head off and the body in hot water, and 20 minutes later on your plate -- almond chicken! (laugh). So I always said Chuck invented the fast food service!



MB: But there were other things going on in Nanaimo such as the dances, I think you told me before -- the various halls that they used to go to.

Dr. G: Yes, well Chinatown though had the fan tan game going, that's all. But the dances were held -- oh we had dances -- they had 'em at the Speedway, the Oddfellows was the big one in town, in the basement. And then Northfield had a dance, and also Pleasant Valley. Those were all dance halls that were operating. And some of the younger ones when I was young, we'd go to Westholme for a dance, and occasionally Ladysmith. Not so much Ladysmith, maybe that was because it was my home town! (chuckle).

MB: And then they had the churches too, for social centres.

Dr. G: Yes they did.

MB: I've heard something from several of them about Fraser Street, the girls. There was a curfew at five o'clock ~~or~~ wasn't there?

Dr. G: Well, they were very good. They didn't need a curfew, really. For years I had to take care of them for the government. They were supposed to be examined, and that was my job. Dr. Donald Williams who in Vancouver was for years the head of the VD Division had me do it. But they were all fairly nice people down there.

MB: Someone has told me that one of them -- and he gave me the name -- furnished two rooms in the hospital. Do you know about that?

Dr. G: Well that might have been -- well she had two names now -- see she didn't -- as a matter of fact she just died --

MB: Belle Harvey?

Dr. G: Yes. Last year. But that wasn't her real name. She died last year. And she gave a lot of donations. I think her name was Mrs. <sup>Davis</sup> She was an Iriquois Indian.

MB: A French half-breed was how it was told to me.

Dr. G: Yes, she was an Iriquois Indian. And she died last year. She was a great friend of Mrs. Douglas, Tommy Douglas' wife.

MB: It's too bad she has, because I can't find the name of anyone else, and she may have been the last one.

Dr. G: Yes. I think she is the last one, because Kitty -- now -- Kitty -- I can't think of her name -- Kitty Borman, she was a girl from there. And she died last year. --Oh, there is one! But I'd better not --

MB: Yes, well that's it --not on tape.

Dr. G: No.

MB: But if there were one, you know, I would go and ask them, and see if they wanted to talk about it, and -- because everybody's interested in that. And of course

Dr. G: But this girl, Belle Harvey, her name was Mrs. Davis, died last year.

And she gave a lot of money, and took care of a lot of people. They all were good, really. I remember one of them one time I had a patient that was sick, and she was a friend -- or the wife was a friend of one of them -- and she paid all the hospital and all the medicine and my bill, you know. Marian was her name. And they were all good down there. And Kitty -- she married this Borman. He's still living though.

But they were all fairly good.

(end of interview)

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