

(transcript)

Guppy, Walter
(BOB BOSSIN)

3878:37-38

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT
Should be used in conjunction with tape.

Walter Guppy

Date ?

Accession No. ..., Tape No. 4, Track No. 1

Mr. Bossin: This next voice is that of Walter Guppy once again interviewed by Bob Bossin.

Mr. Guppy: I imagine about a third of the class, a third of the people were Japanese when I went to school here. Oh, yes we chummed around together there was no actual -- as far as the kids were concerned -- there wasn't too much friction. And actually, they got along pretty well you know. They did have their own separate community alright, but there wasn't actually any animosity. There might have been a little bit of...well, what do you say envy because they always worked together and they were successful fishermen, at that time pretty near all the trolling, the salmon trolling about 80 per cent Japanese here at that time. And it was hard for a whiteman actually to compete you know because they were just better fishermen, and they helped each other. And they seemed to know a lot of little tricks you know, they kept themselves. And so I suppose there might have been a little bit of a feeling there but we got along good. I always used to chum around with Japanese kids, we had no problems, except normal scraps the kids have.

Of course you know it was a little bit of a feeling there in war time you did get a bit of an animosity I guess. But still there wasn't any violence.

Mr. Bossin: Were (inaudible).....

Mr. Guppy: I remember seeing them, I remember seeing the navy fellows rounding up the Japanese folks here.

Mr. Bossin: Can you describe that in a little more detail?

Mr. Guppy: Not too much except you'd see these uniforms, of course they were very conspicuous, but there was a bunch of naval guys. And some were local guys too you see because they had the fishermen's reserve navy at that time and some of those were involved in this rounding up. They had to have men that knew the coast to run the Japanese boats, because they confiscated all the boats and took them down to the Fraser River.

No, I don't remember saying goodbye to them. They were lined up and hauled away. I think most of them.... It seems to me they had a bunch of the women and kids down on the dock, they must have shipped them out on the McQuinna I suppose, whether the men went on their own boats...? Maybe most of the men went on their own fishing boats with a navy escort. I couldn't say you know, I don't remember details. But I suppose there was enough feeling there that we were willing to go along with this thing, nobody was really...the local guys weren't really upset about it you might say. "Oh, well it's too bad but there's going to be more fish for us," or something like that you know.

Mr. Bossin: How did you feel about it yourself, did you have that sort of feeling?

Mr. Guppy: I suppose. Yes, I suppose at that time, yes. Although these kids that were getting rounded up and hauled away.....saw them at the time I would have felt sorry for them, but I was busy with my own affairs I guess and you just saw this activity going on.

This is true that there was quite a movement to keep the Japanese out of the community.

Mr. Bossin: How did it get started, how did it work?

Mr. Guppy: I don't know. But no doubt that.... You've got to admit that there was a feeling against the Japanese. And they say, people are all selfish you know. If

you can get rid of your competition you'll do it. Well, then of course there was this feeling of war time atrocities, and all this suffering of the P.O.Ws, that were taken in Hong Kong and that. You heard so much of it, you do get sort of....

But I'll tell you something else too, just before the war there while the Japanese were invading China, and they had this building right across it's a duplex now, it was a Japanese school and sort of a community hall. They had their own activities there. But they used to have propoganda films in there showing the invasion of China, and I used to go in there, they didn't mind us going in I guess. And we'd sit down and watch these films with one of the local Japanese kids that I knew there. And the young fellow's up there commentating on this silent film of course, doing the commentary on it.

Mr. Bossin: In English or Japanese?

Mr. Guppy: In Japanese of course, yes. But you know you see when they'd have a film and they showed a bunch of kids waving their little flags and so on, and this kid would be reading out of the script there, "Bonze Bonze," and all this kind of stuff. You knew it was propoganda films. And they made the Chinese look ridiculous all the time you know.

You've got to admit that there was a certain....the Japanese people were more or less loyal to Japan, to quite an extent. I don't know if they were all of them or just a fraction of them. In reading about it afterwards it seems that there was different factions you know, but I didn't realize that at the time. But they themselves had a distinction there, what they call them the and theyou know the first and second generation. And they did have quite a distinction themselves. And a lot of the younger fellows didn't go for this Japanese imperialist stuff, but some of them did of course.

Mr. Bossin: Do you recall some of the.....showing that, that they did

have a kind of a loyalty to Japan?

Mr. Guppy: Yes, I think we sort of took it for granted, that most of the Japanese had a sort of a dual citizenship they were still more or less....

Mr. Bossin: Did you see any manifestations of that or just sort of a guess?

Mr. Guppy: No, outside of these films they had that I was talking about, outside of that no I can't say that I did see anything that.... But I think there was a feeling and a lot of people wouldn't believe that if there was an invasion, if Japan invaded the coast that a lot of the local Japanese would help the Japanese. This was a.... Whether it was right or not I don't know. How can you tell, they're not going to admit it anyway are they?

Mr. Bossin: Do you recall when there was that meeting at the village to pass a resolution, like was that quite a controversial thing in the village?

Mr. Guppy: No, I wouldn't be that involved in the village.

Mr. Bossin: Was it debated back and forth or was...?

Mr. Guppy: Oh yes, I can remember discussions on it.

Mr. Bossin: Can you recall sort of, what would be discussed?

Mr. Guppy: I remember discussions of it. It seems to me what discussions I seem to recall I think had more to do with fishing rights, fishing licensing rather than...this was one of the bones of contention. Because they wanted to restrict Japanese fishing licenses. In fact they were restricted. I remember a discussion

at a Legion meeting right after the war there, when this came up. And some of the members said, "that's discrimination." And the rest of us said, we were for it, they should be restricted. And I'll admit that that was my point of view at the time although I wouldn't go along with it now.

Mr. Bossin: Why would you not go along with it now, that you would go along with it then?

Mr. Guppy: I don't know you change your mind. I've changed in a lot of ways. There's a lot of things I look at differently now than I did at that time.

Mr. Bossin: What are some of them?

Mr. Guppy: Oh, I don't know it's hard to say you know. You get old and you're mellow in a lot of ways I think. (end of interview)

Mr. Bossin: This will once again be the voice of Walter Guppy.

Mr. Guppy: Bill (?) was a real character. There was a story about Bill (?). He had a big dog, a big sort of English sheepdog type. I remember the dog, you know, with hair over its eyes, a big shaggy dog. And he had a lead and he'd lead him around, you know. It was a piece of anchor chain with big heavy links on it..the dog on this piece of chain, and Spiddle(?) was lame and he used to sort of swing his leg as he walked. But the dog's name was.... (continued on track 2)

End of track 1.

Bob Bossin

Selections from Interviews

Tape No. 5, Track No. 2

Mr. Bossin: The voice is Walter Guppy.

Mr. Guppy: The story is about Bill Spiddle(?), the time that Lord Willingdon visited this area and this was some time, I guess, in the late '20s. It was around '29, I guess. Lord Willingdon was the Governor-General of Canada at the time, and he came up here on the maiden voyage of the Princess Nora. That was quite an event, you know. The Indians had all their painted backdrops and the wharf here, it was lined with these painted backdrops and spruce trees or hemlock trees, and all this. I sat up there and they had all their masks and the dancing. Oh, it was a real reception. They had all the Japanese fishermen here at that time and they had an escort of the fishing boats go out and meet the Princess Nora and escort it in. All the school kids were down on the dock there, you know. I don't know what they were doing, singing the national anthem or whatever they were supposed to do.

The story is that the president of the Legion here, he took to escort the Governor-General up the road; I guess to have a look at the village and maybe they went up to the Legion hall or something for some reception there, or something of that kind. And going up from the dock there, you know, at that time it was just a gravel track through the bush with shrubs on either side. And they meet old Bill Spiddle coming down there limping away with his dog, on this big chunk of chain, you see. And so, the Legion president says: "Bill," -- I guess he thought he was a local character and it would be amusing for the Governor-General to meet him. He said: "Bill, I'd like you to meet Lord Willingdon, the Governor-General of Canada and his staff."

Bill said, you know, he spit tobacco juice all the time. he says: "Yes, I'm Spiddle of Glenshee(?), and this here dog is my bodyguard."

You know, you take old Bill Spiddle and that shack of his up there after he died. The one wall they said had a bunk on one side, just a little room and the

wall on the other side was streaked with tobacco juice where he lay on the bunk and just spit tobacco juice on the wall.

It must have been a bleak life, too, to sit up a shack like that and a howling south-easter day after day. So I don't remember now if he died there or if they took him away. Most of them, I guess, went to an old mans' home. They finally took them away to an old mans' home.

You know, the local Indians, they told me that "Guppy" is a word in their language, in their local dialect here. It means: "a cranky old man:."

Mr. Bossin: Okay, this is Bill White, once again interviewed by Bob Bossin. His wife, Ruthie, probably speaks too.

(Please note. Either this tape is very bad, or I'm getting deaf. I'll do my best with it, but there's bound to be some gaps.)

Mr. White: Alec McLeod was a real scotch presbyterian, very, very strict and religious on Sunday. The kids weren't even allowed outside the gate or outside the garden. He used to hold his prayer services (indistinct). And Major Nicholson, who didn't get along with Alec too well, one Sunday morning went over and brought the whole Indian band over. They stood at the top and competed with the bagpipes, and it sounded like a Chinese feast, you know, one hell of a bloody noise. Of course, old Alec was madder than hell and wouldn't speak to him for months.

Although I think the Norwegians were the builders. They came.

Ruthie White: (inaudible)

Mr. White: Yes, they built fishboats and mills and shipyards and houses.

Ruthie White: (inaudible)