

Interview: Grace Stevens (GS)

Interviewers: Sean Griffin (SG) and Bailey Garden [BG]

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Transcription: Pam Moodie

SG [00:00:00] You're stating your full name, your birth date.

GS [00:00:05] Grace <unclear> Christine Hilland. Born February 26, 1923.

SG [00:00:11] I understand your name is actually, uh, because they couldn't pronounce the original Finnish. They anglicized it, eh. So what was your birth name in Finnish, you're Finnish name?

GS [00:00:22] <unclear>. And that means hilly land so my father had it Anglicized to Hilland.

SG [00:00:34] That makes sense, doesn't it? And that it almost seems...

GS [00:00:38] He came across and he worked his way through the United States, came up to Victoria and married my mother Borg Hill both in then Ucluelet in 1915 but they had some kind of, I think it was the first World War and they were giving out quarter sections in the, on the prairies. So. My father had a quarter section. I've given John, my son, a book called Quarter Stay Echoes about that time. So he had that information.

SG [00:01:17] So this quarter section of land was in Saskatchewan?

GS [00:01:21] Yes.

SG [00:01:22] And so after they got married here he went, you went. You went back to Saskatchewan?

GS [00:01:26] Yes they had. I don't know what the connection was there but then I can remember even my grandfather and grandmother <unclear> Olsen being there as well.

SG [00:01:37] In Saskatchewan?

GS [00:01:41] I remember visiting them there when I was smaller.

SG [00:01:44] So when your father met your mother here in Ucluelet, was she born here or was she from Norway originally herself?

GS [00:01:53] I'm not quite sure about that. I think maybe she was born here. I'm not quite sure.

SG [00:01:59] Oh, okay. But she was Norwegian, and he was Finnish.

GS [00:02:03] Yeah but I don't know hardly any Norwegian. All I know is god dag. (laughter) Yeah. That way, we lived in mostly Finnish communities, so I learned a little bit more Finnish than that.

SG [00:02:20] So when you picked up, your father pulled up stakes from Ucluelet and moved to where in Saskatchewan? Where did you have this land?

GS [00:02:29] Nine miles from the closest town. Shaunavon.

SG [00:02:35] Shaunavon.

GS [00:02:35] It was what they call the Palliser Triangle in the southwest, not too far from the Cypress Hills.

SG [00:02:42] Oh I see.

GS [00:02:43] And I remember going there down into the coulees when I was a child and they would pick Saskatoons, chokecherries and pin cherries and my mother would make the best chokecherry syrup for our pancakes.

SG [00:03:03] Those are the remembered, memories you hold on to, that's for sure. And so you had siblings as well, did you? Siblings? Brothers and Sisters?

GS [00:03:15] My oldest brother was Alfred Lowry after my cousin, my uncle Lowry in Finland. Ida, Helen Ida, after my Aunt Ida <unclear> in Finland and Karl Christian, Allison Alma, Alice Katherine. My mother <unclear> second name was Katherine so that name goes down in the family history. She has a daughter Katherine.

SG [00:03:49] Oh, I see, right.

GS [00:03:49] And then there .. Alma Marie. She was an artiste and Alice is more like me. I followed Alice's path. Alice is still alive in Oliver in a nursing home close to her oldest son Allen.

SG [00:04:12] Oliver, B.C. Right, I see.

GS [00:04:16] Yeah. And she is 96 now.

SG [00:04:21] 96.

GS [00:04:22] That's, my oldest brother Alfred is 101 and still alive in Kamloops. How about that?

SG [00:04:29] That is amazing. You obviously got good genes, that's for sure. So what was it like growing up in this? How old were you when you went to Shaunavon? Were you born there?

GS [00:04:41] All the other kids except my myself and my younger brother Harold were going to school, and I wanted so bad to go. I begged and I begged, and they finally let me go.

SG [00:04:55] Go to school?

GS [00:04:56] Yeah. It was about a mile walk, really cold in the wintertime.

SG [00:05:01] How old were you at this time?

GS [00:05:02] Almost six.

SG [00:05:04] Almost six, eh? so?

GS [00:05:06] And because it was, and they had two months off in the wintertime so they didn't have to heat the school. So we had two months off in the wintertime instead of the summer as they have in other schools. And only two weeks in the summer. And I could remember threshing time was one of my favourite times because all the threshermen would be there and my mother would keep one of us younger girls home to help her cook for the threshing crew.

SG [00:05:42] So was this a predominantly a Finnish community where you grew up?

GS [00:05:46] That was. I remember Navola Hall. And there was <unclear>. Those were Swede-Finns. (sigh) Now their names, gee.

SG [00:06:05] So was there any organized Finnish community there, was there a Finnish Hall there?

GS [00:06:09] Yeah it was Navola <unclear> Hall.

SG [00:06:12] Oh yeah.

SG [00:06:13] And it was the Finnish organization of Canada was it?

GS [00:06:16] Yeah.

SG [00:06:16] Right.

GS [00:06:19] Yeah, let me see.

GS [00:06:23] I don't remember all the names there. It's so long ago. But anyway, when I was twelve we came to B.C. He had a Model A Ford and he took us down through the States. We didn't have the proper Canadian. So I remember it was late October early November and I couldn't get over how everything was so green here.

SG [00:06:59] Well I guess you'd left Saskatchewan in the middle of the Depression.

GS [00:07:03] Yeah, yeah.

SG [00:07:04] And drought was..

GS [00:07:06] '35, yeah.

SG [00:07:07] Because couldn't couldn't make a living on the farm anymore?

GS [00:07:10] Very difficult.

SG [00:07:11] Yeah.

GS [00:07:13] But he knew somebody here by the name of Wepsala <unclear>. There was Gertie Wepsala who is a very famous skier. So anyway, he had rented a house at Webster's Corners. It was twice as big as the little house on the prairie. And there was a lot of cedar inside. I had never seen anything as beautiful and they had these beds with apples, and I felt I had died and gone to heaven. <laughter> They had apple pears, pear trees, cherry trees there you see, on the prairie we had gooseberries and all that kind of stuff. But we also had large gardens all the time and at our little house we had a cellar and we kept the potatoes, turnips and everything like that down in the cellar.

SG [00:08:12] So how did your father make a living in Webster's Corners then? Was he farming there as well?

GS [00:08:14] Well he, he farmed there, yeah. Grew wheat, rye, oats.

SG [00:08:23] Oh, really? I didn't realize that there was actually wheat growing in Webster's Corners.

GS [00:08:30] And I remember he had to cut the hay for the cows and horses and we would go and turn it and so on and help him with that.

SG [00:08:41] So, there was a Finnish Hall as well in Webster's Corners?

GS [00:08:46] Yes. That was Sampo Hall.

SG [00:08:48] Right. So was that part of your community? Do you remember going there as part of your cultural <unclear>.

GS [00:08:54] I remember a big guy by the name of Mono Hilbert. And there was the Katainnens. Theo, Viola, Kalmy, Tenho and Violet. There was Otto Skype and Leonard and Grant and Livy Ranta. I forget. Oh Hattie Bell. She had Peter and Ina. Ina played the piano and we used to sing with her and we would go to the Hall in Haney and do the sailors dance and so on.

SG [00:09:37] Oh, so you were doing Finnish dancing and that sort of thing there? So that really was part of the cultural life growing up?

GS [00:09:44] Yeah, then Peter married Olla Koffina.

SG [00:09:47] No. Now I see. And did your father get involved in fishing as many did? In Webster's Corners?

GS [00:09:54] Yes, when we came to BC he started fishing on the Fraser. He had a boat called the Putt Putt. And even my mother joined him and she had a fishing boat as well. I have a picture of her when she was fishing as well.

SG [00:10:20] So both of them were fishing the Fraser?

GS [00:10:23] Yes, and so was my oldest brother Alfred. Yeah.

SG [00:10:29] So you could qualify at that point as a fishing family, eh?

GS [00:10:32] Yeah right. My brother Alfred had also helped my Aunt Hilya and Johann <unclear> built a boarding house for the miners in Wells, Barkerville in, um, '41, '42. So Alice and I went with him, I forget if my brother Carl did but Alice and I stayed there and when Hilya and Johann had to come down to Vancouver, Alice and Mary cooked and did everything for the miners. One time Alice was washing dishes and this miner Gary Lamb came and talked to her. She said, if you want to be helpful dry the dishes. He did, so she married him.

BG [00:11:31] So were you getting paid to cook for the miners, or were you just up there? Were you getting paid for that, was that a paid job?

GS [00:11:33] Yeah. yeah.

BG [00:11:33] Great, great.

GS [00:11:43] Anyway.

SG [00:11:44] There were gold miners in Wells were there? yeah.

GS [00:11:48] Anyway. They were married in the Barkerville courthouse. I have a picture of us there. Yes. Yeah.

SG [00:11:58] So I understand your father was also, you had mentioned to me earlier that he was a member of the Workers Unity League.

GS [00:12:03] That's right, in the Prairies, yeah.

SG [00:12:03] In the Prairies he did that? So did he continue that? Did he become a member of the Fishermen's' Union here? in the 30s?

GS [00:12:04] Oh absolutely, yes,.

SG [00:12:04] Do you remember anything of that? of those times when you ...

GS [00:12:04] Well I remember going to the Finnish Hall and there were people talking about it and how they had to have better conditions and things like that. He was the ethical person of our family. He was a planner and a thinker and my mother executed everything so beautifully for him.

SG [00:12:42] Oh, I see, a good team.

GS [00:12:43] Yeah. So we had a wonderful family life, I really did. Yeah, yeah, but I was amazed at the mountains when we came to British Columbia. Wow! Nothing like that on the Prairies.

SG [00:13:00] No, it always astounds people from the Prairies to see the mountains. That's true. So, when your father was involved with the Fishermen's Union here. That's the only thing you remember was going to the meetings of the fishermen at the Finnish Hall? Did they ever have any strikes or anything on the river at that time?

GS [00:13:25] Not, not that I remember.

SG [00:13:27] No.

GS [00:13:27] But I remember going fishing with him on his boat. On the Fraser. So I liked boats as well.

SG [00:13:42] So he was a gillnetter, I presume, was it?

GS [00:13:44] Yeah. Yeah.

SG [00:13:46] Then your mother did the same? She ran her own boat as well?

GS [00:13:52] Um, hm.

SG [00:13:52] Also a gillnetter?

GS [00:13:52] Um, hm. She wasn't very tall but she was very strong. Yeah. Yes that's my grandmother and grandfather on my Norwegian side.

SG [00:14:07] So you'd mentioned also that you were, ah ...

GS [00:14:07] He was a boat builder.

SG [00:14:10] Oh, I see. OK.

GS [00:14:18] And. I remember when Ida was building her house he came and helped her build it. Around Websters Corners, yeah. And when he came there he bought 40 acres, so, all of, some of us kids got five acres from him. I remember Alfred did. He had been in the war and he went back and he married Pat Rancel had brought her over to Canada. What she thought of this big country, I don't know.

SG [00:14:52] But so, that's interesting. So your father who had remained in Finland then came over and joined the family here in Webster's Corner? That was.

GS [00:15:04] I have pictures of Alf, Karl and me and they are, if you want to see them.

SG [00:15:11] Sure, sure. (pause while Grace brings pictures)

SG [00:15:21] (looking at pictures) ..this was earlier when they joined the army.

GS [00:15:23] This is the second world war.

SG [00:15:25] Right. Right.

GS [00:15:25] He was in the army. Karl was in the RCAF in Mont-Joli Quebec. and this is me in the Canadian Women's Army Corps.

SG [00:15:38] Oh, I see. That's something, eh? 000000

BG [00:15:38] So, did you, uh, sign up to join, or?

GS [00:15:46] I signed up in the old Vancouver Hotel on November 10th, 1944, but I was only in there a year and a half. But we had to go up to St Mary's Primary and have a

complete medical to make sure we were okay. Then we were shipped by train to Kitchener, Ontario for six weeks basic training. And it was Christmas time so Karl and I were going to meet in Montreal. On the train I talked to this woman. She wasn't in my platoon but she said my people are empty nesters, come and stay with us. So we did and they treated us just like family. It was wonderful, yeah. And then from there I was posted to London, Ontario to work for District Dental Corps number one in administration. There, the colonel was a retired dentist. The 2 I/C, or the second in command was Captain Smith from Guelph, Ontario. He would come in barking orders, ha ha ha, and my job was to type out orders of the day, about once a week to make any change in staff personnel. We had to do them on stencils and run them off at the time and they had these huge brown envelopes that they used over and over again to save paper.

SG [00:17:31] Yeah. So you had got some training in office training in school?

GS [00:17:37] Yes I followed Alice <unclear>d in Vancouver.

SG [00:17:39] Right.

GS [00:17:40] I went to the same business school she did and I took a separate secretarial course in shorthand, typing, filing and some bookkeeping.

SG [00:17:52] Oh, I see, right. And so you use that training in the wartime work and, as I understand, you also used it when you went to work in the union office after the war?

GS [00:18:05] Yeah.

SG [00:18:06] Tell me about that a bit.

GS [00:18:09] Well, I. I used to play basketball. So our ref was Bob Strum. So we started dating a bit once in a while. But nothing came of that.

SG [00:18:25] Right.

GS [00:18:26] And I finally came back to BC and my brother Alfred picked me up. I had got a bicycle and had been biking all around. So anyway, after the war he, he built a house close to my Mom and Dad's little log house. But it was a much bigger house. A lot of the children had got five acres from him. Karl <unclear> I know. I asked to be demobilized early because Karl was getting married to Annie in April, so they sent me home. So I came back and my aunt Hilja lived in Vancouver at the time with Johann up in the attic with my friend from high school, Julie, and we kept in touch all the time until she died about five years ago.

SG [00:19:35] So how did you come to, you, you'd mentioned to me earlier that you'd worked in the IWA Local 1-71 office?

GS [00:19:42] Oh yeah.

SG [00:19:43] How did you, how did you land that job?

GS [00:19:45] When I came back, I worked for Vancouver City Health Department and we had to, I'd took a little bit of dictation but I also had to write monthly reports about salmonella and things like that. But I didn't have enough to do, I was bored. So this Gladys

said well the IWA had been on strike and they need someone to do some typing, so I did. So I was hired by the IWA Local 1-71 there was John McCuish, Neils Madsen, hiring hall was Don Barber.

SG [00:20:26] And there was the loggers local? Right.

GS [00:20:29] And there I looked after the membership, took dues over the counter, looked after the membership and I was a happy camper. I was busy and I really liked it. That was when I met my future husband Homer. He had been, he and about 90 young people had been to the first World Youth Festival in Prague Czechoslovakia in '47. Halfway through, this woman gave up, so he was elected Commandant of the Beaver Brigade.

SG [00:21:06] Which was the Canadian Brigade, right?

GS [00:21:10] Yeah. So when they came back there was a bunch of them. One was Glenn Thomas, I remember from Vancouver and others. Anyway my father was having something at the Finnish Hall at Webster's Corners and he couldn't go he said well, I'll phone Homer, he was, Homer was the organizer for the fishermen's union at the time so I phoned him and he said it was Saturday night and I said what are you doing Saturday night. "All I can, the easy ones twice." Ha, ha. Anyway I told him Glenn Thomas couldn't come. Would it be possible? he reluctantly agreed. So my younger brother Harold had a Chrysler rumble seat so he took us there. I don't think he got it why Homer and I talked all the way. We were on the same page on so many issues.

SG [00:22:09] What were some of those issues?

GS [00:22:10] Better prices, better wages, better conditions for working, all about unions and stuff.

SG [00:22:20] I guess you would become more familiar with this working with the IWA.

GS [00:22:24] So we talked all the way out and he stayed overnight and same thing going back the next day. So, so he said, what are you doing tomorrow night, I'm going to Tim Buck's meeting. At the time, he was the head of the Communist Party in BC at the Hastings auditorium. So I said I would. He said I'll see you there. And that was the start of our <laughter>

SG [00:22:50] You were on the same page as that as well. I see.

GS [00:22:56] So was, in three months we decided to get married. So we got married April the 30th, 1948. At first we were just renting places and, after four months I became pregnant so he borrowed money from his Uncle Peter and <unclear> and bought a house on Triumph Street in Vancouver, not far from the Hastings Forum.

SG [00:23:28] So had you continued to work for the IWA at this time, after you got married?

GS [00:23:31] Um, for a while.

SG [00:23:35] But I guess they, were typically, once you got pregnant you weren't allowed to continue?

GS [00:23:40] Right, I was home. And my older sister Ida was like a surrogate mother to me. She helped me with everything, any problem I had I'd go to Ida and she and I were very, very close. Yeah.

SG [00:23:57] And so then you had a whole bunch of boys fairly quickly?

GS [00:24:01] Yeah. Bruce first. John a year later. Finally figured out what to do, so it wasn't till, about two and a half years later we had Nicholas. That was it, but then I thought it would be kind of nice if I had a daughter so, I went off the pill and I finally had Barbara.

SG [00:24:24] Right. So that must have been pretty difficult. You were somebody who had been working in the trade union office, you always wanted to be busy. Well now you were suddenly at home by yourself with three kids.

GS [00:24:39] Yeah. In '48 they had their convention and I was part of a youth group. There were five of us who went to Toronto to the National Federation of Labour Union Convention and who is there but Bill Stewart who had married Dora a friend of mine.

SG [00:25:05] Oh, Dora was a friend of yours.

GS [00:25:07] Yes, and I stayed at the Endicott in Toronto. That was very enlightening to be, all the young people who were into unions, community work and all the rest of it.

SG [00:25:26] So I guess this was a new thing for you.

GS [00:25:28] It was very inspiring for me, very inspiring.

SG [00:25:33] So this convention was before you got married or after.

GS [00:25:37] Yeah.

SG [00:25:37] Before you got married. Yeah.

SG [00:25:39] So after you got married and you're now home what with your kids.

GS [00:25:42] Yeah.

SG [00:25:44] And Homer's off organizing, he's away from home. Well, it must have been, must have been, very tough.

GS [00:25:48] Yeah, he was away a lot. Then after two years he, that was the year that he was elected Secretary Treasurer. Yes, he was away a lot. But I had good family and good friends. Although I did have a bit of a nervous breakdown and I was in the hospital in Vancouver and my kids came to see me and I thought I'd better get better and look after them. So I did. I went to a shrink. He said "Yes, you need other things beside the home. You need other things to, people to work with. So I went back to work part time and that started working for me. Eventually I got a full-time job at the Operating Engineers.

SG [00:26:49] Oh, I see.

GS [00:26:56] Union. And, I used to look after the certifications and agreements for all the people, you know, all the people there. Then they found out who Homer was, who my husband was, and Mike Parr, it was more of a business union, so they sent me downstairs to the welfare plan instead.

SG [00:27:19] Be a little less visible I guess. I see ..

GS [00:27:22] Yeah, so there I looked after pensions and things like that. There were quite a few of us from there.

BG [00:27:34] So was that, were you working there in the 50s, is that right, at the Operating Engineers? Or was that later?

GS [00:27:40] That was later, 60s, 70s. Yeah yeah yeah. So they I was away for a week and they had a problem. So, a bunch of them are quitting. So, I agreed with them and I quit with them. Well they phoned me back to come back, phoned me to come, but I said no way, because it was my good friends the ones who believed in real trade unionism, who was let go. So I refused. From there I was hired by the B.C. Provincial Council of Carpenters and there again I looked after the certifications and agreements with all the different locals, sub-locals.

SG [00:28:26] So you were also a member of your own union at that time.

GS [00:28:29] I was in Office and Technical Employees Union. And one time I was elected Trustee, we would go over all the books. Another time I was part of a negotiating committee and some of, for trade unions, so they were very, very close so I mentioned to Homer that it would just take a little bit. About a week later there was an agreement with them.

SG [00:29:04] Oh, I see. A little, little inside work on negotiations. Well this is also a time when when being married to Homer the information, I guess. (phone rings)

GS [00:29:16] Yeah.

GS [00:29:18] The Women's Auxiliary Council and the Congress of Canadian Women, the Vancouver chapter sent me to the World Congress of Women in Helsinki and, um, back in '67 there had been a Royal Commission on the Status of Women that opened my eyes really wide. So I used to go to Sears in Vancouver and I wanted to get a Sears card. Well, they wanted to know what my husband did. I said what's the matter with my, I'm, I'm working, I'm making money. Well, I finally compromised and decided to get it. But I let them know in no uncertain terms that I was just as able to have it as my husband would because I believed in equality.

SG [00:30:17] Right.

GS [00:30:18] Why women shouldn't get as much money as men do when they work.

SG [00:30:22] So did you finally get the card? Did they give it to you on the basis of your income?

GS [00:30:28] Yeah.

SG [00:30:28] Oh that's good. Yeah, that was that was a small blow struck for consumer freedom, eh?

GS [00:30:37] Yeah, (laughs)

BG [00:30:40] Can you tell us a little bit more about the Women's Auxiliary? What sort of things you guys would do or organize? Yeah.

GS [00:30:46] Yeah. Well I mean, why shouldn't we get the same wages as men, when we do the work that, you know. So I really did believe that and I've worked for it all my life. Yeah.

SG [00:31:01] You have a journal here too called The Mermaid.

GS [00:31:07] Yeah.

SG [00:31:08] That you produced for the Women's Auxiliary.

GS [00:31:12] <unclear>

SG [00:31:13] How often was this published?

GS [00:31:20] Uh, about two, maybe three times a year or so. Just to let all the different auxiliaries know what was going on and keep us informed.

GS [00:31:27] And there were Auxiliaries sort of up and down the coast connected with the Central Council.

GS [00:31:34] Yeah. Yeah. It's called The Mermaid, <laughter>.

SG [00:31:37] Do you remember how long that went? What years? When did you first start putting it out, in the '60s?

GS [00:31:45] Yeah. 60s, 70s, 80s. Yeah.

SG [00:31:48] And then it continued on.

GS [00:31:50] Yeah that was the...

SG [00:31:51] This went on through 1975.

GS [00:31:53] And then Homer decided to retire in '77. He was getting cranky. The pressure was getting to him so he decided to quit and go fishing again.

SG [00:32:13] Uh, hm.

GS [00:32:14] So, at first he rented one from Cassiar. Later the PE II from B.C. Packers. He finally had enough money to buy it so he bought it and he renamed it the Emma after his Cowichan grandmother Emma.

SG [00:32:39] Then you went fishing with him.

GS [00:32:41] I did. I went fishing with him, '79, '80 and '81 as his deckhand. And then I decided that was enough.

SG [00:32:52] So you became a full-fledged member of the UFAWU at that time?

GS [00:32:56] Yeah <unclear>. They had it converted it into a gillnet trawler. I remember trawling off Dundas Island and I didn't quite go the right way so we got caught and I, I, (pause) we caught a great, big Ling cod, so that made up for part of it.

SG [00:33:19] What you steered in the wrong direction, had you?

GS [00:33:19] Yeah.

SG [00:33:19] Oh, I see. Just, just to back up a little bit, you know one of the big events in the labour movement was when Homer and Steve Stavenes were jailed for contempt of court during the trawl strike.

GS [00:33:43] And then being in jail for about a year added about, I think about ten years to his life when he came back because he did physical work. He was physically and mentally so much healthier for doing that. So, in that sense they almost did him a favour.

SG [00:34:05] But what was it like for you being at home, while, you know, your husband's in prison now. And you're trying to work, you've got kids at home who are still relatively young.

GS [00:34:14] Well, my oldest son Bruce was old enough to drive at the time so he used to, they were going to send them to Vancouver Island and they went. They refused to work so they put them in the hole. So they finally sent them to Chilliwack Valley. So that's where they worked in forestry and they became much more healthier because of that, because of the physical work and everything else.

BG [00:34:45] So your son would go visit him then with his car? Did you guys ever go to visit? Were you allowed to go visit him?

GS [00:34:52] Yeah.

SG [00:34:53] And so Bruce would drive you out there. Bruce would drive out there, to take you out there?

GS [00:34:58] Yeah.

SG [00:34:58] But what was it like? Because, I know the labour movement was supporting him but it must have been difficult.

GS [00:35:06] Yeah.

SG [00:35:06] Did you have difficulties at home or at work with this?

GS [00:35:10] No, not too bad, but um. They first sent him to Victoria to Wilkinson or something and I had a letter for him and, thank goodness I took it out of my purse because they took my purse away and I had it in my coat pocket. So I gave him this letter here.

SG [00:35:29] Oh, I see.

BG [00:35:30] Sometimes they give you trouble.

GS [00:35:30] I did like to visit him <unclear>.

SG [00:35:34] Yeah.

GS [00:35:35] Yeah. That was John Stanton, one of them, who was our lawyer.

SG [00:35:41] Right. (pause) So you did, there was no, you didn't see any, any difficulties from having to be the single mother of parents and what not, with your husband in jail? That was life as usual, or?

GS [00:35:57] No, I had a lot of good family and friends.

SG [00:36:00] Right.

GS [00:36:00] Who helped me through everything. I feel very lucky to have such a good family and friends, I really do.

SG [00:36:10] Where were you working yourself at the time, were you? That's when you were at the Operating Engineers or was that, or were you with the Carpenters by this time, 1967.

GS [00:36:28] Hm, (pause) I forget exactly. (pause) Probably the Operating Engineers. I think so. Yeah.

GS [00:36:39] Then you were still working. Kind of less visible in the, in the welfare office.

GS [00:36:44] Yeah, yeah.

BG [00:36:45] Do you think that maybe had something to do with it? Like you said they kind of figured out who Homer was and moved you around a little bit?

GS [00:36:57] Yeah.

BG [00:36:58] Well, it probably helped, uh, since you had met and bonded over union and all those sort of things, you know you could support him through all those sorts of events. You knew that he was fighting for the right thing.

GS [00:37:09] Yeah, yeah.

SG [00:37:11] So looking back on your life from the vantage point of 94 ...

[00:37:20] I'm quite satisfied that I've done the best I can...

SG [00:37:22] Right.

GS [00:37:26] ... for the working people who were and make all the money for the big corporations etc..

SG [00:37:34] And so when you talk to your kids you say that's the life I had and that's something that you should stand for as well?

GS [00:37:42] Yeah, as a matter of fact our oldest son Bruce was elected to the executive of the Fishermen's union as well. So he understood it, and so did John. Nicholas, on the other side, it's a little this way that way.

SG [00:37:59] But he's the vice president of the Union now so obviously it's, the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree.

GS [00:38:05] Nicholas also works for the BC Ferries shipyard so he's a member of that union as well.

SG [00:38:14] Right, and so that union culture is still very much part of the family's culture.

GS [00:38:21] Yeah, yeah, but he's big and blond, so I call him Hagar the Horrible.
<laughter>

GS [00:38:36] 0000He's blond and blue eyed like myself.

SG [00:38:36] Right.

GS [00:38:37] Yeah.

SG [00:38:38] It's interesting your family. They go in two different directions. The one following ...

GS [00:38:44] Yeah, John and Barbara are darker like Homer and Bruce is sort of in-between but Nicholas is very blond like me.

BG [00:38:52] Well so I have a question. What about .. you said your whole life you were trying to fight for women and for women to get paid equally and all that sort of stuff. What do you think about for young women nowadays? Should they get involved in a union? Would you, would you encourage young women to get involved in the union, or ?

GS [00:39:11] Absolutely.

BG [00:39:12] You think it's important stuff?

GS [00:39:14] Yeah absolutely I would and I would certainly encourage everybody to join their union because that's the only way you get better working conditions, better wages, better prices for your fish and all the rest of it. ... I certainly do. Yeah, and I'm happy that I spent my life in that, doing that. Yeah.

SG [00:39:43] I think that's a good note to wrap up on.

BG [00:39:47] Yeah, I think that's good too.