

Heritage Alive

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW with

Miss May McLachlan of Chilliwack, B. C.

By - Rev. R. J. Love, August 2nd., 1977.

LXXIII

Side #1

- Born in Manitoba on a farm in Community of Pipestone in 1895.
- Early education in Pipestone, then in Brandon College where she obtained her B. A. Degree.
- Took Normal Training for a teacher and taught school for 4 years.
- 1922, went to United Church Training School in Toronto and at end of year was sent to Japan.
- Taught English in Mission High Schools while studying the Japanese language.
- After end of first year was sent to Mission School at Shizuoka as a teacher.
- 1928, after first term came home and went back in 1929.
- After returning to Japan was sent to Kofu to teach Mission School and help with kindergarten work where she stayed for next term of six years.
- Came home during the war in 1942.
- Arrangement made by International Red Cross between America, Canada and Japan for exchange of prisoners, 1510 altogether. Taken in Japanese boats to Africa to Lorenza Marks and transferred to the Gripsholm which brought them back to Canada.
- 1943, while on furlough was given chance to work in B. C. in one of the evacuation camps at Tashme, near Hope, teaching High School boys and girls until August of 1945.
- 1947, after war, went back to Japan to Shizuoka, which was in ruins after war.
- Sent to Highbara for 5 years trying to revive and get the church going.
- Did five terms in Japan until 1963. Went in 1924 and came home finally in 1963.
- The Church in Japan today, what of the future?

Side #2

- Returned from Japan and came to Chilliwack to live with sister, but was sent out on deputation work which took her right across Canada for a year, then back to Chilliwack and then helped the Soowahlie Indian Church on the Soowahlie Reserve.

Rev. R. J. Love interviewing Miss May McLachlan at Chilliwack, B. C.
on August 2nd., 1977.

Bert: Now May, we would like you to tell us just a little bit about your origin, where you were born and so on.

May: I was born in Manitoba on a little country farm in 1895. My father and mother were pioneers in that district.

Bert: Now that community was Pipestone?

May: Yes, a little town - -

Bert: And I was born just a few miles away at Melita, Manitoba.

May: Well!

Bert: Now you went to school in Pipestone?

May: Yes, I went through what we called public school in those days and also got the first two years of high school. That being an Intermediate School they didn't give the last year of high school, nor did they teach french and latin, so after I had finished school and wanted to go to college, I had to, in some way, get the latin and french and another year of high school. I was very fortunate, the principal offered to help me, and so because of his kindness, I was able to get that and to get my entrance to college, and also the minister encouraged me very much.

Bert: What was his name?

May: His name was Rev. A. R. Maunders.

Bert: I remember him. He was the minister of Melita as well. And whereabouts did you go to college then?

May: I went to Brandon College. It was near and it was a small college and I now appreciate very much.

Bert: And you graduated from there?

May: In 1917.

Bert: That is with your Bachelor of Arts?

May: Yes.

Bert: Now did you go to the United Church Training School after you graduated?

May: No, not actually. I took my normal and then taught for actually four years, two years in Pipestone and two years in Virden Collegiate, and then I went in 1922 to the United Church Training School in Toronto.

Bert: Oh yes. Do you remember who was the principal of the school at that time?

May: Miss Winnifred Thomas.

- Bert: Oh yes, I remember her. It was in the years when she was in the training school when I first met her, and then afterwards she took other positions in the United Church. O. K. then, how long were you in the training school then?
- May: Just one year. Graduates were given one year while high school graduates were given two years, so I was only there the one year.
- Bert: Then at the end of that year, where did you go?
- May: I was sent to Japan.
- Bert: I see. You were a missionary to Japan. Were you commissioned in Canada?
- May: Actually in our little Pipestone Church where I had grown up.
- Bert: And the whole community of where you had grown up would be there I would presume.
- May: Yes.
- Bert: Now when you went to Japan, what was your job there, what did you do, what did you go for?
- May: Well, I went to teach really in Mission High Schools. They had asked for a teacher, and that is what I did during my first term. I did a certain amount of teaching, and most of the time spent in studying the language.
- Bert: You were teaching in English then?
- May: Teaching in English, yes.
- Bert: And at the end of your term when you learned the language, where did you go then?
- May: Well actually, at the end of the first year they sent me out to Shizuoka to our mission school there in that city. And so my last four years, were my first five years term for Shizuoka, and there I studied language and taught in the school, and taught English.
- Bert: What was your job in the town of Shizuoka?
- May: Just as a teacher.
- Bert: I see.
- May: After my first term I came home in 1928 and went back in 1929. I was supposed to go to Shizuoka and continue there in the school but a change in mission plans sent me to another city, Kofu, which is a city on the other side of Mount Fuji, and there I was to help teach part time in the school, a mission school there, and part time help with kindergarten work. I stayed there for the next term of six years, and I did many kinds of work in the school.
- Bert: Now did you do any pastoral work as well?
- May: I did not do pastoral work exactly in one sense, I had Bible classes, I helped in the kindergarten, and through that started

what we might call, day nurseries in country villages just during the rice planting season. That gave me a lot of contacts that were very interesting.

Bert: How many terms did you spend in Japan?

May: I did five altogether, until 1963. I went in 1924 and I came home finally in 1963.

Bert: You would come home, I suppose, during the war?

May: Yes, I came home during the war, I came home in 1942. The war started in 1941.

Bert: That would be your third term then?

May: Yes, my third term.

Bert: Now were you interned in Japan?

May: Yes, I guess that is what you would call it. I was in a sense, under house arrest too. I lived in my own rooms and wasn't allowed to go out.

Bert: And did you have any contact with your school or the Japanese people during that time?

May: Those who came to visit me. You see it was a difficult time, perhaps I should have said that during the year before the war, word had come from the church here at home advising us to return, and each time the missionaries met and decided, and each time some decided to go home and some decided to stay. It was a difficult decision, because if you stayed you could become a real embarrassment to Japanese christians who could be accused of having dealings with the enemy. On the other hand, if you stayed you could witness to the fact that we are brothers, whether it is war or peace.

Bert: That's right. And how did you happen to come home then, was there some kind of exchange?

May: There was an arrangement made by the International Red Cross between America, Canada and Japan for the exchange of prisoners, and there were 1510 of us exchanged for 1510 Japanese living here in America and Canada. Now the 1510 of us were not all from Japan, but from Korea and China as well.

Bert: How did you travel home?

May: We were taken in Japanese boats to Africa, to Lorenza Marks, and there we were transferred to the Gripsholm which brought us via South America, back to Canada.

Bert: I remember George King was on that boat. He was a missionary in China at that time.

May: Yes, I don't remember meeting him, but I do remember the United Church missionaries from Korea, and Dr. Murray, Beulah Bournes, Dr. Scott and several others.

Bert: Is that the Dr. Scott who later became the Moderator?
May: No, I think not.

Bert: That was another one. Were there any other missionaries from British Columbia?

May: Not that I remember. There were two of our Women's Missionary Society in those days, Miss Hamilton, Gertrude Hamilton, and Miss John, we called her John, - - -, were with me, but actually they were from the east, but they lived later out here.

Bert: Well now, even though this was just half way through your term, you would be on furlough for awhile?
May: Yes.

Bert: How did you spend your furlough?

May: Well, I decided when I got home that I would do some studying, and I went back to Toronto, that was the beginning of January in 1942, in 1943, I mean, and there I was given the chance to come back to British Columbia and work in one of the Japanese evacuation camps, and the reason for that was, that the Japanese, as we all know, were put into these camps and no arrangements were made for the education of their children. So the church took up that problem with the government, but got no answers really, and so they decided to do that themselves, and just at that time I arrived in Toronto and they asked me if I would go to Tashme, nearest to Vancouver, just fourteen miles above Hope, B. C. in the mountains, and so I turned around and came back.

Bert: And you were paid by the church for teaching?

May: Yes, I was still a missionary. We were paid even though we were home on furlough.

Bert: But it wasn't a government job?

May: Oh no, it was church.

Bert: And I suppose you had children of all ages, did you?

May: No, I just had the high school boys and girls. Young Japanese men and women in the camp had organized a public school and were carrying on as best they could, but there was nothing for nearly 100 high school boys and girls who were out of school, so we organized them into classes and took over the rooms that the primary school used in the day. We began work at half past four and went until nine at night, and that was our high school boys and girls.

Bert: Were there other teachers in the high school?

May: Yes. At first the Department of Education here in B. C.

Dr. Lucas, was instrumental in getting permission for us to use the Correspondence Courses, and we got those courses for Grades 9, 10 and 11, organized into classes, and they used them, and gradually others were sent in to help us, for instance, Miss Greenbank, who had also returned from Japan, she came. Dr. Ernie Best, who was in a camp on the Island, came over, and Jim Williams was another, and another one was Winnifred McBride. She is now Winnifred Olenack. All these came in and we had a high school going.

Bert: Now was there anything else planned for the young people in Tashme?

May: Well, they did their planning for themselves actually. The young people organized dances, games and so on, but when we got the high school going, the high school boys and girls really organized all kinds of not only games, but concerts and special study groups and many interesting things.

Bert: They were quite resourceful?

May: Oh, very.

Bert: Now were they bitter at all about the action that had been taken against them?

May: Yes, many were, and many were not, and that was the amazing thing. I felt it was very amazing that they had as little bitterness that they had, because it was a great injustice. It was a hard experience for them.

Bert: Was David Suzuki one of the boys that you knew in the camp?

May: No, he was in another camp.

Bert: I remember hearing him tell about the fact that he insisted that he was a Canadian, not a Japanese, and many of them would feel that way, I am sure.

May: Yes.

Bert: Now what about the adults? Go ahead.

May: I was going to say that I wouldn't have said so much that they insisted they were Canadians, but I felt in our high school boys and girls, there was an amazing belief that in spite of being Japanese Canadians, and in spite of what we just ordinary Canadians had done to them, that there was no deep difference. That the future depended upon them, both the Japanese in a sense seeing themselves as people, and for the Canadians too, to see themselves as people that were all brothers, I was very much impressed with young people who could see that and feel that both for themselves and for us.

Bert: Now what about the adults. What plans were made for the adults?

May: Well, we, one morning in April just towards the end, in 1945 it was, there appeared on the Bulletin boards saying that all Japanese had to decide whether they were going to return to Japan or to stay in Canada, and that they had 10 days to make a decision, and that if they decided to stay in Canada, they would have to leave the camp immediately, that is within two months, I believe it was, they would have to leave and go east of the Rockies. That was almost an impossible decision to make, because how could you promise to go back to Japan, how could you promise to go east to the Rockies in a world that felt the way that it did about you? It was very difficult. At that time many of the older Japanese signed to go back to Japan, in fact, most of them did I believe, because they couldn't help it, but then - -

Bert: That was really a black spot on Canadian history!

May: Well, yes, in a sense, in another sense I have always felt proud of what the church did, because there were those in the church who said 'this is not just' and a Japanese in the camp heard of it, and a small Japanese committee wrote a letter asking that this decision by the Government be reversed and that they be given a chance to stay, and asking the Christians throughout Canada to support them. That letter was written and we sent out 10,000 copies, and they went to all the Anglicans and all United Churches, and the result of that was, I believe, it had a real influence on the government. That order was changed, and later the Japanese were allowed to reverse their decision. Even so, several thousands went home.

Bert: Several thousand went back to Japan and many of them, of course, went to eastern Canada, did they not?

May: Yes, and that again was another place where the church helped too, because where would they go, who would want them to live beside them, who would give them work, and so, we who were in the camp, contacted the church in eastern Canada and so many church people helped, that a great many of them were able to find places in the east.

Bert: Now many of them would have to change their occupation, wouldn't they because they were fishermen on the coast?

May: Yes, they just had to take any thing they could get, because they had lost everything.

Bert: Do you know anything about what they did when they went east, did they get any training for new jobs?

May: Not that I know of, unless they themselves were able to take training. For the high school boys and girls, we tried to get them into schools in the east, and so many of them became doctors and nurses and what not.

Bert: Now coming back to Tashme, did they have a church in Tashme and a minister?

May: We didn't have a Japanese minister in Tashme. Rev. McWilliams - -

Bert: W. R. McWilliams?

May: Yes, Dr. McWilliams who from the very first befriended them and did much to help them when they were brought from the coast to the camp, and then afterwards. He came up every Sunday.

Bert: He didn't live in Tashme? He was living in Crescent at that time, was he not?

May: I think he was living in Vancouver at that time, later at Crescent.

Bert: Now were there any Japanese ministers in camp?

May: One who became a minister afterwards, Rev. Ono, who just recently retired.

Bert: Yoshio Ono, I remember him.

May: He was a young man in camp then.

Bert: Were there any other ministers of other churches that were involved?

May: Yes, the Anglican was also involved. The United Church provided the high school, and the Anglican Church provided kindergarten, so there were four Anglican missionaries working there and three of us. We all worked together.

Bert: Very good! Now do you remember the names of the Anglican missionaries?

May: Yes. One was Rev. Gale who lived as Mr. McWilliams did in Vancouver and commuted out. And Helen Bailey was another one who did largely church work in Vancouver. Then there was Francis Hawkins, and May Walker, who were the kindergarten teachers. And in our part, Miss Ryan, Esther Ryan, she did work among the people, and Miss Greenbank, and the ones I mentioned. We worked largely with the high school boys and girls, but on Sundays we came together. I can remember a Sunday service, the first one that I went to when Rev. McWilliams led it, and a little group of eight or ten older Japanese gathered. One man, a Mr. Eddie, had been a gardener in Vancouver, and had offered when he left, he had sent some of his prize new plants to the mayor when he was sent out there. I saw that old man sitting there in that church service and I'll never forget it when that first hymn that we sang was 'Unto the hills around do I lift up my longing eyes. Oh whence for me shall my salvation come' and so on. And the old man sang it. I can still see the look on his face. It was a great experience for me to be with people like that.

Bert: Now these people were not allowed to come back to Vancouver were they?

May: No.

Bert: And how long were you in Tashme?

May: I was there until August of 1945.

Bert: You'd be there about four years then?
May: Three years and a half.

Bert: Now then, what happened after that, after the camp broke up what did you do?
May: I had a year and a half here on my furlough and also a few months in hospital.

Bert: Then you went back to Japan?
May: Yes, I went back to Japan.

Bert: And where did you go when you went back to Japan?
May: I went back to Shizuoka.

Bert: This was where you were before?
May: This was where I was before.

Bert: And that would be about 1947, and how did you find things in Shizuoka, was there much war damage?
May: Well, our city had been burned to the ground. There was very little of it left. It was a city then of about 200,000, and there was very little of it left, so I - - -

Bert: You wouldn't have buildings to go back to that you had had before?
May: No, our school was burnt and things around the area, so I helped dig up the ruins.

Bert: Now did they rebuild?
May: Yes.

Bert: Then did you do the same kind of work when you went back?
May: At that time my main piece of work was, besides trying to help them, these people, where I could, was the connecting of Bible classes in the evenings, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and some, about 300 University students form a University near us, and young people came to those classes. I had never had classes like that before. They were just desperate.

Bert: Now when you went back I suppose you would have to take supplies and all that sort of thing with you?
May: Yes. The only condition on which we were allowed to return was if we took all that we needed for a year, and it was difficult trying to decide how much salt you would need for a year. But in any case, we took back, and I was a little ashamed when I arrived there and saw what had happened to food, we used to have all this food coming in, so the only thing to do was to be glad to share it.

Bert: Did you find any of the same people that you had known before?
May: Yes, there were people there, old friends, some of them gone, some families gone and so on.

Bert: And had they continued the church work while the war was on or hadn't they been able to do that?

May: I don't know whether you call it church work, in a sense that we speak of church work. It was quite impossible, but they carried on their christian life that they prayed together, they met and worshipped together in ruins, wherever they were, and also that they witnessed during that time. It might be interesting if I just added this, for instance, one of the American bombers that came over the city was downed, and the young man whose body was found, and the name found, they took him and buried him and gave him a christian burial, and kept the name, and when I was there they found out his parents and sent the word. So their christian spirits stayed although doing church work in our sense.

Bert: Yes. Now would they have had any Japanese minister, christian ministers in that community?

May: Oh yes. It was an old community. They had had the church there, the first missionaries came in.

Side B

Bert: Now will you continue May and tell us a little bit more about the church in that community?

May: It was started in the closing years of the 19th century, actually by a Canadian doctor, Dr. MacDonald, so it was an old church.

Bert: Now you had church services of course. Did you take part in the church services or were they conducted by the Japanese ministers?

May: Oh yes, the Japanese ministers, were ministers for at least, counting all denominations, I would say, there were at least ten churches and ten ministers in that whole area, so we worked with them in the church. I might say this about it, that you might understand it better. Up until the war, we as a mission, met and made our plans, and we were assigned by the mission, that if we wanted to start a kindergarten or do some new type of work, we planned it, and did it, as it were. It is true we reported to the church, but from the time of the war, and before that, that was beginning to change, and after the war, we didn't even return to Japan without the permission of the church in Japan, and after that we were always invited there. We were given our work. If we had a new idea we brought it up in the church councils the same as any other christian did, and it was worked over. It was a splendid change, and I enjoyed very much that part of our work during the last 20 years that I was in Japan. So the little church in Shizuoka, you see,

it started up, I was simply working there. For instance I taught the Bible Class in the Sunday School, and I had groups of young people in the city who didn't come to church in connection with kindergartens and that sort of thing where I taught Bible.

Bert: I thought of you when we drove through Shizuoka. I remembered you had been there. Now the church in that community as in all communities in Japan would be a small minority, would it not?

May: Yes, a very small minority. Even today 1% of the population is christian, it is a very small minority.

Bert: But they would be a self-supporting church?

May: Yes. There are self-supporting churches and there are churches that the Japanese church assists, just the same as here in Canada.

Bert: Now you stayed in Shizuoka until you retired, is that right?

May: No, not actually. I had during the end of my first term after the war, I was at a meeting of the church conference in which it was said that the church in Japan must move out into the country and that too many people were working in the cities and not out in the country villages, and that was true even of the missionaries. I thought then that perhaps what God wanted me to do was to go to the country, so I told the church I was willing to go, and would like to go, so they arranged that when I came back from furlough in 1953, that I would go to a country village and live in the country, and that was the last ten years that I was in Japan, and I lived in that village.

Bert: What was the name of it?

May: Highbara, is the name of it now. I was there in Highbara for five years. It just happened that in that church, in that village, there had been a church. It had been founded by a missionary, many, many, years ago, and then before the war it had fallen into disuse, and during the war the ministers in the city near it, had taken two of their older women workers, evangelists, to live in that village, and so they sent me out there to try and revive the little church.

Bert: What was your work there?

May: Well, it was just to try and get the church going. There was no minister. There were only five christians left and so we worked together.

Bert: Now were there any special needs in that community that you had to meet?

May: I would say the first need that we, as a little group, felt was, to rebuild that church and so we tried in every way we could to develop our little church and our young people, and so I did it through helping high school boys and girls with

their English and so becoming friends. Also it was a farming area and the women during the rice planting season worked in the fields and had no one to look after the babies and so we started doing that and so on.

Bert: When we were there we met Bob McWilliams, W. R. McWilliam's son, and he is working with the Presbyterian church, and he was organizing an institution there for handicapped people. We found that a very very interesting part of the christian witness of the church.

May: That happened in this village. I was there for five years and by that time there were 19 christians, and they decided to call a minister. They called one of the young men who had become a christian after the war in one of those Bible classes. He came, then I moved to the next little village and lived there, and now in that town there is a church with between 60 and 70 members and they have not only a minister that they recently had, but an assistant minister because they have developed a piece of work for the severely retarded, and they have a large institution now going in that village, the work of the church.

Bert: It is wonderful the way the church has been able to establish this work and then leave it for other people to carry on.

May: It is amazing, it is a great witness.

Bert: Well now, let's finish off with what you did in Japan. What would you like to say about the church in Japan today as you know it?

May: The church in Japan of course, is a much stronger church in one way than it was before, as I say now, I think they have almost increased their membership, but actually, a great problem has arisen in the church which has divided it very much, and it is one that we see here of it, the extreme left and the extreme right, shall we say, and those who feel that the social work must be the central thing in the church, and those who feel that the evangelistic work is central, so it has caused trouble in the church. They're going through that period now.

Bert: But they will come out a stronger church in the end.

May: Yes, I think so.

Bert: I wonder if there is anything else that you would like to say now about the people that you have heard from since you have left. Do you still hear from people in Japan?

May: One of the latest things that I have heard is from the minister that I mentioned who came out first, and who has been an inspiration for all of this work. He, just this winter married a very fine christian woman, whom I know too, and they are starting a Vanier Home, Vanier type of home in the village near this institution for the severely retarded. Now that is the first, I think in Japan of the Vanier type home, and that may be another witness, I think.

Bert: The church is doing similar things that we are doing here.

May: Yes, exactly.

Bert: And the church has come together, it has united in Japan.

May: At the time of the war, before the war started, the government, as it were, forced the churches to unite and have one man speak for all christians in Japan. It was a time of great trial, even then some of the holiness churches refused, and most of the ministers were put in jail. After the war, this union, although it was forced, also to be fair, one must say that they had felt the need for union and had wanted it, but a forced union is no good and so it fell apart, although some 16 denominations remained and that is what we call The Church of Christ in Japan today. It is the United Church in Japan, as we are the United Church of Canada.

Bert: Is that what they call Kiodan? *Kyodan*

May: Yes, Kiodan is the name of the Japanese Church.

Bert: Now, you came back from Japan in what year?

May: 1963, in the fall.

Bert: Now was this for retirement, permanent retirement?

May: It was the age limit and I had gone over it by a year and a half. I had to come home on my birthday.

Bert: Now did you get back to Pipestone?

May: No. I came here to Chilliwack to live with my sister,

Bert: And you have lived here since 1963, and I suppose you have travelled some?

May: The first year I was sent out on what we call deputation work and that took me right across Canada.

Bert: Right to Newfoundland?

May: Not to Newfoundland, no, to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Bert: And you have been in Chilliwack practically all of your retirement?

May: Yes.

Bert: What do you do on your retirement, or what have you been doing on your retirement?

May: I was very fortunate that when I completed that year of deputation work and came back to Chilliwack, that the church here, which was trying to help the Soowahlie Indian Church on the Soowahlie Reserve and needed someone to help there, and asked me, and so I began at once to go out to Soowahlie to the church there on Sundays and during the week.

Bert: Now what is Soowahlie?

May: Soowahlie is an Indian Reserve very near Cultus Lake.

Bert: Is it the name of the people, Soowahlie?

May: I couldn't tell you. It is the name of the Reserve.

Bert: Oh, yes.

May: And the name of the Band too, the Soowahlie Band, but I just can't tell you the origin.

Bert: Have they had a christian church on their reserve for some time?

May: Yes, they were in 1967, they celebrated, they were going to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of their church, and unfortunately just a month before, it burned down.

Bert: Oh, my! That would be disappointing.

May: It was a very great disappointment.

Bert: And have they rebuilt?

May: No, they haven't yet.

Bert: Well now, tell me about the beginnings of christianity on the reserve as you know it, a hundred years ago?

May: An Indian named Soowahlie, the white people called him Wallis, ^{Soowahlie} Soowahlie, he was in a sense, the founder of it. Now he had become a christian, a Roman Catholic christian here in the Valley. He was the head of the Soowahlia Band, but not only that, they called him the 'Chief of Chiefs' in this whole area from Hope to New Westminster, and he headed up 5,000 Indians in canoes who went down to New Westminster to celebrate the Queen's birthday, but unfortunately to contact with traders, he began to drink and lost all respect, and then he met Dr. Crosby, who came here.

Bert: Thomas Crosby?

May: And through him he got strength again, and his faith strong again and he then started the protestant church out on that reserve, and built his house beside it and taught his people.

Bert: Now is this the one they call 'Captain John'?

May: Yes, Captain John Soowahlis.

Bert: And they built the church under his leadership then?

May: Yes.

Bert: Well then, I suppose some of the older people would remember this?

May: Yes. One of the oldest members when I first went there used to tell me that she remembered as a child. It was very interesting.

Bert: Yes, I am sure. Now have they had an ordained minister at all during that hundred years?

May: No, they always had supply's. People came in, because it is the only protestant Indian church in the Valley, in the whole area. Our Methodist work and Protestant workers all up the coast, this is the only one, all the rest were Roman Catholic.

Bert: Now would these people have any connection with Coqualitza, ^{Coqualitza} Dr. Raley established the Coqualitza School, did he not?

May: Yes, it was established by our church, by the Methodist Church, and I don't know whether Captain John had much to do with that, but anyway it was built there and many many of the leaders of the christian Indian church were educated there.

Bert: Coqualitza was a gathering place for native people from up and down the coast. They used to have summer sessions, and I know the people from Port Simpson did come here sometimes.

May: Yes.

Bert: Well now, what sort of work did you carry on in Soowahlie?

May: Well, I took the Sunday services and others from here came out. I had no car, so always somebody came along, and we got the Sunday School going, not that I taught it, but others from here and some of the folks on the reserve, the young people, helped. So we had the service and Sunday School and we had boys and girls work going, and then we saw the need to help some of the boys and girls with their studies, so we started study classes and that grew through the years out from there.

Bert: And what have these young people accomplished, have they gone out into the community and taken a good place?

May: Well, one of the girls who was in a CGIT group at that time, is now working in connection with the School Board here, introducing Indian History and Culture in connection, and so on, and working in the Coqualitza Centre which now is an Indian Study centre. That is one example.

Bert: I don't suppose there were any of the boys who went into the ministry?

May: Not from Soowahlie, although there is the son of one of the old families who is now down in the States, and he is studying for the ministry right now, but he did come to our church. He wasn't on the reserve at the time that I was there, he was going to school in Vancouver.

Bert: Now do they have any plans for rebuilding the church?

May: No definite plans at present, but the present chief, who was very active in our church, is building, with the Indians help of course, they do the work, a sort of log cabin in which

they will have their study groups and that will give us a place for Sunday School and so on, and then he hopes next to build a church.

Bert: And you are still connected with the Soowahlie reserve are you?

May: Well, in a sort of a way, but actually transportation has made it impossible for me to get out there. The bus service that we used to have is not operating now, so I can't carry on. After the church burned down we had services in a nearby community church it is, and carried on work there, but until we get a church on the reserve, I think, it will not come back to its own.

Bert: They don't have a Sunday School now?

May: The last two years, up until then we carried on.

Bert: Now who is responsible for the work there, is there any one person who is responsible?

May: No, only myself.

Bert: Has the standard of living on the reserve, risen?

May: Oh yes, tremendously. Even more, I feel the whole thinking and attitudes and feeling of the people have changed. They are not looking, and they are not feeling that they have to be helped. They are standing on their own feet. I can tell the difference even when I meet Indian people down here on the streets, they are holding up their heads, and looking you straight in the eye. They are not asking 'What will you do for us, or expecting it'. In fact, we wait until they ask us what they would like us to do to help them with their plans.

Bert: Do any of them come to the United Church in Chilliwack?

May: To the United Church in Sardis, but not to the United Church in Chilliwack. That is one weakness that I wish we could overcome and make them feel at home.

Bert: And what occupations do the men follow?

May: Largely they are loggers, mostly logging.

Bert: And are the people remaining on the reserve, or are they moving away?

May: Many have moved away of course, but there are others coming back on to the reserve. I think this new feeling of respect they have for themselves and of pride, is bringing them back, and there are those who are coming back and building quite nice homes.

Bert: And the population then would be increasing slightly probably?

May: And I think slightly, it is.

Bert: I think this is true in many Indian communities, because I know I've been interested in the people of Port Simpson for

many years and when we go back there we find the situation has improved tremendously, and the young people are taking the responsibility that they didn't take. As a matter of fact, they weren't allowed to take responsibility. The elders took all the responsibility the time when we were there.

Well, now what do you see as the future of this little band of Indian people in Soowahlie?

May: Well, I wouldn't have thought ten years ago that they would have been teaching in our schools and so on. So I think the future is bright for this reason, I think that we too, are realizing that they have something to give, and that we have something to learn from them. I have certainly learned a lot from them, and I think that is moving faster than I thought. It is a real future, both for them and for us in living together as christians.

Bert: I think there is too. Well, it has been interesting to talk to you about your work in the church, both in Japan and in Canada, and we wish you many more years of retired happiness, because you have been happy in your retirement. Thank you very much for the interview.