

Port of Los Angeles Centennial Oral History Project  
Gloria Radmilovich Oral History  
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Gloria Radmilovich: Gloria Radmilovich, R-A-D-M-I-L-O-V-I-C-H.

Male Speaker: Gloria, may I ask you what year you were born and where were you born?

GR: 1938 in San Pedro.

MS: Great. Tell us about your family. How did they come to San Pedro, your mother and father, and what were they doing there?

GR: My father was a fisherman, so that brought a lot of people. He came from Yugoslavia and that brought many people from that country here. My mother was from Sacramento and they met there, marry, and came down here in 1929.

MS: Did he stay as a fisherman for his career?

GR: Yes. He was a cook on the fishing boats.

MS: Okay. So, tell me, what did your father do on the fishing boats? Tell me that.

GR: My father was a cook on the fishing boats, a wonderful cook. He cooked at home as well. My mother was a good cook too but that was his something. He was really good.

MS: Also, I would expect that the men on a fishing boat would have particularly hard on the cook.

GR: Oh, yes. In fact, there were stories about the fishermen throwing food off the boat if they weren't happy with it. Not my father's cooking, but others. So, yes, they had to be good cooks to take care of that crew.

MS: What do you know about the job itself? I mean, what were the working conditions that he was in? Did he have a huge kitchen to work with or?

GR: Oh no, small galley. On board the fishing boats had a very small galley, not a whole lot of available room, I'm sure. Other than that, I don't really know that much about the conditions.

MS: Did your father have a specialty or recipes that he was particularly good at? What kind of food did?

GR: My dad's mostaccioli was the best and still is. But only we don't make it quite as good as his was, but his was the best. Fish, all kinds of fish, I don't know, but the mostaccioli is what comes to mind.

MS: Tell me about your family as you were a little girl growing up. What are the kinds of things you did? What are your earliest memories as a little girl?

RG: My earliest memories as a little girl, just warm family feelings and did a lot of things with

the other family, close friends. We didn't get out even to restaurants that much in those days, but we always had a good time. We always wound up singing around the piano. But just good times, good friends, good lot of kids in the neighborhood that we've played with. It was great childhood.

MS: Well, tell me some more. Describe that family gathering and singing around the piano. Bring me there or describe what it was like on a typical party night or a particular evening with the family.

GR: Well, typical party night, sometimes we'd have gone to another event somewhere at the Yugoslav American Club, where we had a lot of fun evenings. But we'd always wind up at our house with my mom playing the piano, everybody's singing and into the wee hours.

MS: What were the songs you were singing?

GR: We would sing a lot of Yugoslav songs and other popular songs of the day.

MS: Do you remember any of them?

GR: Oh, you're not going to ask me to sing, are you? [laughter] I remember a lot of them. Yes.

MS: Well, can you give us a sample? [laughter]

GR: No. Thank you, no.

MS: What are some specific memories you have of growing up in San Pedro? What was the place like as a little girl? What did you do?

GR: Well, as a little girl, just getting together with lots of friends and going to the movies. On Saturdays especially, we'd stay there all day. Going to the beach in the summer. A lot of times we'd walk and which was quite a distance. We'd take the bus. We didn't have a car then. Just playing with the kids. I can't think of other things.

MS: It's okay. What kind of town was San Pedro. I mean, what kind of place was it?

GR: Great. San Pedro was a great town. It still is but it's changed a lot over the years. You're close with a lot of people and you could go anywhere, any time of day like so many of the other towns out now nowadays. It was just a lot of fun.

MS: What kind of people lived there? Was it a typical place? It was pretty unusual.

GR: Unusual, yes. We had people of many ethnic backgrounds living here. Everybody got along. Everyone did things together. It's like one big family. How's that?

MS: It's perfect. So, as you got older, where did you go to school? What was the school like?

GR: 15th Street, I went to school at the grammar school. It was 15th Street School. Then when we moved later on, I went to 7th Street School. They're both still around. Then, of course, Dana Junior High and San Pedro High, and they were great.

MS: I hear that San Pedro High has got a pretty loyal alumni when it certainly comes to sports and things like that.

GR: Oh, yes.

MS: Tell me about that.

GR: Yes, very loyal alumni of San Pedro High. They're in full force now to this day, yes.

MS: When you finished high school, tell me, what did you do next?

GR: When I finished high school, I went to Harbor College. It was Harbor Junior College, and Harbor College graduated from there and then went on to work as a secretary.

MS: Tell me about it. How did you get the job and what was the job?

GR: My first job out of Harbor College was with Matson Navigation Company. I went on an interview. It was actually a temporary one to begin with. In the meantime, I had taken the Civil Service Exam and with the object of working for the Harbor Department, and that came not too much later. I started for the Harbor Department [19]58 and left there in [19]85.

MS: What was the job of the Harbor Department? How did you get started there?

GR: When I started with the Harbor Department, I was in the public relations office. The office was in the old Ferry Building, which is now the Maritime Museum. Now I happen to be volunteering there. So, I may come full circle. You promote through exams and I would work for the personnel director, then the assistant executive director. Well, he was assistant general manager, then Mr. Parkinson, great guy. Then into the general manager's office and I've worked for I think four different directors that through the years.

MS: Looking out from the Ferry Building in 1958, you had a pretty good view of the harbor.

GR: Oh, yes.

MS: What kind of place was it looking out the window there?

GR: Looking out the window of the ferry building was great. You can see what everything that was going on in the channel. The ferry boat was running then. I kept an eye on that and heard it all the time. Every once in a while, the police boats would go out and come back with a floater that they found and bring it past our window. So, we saw all kinds of things.

MS: People don't know what a floater is. Explain that to me.

GR: Every once in a while, the police boat would come by with the body that had been found in the channel for various reasons. Accidents, someone who jumped off the bridge, of course that was later, the bridge wasn't there right away. Then they made a lot of movies here and they still do. We get to see all kinds of stars and interesting things and shows that we could keep an eye on. It was it was fun. Met a lot of celebrities that way. It was fun.

MS: Let's go back to this floater thing. Were there any particular cases of famous deaths in the harbor?

GR: No. There weren't any famous cases of deaths in the harbor that I recall in the ones that we saw them bringing in.

MS: So, talk about the movies in the harbor. How was the harbor part of the movie business and what did they use it for, who used to come down here and what movies were made or that kind of.

GR: Well, as far as movies and TV shows in the harbor, the harbor was always an interesting place for filming. We saw Marlon Brando and John Wayne. I even talked to Marlon Brando and took John Wayne's picture and he talked to me. [laughter] Big deal. I was excited. My girlfriends and I were aware that John Wayne was going to be filming at the Ports O' Call. So, we went down there on our lunch hour. We saw him walking down the path and all jumped out of the car. He said he'd post for a picture. Well, I had this little spy camera, a little dinky camera that no one else knew how to use. So, I got stuck taking a picture. He's standing there with his arms around my friends and just looking at me saying take that thing or shoot that thing. That's what he said. I about melted. Anyway, it was a great picture and we had a lot of fun that day. Marlon Brando was in Wilmington one night. He and Yul Brynner, I think they were shooting *Tora! Tora!* I can't remember for sure. Anyway, another friend just pushed me, shoved me from behind and said, "Go talk to him," and I did. All I could think of was to say, "Hi. How do you like the harbor?" Wasn't that brilliant? The canneries were working real well that night. He said it was kind of smelly. I didn't care who he was, I said, "That means money for the fisherman. So, my dad's getting something for that." But he was very nice.

MS: Any other movies?

GR: But I can't think of the name now, John Derek.

MS: Tell me what you remember.

GR: Well, he just came into the office for a permit. So, we didn't see much of him, but he did come into the office. That was exciting. A lot of TV programs were shot around the area too. The old buildings are such good backdrops and scenery. So, they used it a lot. I know there are many more, but I can't think of them now.

MS: You also mentioned that some of the other activities that people would not necessarily think about, the USC rowing team. You saw them?

GR: Oh, yes.

MS: Tell me about that.

GR: Well, the USC rowing team practiced up and down the main channel. Their facility was located in Wilmington. So, you just gaze out the window and there they went. It's kind of nice, something different to look at. There was always something great to look at on the waterfront.

MS: What about some of the big cruise ships? The Maiden Voyage, was that a big event with everybody's activity? Talk about Maiden Voyage as a ship.

GR: Right. Maiden Voyage, when I worked in the PR office, we were involved in all those arrangements. So, we got to be in on what was going on. They'd use the fire boats to escort the ships in. It was quite colorful and a lot of excitement about it.

MS: What about the Fisherman's Fiesta? Were you involved with it?

GR: Oh, yes. The Fisherman's Fiesta was great. When we were kids, the fishing fleet was really big then. So, it was a big event. In fact, I think it was second only to the Rose Parade. I think Rose Parade was a bigger thing than that. But the Fisherman's Fiesta was right behind it. For the fisherman's Fiesta, there was a procession from the old Mary Star Church and all the way down to the waterfront and they blessed the fleet. That was the idea of that's what started the Fisherman's Fiesta to begin with. All the boats were decorated. They'd have a contest for whatever the theme was. But they all had just tons of boats with flags and decorations. But the food that was, again, the best. All my friends loved it when they got to come on the boat that my dad was on. The boats would go around the harbor and just a really great day.

MS: Do you remember any particular year that was particularly striking for you or any particular boat you remember?

GR: I don't remember any particular boat in the fiesta or any particular year. It's just every year was great. My mom was secretary for the fiesta for many years. Then for a while, they didn't have that. They had no fiesta. When they started up again, I happened to be in the office at the harbor department where they chose somebody to be secretary and I got to do that. So, it's kind of kept it in the family. It was nice.

MS: That's great. Now also, there's a military presence here in the harbor. Talk about that. What did you see evidence of the of the military over those years, either when you were very young and or when you were working?

GR: Well, I don't remember a lot about that, the military presence. I do remember the (Marquee?), the vessel that blew up across the way across the channel.

MS: You said you remembered about blackouts.

GR: Oh, yes.

MS: Tell me about that.

GR: During World War II, there were of course blackouts. I do remember those because that was kind of scary at that time for me. You just stay in the house until it was clear. You'd hear sirens and things but that was a scary time.

MS: Your father was a fisherman. Did you ever go to Terminal Island?

GR: I didn't go to Terminal Island because of him being a fisherman because all the fleet was in San Pedro.

MS: When you were young?

GR: Yes. No, not really.

MS: Nancy said that you were in junior high school and your mother won something in 1951. Tell me that whole story.

GR: In 1951, my mother won a car in a church raffle. We had no car at the time, so that was really big deal. We lived on a street where the bus drove by and of course we rode the bus all the time. We finally started noticing the bus would slow down and the bus driver would be pointing to our house. So, you know, those are the people who won the car. So, not much many exciting things going on in San Pedro. I guess that was one of the high points of the bus ride. But yes, that was pretty exciting.

MS: What was the circumstances of the raffle? Tell me about the raffle.

GR: Well, the church raffle is like they do now these days too. They have girls running for queen and the one who sells the most tickets is made queen. So, a friend of ours was running and we bought tickets. Then my mom wanted to buy some more and the mother said, "No, you don't have to do that." She said, "Oh yes. Just a few more." So, she bought one ticket in her name at that time. So, if she hadn't bought those extra tickets, she wouldn't win that car and that was pretty exciting.

MS: So, you remember when that car got delivered with the family thought you're all about that.

GR: Oh, yes. That was it was 52 Buick. I think a Super if you remember those. Those were the days when I could identify cars. It had holes in the side, it was a Buick. But now they all look alike to me. That was very exciting. My brothers thought that was great because they didn't have a car either.

MS: Do you remember the day, did you go pick it up or they delivered it? What happened?

GR: I think we picked it up, but I don't remember that that much about it.

MS: You started working for the Harbor Commission, you said. What year was that?

GR: The Harbor Department. I started working for the Harbor Department in 1958 when I graduated from Harbor College.

MS: People don't know what the Harbor Department is. Could you tell us what is the Harbor Department? What are the kinds of things they do and what kind of things you get involved with?

GR: Everything that has to be done to run the harbor is done by the Harbor Department. I was in the public relations office at that time.

MS: So, as a public relations person, what was your job? What did you do?

GR: In the public relations office, I was secretary to the director. Well, there were a couple of us who were secretaries for the office.

MS: What are the kinds of things that you had to relate to the public about?

GR: Let me think that one over. [laughter]

MS: I'm sure they're always controversies in their image, things you want to make the port sound great or people have questions or criticisms.

GR: Right. But I didn't have to get involved in any problems that were going on. I did mostly secretarial work and other staff would take care of that type of thing.

MS; Now, were you here working when the Sansinena the boat blew up?

GR: Oh, yes.

MS: Tell me about that.

GR: Oh, that was a big noise. We were at a family at a family dinner. It sounded like something ran into the building, a big vehicle. Then of course we learned right away what had happened. It was very, very scary. The funny thing – not funny, but the odd thing was the next day, I was to leave for -- I have a brother in Oklahoma and I was going there for the holidays. It was around Christmas. The big bit of entertainment they had for me, the first day was to watch the implosion of a huge building from the thirty-eighth floor of another building. It was very exciting, but I said, "We've got you [inaudible]." Of course, I told them about the Sansinena. So, I don't remember much more.

MS: So, how long did you stay with the Harbor Department? How many years?

GR: About twenty-six and a half years.



MS: What did you do next after that?

GR: I just needed a change at that time and I went into private industry. I worked for Metropolitan Stevedore Company in the secretarial position too.

MS: Tell me what is Metropolitan Stevedore Company?

GR: The Metropolitan Stevedore is one of the many companies that they hire labor to load and unload ships. We operated the coal terminal in Long Beach and we operated the passenger terminal here in San Pedro.

MS: How long you were you with them?

GR: Thirteen years.

MS: So, you retired from them?

GR: Yes.

MS: After you retired, what kind of activities did you do in your retirement in town?

GR: Well, I've gotten into volunteering. I thought I would get bored, but it's fun. It keeps me busy. As everyone says, I'm busier now than I was when I was working. It's great. Retirement is a very good thing. Yes.

MS: What kind of volunteering work do you do?

GR: I'm with the Historical Society and help out at different events there. We have a big rummage sale coming up in September. Watch the news, a big annual thing. I work in the gift shop at the Maritime Museum and also the United Nations gift shop in town. I work there. I was with the San Pedro Youth Coalition for a while, but not within any longer and.

MS: So, you've lived a long time here in San Pedro.

GR: Yes.

MS: How has it changed in the years that you've been here?

GR: Well, it's not the small town that it used to be. But it still has that feel even though it's changed drastically, San Pedro, that is.

MS: How is it different from when you were growing here?

GR: Well, it's San Pedro is very crowded now, as we all know. A lot of traffic that we have to deal with. But still, as I say, it still has a small town feel because not everyone leaves San Pedro.

So, it's a good feeling that you have that continuity and know everybody and know a lot of people in town.

MS: For people who've never been to San Pedro, how would you describe this place to them so they have a sense of what it is?

GR: Well, San Pedro's beautiful town, warm community, lovely scenery. You've got the lovely waterfront and the lot to do here and they ought to come down and see us.

MS: Sounds like an old PR person to me. Well, that was great. Thank you very much.

GR: [laughter] Oh, my gosh. Oh, I didn't mention my mother was secretary to Vince Thomas.

MS: Oh, absolutely. Talk about that. Who was Vincent Thomas?

GR: Vincent Thomas was our assemblyman for many, many years. Of course, there's a bridge crossing the channel that's named after him. He worked many, many years to get that put up, and my mother did too. My family feels there's one little corner of that bridge that's belongs to her. She worked for him for 16 years. So, a lot of things happen over the years.

MS; Tell us about Vincent Thomas. Who was he? What kind of man? Did you meet him in person?

GR: Oh, yes. They were like family. Vince Thomas was family. He was always an honest politician, which you can't say [inaudible] and had San Pedro's welfare. Vince Thomas was a good man and an honest politician and had San Pedro's welfare at heart. He was part of a great family in San Pedro.

MS: Did you meet him?

GR: Oh, yes.

MS: When you met him, what kind of person was he?

GR: Vince Thomas was a very good man and was just like any member of your family. Just made you feel welcome and right at home. His whole family did.

MS: But was he a shy guy? Was he outgoing? Was he full of jokes? What kind of person was he?

GR: Well, he thought he was full of jokes. Sometimes they were good, some sometimes they weren't. He was outgoing but a kind person.

MS: Let's talk about your family. Tell me about your father and mother, what they did and what their activities were associated with the port.

GR: I'm Gloria Radmilovich. R-A-D-M-I-L-O-V-I-C-H.

MS: Tell us about your family and who they were and what they did.

GR: My father was a fisherman and a great cook and cooked for the cruise on the fishing boats. He was a fisherman all his life.

MS: Talk about what it meant to be the daughter of a fisherman.

GR: Well, I was very proud to be a daughter of a fisherman and he was. He would be gone for weeks and once at a time.

MS: Being a daughter of a fisherman, what was that special about that? Well, your father's gone for a long time. I mean, do you go back to see him when he comes in and all that?

GR: That's right. We'd go down to see him off when the boat would leave and be down there when they got home. It was just a big party every time he came back. He loved doing that. In fact, I had one of my nephews do fishing once a year. He goes up to Alaska and he's there now. We're kind of proud of that too. We feel like he's watching over him when he does that. I say he could have had a restaurant, too. He was a great cook and.

MS: What are some of his specialties?

GR: Mostaccioli, his was the best in town. Better than all the restaurants and all our friends. Anything, fish, seafood, lobster, lobster thermidor. Of course, I wouldn't try any of that stuff when I was little, and I'm sorry that I didn't.

MS: But it must have taken a little bit of a burden off your mother if your dad is a good cook.

GR: My mother was a good cook also but he loved cooking and he loved to cook for the family and friends and company anytime. The more, the merrier. He was always that way in our family.

MS: Were there special kind of holidays and things that he would cook for? What were they like?

GR: Oh, the holidays were just extra special when my dad cooked. But it was always like a party when he cooked anyway because he loved it.

MS: Now, as a little girl, did you learn to cook from your mother or your father or neither?

GR: Both. So, I learned to cook from both my parents and just by watching. Then they'd teach me a few things. But after my dad was gone, I paid more attention to it. My mom would walk me through recipes. So, I hope I picked up some of their good talent. I don't know. My family might not agree, but that's all right.

MS: Did your father sort of give you any little tips that are secrets of a great chef when you were a little girl?

GR: No. I just learned from watching what he did. I had no particular lesson, just enjoyed watching him. They say I do things the same way he did, which makes me happy.

MS: So, let's talk about your career. Your first job was in 1958. Talk about what your first job was and what were you doing in that first job.

GR: I first started at the Harvard Department in the public relations office, support staff. I was secretary to the director, assistant director, special events coordinator and the legislative rep. Just doing the usual, you know, normal secretarial things. We were in touch with the public, of course, and the press. I helped arrange all kinds of different events that were always exciting and brought interesting people to them too. So, it was a great place to start. I got to know a lot about the harbor operations and it was just fun.

MS: Those early days, what were some of the big events you remember that you were involved with connected to the harbor?

GR: Well, there was a visit of King Olaf of Norway. He had several things going on around town. I think we had a dinner on the Princess Louise, which used to be a great restaurant in the port. We had first arrivals for various ships and that was always a big deal. They had the fire boat escorting them in. It involved various dinners or luncheons, whatever the time dictated.

MS: Was there one particular thing that was either most memorable because it was particularly stressful or particularly gratifying that you were involved with that you remember particularly with pride or just remember particularly?

GR: Not exactly. Every event was exciting in its own way and rewarding. After all these years, it's hard to remember.

MS: Well, did you meet King Olaf?

GR: I didn't really meet King Olaf but was very close to him as he walked in the room. One of the men in our office walked up to him before the dinner and he said to him, "I'm taking this opportunity to meet you to ask how you would like your meat cooked." Now I didn't have an opportunity like that. So, we got to kick out of that.

MS: You said you did special events and things like that with the press. What were the controversies or the issues that were going on in the fifties that you had to deal with the press about in the late fifties?

GR: I wasn't really involved in any controversies dealing with them. Mine was really setting up schedules and meetings for various things that were going on at the time, but nothing stressful at that time.

MS: You were involved with legislation. What was that and what were those responsibilities?

GR: The legislation part, I did secretarial work for the man who did all the legislative work. So, I wasn't too involved in that particularly.

MS: But why was legislation important for the port? I mean, why would you have to have a liaison for that?

GR: Well, let me think about that one. I don't remember much about it.

MS: The Harbor is used for movies a lot.

GR: Right.

MS: Tell me about that and what were some of the movies and did you have a chance to hobnob with the stars?

GR: Yes. There was a lot of filming that went on in the Harbor, movies, and TV. We would know where they were going to be because they had to come through our office for permits. So, yes, we'd be there at the right time. Got to see Marlon Brando, John Wayne, Robert Stack, David Janssen, Burt Reynolds, and I can't remember the name, whoever played Kojak remember that?

MS: Savalas.

GR: Telly Savalas, right. It was just fun to watch and work and see how, as they say, it would drag on. They'd have to spend most of their time standing around waiting for things to happen. But it was fun to be a part of that.

MS: Did you have a chance to meet any of those personalities?

GR: All of those.

MS: Talk about each of them. Let's start with Marlon Brando? What was he like when you met him?

GR: Marlon Brando was great, very nice to talk to him. One of my girlfriends just pushed me towards him because he was standing alone. We talked about the harbor a little bit. He said it was smelly because the canneries were working that night. So, I straightened him out on that. I said that meant money for the fisherman. So, that shut him up. [laughter] Not really.

MS: What about John Wayne?

GR: John Wayne was super. He was so nice. He let us take photos and was very friendly. Nice gentleman.

MS: Robert Stack?

GR: Robert Stack, we just chatted with him a little bit. But they were all very nice and patient with all the fans.

MS: For example, Marlon Brando, what kind of movie was he making in the port?

GR: I think Marlon Brando was here for *Tora! Tora!* Yul Brynner was there then too. I forgot about him. I think that's what they were making over in Wilmington. A lot of the others were TV shows. I can't remember what John Wayne was doing here, what he was filming, but he was down at the Port O' Call the day we saw him.

MS: I heard that maybe this wasn't your story, but maybe if you remember that for one movie, they turned the Port of Los Angeles into the Port of New York. They had snow all around. Did you hear that story?

GR: I don't remember that about the snow.

MS: So, these are just quiet scenes or were there action scenes of things blowing up? What was going on?

GR: There were a lot of action scenes. Car races and chases and chase scenes, depending on what they were shooting at the time.

MS: Any particular one that was most memorable where they blew anything up or anything?

GR: Seems like they did have a car dive into the main channel. I can't remember what they were filming, but that was one of the memorable things.

MS: What about Burt Reynolds? What was he here for?

GR: Burt Reynolds had a TV series, name of which I can't remember now. But he had just started it then I think, and we didn't get to talk to him. We were just in the area. But we were excited to see him, of course.

MS: Then you came up directly to the personnel director. You were secretary to the personnel director and then secretary of the general manager, right?

GR: You're right.

MS: Let's skip over the personnel director and talk about the general manager. What does the general manager of a port do?

GR: The general manager of the port would be what the executive director is today. Just running in charge of the whole operation of the port. Every division and officer, it would be under him.

MS: So, as a secretary, you must have been pretty busy.

GR: Yes. They kept us busy when in that office.

MS: So, what were the special challenges of that office? What were the hardest part of that job?

GR: Well, the hardest part – wouldn't say it was hard, but just to keep everything of the scheduling right and kind of protect the boss. Keep him away from things he didn't need to be bothered with.

MS: What were the things that were going on at the port at the time that were part of his responsibility? What years were those? 1960s?

GR: It was seventies and eighties.

MS: So, that was probably the one of the busiest times in the history of the port. Wasn't it?

GR: Right.

MS: Talk about what was going on in those years.

GR: Well, let's see what was going on in those years.

MS: What was going on in the sixties and seventies?

GR: What's going on in the sixties and seventies, my mind is blank.

MS: Lots of containerization and dredging and new ports are being built. [laughter]

GR: There you go. Can you get that?

MS: Say what's going on in the sixties and seventies.

GR: In the sixties and seventies, a lot of expansion and building and dredging and just always trying to get new customers and make the current ones happy. That's an ongoing thing. So, nothing specifically difficult, but always interesting.

MS: It was also becoming even more international. Did you have the opportunity to travel as part of your job then?

GR: No. I didn't get to travel as part of my job, but the executives did, yes, quite a bit.

MS: Not to do too much tattling on your bosses but talk a little bit about that you work for three different port directors. Tell me who they are and give me a little capsule description of them as men.

GR: The directors I worked for, Fred Crawford, was one. He was originally from the from Washington area. All of my bosses were great to work for. I really don't have anything to say against them, Of course I wouldn't if I did, but I don't.

MS: But each of them had different characteristics. What was his characteristics?

GR: I think Mr. Crawford was well liked, made it feel like a family type of surroundings. As did (Bernie Cougwan?) who I did not mention. He was there when I first started. Then it was really a lot like a family business. But as it grew larger, it got harder to maintain that. But still a great place to work.

MS: What about Dr. Perry? What kind of person was he?

GR: Dr. Perry was a wonderful man. He had an engineering background. So, he brought that expertise to the job, and just a wonderful gentleman.

MS: (EZ Britz?).

GR: (EZ Britz?) was a great guy too. He still is. He was originally our liaison between the mayor's office and the port, and then eventually became our director. But he was and we've talked with him so.

MS: We talked with him. But he came here and you're talking about Crawford and Perry. They had backgrounds in harbors and engineering and he didn't.

GR: Right, he didn't.

MS: So, that was a different challenge for him.

GR: When (EZ?) started here, the fact that he didn't have a port background was brought up by everyone and in the press. It was a quick study and he was, he learned fast and he did a great job.

MS: So, then after working on the harbor operations side, you moved over to the Stevedore Company.

GR: Yes.

MS: Tell us about that. What was that company and what did they do and what did you do for them?

GR: All right. After twenty-six and a half years with the city, I just felt like I needed a change. So, I went to a private industry, to Metropolitan Stevedore Company. They hired labor to load and unload the ships. They operate the bulk terminal in Long Beach and the cruise terminal in San Pedro. I started out as secretary to three vice presidents and then wound up as secretary to



the director.

MS: So, was that a big change for you or was it pretty much a different angle on the same story?

GR: Different angle on the same story. I saw a lot of interesting things that I wasn't privy to and aware of. It really was interesting and great bunch of people to work with too.

MS: Can you explain what some of those things you saw that you weren't aware of before?

GR: Well, the things I didn't see before was like problems that would come up because of the labor we hired or just different things involving that.

MS: While you were here, one of a tragic thing happened in the seventies where a port commissioner actually committed suicide, and his body was found in the harbor. Can you tell me that story?

GR: Well, first of all, I don't believe it was suicide. I don't think it was ever determined. About the commissioner who drowned in the harbor. It was suggested that that was suicide, but I don't believe it was. I don't think it was ever determined that it was. It was very tragic. He was a great person too. Well, you probably know he was Vince Thomas's father-in-law.

MS: Tell me that whole story from the date it was discovered. Just give me from the beginning.

GR: There was a man who drowned in the port who was a harbor commissioner. It was suggested that it was suicide, but I don't believe it was. I don't think it was determined that it was. But he was a wonderful person and great commissioner.

MS: What kind of man was he?

GR: He was, well, Pietro Di Carlo is who we're talking about. He was a great person and had loved San Pedro and the port and was one of our best commissioners.

MS: Well, tell me the day you came into work, how did you learn about this? Can you describe what happened when you learned?

GR: I'm trying to remember.

MS: Did you read about the newspaper? Did you hear about it when you come in the office?

GR: No. We heard about this tragedy during the workday. I think we had a phone call telling us about it. Being in the general manager's office, the port warden's office or whoever was discovered this would call him immediately. So, that's as far as I can recall, that's how we learned about it.

MS: What happened next? There must have been a lot of phone calls and things like.

GR: Oh, yes. The phones are ringing off the hook. It was just a chaotic and upsetting day.

MS: So, what were the circumstances of his body being found? If he didn't commit suicide, did he fell off a boat or what happened?

GR: He was in the boathouse and apparently fell off into the water from the deck or whatever. I don't know if that was the deck, he was inside the boathouse. He was an elderly gentleman, so I don't know what caused that. But that's all we heard about.

MS: Talk about the relationship between Long Beach and San Pedro as harbors side by side and from your perspective of having worked, you know, in various positions.

GR: Oh, between Ports of Long Beach and Port of LA, I think it's just always been a friendly rivalry, which is a good thing.

MS: What else do you want to tell us? I'm sure there's something else that I didn't ask you about. I went through all of your notes. But there's something else that you want to tell us.

GR: Did I mention my brothers? I have two brothers, older brothers Walter and Tom. We had a great time growing up together and they're still great brothers.

MS: Were they protective of you when you were growing up?

GR: Yes. They were protective of me when I was growing up. Sometimes that was a good thing, sometimes it wasn't. [laughter] That's all I can say about that. No, they're great. I can say, we were lucky to have such a nice family and great parents.

MS: Were you the one who told me that when the fleet was in town that you were told not to be around?

GR: No.

MS: No, it wasn't you.

GR: No, I don't remember that. But that sounds like an interesting story. I wish it was my story.

MS: All these years you spent involved with the port and all aspects of it. If you wanted to convey to somebody what this port means and the importance of it, what would you say to people? A lot of people are not going to know anything about it at all. They're going to say, "Well, why should I care about the Port of Los Angeles? What's the big deal?" What would you say to them?

GR: Let me think. I can't imagine San Pedro without the port.

MS: It provided you with a living for a long time. It's very interesting kind of activities going on here.

GR: The port did provide me a wonderful living for many years and still is in retirement. There are so many activities, so much to see and so much to do here. I think everyone should experience that sometime.

[end of transcript]