

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: OLIVER ADAMS and
LAVINA LIGHTBROWN #2

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General discussion on the conflicts between generations.
Oliver: No, we were...

Imbert: Like you said that we said the old words about... we
were talking about it, of course.

Oliver: Yes, the reason for these larger than average
living rooms was because of a carry over of the communal spirit
of the old days. Even now we still hold very strongly to
family life. We feel that the married daughter and her husband
and their family can come and visit at any period. Or it need
not be your immediate family as we know today, because in those
days your cousins and even second cousins were immediate
family, so they were always made welcome and lived a family
association type of life.

Imbert: What about old people? I mean in society today. Are
they still looked after?

Oliver: Older people are, I don't know, there has been a couple of instances where I have felt bitterness in them that I have not seen before. They want to give the reins over to the younger people, "This is why we sent you to school," and yet they sometimes bemoan the fact that the younger people have not done enough to uplift the race. They seem to feel that there has been some element of failure. Well, you must remember too, this was pride in the race. They were of the old, well, the Haidas were the greatest and there was no bones about it. And now that their younger element has to take a secondary role and they're not too happy about it. Of course the impact of the change they have felt and yet they don't appreciate fully in their children because, "We were the greatest those days, you should be in your society. You should do wonders now. We expect that of you and we should be reaping that harvest."

Imbert: You talked about the younger element taking a secondary role, or do you mean them taking a secondary role to the younger element?

Oliver: I was thinking in terms of our emergence(?) from one to the present flow of society.

Imbert: Yes, so that they're no longer a team.

Oliver: They are no longer the greatest.

Imbert: Yes, the greatest.

Oliver: They are learning from...

Imbert: They are no longer a master race, as you might say.

Oliver: No.

Imbert: The Haidas had a concept of themselves -- I can understand that. The other nations around didn't believe that either, (laughs) but the Haidas did. (Inaudible). I'm just going to stop this a moment. What about older people, you know, and looking... How do they fit into the society today? Are they a problem or is it still part of the same family?

Lavina: Well, one thing we're taught right from very early childhood is respect for elders. And a closeness...

Imbert: Do the young people still have it today?

Lavina: Oh yes, I think it's still...

Imbert: You think the children still are brought up with that?

Lavina: Not so much as perhaps now, I don't think, but it was in my time.

Imbert: Possibly relative to the white society that's still stronger even amongst the little people?

Lavina: Oh, I think so. Like, that's why we don't have a problem with our older folks. They look, the family looks after the older ones.

Imbert: But I bet you there's a growing generation gap though, as we call it, because it's happening everywhere in the world.

Lavina: (laughs) I think we all like to think except in our family, but...

Imbert: I get the impression, though, that this is true in a number of Indian families; that there is a big gap between the young people growing up and not respecting the old ways. No, no, I'll tell you what I can do, I think she can be more... Well no, what I'm going to do, I'm going to pull this off here and I'm going to just sort of stand between the two of you because there are just a few final remarks... I'll hold it.

Oliver: No, we were talking about that generation gap. I think it is far more level, far better with the Indians than any other because of the close family ties. There is communion -- even in my own immediate family, Hank is my grandchildren. We don't exchange that so-called generation gap as is experienced elsewhere, because we can communicate. "Come on, Grandpa, let's go out to the woods and have a walk," or organize a paper chase, or something of that nature. They

always want to involve me because... not just because they want to make me feel better, it's just a natural way of belonging to the same family. How do you experience that, Lavina?

Lavina: Oh, I can only speak for ourselves, like everyone else. I don't feel there's a generation gap. Not as pronounced amongst our family anyhow. We're awfully close. But then I'll look around me and there is a difference from when we were kids and the children now. Don't you think so?

Imbert: What about the teenagers? Of course, the little kids it's fine, but what about teenagers and elders today?

Oliver: Teenagers... I've grown with teenagers, oh, since I was a teenager myself. Like for instance, like I had three teenage girls at the same time. Their mother had died and so they went to myself. And yet when they overwhelmed the house with their crowds, I just put them on their own and found terrific results. In fact, one time I... there was a period I came home from work every night and the place was jumping; there was anywhere from ten to fifteen teenagers jiving at the same time until I put them on their own honor. I called a meeting like we always did and told them they weren't being very fair to their father because they were taking over the house completely and that they had forgotten that I lived there also. So after the discussion they decided to give me two

nights a week. So when the gang come rolling in, "Oh, this is daddy's night," and so they played my type of music and it wasn't very... Mind you, some of them left, but it wasn't very long before they were playing my type of music in their own nights. So it has to have that exposure and also you have to talk to them. You discuss these things with them, you'll find that they can adapt too, instead of taking over you entirely.

So that generation gap, I don't know, there's just a lack of communication, that's all. I think me and my girls we communicated, and we got along, got quite happy results from it.

Imbert: You see, living in a close village like that too, or it was... or possibly it was in Rupert, but you knew you had another place you could go to. You can drop next door or across the street, or down the street... You could go over and spend your evening there. Now so many of us living in our little boxes on our street not knowing our neighbors properly and everything like that, if they kids take over the house -- I'm speaking from experience -- where can you go and sit? You may sit in the kitchen, the kitchen may be a little tiny box, you know. It isn't a big warm place like it is in the old-fashioned houses, you know what I mean? You see what I mean, all I'm saying is that within the Haida society...

Oliver: Yeah. That is what creates the generation gap. Why not have that family participation? Heck, I used to go and join them when they were dancing, and certainly I might be a bull in a china shop but you should see the smiles on them and the kids even tagged the... And so you don't go into the kitchen and sit there and let the kids take over, you go and participate as a family. So I was remarking earlier that on their nights they were exposed to what I liked -- it sounded good to them and slightly long-haired, you know, so that's how they were exposed. So many families today do not expose their children to good type music and they go, "Yah, yah, yah," and "bang, bang, bang," and I don't know, that's not music.

Imbert: Do you think that this is fairly true what you're talking about, not just of your family but true of families in Masset?

Oliver: Well, I don't think I was unusual. I think I'm the average father.

Imbert: Would you find this general sort of participation and sort of... within the houses in Masset now, of the young and the old?

Oliver: You forget too that I had been away from Masset for quite some time. I moved to Rupert because of economic reasons and also primarily to have my children receive better education. So I have not only lived in Masset but I've also lived in Alaska a good third of my life, and Prince Rupert a good part of the time.

Imbert: Well, what would you say about that, that as far as Masset, would that be...?

Lavina: You know, I don't think that as a family they're still close. There isn't a gap, but socially, the social functions, there is a gap. Because, for instance, the only thing there is in Masset right now, or in Haida, I should say, is the community dance. And you find now only one type of music at the community dance, and the older folks don't go there. You remember when we used to go dancing it was everybody, everyone went. But I think that is, that's the only reason is because of the music and the type of dancing. It's not...

Oliver: The older people don't understand it.

Lavina: No they don't. Not only that, but like I said, we need recreation there for young people. Their community hall is too small to hold the amount of people that are there now. When we were younger it could still hold everyone there, so all the functions were attended by everyone, whether you were old or young or what.

Imbert: Could I ask you, is there any organization amongst the young people to -- and possibly it was the age of the old people -- to begin to assert themselves as Haidas? I understand the Nishkas(?) very much are quite aggressive about their rights -- you know what I mean -- and the things that are happening now. And do you find that exists on the islands at all? And that I understand there is a good deal of it is younger people that are, you know, want to really assert themselves and, you know...

Oliver: No, there wasn't the aggression on the Charlottes as there are of the Nass River tribes. Mind you, it's more of the union of the chief councillors of each village that form that Nishka tribe. And there is... You'll have to remember too they're isolated there. But a strange thing... Half, like I'm very acquainted with Kincolith, the one in the mouth of the river. Exactly half of the membership of that tribe lives off the reserve. There has been continuous exodus and now, within the last year, things are happening quite fast now. Within the last year they are returning again in some instances. Some of them that have lived away from the village for thirteen years are returning. They find that they are more at home among their own now, depending on the work involved as well, because if there's no industry in the village, so you have to have sufficient to carry you the rest of the year. So things are changing and with me I can't speak with too great authority on the Haida villages on the Charlottes, because I come there as a visitor for periods at a time, although I do observe. What I think is happening, I can't say that with complete authority.

Imbert: Well, that's an advantage -- the fact that you can to some extent look at them from across the water. And in that sense you can see things possibly they can't even see

themselves, you know what I mean?

Oliver: Well, that is an interesting period too. In fact it's quite challenging, actually. Oh, I've always wished -- Lavina also expressed a wish -- that I have lived in the old day because we think the pace was far better, the life was far greater. There was a harmony without the run, run, run. And yet with this period of transition, if we are partially...

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