INTERVIEWER: Dianne Zieman DATE: March 10,1972

TIME: 1 hr. 50 minutes

INTERVIEW:

1. Mrs. Joseph Gignac
2. Keenie or Rosie
3. Colleen O'Grady
4. 392 McCamus Avenue., New Liskeard
5. 647-5673
6. 35, born July 9th, 1936
7. New Liskeard
8. Mother: North Cobalt, Father: Depot Harbour near Parry Sound
9. Mother: Welsh; Father: Irish
10. She was born here; her father arrived in New Liskeard in 1903; came from Englehart.
11. Horse and wagon; cutter in winter. Later, had all kinds of cars.
12. Englehart to New Liskeard.
13. When he arrived in New Liskeard, there were three children and their parents.
14. Father, worked as a salesman for farm implements; used to sell Singer Sewing machines on the side. He was such a good salesman, he once sold a cream separator to a man who had no cows! Her husband, Joe, was originally a machine operator.
15. Mother worked in a restaurant for 12 or 13 years, plus other temporary jobs. Colleen worked in a hardware office.
16. Deceased. Joe Gignac is now with the New Liskeard Police force.
17. Mother is also deceased. Colleen is not working now.

17. (a)

They used to buy war bonds - woudl buy stamps at school. People would also make little donations every now and then if they had the money. Sugar, candy and soaps were rationed. Mrs. O'Grady once tried making her own soap - awful smell, had to throw the whole batch out. At Hallowe'en

17. (a) continued

the kids would go down to the arena, and one of the service clubs would give them each a little bag of candy and an orange or apple. They would parade around the arena in their costumes; the best costume would get a prize of a book or something. Also, they got stamps at school which they would sell to the people of the town for a penny or whatever they could get. At Hallowe'en, they went around and collected all their stamps. The prize for the most stamps sold would be a dollar.

Mr. O'Grady worked at the air force base that was being built in Labrador. He sent home candies and chocolate bars to his kids from the PX. She remembers walking down the street, eating a chocolate bar and being followed by all the kids on the block who wanted to know where on earth they got the candy.

Her mother was a great tea drinker, and during rationing, would trade coupons to get more tea coupons. There were plastic tokens for meat. Apparently, Father Pacquine usually gave candies, apples and oranges to all the kids at the Separate School every Christmas. One Christmas during the war, he wrote to Eatons for his usual 25 lbs. of candy. He received a 2 pound box. His reply to Eatons was "Thank you for the sample. Please forward the balance of 23 lbs.! - which Eatons did!

Once a trainload of prisoners of war (German) went through New Liskeard on their way north to Monteith. The O'Grady family lived on Farah Avenue, and the kids used to watch the trains go through and would also flatten pennies on the track. The time they saw the prisoners, the train was heavily guarded; some of the slats weren't closed and they could see the prisoners, until the guards realized that the prisoners would be able to see the name of the town as they went through the station, and quickly

17. (a) continued

closed the slats. At one point, a German P.O.W. escaped from Monteith and made his way south through New Liskeard. However, he was recaptured further south and was returned to Monteith.

18. Didn't know anything else - New Liskeard was her home town and she still thinks it is a nice town. Always had lots of food. Her mother was a good cook and would make things like popcorn, candy, and taffee for the kids. She also sewed for them. For three years, her mother would gather up all the kids in the neighbourhood and take them out to the Kiwanas camp for a couple of weeks. She did all the cooking for them. The bigger children had one cabin and the smaller children stayed in the other cabin, although all of the children were old enough not to need constant supervision.

Father Pacquin, the parish priest, was in New Liskeard for about 25 years. It was thought that he came from a wealthy family, because to the children, he always seemed to have a lot of money. He never gave a sermon of less than 1½ hours - should havebeen a missionary. The kids had to go to confession from school once a week.

Colleen also went to Girl Guide Camp - remembers the time when they went across the water from Barretts to camp just below Micks on Dawson Point Road. Had all their sleeping gear in the boats with them. Going back to New Liskeard the next day, the water was very rough and they had to let themselves be carried by the waves to Rexwood and go along the shoreline against the waves to land at Barretts. They then discovered that their leader, a nurse called Miss Cameron, although very good with motors, could not swim.

Mrs. O'Grady would take her children down to the beach everyday in the summer - they loved to swim, and all of the kids, except Colleen, were licensed swimming instructors. She remembers a time when she dove and hit her head while being tested for a particular certificate.

19. When she was a little kid, she and another girl whose father was the manager of a coal yard, would run after the coal rigs to hitch a ride. They would run as fast as they could to catch any of the wagons, sit on the back for awhile, then get off and have to walk all the way home. One time, when riding with her girlfriend's father, they delivered a cord of wood to some woman. The woman called up the coal yard to complain that there was not a full cord of wood in the supply she had been given. Mr. Conlon immediately went back to the woman's house and proceeded to re-measure the cord by piling the wood in the square that they used. He discovered that there was more than a full cord, so he took back the extra wood!

20. Her father came to New Liskeard as a baby. Her grandmother had taught school; her grandfather had kept a small store in Englehart, but came to New Liskeard to open up a farm implements outlet, as there were many farms opening up in the area at that time. Apparently one can still see the old sign; although it has been painted over, one can still read "Henry O'Grady and Son" - located where Ebert's Welding now is, near Canadian Tire.

21. Farming basically at that time and the stores who sold to the farmers. When they were kids, there was a pea cannery at the end of the street. The peas were called Northern Pride. They moved the pea factory from once place to another - it used to provide summer employment. When she was ten, Father Pacquin asked any of the kids if they would like to work at the pea cannery until their new school opened in two weeks - the factory usually employed high school kids, but they were already back in class. Cobalt was the big place to go shopping - she bought a new pair of red rubbers - spent all the money she made working at the cannery on clothes for school. You didn't have to be 16 years old to work then.

21 to 23 inclusive, continued.

Sometimes you worked at the table, and sometimes you worked upstairs shipping the cans down the shute or another time, you would be labelling the tins by hand and putting them into the boxes. Thinks they got 35¢ an hour. She couldn't make out her own time sheet as she was too young to know how - had to get someone else to do it for her. Their hours varied - depended on the loads of peas that came in. Some days they would work from 8 to 5, and come back after dinner to work until 9. Other times, you might work a couple of hours and be sent home.

She wishes that there was something like the pea cannery in Liskeard today so that the kids could get summer jobs. They could grow things out on the Casey Flat and have a freezing or canning plant. The pea cannery wasn't a paying proposition - had to bring the peas in on box cars and the shipping costs were too high. Canada Packers bought them out.

As the truckloads of peas would go around the corner, kids around 8 or 9 years of age would run and grab a whole handful of the peas, then run and hide. Until this day, her sister won't eat peas because she ate so many of them as a child. One year, they also canned some beans, but mostly peas. They would make a brine of sugar and acertain amount of salt - would mix in the bathtub in the factory - had to be at a specific temperature. Peas were put into cooking pots, into big hoppers and taken out and dried.

24. Born on Farah Avenue. House had two bedrooms, dining room, living room and kitchen, bathroom. Her grandfather came to live with them when she was about 14, had to have an upstairs put on. Never put any repairs on the house - her father worked on construction after the implement business was ended. Her father would come home between jobs, but was away most of the time. When the kids were quite young, her mother worked

24. continued

at the creamery for a couple of hours early every morning. She would bring home a pound of butter so packed full that the wrapper would hardly close.

Both of Colleen's sisters are now Public Health nurses.

25. Always had a great big Christmas cake and the kids had to stir it - Christmas at their place was just marvellous. Cookies and candies, a great big party after Midnight Mass - all you could wish for to eat, and dancing.

One time, she was very disappointed - her mother bought her a cross on a chain - she thought it was the dumbest gift she could possibly get. A beau of her sister's stole a tree in Haileybury and gave it to her sister - a rather poor specimen. Greenwoods used to have a grocery store, then a restaurant, and then kind of a dancehall. One year, her father and another man stole some turkeys and hid them under her dad's house steps. The next day the turkeys were gone - the other man had stolen them from her father!

26. In the house.

27. Wood stove.

28. They had electric lighting.

29. Coal furnace.

30. Greenwood's was a restaurant. There were men and ladies' clothing stores, banks, liquor store, all kinds of grocery stores - the Dominion was where Singer's is now. Lavery's is new, one part of Gray's hardware used to be a small jewellery shop. The newest store is Stedman's on that street. Stores on the other side of the street - Randall's Ladies Wear where the theatre now is - Colleen worked there when she was going to high school. They would go the theatre to see the cowboy

30. continued films - her sister would go down every Saturday morning to scrub floors, etc. for a lady. The money that she got would take her brother, Colleen and herself to the movie.
There were so many stores in Cobalt - more selection. She remembers Buckovskies, and Minerva's Sweets, for something different.

31. Theatre to see the cowboy movies; other than that, they would make their own entertainment. The kids in the neighbourhood would put on puppet shows; they would make those little dolls of wool and sell them for ten cents each. Would skate on the road.

32. Sleighriding. Didn't do much skiing although Joe did, as he lived on the hill. Tobogganing; regular hockey for the boys. Played ball at school. They would play their hearts out against the public school. In high school, there was so much rivalry between the three towns - really showed in basketball games. Once, they got up at 4:00 am. to get on the train to go to a tournament in Cochrane. Also, there used to be lots of swimming meets. Remembers a man having a polar dip - out on the lake - the kids walked out to watch him. There were lots of circuses - once even had Clyde Beatty and the lions. Her brother would get a job with the circus to get a free ticket in. They used to unload the animals at the station and then bring everything downtown through the streets to the beach.

33. Sacred Heart Sepaprate School; then New Liskeard Secondary School.

34. Twelve years.

35. Walking; she used a bicycle on her paper route. The buses were betweeen the towns but not in the towns. Their big treat was to take the bus and go down to Perrys in North Cobalt to visit. Once when she was waiting for the bus to come back from Perrys, a salesman stopped his car and

35. continued offered her a lift. She knew the man and accepted the ride; unfortunately, she could not remember his name when she was telling her mother - got into a lot of trouble - her mother was furious with her, even though the man was a family friend and had grown up with her mother in North Cobalt - all because Colleen couldn't remember his name!

36. Dr. J. C. McCullough.

37. Way up on the hill - very hard to get to in the winter. Her brother was born in a truck just over the tracks - they were on their way up to the hospital, but the truck broke down. The doctor couldn't get up the hill either - too icy.

38. Present New Liskeard Hospital.

39. Her children (three sons) are all still in school - Colleen was about 17 when she finished.

40. She went to work in Taylor Hardware Store office.

41. No idea - her family was not involved in these areas.

42. as above

43. as above

44. Everything - really ate well. They all liked spaghetti except her mother, who also disliked wieners. Lots of different foods.

45. Tunics and blouses, because they came from their older cousins who had to wear these outfits in high school.

46. Always had a good outfit for Sundays - passed down from their older cousins so they were well-dressed.

47. Always had to go to Mass - nothing really special after that. Summer time it was always the beach. Often the water would come up to the road at the racetrack - would come almost as high as where the Canton Gardens are now - the kids would go down and play in the water. The men going down to the Windsor Hotel would have to go by boat when the water came up.

48. A few little bits of jewellery and china that belonged to her mother - her father's old St. Patrick's Day tie.

49. People are friendly - they are what you make them. Some of them are very snobbish but can be put in their place. The hospital is here - Colleen has a bad heart and was in the hospital for a month over Xmas.

50. as above.

51. Her husband's job - as a result, in many ways, things have been much easier for them. He has been on the force for three years.

52. Would not send her children to a separate school. Feels that her oldest son had a bad start in Kindergarten and it shows throughout his school years. Borrowing money in this area was very difficult.

53. Didn't like the smoke from the Wabi. However, they have good neighbours and are in a rather secluded little place.

54. as above.

55. Personal: would like a bigger kitchen and one more bedroom, bathroom in their house. Also, would like to see all the hedges on corner property cut down or kept to a limited size. The new arena should be bigger; also, upstairs in the lobby there should be a glass window so that people can look down onto the ice. The older people cannot stand around in the cold to watch - should be able to look from the lobby. The town apparently refused an offer made by a private citizen to pay for the replacement of the wood panelling by a big window in the lobby.

56. above.

57. Summer.

58. Playing bridge, belongs to the Catholic Women's League and does sewing and catering work with them. Playing cards of any kind.

59. Sewing, knitting - have been doing a lot of paint by number sets and needle point.

60. Need more industry - suggestion - growing crops and having a frozen food plant. Processing plants. Should have an Unemployment Insurance Office here so that the men don't have to wait for their money. Need a new hospital - the Tri-Town has formed one board but the location

60. continued of a new hospital is under dispute. She feels that the site offered by the town near the new separate school would be excellent has been offered to the towns' hospital board by the town of New Liskeard for $1.00 for the area. Another suggestion would be along the by-pass road into Haileybury, although that wouldn't give them fire protection. Northern Ontario Dynamics is rumoured to open a furniture factory.

61. The area has lots of snow in the winter. Nice park, beautiful facilities for swimming. Can go to Government Farm, beautiful library which has been there for several years. The kids go on tours of the Fire Hall.

62. Young people - a good place for children to grow up.

HIGHLIGHTS: Have included her stories within the answers.

FOLLOW-UP:

Mr. Frank Newlove - was in hospital with broken leg - lives out along the highway.

Mr. Ray Stewart.

Mrs. MacFarlane - Wellington Street.

Mr. Frank Cooke - Lakeshore Rd. - old time carpenter.