

Lucy Damiani May 2, 1972

1:30 - 3:30

1. Gerald Paul Presse
2. Emma Gabbani wife
3. 91 Cobalt St.
4. 679-5931
5. Barber
6. Born in house on Russell St. Cobalt
7. Both in Michigan USA
8. Married 2 boys 1 deceased
9. 53 years
10. It's the best old town and will never die no matter what people say.

In 1934 the mines all started closing up and in 1938 things started to pick up again when we began selling Cobalt mineral to Germany. This was the only country at the time that had developed Cobalt as an alley for hardening steel. They were producing much ammunition and using Cobalt in the hardening of parts for rifles.

I was 16 years old when I started working for my father in 1936. I worked 9 hours a day for 442.50 a week and some days i put in almost a week's work in a day. My father known to everybody as "Captain Presse" was working with Don Russell as a partner at the time. He was employed by three Jewish promoters from New York. One of these fellows was a real good artist and drew a portrait of my father that was an exact resemblance my mother still has the picture. When Dad was working on Agnico in North Cobalt property we use to ship out ore to Germany every 3 weeks. They took the lease away from my dad before long because it made to much money.

In 1938 I went to Young Davidson Gold Mines for a year then I came back and worked for my dad who then had a lease on Nipissing Property. Mr. Dave Thorne was his partner at the time. In 1941 he shipped the last load of silver. It was then that the price started dropping in the market and there wasn't too much sale for silver. All the mines started stock piling. By then England and. U.S. had discovered uses of Cobalt.

Here are some pictures of my father with a shipment of silver ready to be shipped from Cobalt station. These fellows with him in the picture were working with him at the time. From left to right there's my father, Herb Light, Herb Lanthie³ myself and Dave Thorne.

In 1941 strike was on in Kirkland no jobs so I went to Timmins and worked at Buffalo Anchorite for eight months. I then went to Shipshaw Quebec to work in the big aluminum plant where they were producing aero plane darts. I was foreman at the pit for leavening off the river and Mr. Hugh MacDonald of Cobalt also was Pit superintendent for the same project. It was a dangerous job and when the accident casualties reached 11 in one night I took off for home. After being home awhile I went to Timmins and worked at Hollinger Mine for 2 years. In Jan. 1943 I got my army call and was drafted in infantry for initial training was sent to Nanaimo B.C., one month invasion training at Courtney B.C., two more weeks training at Port Albany then we were

Shipped to Vernon B.C. and overseas to England. Three weeks training in Holland near 20 the Canal. I was wounded in Fronegaa Holland, shipped to Nairneagan finally 11 English Hospital in England which was on Lady Astros estate.

I met her personally while I was in the hospital; she visited the wounded every day. All the fellows really liked her and used to look forward to her visits. When I was better some of us went to her castle for a visit. She served us tea and cookies there was a beautiful portrait of her done by a famous artist. I speak for all who knew her when I say she was the grandest person I ever met. The day we were going home she came to kiss us all good-bye and wish us luck. I went to a convalescent home from there then I came home from the hospital ship "Lady Nelson". I was in Christie Street Hospital for 3 weeks then Sunnybrook 6 weeks then I came home. They sent me on a

Barbering course because of my injury. I worked in Kirkland with another barber for one year Doug's Barber Shop and Annie's Barber Shop on Prospect.

I came to Cobalt and bought barber shop from George St. Hilaire January 1952 and the block I was in burned down in. March 9, 1952 there was a loss of two lives in this fire, the upstairs was rented rooms. I bought a shop from Red Despres which originally the Drummond Tea Room was. Tore the old building down and on Sept- 13, 1961 opened up in same location but a newly equipped modern shop and I've been here ever since.

In 1956 I bought 1 storey home 6 room completely remodeled once and -I've Put heating system with hot water.

My business years in Cobalt have been good and bad right now it's very quiet, but it looks like things are picking up.

My opinion is that Cobalt is going to eventually revert to a town for retirement maybe in 5 or 6 years the old will be almost strictly a quiet place to retire. You can go out any time of day or night and never be afraid of anything happening to you. There will be more people coming here to retire because its quiet i's cheaper living and facilities you need are all easily reached.

I would say there are no job opportunities and this is why our young People all leave. I definitely think that a 2.50 price on haircuts is pushing us out of business. The young people barbers up here can't see this. But 2.50 is alright for cities like Sudbury or Timmins but it's too high for here. I

know another reason for fewer haircuts is that the longer hair but I still maintain that the price has a lot to do with it.

If we have recreation we should be combined with Township of Coleman or maybe a Tri Town effort but it should not be under a director; it should be an appointed board. Also need organized sports for the youngsters they have to have organized sports. We have many men who have already offered their service in this respect and they do a terrific job of coaching hockey teams.

We should give our municipal government credit for the job they are doing. They are working and taking advantage of grants and all the winter works are worthwhile projects. We now have a park at Sass Lake and the Lions Club has done a good job on the lake. The work is beginning to show the effort put in. The Town has done a terrific job of encouraging new homes then will be another 10 new homes going up. And they tell me this site has been chosen for senior citizens this is another good thing the down town area has certainly

improved with the new Red & White, new Motel and the renovations of buildings on Lang Street with new library. I am in favour of a change Of council every two years. We should encourage tourist trade but to do this we should go big, have a good information centre for visitors and we have facilities for winter and summer activities. We have a large skating rink good ski trails ski doo trails ice fishing could be one attraction bowling alley there are many lakes for fishing swimming parks now for outdoor use like camping a good summer resort at bass Lake for tenting or trailers many sights in the area worth seeing. Compressed air plant new Hydro project Drummond Cairn many mine sites and a perfect place for artists to paint or rock hounds to collect specimens.

Can you tell me anywhere else that has all this to offer? So with some help from the right government we can have a big thing going. Well Lucy that's my story now you tell it.

Thanks for the interesting interview Gerry.