**Interviewee: Josie Yoshioka**
**Interviewer: Lisa Uyeda**
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****Note that this interview contains outdated terminology regarding Asian, Jewish, Black and Indigenous people and references to incidents of abuse and sexual assault.**

**[Start Part 1]**

Lisa Uyeda: —and there we are, So, today is August 19th, 2011, and can you please start off by telling us your full name?
Josie Yoshioka: My name is Josie Yoshioka, I was born Josie Yano. And my parents were Kyomi and Tsubi Yano. And I was a family—we had—of six children. My eldest sister was named Tomie, and Omi, I had a brother named George, who was also George in Japanese, written in *kanji*, then a sister named Mary, Kimi, had both English and Japanese name, but I only got the name Josie. And my younger sister was just Ruth. I often thought this was like my parents becoming Canadian-ized, because my father was very eager for us to be Canadian, and encouraged us to do things that I think a lot of *issei* parents did not—would not let their children do. And I know as a young girl, being very disappointed as I—because there were, you know, I knew Japanese girls in the neighbourhood, who mostly would not come out to play like in the summer time, because they were kept at home, whereas I had quite free reign because my mother, worked in the store. Our parents had a dry-cleaning establishment at 2163 East Hastings Street. They had moved here in about 1925, and since I was born in 1926, this was the only home that I knew right up till the start of the War. And in the—I loved school, and I went to MacDonald's School which was in the neighbourhood down the street. Then I went to Templeton Junior High, which was a wonderful, large junior high school that took in about six other public schools. And I felt, as my children went into junior schools in Toronto, that Templeton Junior High in Vancouver was way ahead of the type of schools. We had things like, oh, about six cooking cla—cooking rooms, and sewing rooms, and a large auditorium, on rainy days there was always a movie to watch, and—lots of activities. We did not go to school on Wednesday afternoons because it was always club days, and you had—you joined a club.
LU: Okay.
JY: So that was a lot of fun, and then I went on from junior high to one year at Britannia High School when the war began and we were evacuated. As a child, I—looking back, I had a wonderful father. Everyone in the family felt—dad was very stern and strict. But I soon discovered that my father liked nothing better than to be proud of his children and would do things to encourage us, and so I would go to him and say to him, "now if I can get first or second or third, you know, in the coming semester at school, can I have roller skates? Can I have ice skates? Can I have a bicycle?" And this way I had a lot more things that my mother regarded as tomboyish, you know, than my other siblings did, or other—even children,

because it was Depression years, you know, than other children in the neighbourhood. I like nothing better in the summer than to go to a nearby park that was called Pandora Park. And Pandora Park, had—in the summer time, had two phys. ed [physical education] students from UBC [University of British Columbia] come to supervise the park, so it—it had programs with craft classes, and lots of sports activities, there was a pool that was deep enough to learn to swim, which I—that's where I learned to swim, and we would play baseball against other playgrounds in Vancouver.

[00:05]

JY: I found it interesting that in my neighbourhood, which I sort of felt was Pandora Park neighbourhood, that—I know from talking to people like Fred Sasaki or Roy Shinobu, that they regarded Pandora Park as a—almost a no-no place for Japanese people, because they felt there were other boys who roughed them up. But for me, I feel that this—my experiences as a young girl in Vancouver, that people did not harass young girls. And I do not feel I ever had a time when I could not, you know, do something I liked. In fact, I [chuckles] as a young girl, felt I was—I didn't feel very Japanese, and I never really absorbed, I guess, the fact that Japanese girls shouldn't be *otemba*, you know, sort of—be tomboyish, you know, or do things like this. And—I remember even telling my mother, one day, that I was playing with my *hakujin* friends, this is non-Japanese friends, and we were running down the street in front of where our store was, and because they were store fronts they all had glass fronts, and I could see my reflection along with the other kids, and thinking, "Who is that Oriental person there?" And realizing it was me, and telling my mother, "I don't feel—" you know, "Japanese." And I—guess this continues because—and I think my father encouraged me because I know when I went to high school, and there would be a high school dance, and it wasn't that I was interested in boys, but I wanted to be part of the activities my other friends did, and my father would agree to take me there and meet me after school—after the dance and drive me home again. And I would be the only Japanese girl there. Also, when I was in grade nine, our grade nine teacher said one day that he wanted to have a class party, and we would go to Crystal Pool in Vancouver. And this Crystal Pool was known not to allow—well exclude, I guess, Asians. And so—but when I signed up, another Japanese girl in my class said to me, "Josie, you know you can't get in there." And I said, "I don't think they'll" you know, "kick me out. I'll go along [laughs] and see." And sure enough, I had a great time, you know? My only complaint was that there was a large boy in our class called Ivan, and Ivan kept pushing me under [laughs], but I guess I was a little more daring than a lot of Japanese girls in my time, eh. I think time are different now, but this was pre-War. The other thing about my life in Vancouver growing up was that my father loved going places all the time. And so, he would take us—down to watch the big ship cranes, you know, unload sugar at Roger's Sugar Mill, and I remember also one time him taking me down the street to—and he parked his car up and said to me, "Come with me down this alley," so I followed him down, and after we were about halfway down the street, he would—said, "Stoop down here, and look down that basement window," [points downwards] and when I did, there was—the looms were, a whole room of looms were

weaving cloth. Another time he would take us down to see the press at Vancouver Daily Province. You know, the press rolling to put out the papers. And various things like this. He loved vaudeville, so we went to vaudeville shows, he liked air shows, so we went to air shows, and certainly, almost every weekend, through the year, there was *warabi* to pick you know, to pick in the fields, and mushroom time, or we'd go to the seashore to dig clams, or seaweed, *nori*—
LU: Oh.
JY: And—
LU: —Can you tell us a little bit more about that, what you would do to go collect the seaweed, or mushrooms, or—

[00:10]

JY: Well, you know, I guess—during these years, times were hard, and a lot of people did not have cars. I remember, even [chuckles] my father, we often had two cars—one for the business and one passenger car. And my father was the type of man who encouraged, like my sisters, and my mother all to drive. And I know my sisters—and I could think—my father was a terrible teacher, and of course, there was no power steering, or—in those days, or automatic shift, and I know my two sisters both never got to the stage, you know, where they were able to drive. In fact, my sister, Omi, said to me one day, that she, I don't know, she stalled the car, dad went in front and pulled up the hood to look to see what was wrong and told her to start the car, but she said she pressed on the gas and almost ran him over. So that was the [laughs] end of her lessons. But also, you have to remember, Vancouver is a very hilly, you know, city, and there—we didn't have a level street in our neighbourhood at all. It was all up—up or down and so I imagine it wasn't easy, you know, to learn to drive those old cars, because this would be back in the 1930s and—but—no, I don't know, my father just took for granted that we'd go places on the weekend, so poor mother, who worked all—would often have to stay up late on Saturday night, or get up early in the morning to make bento, you know, and I remember one of her favourites was making chicken cutlets, which we all loved, you know. And—but no, we just—as I say, I can remember going to Cultus Lake, going to Harrison Hot Springs, going to Seattle, that was a terrible trip, you know. There were eight of us in the family, and these old cars, I don't know how many people they comfortably held, but [laughs] eight people in the car on a long, long, trip, I think—the highways aren't, you know—are not what they are now, and they took at least three or four hours, I think, to get to Seattle. But we were always—my father was—we were always on the road, you know, on weekends especially, going out to do something, you know. And then there were—we had, we were Ehime-ken, and there was the Ehime, which had picnics in the summer, and that was a lot of fun because there weren't a lot of us and so, us children got [laughs] so many prizes, it didn't matter how you did in races or anything, you always got lots of prizes. And then there was the cleaners' group, that always had a big picnic in the summer time. So, summers were quite—I felt were a lot of fun. We hated the rain, because [chuckles] it would spoil going out. But between—for me, between during the day going to Pandora Park to play, and then on the weekends going out to various trips, you

know and that [mumbling]. I think life for me, as a child, was very nice. The odd part of it all, is I don't remember what my sisters did! [laughs] I know that when I went Pandora Park, my sister Mary didn't come. Mary often went to visit Mrs. Miyazaki, who had—this is Dr. Miyazaki's family, and she had two young girls. And she liked my sister Mary, and would ask her to come over to help her out. But then, Mary said, "I don't know why she wanted me, she had a maid!" And my younger sister Ruth would often go to the house of Mrs. Amagatsu, who had a baby, and she liked to—she liked going there to help with the baby. And my brother George of course, was out playing with his friends, and my older sisters were probably too old to be playing.

[00:15]

JY: I don't because there was quite a gap in the years between me and my older sisters, I know one of them helped out at the store, you know, in the cleaning establishment, because they both went to—oh, I can't remember the lady's name—but a lady who taught dress making, and design, and they made patterns, you know, for dresses, and this way I was taught in turn by my sisters, when I was older, how to make my own pattern, like, make a pattern for my own dresses and that. So as I got older, I used to be able to make my own dresses, you know, blouses. Now where do we go from here? Do we go to when the war started?
LU: Oh, well, do you want to tell us a bit more about what you remember growing up as a child? Maybe some of your favourite toys, or what you remember about Japanese language school? Or—
JY: Oh, yeah okay [laughs]. Well you know, I remember hav—as I say, my parents were quite generous for—as I look back and think what the Depression years must have been like, because when I talk to a lot of my other friends, who were very successful, you know, in their careers or in business, and telling me what the Depression years were like for them, and that they remember days when they had—when there was no food on the table, I don't ever remember a time like that. In fact, I know we had a girl who often arrived at our—at our back door during meal times or when we were preparing meals, and we would laughingly and you know, and I think it was mean, when I think about it now—give her *takuan* [Japanese pickle], you know, because we felt it would—she wouldn't eat it, but she would, and she would say, "Oh I like it," you know. And as I say, I realize now, she was hungry. And— but for us, there was never, you know, a time like that. And for toys, I remember, I had a doll that I really liked very much. She was not a good doll, later [chuckles] one day, I asked for and was taken to a doll store and my father said, "Pick any doll you like," and I picked this French porcelain doll, which my father said to me was not a good choice and it certainly wasn't, because almost as soon as I came home, I dropped her and she shattered to bits. But this other doll, Betty, was a—a doll, sort of was—I think what they call a composition head. She didn't have any real hair on her, she had a bonnet, and a stuffed body, with a nice little dress on her. But one day, my brother George said that he had made a parachute, and that— could he borrow the doll, and he convinced me that if he tied this parachute onto Betty's back, that Betty would float gently waft down [brings hand up then

slowly down as demonstration] you know, from the upstairs window. But to my horror, when he took—threw— [chuckles] Betty out the window, Betty went splat [emphasis with hand] right down and hit the basement stone steps and shattered the back—just the back of her head shattered. Mary tells me she had a doll that just shattered to bits when George did this to her doll as well. But luckily, Betty had this bonnet that I could tie on her head and so no one was the wiser that she had no—there was nothing [laughs] on the back of her head. But as I say I, you know, was the only girl I knew that had a bicycle, and one thing about my father was that he would take me shopping to buy the ice skates, and of course I pictured I was going to get nice white figure, you know, ice skates, and I would end up with black CCM [Canada Cycle & Motor Co. Ltd] boys, you know, hockey type skates, because the salesman would tell him that these were better skates—and my father would go by what the man said, and not what I had thought I was getting. And same with my bicycle, my bicycle happened to be used, well—preconditioned, I guess you would say, bicycle, but I didn't realize that was a better bicycle, and of course this is what the salesman had told my father, that it was a better bicycle.

[00:20]

JY: And on the hilly streets of Vancouver, I found—I guess it was geared differently; I could go straight uphill whereas all the boys I knew went from side to side [motions finger side to side] to climb the hills. And so I was very popular with the boys, who wanted to ride my bike, you know, they'd [laughs] want to change bicycles because my bicycle would take the hills much better. But no, as I said, my father was a generous man, on my birthdays, when we—I would be outside playing with other children in the neighbourhood, he would come and say, "It's Josie's birthday, come on we'll all go down to the dairy!" and we'd get to this dairy and he would say, "You can have anything you want." Up till now, these dairies were not—there weren't very many of these dairies in—where they're like now, they had, you could get an ice cream cone for five cents double, you know, double scoops and that sort of thing. And so when he had all the neighbourhood kids and tell them they could have anything they want, and they would say, "Can we have a sundae?" And he would say yes, and that. So, you know, the kids would order milkshakes, and sundaes, and things that they ordinarily would not get, and be very happy and then going home, he would say, "Well let's all have an ice cream cone," so we'd all have an ice cream cone as well, you know. But my mother often used to say money burned in his pocket. If he had money, he'd spend it, you know. But yeah so—my mother was the work horse in the family. And this one year, was about—1935 or so, maybe, let's see, I would have been about—I think I would have been at least ten, eight, maybe eight or so, when my father decided to—after talking to some friends that he could make money running a farm. And my mother was very much against it, said he had no farming experience and she was not happy about it. So she refused to let the cleaner business go, so father bought the farm, and it was a nice farm. At least from my point of view [chuckles], not knowing anything about agriculture, or the land or anything, because I liked the house. The house was an old farmhouse with a veranda that ran three quarters of the way around. So on rainy days, it was still nice to be able to—it had a swing on it, and you

could play on the veranda. And being little, I didn't have to do farm work, so the farm was just somewhere different to go to. And in the summer, we spent a bit of—you know, some time in there, but once the school year started, of course, we only went on weekends. But my poor mother, who ran the cleaning store all week, would now have to drive us all to the farm and we commute back and forth. And I remember many times, on these country roads the car tipping over, and we'd all scramble out the car and put it back on its wheels and go on our way. But unfortunately, mother had a couple of rather frightening accidents she—one day when we were coming home very early in the morning, she—as I say the streets were very hilly, we were on Hastings Street above Hastings Park, where the hills really were quite steep and there was a streetcar that started to stop, and mother panicked I think and probably put on the brakes too hard and the car rolled over. [laughs] And because, you know, there were witnesses and people around it was a little—more embarrassing than if it happened when we're all alone out in the country. But anyways, no one was hurt and my only worry was I was going to be late for school, [chuckles] but we all got back into the car, and went on our way.

[00:25]

JY: But later, I don't know if it was the same year or another year, mother did have a bad accident when she was alone in the car, on Powell Street, I think she hit a telephone pole or something, and got a little injured, I don't think seriously, but I think she decided at that point she was not going to drive anymore. Now, where shall we go from here? [laughs]
LU: [laughs] do you want to, maybe talk a little bit about Japanese language school?
JY: Okay. I hated Japanese school. [laughs]
LU: [laughs]
JY: I—to this day, I do not talk Japanese well, I never have. I think as a child, at home, I could get away with talking, lots of—English, you know, because my parents were in business, and so, like, for instance, I knew my mother could—one day talk—trying to talk pig Latin, or what we call the [unclear] language, you know, to try not—to fool my mother or to— not make her—have her understand you know, what was going on, but she said to me, "Remember you're a fifth child. I've been through all this before." [laughs] So I got away with not speaking too much Japanese, I think, and I found Japanese school a real chore, I did not like it, I was a cheeky child, I think, I don't think the Japanese school teachers liked me at all, besides, I found— I guess, you know, Japanese school teachers were much more strict. I know we had one teacher who thought nothing of having a stick in his hand, and hitting, didn't matter whether boy or girl, just whamming you right in the head—on the head, and things like this. But, I know I did not did well at Japanese school, I know at one point at—I went—I guess I must—I think I went up to about grade seven, I know, after so many years, we had to go at night, after—from grade—I mean from seven o'clock. I don't know whether if it was one or two hours, but. So, at this time, I used to dislike school even more to have to go out at night. But—but I can remember one time when we were at the point where we were going to write with brushes, you know *fude*, and the teacher coming along and stopping and looking at me and he said to me, "You do not write, you draw. You make up,"

you know, I guess I don't follow the proper sequences, or whatever I did, I was not good [chuckles] at it at all. I don't know. And I disliked the discipline, I guess, that was there at Japanese school. I did not take to it well. I also did not like the teachers. There were two main teachers I—in fact I disliked intensely. [laughs] And one because of this business of hitting us, you know, with—it didn't matter whether he just felt you didn't sit up straight, or—and some of the girls were very timid, and I thought it was really—they would really be embarrassed and in tears, you know. I would not be like that, but I would find it bullying. And another teacher because one day he said—he was Anti-Semitic. And he very—in front of—told our class that the Jews were out to come for the world, and said things like—and I found this ridiculous [laughs] just listening to him, he said they would control the world through "three S's"—I think he said, and one 'S' I know was the screen, movies, and one 'S' was sanitation, he said cleaners, and my parents being in the cleaning business I thought this was ridiculous. [laughs] And I can't remember what the third 'S' was, but as I say, I did not take to the type of discipline that Japanese school teachers felt that, especially girls, you know, you should be very—much more—what's the word, quiet and demure, which I of course I was not.

[00:30]

JY: But, I only met one other girl, who one day I was so surprised after meeting her—you know, many years later as an adult, telling me how she hated—well her husband told me this—Mariko hates—hated Japanese school! And I looked at Mariko and said, "You too?" And she mentioned this teacher that used to go around hitting people, you know, with a stick. And she said—but Mariko's interesting in that her grandfather was a Mr. Ikeda, who was— belonged to the National Geographic Society, and he has, apparently, a cove or a cape, or something, out in Northern B.C [British Columbia] named after him, and I loved going into their house, because at one point, the Tokunagas moved in with Mrs. Tokunaga's parents, the Ikedas, and—because the parents were old—elderly, and needed a little help, and so to walk into their house was like walking into a museum. It was filled with Indian artefacts, and [stuttering] I—well, on top of that old Mrs. Ikeda made such beautiful craft—Japanese craft works, you know, which she would give me as a little presents. But—and then Mariko herself ended up marrying Clive Abdulah, who became the bishop of Trinidad. So it's sort of interesting, isn't it. But yeah, that's all I could say about Japanese school. [laughs]

LU: You mentioned previously, your birthday that you would celebrate, but what about some other holidays? What do you remember about, you know, maybe New Year's, or—did you celebrate Christmas—

JY: Well New Year's, of course, was a big thing, but big in that, well we celebrated it in the—in the way most Japanese families did, you know. My poor mother, as I said, would stay up all night cooking and making all this food, and we would load the dining room table with it, but my dad, as I said—'cause in those days, I think most men had maybe one good suit that they wore, you know, for all occasions, my father had about four. And one of which was what they call a morning coat, you know, swallow tail—striped pants [miming suit style

with hands], and he only wore this only to go at New Year's, to show— to greet the um, emperor—I guess that's what they call it. He'd go to the Japanese consul's house too. I guess they have a [levy?] and this is where he would wear this outfit. [chuckles] But— and then, of course, when they come home, they just go from house to house to wish other families, you know, give New Year's greetings. And at our house, we would greet other men that would come by. And of course, you had this table loaded with food, and they would have—you'd serve them *sake*, and then they would have—nibble a bit of food I guess, and be on their way to go to other homes. And we—my mother and the rest of us would just sit there and wait for people to come. We—Christmas was not celebrated—with a lot of food, as I recall. We did have presents, my parents, you know, parents gave us presents. When I discovered—it was through Mariko, that I discovered you could have your own books. I always used to think, you know, you went to the library for books to read, but I discovered Mariko had books of her own. So after that, I would say to my mother "I want books— I want a book for Christmas." And I would get "Little Women," you know, the book "Little Women," or—oh, whatever I requested I usually got. My oldest sisters, of course, did the shopping, and they would pick out—oh, I must tell you about one scandalous thing that happened at Japanese school in regard to this. As I say, my parents were quite Canadian-ized, you know, they— And so, one year, at Japanese school, we went for—they went for a hike up Grouse Mountain every year.

[00:35]

JY: And so this one year, my mother sent my older sisters out to buy some clothes for us, and my sister came home with slacks. I remember Mary—my sister Mary got navy blue, and I got a maroon one. And we were quite happy with them, and my parents certainly didn't—I guess approved, and so that was fine for hiking. And so, of course, Mary and I wore our slacks for this hike. Later, we didn't feel—different or anything during that day, but later, I was told, my one of the Japanese girls that I knew, that we were— thought to be very outrageous, it was scandalous, that we would wear pants and slacks, slacks. This girl said, "Only movie stars like Katherine Hepburn [laughs] wore slacks!" and I said, "What do you mean by that? When we go out the country to see some of our country friends, they all have—wearing pants! Aren't they, you know?" But apparently, we caused quite a scandal, and—she said it was discussed at—Japanese teachers' meeting or something. But I think by this time maybe they at the school they must have realized that our parents allowed us to do things like this.
LU: [humming in agreement]
JY: But no, as I said, one thing just before the War—oh.

[interview stops, video and audio cuts]

JY: —presents just before the war, I don't know if you would recall but the [wet-um's] doll came out. Now the [wet-um's?] doll was a doll that had a tube inside her so that you could give her a little baby bottle [miming feeding the baby] and it would like—she would drink it.

And I knew I was too old for dolls, and I—but I wanted this Wetums[1] doll for Christmas, and my mother said this to me, "You're too old, you know, to have a doll," but I said, "Yeah, but I would like a Wetums doll." So [chuckles] I got one, for Christmas. But then, you know, because I was older, and because—it was still like new by the time the war started, and we knew we would have to evacuate, and I—so my mother urged me to give the doll to some little girl, you know, who might like it. And I said to my mother—well I had collections of, like stamps, there was a boy in our class that started the stamp club, so I had a stamp book, I had things like, albums of movie stars, you know, that I had—would collect, and that, and my mother told me that I would not be able to take any of these things with me, I could remember thinking if I can't have my—these things, then who am I going to be? You know, I felt this was [chuckles] a part of me, and my life and my character, you know, but yeah. It was a bit traumatic, and because my brother was sent off to camp first, because he was a young man and they sent him off to some work camp in Ontario, and then my father went early to help build up Tashme, which is where we ended, it was really the nitty gritty of moving out furniture and—and closing up—you know, fell to my mother and to us girls. And one day— night, when mother was throwing out debris into the stove, and burning up some things we had a chimney fire. [laughs] That was scary. [laughs] But anyway, it—it was—yeah, by the time we left Vancouver, I must admit—and got to Tashme, I was a little relieved we were out of all that scary business because we had—I can remember one night, a group of young men, coming into the house, and telling my father to resist, "Don't go, don't go," you know, "Resist."

[00:40]

JY: And they sort of would say that if—the idea was to get all the men out of Vancouver, then the men would rape the women, and things like this, and my father would say no, that it was better to go peacefully, and, that if we didn't, and we resisted too much, they'd send in the army and then there would be more—be trouble. And talking to girls who, later, in camp, girls who came from, you know, Powell Street or downtown in Vancouver, they said this was a nightly occurrence, where a lot of young men would hide—who would be hiding from the Mounties [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] who were rounding up young men, that they would go from house to house, and you know they would come into your house for a while, and till a street—look out and see if the street was quiet, and then they'd run to another house, and things like this. So, at least we didn't have that in our neighbourhood.
LU: Mm-hm. Oh my goodness. And are we going to pause now—
JY: [overlapping] So are—so we stop now, then?
Unidentified Person: Yep.

[Interview stops, video and audio cuts]

[1] Wetums dolls were manufactured by Reliable Doll Co. in Canada. They're found in quite a few auction (or eBay) listings and the main feature is they can drink liquids – see example: https://www.ebay.com/itm/187038424829

JY: —talk about my father?
LU: Yes! Uh, we, we left off, and we kind of skipped over the beginning story on, on your father and your mother, and where they were born, and if you know when they may have been born, and their travels from Japan to Canada.
JY: Yeah, I know—I know when they were, my—is it on?
LU: Yep!
JY: Oh. My father was born in November of, I think it's 20th, 1881. And his father died when he was young, so his older brother became head of the household. And he—I guess that's the custom is in Japan, the eldest son is the head of the family. And I remember my father saying to me, one day when I cheekily was being, I guess disobedient or something, he telling me, that he always obeyed his older brother, even though he says he hated it and tears would be coming from his eyes. And I cheekily said to him, [laughs] "You mean to tell me you know what it's like to have to do something you don't want to do and you want me [with emphasis] to be—to feel like that too?" [laughs] But my father also had a way of always saying he was the captain of the ship, you know, the family ship, and that when he called, we had to say, "Aye-aye sir," or do something right away, it wasn't "in a minute" or all—or whatever, you know, answer that we'd give, he says it had to come immediately and do what he—what he tells us [chuckles] or the ship would flounder, and we would all laugh and said, "Yeah, the ship will go down." [laughs] So, I guess we—yeah. But, but still, as I say, he could be stern. I remember being beaten by him with a stick, for something I didn't do or did do, and that I wasn't supposed to do. But on the whole, I got along well with my father, I always felt there was a soft spot in him, whereas as I say, most of my siblings all felt much closer to my mother, than I guess I did, I don't know. Because I remember as an adult being so shocked, to have my siblings—my sisters tell me, and—that—or say things like, "Well mother didn't say to do it that way," and I would say, "Well what way did she tell us to it?" and they said—and this is maybe cooking rice, you know, and—but they always felt that the way mother told you do it was the correct way, there was no other way to do it. And one day when I was talking to my sister-in-law, she said "Oh, George feels that way too, that your mother was always, you know, whatever she said was the—" [chuckles] "right way, the best way to do things." So I guess I didn't listen to my mother as much as my—as my other siblings did.

[00:45]

JY: But my father left Japan—he was conscripted—conscripted in the Russian-Japanese War which occurred in 1904 to 1905. And he was wounded at one time, because [unclear]—he has a medal that says he was wounded, and he was let out of the army, I guess, and he said he was—they had to make their own way back to Japan, so his older brother, who was in New York, and had come home, when he heard Japan was at war, thinking that maybe he would go back in the army but he—it was over by the time he came—arrived in Japan, and so he told Kiyomi that he should join him in New York, and that together they could make enough money to restore the family fortunes. And so Kiyomi went to China to try to find a ship that would take him to the United States. He, apparently, was in China looking for a

ship, and took ships, worked on ships going to the South Seas, and that—before he found a ship that was going to the United States. He—in China he bought, what we called, always called, I remember as a child, the Shanghai *bako*, you know, means—*bako* means box, and, but I know inside it says Hong Kong. [laughs] So whether he—it was made in Hong Kong and he bought it in Shanghai, or what not, I don't know, or that was just the fancy name that was put on it, but I have this box. And it's made of camphor wood. But my father, I remember him telling me it was a rough voyage over. At one point, the—during the storm, the mast broke, and it took them a month, I think, to reach Seattle. He was—what he did in Seattle I'm not sure, but he said that there was not much work and he was told that Canada would be better. So he crossed the border—he had papers enough to cross the border, to come to Canada, just in time I think, for the Race Riots that happened in September of 1907. And he said that these papers that he had, someone asked if they could borrow them, because he had to go to the US [United States], and he would come back with them, but of course the man never did. But in the meantime, he—in 1911, his brother in New York died. And when he got word that his brother died, he—there was now no need for him to go to New York so he stayed in Vancouver. And I think while he was on his own, he worked in the bush, or—took jobs wherever he could, I know at one point he was in the—he and a friend I think bought a boat, or maybe—mostly maybe it was my father's money, but the idea was apparently to buy fish, and sail the boat to—across the border and sell it in the US [United States]. And—but the business was not successful, and I know for many years my father [clears throat] always resented this man, his partner—so called partner, never paid his fair share of the debt. And [coughs] I remember telling him, because he kept this up for many years, until I know till I was an adult, him even talking about—about it, [clearing throat] and I told him one day that, you know, it's time to forget it. 'Cause he felt that if the chil—if the man didn't pay up his debt, his children should. And I said, "No dad, you just forget it. You've done alright—" you know, " as it is." But my father never thought he was a success. He said this to me one day, "I have not been successful," because I supposed in his eyes, he had come to Canada to make a fortune, and he had not.

[00:50]

JY: And it was only till he was quite an old man, that he took a trip back to Japan. 'Cause he always said he would not go back until he had a lot of money. And so, this one time, I think he went back, I could remember our little daughter was still a baby, when—so it would be—and Pat was born in 1953—so it was about '54, I guess, 1954, when he took his trip back to Japan. And I think he said to me, there was a man he had gone to school with as a boy—as boys, and this man told him one day, that he was amazed that Kiyomi had been across the ocean and that, and said to him that one day he would like to see a train. And my father said to him, "Well, there's a train station in the next town." And the man said to him, "But what business have I to go there?" [laughs] You know, this I think this is—was astounding to him to think this man couldn't just up and go and just see the train! But anyway, I think it made him realize too, how—what a different life he had led from this other man who had stayed in this small village his whole life. My mother was—came from the same area as my father,

only from what I gather, my father's home was up high in the mountains, or in the hills, and my mother lived down on the seashore. But they were cousins. And my father told me that when my mother was born, his mother took him to see this new baby. And so the family arranged this marriage, and so my mother arrived—she came over with another man from the same village, and she arrived in Victoria in 1915, I think, and my father said he had to go to Victoria to meet her off the boat and bring her back to Vancouver. And he told us that he felt that she should learn English. And so she went to work in a home, that my sister Mary says was the home of the Vancouver mayor. And this—the mayor's wife was very kind to my mother, and would teach her, you know, many things. One of the things she told my mother was that a lady always wore a corset. Now in those days, ladies were very laced up. Do you know, when I became a teenager, my mother gave me a corset. And if—I found it, interesting, to this day I like wearing a girdle, or I certainly don't wear a corset, but my mother always did, you know, she always had the corsets that you had to pull the laces to tighten up, she did for many years. She didn't in her very late years, but she did. And when I tell my sisters, I wear a girdle, they were quite amazed. But I got somehow in the habit of being laced up too [chuckles] I guess. And—but my mother said she tried to learn English, she said she thought she would try to do one new word a day, but she found it very, very difficult. But still, I know as a young girl my mother would say things like, "Oh Josie, so sensitive!" [fanning herself, laughs] she would learn these words obviously from my sister. And I could remember her saying, "So hot I sweat—no, no, no, perspire!" [fanning herself] and she could talk, like, to her customers, so, because she was, you know, in business, and that, she was obviously much better at speaking English than a lot of my friends' mothers, and certainly later, in—when they moved to—after the war, when they moved to Toronto,

[00:55]

JY: —my father, still being a sort of a businessman, he bought a house, with very little money down, he even had to take out a third mortgage I think, but felt this is the way to get ahead. And when they bought the house on Hurndale, my father said to me, because I was going to university, that he wanted me to understand that my brother George, and Ruth, who were still living at home, would be contributing to the—paying off the house. And since I was going to university, and would not make any contribution, that he wanted me to understand the house would be left to George and Ruth, and I would not get a share. And I said, "Yes, I understand that," and that was fine with me. And so they paid off this house in five years. And it was a large house where—that was divided into rooms, and this, my father said, would keep my—him and mother in their old age, and this was the purpose of buying this large house. And I know my mother got along very well with the ladies, because they were mostly ladies, in the rooms, and she would talk to them, have tea with them, and as I said, [chuckles] my father became a night watchman, I think, and certainly being a Japanese one, he didn't do much of the house—helping with—you know, keeping—the rooms—where the people rented out, were my mother cleaned them out once a week, you know. So—so, yeah, you know, it's interesting that I guess I've always known my mother worked much harder than my father, but it didn't really hit home until one day when I was writing

down things about my mother and father, when my daughter read it, she said—first thing she said to me, "I feel sorry this woman!" [laughs, sits a bit straighter in her chair]
LU: And, I'm just going to switch this tape over quickly here—

[interview stops, video and audio cuts]

LU: Okay. And when was your mother born?
JY: Oh, my mother was born November the 16th, 1895.
LU: —and you mentioned that there were cousins. Now were they cousins through the paternal side, or the maternal side, do you know which way they linked?
JY: Oh, I know they had the same grandmother, so I'm not sure. Isn't that funny, I never—my mother was named—she was a Kono, k-o-n-o [spells it out], and I don't—she was born when her mother was quite elderly, and her mother I know died when she was 83. And I know my mother was rather intuitive, or whatever you want to call it. For instance, she went back to Japan at that particular time in 1936 because she said she had dreamt that her mother was not well, and—had told her come, come home. And so—my father was rather put out at that particular time because he had given up the farming business as—you know, it was not [laughs] success, and he felt he couldn't send her back in style. That she—it was a time when they didn't have much money. But my mother went, and I can remember—my—and her mother lived—died within the year, and my mother always felt that it was her mother that had told her, you know, come home. I can also remember one time—her telling me that her mother belonged to a certain type of—I don't know whether it was a religion or attended a certain temple, where the ladies of the temple told fortunes. And that she as a young girl accompanied her mother to this temple—

[01:00]

JY:—which I take was not in the same town, or somewhere, and this lady—this woman at the temple telling her that, "You must be very careful this year—this coming year, because you still have a young child to look after, but you may become very ill." And my mother, as I say, believed in this—I always used to feel my mother was a little superstitious, or I suppose, you know, in—I have discovered from meeting people from many different countries, that a lot of people in the old countries have superstitions, or believe in certain things, and I think my mother probably was just a woman of her times and culture, and—but I do know also much later, when we were living in Vancouver—still in Vancouver, my father used to—went to Seattle on business, and coming home he had an accident, and the day before my father came home, mother said, "I dreamt fire last night, something has happened to father." and sure enough, when he came home, he said he had an accident and had to go back to court. I think he didn't have the accident—I think he had taken a young man to Seattle to—learn spotting, because they were in the cleaning business, and—this young man had been driving. But—but anyway, they went back to Seattle for the court appearance, and that night, [chuckles] they were coming home and my mother said again, "I dreamt fire again," and sure enough they had—but this was tiny—it was a very minor

accident and there was no [laughs] court appearance. But my mother said many things like that, you know, but as I say, she was hardworking, you know, she did not lead an easy life with my father, and the two argued a lot, you know. I know I used to feel very guilty if the argument was about me, over something I had done. Mother of course, takes my part, you know, and this would be of course true of any other child in the family. And when mother—father was annoyed with us, he'd usually blame mother. [laughs]
LU: Mm-hm.
JY: But—but, I don't know what else to say about them, they—I feel, you know, they were quite successful, as I say, no time during these difficult depression years, did we ever—I, as a child feel any lack, you know, if I wanted something, I could usually ask for and get it, there was always food on the table, I could remember one time mother sending me to—well this is the name of a store in Vancouver—the Piggly Wiggly, a supermarket, to buy things, and I would say to her, "Don't give me more than 10 dollars," because with 10 dollars you had to have usually two big bags of groceries to carry home. But anyways, one day she told me to buy 10 cents worth of liver for the cat. We always had this—had a cat, very nice cat, which I always thought this was the way all cats were, but I found later in life that Pussy was very special. But— so I went to—when I was in the Piggly Wiggly I asked the butcher for 10 cents worth of liver and I said, "For the cat," and he scolded me. He said, "You should not be buying, you know, liver for the cat, you should be eating it yourself." But anyways I came home with [laughs] 10 cents of liver for the cat. But—but as I say, you know, this pussy was very special, she was such a good mouser, that people would come from the neighbourhood to borrow her. Say they had a mouse problem and could they borrow [laughs] our cat. Also, Pussy often used to follow me to school, like a, you know, most dogs do that, but—you know, after a block or so, you'd have to tell Pussy "Go home," you know, "you can't come," you know.

[01:05]

JY: And also, if Pussy had kittens, she was be very aggressive and if a—dog turned up in the neighbourhood, she would think nothing of climbing on his—running after and climbing on its back till it just got far enough away, or until she felt it was safely out of the neighbourhood—of our neighbourhood. But—what else was I going to talk about? I was talking about my mother. But my mother used to, you now, sew a lot of our clothes when we were little. And I always thought it was funny, and that the top two girls were sort of old enough, so they grouped together, my brother was alone in the middle, and the younger three, Mary, Josie, and Ruth, the three of us, we were often dress alike. Mary—in the same sort of style, but Mary usually in blue, and I was in red, and Ruth was in pink. But I can remember telling this to some of my nieces at a—family party and saying that we were always dressed like triplets! [laughs] So whenever they saw—looked at pictures, they always looked to see if we were dressed alike. But, and often, she, you know, she would be frugal and she would take our coats apart, and put them inside out, so, because the inner parts of the coat looked—was still fresher looking than the outside, the fabric might have faded or whatever. And she often made over so that we—so our coats would last more than

one or two years. And so I could remember my sister, Omi, one day complaining that my father, who used to work with a group of Japanese business men to deliver rice, sacks of rice to needy families, also this way met a woman who said that her daughter needed a winter coat, and you know, she couldn't afford it, so he bought her the coat or else he gave her the money to buy the coat, and my sister Omi complaining that, "I have to do with a—with my old coat that mother turned inside out—" you know, "Fixed over, when this girl came up to me and said, "Look at the coat your father— [laughs] bought me!" She had a new coat, and my sister Omi was quite put out. But my father was very generous that way. I can remember, as I said, my father often did work in the store, as much as I felt he probably should've, you know, as proprietor of the place, but I can remember one day, when some man died, and this woman came to my father and said that she wanted to sell her—sell the business, she was also—they were also in the cleaning business, my father urged her not to, that she would lose her income if she did. But she said that she could not, you know, carry on, on her own, so my father worked, went daily to help her out and tried to convince her and work at her place, you know, for a couple of months I think, you know, but—and he also did a lot of—I think—think a lot of Japanese people are like this, they help out their own *kenjin,* you know, people who come from their own area, province, and so, I remember, you know, a lot of our good friends were people from the same *kenjin* as my parents, and amongst them there was one man who tended to be mental, and father and another good friend would often stay up all night and to try to get him to calm down, so that he wouldn't have to go into Essondale [Essondale Hospital], which was the mental hospital near Vancouver. But— from time to time he would get so rowdy, that he would be confined in there, and they would have to go and visit him, and pick him up, you know, when he was discharged. So they, you know, they did a lot of work like that.

[01:10]

JY: My mother also, I don't—I'm trying to recall what association it was, but she would go to certain places where groups of women would get together, I can remember one time, at one of these groups, she learned how to make fancy sandwiches, you know, the kind where you cut the loaf of bread not cross wise but lengthwise [hand miming cutting] and then you would fill them in with—with coloured cream cheese so that you'd get pink and green—cream cheese, and green cream cheese, then you roll them up in pinwheel fashion, and so—so for many [laughs] days and weeks after my mother learned to make these fancy sandwiches, we used to have a lot of these sandwiches for picnics and parties. But yeah, my mother picked up things very—she was very, I think, clever woman, because I'm sure she didn't, you know, coming from Japan you don't learn how to make Western clothes, and that, and yet they pick it up and make a business of it, and I think, as I say, they were not wealthy people, in fact, we had a lot of friends who we considered wealthy [laughs], 'cause in that area where we lived, I think most—a lot of the Japanese families that moved up into that area had nice houses, and were more well to-do people, and so we—we never considered ourselves quite in that league, like some—a lot of our friends—family friends, were people who lived in very nice houses. And it—I think my father always had his eye on a house, in

the neighbourhood, that was pink stucco, [laughs] my mother didn't like the idea that it was pink stucco, I think my father tended to like things that were more—stood out, or garish a bit, you know, and—but I can remember we all going out to see this pink stucco house that my father liked, and thought he would like to buy, but they never did, which I guess was just as well, because when the war came, he did not—we were renting the premises, so my father sold both the equipment and the business part of it to a Chinese man, I don't really know what the terms of that were, but I think he probably lost it all, the furnishings in the house, because, as I said we had two cars, he had an arrangement with the landlord that we could build a double garage on his property, and so we took all our furniture, and my father felt we would be gone a year, and so we had placed all our furniture into this double garage, feeling that we would be back in Vancouver after a year, and we could be, you know, repossess our things, and resume our—and he could resume the business. But of course, that's not the way it worked out.
LU: Do you remember the address of the house that you were—
JY: Oh yes.
LU: —living?
JY: —it was 2163 East Hastings.
LU: That was the same as the dry-cleaning store.
JY: That's right. I was, as I say, the dry-cleaning store was in the front of this place, and the back was where our kitchen and dining room was, and then we had an upstairs, and we had four bedrooms upstairs, and there was only bath—one bathroom downstairs, you know, to the place, so we usually went downtown to *ofuro*, you know, down to Powell Street, and then ended up usually having dinner at the Fuji Chop Suey. But—yeah, [laughs] I remember—I used to like going to the *ofuro*, because they had these huge tubs where you—you're supposed to wash outside and soak—and go in to soak, and there was one that was sort of medicinal—was supposed to be medicinal, had herbs in it I guess, and the other one was larger, bigger one. But, usually when we went, we went with another family friend. We had these friends, called the Kuramitsus who Mr. Kuramitsu was quite a successful businessman.

[01:15]

JY: He owned a soda pop factory, where they had—I know they didn't have anything like Pepsi, but they had ginger ale, Lyon's Ginger Ale, I think it was called, I think maybe that was the name of his company, Lyon's—I don't know what—they wouldn't call it soda pop. But anyways, he also had another flavour called Jersey, Jersey—I can't remember, but he used to say to me, tease me, say it was named after you, Jersey, [laughs] Josie, Jersey. But anyway, but—but the man who made the deliveries with the pop—cases of pop, used to laugh and say, "You're the only people—" we were the only people who bought cases of pop apart from stores, you know. But because especially in the summertime, because it was hot work, you know, working in the cleaners with the pressing machines, that my father always kept, you know, cases of pop in the house. So I grew up not really ever liking pop that much, I guess because it was—you could have it any time you wanted it, and to this day I don't

really drink pop. But I can remember because we never had Coca-Cola, or Coke, I remember saying to my mother "I want Coke", and she would say, "Oh you won't like it, it tastes like medicine." So sure enough, the first time I got a of drink of Coke, I thought, "Oh, it tastes like medicine". [laughs] Yeah, and I never—I never liked Coke either.
LU: [laughs] What part of Japan was your family from?
JY: Well, they—from Shikoku. Which is, you know, the smallest island, and Shikoku is called Shikoku because it's divided into four, and our parents came from Ehime-ken. Strangely enough, John's mother comes from Ehime-ken too. [laughs]
LU: And how do you spell that?
JY: It's E-H-I-M-E. Ehime, and then *ken* means province.
LU: And what do you know about, I guess it would be your grandparents? And how did they make their fortune?
JY: I don't know my grandparents at all. As I say, my mother's mother was still alive when I was a child, but her father was not. And she was an elderly woman by this time, because I think she died when she—in about 1930—I got it right, in 1936, well I think she probably died later that year, '36 or '37, and she was the only grandparent around I think, because my father's father died when he was young, and—and he was more or less raised by his older brother. I think there was a mother around too, but isn't it strange, because the brother was considered head of the family, I always—I only heard stories about him, and—and I don't remember my father talking about his mother. My father, as a young man in Japan, at one point, we were told, was apprenticed to a doctor in a neighbouring town. But after a few years, I think he was recalled home because of some family problem. I know, as I say, my father always tried to tell us how—that we came from high stock, you know, that— and I can remember saying to my father, "We don't care about that, dad," you know, "It's not something that Canadians, you know, thought of, you know." And I know my father was very disappointed that we never really—truly—really listened to a lot of this. I know when my sister went to Japan and talked to cousins there, because as I say my father wasn't an eldest son, he—it—the people in Japan, actually, the—Mutsokyo, who's his nephew, who came to Canada to join him, he was an eldest son of his older brother, but he gave it up and gave the— right to, I guess, to become the head of the family, to his younger brother.

[01:20]

JY: And so when my sister was in Japan talking to this cousin, he, he told my sister that at one point, the family had a lot of land, and gradually, as they lost it, through debts—I'm not too sure exactly how the money was lost, but they—moved gradually up—up the mountain to—so that apparently, the—where they live today, they are—what I think what my sister—the way my sister described it, the house is practically teetering on the top [laughs] of the mountain. But—at that—one point, though, they still had land though I think they were growing orange trees, you know, mikan, you know, orange trees and things like that—I really don't know—although my cousin here, who went to Japan and visited, she told me, "Oh, they're so poor," and I said, "Isn't that funny? My sisters all talked as if they were well off," and you—I said, "I think it's because you're a different generation. When my sisters

look at them, and don't feel—they feel they built themselves a newer nicer house, and they lived—they thought they were—well you know, not well to do, but doing well. Whereas, my younger cousin Judy, when she went to Japan, she came back and she told me, "Oh they're so poor!" [laughs] Or so—or maybe things in the meantime have become poor, I don't know, I don't know. [laughs]
LU: Oh, incredible. [laughs] Do you know if, so you mentioned that they had the orange trees, the mikan trees, but do you know if they had anything else growing on the land?
JY: I don't know. I do remember one time being told what they were growing, in fact, they were thinking of going into tobacco, too, yeah, tobacco—and yeah. I can remember those two things being mentioned. This was, I guess, back in the days when my parents and them were still corresponding, you know. But yeah, I don't know—I know at one point, one of the cousins used to—started to write to us in English, and very nice letters, and we were quite impressed, until my younger sister went to Japan, and said that, "You know, she can't speak it." She—it's like my French, I can read and write it, but I can't speak—speak it or, or understand it spoken. A lot of that has to do with the fact that during the war years, I had to take correspondence courses, and I took French, but I only read it and wrote it, and didn't ever have anybody to, you know, to speak it to me. But I guess it was like this for this woman too, in fact, I think she taught English in Japan.
LU: Mm.
JY: But you know, I found, when I went to Japan too, John and I took—a tour—English tour and found that our guide who told us that he used to be the translator for one of the princes, [leans forward in seat] I think, in Japan, or something, but we found his English poor. And then, there was also a younger man, who was our guide at one point, and he too—his, he was married to an American non-Japanese woman, but still his English too was very heavily accented. And then when we go to China, and here in the Chinese communes, where the teacher—is speaking English—teaching English, although he has never been out of the country, he speaks perfect American English. And that's the—and he teaches.

[01:25]

JY: And someone told me the difference between Japanese people speaking English and Chinese people is that Japanese is a sound poor language, whereas Chinese has a much more range of sounds to it [waves hand], so that Chinese people have less trouble speaking—learning—speaking English well than Japanese people. I don't know if that's true, I don't think that's true anymore, because I find that recent immigrants from Japan are—speak English quite well.
LU: Mm-hm. do you know the educational level of your parents? Like if they were able to—
JY: Oh, well I think at that time, in Japan, most Japanese people were at—went at least six years to school, I think my father went a little more, about eight years or so, but I think my mother probably only went six years. I'm not, I'm not, I'm not sure about that at all.
LU: Mm-hm.
JY: But you know, going back [motions hand] to that business about Japanese people not speaking English so well, even though they—like, John's father understood English well. But

still, when he spoke Japanese, you know, it wasn't —as fluent or as well, or as well as somebody like us, you know. He still spoke with an accent and maybe his Japanese was a little more—English was a little more formal. But just recently—recent years, we were told—we discovered that John's father's thesis that he wrote, while he was in—at the University of Toronto, was available to us in the archives—
LU: Oh.
JY: —at Emmanuel College, and so we went and got it. And you know, I was so surprised how—what excellent English it was written in.
LU: Isn't that interesting.
JY: Isn't that interesting, yeah.
LU: Yeah.
JY: And here he was, you know, he had come from, you know, from Japan, and had been only in the country a little while, and yet, obviously in Japan he had learnt English well.
LU: Mm-hm. Very interesting. And you mentioned before that when you were at home with your parents you'd speak mostly in English to them, but did—
JY: Well—
LU: —you ever have to speak, I guess, half and half, or just Japanese—
JY: Oh, yeah, it was I guess sort of half-half business, yeah. Because you know, isn't it funny, there were certain things that I never knew there was a Japanese equivalent, you know, especially about, I guess, things in—around the house. You know, you never said—I don't think in our house we ever said *kome*, you know, it was always rice, and a table was a table, a chair a chair, you know, there were never—these things were never said in Japanese, and I think there were a lot of things, you know, like that that you just took for granted that you said them in English.
LU: Mm-hm. Interesting. [laughs] And were there any other stories about the family history or the pre-war years that you want to talk about before we get into the war years?
JY: Hm. No, I—isn't it funny [laughs], I probably could think of things later, but you know, right now, I can't think of anything in particular.
LU: Mm-hm. So, let's talk about the war years, then, and—what do you remember of the day when you heard that the war was started or you—
JY: Oh, like Pearl Harbour Day, yeah. Well—I can remember being utterly devastated, I think it was such a shock, you know, I suppose if—maybe if you were older, you might have realized that things like this might be—might happen. I know that for instance, because Japan at that time was invading Manchuria, there was a lot of —things like that in the newspaper, and I remember my father talking about a lot of things, and— [phone ringing in background] but I myself never paid much attention, you know, to that, so it was a great shock when it happened.

[01:30]

JY: And I think—but of course, right at the beginning we never thought there would an evacuation or anything like that, but it certainly did, I did feel—detect [emphasize with hand

movements] a change in, in Vancouver, you know, being Japanese and, and feeling very conscious of the fact that I was Japanese.
LU: You—mentioned before, and sorry, I forgot to write this down to ask, but you mentioned that you went to the bathhouses, the *ofuro*s, but I was told before that there was more than one in, on Powell Street.
JY: Oh, I'm sure there was.
LU: Do you remember the name of the one that you went to—
JY: No—
LU: —or where it was?
JY: No, no, I don't. And, and I'm sure there were several, probably—I think because my parents probably always went to the same one, you know, we didn't. But I'm sure there were, yeah. There were several, probably several down on Powell Street. The only places I was familiar with on Powell Street was [laughs] Fuji Chop Suey, because we, we often went there, and my sister's wedding reception was there but there—yeah, there were a few stores that I guess I should—I was aware of, but where the *ofuro* was, I don't—I can't sort of recall at all.
LU: Mm-hm. Do you remember any of the other stores, anything distinctly that you can recall that took place?
JY: Well, no, no, I—John will talk about that [points to the side], because his uncle was at Furuya, you know, was the manager there. But I-- don't know, I don't know there was—I think there was a store called Maikawa and, and also, there were—these men would come up to our place, with suitcases full of things [motions a box shape with hands], and my mother would order from them, you know, so that—and then they would deliver goods. And I think Fujiya store was one, but—I think there was a Maikawa, and I think there was—I don't—oh, I thought—I think there was a drugstore, you know. And later, like, I learned from a girl who married - a woman who married John's cousin, that her father had a—made *senbei,* you know, what was her—Betty's first? Oh I guess, isn't that funny, I—that's one of my problems, I have trouble remembering names of things.
LU: Oh, well we're talking a long time ago, so it's quite alright. [laughs]
JY: No, no, no, but this—but Betty is someone I know quite—very well, I should remember her maiden name. John, what was Betty's name?
John Yoshioka: Hm?
Josie Y: What was Betty's name before she got married? She married Gus—
John Y: Mari—[Yamake?]
Josie Y: [Yamake?]-senbei. Yamake-senbei. So, so I—I guess there, you know, were probably a lot of stores like that. I also remember just before the war, that there was an ice cream parlor, that opened up by young men, that was an [Ernie somebody?].
LU: Oh.
JY: But—but I don't know, we didn't—Powell Street was not a place that we used to frequent, well—or go, you know, walk the streets too much, and that. This Mr. Kuramitsu, that I mentioned before, the man that owned the soda pop factory, he was a member of the Buddhist church. He—and very staunch member, I guess—I think he and Mr. Kogetsu were the two big businessmen that supported the place. So, as—now, this Buddhist church wasn't

right on Powell Street, but in the area, but Mr. Kuramitsu often took us there and left us! [laughs]

[01:35]

JY: I remember being there all day with his girls, and he—I think it was to get—get the kids away from the mother who wanted a rest or something, and—so he would pick up his kids and take his kids, then drive over to our place and pick us—whoever happened to be home, the younger ones, us younger ones, and pick us up and take us all and just deposit us there. Usually this, of course, was days on which there was something going on, like there'd be—I could remember spending time watching a movie, or there would be ladies there making—cooking and what—making, you know, food, so we had things to eat, and that sort of thing. But we'd more or less spend time—you know, but that, that, and then later, when I join the Powell Street United Church, CGIT [Canadian Girls in Training], I—those are about the only times we went downtown to that area.
LU: When did you join the CGIT?
JY: Well, I used to go—when we were very little, my father used to send us to an Anglican church service, I guess, and I can remember going to an Anglican church kindergarten. And, and then later going to the Anglican church in our neighbourhood, All Saints [All Saints Anglican Church], but somewhere along the line when I was—hm, I was going to say when I was teenager, but then I wasn't that old, I think, my sister Omi told me, "Go to the United Church, it's more fun," or something. [laughs] I don't know how we changed over from Anglican to United Church, but, but in our area, there—as I say, there weren't a lot of us, so the Shimizu girls, and us, I think—were we about the only ones? I was just trying to think who else went—but we went, we went to—there was a church called Hastings United Church I think, and—but we did go to the regular Sunday school, we went to the Sunday school that the Sasaki girls taught—were teachers. I remember, I think it was Sumi Sasaki that was my Sunday school teacher, and from there, they said that we should—that the United Church girls usually went to what they call CGIT and so we went Muriel Kitagawa's house for CGIT, and—Muriel had, for a young couple, they had a nice house. I think Mr. Kitagawa worked in a bank, and they had a nice little house, and we would just go there, and there were just—as I say, apart from the Shimizu girls, I can't think of who else used to go to CGIT. So, one day, they made—they—when I say they, I'm not quite sure who it was, whether it was Mrs. Kitagawa or the Sasaki girls, said to us that it would be better if we went downtown, and we go to the big Japanese United Church. And so we did, and this was—this always took place at—I don't think it was after school, I think it was early evening, but I'm not sure. But because the Hastings—we lived on Hastings Street—and the streetcars ran down Hastings Street, and we would get off wherever and then walk down to—I think it was the church at the corner of Powell? I don't know, but somewhere more towards that area that we would walk down, but because we were going down at about the same time, I would meet a lot of the other girls who came from a little further up, and then they—this included the [counting on fingers] Shimotakahara girls, the Uchida girls, the Yamaoka girls, so who else would be there?

[01:40]

JY: But anyways yeah, so this way I got to meet all those other girls, and we would all be usually in the same streetcar, and getting off at the same stop, and then walking down to the church, and I must admit it used to be a lot of fun, because it was a big group of girls, in a big gym, and you know, there were lots of games to play, and that. So I was very happy—having gone to that group.
LU: What does CGIT stand for?
JY: It stands for Canadian Girls in Training. [laughs] Don't ask me why that name came about, but that's what it stands for.
LU: And other than playing games and getting together to socialize, was there anything else that you would do?
JY: Well there must have been, I say, [laughs and leans forward in chair] but I don't remember, I don't remember. All I remember was a lot of fun going, and being with a large group of girls, yeah.
LU: Mm-hm.
JY: In later years I got to know more so than then, in later years I got to, get to know, those other girls very well, like the Shimotakahara girls, and—because when we lived in Vancouver, we use to chum around with them, and Sachi Yamaoka was—and I were in university together, and things like this, so yeah. And—but that's where I initially met them, yeah.
LU: Mm-hm. So, sorry to deter a little bit, but back now to—
JY: Yep, okay.
LU: —where we were talking about Pearl Harbour and, you'd mentioned previously before that your parents knew, or kind of knew that they were going to have to move, and that they thought that they would only be leaving for a year, but what were some of the items that you were able to take with you?
JY: Well we were able to take—I think mostly personal things, like you were told, told to take like, I think like your clothes, and things, but I don't know—we did not take things like bedding—bedding, I guess we took blankets, maybe, I don't know, but when we got to Tashme, we found out a lot of people had brought their spr—mattresses, and, you know, box springs, and things like this, whereas we did not, we had left those behind, so I think my father had someone ship them out to us, you know, and, and—but otherwise, we had to sleep on straw mattress that they provided. Isn't that funny, I don't know whether—I guess we probably took dishes, I don't know. I don't think—because I don't think anything was provided for things like that, so we must've had to take our own dishes and pots and pans, and things like this. Isn't that funny, when you're a younger person, you don't concern yourself too much about things like that, I think—we found living and—because in the beginning you are only given two bedrooms, these little shacks [hands miming a square shape] that were built had sort of a common kitchen living room, and then two bedrooms on each side [motions to each side of the room], and each family was supposed to—and we had another family living with us in that place in the beginning. After I think—I don't know how

many years go by, when—I think as some people leave and that, and then it becomes more room, we did get the place—get that one house to ourselves. And my father, being my father, you know, he would fancy up the place. [laughs] He would wallpaper the place and make little panels [moves hand up and down] with borders around them, you know, and order an Aladdin lamp from the catalogue, which is almost as bright as electric light, but yeah, so we were there four years, which is a long time, and because there was no high school provided—

[01:45]

JY: —the public schools were quickly, you know, formed up by get—having people with high school graduates or certi—they trained, they got some training to become teachers, and they taught from grades one to six, and then there were some United Church missionaries that came in and taught grades seven to eight, and anybody above that was on their own. And so, when we applied for correspondence courses, we were told that correspondence courses were never geared to service large groups of people, the only occasional child who was isolated, you know, on some island outdoors. So we—so then they decided that they would give—you know, give us correspondence courses, but then we would have to pay, I think nine dollars per course. So, I took six courses, so it cost about 54 dollars. And when your father is only making 25 cents an hour, you know, it was quite a hardship. I think for—a lot of the boys, could get labouring jobs, sort of—and so they would work by day and, you know, study at night, correspondence at night. And but I found it difficult in that, when you don't any sort of teacher or source of discipline, [chuckles] someone to discipline you, it was hard to keep studying—so like a lot of us girls would get together, but often you'd end up by chatting, and you know, not doing your work, because—mainly because nobody was take—studying the same thing. You know, if you were all studied Grade 10 English [motions hands for emphasis], or something, maybe you could look at things together, and do them, but usually if I was doing English, somebody else was doing something else, and we may not be in the same grades anyway. I know—now I think my friend was taking commercial subjects, I'm not sure, but I know I found math the easiest. I was never a math student, but math was the easiest because it's precise, [emphasizing with hands] and it follows one on top of the other, so if you aren't careful, you'd go from one—[laugh] do one lesson and then do the next lesson, do the next—and you could do one year's work, you know, in a month or two, whereas you dawdle with say, French or something else that wasn't so precise. And I know one time, not being able to, you know, you can't do something, so—it's a problem, and you can't solve it, so I could remember sending the paper [motions handwriting] in with a letter saying that, "Please assist here," you know, "I cannot figure this out," and it would just come back saying, "Finish your paper." You know, they—there really was no assistance, all you got really was marks. They either—when you sent your paper in, you either got marks, and you know, it was right or wrong, but they would not help you solve a problem. Now we had a few people in—around who said they would help, but—they found it very difficult, because they often found they would have to try to go back, way back—way, way back, they can't just look at your thing and say, "Oh that's the answer" or "that's the way to do it." They

themselves would have to—to study, and, and look up things, and so it became very difficult doing correspondence courses. Some of the boys were very good at science, or math, or something, and they would be way ahead of you, you know, but it, it was not easy trying to study together. You really—I felt was always on your own. Now the most difficult subject, of course, was practical science, where you were supposed to do experiments. And it would tell you—something like a chicken, if you had to dissect it, that wasn't hard to—it was easy to get a chicken, and you know, those days, most chickens were sold as is, and you had to pull them apart [demonstrates with hands] and take out the innards anyways, so you know, that sort of thing wasn't diff-or fish, you know, but when it came to doing experiments, it would say—

[01:50]

JY: —take so much of this chemical or so much of that chemical, and if you write to Vancouver, and to get some chemicals, they say that they only sell it in two pounds or something, which was utterly ridiculous, you know, when you only needed a teaspoon full or something for an experiment. So at one point, we were told one of the missionaries, teachers would help us with science experiments, but I think almost anything we did—didn't go right, you know. And she would say, "Well you still have to write it up as is," you know, when it says "Results," you know, "Failure." [laughs] But—but that's the way it was. I felt we should do it again till we got it right, but she said, "no, that's not the way you do it. If you do an experiment, you have to say what the results are, even if it wasn't the right one." [laughs] But anyway, so as a matter, I could remember finally getting this Grade 12 diploma that said, "Lack of science" or "Failure in practical science." And so when I decided I wanted to go to—onto university, and take Grade 13 in Ontario, they—United Church ladies were looking for places that we could go to, because we—because our parents didn't reside in Ontario, we needed families that would take us in that would sponsor us, so most of us would end up going into homes as mother's help. Now for the girls this was not difficult, but I discovered from talking to the boys that it was very difficult. They were not used to helping out at home, and doing, you know, housework, and being boys, a lot of them were expected to do gardening, or heavier work, you know, whereas most of us girls did—just did help with the cooking, and the babysitting, and this sort of thing. But—so, I managed that, and got my Grade 13, and decided I'd go to U of T [University of Toronto], and when I applied, I was told that my Grade 12 science was not complete. And I said yes, I knew that, and they suggested I go to Jarvis Collegiate and take French. [chuckles] And I argued with them, that I took Grade 13 French and passed, so why would I need to take Grade 12 French when it was my science that was missing? I said, "I'll go and take science, but I won't take French." And so they let me go, they let it go. But kind of ridiculous
LU: Mm-hm. [laughs] Isn't that funny.
JY: Yeah, I don't know who decided I should take French, but anyway. I could—probably could have done with better French, because when I first—after going, you know, taking French by correspondence course and gone into a Grade 13 French class, and I was in Northern Ontario, where I think French is more commonly used, but anyway, when the

teacher started off the class, he did speak mostly in French, but soon gave it up, and so I had no trouble with my—with French in Grade 13. But then I got into university, and found it was mandatory, that you take first—in first year, you take French. So I'd be in the French class, and the professor would be spouting French, and I had—would have no idea what he was saying. And one day, he walked up the aisle, and looked—and came up right next to me, and looked at my textbook, where it was open, and he was reading something from—but I was on the wrong page, and so he suddenly says "Mademoiselle Yano!" and [looks upwards] I said, "Oui!" and he says, "La page vingt." and I said, "La page vingt—oh, page 20!" [laughs, mimes flipping pages] Anyway, after that, he picked on me a lot and sent me up to front of this class. Now this class, because it was after the war, there were a lot of vets [veterans] who were not that, you know, good at French either, I think, but anyway, I got picked on. And I got sent up to the front, and was an utter fool not being able to understand things [laughs] that was said.

[01:55]

JY: So one day, after we wrote an exam, I was walking across the campus, when I bumped into him. And he came up to me and he said, "I've just finished marking papers." he said, "You did very well." He said, "I don't understand you. You don't do well in class." And I said, "That's because I took French by correspondence course, I don't understand it as a spoken language, I only can read and write it." And so on an exam, that's what you're doing, you're reading and writing. [laughs] But anyway, so that's a funny incident. But uh—
LU: You mentioned before that when you're taking corres—oh, let me just check this one, I'm just going to switch this one first, here.

[interview stops, audio and video cuts]

LU: [laughs]
JY: —yes.
LU: I was going to ask that, when you were taking your correspondence courses, you mentioned that the missionaries were there to help. Do you remember some of their names, or a bit about them?
JY: Oh yes, yes, I know their names, there was Katherine Greenwood, May Mclaughlin, Ernest Best—Winnie McBride—Winnifred McBride. Katherine Greenwood and May Mclaughlin were older missionaries from Japan. The other two were—Ernest Best, was a conscientious objector, and he was apparently put in some camp, and the missionaries—or the church got him out to, I think when they told him he would volunteer to go teach in Tashme or something. Yeah, so he came. Winnifred McBride was also a younger woman, who was working in Vancouver when I think she heard—or went to some, I don't know, church sponsored conference or something and heard about Tashme and the camps and how they needed some people, so she volunteered to come and, and she was more a science type, and I think that's what they needed. She—I think she worked for the Department of Fisheries or something like that. And so, she—I think that's what they needed, somebody

who was more proficient in the science subjects, yeah. Now, otherwise, they also had volunteers, like my sister Omi, because she was—a commercial, you know, grad— she taught commercial courses, there were other teachers—other volunteers who taught some subjects that—like, there was one lady I know who taught things like sewing or—and cooking, maybe, I don't know exactly if that was what she did. I don't—Yuki Arai, I don't know what Yuki taught. But I know, there was another—Machida Kei, Machida taught, but I don't know what subjects they taught, but there—I think maybe Kei was also a commercial, you know, teacher. She taught—I know my sister probably taught—I think she—probably she taught typing, and my sister probably taught shorthand, or something. But yeah, so yeah they relied on a number of other people, yeah, to help out.
LU: Mm-hm. Do you remember Ernest Best's brother? I believe his name was—
JY: Lori? Lawrence Best?
LU: I think it was Arthur.
JY: Nope.
LU: No? It was a Lawrence? Lawrence? Best?
JY: Lawrence Best.
LU: What do you know about him?
JY: [laughs] Oh, he was a bit of a cutie, and a flatterer. [laughs] I don't know. What happened to him?
LU: I'm not sure. I was recently speaking with Helen Best, she had called—
JY: Oh yes, okay—
LU: —me a couple months ago—
JY: Oh—Helen married early, yeah. Mr. McLaughlin's, yeah, daughter.
LU: Yes, and she was trying to inquire a little bit more information about the role of Ernest Best's younger—older brother, I think it was.
JY: I didn't think he had an older brother.
LU: Oh, maybe it was younger brother, then.
JY: I think it—I think it was just him, and that Lawrence, and the only way I know Lawrence is he came a couple times to visit, but that's about it.

[02:00]

LU: Mm-hm. Oh, see she had mentioned that he was—
JY: Was he something—doing something else?
LU: —doing some legal work to help with the Japanese community—
JY: Oh.
LU: —such as establishing, you know, the payments for—
JY: Did he become a lawyer?
LU: —well she was trying to figure out what his role was, and—
JY: I didn't— [shakes head] I have no idea.
LU: —yeah.
JY: 'Cause I know that he—he wasn't in Tashme, he was just —I think visiting his brother, sometimes.

LU: Mm-hm, mm-hm, yeah he would just come and go when he could, yeah.
JY: But I don't think he came very often.
LU: Oh, okay.
JY: I think maybe once, I don't know. I don't recall. Now—now, did you phone for Mary—Cornell Hori?
LU: Mary Hori
JY: Well, her—Mary was married to a man named Cornell, but she became a widow and then when Nobu's wife Amy died, Amy was a very good friend of mine, he married Mary, but they were only married for a few years before Nobu died. But Mary told me someone phoned her about—asking about Helen Best. And I said, "Is she still around?" and Mary said, "Oh yes."
LU: Oh, that must've been Kathy, Kathy Okamura.
JY: Oh okay—that's right, that was Kathy yeah—she told me it was Kathy that phoned her. Yeah. But Mary—Mary is not interested in this sort of thing—
LU: No?
JY: —she told me.
LU: Aw, that's too bad.
JY: Yeah.
LU: Okay, let's see. I wrote down a couple questions here. You mentioned that at first you were sharing your house in Tashme, and—who was living in the house with you, as part of your family and as part of the second family?
JY: Oh, I don't—can't, you know, I can't even remember the name of the family that we shared that house with, but in our family, like, there was my mother, father, and then my sister Omi, [begins to count on fingers] my sister Mary, Ruth, and me [holds up four fingers on hand], the four girls. Did we all sleep in the same bed? [laughs] I know! I know, we too—I kind of think, the other family, oh gosh, did they only have one bed, and we had most of the house anyways? You know, isn't that funny? When you ask me that, I can't recall, how we bedded down.
LU: Do you remember how many people were in the family? If they were a younger couple, older couple, if there was children?
JY: Oh, they—now, they were definitely a younger couple. I don't, in fact, maybe they were just the two, and that—this is why we had—we had three bedrooms and they only had one, yeah.
LU: Mm-hm, interesting. [laughs]
JY: Most people were like that, you had to share—share one house, yeah. And if you had one, it was a small—now, I—big families must've had a house to themselves, because—like for instance, my cousin, that— who was also there, now my cousin had been, had worked in a lumber camp, [unclear], he was very much at home in a place like Tashme. They came from Fanny Bay on Vancouver Island, and Fanny Bay was a lumbering camp owned by Mr. Kogetsu, and—but they had eight kids—children, I think. Let's see. [counts on fingers] Actually, their oldest boy was named Saburo, he—because Saburo means third child, eh. But, but they had left two children in Japan. And so they—there was Saburo, Masaru, Fumi, Noboru, Judy, Akita I know, there's one more. So, they, you know, they had about six, six

more than six children, so, I would think a family like that must—they must've had one place to themselves, but I don't know.
LU: Do you remember what it was—or do you remember much about living with this other couple? Such as—
JY: No.
LU: —you know, sharing the stove, or—
JY: Yeah, you had to, yeah.
LU: Yeah.
JY: You had to. You had to share stoves. Water, you had to go outside to pump water and—and bring it in, and their sinks and everything [waving hands] were just wooden sinks, you know, they weren't. Luckily, I guess we were up in the woods of BC [laughs] where there was big cedar trees, and they must've cut them.

[02:05]

JY: Do you know, that first year, we were there, the wood they gave us for firewood was beautiful, virgin, you know, what they call first growth wood. You know, wood that should've gone to be making furniture or something, we were burning for firewood. In the later years, they ran out of that kind of tree—big trees, and we were burning—we were burning other, you know, types of trees. But that first year, I can remember, it was beautiful to chop. [laughs] I used to chop wood. And— you know, when you get a good, good piece of lumber, with nice grain, you know, you just bring down your axe [demonstrates with hand] and it just splits so well. Whereas in the later years, that the wood was hard, and pitchy, and, you know, not so easy to chop.
LU: So you would chop the wood. [laughs]
JY: Well, we only had our father, there, so, you know, you couldn't have him do all the—all the work. I guess he did a lot of it. Or sometimes, my sister Mary attracted boys that would help around. [laughs]
LU: And you mentioned that your brother went to a work camp. Do you know the name of the work camp that he went to?
JY: George—George, no. You know, I wrote his obit [obituary]. I think I wrote down Schreiber. But from what I gather, these poor boys were sent out into the woods in Ontario with nowhere—nothing was prepared for them, and, and nothing for them to do, particularly, I know—I think a lot of them had to sleep in old railways cars, or in tents. But anyway, I think soon, the camps would break up, and my brother ended up working in at a CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] roundhouse in Chapleau. And he was just on his own, you know. I don't know if—other guys joined him there, were there a lot of them were there at the beginning, but being wartime, I would imagine to say there was a shortage of men because, you know, a lot of men had gone overseas as soldiers, and Japanese people were not, you know, accepted in the army, so they—I would think, I would think that, especially if you were looking for work like that, or in the woods or something, there was not a great shortage, but I don't know for sure, I don't know what—I know gradually some of them wandered into Toronto, when they—got into cities, and that, but in the beginning we were

not allowed—they were not allowed into cities. And—but they, I'm sure— as I say, being wartime, there must have been a shortage of men. But my brother stayed in Chapleau, until the family all moved out, and my parents when they were moving out, they were not allowed into Toronto, they would every once in a while, shut off a city, and say—so they were sent to Farnham, Quebec. And from Farnham—Farnham, Quebec, I don't know how many miles out of Montreal it was, but my father would— take the bus into Montreal, look around it, found a place to rent, and they moved into Montreal. But, after—how long were they in Montreal? They moved out and went to—moved into Toronto after a couple of years, I think, when things sort of quieted down, I think he just took a trip to Toronto, looked around, and bought a house in Toronto.
LU: Mm-hm. Oh wow. And, what else do you remember about—oh, I know what I was going to ask now. We were talking a little bit earlier about what you remember bringing with you, and you had previously mentioned before that your mother had sewing machines, was she able to bring that with her?
JY: No.
LU: No, you had to leave those behind?
JY: Yeah, I—I'm pretty sure we didn't have a sewing machine in Tashme. I'd have to ask my sister that, you know. In some ways, our family was much more fortunate than a lot of other families, because, as I say, in my cousin's family, he was the only working person, his children all—his other children—his children were too young.

[02:10]

JY: And, and whereas in our family, you see, my father worked, my eldest sister worked, in the—as a bookkeeper assistant, or—there—she and another man, were—worked in the bookkeeping—as bookkeepers, and they did— made up all the payrolls. And—
LU: Oh, was that part of the BC [British Columbia] Security Commission?
JY: Yes, that's right. And, and, and my sister Mary became a nurse's aid. And everybody was paid the same, 25 cents an hour.
LU: Oh wow.
JY: So, so, so yeah, and—whereas you see, when you have a large family, like my cousin's, and, and only one breadwinner, you know, looking back at it now, I feel I was a young person who didn't really think about these things. And, and when I—you think about it now, you wonder, how did they manage? I don't know whether there was a—somehow, somebody, you know, they figured out somebody was there to figure out if you have a large number of children and only one wage earner, you know, did—you needed—that man needed more money than say, another man who—like my father, who had two others working in the family.
LU: Mm-hm, mm-hm. And what about, purchasing groceries, or did you grow a lot of your own items in a garden, or—
JY: No.
LU: —was everything at a store?

JY: There was a grocery store set up, and everyone went there. And there were a lot of girls that worked, you know, in the grocery store. There was a butcher shop, and that's where you went to buy meat, and what other kinds of store would there be? That's it, I think there was a—the BC Security Commission store, I, I think, you know, being wartime, and being—nobody was—and nobody had the income to be, you know, to buy a lot of frivolous things. I think we bought things from the Eaton's catalogue, and—but that was about it, I think, you know. People—because like people had to—cook and together with other families and that, I think—I don't remember really what, what we ate, I don't know—you know, you think there must've been parties, where people got together, made sushi or something, but I don't recall that.
LU: Mm-hm. What about other items, such as, you know, music and radios, or—
JY: Well we had to give up radios, you know, you weren't allowed to have a radio, like a tape one—but of course people had them. You know they—I don't know whether they bought them after they moved to Tashme, or how—you brought them but I know, I don't think we had a radio, or maybe we did. But I know soon, like the high school crowd, especially the boys, were soon—because a lot of them did work, and they had some money of their own I guess, I think like at high school dances, they you know, certainly there were a lot of records, you know. And, and then at the high school, Ernest Best started a music appreciation club. And—and of course it was all more classical music, and we would go and I think it was probably an hour on Saturdays or something, we'd go in to listen to music. But the boys, after a while, a lot of them wanted more popular music, you know, and so gradually, I think Ernest let them have one or two, you know, in there as well—to sort of—because the younger crowd wanted it, they didn't want all this heavy, heavy music. You know, but I think it was great that we got exposed to it, because otherwise we would not have because it came about  at the time of our lives where our whole world was very, you know [links fingers] narrowed, and constricted,

[02:15]

JY: and, and you couldn't get to hear a lot of this sort of thing. Even though—I say that—even though when I was going to Templeton Junior High, I became president of the Sir Ernest Macmillan club. [laughs] Sir Ernest Macmillan was the conductor, I guess, probably of the BC [British Columbia] Symphony? I'm not too sure, now. But there was a teacher in our—in the school who was a friend, or a great admirer of his, and she started this Sir Ernest MacMillan club, where we would—yeah, pretty well listen to classical music and that. I, I am tone deaf, and I really don't have a good musical ear at all, and, and so it was rather odd, but the only reason why I became president was that when—when elections for the school year came up, that was—that place—that position was open, so I took it. I decided to run for something. [laughs] And it was the only one open, and I wonder if I was uncontested, I'm not sure. [laughs] So, for the privilege of being president of the Sir Ernest Macmillan club, I think I was allowed to go to listen to rehearsals, of the orchestra, but.
LU: Oh wow.
JY: But I don't know if I went very often.

LU: [laughs] And what about the, you know, the dry-cleaning store, and the cars that your family had owned? What happened to all those? And—
JY: Well, well it was just like fishing boats or anything, they were confiscated. You just had to turn up one day, with anything like that, you know. You were told to hand over your cars, your radios, your—I, surely not cameras? I can't remember—or I guess if you had guns, certainly you had to give it up, because my cousin's, for instance, was a great hunter. We used to have—have deer heads stuffed, [laughs, points upward] bear skin rugs, and all kinds of things all through my cousin's, you know, because he was a great sportsman. I think he really enjoyed life, you know, out on Vancouver Island, in the wild.
LU: Did your parents think that handing in their car, that they'll see that car again? Or did they—did they kind of know that, you know, they would be kept?
JY: Oh, I don't know, I don't know. I kind of think they—well I think a lot of these things, when they were taken, you sort of were told that you might get them back, or—I think, I think people thought yeah, they might get them back. Because it—I don't know, as I say, I think my parents felt—thought that we would be back in a year's time.
LU: Mm-hm. So they thought after the internment they'd be able to—
JY: I don't know whether they thought that the war would be over, they must've, eh? But I don't know. But I can remember my parents—if they had thought they would never come back—never go back to Vancouver, never see the things—I don't know, I think maybe they would have sold them off cheap.
LU: And when you're in Tashme, how did you get news updates about what was going on with the world war, and—or did you receive any news updates, or—
JY: I think we took the paper. I think we were allowed to, you know, buy the—[stuttering] subscription and buy the paper.
LU: Would that be, like the Vancouver Sun, or—
JY: Yeah, used—probably The Province, we were always took The Province in Vancouver, so it was probably The Province. It—yeah, I think we must've taken the paper. I don't think—well you know, places like that, news travels fast anyways. Like, you know, if something big happened, I think it—you know, soon, by word of mouth you'd hear about it. I know at one time, they—they sent Mounties [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] around—when you think of the, here is this camp, of, I don't know how many thousand people in the camp, and there was only one hut with maybe two or three Mounties in it to secure the [chuckles]—you know, you could men—shows how docile [chuckles] Japanese people are, that they don't break the laws or try to break them.

[02:20]

JY: I think sometimes maybe a few people do leave, or something, I don't know but—on their own, but on the whole, people just stayed put. And—but at one point, when we were told that we had to make up our minds, whether we sign papers, whether you go to Japan, or you stay in Canada, and if you were going to stay in Canada, we were told you had leave, right away. So I can remember my, my younger sister and I, went in together, or maybe we didn't go in together, maybe we went in one after the other, and when we were asked this, I

told them, "I'm going to write exams next month. I don't want to leave before next month!" And they told me, well, then you'd have to sign the papers saying you don't want—if you don't, don't want to get shipped out right away, then you have to Japan. And I said, "Well I don't want to go to Japan!" And the man said to me, "Oh well." And he gave me a name of a man, write to Corporal someone or Captain somebody or other, and he gave me a name and an address where I could write to, and say that I not—I was not ready to go east, okay. So I did that. And—so I signed it, saying I stayed in camp, which meant I [unclear] go to Japan, you see. So, so—anyway, when I—after I finished my exam [laughs] I wrote to this man in Vancouver and told him I was not ready to leave—this is what instructions I had been given, that—because when I asked for more time, to stay in camp, till I finished my exam, wow, they sent lawyers up to examine my documents—my younger sister and me. They questioned her more. Soon as I got word, that I—we would do this, I consulted Mr. [McWilliams?], who was the United Church minister that came around, and he told us how to behave and what to say, to stick to our guns, that we—that this man—that this is what we were told, and this is why we were complying, exactly as we were told. And so, we went in, and we were questioned by the lawyers, and they wanted—gave us a statement to sign, okay. So I said, I could not sign this, until I got some advice, you know, luckily Mr. McWilliams was in town, that night, so we took it to him, and showed it to him, and he said, "Look. All it really is—amounts to—" what he felt, was that this particular man, who the Mounties had given me the name, he didn't want to be involved in any of this. And he, he wanted us to sort of not put his name [waves hand] on anything. And so Mr. McWilliams worded [mimes writing] this form for us, so that he says, "He wants off the hook." So we took it back, sort of changed it a bit, took it back and signed it, and that was that.
LU: Oh, wow.
JY: But anyway, yeah—it seems strange when you look back at it that this particular Mountie, I don't know what orders they were given, but he—looking at two young girls, he, he would say things like this to us, that, you know, if we didn't sign—we didn't agree to leave camp immediately, that we would—that we were—all we were asking for was a month's, you know, clear—and as it was, nobody left, you know for months and months. But, but anyway, I guess, you know, things are like that. But, but we all felt that it, it all fell on my younger sister, you know, she was the one they really pressured, and, and—but anyways, Ruth stuck to her guns. [laughs] And so everything worked out well, you know.

[02:25]

JY: But it was funny, that they—that they would send Mounties around to do things like that.
LU: Mm-hm. Do you have any other memories about Tashme?
JY: Oh, well, I have a lot of memories of Tashme, you know. I—when we—do you know, when we first arrived to Tashme, there was a group of young people who, because they had a lot of resentments, you know, being moved to—out into camp, I can remember one of the very first young people's meeting that I went to, there was a group of people that started—that said, that we will not talk English in this camp, only Japanese. And I could remember being—feeling panic, because I felt like I couldn't, you know, get along in Japanese. But, but I

think majority of *nisei*s don't speak Japanese when they're amongst themselves, and that—and so, that didn't, you know—I think there was agreement at that particular meeting, that that it would be—but it didn't stick, you know, nobody—went around talking Japanese that I know.
LU: Mm-hm. What other memories do you have about, I guess, just in a sense, spending your time in Tashme? Because other than doing correspondence and helping out—
JY: Well, you know, anytime—like here, suddenly, there was a whole lot of people, eh, and people of your own age, [motions to herself] you know, and, and so, it really was, once we sort of settled in, there was lots of friendship and good times, and lots of very clever people around, you know, who—like we had skits and plays, and things like this. There was a—there was movie nights. About this one movie night, I'll tell you. One night, they showed a Sonja Henie picture, and the next day, a lot of girls—I don't know where we were, whether we were, you know, because often we just sort of gathered together, and one of them talking about the movie, and how graceful and wonderful Sonja Henie was. And I said, made the remark, yes, yes, you know, ice skating— figure skating is so graceful, when we used to go to the Ice Capades, you know, we thought it was so wonderful. And this one girl turned to me and she said, "Josie, you're a liar. We all know you're a liar. We know things like that only happen in movies." And I looked at her, and I said, "Well, you, you may not have to believe me, but I'm a city girl, and my father used to take us to the Ice—" I can remember the first year the Ice Capades came to the Vancouver Forum, which is Hastings Park. And the whole family went. And I can remember my mother being entranced with it. And we all—and it was, it was lovely to see, we had never seen anything like, you know—this kind of figure skating. And so yearly, the next year, when the Ice Capades came, we went, but the magic was gone, you know. It was nice, but it—we weren't awestruck like we were the first time we saw it, yeah.
LU: Do you remember how old you were? Or what year it was when they first came?
JY: Oh gosh, well, we—I left Vancouver when I was 16, so it must be 14, 15, something like that, yeah. But as I say, my father like a lot—we went to vaudeville, and you know, when you think of vaudeville, and stripteasers and things like this, most people would think that's not for children. But striptease in those days, they didn't take off much, I'll tell you, you know. But, but my father too, he liked the juggling, and the singing, and the skits, and things. I remember one time my father took us to see a movie. Movies were sort of funny because in Vancouver, when we were—wanted to go to a movie, Saturday matinée, we had to convince my father it was education, that the teacher suggested we see this particular movie, you see.

[02:30]

JY: So here my father one day, take—tells us he's going to take us to see a movie downtown. And it happened to be about Ethiopia. We had to sit through it twice, [laughs] because he felt it was educational. And this was about the time the Italian-Ethiopian war started, and so I—guess somebody—since we didn't know, I guess probably no one knew much about Ethiopia, there was this documentary film, and so we went to—my father heard about it, and made us sit through it twice. But, you know, it's—I realized much later, what a

privileged life, in some ways, that we had, because our father was the type of man he was, and, and he wanted to see all these things, so, so we got to see them too. And, just quite recently, my sister Mary was talking about the whale. And I said, "Did you—were you there with the whale? I don't remember you, I remember going to see the whale." [laughs] But apparently, one day, and this is a dead whale, they brought in on a railway flat car into Vancouver. And of course it wasn't going to last long, so, so this one day, I remember my father taking us down to see the whale.
LU: But where did the whale come from?
JY: I don't know where it came from. Somebody caught it or found it and put it on this flatbed railway car and brought it into town and it was sitting in—somewhere in town.
LU: Wow. That's, that's different. [laughs]
JY: Yeah, but my father was like that. He, you know, till he was a very old man [points backwards], he always went to the Ex [Canadian National Exhibition] every year. And if you went to the Ex with my father, you had to go through every building, and you always had to look at all the animals, you know. And, and then he would go, after seeing everything on the grounds, he would go and watch down by the waterfront where they would have the water show, and things, but he, he was very—always very I guess, curious man, or a man who just loved to go and do—see things.
LU: [laughs] And what did you parents do with their time when they were in Tashme?
JY: Well, there again, I think not much, you know. I think for—I know we went to a lot of funerals. I can remember my mother one day saying to me, there's no one to go to—this particular funeral, somebody in Tashme had died. We may not know him, but mother felt that someone in the family should be represent the family, so since I don't know why she couldn't go, or when I guess my dad was working, but anyway, she decided it was—that I should be the one to represent the family. So I could remember going to a funeral, just to, as I say, to represent—to be there, because I think, I know when someone died in Tashme, they—if the man lived on your street, then it was up to the people on that street to, to cremate the man, to prepare him. You know, prepare his body after he died, and have the funeral, and then, I guess assist the family, you know, and then the men would go out to the woods to cremate the man, stay up all night till the body, you know, was cremated. But—and I suppose it must've been different groups and things, that—people with particular interests would do. Now my father, [laughs] was—when he, went to—got—first arrived in Tashme, and we were still living in Vancouver, he wrote to my mother to buy rabbits, because he said there were—like Tashme had been a huge ranch, there were two huge barns, one became an apartment building and one became the school.

[02:35]

JY: But out the fields, I guess they had pens where they had fox, blue foxes. This was for still the days when ladies wore these fox stoles, you know, you know the kind with the head, and the thing sticking—the tail sticking out [mimes wrapping the accessory around shoulders] and what not. But that's what they—they raised there. I guess they must've had cows, and other animals, but—and horses, but by the time we arrived, those big animals were gone,

and—but there were still some foxes, and they were getting killed—I don't know if they were killing them off—but getting rid of them, so my father looked at these pens [lifts hand up] and decided he would raise rabbits. And he felt that because it was wartime, this would be a way of feeding people. And—so he—he instructed my mother to buy some rabbits and send them. Well, my sister and I got the job to go, go down to downtown to the market where they sell things like [unclear] rabbits. Of course, in our little childish minds, [points fingers at head] we were thinking of cute little white bunnies. [laughs] And we get down to the market and there's no such thing. There were—and this man asked me what you—we—were these going to be pets. And I said no, my father wanted rabbits to—for meat, for people—he said, "Well," and he showed us these, he said, "These are Australian reds, and they're good rabbits for that." And we looked at them, just plain brown rabbits, and we didn't care for them, but that was all he brought, so we bought two [holds up two fingers] of them, I think, I don't think we bought more than two, and we took them home and my mother had them shipped off to my father in Tashme. And when we arrived in Tashme, the rabbits still hadn't bred, but they grew too big, to be big rabbits. And my father complained that us girls had bought two rabbits of the same sex, this is why they weren't breeding [laughs]. But I'll you after a while they did, they had so many rabbits. And my poor father would go out because there were lots of alfalfa fields, and you know, things where they had been growing hay and stuff for—so he would go off with a scythe, I don't know where he got the scythe, [unclear] he was allowed to have it. But—because we always had a machete in the house, when we were in Vancouver, and come to think of it, we still had it in Toronto, so he must've been able to—get—take that knife to Tashme with him. But this machete was a souvenir of the Race Riots in 1907. Because he—dad, my dad said when he arrived in Vancouver from Seattle, and just in time for these Race Riots, he said someone handed him this machete, and told him, defend yourself if they come, because these—because groups of white men would come and raid most of Chinatown and Japanese—you know, Powell Street area. So—so yeah, my dad still had this machete, and he would go off and—and cut down a lot of the alfalfa or hay, or whatever, and—to feed the rabbits. And as the rabbits grew in population, it was a big job , and he could never convince Japanese people to eat rabbit. He would make my mother cook up rabbit, and he'd invite people for dinner, and after—and he would tell them it was chicken until after they were finished, and then he'd say, "How did you like the meat?" and they would say, oh, it was great, and he would say, well you've just had rabbit. And rabbit, you know, was an acceptable meat. But Japanese people wouldn't take it—so finally, he got fed up with it and we sort of told people in general, if you want a rabbit, go and pick—go and have— [laughs] so a lot of people took them as pets. So like kids came around, of course they wanted them for pets. But nobody—you couldn't convince Japanese people to eat rabbit, yeah. If they were Europeans they would, eh. But Japanese people would not—rabbit is quite bony, you know? They don't have a—too much flesh on them, but still, you know, during wartime, I think yeah, you know, some countries like England, where I heard Betty's people tell me how starved for meat they were during the war, they would've loved—liked, loved it. But anyways.

[02:40]

LU: Wow.
JY: Yeah, but my dad was like that. He would, you know, do things, try things, do things—the other thing my dad did a lot in Tashme was he would forage around in the woods, and he'd come home with mushrooms and things like this, and my mother would say, "I will cook it." My father had a theory that if you got a mushroom, and you could split it cleanly, it was edible, which [laughs] of course, is not true. But—my mother would say to him she will cook it, but he cannot force anybody else to eat it. And, and so couple of times my father, he got very sick eating something, after a while, I think he gave it up. But—he also used to bring home stuff he used to call water spinach, but he'd bring up, you know, weedy stuff from the creeks, or wherever—oh and our green tea, oh, he tried many, many things to make green tea. In the end, he found the best thing, at least, mother agreed was best, was alfalfa, just roast alfalfa leaves, and bake it into green tea. I don't know whether—some things we found very diuretic [laughs] but anyway, I can remember them trying many different types of leaves, and things like this to make green tea.
LU: Oh wow.
JY: I guess now you'd call it herbal tea, wouldn't you.
LU: Yeah. What about other Japanese food commodities, such as, you know, *miso*, or rice, or *shoyu*, at that time?
JY: Well, I think things like that, people began to make on their own, or some people were better at it, and I think it—I think our *miso* and things came in from some other place, not—people in Tashme didn't make it so much as some other of the camps, somebody from Lemon Creek or somewhere else made it, and exported it out, I think. I think *shoyu*—things like shoyu, I think the company—the people who used to make *shoyu* in Vancouver, I think still made it in—somewhere, wherever they had moved to. But things like that were available as I recall. And I would think tofu and things like that, I think tofu probably, maybe was made in Tashme, I don't know, but I know we did—there were things like that, I'm sure there were things that, that, you know, wasn't available, but pretty well, everyday things were, I know the first time I heard of Kraft Dinner was in Tashme, because there was a Swedish lady married to a Japanese man, and she told people about Kraft Dinner, and told them it was a cheap meal, you know. And I think a lot of people probably didn't take to that type of meal in the beginning, but I know that's where I first heard of Kraft Dinner.
LU: Mm-hm. What other memories or stories do you have of Tashme?
JY: Well I'll tell you another one about, about our—my life in Vancouver, like my father. Like most Japanese families I know, only ate Japanese meals. But my father always made us eat two, what he calls *yoshoku*, or European, meals, a week. And he was the one who told us how you sit up straight, [sits up and puts hands in eating position] put your fork in your left hand, your knife in [laughs] our right hand, to—this is the proper to eat an English meal. I used to wonder where my father found, you know—learned all these things, but I think he was quick to observe, he'd observe people, and [unclear]. He was the one who taught me how to chop vegetables, I can remember. And he did like this [chopping motion with hands] du-du-du-du [faster chopping motion] [mimicking sound of knife chopping]. "This is the way chefs cut," he said, "This is the proper way to cut," you know. Everything had to be done

efficiently, my dad always felt that was the best—he prided himself on making pancakes. The higher it rose, the better. [using thumb and pointer finger to indicate the thickness of the pancake] So all the baking powder went into pancakes [laughs] to make them rise, oh dear. And if he made a really good pancake, this is in Tashme, I can remember having to take his prized pancake down to—another house, to another friend, to show them what, what a beautiful pancake, you know, my father made. [laughs] Oh dear.

[02:45]

LU: What other, I guess, family favourites of cooking or cooked dishes were there? I know on New Year's, for our family—
JY: Yeah.
LU: —we have certain favourites that we really like, and, red bean rice, or certain stir fries—
JY: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
LU: But was there anything in your family, that your mother—
JY: Well my mother made everything, and I—must admit, I still like red bean rice, I—like on New Year's, I always invite the family for New Year's dinner meal, using just, you know, Japanese food, although I guess maybe chow mein gets in there too, Vancouver Japanese style one, eh? But—yeah, I don't know if there were favourites, because my mother—I think my mother was very good. We had, you know how Japanese—like this New Year's food for my mother, and for—because as I said, they cooked a lot of food and it stayed on the table, and people, people came in and out to—for New Year's greetings, and so a lot of it had to be in those [gesturing with hands], do you know those little square boxes? They come—lacquered ones—John, what do you call those little lacquered Japanese boxes you put food in—
John Yoshioka: *Jubako*.
Josie Yoshioka: *Jubako.* And—did your family have those? Where there are many layers?
LU: Oh, maybe.
JY: And you put food in, and you stack, and then these people come, you open them up and they help themselves. And a lot of it would be cold, because it had to, you know, you didn't—you know, people didn't come to stay long, they came in and out and—
John Yoshioka: And also you didn't cook on New Year's, you had to cook it all ahead of time.
Josie Yoshioka: Yeah, it was cooked ahead of time, that's right. But anyway, yeah, so, so we had, as I say, I think my mother made almost a bit of everything. I know there were certain things I liked better than others, one thing we ate quite a bit of, because my father liked it, and also because my cousin in Vancouver Island, this Mr. Kogetsu, the one at lumber camp, also started an oyster farm, from Japan, eh? And so, these—whenever my cousin would come for a visit, he would always bring us oysters. And he'd bring a big, you know, gallon? [lifts hands] I don't know, full of oysters. And so, from the time I was a child, I got very used to eating oysters. And so, and I must admit, I guess, from the time we were little, we were used to eating a lot of fish. And I must admit, I always liked *sujiko*. Now *sujiko*, is, they don't call it that anymore, they call it—on sushi it's very expensive—it's fish—salmon roe. What do they call salmon roe, *takawa*? No. But whatever, see, we had good friends, called the

Fukuyamas, who were in that business of salting down salmon roe to send to Japan, so we got a lot of that through them, as well. And one day when we were in Vancouver, after we had left Greenwood and went to Vancouver and we were living on this very tight budget, I was in—the fish store when I saw the man taking out all the salmon roe and I said to him, [leans forward] "How much is that—is the salmon roe?" He says, "You want it?" I said, "Yes," and he says, "You can have it." So, because in those days, I think, you know, reg—they—apart from maybe from Japanese people, people didn't eat it. So I came home with all this salmon roe, and just salted it down a bit, and had it [unclear]. [laughs] But now it's so damned expensive, eh? You rarely get it, and that—yeah, [other things?]. We used to eat, I was just trying to think, who used to give us some salmon? I can remember many times, getting—the family having, you know, large salmon and things like this. But, you know, it's—I can't think of anything really favourite that we—I liked that *sekihan*, that you know, red, the bean, red bean rice a lot, and yet I only cook it at New Year's.

[02:50]

JY: Why you know, you can't cook it other times in the year I don't know [laughs] but, but my sister used to cook it for picnics and things like this, yeah. But I do like that. I must admit, I don't make sushi. I can remember my children saying to me, "Why don't you make sushi like grandma does?" and I said, "Well if I made sushi all the time at home, it won't be such a treat went you went to grandma's!" [laughs]
LU: Did you learn from your mother how to make it?
JY: I guess. I know how to make it. It's just the better of—I think when I was younger, might cook a lot more than I do now. I, at one time thought I was a fairly good cook, I must admit nowadays, I—it just seems when I bake, nothing turns out right, [laughs] and yet, I—you know, when children were small, I would bake all their birthday cakes and really make them fancy, and things—I even once worked, for a short time, for a woman who was a—what was she? She was a home economist, worked for companies like [the port board?], and I forget what else. But anyway, we used to—I used to assist her, when she would go to food shows to—for demonstrations, or she—or we'd go for food photography, she'd be—or TV, on TV shows, when they're going to show a lot of food, I was the one behind, you know how the—how lady—these chefs go, and they say, "A bit of this, and a bit of that," and they were all premeasured and put in, well I was the one who all—did all that premeasuring so that she could just toss things into the bowl, and—for cookbooks, when they want to have a show, I often did most of the cooking for the presentation to the photographers. Food photography is—I can remember we'd be all day long, for the man just to get one good shot. I can remember one time, I had to bake brownie—pan after pan of brownies, because my boss didn't come with me, she—her—she was having a family crisis, so she sent me on my own. She told me to "cook a couple of pans and take it with you, get a head start," you know. This was an ad for Fry's Cocoa, and it was—they gave you the recipe where you had to cook it in the pan and cook—bake it. And it made a nice brownie. So I got there. But you know, these photographers are so fussy, you think you had enough brownies for him to take a good shot, but then he'll say he wanted more, he wanted more, you know. Or even for a cup of cocoa,

you had to keep making up cups of cocoa. He'd—you'd just stir it once, and he'd take a photograph, and then said he wants another cup, that one's stale, or something, [laughs] I don't know what happens to it. But, but it's a lot of work, you know, just working to take one shot of—for he can have in the magazine or something, one page. Same with TV cooking. I can remember laughing when—for instance, we were going to have to cook up a roast, and some things, and my boss ordered three stoves to be set up at the thing, because she says, "We have to have one at the precise moment they're going to take the photograph." But I said, "But you can put three roasts in one oven—one stove," [lifts one finger] "You don't have to have three different stoves." She says, "I know that, but these people don't." So they—she said three roasts, they gave her three stoves, [laughs] as well. But—but to make a 30 second TV shot, commercial shot, we would be working from seven in the morning till nine at night.
LU: Wow.
JY: Now mind you, there were actors involved, and—you could certainly tell a professional actor from some, say, some young kid—girl—kids that they just bring in, you know, because when you get a pro in, they know exactly what to do, and the shots made.

[02:55]

JY: But you get somebody in who isn't a pro, they have to shoot, have to shoot, have to shoot to get the right—right, I guess look, or whatever they want, you know. But that was sort of interesting work.
LU: Mm-hm. Wonderful. I think this tape—
JY: [looks at watch] I think—
LU: This tape's all done.
JY: We're not finished—

**[End Part 1]**

**[Start Part 2]**

Lisa Uyeda: And there we are. And so part 2, August 22, 2011, with Josie. And can you please start off by telling us a little bit about getting ready and preparing yourself to leave Tashme?
Josie Yoshioka: Alright. I decided, while I was still at Tashme, that I would like to keep going, going to school, and to go—to onto university if I can, and I knew I needed grade 13 in Ontario. So, through, through the missionaries who were helping young people leave and finding places for them to go to—they found me a family in New Liskeard, Ontario. And I was to be, sort of mother's help, and they would then sponsor me for my high school, because not having parents in Ontario, I was not entitled to go to high school there unless I paid a fee. I—and so anyway, I went—I traveled—I left Tashme sometime in the early summer I think, possibly late June or so, and I traveled across—on the train across Canada with another girl who was leaving to join her family, who lived at that time somewhere

north of Toronto. But before we went, we went to Toronto—directly to Toronto, I had said that I would like to stop off at North Bay, go north to New Liskeard, to meet this new family. So this girl, named Fumi, I can't remember what her last name was at this point, said she would come with me, and, and so we both went, went to New Liskeard and stayed the day, I think, there, and then got back on the train and came all the way down to Toronto. Fumi got off somewhere at Allandale, I think there was a town called Allandale, north of Toronto, she got off there, and I proceeded into Union Station where two of my friends met me, Mary Oki and Amy Shimizu. Both Mary and—they were both going school in Toronto, I think. They had left about a year before me, I think. And Amy was staying at a family, Dr. and Mrs. he was a university professor, and they were both very—they were Unitarians, and very sympathetic to Japanese people, and Amy was very fortunate in being placed with them. And she was like, also a mother's help, helper. I—you know, I'm so sorry, I can't think of their last names, I might come to it later, because they allowed a lot of Japanese people, like friends of Amy's to come to the house. And—so I stayed with Amy for a few days, and then I went on to Brantford, to what they call a student and industry camp. Now this had been arranged for me, by somebody who, I think the United Church people had asked to sort of keep their eye on me, and she was—was I think, a lecturer or somebody at one—the women's—it was not a—wasn't a divinity college, but it was a—sort of a place where women who wanted to be deaconesses, I think studied, and only she was busy, out of town at the time, so this is where they decided [laughs] that it would be a good place for me to go. And it was. I had a good summer there, most of the people in this student and industry camp were university students, who—we all got jobs in factories and such to make money—earn money for, for the summer, and then would have meetings at night and also take trips or socialize amongst ourselves, and it was an interesting experience.

[00:05]

JY: Because I was in Brantford, at one time, Hugo Yamamoto approached me, he was in town, working somewhere, and said to me that his cousins, the Matsubayashis, would like to see me, and told him to bring me down for a visit. So one weekend, Hugo took me to Brantford, that way I was able to meet Nobuko and Yoko. They were working, their parents and the girls, though they were going to school, worked part-time at the sanitarium there. And this is—and a lot—and a fair number of Japanese families were there, working, amongst them, the Noguchis. Remember, I just finished telling you about Kunio. I think Mr. Noguchi was a cook. I don't know what Mr. Matsubayashi did, but Nobuko and Yoko were there, and—I knew them from Vancouver. But after, after the student and industry camp finished, I went back up to New Liskeard and spent the year there, getting my grade 13. New Liskeard is a small northern town, and I, I made a few good friends, especially one, one girl, became a very good friend. Her parents were—had a farm, which was a hard life in northern Ontario, because the growing season was short, but, but I would spend a weekend with them, and attend to some country barn dances, [laughs] which—which, you know, for me was a real novelty and a lot of fun because you found yourself at a barn—this type of barn dance, that you may dance—a 12 year old boy would come and ask you to dance, as well as

a 90 year old man, and everybody just mixed in. And it was a—it was a lot of fun. But after I—the school year ended, in New Liskeard, I wrote my grade 13 exams, and then I stayed on because the family needed me for—to help out in the home, but I eventually left, in, I think probably in late July, or some—sometime like that, because I—and I went down to Toronto, and my sister accompanied me to Montreal, where my parents were then living. And during that summer, because I wanted to go to school, and I wanted to earn a little more money, I got work in a factory that made shirts. And I know I had to operate one of these big heavy steam pressers—ironers, it was really an ironer—iron, and not very good at it [laughs] compared to all the other women in the place. But somehow or other, I think the owner—the boss realized I was more—better educated than the average girl in there, and he took me into his office. And so I often was just put into the office, where I didn't do much except answer the phone or do a few filing jobs or something, but he—but the boss's son was often there, was there, I guess every day, and he, I guess, was there to earn a little money, but he didn't do much either, so the two of us talked a lot, and I helped him with his math. He had some math homework that he had trouble with, and I would help him with his math. But anyway, I finally, had—knowing looked at the calendar in the, the things I needed to, you know. to go to university, I had noted that I needed 125 dollars, I think it was, for university fees, or maybe it was 150, for university fees, and I had earned that, and a little more, so I thought I would [laughs]—I was well equipped to go to university, so off I went to Toronto, and went to the university office, and asked to be—to be allowed to start first year in university.

[00:10]

JY: And I discovered that above the tuition fee, there were athletic fees, there were a few others—incidental fees, like I think there was a fee for—oh, just to, to, I think for some of the facilities in, in the place, and others, but of course, my biggest problem was I needed a place to stay. So I went to the dean's—the women of—the dean of women's office, and talked to Ms. McPherson there, and said to her that, "Did she have a list of places where a girl might stay as a mother's help?" And she said, "No, but leave it with me and come back in a few days." So I, fortunately had a sister in town, so I went and stayed with her for the few days, and then went back to the dean's office, and she said, "I have a nice deal for you, if you'd like this." And this was to work in the dining room, in the girls' residence, and I would get a room there, and I could work in the dining room and stay in, in residence. So I happily agreed to this, and—but I found that I was going to be roommate to one of the maids, rather than a—it being in with a student. I think this was unknown to Ms. McPherson, because at the end of—at Christmas time, when I went to see her to say that I got a bill for my residence, and because apparently the work I did in the dining room they had scaled it at so much per hour, did not pay fully, you know, my—the residence fees, so when she found out I was rooming with one of the maids, she was quite put out, and she arranged for me to move in with one of the students at—in—at the new residences that was in Charles Street. So this, this way—oh also, when I asked her, told her I needed a little more money, she said would you be working for a bursary, and I said oh yes, I'll work for it, and so they—she gave me a

job to work in the George Locke library, but it was a bit of a nothing job, where I had to show up, and sort of sit in the room, and, and students came in there to study, and if they needed a little help, or something to find a book, was just to help, but I don't think—that was a rare occurrence, so it was really just mostly sitting there and I could do my homework as well. But I found residence life very interesting. I stayed another year in residence, and got to know the girls there very well, I found out that some of the girls from southern Ontario, were very, not happy, I guess, to have an Oriental in their house, I can remember one day having quite a to-do with one of the girls, who talked about being white, white and oh—what was it, sort of superior, you know, idea. And I said to her, "Well I'm glad—I'm just glad I don't have your arrogance." [laughs] But anyway, in the end we all became friends, I think, and it, it was a pleasant stay. But about this—but the next year, my parents moved into Toronto, so I left residence and moved, moved to live with my family in, I think by this time, my father moved to— bought a house on 79 Victor Avenue, in Toronto, which is just off Broadview. It was a nice area, I found it was not too far off the Danforth, and, and after a year or two there, my father found a larger house on 20 Hurndale Avenue, which is off the Danforth, and he felt that this larger house, which was—had been broken down into rental rooms, would be a good, good income bearing house, so that he and mother could stay there in their old age without support of their children.

[00:15]

JY: So I remember when they bought this house, he bought it with a—with a third mortgage, a first, second, and third mortgage I think, but he bought it, at that time my brother and my—George and my sister Ruth were still living at home, and so he asked for their help, and I don't know—I'm not sure how much, you know, they contributed, but they did contribute—part of their pay, and mother and father both worked as well, dad went out as a night watchman, and my mother as an alteration-ist at a store. And this way they paid off the house in five years. And my father at that time, came to me and said to me that, "I want you to understand, that since you will not contribute to the house since you go to school, that this house will be left for George and Ruth, and that you will not get a share." And I—he said that he just wanted me to understand that, and I said that "Yes, I understand that," and that was fair to me. So, so I finished—I had met John, you know, when I was in—still in my first year, and it's an interesting funny little story the way I met him. I was in residence, as I say at that time, at Annesley Hall, which is on Bloor and I was going to say Avenue Road, they call it Queen's Park. And a friend, who was going to University College, Sachi Yamaoka, phoned me one day and said "There's going to be a *nisei* students' meeting at the Nagatas'," at the Nagatas', and would I like to go, and I said, "Oh yes, but I don't know the city and I don't know how to get there," but she said, "Oh that's fine." She was in residence at University College so she'd come up—pick me up, and we'd go together. And so we did, and I can't remember what the meeting was all about at this point, but it was, I guess, interesting to meet other people who were university, a lot of them were like me and Sachi, still in their first year, second year, as well as people in other years. Now John was there, but of course I didn't know that, at that time, and—but the meeting was chaired by Roy Shinobu, and I did

know Roy. So when the meeting ended, he said to me, "Do you have someone who's taking you home?" And I said, "no, but I don't live far, so it was no problem." And he said to me—because Sachi had come up to me. She had lived in Toronto for some time, and gone to Jarvis Collegiate, and at the meeting she had met a boy she had dated, I think, at one time, and he had asked her—asked her if he could take her home. So she said to me, "Would you be alright on your own," and I said, "Oh yes," because it was a straight walk—we were at—the Nagatas lived just over the bridge into—hm, what's that area—but anyway, at Bloor and Sherbourne, and I just had to walk straight [motions with hand] along Bloor till I hit Avenue Road, or Queen's Park, so it was no—not difficult. And—but Roy insisted, he said to me, "Where do you live," and I said, "well I was in Annesley Hall, and—at the time," and he said, "Oh, John lives close to you, we'll get John to take you home," [laughs] and someone—and so they said, "Where's John?" and somebody says, "He's left," so somebody went out and ran down the street, I think John was at least a block away, they ran down the street and brough him back, and said, "Take her home." [laughs] And that's how I met John. [laughs] And when we found out we lived so close to one another, and certainly when I moved to Charles Street, he was only a few doors down. [laughs] It was very handy. And so at the, the girls' residence often had parties and teas, so I would invite John to come, and he invited me to the medical parties, so, you know, and—or—I think we also went to a few football games or something together as well.

[00:20]

JY: They were mostly free things, or things at Hart House, that—you know, were free. I think they had almost weekly something, you know, going on at Hart House. But, but, so by that time, John was graduated, and he took a year at—internship at Toronto Western [Toronto Western Hospital], and then he was going to go out to Vancouver, to Shaughnessy. We sort of had an understanding, I had—and I had this little pin. They don't—I don't know whether they pin people anymore, but in our day, the men often gave a girl his pin, when—and John's—was—pin was rather cute, because it was a [unclear] pin, which had a skull, and like the year 49 written on it. He tells me at one point his—he had a skull with ruby eyes, but one day when some classmate wanted to get, get—pin his girl, and he went to try to buy one with ruby eyes, but could not, and talked John into selling him his, so John did, and got a more—less expensive one without ruby eyes. But you know, those days we didn't have money, and poor John often sold his blood [laughs] in order, in order to get a few dollars together. But, but we had fun, we had fun. And, I graduated in 1951. And then I worked for National Life Insurance for a while, but then I left in—I left in late February to—to go to out to Kelowna. We had agreed that we—because money was so difficult at that time, that I would go out West and we'd be married by John's father, in Kelowna. And so, John and I were married in March the 8th, John's birthday was March the 2nd, so I decided that if we got married, I was trying to get married on his birthday so he'll never forget the date [laughs] but it did turn out the week—it did turn out to be a week—on a weekday—on a weekend day, so on the Saturday, so we got married on March the 8th, in Kelowna, by John's father. I remember laughing and saying to John, "You know, I'm not going to agree to the words 'to

love and obey,'" which often was still in the marriage vows in those days, so he said, "Well what would you like? How about 'to love and tolerate?'" [laughs] But since it was John's father that was marrying us, I didn't have the nerve quite to tell his father that—not to put in the word 'obey,' but—he did anyway, I think he wrote, I think it was something like 'to love and to cherish,' so—which was—which was lovely. [laughs]
LU: And was that 1951?
JY: That was 1952.
LU: 1952.
JY: March the 8th, 1952. And—and we took a short honeymoon, to—down to Spokane, since John was in Greenwood, and Spokane—which was very close to the border—US border, so the closest city over the border was Spokane, where people from Greenwood often went shopping, and—and so that's—so that's where we went for our honeymoon. And I remember as we drove home, and we were getting close to home, it seemed to me John was slowing the car down a lot, and I said to him, "We're almost home, why are you going so slow?" and he says, "Well I've been out of gas!" [laughs] or nearly out of gas, or [unclear] he was taking matters of coasting down the hills. But anyway, we made it—we made it back, and in those days, as I say, John used to look at his pocket and say—go to the station and say, "Well, give me five dollars of gas" or whatever he could spare at the time. And seeing that, you know, when you're a general practice, at general practice, you had—you did house calls in those days, and you did—he had to drive down to the hospital, which was 30 miles down into Grand Forks, down a mountain road and back up again every day, so.

[00:25]

JY: But I found life in—a small town, in some ways, difficult, and in some ways not, you know—fun, because you knew everyone—you had to—it was a small town, you pretty well have to get along with everybody. But the negative aspects of living in a town like that is that everybody knows your business. And I found that one day, when John was at the hospital, and I locked myself out of the house, or thought I did, because the wind slammed the door shut, and I was outside, and hanging up some clothes—clothing, I think, in the backyard, and I went across the road to—the house across the road, and said to Mrs. Nakayama, "Can I stay here until John get back?" and she said, "everybody in town knows that if you put your shoulder to the door the doctor's door—office—" this was his office door, "Will open." See, we lived behind—like—behind the office. And so sure enough, I went and, and it was true, you see. And this was apparently general know—knowledge. But not only was something like that general knowledge, but I found out that one day, I went out to shop, and I was—when I was shopping, I suddenly didn't feel well, so I said to the man in the store, there were about three, gen—you know, grocery stores, and so I had to sort of shop a bit at each one. I said to the man, "I—I'll just leave this for now, and I'll come back later, and finish my shopping." And I left. I got—and I went back, and John was busy with a patient in the front room, so went and laid in the back room, and after a while John comes in. And he says, "Are you pregnant?" and I said, "No!" and he said, "Mrs. Otsu just came in and said that everyone is saying that the doctor's wife's pregnant." And to my great chagrin, I later found I

was. [laughs] So everyone in town knew before John and I did! [laughs] Oh dear, well that's—that's the way life is in a small town, word gets around really fast. But the added—the plus side was, that, you know, you took part in everything—if you didn't, then, you know, things didn't happen. So, we played badminton, and we played—we curled at the unheated curling rink in the [laughs]—in the winter, we played Whist, you know, you—we did a lot. When there was a dance in town, or in the next town, it never started until the beer parlor closed, which was not—was a negative. But we got—became very good friends with the forest—there was a government forester in town, and, and he and his wife had just recently been married—they were newlyweds, and also the geologist in town, was—had got married just shortly after we did, so, so the six of us sort of hung, hung around, and entertained, you know, when—we would each take turns in, you know, having dinner in each home, or whatever. So, so the social life was fine, and—but after, but—we were there about three years, so after a while John decided that because, because we—the way the life was in the small town too, often during the hours—afternoon office hours, people didn't—they weren't—John was not busy, but you're—in the evening, when the men came home with their cars, because often if you lived a bit out of town, there was no car to—so—until the father, father came home, you know, with the car at night. So we were—we found that it was—he was busy a lot of times, when, you know, and not busy at other times, and sometimes Sundays was [laughs] the busiest day of the week. But, but—and we would go annually, John would like to take time to go annually to Vancouver to take a refresher course or take a course of some sort. And so we would—we would go out to Vancouver.

[00:30]

JY: And often, when we came back, we would be scolded. You know, "When you were gone, so and so had an accident," something or other like that, but I guess that's the way it is, you know, if they, they might not need you when you were there, but when you weren't there, it's something came up. Any other negative thing for John was often some of the accidents were horrendous accidents, that would happen in the logging—in the street, and, and also it—even know these people as well, you know, quite well, to have to do post-mortems on them was not a pleasant part of the—of the work. But anyway, he decided, after some years, that he would like to specialize and go into anesthesia, so he—we made some inquiries and found out that his first choice would have been Toronto, but Toronto, not only would not pay you or give you any—anything, they wanted a fee [laughs] of a thousand dollars a year or so [and only for?] the course, so Vancouver became the place we'd go because they would take you on and also give you a hundred dollars a month if you did not live in the—in the hospitals. So we sold this little practice that we had, John had bought it, you know, when he first went in, and we sold it to the lady across the street, who I remember came and paid it in cash. [laughs] I think it was something like 3000 dollars or—and she came and put it—in pennies and quarters [laughs] as well as dollar bills. But anyway, we left—we left Greenwood with our little child, we had a little girl, Pat, Patsy we used to call her, and moved into Vancouver. And in Vancouver, when we—the first summer we stayed in

university housing, and then—and looked for a place to stay for the coming fall term, and we ended up buying a little house—

[video gets clipped and starts again]

JY: —a house, and let's see. We—I guess we must've moved in there sometime in the fall—early fall, and Robert was born in 19—on John's 30th birthday, that's right. 1955, 1955, yeah. March the 2nd, 1955. And—but he turned out to be a very allergic child, from the time I brought him home from the hospital, they told me that this child is allergic to cow's milk, you will have to breastfeed him, and—so Bob was, even as an infant, allergic not just to milk, but to—seemed to be almost anything and everything, you know. Unfortunate we had a little cat, and I think he was allergic to that plus dust, or whatever happened to be around. And so he was in and out of the hospital a lot because they told me because he was little, that once he started to really heave and have hard time breathing that I was not to waste any time but hustle and take him into the—put him in the hospital, where they had what they called a rain room. And this room was just—be very moist, and apparently this helped him breathe. And once he sort of settled down, I would bring him back home. So I devised where I would put a tent sort of—a sheet and make it like a tent [mimes a tent shape with hands] over his crib, and piped in steam from a little steamer, you know, vaporiser, and that way we, we were able to keep, you know, keep him at home rather than put him in another hospital. And—but once he was out of—finished with breastfeeding, I think I breastfed him for no, I was going to say a year, I don't know, but, but we weaned him on soymilk, and soy milk in those days was not—was a thick, brown, muddy looking [laughs] looking thing that came out of cans, and was quite expensive.

[00:35]

JY: In fact, I think I used to say it cost us half of our food budget. But anyway, but he thrived and did well, and Bob himself soon learned how to—that—he was not any problem. Like if he knew something was allergic, or even—he seemed to even know by—that something—this was not something he could eat, and so he wasn't— he was not—he was no trouble, you know, raising. But after, we were in Vancouver for some years, we had—we met good friends in Vancouver, and amongst the Japanese crowd, there was the Shimotakaharas, Charlie and Lily Kadota, Lil is a Shimotakahara, her sister Katherine was married to Jim Suzuki, and then Donnie Tsuyuki was married to the brother, Lloyd, and there are a few others. But we sort of made a sort of group, we would go once a week to—one of the Japanese or Chinese restaurants, there were Japanese restaurants in those days, but some Japanese people—restaurants made Chinese food, and we would have cheap meals. I could remember [laughs] we used to say we could eat for—a dollar per family. [laughs] And then we would have picnics and things like this, so—and we all had little children in those days. So this was kind of nice for us. But after a few years, we—when John discovered—when he had not quite finished the course, he found out they would not be taking—there would be no jobs for most of the men taking the—taking the anesthesia course, so we should be

looking elsewhere. And then though he was offered a job with one group of people, he said to me he thought he would get all the night hours and the worst possible time [unclear], he felt if he—we could not live in around Vancouver, that we might as well go back East. So, so at that particular time, a Doctor [unclear] from the Royal Victoria Hospital came and said they needed someone, so John agreed to go and—to fill in this position in Montreal. So we moved to Montreal, and John worked at the Royal Vic [Royal Victoria Hospital] and spent most of his evenings studying for the final exams. But before he finished, we found in Montreal, all houses—rental, the rent, what do you call, lease day, or you know, all came up on the same day, May the 1st. Was it May the 1st? [looks off screen] But whatever. And John wasn't going to write his exams till June. But the—but our landlord said that he wanted us out by the first of May, because that's when everybody moves, and that's when he can find a tenant more easily. So the children and I, oh we had another child in Montreal. This was—this was what—the pattern we discovered. You make a move, you have a child, you make a move you have a child. [laughs] So, so we had one child in Brantford, one child in Vancouver, one child in Montreal. So we were going to move to Oakville—we were going—yeah. We discovered there they needed a anesthetist in Oakville, so we—John had decided that's where we'd move, but we had to move earlier than, than when John would be able to start on July the first, so the children and I went to live with my parents in Toronto, until John was finished. And so we left Montreal before John, and spent a month or so with my parents, and then moved into our home, that we could not afford to buy but bought [laughs] in Oakville. I think—there again, we borrowed some money from my sister, we took out a loan—mortgage from the bank, but anyway, we—I think maybe we had a second mortgage, first mortgage and a second mortgage, and we bought the house.

[00:40]

JY: Because when we went to see the real estate agent and said to him we wanted a rental, they said there aren't—there weren't any. And—I think there was one they showed us, but it was right down the main street next to a service station, and I said no, that—you couldn't take children to a place like that, so, so the only alternative was to find a house—find a house that we couldn't afford. [laughs] And so we moved into Oakville, and—Oakville was ideal—the area we moved into was ideal. An area with young families with little children, and nit—with a school a block away, and these people that we met there and our children grew up there have always been very good friends of ours. And so, it was a lovely, yeah, sojourn in Oakville. We were there for almost 15 years, when John said, [laughs] he heard there was going to be a new hospital built in Etobicoke, or—and opening on—in September of '72, so he applied for a position, and was accepted as Chief of Anaesthesia there. So we moved in about June, the hospital wasn't quite finished, I think, to open on September first, but anyway, it did open sometime in the fall of 1972, and we bought a house on 10 Richdale Court, which is right off Kipling and Eglington. Yeah, near just a block above. Was it a block above, a block below? I'm getting mixed up with [unclear] Hill. Okay. But anyway, so we moved into this nice large four-bedroom house, and our children, Pat had finished high school, and was at—going to Western [University of Western Ontario], but our—Robert had

to take one year, he—Grade 13, at—in Toronto, they went to Martingrove Collegiate [Martingrove Collegiate Institute], Richard took—from Grade 10, I think, in—at Martingrove, and Marianne went to John G [John G. Althouse Middle School], at that time it was called junior, senior—it was a middle school, anyway. And its great notoriety is that it's the school Harper went to, Stephen Harper, went to.
John Yoshioka: John G. Althouse.
Josie Yoshioka: John G. Althouse, yeah was called John G. Althouse, that's right. And then Marianne when she finished there, she only went to there one year, I guess, Grade 9, and then onto Grade 10, so it was 11—went to Grades 11, and 12, 13, I guess in, in Martingrove. But by—now we were—this is—this is what house? Did I say 10 Richdale Court? Yeah, okay. That was 10 Richdale—'cause it was from Richdale Court, we were down then and John was at Etobicoke General, we were in Toronto for 10 years, before we went to Saudi Arabia. When the children were all out of school, I decided at one time to go back and take a course at—
John: Humber College.
Josie: —Humber College. When I had first started university, I had thought I went into sociology thinking I may become a social worker, but as I did on, I thought—they had a social work course at Humber College, so I thought I would take that. But then I applied, they told me it was all filled up, and they suggested I take this course called, oh gosh, I can't remember the name of the course, but it involved a lot of—they told me they felt that my experiences would be a good fit for this course. But it turned out to be a lot of cooking. I had thought I was leaving the kitchen [laughs] to go to school, and here was a course that involved a lot of cooking.

[00:45]

Josie Yoshioka: We—and nutrition, cooking, and we also had a course in cooking for—like in restaurants, and that, you know. You—
LU: Culinary?
JY: —Huh?
LU: Culinary, cooking?
JY: Well, well, it was a course like—you—when you walked into the room, this teacher would hand you a piece of paper and it would say on it, "Mushroom soup for 50." And, and you had to prepare it within 20 minutes or something, like this. It was made for more commercial set ups. And I can remember this one day, which soup was it? Onion soup, what soup—[share?]—anyway, I asked for, you know, amongst the things I wanted [miming writing a list]—and it was very simple, because they had these bases that you just add hot water to and cook—but I asked for a bottle of sherry [laughs] to put into it, it was consommé, I guess, and I asked for it and he asks, "A bottle of sherry?" and I said, "Well for 50 people, don't you think it needs a bottle?" But I—he gave it to me, but I think he sort of questioned, it was good soup. [laughs] And other people would be making apple pie, or some people would be making the vegetables, so that by the time we finished within the hour or something, we had a full dinner [gestures for size with hands] for 50, you know, on

the table. We also, what was fun in the course, was we ran a restaurant. And every month, I think it was only once a month, we would prepare to let the public in for lunch. And the word got around in the neighbourhood very quickly, we'd get [scans] of men who found it was cheap wine, we would charge a dollar a glass. [laughs] Humber College apparently had a liquor license, so there was always, but the teacher would say, for the lunches there was a limit of six bottles or something, so you had to tell the people their limit was two glasses and then—no more than that. But—I can't remember what we charged for the—for the lunches, but whoever—like one person would host the lunch, and all the rest of the class would be your workers, and you would assign jobs to them, and so—it was, you know, you had to decided what kind of cooking you do, I think I chose Italian one time, and of course there were all these Italian girls will tell me what to do—what not do, you know, don't put mums [chrysanthemums] on the table because mums were a flower they associated with the dead, and this sort of thing, but—and when—I know when just like when someone—one of the girls was doing a Japanese meal, I was trying to tell her something, but she said, "Don't tell me anything." It was hers to do, and she was going to do it. So when she put something like noodles, you know, the type of noodles, buckwheat noodles, on a plate, [miming placing something down] I tried to tell her it should go on a bowl, but you know, but she put it on a plate and put nori all over [miming sprinkling] with a little *dashi*. [laughs, miming sprinkling] But anyway. [laughs] So, but most of the girls were—were just out of high school, they were 19, 20 year olds. Whereas there were three of us who were older. There was one Jamaican lady, whose children were sort of in high school, or, or think one about to go to university. And then we had a Catholic nun from the Caribbean, and so, so it was a fun—it was—sort of fun class, we all got along well, along the way some girls dropped out, but—

LU: What year was this?

JY: This was—

John Yoshioka: 1970.

Josie Yoshioka: 1974? '70?

John: [unclear]

Josie: '74, or so. Because when our anniversary came up, just after I finished the course, we went to Japan. So if we were married in '52, then 25 would be 1977 we went to Japan. So this was about that time. And, and so after I finished the course, I got a job working for a lady named Kate Spicer who was a home economist, who worked for the Ontario Port Board and few other places, and she—it was her job to fix up menu—recipes, and things in the booklets, or something, and she needed like pictures to go with it, and so we got—she was involved in going to photographers for food photography sessions, or sometimes with—on TV for ads, like a 30 min ad, we worked from seven in the morning till seven at night, often for a 30 [with emphasis] second—30 second ad, [unclear], and it would—I discovered that making TV ads, for one ad, sometimes we did two, but, but you'd have hundreds of people in that studio, not just people who were like shooting the films, or that, but they'd have people whose job was just to pick up things they might need in the film. For instance, one can remember one day, one of the ladies—girls was saying that she was asked to pick up a glass piggy bank, so that they could say, "You save pennies," and there's this piggy bank they

wanted to photograph with pennies in it, you know. But she said she couldn't find—she came back with a copper one or a metal [laughs] one, you know. So, she said they didn't like the idea of folding up a bill and putting it in, because they were trying to tell you, "You save pennies, rather than, you save dollars, on, on buying, you know, this particular product." But also that girl, [unclear], I can remember one time we were told we were going to have to shoot a banquet scene, so there was going to be lot of food made, but a lot of tablecloths, dishes, and things like this required—and I can remember going in and just being flabbergasted instead of—getting some maybe half a dozen plates and forks and knives, there must've been—there were two tables just filled with all kinds of fancy dishes, and candelabras, and things like [laughs] things like that. They overdo; they overdo. Just like when with food photography, you overdo. Like if you're doing something, you want to show a strawberry dish, you bought about five pints of strawberries just so you could pick out a few perfect ones to place and you know, in the photograph, and things like this, so. And a lot of times when you are doing that sort of work, the food doesn't have to be really, be cooked. You only want a good picture. And I remember one time when we were doing a barbecue scene, we had this cold barbecue, we placed—I got—seared the meat, just quickly in a hot pan, and, and got worcestershire sauce and drew lines like it—like it came off the barbecue [laughs], put it in a pan or on the grill—on the barbecue, and they took the picture. [laughs] A lot of guys, at the TV sessions, when the men would come around and say they want to eat the food, I'd tell them, "You don't want to eat that," you know, [laughs]"It's not cooked properly, it just has to look good," you know, but, anyway. That—there was an incident like that in my life. I also one time did some volunteer work, where I—well I did a number of volunteer work. That was paid work, but I did volunteer work, like I taught English as a second language, and got a certificate—I took a course then got a certificate, and taught a lot of Japanese ladies who were here from Japan with their husbands—like their husbands were on contracts for five years in Canada, and a lot of them lived in the same apartment building, I think it was on Islington [points backwards] near—[unclear] the academy? And so a lot of these ladies would come to the classes, I'm trying to think of which school I went—I taught at, I can't even remember the name of the school. But these—a lot of these ladies came to that class, as well as, you know, people from other nationalities. I can remember having a very spoiled Vietnamese woman, who kept saying to me, "Why can't you come to my house? Why do I have to come here?" [laughs] because she was sponsored by, I think, a certain church we were out—who laid down what they expected her to do, and one was try to learn to— English, and she had an infant, and she kept saying what a—how difficult it was for her to come.

[00:50]

Josie Yoshioka: But these church ladies, you know, would babysit for her and do things for her, so there was really no reason why she couldn't come. I think there was even babysitting facilities at the school for some of these ladies.
LU: Do you remember where this school was located?

JY: That's what I'm trying to think. Where would it have been located for these ladies to have come from? Somewhere in the house I know I have a certificate, but that doesn't tell me the name of the school where it was located, I think. But it must've been—see I lived at Kipling and Islington, and so it must've been a school in that area. But I also taught, at one point, down—a course for—I saw an ad in the paper, I think it was, where they wanted university trained women to volunteer to—well it wasn't, it was neurotic people, not—not people who were—
John Yoshioka: Agraphobia.
Josie Yoshioka: Yeah. I did a lot of agoraphobia; I think it's called—
John Yoshioka: Agoraphobia.
Josie Yoshioka: —people, people who are afraid of heights, you know, who had phobias. And this clinic was run by a Dr. [Niber?] who was a medical doctor as well as a psychologist, a doctor of psychology, and he felt there were a lot of women in—or people in Toronto who were well educated and would like more meaningful, you know, volunteer work. And so I worked with a German lady who was—had a medical degree in Germany, but she could not rewrite her exams, you know, in Canada, so she was—she volunteered there. I had another lady who had her Master's in Education, so we were a good group of people this man amassed, and he would give us—assign us certain people, and one thing I didn't like about it was he, he also had university students who were in psychology, and he assigned me and some of these young men to do electric shock treatments, and I didn't like it at all. It was—he sent us to a certain, I think it was Sunnybrook where they did this sort of thing, in fact after we had started our course and when I went to Sunnybrook and I found out they did it far differently, I quit. [laughs] But the idea was that when people had these bad [puts up finger quotes], bad, you know, quotation marks, thoughts about their phobias, you would just push a button and they would get a mild electric shock, you know. And I guess it was considered a treatment that was alright, but, you know, it really isn't one that I care for, I think. But we did some other things. I used to walk people who would not want to leave their homes—
LU: Just going to switch the tapes for a second there.

[interview clips out]

JY: This is—this is a lot of minutiae about my—me, is that what you want?
LU: Well, that's okay, because even part of the, you know, the post-war experience and—is still important to the history and how the community overall has been able to succeed in life and been able to work their way through—
JY: Well, this is true. You know, when I think of the kids I knew in Tashme, the—the vast majority of the ones I went to, took—you know, we were all taking correspondence courses, ended up by being doctors, dentists, lawyers, you know, we came up very, you know, well educated, career successful group of people.
LU: Mm-hm. Which you would think, may not have happened, considering the schooling—
JY: Yes, exactly, exactly, exactly.

[00:55]

LU: —at that time was so different. Mm-hm.
JY: Yeah, this is why often when you think of who they say find it hard to go to school because they don't have money or what not, it—to me, this experience that I went through, and—proves it wrong, you know. Although the fees were much lower, but so were the wages, you know. We—I'm trying to think what we earned—I think we earned something—30 dollars a week, when I was working at that student industry camp, and then I—through university, I usually worked at Bell as a long-distance operator, and that was well paying because—mostly because we would take on hours that other people didn't want. For instance, if you were assigned day hours, it was long, it was eight to five, I think, with a, I think half hour off for lunch, I'm not sure. And—but those hours were wanted by ladies who had children and wanted to be home at night, whereas I would gladly switch, tell them, "I'll switch with you," and take a six thirty to twelve thirty at night. And that was only six hours work, and you got half an hour off as well, and a taxicab home, and paid better too, you know. And certainly, we tried to work a lot of holidays and weekends, because you got hour and half on weekends and the whole time on holidays or something. And—so, that—those were good, you know, good salaries. But—I know I urged, when my children's friends would come around, especially the boys, come around, and when they were in high school years, and they would say they weren't planning to go to university, and I would say, "Why not?" and they were saying, "Well nobody in my family's ever gone to university," and I said, "Well that doesn't matter, that doesn't mean you can't go," and I said, "You know, if you are willing to—[unclear] your family doesn't need your wages, and you could work summers and save that money, there's no reason why you can't pay—make your own way." And so I'm very proud that both of my—the friends of my boys who weren't planning on going to university, did—they all went. And I remember how one boy said to me, "Oh you know, my parents are so proud," you know, "I'm the first one in the family ever, none of my cousins ever went to university." [laughs] So you know, yeah, it—that was good. But anyway, to get on with this other part, what—did you want to—you don't want to know all the volunteer work—different volunteer work I used to do, did you?
LU: Why don't you tell us a little bit about the trip to Japan, and what it was like to go and visit Japan for the first time, when, you know, back during the war years, you know, the RCMP and BC Security were telling you to go back to Japan—
JY: Yes, yes.
LU: but you'd actually never been there before. So tell—tell us a little bit about your first experience there.
JY: Well our—John—the first trip to Japan was back in 19—it was for our 25th anniversary, and I had just finished going to Humber College, so I'm just trying to think—
LU: '77? 1977?
John Yoshioka: '77.
Josie Yoshioka: '77, okay. It was 1977, and we—I booked a trip with a tour group, an English speaking tour group, I think it was with one of the Japanese travel groups that, you know advertised in The New Canadian or something, and we had decided we wanted to just,

generally, you know, see Japan, but I also wanted in there, experience at a Japanese Inn. So that was supposed to be included. We went to Tokyo and stayed at the Prince Hotel [Tokyo Prince Hotel], I think they have several, I can't remember, this was—the Prince Hotel at some kind of, you know, some kind of park.

[01:00]

JY: And, I think the interesting thing about going to Japan, at least for me, not speaking the language, you know. But I must admit, before I ever went to Japan, one time when we had Japanese visitors, John's mother's friends from Japan who stayed with us, this man said to me, "You're not Japanese, I—in Japan we'd spot you like that." He said, "You don't—it's just the way you are," you know, he said, "Your whole mannerism is different. You don't—the way you walk, the way you hold yourself, and even before you open your mouth," you know, "they could tell you're a foreigner." And he laughed and he said, "Even John's mother, she says when she was visiting in Japan, she says things like rice, she says things like—" and see, even these things now have English words that they use instead of Japanese words and that. So when you're—you've lived, you know, abroad from Japan, even the isseis are different. But, I think one thing that—you would see is this crowd of all black haired, Oriental people. Yeah, it's, it's a bit of shock, you know, to—just looking at them. But certainly, there were—Japan's a pleasant place to go, to visit, and to see, you know, it's a clean place with—what strikes you is you're told how honest people are, you know, that you don't have to tip them, like in some places—some countries if you don't tip, you know, they really curse you out. [laughs] And—but—and you know, one thing, you're used to the food, so there's no adjustment that way, you enjoy the food, I can remember the only place I didn't like the food was—there was this small seaside town I think we were in having lunch, and they told me, we were looking at the menu, they said their speciality was something like ten different types of clams. So I ordered it, and some of it was so rubbery [laughs], you couldn't eat it, you know, some of them were so small [makes a circle with thumb and pointer finger], just barely, you know, a mouthful of food, but anyway, but that's part of travel, even sort of a fun part where you can talk about it later. No, I like Japan, I don't know quite what to say, I think I realized, because I think John's family and I was brought up as Christian, and always thought—heard many stories about missionaries and things like this, that—to realize Japan is not a Christian country. And I think—I can remember that struck me. And what also struck me was how small [laughs] the taxis were. I was travelling with a big suitcase, and we couldn't get my suitcase into the trunk of the car, and it became quite—Japanese railways are just wonderful. You can get wonderful *bento*s on them, and they come around with water, and I think hot towels to, you know, wash up, but I can remember when we—Japanese people don't seem to travel with much luggage. And so here we come in with our, as I say, with my enormous suitcase, and John's, and you find nowhere to put them. The man said, "Just leave them at the door," and John said, "but we're going to be sitting way out there— "doesn't matter, doesn't matter, nobody will touch it, nobody—" and that's the way Japan is, you know, you don't have to worry about your possessions at all. And having, you know, when you go to countries where you have to really hang onto [laughs] to your purses

and things. I can remember, and this is going later, but even in a country like Spain, a lady came up to me, one day, when I was just—when John and I was just walking around, and she said to me, "Excuse me, but you have such a large suitcase, and it's so prominent."

[01:05]

JY: She says, "I am scared for you," you know, she says, "Please be very careful." And then somebody else would say, I can remember in Italy saying—telling us, "Be careful of children." And she says, "If they come up to you, waving newspapers in your face," she says, "They're going to rob you. So—" you know, "Hang on to your purse and things." Or another lady telling me all she was, was bumped from—someone would approach her from front, and she said then somebody would bump her from the back, and in that instance her purse is gone, you know. She says, "Somebody is talking to you, and talking softly so that you have to lean over to listen, and—"[laughs] So travelling has its hazards, but not in Japan, not in Japan. And no, I—we enjoyed Japan, even, you know, where did we go? We went from Tokyo up north a bit first, to see the big Buddha, at, what's the town? Ka—no, never mind, and to see Mount Fuji, and it happened that we went on a good day. And later, when we were coming out of Tokyo, on the bullet train, at one point I looked out the window, and there was Mount Fuji. You know, these are the sort of the marks—these are the places you want to see, and sometimes people don't see them because of the weather and the clouds and that. But so, then we went to, oh, how far south did we walk? We went to Hiroshima, and that was about as far south as we went, I think, because it was on the next trip I think we went a little further south, but, but that was a good English-speaking trip—tour. I found that we were travelling with mostly Americans. There were a couple of Australians and—I think, but how—some people, even before they see their rooms, they're complaining [laughs] about their rooms and that, but yeah. Travellers can be funny.
LU: Mm-hm.
JY: But one thing I was—the contrast between China and Japan, as far as people who talk English, was to me, striking. China is not the clean, neat, country Japan is, but I was impressed by the fact that the Chinese talk a much—English much better. Very good American English, whereas the Japanese, our guides, you know, were—
John Yoshioka: Well it was a long time ago.
Josie Yoshioka: Yes, it's a long time ago—
John: It's different now.
Josie: —it's different now, yeah, I certainly could see that by talking to the—to the people that come from Japan in recent years, yeah, they all talk English very well. Because even among the people like—who are the consuls, and people like that, you notice that they all, you know, come and they are fluent, whereas they used to struggle and their accents were very heavy, you know, Japanese accents. Like most of the *issei*s of our parents, and that. But, so where do we go from here?
LU: I'm just trying to think now, of any other questions that I have. John mentioned before that occasionally in the past you used to visit the Centre and take part in events such as the

Bazaar, or *Issei* day, was there any other events at the Centre, whether it's the new centre or the old centre [Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre] that really strike you as—
JY: No, don't know. Just a bit. We used to treat the Japanese Centre, I think, mostly not as a place to go to participate in things, but as a place to go to visit on special occasions, or I remember when the children were little, we used to take some of their friends, like, and go so that they could—like if they were showing things like origami, or things like that, and—or storytelling.

[01:10]

JY: I remember listening to some storytelling when the children—with the kids, when they were little, I still remember them. They were nice occasions, but we never went to do anything [laughs] I think we were only—always visitors, weren't we. And—when we were younger, even when we lived in Oakville, it wasn't as much effort to get there as I feel it is now. Certainly, the highways make a big difference, but when I—when we lived in Oakville, or moved into Toronto back in the seventies, it was nothing to go on the 401 [highway] and go across town. You could go across town in half an hour, and I used to—or if I was at home and wanted to go downtown to the market downtown or somewhere, you know, you could do that and get there very quickly and easily but now, you see with the highway traffic, I won't drive the 401, it's horrendous traffic, and—besides, yeah, you know, it, when you're our age, and you have to go every two years to write this sort of exam, and they keep telling you, when you're, you know, your result is over 80, you should be very careful. I must admit, yeah, I think this is true. I hate, I hate having to watch traffic in the rear window, or turning my head around [turns head], and on the 401 you have to do this constantly, I think, because cars can come up at you on either side very quickly, so I won't drive the highway anymore.
LU: And what about going back now, to the eighties, to redress? And I know I'd mentioned it to John before, and—
JY: Oh, to redress—
LU: Mm-hm. Where—
JY: Oh, alright. I think John made a mistake—I don't know if it was an error or if it was deliberate, but he mentioned Trudeau, but of course it wasn't Trudeau, it was Mulroney that gave the redress. Mulroney just felt it was the past, you know, and just, sort of, it was gone, and no need to redress. I must admit, we didn't take part in the redress and that, and I must admit thinking, why bring it up, you know, leave it alone. The people—like I felt the people that should've got it, like my dad, they were gone, you know, and I didn't feel that people like my age or—

[sentence redacted from 1:17:53 to 1:18: 20]

JY: I don't know how—because I didn't take part—how it was arranged that it would go up to a certain year, and that—

LU: I think it went up to if you were born pre-war years, and if you were born within the war years—
JY: Oh, I see, okay.
LU: —within the internment camps, or—
JY: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
LU: —wherever you may have been living at that time.
JY: Yeah. But, yeah, it—this business of redress that I know they talk about, you know the Chinese people who had to pay a lot of head tax, you know, to get redressed, and maybe, yeah, but it could go on and on and on, and I must admit, I guess for my part, I felt once the war years were over and people like my father were gone, and—I, yeah, I took the money, and it was nice, but I must admit I wasn't a real pro-redress person.
LU: What about going back now, to 1949, when Japanese Canadians were allowed to vote, and give n the right to vote—
JY: Now—
LU: —in Canada. Do you remember that? Was that a—
JY: No, let's see. 1949—where was I in 1949?
LU: 1951 you graduated.

[01:15]

JY: Okay, just before that, was it? Obviously, it wasn't a high mark day in my life—
John Yoshioka: First time I voted was 1952, we were in Greenwood.
LU: Ah.
Josie Yoshioka: Oh, we were in Greenwood, okay. I must admit, my father was a naturalized Canadian from 1912. And I think his motive at the time, although I never discussed it with him, but I think it was to get a fishing license and to get—he had this business where he bought a fishing boat and would—wanted to sell fish, you know, not fish, but buy other people's fish and take it and—into the US to sell it. And I kind of think, I wish I had talked to him about, that that was his motivation for becoming a Canadian citizen, I don't know. But yeah, I really, yeah, think it was a great injustice that people like him, who were naturalized Canadians, and people like us who were born in Canada, were not allowed to vote, certainly I think—were we allowed to vote municipally? I'm not sure, in Vancouver—
John Yoshioka: Oh, I don't know.
LU: I don't think so, not until—
Josie Yoshioka: no, not—
LU: —after 1949—
Josie: —that was for—
LU: —but I'm not sure.
JY: —that included municipal as well federal voting?
LU: I believe so, but I'm not sure.
JY: I don't know. And I don't know, I guess, I must admit, it's too bad, but neither John nor I were very active in trying to get the vote or anything. As I say, we didn't belong to a Japanese group of people who got, you know, political minded, or even culturally minded. I

think we were sort of living on our own in Oakville and not—or is this when we had been younger. When I was going to university, one year, I was approached by a group of people who wanted to know if I would be part of a group of people where they ethnically mixed us. So I would be the Oriental, there was another young man who was the Black person, and then there were—we were taken to different place by people who were non—sort of visibly you know, different, you know, people, they were just Anglo-types. And we would go out to different place where they had been—there had been—told that they would not allow Blacks in or Orientals in, and we would go out for—to—we would be—me, had been told the target is such and such a place, a nightclub, or a place, you know, someplace, a bar, and we would go, and see if we can get in. And I must admit, anytime I was with this group, there was—I—there was no place we didn't get in. So we'd get in and we'd just sit in the place for a while and then leave, because, you know, I guess what would have happened if we were told, you know, "Oh we won't let that Oriental in or we won't let that Black guy in." What we would've done, I don't know, I guess these other people who were the—charge—had a certain way of approaching it, but I can remember being asked if I would do that, and I remember my friend Mary Oki saying that she also did that sort of thing. So there was a group of people who tested different places in Toronto this way.
LU: Mm-hm. That's interesting.
JY: But we would go to dance halls—you know, dance halls were—really nice, nice places. I often felt sorry for my kids that there weren't places like—when we were young, you know, there were regular places you could go to dance, and—like The Palace Pier, and Casa Loma, had a beautiful place that you could dance with an orchestra.

[01:20]

JY: The university often had—Hart House would have a band in, and—but, and of course, when we went to dances, we dressed up. My kids go in old jeans. [laughs] They might look fairly decent going to school during the week and then on the weekend [laughs] they wear old—they wear jeans and things. Yeah, times change.
LU: Mm-hm. Well, were there any other stories, or comments that you wanted to include? I think—
JY: Oh I don't think so—
LU: —my questions are all—
JY: —I think I made too many. [laughs]
LU: [laughs]
JY: You can end it [unclear].
LU: Wonderful, thank you very much.
JY: Oh, well, thank you for taking the time— [video cuts]

**[End Part 2]**