

Interviewee: Patricia "Pat" Adachi

Interviewer: Teri Yamada

Present: Peter Wakayama, Tak Yano

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* Note that this interview contains outdated terminology regarding people who use drugs.

[Start Interview]

[very soft audio, sound checking for the first 5 minutes or so]

[05:23]

Teri Yamada: Could you please state your full name and your date of birth?

Patricia Adachi: My name is Patricia Sumie Adachi. I was born in August the 8th, 1920. It's a long time ago. [chuckles]

TY: Is that your original name?

PA: Yes.

TY: So, you've never changed it?

PA: Well, like- I was born a Kawashiri. Maiden name.

TY: Okay, and where were you born?

PA: In Second Avenue in Vancouver, which used to be called the Kitsilano area.

TY: And you grew up- in your whole childhood in Vancouver?

PA: No. We moved from there to- my father started a rooming house on Cordova Street, not far from what was Woodward's at the time, and I lived- grew up there, until I was almost high school age, and then we moved up to Powell Street on Main, another rooming house. And-

TY: Okay, and then where were your parents born?

PA: My parents? Uh, they're from Tottori, in Japan. My father came when he was 18, and- but he came as a *yoshi*, which is like, my grandfather sponsored him. He had a chicken farm on Mayne Island, that's in the Gulf islands. Well, my father wanted to get out of Japan because he was a second son, so he wouldn't receive anything. In those days, the oldest got everything, and he couldn't follow his dreams, so he decided to come to Canada.

TY: So, your father was the first one to immigrate from Japan?

PA: Yes.

TY: And after the chicken farm, what was he doing?

PA: Well, he became allergic to chickens, I think. [chuckles] Anyways, he's got asthma. So, he went to Chilliwack to work at a dairy farm. And he was very fortunate because there, this- the lady of the house taught him his English, every night after work. And so, even his handwriting is better than ours. TY: And why was that?

PA: Well, he practiced all of this, and he learned to read and write English.

TY: So, he practiced calligraphy?

PA: All due to this lady of the house.

TY: Great, and your mother? When did she come to Canada?

PA: Well, she had been here before, like with her mother. Uh, my grandfather had come in 19– year 1900, and my grandmother came soon after with my mother, who was only about a year or two. And then she was sent back to Japan to get her education and there she was married to my father at the age of 16, and she followed him out to Vancouver, soon after he arrived.

TY: And do you have other siblings?

PA: Just one sister.

TY: Older or younger?

PA: She's six years younger than I am. So, yeah.

TY: So, then both of you were born in BC?

PA: Yes.

TY: And what are your earliest memories of BC?

PA: Of BC? Well, like, my grandparents had this chicken farm in Mayne Island. So, I remember going there every summer because in a rooming house, it's not a great place for a child to grow up. So, when school was out, I was sent out there and I loved it. My grandfather had this great big work horse, and he used to let me ride on it. And I remember my grandmother's biscuits. I still remember them, and they're my- still my favourite.

TY: But your schooling was in downtown Vancouver?

PA: Yes. TY: And where did you go to school?

PA: Went to Central School, which is just across from where the province newspaper office is. And uh, like, we were south of Main Street. So just a few of us went to Central, so there weren't many Japanese. And my friend Hideo Yaguchi, we went from kindergarten right through to high school together.

TY: But you were essentially living in Japantown?

PA: Pardon?

[00:10]

TY: You were living in Japantown? What was considered–

PA: Well, not quite. Cordova is a little further away from Japantown. But when we moved to Main and Powell, that was closer. Mm-hm.

TY: So, during your school years though, was it a mixed community?

PA: Uh, well our public school was uh– oh I guess, just a handful of Japanese. There were Chinese students, we were all good friends, and we never felt discrimination or anything, well kids, you know. It just rolls off your back, you don't really feel it, but– In high school, I don't think it was a problem.

TY: Do you remember a distinctive Japanese community?

PA: Uh yes, because we all had to go to Japanese school. That was our parents' priority. We didn't wanna go, but we had to go. So, every day after public school, we'd attend the Vancouver Language School. So there, we met a lot of friends, and we're still friends today because each year, after we graduate from Japanese school, our principal used to give us a name for the club, and that became an alumni. So, we're still pretty close.

TY: And what was your year's name?

PA: Ours was 1934 graduates, so we were called *Meiropai*.

TY: So, it ended up that Japanese school was sort of, a centre of Japanese social-

PA: Community- [overlapping]

TY: -activities?

PA: Yes, for us.

TY: Great. When did you start your interest with baseball?

PA: Oh, from the time I was a kid. [chuckles] Like, well, my father used to take me to the ball games 'cause he had no boys. And so, uh, oh, I guess from the time I was about eight or nine, he'd take me to the ball game and sit me on a bench and buy me a bag of peanuts. And he'd forget about me, you know, but I soon caught on. [chuckles]. And then I started to play softball at school. So uh, always a tomboy.

TY: And who did you play with? Was it all girls or boys and girls?

PA: The players on our softball team? No, they were a girl's team. But the funny thing about that is, there was one Chinese girl. Her name was Jean Wong. She came to all the games that I played, and if we went to another school, she'd follow me and be there. And that girl became Mrs. Jean Lumb, who is- later, you know, became head of the Chinese community in Toronto. And it's funny how things happened, but-

TY: So, you met some very interesting people through baseball.

PA: Pardon?

TY: You met some very interesting people through baseball.

PA: Oh, anybody. [chuckles]

TY: Was it very common for girls to play?

PA: No. Not in those days, and I used to be about the only one that was late to Japanese school all the time because I played ball after school. But uh, somehow the teacher forgave me, because my father made sure I knew the lesson- that day's lesson. We'd study the night before, so the teacher couldn't reprimand me for being late. So, I got through. [chuckles]

TY: Right. Was your family affiliated with a particular religion?

PA: Well, we've been Anglicans. We started at Holy Cross Mission, which is just across from Powell Street Grounds, and we continued right along. Even during the evacuation, the Anglican missionaries came with us to the ghost towns and lived there. Spent their life with us there, and even after we were sent out East, Miss Tucker and Miss Foster, who were the missionaries came out here, and helped us to get settled again. So, we've been involved with them for most of our lives.

TY: What do you remember of the evacuation?

PA: Well, it wasn't a very good idea, but, like, one reason why we got married so soon was my father knew he would have to leave because he was a Japanese national. So, my husband and I, we were going around together at that time, and he said he would like us to get married, so at least there'd be someone to look after us. So, that was right after Pearl Harbour. We became engaged and got married January the 23rd.

[00:15]

PA: Then my father had to leave in March. But, as you know, things changed, and all the men

had to go. So that just left my mother and I, and my sister. And we still stayed at the rooming house until we had to be evacuated.

TY: And where were you taken?

PA: Well, my husband had been sent to Popoff, to Slocan, to build houses. And so, they sent us there. And we– at that time, the houses weren't ready, so we lived in tents. And lived– and like ate in the mess house, you know. So, it wasn't the greatest situation. Finally, the houses were built– they were just like little shacks with tar paper, and we survived the winter. But I lost my first baby there. And uh– so I guess it wasn't the greatest of times. But soon after that, like [Hide Hiroshi?]- she became Mrs. Shimizu, was a supervisor of schools, and she asked me if I'd like to teach. Well, it never dawned on me to ever teach anybody, but she gave me a choice of grade 3 or grade 1. So I said, "Well okay, I'll take grade 3," and she said, "Oh no, you'll take grade 1." That was Hide. But uh, and it was a wonderful experience.

TY: And you were actually reunited with your husband, so your family was then together in Slocan.

PA: Yes. Mm-hm.

PA: My– Yeah, father had been sent to Lempriere, which is a road camp. But eventually, he joined us too.

TY: And what happened to your Vancouver properties?

PA: Well, uh my father had this– what they call the block. He had a hotel, and there was a restaurant underneath, and a couple of barber shops. But all that– you know, he had to sell for a pittance, because, well the government said they will look after it, but there wasn't much chance of that.

TY: So, you actually were married before the war started or just as the war was starting, before the evacuation?

PA: Yes. Uh, like, we were married in January. Then, well, by March, everybody was moving out and so we thought, well we better get rid of everything that we could because we couldn't take it with us. And so, we had to sell our furniture. And the wedding cards were still in the drawers and that. The people that came to buy the furniture, they started to cry, to see this, you know, that we had to leave all this behind us. But there was no way– no way of getting around it. So, I'm sure it happened to a lot of other people, but uh–

TY: So, you were reunited with your husband at Slocan, and is that when you started your family?

PA: Well, uh, I was already pregnant when we left Vancouver. That was in about August. So uh, the baby wasn't quite developed. But uh, I guess the harsh winter and the situation–

TY: Could you describe family life in Slocan, in an internment camp?

PA: In Slocan? Well, everybody was in the same boat, you know. So, there wasn't this competition of who had more or less. Everybody tried to help each other out. And of course, all the Japanese had gardens. They grew vegetables, whatever. And, in a way, it was great. We had time to take lessons in different kind of Japanese cooking, floral arrangement. And, I guess on the whole– Well, we were married so we didn't go out, but for the young people, it was a lot of fun because they had a lot of friends, you know, and there wasn't much else to do but have a good time. But uh, we managed. So, we had only one, like a shack which we

shared. Like we were two families, so we were able to share that. But, in some cases, there were two different families living together.

TY: So how many people were in your situation?

PA: Oh, I guess there must've been about, I would say about 400?

[00:20]

TY: And how many people would be in one shack?

PA: In one shack? Well, like, these shacks- well, I would say, next door they must've had about eight people. There were five in ours, and then there were two families in the following building. But then there was a bunk house for the single men. And, then they had to think about building a school for us. And that took a while, so, once we started teaching school, we had to march our children to Bay Farm. And shared their school for half a day and then march them home again. Sometimes, I had grade 1 classes, so sometimes we'd sit under the apple tree and have fun or else go walking in the woods, pick apples. The children were greats [?]. They wanted to learn so much. Now, a lot of these families had come from Japanese communities, so the children didn't speak Ja- English. But that didn't seem to hinder them.

TY: So, you were teaching in which language?

PA: English only. We weren't allowed to use Japanese. But- and, you know, every morning, there would be half a dozen of my pupils waiting for me, to- to walk me to school. They were so cute.

TY: Do you know where any of your pupils are today?

PA: Yes, I was just talking to Mr. Yano. His brother was one of my students. In grade 1. Then, I found out a few years ago, he was a teacher in Humberside. Now he's retired. Now I feel old as ever! [chuckles]

TY: Are there any other students you can remember?

PA: Yes, there's David Nishioka. My son moved to Nanaimo, so I went to visit him. And not far from there, David had built himself a beautiful home. And he had worked for [unclear]. When times were great, he became a designer. So, he built his own home as well. And he had done well. Uh, Terakitas- I found out because Mickey Terakita's an Asahi baseball player. His daughter used to be in my grade 1 class, and she became a teacher. And I don't think I've run into any others.

TY: Now, you mentioned the Asahi baseball team.

PA: Yes.

TY: And they were actually famous before the war broke out.

PA: Yes.

TY: So where did they end up during the war?

PA: Well, they were, you know, disbanded like all the other Japanese. They had to go to road camp or to various evacuation centres. So, they were all split onto different places. But- uh, I think they were great leaders who are- children were, you know- required someone to look up to. Like, school wasn't ready, children didn't have anything to do. So, the Asahi players would get them to break ground, make a ball field, and get them started that way,

and that would keep them occupied. And of course, if they were to say they were Asahi players, they didn't have much trouble.

TY: And when did you leave Slokan?

PA: Uh, '46.

TY: And where did you go from there?

PA: Uh, oh no, not '46- '44 becau- '45 because my son was 6 months old then. And we went to a place called Stratton, Ontario. Which they told us was a resort area, which we found out was just a whistle stop. We arrived there 3 o'clock in the morning to an old house with no running water, and no lights, and they expected us to stay there. So, I guess, I sort of broke down because I had a 6-month-old baby. And so, they took us to a hotel for one night. But, next morning, we had to face it. There wasn't any place else we could go. So, there was another family with us, the Sakamotos. So, we ended up on this Dr. Browton's farm. And this Dr. Browton turned out to be a quack- he had lost his license, and uh, but anyways, he was running a cattle farm. So, my husband and Ted Sakamoto, they worked for him.

[00:25]

TY: And how long did you stay there?

PA: A year and a half. And then we parted company. And then we went to live with Dr. Browton in his house and my husband helped him farm. But Mrs. Browton started a fire. She was rushi- uh, was clearing the brush around the house and set the house on fire. So, everything burnt down. So had lost what little we had, so uh, we couldn't move too far from there. So, we worked for another year for this Dr. Browton and my husband helped cut pulp. And we lived in a little shack in the bushes. But as I was telling Peter [Wakayama], I put on a lot of weight. I don't know if it was to fight off the cold but [chuckles] it used to get below 30 degrees in wintertime.

TY: And that was still rural Ontario?

PA: Yes. But fortunately, our neighbours were very kind. They- there were the Kings, who are- who we used to visit, they'd invite us out. And uh, there were, another family- I forgot what their last name was. But the two daughters taught at [unclear] Francis, they were teachers. So, they would invite us over, and we enjoyed their company. But we were glad to get out of there. [chuckles]

TY: Then from there, where did you go?

PA: Then from there, like my parents had already arrived in Toronto. They had stayed with Sumis on Hayden. That's near Church Street, so it always reminds me of that when I pass by Church Street. But they had come, so we decided that it was time for us to move. We came to Toronto, and we stayed with Ken and Kay Nagata on in their house on Springdale. I think that's on King- King Street, I think it was.

TY: Now could you work at that time?

PA: No. My son was just about a year old- a year and a half. So, my husband started working at the [unclear]. They were Italians and they were about the only people that would hire

Japanese. Either them or the Jewish people. Eventually, we bought a house together. So, my mother looked after my son. And so, I went looking for work, and if I tell this to my children, they don't believe me, but I knocked on every door along Spadina, right up along Lakeshore, right up to Roncesvalles. They won't believe me, but I had to- [chuckles] I had to find work. Eventually, I ended up on Spadina. And, course, everything was power machine, I had never handled on before. But I said, "Oh sure, I know how to handle one" [nods] [chuckles] and uh, I started off at the shoe factory and stayed there for two weeks. I learned how to use it. Then I moved to a dress shop, the [Collins?], and they were wonderful people. So, I worked for them for a while until my first daughter was born. So-

TY: And how many children do you have?

PA: I have 4 altogether. My son and three daughters.

TY: And when were they born?

PA: Well, my son was born in Slocan and then my daughter was born 1950. And the other one was '58- '56 and '58, yes.

TY: And your husband, you said, was working for some Italians. What sort of work did he do?

PA: Well, at first it was to do with marble and tile. He worked for them for a while, and then there were two air force pilots. They were starting out a new business. And they would come to this Italian office to get supplies, and then they asked my husband if he would come and work for them. I don't know why they asked him, but his boss said, "go, because you'll have a better opportunity."

[00:30]

PA: Eventually, they were called [McNaughton?] and Brooks. Eventually, they became worldwide, and they sold franchise. My husband worked for them, making samples and training people. And then he went to practically every state, he went to Manchester, England. We even went to Japan. And they even offered to build him a house in Ann Arbor, Michigan. I was all ready to go, I had four kids but never mind, let's go [shifts body], you know, but he says, "No," he says, "Canada is the best place," he said. And just so, we never moved.

TY: [whispers] We'll take a break? Just gonna reposition because just as she turns this way, we get to shadowing.

PA: Oh, am I moving around? [chuckles]

Tak Yano: Gives you something to look at though.

TY: Uh, that's true.

Tak Yano: [unclear]

TY: That's true. That's true, you know, they were pretty picky at Densho about shadows and moving and stuff. But I think it's more natural if you do move around. [overlapping] It's difficult to speak and just stay in one spot, isn't it?

PA: Well I- I don't think so.

TY: Yeah. So-

PA: If you rather pre-, you know, I stay put. [chuckles]

TY: No, as long as you stay in the frame, you're fine. Yeah, so, I think we'll probably tell you if you move out of the frame. That's great. [overlapping]

PA: Moving around too much. [chuckles]

TY: So, as far as my notes are concerned though, is that we've gotten quite a bit through family, and through the war time, and I'm eventually gonna talk more about you know, when you travel with your husband a bit. And your work here in the Ca- Japanese Canadian community in Toronto. And obviously going to be asking you about your career- ask how you got back into write- got into writing and et cetera. But are there any other things that you would like to touch on?

PA: Well, I worked at the Bell for 19 years, yeah.

TY: Okay, so we'll- I've got that down.

PA: Yeah, and uh-

TY: But is there anything from the past in Vancouver or whatnot that we may have missed?

PA: I don't know, it wasn't that eventful. [chuckles]

TY: [chuckles] It's a long time ago, yeah.

PA: I guess so. [overlapping]

TY: Yeah, it's interesting.

PA: Mm-hm.

TY: Hm, okay, so-

PW: Jean Lumb was at Kwong Chow [referring to Kwong Chow Chinese restaurant] wasn't she?

PA: Pardon? [shifts body off frame]

PW: She was at Kwong Chow? No, Kowloon? Was it Kow- no, Kwong Chow wasn't-

[Camera cuts at 32:30]

PA: Italians?

Tak Yano: Yeah, and Jewish people.

TY: Yeah, it's very common. It's sort of a given, because they were going through the same thing.

Tak Yano: But, what about, what about the Jews?

PA: Why did the Italians hire Japanese?

TY: Mm.

Tak Yano: The Italians I can understand, but-

PA: Well, because they were enemies too, actually.

Tak Yano: With the Jews?

PA: But they were never forced into evacuation or anything, yeah.

TY: The Jews, our family had experience with too. They were the only people that would hire my father. 'Cause they knew what persecution was all about.

PW: 'Cause they were a minority. [overlapping]

PA: They've been through all that. [nods]

TY: Yeah.

PA: There was a little Italian lady-

TY: Oh yeah, we want to get into that, so we'll save that story.

Tak Yano: [Unclear].

TY: Oh, okay.

PA: Can I move this thing?

Tak Yano: Yeah, that's fine.

TY: Okay, we'll just leave it there. Lost our technician there for a minute.

PA: Okay.

TY: So, when you were on Powell Street, I think you were younger- quite a bit younger than my father was, but my father was on Powell Street as well. Cordova, actually.

PA: Really?

TY: Yeah, we went back to visit, and the house is no longer there. It's now this wide intersection, where the house used to be, but the park is still there, the two bath houses are still there.

PA: Oh really?

TY: The hotel is still there, the one on [unclear]. And-

PA: On Powell Street?

TY: Uh, on Cordov- yeah, on Powell Street. And the Japanese Language School is still there, and it's bigger now. [overlapping] They've, they've enlarged it quite a bit.

PA: Oh yeah. Uh-huh. I was there, not this year, but last year. CBC wanted to do an interview. And so, they took us out to- You know, they wanted me to do it at Powell Grounds.

[overlapping]

TY: Right.

PA: But it's full of addicts.

TY: Yeah, it's not a very nice place.

PA: No. So, we went to the Japanese School to do it. [overlapping]

TY: Oh, okay.

PA: But afterwards, we drove back to Powell Street, and everything's boarded up, eh.

TY: Yeah, it's- it's not, it's crack houses now, it's really awful.

PA: It's a real mess. And the following day, they interviewed Kaye Kaminishi, and they took him out to Powell Grounds. And he said there was one Japanese. He was an addict too. He says, "What are you guys doing here? This is our place."

[00:35]

TY: Hm.

PA: You know, they didn't want them to be coming around and yeah. [nods]

TY: With cameras and such.

PA: No.

TY: Yeah.

PA: So, I was amazed how beautiful it looked when they had the Powell Street Festival!

PW: Yeah, because only when Powell Street Festival is on, they clean it all up. [overlapping]

PA: Yeah! [nods] I know. [overlapping]

TY: Yeah, that's too bad.

PW: The rest of the time it's terrible.

TY: Now, have you ever been to the New Denver Museum?

PA: I was there a while, way back when they were just building it, I think, you know.

TY: [sentence redacted]

PA: Oh, is that so? No. [shakes head]

TY: He's quite a character, so yeah.

PA: Mm-hm.

TY: And it's interesting how they maintained a few of those shacks, exactly how they were, with the tar paper or the newspaper insulation, and-

PA: Oh, yes, uh-huh. Yes. Well, when Mr. Goto came, you know, he's from Japan, he took the film about the Asahis- he did [unclear] there. And, you know, showed the house and that. I was supposed to go when they had the official opening. But as I was telling Peter, it seemed I'd have to find my way out there from Vancouver, you know. So, yeah-

TY: It's in the middle of nowhere.

PA: I know. [nods]

PW: Well yeah, it's in the middle of the Kootenays.

PA: [chuckles]

TY: I wouldn't- I would've never have been there if it wasn't there for work.

PA: Oh, did you go there?

TY: I was visiting some golf courses in the area.

PA: Oh, is that so. Is that what you do?

TY: Mm-hm.

PA: Oh, my daughter would be really interested in you. [chuckles]

TY: [Chuckles] Yeah, no. Well, my father was a great golfer. He was very much into that. He was the photographer in the community, Sam Yamada? I don't know whether you knew him.

PA: Sam? Oh, I'm very sorry we lost him, yeah.

TY: Yup, well he was- So, you got into bowling at one point, didn't you?

PA: Yes, I enjoy everything. [chuckles] I even did lawn bowling.

TY: Yeah, that's great. That was his final sport. He started getting into the senior's bowling at O'Connor bowl and that, and he still did golfing, right 'til the end.

PA: Well, he had such wonderful stories, you know. That- when he first came and joined the Wynford Seniors, he'd tell us stories and we'd all sit around and listen to him, never mind anythi- anything else.

TY: Well, he likes an audience. [chuckles]

PA: Yeah. [chuckles] [unclear] was such a lovely lady.

TY: Yeah, well.

PA: All too soon.

TY: Well, trying to preserve some of the stories.

PA: I hope so, yeah.

TY: Yeah, that's the whole point of this project. So that's good.

PA: [nods] Did they get his picture?

TY: Uh–

PA: He was- said he was supposed to go out that morning to get a portrait taken?

TY: Oh, I don't know about that.

PA: Oh.

PW No, you know what that story is about?

PA: What? [shifts body off frame]

PW: There was a young photographer that he met at Hamilton Art Show.

PA: Mm-hm.

PW: And uh, Sid he wanted this young sansei, or maybe it was a yonsei, to meet Sam because he was a photographer.

PA: Oh, I see. [overlapping]

TY: I see.

PW: And so, they were going to have an arrangement, that your dad [referring to Sam Yamada] and this young photographer was going to meet. And uh, and that was, not– and everybody, I think everybody had this wrong impression about what this meeting was about.

TY: Oh gosh. [overlapping]

PA: We figured it was part of this. [overlapping]

PW: Oh no, it wasn't. It was just that this photographer, it was a young guy, and he does some beautiful photography 'cause I've seen some of it– [overlapping]

PA: Is that so, uh-huh.

PW: You know, the Kimiko, you know who lives in Burlington who does these little dolls?

PA: Oh yes, Koyanagi? [nods]

PW: And he was taking some photographs of those and they're just absolutely gorgeous [overlapping] and he wanted- Sid, of course wants, you know- "Here's a photographer! I know a photographer!" [unclear] Sam Yamada.

PA: Oh. [chuckles]

TY: Yeah. Well probably is just as well as they did. 'Cause my father, after he finished photography, he wanted nothing to do with it.

PA: Is that so?

TY: Yeah, it was really interesting. A lot of people would say, "Oh! you're Sam Yamada, you were the photographer of Vancouver–" he says, "Yeah, yeah," and then they say, 'Well uh, would you be interested–' and he's like, "No," [chuckles] "Not at all!" [overlapping]

PA: Oh, is that so? [overlapping]

TY: Yeah, that's finished now.

PA: We all brought our pictures that he had taken. [chuckles] Yeah, he went to, it was sculpturing.

TY: Yes, yeah. I think the funniest thing is when we took my nieces and my brother out to Vancouver, while he– while Dad was still alive, to show the places. We went to visit the senior's home that was paid for with the redress money– beautiful facility, and they have a nice little restaurant in the first floor as you walk in. [overlapping]

PA: Yeah. [overlapping]

TY: So, my dad walks into the middle of the restaurant and just stands there and looks around– I said, "What are you doing?" He says, "Someone's gonna recognize me! I was the photographer! For how many years, someone's gonna recognize me!" And I look around and there's all these little old ladies– I don't even know if they could even see past here! [chuckles] That guy had such an ego.

[00:40]

PA: Well, he was a lot of fun. [chuckles]

TY: Oh man, it's funny.

[very soft audio, unclear]

TY: Yeah, I'm not sure either.

PA: Maybe I scared him away. [chuckles]

[sound checking]

PA: Well, you'll have to edit that one. [chuckles]

TY: Yeah, okay, well, let's resume then. Uh, okay, let's see. 'Kay, just going back to what your husband was doing while he was working with the Italians. Did he learn any other languages?

PA: Well, he learned Italian very well. Yeah, he learned it better than Japanese. [chuckles] But it so happened that there was a little Italian lady who lived behind us. And every night, she'd wait for him to come home so that you know, she could talk to him. And they'd get along so well. I don't know what happened to her after we moved, but that was something, you know, he gave her pleasure and she'd always be giving us tomatoes or some kind of fruit that she had grown. That was a lovely time.

TY: Now, you all went to Japanese school, but he didn't learn Japanese?

PA: Myself?

TY: You did, but your husband? [overlapping]

PA: My husband? [overlapping] No, well, he lived near Campbell River, as a child. He grew up there. So, there were no schools there, you know. But oh, I'm sure he could understand when spoken to, but never heard of him say anything in Japanese.

TY: So, when his work took him to Japan, were you with him at the time?

PA: Well, I was supposed to go as an interpreter. But [chuckles] as it's happened that most of them spoke English very well because they had a job– done a lot of travelling. Besides, after a few drinks, you know, you're all friends anyways. [chuckles]

TY: So, any other places that you've travelled to that you can remember?

PA: Yes. We went to San Diego. That was a conference, and that was lovely. And- Oh no, that was Key West, we went to for a conference. We went to San Diego, and he worked there. And then we were supposed to go to Arizona. But that was cancelled, which was quite a disappointment. And, well I guess we went with a group of friends to Hawaii, and that was a great experience. And I guess we went to LA, Las Vegas. That was okay for a day. [chuckles]

TY: So, that business trip to Japan was that only time that you went to Japan?

PA: Yes, I've never been back. [nods]

TY: Now, are you part of a Japanese Canadian community here in Toronto or are you very active?

PA: Well, I have been. Like when the Centre started. My husband worked with them, and, he was, you know, when they were first starting, and he'd always be talking about George Tanaka. For some reason, he was very impressed with him. And, my husband's not one to make friends easily, but that impressed him a great deal.

TY: And you became involved in the community as well? [overlapping]

PA: Yes. Well, my parents said the Centre was doing so much for the isseis, so I thought well, we better get involved. And, eventually, I became person of the WA [Women's Auxiliary]. I never had much to do with Womens' Club, and I'm no cook at all, but I got involved anyways and- So, we thought, well, let's do something different. I can't be always talking about recipes, you know. So, we started a- We had a fashion show. In those days, all the mothers sew, you see, so we had children's fashion show, clothes that the mothers had made. It went off pretty good. And then, we had a card night. That was the beginning of the bridge club. And then- oh, we went uh- we were asked by the art gallery to come and help out. So, we were there for about a couple weeks as guides. And I thought that was a wonderful experience. But they were invited back the following year, but the new president wasn't interested, so sort of lost contact there. But- and then after that, I was invited to the board, and I was on the board for about three years. And because I worked across the road, so I worked at the Bell down here, so it was too easy to come and go. [chuckles] But we got quite involved at the Centre through the Bell. And uh, one Bazaar time, my boss said, "Why don't you just put up a stand and recruit people?" And I said, "Oh okay." And so that's how we got Marie Kera [?], and Dorine Noyagi [?], and a few other Japanese girls.

[00:45]

TY: And where did you set up the stand?

PA: Just outside of the Bazaar entrance, and a couple of girls came with me, and it was quite interesting. Never thought about it, but after that, Bell would rent the parking spots for the, you know, their workers because there wasn't enough room for us. And uh- so we got quite involved with the Centre. And when my boss retired, we were gonna have a party there, so he said, "You take care of it." So, I hired a belly dancer. [chuckles] And had her train our

managers, there were eight women managers. So, they became his harem, and they learned a few steps dressed in saris and it went on pretty good.

TY: So that was quite a career you had at the Bell. That was the Bell on Wynford.

PA: Yes, that's right. Uh-huh.

TY: And after you left Bell Canada, where did you go?

PA: Well, I retired in '84. My boss said, "Don't quit yet, you know, even if you become 65, we'll fight the government and stay here," you know. But my husband wasn't well, my parents were getting on, and my father was calling me every day because he didn't know what to do with my mother. And so, I thought, well something's gotta give, you know, so. I decided to quit. They gave me a wonderful party at Fantasy Farms, and it was a good send off. But it was time to go.

TY: Any other careers after?

PA: Well, [chuckles] I don't know if you can call it a career, but you know, I can't sit still too long. But I couldn't leave home because my parents needed me, so I had to think of something to do, so I racked my brains and thought and thought, but you know, I'm not that good at anything. And then I saw these beautiful silk flowers one day and I thought, this is what I'm going to do. So, but trying to get into the business, no one would tell you how to go about it and you couldn't find out a place to get the supplies from. I think I walked all along Yonge Street going into every flower shop, and there was one Korean store, and this lady told me, "You go out to Dixie, above Eglinton, and there's a whole, two streets full of shops that you can purchase your flowers from." That's how I got started.

TY: So, these were silk flower arrangements?

PA: Mm-hm. And I had taken Japanese flower arrangement. So, it fitted in very well because it was something nobody else was doing. And to me, it seemed such a waste to spend so much money, you know, arranging flowers, and in a few days it's gone. So, it- that worked out okay.

TY: So how did you ever get into your writing career?

[00:50]

PA: [chuckles] That's another story. [chuckles] Well, after that, after the flowers- Well, my husband and I didn't, you know, it was getting too much to be carrying things around. So, I looked for something to do, and about that time, I had been doing my own income tax. But uh, with my fa- husband's dad, and my business and everything, I thought I should give it to an accountant. Well, he made a terrible mess, and I had to pay 4000 dollars. And I thought, it's wrong because I know I put in enough RRSP to cover all this, you know. He wouldn't answer my phone calls. I was awfully mad anyways, so I thought well, I'm gonna get it back. So, I went to work for H&R Block, learned the system- Well, I had been doing you know, income tax all along, but trying to get your money back is something else. But the supervisor was great. She got my money back for me, and more from the previous year. So that worked out fine. Then I worked there for a couple of years. And then, I had my own

time for a change. [chuckles] But, oh what was I gonna do now. So, I went to U of T [University of Toronto] to study Japanese all over again. My Japanese was old fashioned now, so I went there for about two and a half years. And you know, surprising thing about that was there were so many Chinese pupils. There were, I guess about 85% Chinese. They said they were required to learn it because if they go back home, and if they were getting into a *Nikkan* business, they had to speak Japanese. So, and well I went there, but my Japanese didn't get any better. And so, [chuckles] I decided to go- I went to George Brown to take a writing course. I wasn't dreaming of writing any book or anything, you know, it was just something to do. And oh, it was okay, but you know how classes are. You write it, you critique it, take it home, re-write it again, and do it over again, and all of this is getting boring. So, I thought, to heck with this. And I guess it was about that time Roy Yamamura passed away, and I saw the write up. And I thought, it's a shame you know, these fellas, they've done so much, and they might write it in the newspaper, but it's gone the next day. TY: And he was one of the original Asahi baseball players.

PA: Yes. Mm-hm. And I guess that's where the idea came, and so I asked the boys because I knew quite a few of them, and they said, "Sure go ahead, we'll help you." You know, what was a woman writing about baseball. But, in a way, they were all willing. So, we met at- What's his name? Kitagawa, Eddie Kitagawa's house. And he was a wealth of information, he was one of the older boys. But he had so many pictures and stories to tell, and we'd sit around and listen to him, you know. And I'd go home and write it up and then about a month later, I'd bring it back and ask the boys to read it and tell me if there was any corrections to be made. And this went on for a while. And I was having a great time, but I thought, "Gee, what are these wives thinking about me, you know, taking up their time?" So, I thought I better be doing something about that. So, I decided that maybe once a month, we'd ask everybody to come. There were a lot of widows, and the wives came, and they looked forward to it. And so, about that time, New Horizon- it was a government sponsored group, and they would give us funds to, you know, run a senior's group. And so, that helped pay for some of the expenses. And then, also, Connie Sugiyama went to bat for me, and I got money from redress. So, that's how my book got started.

TY: So how long did this process take when you first had the idea to getting a published book?

PA: Well, it took about a year. But I was lucky, you know, because we advertised in the newspaper, asking people to send in material. Anything they had or pictures or whatever, and it just came flooding in. They said, "Why didn't you do this ten years sooner?" [chuckles] You know, but they were waiting for something, and they didn't want to forget them. Surprisingly, you know, when we left home, we could only carry a couple of suitcases. And yet, amongst all that, they had brought these things with them. So, that's how much it meant to them. And so that's how I got started.

[00:55]

TY: And how old were you when you wrote the book?

PA: Pardon?

TY: How old were you?

PA: [chuckles] That was 1992, I was 72.

TY: That's not bad for a what, 5th career? [chuckles]

PA: [chuckles] Well, I don't know, I just finished a book. I'm 84.

TY: So, there was a follow up book?

PA: Yes, I just finished it.

TY: And what was that about?

PA: It's the sequel to it because they became inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, and I sort of wanted to finish it and I wanted to leave it for the youngsters that are coming up. So, but, anyways-

TY: Do you have any other projects up your sleeve?

PA: No. [chuckles] Time to retire. But we wrote a book about the teachers' experience, teaching in Canadian exile. It took us 11 years to write that one.

TY: Wow.

PA: Yeah, well, we spent so much time talking and eating, you know, [chuckles] that we didn't get much writing done.

TY: During the time when you were researching for your Asahi book, the original one, you said you were able to get funding because you started a senior's group. Did they keep that senior's group going?

PA: Well, that was just for- we called it the Asahi organization, and that was just during the time we did the-

Tak Yano: I think I'm-

PW: Running out of film?

Tak Yano: There's this film with a slash through it.

PW: [overlapping] It's about an hour so it's probably coming to the end, so we'll have to replace it with another film.

TY: Yeah, well, we're pretty much at the end of the interview. But we should just check to see if we got it all. Could you just back it up a bit to see what the last couple of frames are? Rewind it? Just make sure we got everything?

[57:18]

[background audio, checking film]

[Interview ends]