

**Interviewee: Roy Takumi Honda  
(with appearance by Kay Honda)  
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SEDAI   
PROJECT

THE JAPANESE CANADIAN LEGACY PROJECT

**[Start part 1]**

Lisa Uyeda: Okay. Can you tell us your first name, please?

Roy Honda: Roy.

LU: And do you have a Japanese first name?

RH: Yeah. Takumi.

LU: Takumi? Oh. And can you start off by telling us where and when you were born?

RH: I was born in White Rock in 1922.

LU: In British Columbia?

RH: In British Columbia, yes. That's – that's just south of Van – of Vancouver, and it's right at, at the bor – border of Washington.

LU: Mm-hmm. And do you want to tell us a little bit about how your family came to Canada, and where they came from?

RH: Well, my – my parents, they both come from Hiroshima and they were both born in Hiroshima. And – they – my dad said he came to, to Canada because he, he didn't want to do farming in Japan, and he said he wanted to get away from that, so he came first and then – then he brought, you know, then he called my – Mother over, or my – my mother over, and got married by, you know, picture bride, I guess.

LU: Oh, and do you know if they were friends before they got married? Back in Hiroshima?

RH: Yes. They, they knew each other back home. Yes, in Japan, in Hiroshima, yes.

LU: Is your father an only child, or is he youngest?

RH: No, no, he –

LU: How many siblings?

RH: No, he's – he had another – I know at least another brother, and I – he didn't say too much, but he said he was in – I think he was in Hawaii.

LU: Oh, wow. Mm-hmm.

RH: And apparently there's a lot of Japanese in Hawaii, so – you know, from Hiroshima there.

LU: Yes, there are. So what did your father do when he first came to Canada?

RH: When he first came to Canada, he worked with – was working in a – there was a Japanese store on – I believe it was on Cordova, and he worked – he worked as a – I think it was a handyman and he said he drove, drove a truck then, and he said, he said – it was an old car, and it was you know, they didn't have things – shifting and things like, you know, the pedals were [indistinct] – driving by pedal or you know, shifting with pedals and things like that. So you know, I – I guess it's, it's a lot different to what they are now.

LU: When your parents came, and they started to establish their family – do you want to tell us about the children that they had? How many brothers and sisters do you have?

RH: Well, they – they start working in – in a sawmill in White Rock, and White Rock is – as I was saying, it was – it's south of Vancouver, and it's right at the border of – going into Washington, at the – Blaine, Washington. And this was a company sawmill that had – they, they hired a lot of Japanese, and they made – built – they owned – own Japanese part of the – they built houses for the married people, and bunkhouses for the single people, and you know, they – they fed them and everything. Like the camp house, regular camp house.

And they worked there 'til – well, that's when we were born. I was born in 1922 and my brother Mitsuo was born before me. He was born in 1919, and after me, there was – my – I had a sister, she was born in 1927, and – and I – the – my youngest brother was born in 1929, I believe it was. Oh, actually, I had another – another brother, older brother, that was – well, he was born in Japan, I guess, when they were – when my parents was – apparently there – they went there, in Japan – I guess they were married in Japan, so he, he was born in Japan, and they left him there with the grandparents, and he came over a lot later. But he was about, maybe 14 years older than I am, and he passed away quite early. He was working, also in a sawmill, and after – let's see now, what – having a hard time remembering all these things.

In 1927, and during the big Depression, this sawmill in White Rock – it was called the Semiahmoo Sawmill, I believe it was. They, they went bankrupt and so all, all the Japanese people had to scatter. Some of them, you know, they, they had to leave the place. A lot of them went to farming in, in Surrey, and in that areas. Mission, and all, you know, that area and then some went to work in sawmills, which my dad did. He worked – went to work in a sawmill, and there was only 5 families left in White Rock after, after all the other Japanese people dispersed, and so – we, we – we went to public school in White Rock, and then went to high school in a place called Cloverdale, and this was also in Surrey and it was – I think it was 9 or 10 miles away. We went by bus every day, and I only went to grade 11, and then had to go work to help the family, because my dad was out working in a sawmill and my mother was home with the – with my other sister and brother, and I worked in a place called Englewood for about a year, year and a half. It's – it's about three-quarters of the way up the Vancouver Island. It was a sawmill, and it was in a – it was in an isolated town, and there was – there wasn't anything to do there, because that's all there was, was a little sawmill there. And I walked – like I said, I worked there about a year or a year and a half.

LU: How old were you at that time?

RH: I was only 17 years old.

LU: Oh, wow.

RH: Yeah, and then I worked – like I said, I worked there about a year, or year and a half, and then, then I – my other brother, next brother, was working at, at a place called Woodfibre. And so he, he called me down there, because it was – work was getting kind of slow at, at this Englewood, and so I went to work at Woodfibre. This

was just before the war, now, and when – when – I worked there, I guess, I don't know, about another year or so there, and – and then the war started.

LU: Before we talk about the war, why don't you tell us a little bit about what it was like to work in the sawmills? Like, for somebody who has no idea, you know, what goes on, on there. What kind of jobs would you have to do, or –

RH: Well –

LU: What was it like?

RH: When, when – when we first started, it was a – what they call a green chain. All, all the lumber, lumber came down on this conveyor, and, and you had – there – there were all different sized lumber, and we had to sort it out, and it – it was really hard work, 'cause in the morning your, you fingers were all, all – well, you know, like you can hardly straighten your fingers out – fingers out, first thing in the morning because you're pulling all these lumber out all day long. And we worked – we worked there for – I think it was – when we first started, it was 40 cents an hour, and this, this was in a Japanese camp. It was all Japanese. We ate, ate and slept and worked there, and there was another, another bunkhouse that – it housed the – it housed the, the English people, the white people, and they were getting 45 cents an hour. And you know, we were doing the same work, side by side, but they'd be getting 5 cents more than we were.

LU: Oh.

RH: So you know, I didn't think that was very good, but you know, it was hard to get a job so we had – couldn't be picky. People were just, you know, happy to be working. So, so this was – this, this was – well, this was before the war so [indistinct] – then I went – we went – or I went to Woodfibre to work there, and that, that was another, well, kind of tough job, too, because they make pulp, pulp there. And yeah, yeah, you had to – I'm trying to think of what I was doing there now. Did – they – take the bark off – bark off the trees, and they were coming off on a, on a conveyor and some bark are left, so we had to chop it off with an axe, and so that, that was another hard work. So this, this what I did before the war.

LU: What would they use the pulp for?

RH: Well, they made the paper.

LU: Oh.

RH: Yep. Made, made from these trees and they take all, all the bark off, and then, and then – and then they's all ground up into little small chips, and they got – they have chemicals on there. There's a lot – used a lot of lime and stuff like that, because if they – they had mounds of lime sitting outside. So you know, it must have been a lot of pollution there, in the – in the old days, they didn't have – know anything about pollution. So that, that – that – you know, that was – must have been hard breathing through all that stuff.

LU: Oh, yeah. Were there a lot of Japanese people in the sawmills –

RH: Yeah, yeah. Yes, they had – yes.

LU: Versus English?

RH: That's another place that had a lot of Japanese in it.

LU: Oh, wow.

RH: Single and married. Married people had their own apartments, and all – these are all owned by the company, though. Company homes, and single people lived in these camps and they'd, they're bunked and they ate at the mess hall.

LU: So you mentioned before, when you were growing up, that the sawmill that your father was working at, when he – it went bankrupt. So they didn't have to move out of the home right away? They were allowed to stay there for a little while?

RH: Well, no. They, they – no, they had to move – well, they didn't have to, but there's nothing to do. They, they – you know, they had to live so they had to move out.

LU: Oh, wow.

RH: They had to do something. That's why they all went out to move to – to sawmills or, or went farming, or some went fishing.

LU: And when your older brother came from Japan – how old was he? When he first came to Canada.

RH: I – I'm not exactly sure, because he, he's – he's like an uncle to me. I, I didn't even see him at home, you see, because he was quite grown up by the time – by the – he came to Canada. So, so I, I would say he was in his teens, late teens, you know.

Because he was also working in Woodfibre.

LU: Oh, was he?

RH: Yes.

LU: Oh. And do you know what he was doing back home in Hiroshima? Was he working at the farms?

RH: No, he – he wasn't working yet. He wasn't quite old enough to be working yet, yeah.

LU: And then you also had a sister, and a younger brother?

RH: Yes. They, they were both at home and at White Rock, and they were still going to school before the war, so.

LU: What do you remember about going to school when you were younger? You took a bus to go to school. Do you remember the name of the school that you went to?

RH: Well, the high school was called Surrey High School in Cloverdale, and the public school was – I believe it was Semiahmoo High School – Semiahmoo Public School, that could – Semiahmoo is the – was the – it's the – the water, at the bay, and that's where White Rock is situated.

LU: Oh. Were there a lot of other Japanese students at the public school and high school with you, or –

RH: No, it's just – it was just the 5 families.

LU: Yeah.

RH: Yeah. Mm-hmm. So they weren't that, that – there weren't too many, no.

LU: So what kind of activities would you do on weekends, when you weren't going to school?

RH: Well, mostly – we did a lot of fishing, because there's a small little – small river there they call – Powell River, they call it, and we used to catch frogs and things like that. And we, we spent all our summer practically down at the beach because it was, it was a nice beach there.

LU: Where did you learn how to swim?

RH: Well, we were right at the water there, so that's where we learned.

LU: Just by jumping in?

RH: Yes.

LU: No swimming lessons?

RH: No, no. Just learned on your own, yeah. Yeah.

LU: Oh, wow. And so there's only 5 families, so you didn't have Japanese school?

RH: No, didn't have Japanese school so no, I couldn't – I couldn't write. I can – I could talk a little bit because our parents would talk to us in Japanese. That's the only way I know – I knew how to speak Japanese.

LU: Did they ever try to learn English, as well?

RH: I don't – not really, no. Not really. So they, they have a hard time conversing. Well, Dad could understand quite a bit, you know, but he couldn't speak that much English, no.

LU: And what about high school, when you got a little bit older? Would you still be going down and fishing and swimming, or did you play any activities or sports?

RH: Well, the only – we had a lot of lacrosse there, because B.C., it was known for lacrosse there. So we played lacrosse and a little bit of baseball. Otherwise, we didn't have too much other activities and sports.

LU: And what would you do to celebrate New Year's or birthdays or holidays?

RH: Well –

LU: Do you remember doing anything?

RH: Not, not – we – I don't remember doing too much at New Year's and things like that, because, you know, it's just – I remember when, when the sawmill was there, there – the, you know, all the – all the men used to go around to different houses so they, so they'd be eating and drinking, you know, but when it's only 5 families, we really didn't celebrate that much. Well, even at Christmas, you know, we're very poor and you don't – you know, you don't get – you don't get, really get a present, even for Christmas, because of – you can't afford it. Don't have any money.

LU: I think you mentioned before that your parents were Buddhists.

RH: They, they were Buddhists, yes, from Japan. Yep.

LU: And did you ever practice it when you were younger as well?

RH: Not – not really, no. No. When – after the – during the war, like, my parents were sent to Tashme relocation camp, and they – they had some – but they didn't practice Buddhist, because there was no Buddhist people around there, so they became –

LU: Christian?

RH: They became Christians, yeah, because there, there was some, some – what do you call it? I keep, I keep forgetting the name.

LU: Nuns? Not nuns.

RH: No, not nuns.

LU: Oh. Well, I can't remember the name, either. [laughter]

RH: Well, you know these people – they're not – they're not ministers, but you know, they go around to different places and –

LU: Not missionaries?

RH: Missionaries, yeah. There was a –

LU: Okay, missionaries.

RH: Missionaries. So – And there – there was Anglican missionaries, so – and so they became Anglicans, you know, while in Tashme.

LU: Oh, okay.

RH: So they – but you know, it's – they're – they're Anglican, but they still practice Buddhism, because, you know, they celebrate and put the – you know, oranges and apples and bananas, things you know – they pile them up in a kind of a triangle type of thing to – when they celebrate something.

LU: Oh.

RH: Yeah.

LU: Oh, wow. What do you remember about the community, when you were growing up? And like, I know there wasn't very – very many Japanese Canadians around with you, so did you – what were your feelings about, you know, kind of feeling a little left out, that – that you're a little – little different from everyone else, 'cause – than the non-Japanese.

RH: Well, when we were kids – I don't know, I didn't feel very much. You know, I didn't – I – you know, we're – we weren't as discriminated against or anything like that. I think we – we thought we were just treated normally, you know. Just that – you know, seems like we – we were poor. That, you know, that we couldn't afford a lot of things that, you know, other people bought, but that's – I guess that's – that's about – that's about all I can think of.

LU: I've heard stories before about some people – they would have school friends, and as soon as they went to their friend's houses after school to play, the next day they'd come and say, well my parents don't want me to play with you anymore. Did you ever experience anything like that?

RH: No, I – I've never had any of that, no. We didn't – we didn't have any discrimination like that, no.

LU: Oh, wow. Yeah. So when the war started – where were you when you remember hearing about Pearl Harbour?

RH: Well, I – I was out working at Woodfibre. And it was – it was right after that they, they – they took – took us out of Woodfibre and put us on these freight trains, and evacuated us and send us to road camp.

LU: So did you hear about it on the news, or in the newspaper, radio, before they came and – and came and found you?

RH: No, I – I think it was on the radio, yes. Yeah.

LU: Yeah. What was everyone's reaction, around you, before you – the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] came and found you?

RH: Well, we were surprised because, you know, we were Canadian-born. We didn't think that they would be hauling us out of there, but they did come and haul us out, yes.

LU: Yeah. What about the, the non-Japanese people who were working at Woodfibre as well? Did they – were you ever worried for you as well?

RH: No, no – no, they didn't – about what? Really weren't – they weren't – we didn't really chum around with hakujin that much, anyway, so – you know – in fact, we hardly talked to the hakujin because they – we didn't work – do the same type of work as them, you see, and so we wouldn't be in contact with them.

LU: Oh.

RH: Yeah, 'cause mostly – it was mostly Japanese who'd be doing the manual labour, you see.

LU: Mm-hmm. So what was it like for them to come and contact you? Did they give you a piece of paper first, or did they just say, "You, come with me." Or – what, what did they do?

RH: You know, that – that I can't – I can't – can't remember what happened there.

LU: How long was the trip to go from – when they picked you up, and when they took you? Where – so – you went to the road camp?

RH: Yeah, I went to a place called Taft. It's near Revelstoke, you know, up by – up by – well, I don't know where it is. Probably a couple of hundred miles up, yes. So I, I stayed there about a year, or year and a half.

LU: And what were you doing in the road camp?

RH: We were building the Trans-Canada Highway. It's – it was – yeah. We were getting 25 cents an hour pay, and they, they were taking – I think it was 75, 75 cents a day or something off for food and – food and lodging.

LU: Oh, wow.

RH: Yeah. So you didn't make much money, but we didn't do much work, either, though.

LU: So what were you doing to help build the, the Trans-Canada Highway?

RH: Well, you see, they had these trucks with bulldozers and things like that, but we were helping – man – I don't know. Let's see – helping the truckers, and helping the people with bulldozers, like that and – we, you know – when we were in these camps, now, we couldn't have any – there were some guards there, so – and we couldn't have any, you know, guns or things like that. But it's a funny thing, that – I was – when I was working on the camp, one of the – one of the guys taught me how to use dynamite.

LU: Oh. [laughter]

RH: Yeah! Isn't that a funny thing, though? You know, we can't use – have guns, but he taught me how to use dynamite, because there was too – so many rocks along there. Taught me how to drill holes in these, in these stones, and he showed me how to dynamite.

LU: Oh, wow.

RH: Yeah. Because they do – did – they did a lot of dynamiting because it was – you know, it was rocky, they'd have to dy – break it up and dynamite it and then bulldoze it. And – and these road camps, there was – I believe there was 5 camps along the way there, around Revelstoke there, and weekends, we got together and we, you know, we played baseball against each other and things like that. And played a little bit of hockey, but not too much hockey. A lot of baseball, though.

LU: So you only worked Monday through Friday?

RH: Yes, I think that's what it was.

LU: And what were the living arrangements like?

RH: Well, we were all sleeping in double bunks and – I can't remember how many there were, but when we – when we first got there, there was no bath, so you'd have to bath in a – in a little stream at the back, and it was probably around freezing there, and that was pretty cold. But later on they built a Japanese bath and there was

a lot of – I think it was Swedish people around there, so – so they made, made a Swedish sauna there.

LU: Oh, yeah.

RH: Yeah. And the food, it was – it was regular. Yeah. You know, Canadian food. Food was – food wasn't bad.

LU: Is it like egg and toast and oatmeal?

RH: That's right, yeah. Yeah.

LU: Potatoes.

RH: Yeah. Regular Canadian food, yeah.

LU: What about like, chicken and beef? Did you have that as well, or do you –

RH: Yes, we had some. Not that much, but we still had some, yes. So food – wasn't too bad, yeah.

LU: So when they came and they picked you up from the – Woodfibre and took you to the work camp, were you allowed to pack anything to go with you?

RH: No, just – just my clothes and personal belongings, that's all.

LU: Oh. So just like, a small suitcase?

RH: Yeah, just a – just a suitcase, yeah.

LU: Did they provide you with any clothes when you got there?

RH: No, no. No, they didn't provide – no, they didn't give us anything. Everything we bought – well, in those days, well, we bought it by mail or from Eaton's.

LU: Oh yeah?

RH: Yeah, I think it was from Eaton's. I think the head office was Winnipeg, I believe. But we could order anything that we wanted, yeah. And we'd get a pass to go to Revelstoke. You know, they had a movie there and anything incidentals that you wanted, but you'd have to get a pass to go there.

LU: Who would you get the pass from?

RH: Well, from the – from the security guard there at the camp.

LU: Oh. Do you remember how many security guards there were?

RH: Oh, there weren't too many. There was only 2 or 3, I believe. You know, they'd take turns and they'd – so on, but I think there was only 2 or 3 there, I believe.

LU: How many Japanese Canadians were in the camps? [indistinct] Or at least in yours, anyways? Roughly?

RH: Gee, I can't remember but I, I don't know. Maybe 140, 150 in each camp, but – Yeah, but you know, like I said, there was – I think there was 5 camps or something.

LU: That's a lot. 140 for, you know, 1 or 2 guards.

RH: Yeah, yeah. I believe that's what it was. I'm – I'm just guessing mind you, now, you know?

LU: Oh, yeah.

RH: My memory's not very good now, you know? I'm getting pretty old here.

[laughter]

LU: And what kind of movies do you remember going and watching? When you were going to the movies?

RH: I, I – I can't – I can't remember any movies.

LU: Were they Japanese movies? Or –

RH: No, no, no. No Japanese movies.

LU: Canadian ones?



RH: Mm-hmm. I mean, radio – we used to listen to radio a lot, in the camp, because we had our, had our radios, you know, but – so we listened to all these war time, big band music and things like that. That was about the biggest entertainment we had.

LU: Were you ever able to go watch the Asahi baseball team, before the war started?

RH: No, no, I didn't.

LU: Probably too far from –

RH: Yes.

LU: Yeah. Oh, wow. What else do you remember at the – the road camps? You were in Taft for a year, you said?

RH: Year, or a year and a half, and then – then I went to another camp. I believe it was the 11 Mile camp, now. It's near – near Tashme, because my parents were down there and they, they let me go down there. And so I went down there and it was a similar type of camp. And you know, arrangements were pretty near the same as in Taft, and – but it was only – I believe it was only – maybe 2, 3 miles from Tashme.

So weekends, we'd go up to Tashme and we'd, you know, visit with our parents and family that were living in Tashme, and we used to have our own baseball team, so, you know, we'd play against the teams in Tashme. Tashme had about – I believe it was about 3 or 4 teams, and – it was about 5 teams all together, I think, and we used to play baseball every weekend.

LU: Oh, wow.

RH: Yeah.

LU: When you were in the road camp in Taft, did you have very much correspondence with your family? Did they know where you were at first?

RH: No, they didn't know where we were, no.

LU: Oh, wow.

RH: Yeah.

LU: So did you have any communication with them, the whole time you were there, or were you able to eventually write them a letter?

RH: Well, yes, that's – eventually we were able to write them a letter, yes. That was [pretty much] the only way. They probably didn't know that – where – where we were, either.

LU: They would probably be pretty upset not knowing where –

RH: I, I would think so.

LU: You went to.

RH: Yeah, I would think so. Yeah. Yeah.

LU: Because you were only 18, at the time.

RH: Yes, I was just – yeah, just turned 18 at the time, so –

LU: So when you moved closer down to Tashme, did they know you were switching camps and going closer? Or –

RH: No, I don't think they knew that, either. No.

LU: So your parents went to Tashme, and what about your older brother? Where did he go to?

RH: Oh, well, he was still in Taft.

LU: Oh, okay.

RH: Yeah, yeah.

LU: So you were with him in Taft for a little while at least?

RH: Yes, I was with him, yes.

LU: Did you have any other family members with you in Taft?

RH: No.

LU: And your younger brother and your younger sister –

RH: Well, they were in Tashme with – because they were too young yet, so they were with the family in Tashme.

LU: So they went to school there, in –

RH: In Tashme, yes.

LU: Yeah. Do you know if they had to share a house with somebody else?

RH: Yes, they did. Yes. There – there – there was nothing – there was – there was another family – the other family had four – house of four, two adults and two children, and I think our family – my mother and dad, and two – yes, two children. They both had two children each. So they shared – they had a bedroom on each side and then the, you know, common centre for the, like, dining and eating room area.

LU: And were they pretty different from the other road camps, as well? Like, when you were in Taft versus – what was the second one you went to?

RH: 11 Mile Camp.

LU: 11 Mile Camp. Were they really different from each other, or did you find them to be pretty similar?

RH: They were pretty similar, yes.

LU: Yeah. Yes. So there's, you know, a big mess hall for everybody to come and eat in.

RH: Yes, a big mess hall, yes.

LU: And how long were you at that one for? 11 Mile?

RH: Well, that was until the – until the war finished, so that would be another – about a couple of years, I guess.

LU: Yeah. 2, 3 years, or so. Yeah. And you did the same kind of work there?

RH: That's right.

LU: Working on the highway.

RH: We were building highway, yes.

LU: Oh, wow.

RH: Yeah.

LU: So when the war ended, what did you decide to do next?

RH: Well, the, the – they said that you either go to Japan, you know, which we'd never seen, or – or go east. They wouldn't let us go home to B.C., you see, so we – we decided to go east. So we ended up in Tashme – I mean, in Hamilton.

LU: Now, was it just yourself in – or your whole family went with you?

RH: No, just myself.

LU: Just yourself. What about your mother and father and the other children?

RH: Well, they – eventually – they came to Hamilton, too.

LU: So they didn't leave Tashme right away?

RH: No, not at the same time, no. From the camps, they made us go first, you see. So they told us to go east – no, I didn't come to Hamilton. No, they told us to go, go to London, this tannery in London, and we heard this tannery was such a smelly place, that you know, you have to tan raw, you know, cow hides, stuff like that. So we –

before we got there – we’re going by there on the train, we jumped off in Hamilton and we, we stayed here.

LU: [laughter] So how did you manage to find a place to stay, or to work? And what – what did you do on your first, first day in Hamilton?

RH: You mean for work-wise?

LU: Well, like, when you first jumped off the train, and then where did you go? How did you know what to do next?

**[End of part 1]**

**[Start part 2]**

RH: That, I – I can’t remember how we ended – but 4 or 5 of us ended up at a, at a boarding house, and it was owned by – I think it was a German lady, German Canadian lady, I think it was, and she had a – she had a small boarding house and it was about – maybe 4 or 5 of us that come from B.C., that we started living there.

LU: And so how long did you end up staying in the boarding house for?

RH: Gee – I don’t know. I don’t know how long I lived there, but I lived there for – I, I don’t know, maybe a year? But then we moved to another boarding house that was owned by another – it was – by Japanese family, so we moved in with them for, for another I don’t know, maybe a year or two, or – and when my parents came over, then we – no, wait a minute. Oh, not yet. Maybe – maybe it wasn’t even that long. I don’t know how long it was. I, I lived there for a while, and then my parents came over and then we, we decided to buy a house.

LU: In Hamilton?

RH: In Hamilton, yes.

LU: And what were your feelings – like, when the war ended, and you heard that, you know, you didn’t have to work in the road camps anymore, and that you could, you know, go – go out east. What do you remember feeling? Were you happy the war was over? Or happy to get out of the road camp? Or –

RH: Well, we were happy to get out. Oh, yes, we were. Yes.

LU: Were you ever worried about where – where you would end up going?

RH: Yes, I think – I think I was, yes. ‘Cause I mean, I didn’t have any profession, you see, because I – all I was doing was I was a labourer, and I was working sawmills and things like that.

LU: So where did you end up working when you first came to Hamilton? Where did you find a job?

RH: When I first came here, I started working at a place called Building Products, and they were – they built asphalt shingles for roofs, and this was another – it was a dirty, dirty job, too, and then – yes. A lot of the – I think, you know, I think they had a hard time getting workers for those kind of jobs, too, and that’s how we ended up doing jobs that other people didn’t want, I think. Either – either that, or you could work at a place called the Harvester, you know, where they were making Harvester machines and things, like parts and things, and I guess it’s a dirty, heavy jobs that a lot – a lot of people don’t want to do. So that’s –that’s the only type of job you can get.

LU: What was the pay like when you were working? More than 25 cents an hour, I hope.

RH: Well, it was more than that, yes.

LU: Yeah?

RH: I – I forgot what it was. I just can't remember what it was.

LU: Was it closer to what it was when you were in the sawmills, maybe?

RH: Oh no, I think it was more than that. It was probably around 70 – 75 cents an hour or something.

LU: And did you ever have – you know, felt any discrimination when you were trying to find work in Hamilton? You know, what about other non-Japanese who were also trying to find jobs after the war?

RH: Well, I – I found it was – yes, it was pretty hard, trying to find a job. Trying to – we had a hard time trying to find a place to live, too, you know. They – they wouldn't take you just anywhere. Or even when we were trying to find a home, you know, they – they don't want to sell that to you or something like that.

LU: Yeah. Did it take you a long time to find – find your house, family house, when your parents came over, or –

RH: Yeah. Yes. We had to look around quite a bit, yes.

LU: Did you receive help from anybody, trying to –

RH: No, not that I can remember, no.

LU: It must have been very challenging.

RH: I can't – you know, I, I don't know about – you know, nowadays you have real estate that's trying to find you something, but I, I can't remember if there were any such things in those days.

LU: Yeah. I don't know. I don't know, actually. I'm not sure. Hmm. Okay. So – so you found a job, and so what were you doing there, again?

RH: We're, we're – we're – it was a labourer job, you know, and they were building shingles for – like I say, for, for roofing, and that was another dirty job. There was a lot of asbestos there and things like that, you see.

LU: So I guess you had some health concerns, then, wondering –

RH: Well, I – I worked there for – I don't know how long, maybe a couple of years or so, and then I got a – I got a – found another job at a place called – I can't remember the name, now. They're not even around, but they were – they were building clutches for cars and brake linings and things like that, and that's another job that I found out it was full of asbestos. And I – I worked there for – I worked there for quite a while. Another 2, 3 years I guess, and – you know, I – I guess the governments at that time didn't – and then they finally found out that there was a lot of asbestos there, and so I had to go for checkup at the McMaster University for – see if there's any asbestos in my lungs, and so I had to go for checkup every so often, and they said that I was still – I was clear.

LU: Oh, good.

RH: Yeah. There was a lot of people that got sick with that asbestos there, 'cause all the brake linings for cars and clutches, and there was not – now there's not too many clutches, it's automatic cars now, but – and they all had asbestos in it.

LU: So you worked there for a few years, and how old were you, at this time? Do you remember? Or approximately.

RH: Oh, probably – by that time I was probably 30 years old or so, probably.  
LU: So when did you finally meet your wife and get married and start your family? Was this before or after you were working at the –  
RH: Well, it was – I guess it was during – when I was working there, that I met my wife, I think.  
LU: Oh.  
RH: Yeah.  
LU: Do you remember where you met?  
RH: Probably bowling alley.  
LU: Bowling.  
RH: Yeah.  
LU: Would you do that on weekends, for fun?  
RH: Yes. Yes. Yes, we used to go quite a bit in those days.  
LU: And was it, you know, a Japanese community organization?  
RH: Yeah. Japanese league, yes.  
LU: Oh. Who organized that?  
RH: I – I don't know. I think it was just a group that organized it – but it was quite a few of us were bowling, though. Yeah, it was quite a big league. It was probably about, I don't know, 10 or 12 teams or so.  
LU: Was Hamilton becoming, you know, pretty populated with Japanese Canadians at that time?  
RH: Yeah. It was quite a bit at that time, yes.  
LU: Did everybody try and get together and stay together, or did most people want to just be, you know, dispersed and –  
RH: Well, they – living-wise they all dispersed, you know. They're all spread out. But you know, every so often we get together. You know, you have dances and things like that.  
LU: Oh, yeah.  
RH: Yeah.  
LU: And then where did you work after working with – with car parts?  
RH: Well, I worked with the car parts 'til the end, 'til I've retired, but another company bought us out. And eventually, I got – I got promoted to another job, but – and I was – as a storekeeper, and I looked after the stock, you know, of – of the tools and things like that. And then this – this was bought by another American company, and then – then eventually I became a shipper and receiver, and that's – that's what I did until I retired.  
LU: And did you retire at 65 or –  
RH: Yes, I was. Yes.  
LU: And what about when you met your wife, where did you get married? Do you remember?  
RH: I met her in Hamilton.  
LU: You got married in Hamilton?  
RH: Hamilton, yes. And we have 2 children, a son and a daughter.  
LU: Where did you move when you first moved out of your parents' house, when you – 'cause you were living, at the time, with your parents, when you had bought the house, right?

RH: Oh, okay. When we – when we got married – Kay and I got married, we had an apartment on – I believe it was on Hess Street. It was a two-room apartment on Hess Street, and after a couple of years, I guess, we – we moved to this house. We – we purchased a lot, and this – these lots were on sale, but it was a former orchard that the city owned, and the city was selling these properties, so we had to line up to buy the property, and then we bought the property, and we had a house built here. That was in 1961, I believe.

LU: Oh, and you've been here since.

RH: So we've been here ever since. Yes.

LU: Did you have a hard time finding an apartment, when you first moved out and got married, or was it a little bit easier, then? After –

RH: It was a little bit easier then. It, it was – well, you know, I think it was a Jewish – yeah, Jewish owner. So you know, Jewish were a lot better to us than a lot of other people.

LU: Yeah, I've been told that before, that they're – they're a lot more open to accepting the Japanese Canadians.

RH: That's right, yes.

LU: Right after the war.

RH: Yep.

LU: So why – why do you think that was?

RH: Well, I guess they've – they've been discriminated too, so they know how – what it feels like to be discriminated, I think.

LU: So they really helped us out.

RH: Yes. I heard they helped a lot of people in Toronto, too. Yeah.

LU: So after the war, other than trying to find a house, or trying to find a job, do you remember experiencing any discrimination or, you know, having any issues with other – other non-Japanese people, who were pretty angry, after the war.

RH: Personally, I – I didn't get too much discrimination. I can't see any much discrimination, no.

LU: That's good. And what else do you remember about trying to establish, you know, your life after the war and – do you remember anything else? Like what, what was it like – if you wanted to go out and you know, buy any Japanese food or, you know, where – where would all that come from? How did we start importing?

RH: Well, Japanese food now, we – we'd have to go to Toronto, usually, 'cause there's not – there were – well, not much they could do – buy in Hamilton. Some of these Korean stores, they sell some, but not very much, so we didn't – we usually go to Toronto to buy Japanese food.

LU: And how do you think your life would have been like, if you didn't have to go to a road camp and then move to Hamilton? What do you think it would have been like in B.C.? Would you have continued working on the sawmills, or –

RH: Probably would have, you know. Probably would have. Probably our life would have been a lot different. I'd probably – you know, I – I don't know, the people in B.C. were pretty anti-Japanese, in those days. Well, maybe then – even now, I don't know now, you know?

LU: And I think you mentioned before you had to drop out of high school to get a job, or did you finish high school?

RH: No, I didn't I only went to grade 11. I had to help, help the family because my – my mother was by herself with the – with the – just us, the three kids, and my – my brother was already working in a sawmill, and we had to help support the family.

LU: Where was your dad at the time?

RH: Well, he was working at sawmill too, but then – then they're not making much, either. You know, they're only making 35 cents or something an hour, too. Like I say, he was also working in Englewood when I was – he, he called me up to Englewood. So he was working 35 cents an hour, too.

LU: What do you remember about your family house, growing up? And, you know, did you have a family garden, or –

RH: Yes, we had – yes, family garden. Yeah, I remember – we had the bath house out the back – back at – and outhouse in the back.

LU: Oh, yeah? [laughter]

RH: Yes. Yeah.

LU: No flush toilets?

RH: No flush toilets, no. Not even – I don't think – I don't think we even had a tap in – inside the house.

LU: But would you use a well, for the water? Or –

RH: No, no, there was – we had a tap outside, I think it was. There was water coming outside, but there was no water in – there wasn't water [that ran] right into the house.

LU: Was it a fair-sized house? How many rooms? Do you remember what it looks like?

RH: Kitchen, living room, and two bedrooms. Two small bedrooms, yes, for the five of us, yes. It's just a small house, yes.

LU: Did it have like, a fireplace or a stove?

RH: No. No. No fireplace.

LU: So how'd you keep warm in the winter time?

RH: Well, all – all we had was one of these wood stove.

LU: Oh. Is that one of those big metal stoves?

RH: Yes, a little metal one, yes. You know, about so long or something like that.

LU: So do you remember having to cut up all the wood for the fire or –

RH: Yes, we had to go get wood and cut it up. Yes, that's right.

LU: What other chores would you have to do around the house to help out?

RH: Well, I guess – I guess I had to help dig the garden up for Mother. She makes – planting stuff, and Mom had to go out and she – I, I remember she used to go do with us – you know, strawberry season, she'd pack up some strawberries in a box and she'd be out selling strawberries to, you know, the people come – the summertime, they'd come for, for their holidays from New Westminster and Vancouver. So I remember she used to go out with them. She's selling strawberries to make a little bit of extra money.

LU: And what else do you remember about growing up, when you were younger? Do you have a favourite game you used to play, or board game, card game, favourite toy?

RH: I can't remember any favourite toys, no. We didn't – we didn't have very many, many toys in those days, so you know, we did – Christmas, we never got any Christmas toys, so – there's no money to buy us toys, so we didn't have any toys.

LU: Did you ever try and make your own toys? I know some people said that they tried making, you know, scooter boards, or –

RH: Yeah, I guess we – yeah, I guess we tried making something like that, too, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

LU: And 1949, I believe, was when Japanese Canadians were allowed to vote.

RH: Right.

LU: And what do you remember about that time? What do you remember about – like, reading it in the newspaper or hearing it on the radio? And what were your feelings towards that?

RH: Oh, I thought – I thought it was great.

LU: Do you feel like maybe it took a little bit too long to, to get the vote, or –

RH: Oh, yes, I – I – oh, sure. I thought – I thought it was a long time, yeah.

LU: Did you go out voting that year? [laughter]

RH: Yes, sure. That's for sure. Yeah.

LU: Must have been pretty exciting.

RH: Yes, it was.

LU: Was everyone else around you pretty excited about it as well, or –

RH: Oh yes, my wife Kay was excited, because she was – she was – she's been working with the NAJC [National Association of Japanese Canadians] for a long time. She was been fighting for this.

LU: Were – what year were you married?

RH: We were married in 1957.

LU: '57. Oh, wow. Yeah. And were you ever a big part of the redress?

RH: Of what?

LU: Of the redress.

RH: Why, yes. I was. My wife was very involved in it.

LU: What kind of participation did you, did you help out with?

RH: Well, I didn't do too much. My wife – wife was very involved. She was, she was a secretary for the NAJC here.

LU: So would you have to go to meetings, or –

RH: Yes. She went – she went to a lot of meetings, to help distribute the posters and things, you know, before we got the redress. She went – she went to march at the Ottawa rally.

LU: Oh, yeah.

RH: Mm-hmm.

LU: How many people were at the Ottawa rally? Were you there as well?

RH: No, I wasn't. Just Kay went. Kay and Polly went.

LU: And what were your feelings towards redress? Was it, you know, something that you felt needed to be recognized by the government and –

RH: Yes, I did, but I – I thought it was a lost cause, earlier in the – in the, you know – earlier times [indistinct]. It was – it was good to hear that we finally got it, though, and – and the NAJC really fought for that. 'Cause there was an opposition, you know,



in Toronto, that – that did – that didn't want that re – personal redress, and – but we – we got what – whatever they – we asked for, there.

LU: Well, a lot of people at first were, you know, kind of afraid to stir the waters.

RH: That's right, yeah.

LU: The pot.

RH: Yeah. Yeah.

LU: Weren't really sure if they wanted to – to try and push for individual settlement, and they – they would be happy just taking, you know –

RH: Yeah, yeah.

LU: A couple million for group –

RH: That's right.

LU: Settlement.

RH: That they were willing to take it, that's right. Yeah.

LU: Mm-hmm. So where – were you more leaned towards doing individual settlement, at first, or –

RH: Oh yes, I was, yes.

LU: Yeah. Yeah. So it was pretty important to – to get that. So what else about the redress? Like, for somebody who doesn't really know very much about it, what would you tell them about it, to try and teach them about what happened with the redress? [long pause while Roy thinks] So if you're trying to explain, you know, what the redress was to, you know, your grandchildren, what would you tell them?

RH: Well, we would tell them that we – we didn't – couldn't vote, and when we were living in B.C. – you'd graduated from university as a doctor or, you know, or you know, any other profession, and he couldn't find a job. They wouldn't give you a job, 'cause in B.C. there were people who graduated as different things, and they had to end up in at sawmills and things, working, because they wouldn't – they wouldn't give you a job.

LU: So most – some people in the sawmills had, you know, educational degrees.

RH: Yes, but they were just a labourer.

LU: Yeah.

RH: Doing a labourer's job. Yeah.

LU: Oh, wow. I didn't know that.

RH: Yeah. Yeah. Doesn't matter what you – what you – what kind of degree you had, they wouldn't give you a job. Become, you know, lawyers and doctors and so on. So in the – so at that time, we're saying, "Well, you know, what's the sense – what's the sense in going to university, then, if you can't get a job?" So there's quite a few – you know, they went outside to, to Ontario or ea – [I'm going to call]– east somewhere to get a job.

LU: Do you know if the Japanese Canadians ever spread out across –farther east than – than Quebec or, you know, did they ever go down to PEI [Prince Edward Island] or –

RH: I, I think – yes, I, I – I think there's some in New Brunswick, yes. I think there's some out that way. Not that many, though.

LU: You know, now that I think about it, I've never – never heard of any stories of anybody going that far.

RH: Yeah. Yeah, I believe – I believe there are, yeah.

LU: And what about your involvement now in the Japanese community? How do you participate in it still?

RH: I really don't – I really don't get involved with it too much now. I, I used to be a vice-president at the Japanese cultural centre here, for a number of years, but – you know, now I'm kind of – I've just – really – I support them, yeah, but I don't get involved with it too much now.

LU: Did you ever do any activities? Like, you know, martial arts or –

RH: No, I – no, I didn't. No, no. The only thing I'm involved right now is the – we have a – what we call the Koyu-kai club, which – it's a seniors' – I guess it's called – koyu-kai means friendship, so it's – it's a club for the seniors now that we have, and we have a meeting every third Monday of the month, and we just have a short, short meeting. We just talk about, you know, anything that comes up, somebody's birthday or, or – well, anything else that's comes up, we let everybody know, and then we have – then we have a bingo. And the seniors really like to play bingo.

LU: Me, too.

RH: Yeah? And then – I'm – I'm the coordinator of this travel, for them, so we travel to a casino. So we go to the casino, maybe 3 or 4 times a year, and we're not like Toronto, we have a hard time getting – getting a whole bus load, so we used to – one – at one time, we used to get a whole bus load, but now there – are – seem to be getting less and less, so we have to join up with another group to – we go to casinos. Because seniors really love the casinos. I guess we're like, you know, Orientals are really gamblers, I guess. We like casinos.

LU: I know there's a few Japanese gambling card games. Somebody mentioned that to me before. Do you ever remember learning how to play any of them?

RH: I've never learned, no. No.

LU: No. Do you remember, you know, your – your dad knowing how to play? Or –

RH: Yes. Dad used to play – used to love the – Go. Yeah, you got the white and black stones, little white stones. It's about the size of a – maybe a quarter, little bit smaller than a quarter. They play with stones.

LU: Oh.

RH: And – and I heard it was something like – what's, what's that – what's, what's that – the game they have, over here? Where you know, they have these –

LU: Chess? Checkers? Othello?

RH: Something like chess. Something like chess type of thing, I heard. You know?

LU: Oh, yeah. Chinese checkers?

RH: Yeah. Yes. Yes, but it's a shape. It's a round stone, though. Or – or there was a card game they had, this *gaji*. I don't know if you've ever heard of *gaji*.

LU: No. What – do you know how to play that one?

RH: No, I don't know how – but I know that my dad and them used to play a lot of that.

LU: And it's a card game.

RH: Card game, yes. I'll – I'll show it to you later on.

LU: Yeah?

RH: I got a – I got a cards – cards here. I don't know how to play it, though.

LU: Are they special cards? They're not regular cards?

RH: Yeah. No, no. Special cards.

LU: Oh, wow!

RH: Yeah, yeah.

LU: Okay. Oh, isn't that interesting? Oh. Do you remember any other Japanese games that they used to have?

RH: Not really.

LU: You can't think of any?

RH: I, I really used to like golf, you know. In fact, I golfed quite a bit before – 'cause I used to caddy when I was in White – when I was a young kid, when I go – at White Rock. I, I started caddying when I was about 12 or 13. In White Rock, there was a golf course there, so I caddied, and when I came out here, I – I golfed quite a bit and then had a sore back. I had to get an operation for my back, so I, I – I quit after that. I, I couldn't – I couldn't play golf anymore.

LU: Oh, yeah.

RH: And then – and arthritis, and I – I can't grip the club very good now. So that's – that's why I gave it up.

LU: Well yeah, you don't want the club to swing out of your – [laughter]

RH: No, I can't – I can't hold on to the club. Yeah. But it's a good game, though.

LU: Yeah, yeah. Well, it's one I'm starting to learn.

RH: Oh, are you?

LU: So, trying. [laughter]

RH: Oh, okay.

LU: So – mm-hmm.

RH: It's an expensive game now, though.

LU: Oh, yes.

RH: Yeah, 'cause I know when I first moved down here, I think I joined the golf club down here and I think it was only about \$35 or \$40 a year to play.

LU: Oh, wow!

RH: For a season – season pass –

LU: Yeah.

RH: At the – Yeah. For the local golf course, yeah.

LU: Oh, that is a very good price.

RH: Now, you – you can't play one game for that, now.

LU: No, no. Not at all.

RH: No.

LU: That's for sure. So your family came here, to Hamilton, and they lived in the house. Where did your dad find a job, when they first came here? Was he retired by then?

RH: Yeah, he was working at – what'd they call the – Canadian, Canadian Cottons. They were making cotton, cotton goods. There's two factories in Hamilton that used to make cotton, cotton goods, and he – he was working at this Canadian Cottons.

LU: And did he live – work there until he retired? Or –

RH: Yes, he did. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. It was only about a blo – couple of blocks from where we lived, so –

LU: When did he pass away? Roughly.

RH: My dad passed away in 1972, I believe it was.

LU: Oh, really? Do you remember when he was born?

RH: He was – he lived to a good age. He was – I think he was born in 1889. Yeah. My mother was born in 1890, I believe. I think she – I think she passed away around 1978 or something.

LU: Oh, so they both lived a really long time?

RH: Yeah, they both lived – so quite a long, good life, yes.

LU: Just going to switch the tape – I think this one's done, or close to being done. And – just trying to think if I have any more questions.

RH: You probably found out everything about me now.

LU: Yeah, yeah. That's for sure.

[tape changing noises]

LU: Is there any other family history that you remember about, you know, your mom's family or your dad's family that you want to talk about? That you remember any of that, or – what, you know, what their family line of work was like in Hiroshima, or –

RH: Well, my mother –

LU: Oh, here, let me put this back in. I just wasn't sure if we had any in, first. [tape changing noises] Okay.

RH: My mother – were really, really musical and she learned to play the shamisen in Japan, and so she used to play the shamisen a lot. She had little concerts, I guess, they have around here, and she loved to sing the, the naniwa-bushi or whatever, you know, this kind of a – kind of a squeaky [indistinct] sing-song that they have?

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

RH: Yeah, she used to – she used to [indistinct] do that. Play the shamisen.

LU: Did she ever try and teach you how to play, or –

RH: No, no. I didn't, no.

LU: No.

RH: The men really don't play that one, anyways, too much.

LU: What about your sister? Did she try and learn?

RH: No, she never learned either.

LU: And what happened to your brother and sister, after the war? Did they come to Hamilton as well?

RH: Yes.

LU: With your parents?

RH: Yes, we were all in Hamilton. My sister, she – she had – I think she did the – she worked at a garment factory for a while, then she took up – I think she went to a commercial school, and then she was working in a seed place as a, as a – office – office – and she was working in the office, somehow, in a seed place, and she worked there until she retired. And now, she's in a nursing home in Burlington. And my brother, younger brother, he's – [phone rings loudly] He, he – he also worked at a cotton mill [phone rings loudly] and then he went to work at, at the [phone rings loudly] International Harvester. [phone rings loudly]

LU: We'll just wait a second.

**[Interruption]**

RH: Yeah, so my – my brother still lives here and he's a – he's a karaoke man. He goes to karaoke all over the place. He goes to all the karaoke clubs in Toronto, I think.

LU: Oh yeah?

**[End of part 2]**

**[Start Part 3]**

RH: Yeah.

LU: Well, he might know my aunt! Betty Tanabe, and Tad Tanabe.

RH: Yeah?

LU: They go to karaoke.

RH: Where do they – where do they do the karaoke?

LU: Toronto.

RH: At the JC [Japanese Canadian Cultural] Centre?

LU: Yeah.

RH: Yeah, well – Ah, he'd probably know them, then. He goes – he goes there. He goes with the Buddhist church. He goes to Konkokyo church, whatever – wherever they are having karaoke, he's goes.

LU: Oh, wow.

RH: Yeah.

LU: Did your sister ever get married?

RH: No, she didn't.

LU: No.

RH: No.

LU: Oh. So did she live at home with your parents until they passed away?

RH: Yes. She lived at home, and she looked after my mother and Dad but – until they passed away.

LU: That's hard to do. It's a lot of work.

RH: Yes, that it is.

LU: And – sorry, do you remember anything else about your family history, back in Japan? And you know, what their line of work was like, or –

RH: No, I really – well, they must have been farming, because Dad said he came – came over here because he didn't want to go farming. So that – I presume they were farming back home in Japan.

LU: Would that maybe be rice farming or –

RH: I – I don't know.

LU: What other kind of farming is there in Japan? Do you know?

RH: I don't know.

LU: I only know of rice farming.

Kay Honda: Yeah. But that – they don't have enough, do they? Oh, yeah, I guess they do.

LU: I don't know. Did you –

KH: [indistinct] vegetables. Daikon. [laughter]

LU: Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's true. Was your sister – or not your sister, your mother – did she have any brothers or sisters?

RH: Yes, she had – she had – I know she had a sister. I think it was in California somewhere. But – yeah, she really didn't talk to them – about them too much.

LU: Was she the only one who came to Canada?

RH: As far as I know, yeah.

LU: And your father was the only one who came to Canada?

RH: No, he – he had a – he had a brother that came to Canada. In fact, he's – his brother was living in – in Chapleau [Ontario] for quite a while. Now, now they – he moved to Toronto – this is after the war now. And he moved to Toronto and – and – and his children are living in Toronto now. My – that's like, my cousins.

LU: Did you know them when you were growing up? When you were – before the war, did you –

RH: I, I – what, you mean my uncle?

LU: Yeah.

RH: Well, I –

LU: Did you – were they close by?

RH: No, no. They weren't close by, no. Well, he was living in Vancouver so we hardly saw him.

LU: Mm-hmm. But you know them now, or –

RH: I – oh, I know them now, yeah.

LU: Yeah.

RH: They make good cousins. Like, the cousins, yes.

LU: And the rest of the family just stayed in Japan?

RH: Yes, I guess. As far as I know, yes.

LU: And tell us about returning to Japan, after the war, and when you – your first visit to Japan?

RH: First –

LU: When was that?

RH: Well, that was our first and only visit that – we took one visit, yes, and it it – was just the regular spots that all the – all the tourists go to, you know. From Tokyo and down – well, we went as far as the – where did we go? Kagoshima. Then right down to Kagoshima.

LU: Oh, is that all the way on the south part of the –

RH: Yeah. Yes.

KH: Yeah.

LU: Wow. Oh, yeah. And what year was that, when you finally went to Japan?

RH: I think it was around 1990 –

KH: '93 or '94.

LU: '93 or '94?

RH: Somewhere –

KH: Somewhere around there.

RH: Yes.

KH: 'Cause '93 we went to Europe.

LU: Oh, wow. What was it like, visiting Japan for the first time? Was – did you find it to be very different or harder to understand?

RH: Well, it's hard to understand it for – for –

KH: Interesting.

RH: If our – if our brother-in-law didn't take us along, we'd have a hard time, 'cause you know, he – we can't speak very good Japanese. You can't read, so it's pretty tough.

LU: Did you go with your older brother, who –

RH: No, no.

LU: No?

RH: Went with Joe Hori. He's – he's – he took us along, and he's – he's involved in the travel, so he can speak both English and Japanese, so he's a good tour guide.

LU: Mm-hmm. Did you ever have a hard time when you tried to ask help from, from other people – from the Japanese?

RH: In Japan?

LU: Yeah. Did they ever look at you and say, "Well, why don't you speak Japanese?"

RH: I, I – yeah, we did, at the station, didn't we? We didn't know what to – where to go. Don't know what to do.

LU: Yeah. Did you find them to be helpful though, or was it –

RH: Oh, I don't know. They can't – they can't seem to understand. [shrugs] They don't –

KH: [indistinct]

RH: They don't – yeah. They don't – they don't seem to have anybody that could speak English, you know. At some of the places, anyways.

LU: Yeah. Oh. I better learn Japanese, then, before I –

RH: But it must be different now, though, I think. You know, I think they have a lot of English-speaking people round – you know, around the stations, they should have a lot of English-speaking, too.

KH: Yeah.

LU: Mm-hmm. Like tourist guides.

RH: Yes, that's right. Yep.

LU: Information –

RH: Yep.

LU: Centres. Yeah, yeah. Oh, wow. Mm-hmm. Well –

RH: I think I'm about finished.

LU: Yeah! I'm trying to think if I have any more – oh! Are you interested – or are your children interested in learning about your Japanese Canadian history at all? Like, do they ever ask you, you know, what happened during the war, or what – what it was like to grow up before – did they ever find a big interest in that?

RH: I – I don't know. They don't seem to ask at all.

LU: Is it important that they learn a little bit about their history, though? Do you think?

RH: I don't – yeah, I – I think they would be – it would be nice if they would learn a little bit, yeah.

LU: And your grandchildren as well?

RH: Yeah. It would be – it would be nice if they would.

LU: Is there anything else that you want to share? Like, do you have a favourite story that you like to tell about, you know, when I was growing up, and when I was your age? I know there's lots of stories that start off with that.

RH: No, I'm sorry, I don't – my – my –

KH: Your family is a musical family, you know. Your mother played the koto, didn't she? – shamisen.

RH: Yeah, I – and I told – I was talking about the koto. Yeah.

KH: Yeah. Was it koto? You know that thing – koto?  
RH: Yeah. Koto, yeah.  
LU: Did she always play, or is it just when she was free, and –  
RH: Yeah, she – I think she played most of the time, yeah.  
LU: Did she ever do any other activities? Like the flower arranging or –  
RH: She did flower arranging, yeah.  
LU: Or dancing?  
KH: Dancing?  
LU: Odori?  
KH: Minyo.  
RH: I don't know if she did minyo.  
KH: Yes, she did folk dancing.  
RH: Did she?  
KH: Yeah.  
LU: What's minyo?  
KH: Old people's dance. Folk dancing, you know. It's for –  
RH: But it's the old people's –  
LU: Folk dancing –  
RH: But the old people that do minyo.  
KH: You know the type of dancing that they do at Obon? Did – did you ever go to a Buddhist Obon?  
LU: We just usually go to the cemetery, and that's it, for Obon. We don't usually go back to the centre, afterwards, no.  
KH: Oh. Well, night before, they dance, right? They, they do Obon. They call it [remembering them with good] memories and dance away. You should go there.  
LU: Yeah, well, I was going to go this year, but I had a family surprise party up north.  
KH: Oh.  
LU: For my other side of the family, I had to go to.  
KH: We used to go because not anymore, because our daughter doesn't live here. [You're not?] participating.  
LU: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, okay.  
KH: Yeah, it's very interesting.  
LU: Well – thank you very much. [laughter] I don't think I have any more –  
RH: I don't – I think I've talked enough, yes.

**[End of interview]**