

**Interviewee: Kimiko Rose Aihoshi
(nee Kato)
Interviewer: Lisa Uyeda
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THE JAPANESE CANADIAN LEGACY PROJECT

Rose Aihoshi: So, are you asking the questions?

Lisa Uyeda: Yes, I'll get started. I'll just have to change this tape every, every hour or so. Ok. So today is June, no, August 23rd, 2010. This is an interview with Rose. We only go by first names and would you like to start off by telling us where you were born and when you were born?

RA: Okay. I was born in Vancouver in an area called South Vancouver, just by False Creek. My birthday is April the 9th, 1923. So, I am 87 years old, believe it or not.
[laughs]

LU: I didn't know that. Oh wow and what do you remember about growing up in South Creek? What do you remember about your family home?

RA: Ok. There was no electricity at the time and the Japanese lived in little pockets of area. The people that were living downtown where the Japanese area was, there was more Japanese families. Living in Fairview, in the South Vancouver area, the Japanese families were much smaller.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: We lived in a [shimamori] cabins. They must have owned about five or six houses close together, no electricity. So, we had lamps that were timed, literally went into gas pumps like you use in the tents. And then finally, when the electricity came in, it was just one lightbulb so we had to be very careful that we didn't have it on all the time. This cabin, we didn't have any, we had toilets but no baths. The [shimu-], the owner had a Japanese bath so every maybe twice a week we would say [Onigai shimasu] and we have our turn at the typical wooden Japanese baths.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: And then for New Year's Day, they had a great big kitchen so the other families that were living there would all get together and we would have the mochitsuki and then, on this great big table, we would have the mochi-making. The soft ones we would eat with orochi daikon or kinako or whatever. So, it was fun. This is during the kindergarten days so we must have been four or five years old. Since then, of course, this was the 23rd and then, because our parents spoke only Japanese or mostly Japanese, we were sent to kindergarten, which was run by the missionaries and it turned out to be the United Church in that area.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: So, this was to get ready to get us into grade one. So, what else? Then, living there, my father used to work for the union steamship company. So, when they are out on the tours and that, he was only home maybe a couple of days a week. So, he had a strap of farmland in Strawberry Hill. So, during the winter when things were quiet, he would spend, he had a little cottage there and he had this house, maybe one acre of land that was already broken with little vegetables and whatever. But my mother came from Miyake, my father was from Nagoya, a city. Why he left Japan?

We didn't know. He was the eldest son but apparently, he left Japan and the family was quite wealthy from what I had heard from my aunt later on, you know. Why he left Japan? We didn't know but my mother was from Miyake and she said she didn't come- She got married in Vancouver. She came because her brother was here. So then, she said she didn't come to Canada to do farming so we never used that lot. When my dad died in 1933, we sold the property to the people who lived down next door, the Nagasakas. And that's why I always say even now. During the Depression, my dad died in 1933. But when during the Depression, I don't remember not being, you know, being hungry because in those days, they didn't have the chicken sexers so they had to look, you know, until the combs came out whether they were roosters or hens. And we would have [bodies?], what they called the fires, grain-fed or grass-fed. So they are not like the chickens now. They were so tasty and we would bring these home by the bucketful.

LU: Oh my gosh.

RA: And that's my Depression days. And we had a little land about this size that we had grown carrots. We had, of course, a few chickens, in Vancouver, that we would have eggs.

[5 minutes]

RA: So, I knew vegetables that most niseis didn't like [udo]. I don't know if you know something like that. It's like the rhubarb.

LU: Okay.

RA: Bu they had the shoyu barrels covering it. Even the celery in those days were kept white. They had the sacks covering it so the sunlight doesn't get at it and the udo was the same. If you see the TV Japan now, they have it like the mushrooms in the dark area to keep it tender and white like the white asparagus. I grew up with these things and people are amazed at what I know but this is our Depression days that we grew up with.

LU: Yeah.

RA: So then, going to kindergarten. Then, of course, we had Japanese school on top of that, Monday to Friday for an hour and a half. So, we never had time to stay after school to play because we would come running home, have our little snack, and then go to Japanese school. Apparently, I wanted to go to a kindergarten but I wanted to go to a Japanese school so I was in a class that all the rest of them were a year older. I could remember going to kindergarten and then going to Japanese school. I wasn't bright or anything, I did want to study but I was just interested in going I suppose. So, that's my childhood.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: From there on of course, we just went onto high school and whatever. But my dad died in 1933 and my mother, I was ten years old, my mother had asthma and then, she couldn't sleep so the doctor told her to take a walk every morning. She used to walk from Second Avenue all the way to Vancouver City Hall, which is on the Tenth or Eleventh Avenue, can be. She would walk there, have a rest, and come back before we got up. And then, the milk would be delivered to the door but we had to

go running to buy the bread. So, mother was walking when I was 10. To this day, I learned to exercise at Momiji.

LU: Oh yeah.

RA: I don't mind. I said, this has not started now. I said, it started when I was ten years old. So, to keep healthy, I guess, this is part of me.

LU: Yeah.

RA: I suppose.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Then from high school, of course, I went to [unclear] High School and then, I graduated and of course, war started but my mother believed boys could get educated. But of course, even if they graduated university, if you hear like for instance [Aki?]'s history and that, they couldn't get jobs. It's only when they come west, east that they had the opportunities. So even when you graduated top of the class in high school, we couldn't get jobs so a lot of, you know, some of them have died now but when you listen to them, they were maids in private homes. I talked about [Miyu Guromaru?]. Her sister, Akida, used to live in Hamilton after the war. She had been a maid with the CGITs [Canadian Girls in Training] during the church system. We went to Sunday school and then the CGITs Saturday clubs whatever. They taught us Jap-Canadian cooking, what they learned, and I was so impressed with Gladys' open-face sandwiches. So, to my liking of food now, which is completely different to the type of work I was doing, they always say, you know, where did it start and I say, thanks to Gladys. If I had the opportunity, I would have maybe wanted to go into home economics but that was a university course. And of course, girls, unless they came from what I called "wealthy" families, didn't have the opportunity to go to high school or even university. Because when I went to high school, half of them dropped out to go to work in factories or whatever.

LU: Aww.

RA: Half of them went onto high school and I had friends that said I wanted to go to high school but my mother made me work, you see. Although we last, I don't know where the money came from. Don't ask. My mother was doing sewing. So, even in those days, we used to help mother with her sewing. Woodward's Department Store used to have 95 cent sales and we would help with the sewing on buttons and turning belts inside out, little French flowers and that. So, we learned that as youngsters. At 16, I was able to knit a whole suit. Because the issei ladies would say, no distractions. They would say, what are your size if this is wool, put so many stitches on and this is how I learned. So, I have a little doll that has, I would take a baby's three months pattern and I could make it into a fitted doll's outfit.

[10 minutes]

RA: It had leggings and a cap and everything.

LU: Wow.

RA: And that's how I learned. I couldn't do it now. [laughing] That's our background of what they taught us. What they learned, they passed on and cooking is the same, you know. My mother came from Miyake, which is, you know, a fishing area. So, winter, okay, is food from the earth, food from the sea, or whatever. Then

afterwards, when you take mackerel out for cooking, microbotic or whatever, you know, it's always, think in terms of color: white, black, green, red, whatever. It makes the presentation pretty. I was exposed to that when I was a young teenager. In the Japanese school system, of course again for girls, we had the [Ikebana] so I was exposed to [Ikebana] when I was 13 or 14 years old.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: During the high school period, a lot of them went to canneries to work while my mother sent me to mother's helper in a private home to learn how housekeeping was done in homes and to look after a little child.

LU: Oh, that's interesting.

RA: So you know, she thought that girls, in those days, if they knew how to cook and they knew how to sew. So, I went to the academy in Vancouver, it was the best sewing school in Vancouver. I got a diploma but I hate sewing. [laughing] If I had a sewing room, that's different but when you have to tidy up and put it away every time, you know, there's meals and that, I think that's what I hated more than anything. But when my daughter needed an evening dress when she was graduating university and couldn't find it, I would make it, you know.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Background was quite interesting. Of course, my brother was at UBC when the war started so then, he was surveyor's help in Slocan City so we got a house in Lemon Creek. Then, I had graduated commercial high school so I was working for the supervisor there, later on, in New Denver. And then, my brother had graduated University of Manitoba. But even then, they were, I think, dispersing students not into one university, you know. He and another friend were able to get into Manitoba. And then, when he graduated, of course, he moved to Montreal so it was just the two of us and my mother so we moved there, you know. Anyways-

LU: Oh wow.

RA: It's been fascinating, my life.

LU; Yeah, certainly.

RA: Like, I say, I always met the right people at the right time, you know.

LU: Well, a little bit more about your mother's history though. So-?

RA: My mother came from a family of ten children. She was probably number five and, in those days, you know, they were all poor. Because, I guess, business wasn't, they were doing this dashi jako, which is a dried fish. It was a small business of their family and because they weren't making money, the eldest son came to Canada. And he was in Vancouver, and I think they had a little store somewhere in the downtown area. A lot of them would work as busboys and porters at the Banff Hot spring Hotel or whatever to make the money. He made enough money, had two jobs, and then, he went back to Japan because he was the eldest son, so carries on the family. My mother came with a family that had been in Japan. She came. She, as a youngster, was living with her cousin. The cousin's family used to look after the children so the cousin, her cousin, is closer to all of us than her own brothers and sisters because you never really live with them. In those days, she says, she only had grade four education, Yonensei or whatever so then, she had an uncle who was a school principal. So, she believed in education. So when my dad died and my brother was going to university, people used to laugh at her in Vancouver because, you know,

she's a widow with no money. Once you graduate university, there's no jobs. So the kids that were going, they were either, the families had private businesses or they were running this. They were the, you know, what I called the "rich" families in Vancouver. With my mother being a widow and on top of that, my uncle, [unclear] my father's brother, had said, if there's any money in the home, there was maybe a little bit of insurance, he said, use it for education.

[15 minutes]

RA: This encouraged her. So, at ten years old, I am going to Japanese school. She is making me write Japanese letters to my uncle instead of her writing because she was only had a grade four education. You know, from Lemon Creek camp, we used to [unclear] sugars and all sorts. So when I met my cousin, the uncle had died the year before. When I met the son, he said my father was right with him and me. The son, the father must have been praising, here's our niece writing Japanese from Canada sort of thing, you know.

LU: Oh yeah.

RA: But that's our background for education. I say, I had my mother since I was ten until she died just before 95. All my married life, I had her. So I say, this is a blessing to live by myself. You know how children want to leave house when they graduate from high school and go on their own, eh. Regardless of how comfortable they are, they want to live on their own. My mother always lived with me so now, I said and they said, oh yeah [go go?] I said, no no, I said, my mother used me, I had to scrub the floors and wash by hand and do all the shopping and even the groceries, you know. And I say this is heaven 'cause I can do as I please and I'm healthy. I leave my children alone. They have a mortgage-free house and I say, that's it. So yesterday, I took them to the South Pacific.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: We had orchestra seats, you know, and I told [Suzanne?] to buy. I just didn't want to spend a \$190 but it was still \$120 show but still.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Anyways so, my mother had a tough life. But fortunately, she was able to do-. I don't know if you've heard of [Roy Iwata Travels?]? Mrs. [Iwata?] and her husband used to run a little clothing factory. This is where she worked, you see. After school, you know, we would help her. She would put little pieces into her purse and bring it home, eh. But that's the time I learned to cook, I guess. In those days, we don't have everything with buttons so you have start, you know, cut the wood for the winter and put it up, pile it up in the basement. Start from scratch to make hot water and washboards and whatever. It was tough for our generation. The younger they get, it's easier. So, for the Isseis, when the evacuation, they had to start from scratch. So, then I always feel that with the second evacuation, whether they wanted to go east or go to Japan, my feeling is that the men were bachelors when they came but when war started, the children were young, too young to work. So here how are they going to cope moving east with himself, his wife, and his children to support? Somehow, they went back to Japan. My husband was born in Japan and he was one of the last ships to come in so when he saw all the stuff piled up, all sorts of things in Canada,

he said he was sent to road camp, he said, "Don't go back to Japan because there's absolutely nothing."

LU: Oh wow.

RA: In the camps, it was also interesting because there were some that were veterans of the Canadian soldiers and some had been to military in Japan. So when they get together, of course, Japan is winning, Japan is losing, whatever because of the newspapers and that, eh. So there's one family, the son didn't want to go so I said, "Bow to your dad," and say, when the war is over, he'll let him go back to Japan. The father listened and they did well in Edmonton. When I met [unclear], we used to call him Taxi, it made me cry, you know, that they stayed in Canada. I don't know why my dad came, why he left home as the eldest son, and I'm sure he was quite young. He died at 49 because he drowned in Bowen Island.

LU: Oh, he drowned?

RA: Yep, he was working. He must have fell off the ship or whatever something happened and ironic, my brother's son lives in Bowen Island now.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: History, way back in 1933, my dad died, you know.

LU: Was your father buried there as well?

RA: No, no, we had the ashes so my mother took it back to Japan. We had the ceremony there, I had accompanied her.

LU: Oh wow, when was that?

[20 minutes]

RA: This is-

LU: Was that your first trip to Japan?

RA: No, no, my first trip so 1962. No, yeah, my mother had first trip to Japan in 1954 or 55. That was her first trip, you know, after the war. And then I went, we took the two kids and we spent about three weeks in Japan, I guess. This was before the Shinkansen, the bullet train. I think the bullet train was 1964 or 65 because the Olympics was 64', you see, so we saw it being tested on the sidetracks.

LU: Isn't that neat?

RA: Anyways so, I had some interesting trips to Japan, you know.

LU: Yeah, does your father come from a very big family? Him being the oldest.

RA: He was the oldest of five boys, I think. I don't think he ever mentions youngest brother. The youngest brother, by photo, looked almost identical to my father. The wife, you know, they're the ones that run the company and-. They became our closest because the other uncle had died, you see. The one that encouraged my mother that education was important.

LU: Yeah. Was he the only one who left Japan from his family?

RA: Yeah. In my mother's family, she was the only one other than the older brother that went back to Japan. So, we never met the older brother and then, of course, by the time we got to Japan, well, he was gone. We met all the relatives but- I don't keep in track with my mother's side of the family but my father's side of the family [unclear], we are almost like sisters so we'll talk on the phone and you know, she calls me Nee-san whenever I go, you know. [smiles]

LU: Oh wow. So you've never met any of your grandparents?

RA: No.

LU: They all stayed in Japan?

RA: That's right. See, most of them had come, if you know the Japanese history, most of them came to make money. When we were kids, they said, if you had 20 or 30 thousand dollars, you could live a lifetime in Japan on the interest.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: But because of the war, it became nothing. When we first went to Japan, 360 yen to a dollar. It's only two dollars or [laughs] it's only three dollars, you know. But of course, we didn't have the money at that time and the kids were still small but 360 yen to a dollar so that was fun.

LU: Yeah. So, do you know what your father's side of the family, the line of work was, in Japan? Do you know what they were doing there?

RA: Not really. The one that encouraged my dad must have been very successful, he worked for the government. You know, where the origin of the emperor's family in Issei, [unclear] He was in [Nanano-ken?] which had the Olympics in that area and every 50 years or something, they rebuild the Issei shrine.

LU: Oh.

RA: Anyways, he was working for the government and from what I understood, he was in charge of that area in [Nagano?] where all the trees were. So I think he must have had quite an official good life. The other brother, there's one of them that I had met but he was sick at the time, I don't know what he was doing. But the youngest one, what happened in my father's family- It's gonna get long. I hope you don't mind. My father was the [chonan] but because he left, the second son had married and gone as yōshi taking over another family. So, when my dad died, this yōshino son had to come back and take over the Kato name. So, the youngest son, number five son. They decided, okay you carry on the family name and although his blood is the [Kato] side, his name is [Mino?] and he is the successful one that after the war, Mitsubishi was starting. Mitsubishi Electric, and this dad, you know the youngest brother had started together. The business- so, the great big property and the home they have is right across from the great big Mitsubishi Electrical plant. They started off with all the guys starting from scratch growing up and my uncle, he had a fairly good job and then in Nakatsugawa, in another area, they had another big plant and I think it's still there, you know.

LU: Oh wow.

[25 minutes]

LU: I find it so fascinating that some of the males will marry into another family and take on that last name.

RA: Yes, that's right.

LU: Yeah.

RA: What happened is interesting because when we were all being registered with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and that. The Watanabes that we grew up with in Vancouver became Muranaka because the [Watanabe] name wasn't being recognized as such. And there's Mr.- in Montreal, there was, my mother used to call

them Sumikawa-san, turned out to be Sunokawa after the war. There's quite a few families like that.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Yeah. So this is because of the traditional koseki touhon is the birth certificate, say it, the Japanese one. So, why the change had to take place? I have no idea but it was quite interesting.

LU: Yeah, that is interesting. Oh, I didn't know it happened after the war.

RA: This is the evacuation time when we were evacuated. Yeah, this came out. Tosh and Yosh Watanabe, we always knew them as Watanabes. Always, you know - After the war, became [Renakas?]. They were known as that, you know. There were quite a few families like that. You check into it. It's quite interesting.

LU: Yeah.

RA: And of course, before the war, you know the other niseis, when they were 21, they were registered with the Japanese army. So, when the war started, they said all the papers were destroyed. I think, these are all facts, you know, so of course all we said was, we'll just tell them what the papers did. We didn't know.

LU: Yeah. No, I've been told before that, before the war started, they had registered with the army but they wouldn't allow them once the war started.

RA: That's right, that's right. It's like a dual citizenship, you see, but it was also interesting, too because some of the older niseis would say, I'm very Japanese when I want to be and I'm very Canadian when I want to be. We would shift, oh well, we're Canadian so we don't do this kind of thing. [laughs]

LU: So, when you were growing up in South Vancouver, at your school that you attended, was there a lot of other Japanese students there?

RA: Not that many. There was Tosh Onizuka, used to be a lawyer here and he was in my class. Whereas if you take the ones that grew up in Powell Street, 90% was Japanese. Whereas with us, it was mostly non-Japanese. It was much smaller area. There was a Mr. Ito that I sort of look after. He was taken to Japan when he was two and left so he's not that close with his own older brothers and sisters here. There's that gap there. I look after him, but-. He doesn't know, lot of times when I'm talking to him, he doesn't know the pre-Japanese Canadian history. So he can't understand that we didn't have, you know jobs that, good jobs after graduating from school. And then, when we were walking the streets, we would be very quiet, don't talk too loud sort of thing. We were quiet on the streetcars or whatever. Whereas you see the immigrants now, you know- they are like they are in their own country. So, there was a little bit of subduedness in the Japanese but then of course, they were hardworking so then the strawberry farms were doing so well that we could take it to the wholesalers. They don't even look at it because they know where it came from. So, the market was good but this is the British discrimination that went on in Vancouver and we grew up with it, you see. Whereas with friends, of course, we never realized this but after, in Fairview, South Vancouver area, [Riz Ohara?] lives in Toronto, she was, you know, it's like a cabin, the townhouses' type. They lived next door and then it was our family. There's Dorothy [Wita?] here and the three of us were neighbors. Lily Ito, that just died, her funeral was yesterday, they lived up fourth avenue. I said to Lloyd and her sister, you know, I said, we used to call your mother Uri-chan, you know, because shewas the neesan of this end of family name. .

So, there was pockets. Of course, we go to Japanese school so we can't stay to play with the hakujin friends. So, we come back and of course, we have our Japanese friends. There was a tendency that we have a little circle of Japanese friends.

[30 minutes]

RA: So this Mr. Ito, I said, I grew up with your mother and sisters in Lemon Creek. We were sharing the same house so I said, I am able to do what I am doing for him now. But I said, if I got to know you here, I cannot be as friendly or you know, towards him because when his wife died, I looked after all his papers, name it. Even now, I do all his, you know, necessary work for him. So, I said, if it wasn't for the past, you know, people would think I'm now looking for a boyfriend or whatever. [laughs] Because there are people going to say. Everybody knows I've adopted him as my kid brother and he needs that help, you know.

LU: Oh wow. So, what would you do as a child growing up for, on weekends for activities or playing? Did you have any games that you would always play?

RA: Well, we all had Japanese games. We had like hopscotch, you know and we would buy, pick up colored glass, broken glass to play with. We had the Japanese otedama, which is, you know, with the beans in the center and the [speaks in Japanese] Japanese stories that we play with. We play jacks and then, slingshots. [Sumito Minaga?] lives in London, Ontario but her mother used to have a little shop so you know, all these little pieces of materials, we would use match boxes for suitcases. Then we would make, they had Kewpie dolls about this size. So, we would make little clothes whereas a lot of people started to make Barbie clothes. Same idea but we would use 5 cent Kewpies. So, we know most of the Japanese games and of course, we played karuta. Even my kids used to play karuta. You know, I would teach them and a son that could pick it up in 15 minutes, you know. So typically, we grew up very Japanese.

LU: And what do you remember about the area around your house? So, the general stores or-?

RA: There was an Italian store just about a half a block away or the Uno family used to have a little corner store so I would run every morning to buy bread and there was a [unclear] baker. In those days, there was no sliced bread so when you are cutting it, it is thin and thick or whatever. We still remember, put on butter, peanut butter, and jam. That was our treat. So, a whole bread could go in half a day, you know, because you are cutting it this thick or ice cream cones with two little scoops for a nickel. We used to go to Kitsilano Beach and we would get a nickel. We can't use it for a bus fare so we walk and then, we would eat their French fries or you know, horseshoe shaped, five cent, nickel candies, stick candies that would last all day or the other thing is we used to line up for Shirley Temple movies.

LU: Oh.

RA: It was probably ten cents, you know. They give you photographed pictures if you line up. That was our treat to see Shirley Temple movies.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: One of my friends, her father used to have a laundry so they were comfortable. They had a Packard car, whatever and she had a Shirley Temple doll. I was so

envious, you know. [laughs] Or people that wanted to, there was another girl that was studying okoto, the Japanese traditional 13-string instrument. I said, fortunately, I have a daughter that loved it. So, my mother bought her the koto. So, she has the first certificate on it. The teacher was excellent in Montreal but then, she went away to Western University so she quit after that. We have a beautiful instrument at home. I wish she could take it up again, you know. She studied sitting Japanese and she studied with the Japanese music, completely the kanji.

LU: Wow, that's incredible.

RA: Yup. So now, you know, she works at the [unclear] and meets all the bigshots from Japan. She has a smattering of Japanese, you know.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: She always, you know, she used to meet the ambassador from Ottawa. Yeah, stay at the hotel then. I've got Ichiro's signed baseball.

LU: Oh yeah? Look at that. So, your children, did they go to Japanese school as well or did they just learn-?

[35 minutes]

RA: Well, no. Of course, this is Montreal. So, I had, no, she was studying [odori]. So, this girl [unclear], she came from Japan. I had them both teaching Japanese for a while and she was doing odori. When Gail was eight years old, of course, I took her to Japan. So, I've taken them twice to Japan. With my mother living with us, you know, so they have enough Japanese. One time, she calls from down-, she says, "Mother, what does shachou mean?" I said, shachou means president because, you know, with a president there's always an assistant tagging along. They always say, shachou, shachou you know so she picked up the word. So, I said, that's because of the president. There's always the tag alongs, you know. She has enough to start a conversation. She used to love to watch Japanese videos whenever she came home.

LU: Oh wow. That's remarkable. Trying to think of any other questions about pre-war days. Is there anything else you remember about the pre-war days before we start talking about the war years?

RA: Well, even like I said with the pre-war days, we were amongst the Japanese. We didn't have the opportunity to mix with our Canadian friends because we went to Japanese school. So we had to rush home and most of us, I think, went to Japanese school. When you are spending an hour and a half, once you finished [speaks Japanese], grade 8, eh. Then, we went to night school and that was another year and a half. So just before the war, my brother and [Nikyo?], lives in Winnipeg, and Nishikawa, I think Rick Nishikawa's older brother that lived in Ottawa. He was working for the consulate there. I think they were the first three graduates of high school just before the war. But we were in it also so we didn't, of course, graduate but our time was strictly either helping at home, going to school, Japanese school, and then, we used to see- There used to be a Mr. Suki that used to come around with Japanese movies.

LU: Oh.

RA: Yeah. So, we remember watching Mr. Arabaki's old, old movies and Yuki downstairs with the EPC program was looking for stories or artifacts of people that

could talk about the pre-war days and I found out Mr. Arabaki? 78 Rem [unclear] record the other day. So, I have quite a few. It was another interesting thing is, there was Sally Nakamura who became an opera singer in Japan. Quite popular, I guess. Anyways, I don't know. His son was looking for his father's records that I guess must have been lost during the war. When I was in Vernon, my girlfriend, I was staying with them. Her husband had boxes of old Japanese records. I found one practically new with the cover, picture, and everything. So, I said, "Can I have it?" and I brought it home to Montreal. I packaged it with a note inside in English saying how I found this and you know, so I mailed it in Japan. So then, when I came back to the house where I was staying, there was a message from the son, you know, with a note saying he wanted to meet me but I called him. I didn't want him to come with [Omiyaki?] because there was nothing for me to say to him. So, I talked to him on the phone and he said, the note said, he had-. I said, maybe it could be a duplicate but because it was so nice I am sending it. He had been looking high and low and he never found it. So, a total stranger had sent this to him. He was so delighted, you know. So that was nice, you know, because I had read in the New Canadian that he was looking for letters and anything about his father. So, anyways-, these are the memories of, you know, people and then of course, a lot of them, if you are able to, talk to like Pat Adachi with the baseball history, eh. Yeah.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: So other than-, other than, we were always started congregating amongst the Japanese. So, when this Harry Nakashima moved in across just from the corridor, I said to him, you know, oh I was saying I was from Fairview.

[40 minutes]

RA: And she says, my husband was from Fairview. He was Frank Nakashima. He died quite young, you know. I said, he and I we grew up together till the evacuation so we meet up with people. Immediately we say where you are from and you say, your parents were from Steveston, then right away people that were [unclear] what was your mother's maiden name, etc, you know. We're not, there were only 23,000 Japanese. We are not that stranger so we know of and now you'll find that it makes a complete circle with some of them, their in-laws or whatever, not blood related but it can happen, you see.

LU: Yeah, yeah.

RA: Other than just our local areas because like Sunday school, Saturday clubs, Japanese school every day and then, with the neighborhood kids, we would play, we play softball and whatever. But the evenings were long, so after supper. That's why to this day, I like to do the pots and pans early because I want time to do the dishes and go out to play. One little girl in Hamilton said, she happened to say something about the pots and pans were washed first or whatever. Well, the water could be dirty. It wasn't that. It was time to get rid of it as soon as possible but then, when you meet Mr. Ishi and them, the minute they have their hands free, it's washed. And to this day, when I make my [manju], one thing if it's finished, it's washed and set away before I even finish cooking.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: It's a habit. That's what the pros apparently do. I didn't know that, I was saving time. So, it's interesting the habits that you pick up without realizing, you know.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: My cooking like I say was started my liking for food but if I had the opportunity to study to be a dietitian or home economics, I don't know if I would have been good at it. I'd like the job, I ended up being an executive secretary to a vice president, you know and all the extra work from the rush job from the president's office, I handled so I had a very interesting job.

LU: Yeah.

RA: That's why, like when I read some of these newspapers with all that goes on. Because I had all the litigation files and all the consultants' files. Heck, you know you bring it to their attention. RA: So it's interesting. That's why I like, I like reading that article. I liked [Horish Eldger?] stories that if you work, you know, hard at it. I loved reading [Hayaoaka's?] story because he praises his secretary. And to this day, my boss thanks me. [emphasizes with hand movements]

LU: Oh wow.

RA: We keep very good friends. Should I met his family, [unclear], his daughter-. We still keep in touch, Victoria, you know, he and his wife.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: But I've always said, there's a line of respect. To me, he was always Mr. Jack Hunter not Jack. Even to this day, I find it hard, you know. I only had two bosses. One was John Mackenzie and to me, he is still Mr. Mackenzie, not John. I met wonderful people but that respect is there, always.

LU: Oh my, did you complete high school then when you were in Vancouver?

RA: Yeah, commercial high school and then, I went to sewing school, the Academy of Useful Arts instead of going to a Japanese sewing school and some of the daughters of the friends that my mother knew, they had gone to the Academy. So [Mary Amalka?] that lives here went to the Academy. She was from Prince Rupert.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Yeah. She might have an interesting background because she grew up north and she grew up in a fishing area and she doesn't eat that sashimi, raw fish. [shaking head]

LU: Oh why? Oh wow. Maybe too much of it.

RA: Did you ever hear of Roger Obata?

LU: No, I've never heard of [Roger Obata?]?

RA: Have you heard of John, John Kawaguchi that died recently? Ok.

LU: Yeah.

RA: I think John Kawaguchi had a start with Roger Obata in Montreal.

[45 minutes]

LU: Oh.

RA: Roger Obata was one of the old, old diehards of the [Kunio Sumayano]. Well, maybe [Amaka?] grew up with him in Prince Rupert.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: She might be interesting. Sort of hard of hearing but she lives on the floor here.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Other than that, I can't think of, you know, just ordinary lives-. Japanese games because that's what we knew, you know.

LU: So what do you remember about the day when you heard that Pearl Harbour was bombed?

RA: We were in Sunday school and when we came out, we heard and we rushed home to listen to the radio.

LU: Who were you with?

RA: I don't know. Cause you know, Sunday school is all Japanese, you know. It was the Christian United Church.

LU: What do you remember hearing on the radio?

RA: That they had bombed Japan and then going to sewing school was terrible because people would stare at you and look at you and whatever. You could even be spitted on, you know, sorta. I had finished high school then. So, like I said, I was at the Academy. I graduated from there just prior to. Yeah so, I don't know. Of course, you know, the lights, we had to cover it with the newspaper so the lights don't leak out, you know, because it's the curfew and my brother was at UBC and he used the excuse that he was writing exams so he didn't get caught-

LU: Yeah.

RA: Because there was the, you know. What is it? You had to be in by a certain hour, eh. A lot of our friends got caught, you know and they got sent to an internment camp.

LU: Oh.

RA: But my brother was lucky so he was able to get to Slocan City.

LU: If you were caught, did they take you right away to the internment camps or-?

RA: No, no, no. They had, in the Marine building. When you go to Vancouver, like Burrard towards the waterfront, there's a building there and I think they had an area there somewhere. And then from there, there was an evacuation. But some of them that went to Hastings Park, even Vancouver went to Hastings Park, we didn't but-. I think we, we were packed up and then, of course, all the furniture that we weren't able to bring, we were leaving it in the Japanese school. The United Church we didn't but the Japanese school, and of course, so much of it got robbed and whatever. Yeah but-. And then none of the families were, if they were left, left without going anywhere, they were frightened because they didn't know where they were gonna end up going. So a lot them says- Ok, I remember like the [Sahuji?] family. I sent them a telegram to say, you know, we were able to get a house for them so come to Lemon Creek. So, different religious groups like, Buddhists went to Sandon, the Catholics went to Greenwood, United Church went to Kaslo and different centres opened up. So, it was because they relied on leaders and their teachers or the Buddhist priests were leaders in that little community. Yeah so they listened, you see, and of course, we had somebody. So, United Church- The government, in Lemon Creek, the government set up the elementary school but the high schools, the United Churches came to Lemon Creek and the teachers that were there were the objectors. They came because they didn't go to war. Some of them, when we have the Lemon Creek reunion, the teachers would come and I got very friendly with the RCMP and he just died two years ago. So, whenever I went to

Vancouver, I used to see him, you know. When he died, the wife sent me a letter. Recently, I found some of his pictures so I sent it to the wife. This was one of his first postings. [Jack Dugget?], he was a very nice guy, you know.

LU: Oh wow, you first met him in Lemon Creek?

RA: That was his first posting. And then, of course, I worked in the commission office so Jack Burns was the head supervisor so I worked for him. In New Denver, I worked for [Lawhee?]. Once you get to know them, to them it was a job. It wasn't easy for them.

LU: Yeah, yeah.

RA: 25 cents an hour and you know, some of the Isseis come to complain in the office, you know.

[50 minutes]

RA: Their house is wet or whatever. I still have the commissioned blanket. One of them.

LU: Do you?

RA: Yeah. [laughs] So, I was telling Yuki I could show it to you. It's got holes in it but I said I still have it, you know.

LU: And that was the blanket that they were giving out?

RA: [nods] To everybody.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Straw mattresses and whatever. Commissioned army blanket.

LU: That's incredible.

RA: Yeah, I still have it. It's got a few holes in it but I still have it.

LU: Yeah, yeah. So, was it a very thick blanket or is it-?

RA: At one time, it was thicker. Now, it's flat, you know.

LU: Oh my goodness. So, how many siblings do you have? Is it just-?

RA: I just have an older brother.

LU: Just your brother.

RA: And he lives here. [points finger down] Yeah, he graduated University of, I don't know, Manitoba and he was with the aluminum company. So you hear of Kitimat, out west. Yeah, he was one of the original engineers that was there. He would get posted [unclear] in Kitimat.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Ended up being a sinking engineer at an aluminum-. He had a very good job. He was lucky, you see. He was two years of out of UBC [University of British Columbia] when the war started and he was able to complete it at Manitoba. Whereas Fred Sasaki, they were, you know, already graduates but couldn't find jobs. I think when he first came here, he was in the warehouse in Canadian Tire or somewhere and got promoted and became vice president.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: The niseis did well. But the- I always say even now, when you look at Momiji and some of their staff too, the work ethics is different. I used to say to my daughter too. I say, just because you don't do something, I say the company's not going to fall so don't worry, you know. But of course, the computer generation is again totally

different, you see. I don't like using the computer because if I make a mistake, I have a hard time correcting it. So, I say, it's too much leg work. [laughs]

LU: They take a while to learn.

RA: Well, I did, I have my third computer.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Because once I had it, something went wrong. And then, the kids, you know. I would buy the kids a new one and then their old one comes, you know. It's fun to just write letters but I have a beautiful typewriter. So, if I write letters, that's it. And then, there's always a nice phone call. At least you get the answer right away.

LU: Yeah, that's true.

RA: So, I say, I'm not a computer-. If it had started about-. You see, data processing was starting before I went [unclear]. If it had started just a few years earlier and if my children were at home, you know, then fine. Both of them had already left Montreal so I had nobody to discuss it with. So, if I had that about three or four years, I think I would have enjoyed it. Now, one of my friends does everything. You know, photos and whatever. I say, it's too much leg work.

LU: Yeah. [laughing] How much time were you given notice to leave your house and move to the camps?

RA: It was already started because a lot of them even from Vancouver were moving into Hastings Park. But we, oh we had maybe three or four months more, more than that, I guess. We knew that the evacuation was going on. But actually for us to move, Slokan was already full. They were starting to build houses in Lemon Creek which was about seven miles away. To pack and be ready to go, my brother must have gone-. I guess, just a couple of months.

LU: Yeah, yeah.

RA: I can't remember what we did with all the furniture. Did we just leave it?

LU: I thought you said you put it in the Japanese school?

RA: Some of it, yes.

LU: Some of it.

RA: But you know, like beds and that, you can't, eh. I can't even remember. I don't think we sold anything because-.

LU: Did you think you were going to come back to the house or did you know that you might not return?

RA: We didn't think we would return, not right away anyways, you know, but I don't think we even thought- Did I even think of that?

LU: Yeah.

RA: Because we were able to take, Vancouver, Lemon Creek, we were able to take quite a few things. I can't remember. Huh, what a question for you to ask. I can't remember.

LU: Do you remember taking a lot of dishes and clothing and blankets or did a lot of that stuff get left behind?

RA: I think we were able to take our clothing.

[55 minutes]

RA: I remember my mother, you know, we had one family picture and my mother cut it up and I was so mad because it was a nice photographer's picture, you know, and that was the only one. I must have been about four and it was about this size [extends both arms] and I said, "Why did you cut that up?", you know. But some of the books that we should have brought, I'm sad we threw it out, you know. So I can't remember what we did with our furniture. Huh, isn't that interesting? I'll have to think about that.

LU: You mentioned you had a radio in your house as well. Was it one of those big radios or just a small-?

RA: No, it was a small one, round. My brother would always be sitting because he would be studying. You know, the table's there and being the only son, you know, I did all the housework and he sat there. If there was a bicycle to buy, he would get it, I wouldn't get it, you know. [laughs] Yeah, he was always listening-. It was here and he's facing the table here. Could always remember that.

LU: Would you often listen to the radio? Would you normally turn it on?

RA: Yeah. Of course, yeah. You know like radio theatre. It's not theatre like that in pictures so you are listening quietly. Yeah, that was our entertainment, I guess.

LU: Yeah, so when the curfew first started, what time did you have to be, you know, quiet and lights out?

RA: Well, the lights are okay. But it's all covered so that it doesn't leak out. Soon as it got dark, I think. Sometimes like in winter, Vancouver is very dark so even by five, five-thirty, it's dark.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Because I could remember when we were kids, you know in the morning, the cars have their lights on. That's how dark it was. So, at five-thirty especially if it rains, you know how it reflects, it was very dark. So, I said, I never wanted to go back to Vancouver. I could never live there, you know.

LU: Yeah. Did the RCMP come and take away the radio you had in the house or were you able to keep it?

RA: I don't think so. I think they- Did they come to collect it? Those are interesting questions. Cameras and that, of course, you know you took. The ships, I think they came to get, you know. And when the Bird commissioners went around in Lemon Creek too. You know, they had to give out their deed paper. I was doing some interpreting with them and some of the men would cry because that was their livelihood, you know. The RCMP, some of them were very sympathetic. Gee, I can't remember whether they came to get the radio or not.

LU: Maybe they didn't.

RA: Good questions you're asking. Did others know? Did you ask questions like that to others?

LU: No, just thought of it now.

RA: Isn't it interesting? I'll have to find that out.

LU: Yeah.

RA: Even from [unclear] to New Denver, what did we bring out west, from west to east? I can't remember. I am going back to- I said, a baby born is on old age pension [laughs] and there are so many families now where both the parents and the children getting old age pension. That's how long we're living.

LU: Yeah. Well you said your mother lived till she was 95.

RA: Just under 95.

LU: That's incredible.

RA: And she had a blood pressure of 200 with medication.

LU: Wow.

RA: The last six months, because I was taking my husband's part of his ashes back to Japan. My brother said they can't look after her so I had to put her into a nursing home. She didn't need diapers or anything. She was slow but before she left, we knew she was just eating little bits, you know, so we knew that her appetite- [background noise] Gee, I'm talking a lot.

LU: That's perfect.

RA: Am I making any sense?

LU: Yes, of course. You packed up and you first went to Lemon Creek and you mentioned you shared the house and what do you remember about the house in Lemon Creek? Was it very big or was it one of the two-bedroom ones?

RA: Well, it was two bedrooms and because it was a small family. My brother was working in Slocan City so it's just my mother and I. Once in a while he might- It was one bedroom and a shared kitchen and the outhouse is in the back. Of course, nobody wants to go out at night, you know. It's cold and there's icicles in the house during the winter and the tap was outside and then, we had the logging people, you know.

[60 minutes]

RA: So, in the end, they were able to bring the water into the house. So, yeah, I said, I never wanted to go camping. [laughs]

LU: How long were you in Lemon Creek for?

RA: I was there for about two years, I guess. Then, they had another, the second evacuation so either you are going east or going back to Japan. So, we were moved to New Denver. Slocan City, Slocan, Sandon had closed so some had come to Lemon Creek but then again, you know, they moved to New Denver. Tashme Camp closed so then, some of them moved to New Denver. From there, it was- The community is still there. A few Japanese are still there. One thing the Canadian government gave was property to them, after the war, you see. Whereas in the U.S., when you start comparing, there's quite a bit of differences. Canada wasn't bad in that respect, you know. Of course, we weren't behind wired fences and whatever.

LU: And the RCMP were very nice, so I've been told.

RA: [nods] Right, yep.

LU: Oh wow. What kind of work were you doing in the commission's office?

RA: It was just typing, secretarial, you know. Requirements and of course, the payroll, when it comes in [unclear]. And then there was a sugar rationing. So, Yuki Kondo lives in Toronto, too but she and I, we would weigh the sugar in one of these weights, you know. So a hundred pound doesn't end up a hundred pound so towards the end, we had to cut out a little bit but it was rationing. And of course, in the camps, there were some Canadian people to have stores. So then, the

Doukhobors would come in to sell fruits and vegetables. So that was good, you know.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Of course, we had the Eaton's catalogue so everyone wore the same types of shoes. [laughs] Boots with the little fur on the top, you know. So Eaton's catalogue was, you know, we would look at it from cover to cover, I don't know how many times in ordering it. It was fun and then we had a concert one time. There were maybe 2000 people in the camp so the whole concert went on for a week. I was in one of the shibayi, you know, so it was interesting.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: And then, they had the United Church came in with their little kindergartens and that. Then, the United Church later on came in to do the high school. So, I was helping with some of the correspondence courses there for a while. You see, then, they were looking for teachers. If they had grade then education and up. So when you talk about, well some of them have died now, they would say, he was my student. Between the student and teacher, there's not that much age difference, you know.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: The kids did well, you know.

LU: Did you ever consider being a teacher?

RA: [shaking head] No.

LU: No, never thought of it?

RA: I went to teach the, help with the correspondence courses for the high school students but just for a little while. I don't think I ever wanted to be a teacher.

LU: Yeah. And what about- When you were in Lemon Creek, did you have any other correspondence with any non-Japanese other than the RCMP and the Doukhobors or whoever else would come in with a store? Was there ever any opportunity or-?

RA: Not really. The people of Slocan City. I don't know if you have ever seen the tape *The War Between Us* that CBC put on.

LU: Oh.

RA: It was basically-. It's too bad Kana died. But you know, another person, Claire Nakamura lives on the third floor or wherever. She took over the job Kana had but Kana had worked, she was in Bay Farm, and Kana died about four years ago now. Kana was, you know, working for a couple, a Canadian couple in Slocan City. They had a little store. And then, Kana would look after the house. She would do the cooking. They were surprised at the way she could cook because she worked for a Canadian family in Vancouver so they knew how to bake and everything else. When they used to talk- When she and Kyo Ida and Ms. [unclear], she's got dementia now so I don't think it's worth talking to her, but Kana used to say, "in the afternoon, [unclear] the maids have to wear the black dresses, the white apron and whatever."

[65 minutes]

RA: It's that generation. You people did that sort of thing and they laughed, you know. But Kana was working for them and then they moved. The daughter, the granddaughter became a writer and she sold the story to CBC. If you ever get hold of

it- Do I have it on a CD/DVD? I may have. I'll take a look. I had the preliminary of how they made this film in New Denver. Plus, the story is based on facts of Kana. There's, you know, to make it into a sellable story, they had to fictionalized it a little bit. It's a very nice story. Even after that, the friendship that was made still carried on.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: It was the granddaughter that wrote the story. It's really nice, it's called *The War Between Us*. Try to get hold of it and read it. It's very interesting.

LU: I'll try looking for it.

RA: Yeah, right, CBC. I don't know if I have it because sometimes, if I loan it out, I may not get it back, you know. But that would be interesting. That was the relationship whereas Slocan was fine because there was the residents there. But one of the chaps started a store in Lemon Creek. So, the Lemon Creek was isolated. It was a farm area that they took on so Burns, sometimes they would invite me to their home for dinner or whatever. The RCMP is a bachelor, of course. You don't get to know, to socialize with him but he got friendly with a lot of the students, especially boys in the area. Some of them really kept in touch with him just like I did, you know. So other than that and the Doukhobors, it was only the store managers that were non-Japanese. So, we didn't have much opportunity. And when we moved to New Denver, there was a little town there. You got to know the grocery man and, you know, but not on a friendly basis as such. You're just a customer, you see. So we didn't have really the relationship whereas like Kana, working for this family. The people in Slocan city had more opportunities. Once they got to know-. But the people that lived in Kaslo, they were part of the city. They have another background. To this day, excuse me, one of the girls is still living there.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: If you ever get a chance to see one of the ghost town cities, you know, she's still there.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: It was interesting because when we went to New Denver, in a town called Silverton which is only four miles away, there was a Chinese laundry, and they were the ones that when the CP¹ was being built. Wherever they finished the work, you know, the Chinese were that. The Chinese history is sad, probably worse than the Japanese, you know.

LU: Oh really?

RA: Yeah, yeah. They brought all the workers from China and lot of them died. Of course, a lot of them when the job was finished were left in that spot where they were. One of the famous stories is that in Timmins, Ontario, there was a Chinese restaurant that when the miners didn't have any cash, he would buy their, take their stocks as payment and became a small millionaire is the story that we read. So there are a lot of interesting stories if you really search, you know. One time, I think, the CBC made a documentary on CPR, it's quite interesting.

RA: Oh wow.

¹ Likely referencing the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR).

LU: So, no, we- That's why, from our childhood, we didn't really have the opportunity to mingle and really become friends other than in school. There was an Estonian girl that I guess we were chummy from grade one to four sort of thing. But it's in-. Once we got to Montreal, of course you know, you get to know your neighbours. One of the ladies that came to work, she died just a couple of years ago. Her niece lives in Victoria, and if I go,, I always visit them. Montreal, I still have the [unclear] that I visit and stay with them. So now, this Ann that I'm traveling with. I have more friends now, non-Japanese so whenever I'm traveling in Canada, I'm visiting them more than Japanese although I have friends in Vancouver and Steveston, Japanese that I visit.

[70 minutes]

RA: So, I really enjoy it. I'm fortunate to have them now that I get away from my Japanese, you know. So, I really enjoy it when I am with them.

LU: Oh wow. What about when you moved from Lemon Creek to New Denver? How long were you in New Denver for?

RA: I was there, way past, over, you know, I got married in New Denver.

LU: Oh, okay.

RA: Todd was from Japan. He was doing contract logging, you know. Yeah, we got together there and then, we moved to Montreal. I was working in the commission office.

LU: So, you weren't there for very long then?

RA: No, I was. From way back until 1952 that I moved to Montreal. So, I was one of the late ones moving to Montreal.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: So, I was just loafing around, I guess. Not doing very much.

LU: And were you doing the same thing in New Denver that you were in Lemon Creek for work?

RA: [nods] Whoever came into the office, I would look after.

LU: Yeah. Oh wow. Did you ever hear about any stories about any of the RCMP having problems with any of the Japanese Canadians in any of the camps?

RA: Not that I know of because there's [May Mitsui?] that lives in a condominium somewhere. She worked for the RCMP commissioner in New Denver.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: I wonder if she's- May Mitsui. Mrs. Mitsui teaches the Ikebana here. It's her sister-in-law.

LU: Okay.

RA: Her husband was one of the Asahi Baseball players.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Get in touch with her. Gee, I wonder if I have her telephone number. [gets up from the chair and grabs a phone book] She worked for the commissioner of the RCMP. This was before we moved to, to New Denver. Yeah, she would be interesting and her brother was George Yoshinaka, was a young pitcher with the Asahi.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Yeah. And he had one of these, you know when they had the Hall of Fame things, they got that green jacket? She got one for her brother.

LU: Oh, isn't that nice.

RA: She might be an interesting person. She's- We call her May and her Japanese name is Fuyuko, Fuyuko], winter. They had four sisters: Matsui, Haru, you know, Fuyo. We grew up in the same area in Vancouver. Yeah, her husband died very suddenly, [unclear]. She would be an interesting person.

LU: Yeah.

RA: With the, you know, Asahi Baseball background of her husband.

LU: Oh yeah.

RA: And then, George, her brother, was an Asahi player.

LU: I'll have to try and find out.

RA: Yep. Her sister, sister-in-law still does volunteer work at Castlefield.

LU: Okay.

RA: She's from Nagoya, Japan though. So, you will be able to find her through-.

LU: I'll have to ask.

RA: Yeah, yeah. She would have an interesting because she's a couple years older than I, I think you know. What her mentality is now, I don't know. Because you sort of get forgetful, you know. That's why, when I'm talking to somebody at the bank or the broker or whatever, this one I called now too, she's looking at my record and she has my birthday. She says, boy you sound well, you know. So, I said, I'm very fortunate at least. I have a sound mind, I think.

LU: Yeah, yeah. You do. So, when did you meet your husband?

RA: I guess, around the 1950s when he was doing contract logging. Yeah, there were many that were using one of the camp houses, you know. I had always said, never marry an issei, you know.

[75 minutes]

RA: He was a quiet guy. I think, no, I had said when I married him, he wanted to study so he came on a last ship from Japan. If he had high school, I said, I would have him now get through university but because of the war, he ended up in road camp. But he became a mechanic and did quite well. He had never been sick in his life but he did have prostate cancer and died within a year, eh. 68. So, so it's over 20 years now since he died.

LU: Oh wow. When did he first come to Canada from Japan?

RA: 19-, I guess, '38 or '39 or '37 around that time before the war. And they had to commit themselves for three years to working at farm, and his uncles were here. So that's why he came, you know.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: So, from Kagoshima, Japan, the southern. Because he had uncles here, he came hoping that he could study, you see, but then the war started.

LU: Were his uncles working in the road camp as well?

Well, you know, they were in Duncan area. They had a shoe repair shop. [Sam Mashima?] still lives. He died but the children are still here.

LU: Oh wow and did he come from a big family as well?

RA: No, just three brothers. Yep, no daughters but older brother had become blind during the war with malnutrition. And actually, they apparently, they had started to make an application for the older brother to come but, you know, it takes time and then of course, the war started. So the younger, the middle brother came and he didn't mind living with my brother. He says I never looked after my mother so, every time I go off on a trip, and I say, "Do you wanna go?" No, he stayed home and looked after my mother.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: But he was a quiet guy. You know, so-. I do so many projects that he'll help me along, you know. He's a little quiet guy but I had my own pleasures so it was okay and he'd tagalong and help me with everything. Worked out fine.

LU: Was there another brother as well?

RA: He was the only one in his family that came. And he-. The money that he was earning, he sent to Japan to educate the young brother. And when we met him, I didn't like him. He was sort of a bigshot. Even Todd, you know [Todashi?], he said his brother had changed, you see. It was sort of sad, you know, because his mother was still alive. So, I took the kids and we had a couple of trips there.

LU: So, you got married in 1952?

RA: '52, yeah.

LU: How many children did you have?

RA: I have two. I have a son in Mississauga and he's one of these scholars, scholarship to Royal Canada College. Didn't have to study to go through universities. He's one of these Mensa guys, you know. Knew all the sumo wrestlers in ten, fifteen minutes. Knows karuta. He was, you know, when they had this reach for the stars, he was even on that. [unclear] went through elementary right through high school on scholarship from [Royal Canada College?].

LU: Oh wow.

RA: So got into any university so he graduated Western with his MBA. So, he's doing okay, I guess. Not doing very much now because his contract with an American company was cancelled, you know, with all this recession and that. I think he's doing alright. They have no children so-

LU: Does your daughter have children as well?

RA: Yeah, she has one. He doesn't know, he just graduated high school. He doesn't know what he wants to study.

LU: Oh, he's still young.

RA: Yeah.

LU: So, what made you decide to go from New Denver to Montreal?

RA: Well, my brother was here.

LU: Right.

RA: So, to keep the family together.

LU: Oh wow. And once you arrived in Montreal, did you find it was difficult to find a place to live or did you live with your brother?

RA: Oh, we lived with, my brother had, wasn't married at the time so he had bought a house. So, we lived together and then, when he got married, we were living together and then, we moved into an apartment and saved enough money to buy a house. So, we bought a duplex and I was five minutes from work so I could walk to

work. So, for 31 years, I worked, you know. But then, Sunday morning at eight o'clock in the morning when the phone rang, I would be in there, you know, doing these funny little jobs but the boss was super, you know.

[80 minutes]

RA: I really enjoyed it. Every day was something different. I worked with consultants. I worked with- You know, we even, in those days, we even made sushi for the Board of Directors. Dinner one time because not enough Japanese restaurants and my mother was very good with sushi. Yeah.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: So, I've had lot of- I've been on company planes, we learned to separate bill or whatever.

LU: Well, that's a nice treat.

RA: I've met- Because of my liking for cooking, I like to balance things. I studied cookbooks. I played golf for about three years and never liked it. So, I said, even now, my cookbooks lie away. If there's something, I say, I'm looking for something different-

LU: Oh wow.

RA: We've done, you know, like one of the [unclear], we did private parties for them. Real estate, you know. President, he wanted a private party so we would do that. Museum of Fine Arts, we did some of their programs, you know.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: I've met a lot of interesting people but the Olympics was 500 and when the Japanese training ship came in, that's another 500. You're planning meals, what to serve and you know. That's why I had the executive chef contact, too.

LU: And he was the executive chef at the hotel?

RA: No, at the company where I was working because it's what's now Bombardier. I used to work 400 under Canada Air and it was one time owned by General Dynamics. See so-

LU: Oh wow.

RA: [unclear] from New York, taking- Because I was the only one at that time taking dictation, shorthand.

LU: Oh yeah?

RA: See, this is before like the computers, before the computers, eh. The data processing was just starting, very little of it, and of course, they needed, you know, President's secretaries. Down the line, very few people took dictation.

LU: Oh wow. That's incredible.

RA: So, I've been, you know, exposed to- And then if they are sending out a contract or something, you know, submitting. I can remember going home at four o'clock in the evening and going back at almost at midnight to work to make sure that-. Because different people have different stages of work so it's no use hanging around and waiting so they said, okay go home and come back at such and such an hour and we'll write through to morning because they have a deadline. There's a courier sitting there, waiting, to take the plane and we have a traffic department that would

handle the reservations but it was faster for us to say, look, change the schedule to this because it's not ready.

LU: Oh wow, that's busy.

RA: Oh yeah. It was interesting.

LU: And your husband at the time was working as a mechanic, you said?

RA: Mechanic, yeah. Right.

LU: Was he working close by to home as well?

RA: No, he was a little bit further but we had always said, one should be at home and it just happened that I had an introduction into the company and the boss, Jack Hunter, was looking- He had an English girl secretary and he needed somebody, somebody good, apparently had said who comes to apply being the first Japanese in there. They had an engineer already there. And because I had been printed, hand printed by an RCMP, they had to check to make sure that the fingerprint was okay.

LU: Oh yeah.

RA: In those days, it was interesting because Japanese consulate first started in Montreal. They would always come to greet the President, you know. So I arrived at, you know, dinner not with the, you know, but one of the rear admirals of Japan when he came to visit. He has his interpreter and everything else but I'm asked to sit with the president at their dinner and it's awful to have to sit there. [laughs] And then there was another escort that, you know they're showing off the city. They say, "Would you like to tag along with them?" I had said, for lunch, I want to take them to smoked meat sandwich. And the guy tries it, "You mean the smoked meat sandwich?" But I said the Japanese apparently liked the taste of it and it was upstairs, a nice dining room. They loved it, the taste of the smoked meat.

LU: Oh yeah.

RA: Not the corn beef in Toronto but the smoked meat in Montreal.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: You see. [laughs]

LU: That's fascinating.

RA: I've had some, you know, experiences that are quite interesting. I met a lot of nice people too.

[85 minutes]

RA: I met all the [shoshano] ladies. They are Japanese trading company. And I taught them how to make manju because they said, when their husbands bring a guest back, they don't eat cakes so what can they serve? So they thought the manju would be nice as long as the anko is frozen. Then, while they were chatting, they could make a few and send it out.

LU: Yeah. Oh wow,

RA: We have to have tea, are you finished? [laughs]

LU: No, not yet. So, what was the Japanese community like in Montreal? Were there a lot of other Japanese or was it pretty dispersed?

RA: No, no. We had- There was a small Catholic group, there was a cultural centre, the Buddhist, the United Churches and that. But because the community was small, they all collaborated. So, it was a warm group. Whichever groups had their bazaars,

in that, we all helped. We had the United Church group that did one portion like the Saint Mary's Ball. Did I do that through the community cultural centre? Or sometimes, depends on where the request comes in. When the Museum of Fine Arts had their show, that was the [Availity?] Canada Company that sponsored it in Kyoto. That came into the United Church so then Ms. [Nia?], downstairs, got involved. So, she and I would work at it. When it came to the Cultural Committee, the Saint Mary's Ball, you know, the debutante ball, it comes into the community centre in which case I would get involved as the head. So, there were the two elements and so it was interesting. But when the, you know, Olympics is on, training ship was on, that was the community thing, not the United Church group but, some people are involved, eh. Then, when we had the cooking class, I was asked by the cultural centre to do the English portion so I worked with the instructor in setting up the menu or whatever. [Harumi Amamoto?] was from the Buddhist Church and she did all the background work of shopping and doing the dishes and you know, getting everything ready whereas I was doing the commentating at the front. We set it up so we all sat and ate together.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: So, a specialist from the children's hospital was one of the guests. The President of [Air?], [unclear], he happened to be, you know, one of these class students. Another one was [gatutoes?], home economics. We aimed it at the non-Japanese. So, we said we'll make it as authentic as possible, you know. We started with a one-shot deal. We were volunteers and it went on for three sessions, three years, spring and fall. I said because I didn't want just a tasting, so whoever came in first would start washing the rice. [swirling motion with hands] They would come and have a meal. So, I think, we charged about \$15 for each student, you know. But we didn't get paid or anything but it was fun.

LU: Oh yeah.

RA: So, that was interesting, So, I've had interesting programs, a lot of it. I've done a lot of seniors' home. A lot of non-Catholic. Every time we have something, I would always make a tool for them to take home. So, for the traffic association, when they had it, we made, Ms. Sato and I, our families, we made 1000 paper cranes for the centerpiece decorations. Another year, they asked us and we couldn't afford to buy it so we made-, Valentines, so we cut out, buy a cut-out and we trace it and make it. One year, we made 1000 crepe paper roses, whatever.

LU: Oh my goodness.

RA: We had a lot of fun.

LU: Oh geez. Yeah.

RA: I thought-. Of course, lot of the French in Quebec, they are more into the arts. So even now when we get the Montreal Bulletin, the types of artists that come into Montreal, we don't see them all in Toronto. They seem to get a smaller group of different variety. Even now in Montreal, you know, and it's quite interesting.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: No different to the- Of course, being isolated here, we don't get as much out. So, it was an interesting community.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: To this day, it exists, you know. And then, one year, they had the-, every Wednesday, they had the seniors' group meeting.

[90 minutes]

RA: The volunteers go in to have, make lunches. The first week, they all brought their bento. Some of them that could make sushi had their little circles so then others that would only bring a cheese sandwich stopped coming. The community asked us if we could do something sort of, the fourth week, we used to volunteer to put on a meal for them, you know. So, I did that for about a year I guess before I moved out. So, I have all the recipes, you know.

LU: So, what made you decide to move out to-

RA: Toronto?

LU: -Toronto?

RA: Well, the kids were here and my husband died. And I thought, I was going to be alone and then, my mother died the following year. We had already planned that when we retired so we bought a house in Mississauga already because my son had graduated Western, you know, and at that time, he was working for Panasonic, I think. Yep, so we already had a house. Not that we were going to live together or anything but-. Yeah, so then, when they started building, I had, you know, inquired before they started to build. Then, the house got sold so I waited for six months. So here, I had a chance to go to Whistler and Banff for nothing. I didn't need to get paid. Then I had-. It's funny. There was another inquiry because I'm fluent in Japanese, I had another inquiry from a great big corporation, Japanese corporation in Toronto. I said, if they paid me in yen, I said, I would go. Because it's a separate entity, they couldn't do it. It was a nice, funny. I can tell you about it. It was a very nice inquiry. But I said, you know, if I took on a job, I said I'd lose all my pension. I wasn't interested in working. [laughs]

LU: Not anymore.

RA: But the offer was sort of fascinating. It was a nice idea but-. It was nice of them to think about it and think about me, which is you know-.

LU: You mentioned you worked for 31 years, was it?

RA: [nods]

LU: Yeah. After that, you've had-.

RA: With us, it was very fortunate because we have a company pension. But when the General Dynamics was holding onto the company for about 20 years, they had a savings plan similar to like the Japanese that had their bonuses. Yeah, the shop had their bonuses twice a year and the staff had an investment plan so I left my money in for 20 years.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Whatever area you want to invest in, you know.

LU: So, when you were growing up and even now, was religion ever a big part of your life or -?

RA: Well, I always say that I grew up in the system.

LU: The system?

RA: The system is because the missionaries of the United Church helped us with teaching English to get us ready for school. So, then they had the Saturday clubs to teach us handicraft or others, you know. Then, we had the CGIT, the Girls in Training is what they called it, Canadian Girls in Training. So, they taught us little cooking and when they talk about other classes, if they were talking about Africa, we would learn to make the little, you know, decorations or whatever. It was a growing up process. So then, it became YP so we learned more about the world. When you are ready to join the church, then, of course, with, through the church, we had choirs that went to different churches to sing or competitions.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Yeah. So, that was meeting other non-, this is United Churches' Japanese but we had a Canadian minister. And then we would go to sing with other choirs and that. So that was the only exposure to non-, you know, the Caucasian group. So, our days were busy because we were being taught by missionaries and even Sunday school. So, every day was filled. We didn't have time to play other than in the evenings when we played with our neighbours, you know, softball and whatever. On Saturdays and Sundays, we walked all the way to Kitsilano Beach or we went to Shirley Temple movies.

LU: Yeah.

RA: When we had a nickel, we would look at these one-cent candies.

LU: And pick up five?

RA: Yeah, you get a bag full for a nickel.

[95 minutes]

LU: Oh wow.

RA: So, we all remember and you know then, the scrubbing the floor. You know, washing. We didn't have automatics so you had to boil the hot water to do the washing and that. So, we didn't really have time. It was all education for us, the Canadian way of doing things.

LU: You must have had a lot of chores then to help around the house.

RA: [nods]

LU: Being the only girl.

RA: Yup.

LU: Did that change when you went to Lemon Creek? Did you find you didn't have as many chores because you were working or-?

RA: Well, the wood was brought to us, you know. So, we still had to do the cooking and whatever and all the water from outside to the inside and the houses are cold. But, you know, they put on movies and they put on these concerts so it was fun. For the kids that were in school, I think that was the best time of their life. They don't regret it.

LU: Yeah.

RA: And they all turned out to be wonderful adults.

LU: What do you remember about the weather and the seasonal conditions-?

RA: Cold.

LU: In the camps? Was it really?

RA: Oh yeah, there were icicles in the house because they took, still, you know, the wet woods, to build the houses and it's tar paper and the weather in interior BC is cold.

LU: Oh wow. What would you do to stay warm? You only had one stove.

RA: One stove? Yeah.

LU: For the whole house? Oh wow.

RA: We had all the blankets. [laughs] Did we go to bed early because it grows dark in the night, too? Then, they had creepy bathhouses. The bath would be about this size [extends both arms] and they have ladies' and mens' whatever. Yeah, lot of them was a little fun, you know, in some respects. Every day you would sort of wait for the mail to be brought in or the groceries to come in or the Doukhobors to come in. Oh, the Doukhobors [speaking Japanese], you know, we all ran to see what he's selling.

LU: How did you hear about the news of what was going on in the war and-?

RA: I don't know. There always seemed to be leakage from somewhere. Because none of us were supposed to have but I think we had the Canadian newspapers. So, we would say one thing and then, the Japanese would come along and say that Japanese is winning and that sort of thing.

LU: Oh wow. What was it like in the summertime though in the camps, was it really hot or was it pretty mild like Vancouver and-?

RA: Summer was, I think, quite nice. And then of course, you know, they had some type of mushroom that we would go and pick. I don't think, in Lemon Creek, we found matsutake. But in New Denver, we would go trout fishing or go mushroom hunting. There were real nice matsutake.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Yeah so-. Summer was-, New Denver was more in a nicely located area. It's like a resort area now but that was nice but Lemon Creek, they took Anderson's farm. It was just a farmland that they rented apparently and just built houses. Yep, so everything was shacks and whatever but great big schoolhouses. The government did the best they can. It was trying because everything was left behind especially the people that ended up in Hastings Park, you know, because they came from the islands and they were only able to carry two suitcases with them. So, after the war when you go to some of these antique places, they are selling Japanese stuff so they must have swiped at one time and when the custodians took the ships, you know, a lot of the movables were all taken off before the government, you know, went to check. Some of them would say the houses were so dirt cheap too. You can't start to compare the prices then to compare the prices now, mind you. What you pay for a car, you could buy a house in those days.

LU: Yeah. Oh wow.

RA: So, people that had something. Some people, when the government gave out the 21,000, if the whole family was five of them, you know they got a lot. But what they lost in total, for some of them, especially with a lot of the Japanese from what I heard way back in 1929, when the Depression hit, they had already bought property but they couldn't afford the taxes so they lost it.

LU: Oh my.

[100 minutes]

RA: So, that was the one area that we are not too familiar with. But then, with the evacuation, again, you know, this is what they lost too.

LU: Did you ever receive any compensation for the house?

RA: No, we had nothing.

LU: No?

RA: No, we had nothing.

LU: Oh wow. Were you renting the house though or-?

RA: That's right.

LU: Yeah, it was rented. Oh wow.

RA: So, people that had houses-. Maybe they got-. The sad part of it is they had to live on that before welfare would help. People that declared they had money in the bank, you know, some were honest. Then, they had to use that up before they were helped with the, you know, welfare.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: [unclear] I would always say that there's government loopholes. People that, you know, couldn't afford to get their children to houses, get supplements, it's the same thing. So, there's a lot of holes if you look for it.

LU: How did you meet your husband?

RA: He was working in the camp, doing contract logging in that area.

LU: I think I already asked that. [laughing] Started looping back on the other questions that I'm trying to think of so I cover everything. Did your parents ever try to learn English?

RA: My mother- I don't know about my dad. But my mother was able to read, you know, Jack and Jill went up the hill, about a grade two book. Because, you know, they came with nothing, they were, I guess, too busy with their livelihood. Like I say, the only ones, the women that went to churches were, their husbands were running a business or you know, the Japanese rich. That's why like evacuation, a lot of them went to what they called [Kanimuchibura?]. The rich, they didn't want government assistance and they went. Some of them says, oh well the friends, why don't you go with us. They didn't have the funds but they would tag along and they had a very hard time. Of course, depending on where they were settled, some of them got along fine, you know, with the community. Others were- Some of them had a pretty tough time too. Some of them did very well. Like in Alberta, you know, a lot of them became millionaires too, depending on how they ended up. Yeah.

LU: Do you ever remember your mother reacting to what was going on in the war? What was her impression on what was happening? What were her feelings about it?

RA: I think, I don't think, she worried that much. It was dependent on what we thought. Of course, her feeling was that, way back when, you know, my uncle had said, study, you know, education was important. So, whether we went back to Japan or Canada, I don't think it meant very much to her. I think she wanted us as long as we were together. Because she was, you know-, after dad died, that's why I like-, instead of living with my brother that got educated typical Japanese style until now, she was dependent on me. She didn't want me to have boyfriends in Vancouver because she was scared that I might leave her, I think. That's my feeling sometimes, you know. Because with a lot of the Japanese families, if the father died young, the

oldest son never married or there was one family that all the other younger children either got educated and left home. The eldest son finally just left his mother and left. Things like that have happened.

LU: Yeah.

RA: Because 100% Japanese tradition just didn't exist as our lifestyle changed. So, there are some sad cases and there are a lot of-, somewhere quite a lot that never got married because their mother was a widow. In my case, my mother, [unclear] my feelings, is that she was very dependent on me because if I, you know, in Vancouver, if I got a boyfriend, want to go out. "What you want to go there for?", is always what my brother used to say to me. [laughs]

LU: How did your mother feel about leaving Vancouver?

RA: The only thing, she was scared. I don't think she minded. She didn't express concern. She was only worried about her health. Because she had asthma, if the weather changed, how was it going to affect her? But once we got into the interior, she was fine because it was dry.

[105 minutes]

RA: When we moved to Montreal, periodically, she would have a small asthma attack or just you know, and a pill would subside it. Whereas I grew up with asthma. In those days, they didn't-. No, my mother. In those days, they didn't have the medication. In the middle of the night, she would wake me up and I have to rub her back. And then there was a cigarette or some herbs that, you know, you burn and you take the steam in or whatever. I did all that.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Then, if she's you know-. And then we didn't have a telephone, so we had to go to our neighbours. You know, if she needed a doctor. Before the doctor comes, the attack is gone or she'll end up in the hospital sometimes and they have to give her an adrenaline shot or whatever. She'll blame me that I didn't come to visit her because she hasn't got the language. I'm so busy with other things that I may not go. So, my mother [unclear]. I said, no, my mother used me so, I said I'm able to do so many things that I said I am capable. I said, one thing I never complained about my mother was her belief in education. I'm thankful for that. I'm thankful that she used me and I could do anything. 'Cause I said, if I didn't have the money for the children to go to university, I didn't mind doing housework. Scrubbing other people's floors didn't bother me. But they-, we never had to borrow money, you know. We didn't have to get any help from bursary or anything and they went through. So, they had 5000 dollars each when they turned 18 because I saved all their family allowance for them.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: Once I started working, I paid it back. Yeah, so now, I'm very independent. Yesterday, I treat my daughter and my daughter-in-law to South Pacific. It cost me that plus dinner at the hotel, lunch at the hotel plus taxi. Twice a year we do that.

LU: Oh wow but that's nice.

RA: That's nice.

LU: That's really nice.

RA: I tell them, you know, I saved my nickels and dimes. In between, I've been to Brazil, I've been to New Zealand, I've been to Europe, been to Japan so many times. So, I've been very, very lucky.

LU: What was it like going to Japan for the first time? What do you remember about your trip there?

RA: Well, this was before the bullet train and you know, it's the slow train. We went all the way to Kagoshima with the two kids. I didn't stop at Hiroshima because I thought the kids were too young but we went to Nagasaki. They had a beautiful trip. I saved for ten years, I said, to take that trip, you know. But no, I was fascinated. I always wanted to go. I had this rich aunt that took us to so many places. Yep.

LU: Oh wow. So, you got to see a little bit of everything and a little bit of family.

RA: That's right.

LU: Yeah and how was it, how was it communicating with the other Japanese people there? Did you have a hard time or-?

RA: No, I, my Japanese, my Nisei Japanese had turned into what I call Japanese Japanese. Even now, people ask me, was I born in Japan? Did I live there? Did I study there? The longest I've had in Japan is about six weeks.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: I said, I would never want to live there. I love to visit. But not to live there. See, after three weeks, I'm happy to get out.

LU: What were the houses like in Japan?

RA: Oh, at one time, there was a toilet that I didn't know which way to face, you know and we hated all these floor ones because it could spill all over. So, we always worked for the Western and the Japanese gradually started to change. One time, I go to- always use the upstairs bathroom, you know because they have all this fancy one downstairs and when they get their bonuses, this family that I stay with, he used to work at NEC. So, when they get their bonuses, they usually buy something, eh. The wife always says, you could use the washroom downstairs. I said, no thanks, I'm used to the one upstairs. You know, I'm sleeping upstairs anyways. So, the fancy gadgets, were not familiar with. But every family, as the parents got older, it was easier for them. One time, Kana had said, I had gone to Japan with her and she said, if we go to this certain relative, you know, the washroom is very old.

[110 minutes]

RA: When we got there, it was all Western. See, the people living there had gotten older and it was easier for them to have the Western. Each place, we sort of would say, is there a Western one around, you know?

LU: Yeah?

RA: Yeah. [laughing]

LU: Oh my.

RA: I don't know. Some of the others, you know, we went 1970 [unclear] and they said, gee, Japan smells, you know. No, I didn't mind at all. When I took mother, everywhere we go, we said, where's the washroom? We are at that stage now too. So, no, I didn't mind at all. I've always been fascinated, you know. I had the language, that's most important, you know. So, I used to tell my kids, you know, as long as they

could read some katakana and hiragana, then it makes it so much easier. One of my friends, she had all the cities in the kanji written and she compares it so that which ticket to buy. But when my brother went, I said, just go to any counter and speak in English and they are very kind so they'll help you, you know. And sure enough [nodding], they were very good about that, you know.

LU: Oh wow.

RA: You should go one day.

LU: I hope to.

RA: If you listen to history like this, all the more so. If you get a good tour, it's not expensive at all.

LU: Yeah.

RA: Yeah.

LU: I'm hoping to go after my Master's. That's going to be my little treat so. Done university and I'll go away for a little while and then, come back and get a job. That's what I hope. I'll see how it goes.

RA: There's obviously that cutoff which is very nice, you know, before you go into a permanent job. That time, very nice.

LU: I'm excited for it. I just wanted to ask, did you ever experience any discrimination whether you were living in Vancouver or in the camps or Montreal or Toronto?

RA: Well, Montreal, I'll start from Montreal, we had the advantage, I think, because being oriental, they automatically, Quebec has their language problems, automatically think that I'm from another country, mostly Chinese at that time. So, they realize that I can't speak a word of French so they are more careful with us or you know, not, like my next door neighbor, Ms. [Charleston?] always used to say, you know, she hated it because she's of English name. So, I said, it doesn't bother me because they just automatically presume that I don't speak the language. But then when they come from outside, they are always sent, the French government is giving them allowances to study French. So, there was that, you know. So, when the Japanese trading companies, a lot of them would send them to private schools because it's easier to get in and then, one family went back to Japan because the wife can't speak English or French. Then, when the children start going to school, they are learning French and they thought they couldn't cope so they went back to Japan. Things like that had happened. Vancouver, because we were in that little community, we didn't feel it but, you know, going to sewing school, that's when the war was on. Then, they would give you a dirty look or whatever. I don't think we noticed it that much. Depending on where we were, I suppose. This school, the academy was way downtown so it was sort of on a side street so we didn't get into the main area. One time, I think one person tried to spit at us or something but other than that, I don't really- School was very good to us anyways so we never experienced anything there, not that I can remember.

LU: I know a lot of people who were in high school at the time when the war started were told not to come back or even elementary school but you didn't have that problem?

RA: No, I had finished school. But going to school like that, they know that companies have come to look for people to work in their offices or whatever and all

the top students are Japanese but we were not even asked or anything. Yeah. That was just automatic so none of us felt that, oh well once we graduate, what are we going to do sort of thing. Half of them like our generation didn't even go. So, a lot of them went into [packs?] and shops and whatever, sewing. Whereas because the head offices were a lot in Montreal, I think, a lot of opportunities opened up in Montreal more so than Toronto because, you know, I feel, in Toronto, a lot of them went into students or worked for small law companies or whatever.

[115 minutes]

RA: There's a few that went into big corporations, you know, but other than that. I don't know, when I sort of think, what was it like in Montreal versus you know, Toronto? I think some of them in Montreal did well but Toronto is bigger so we don't know because I know some of them when into Bell Canada and different companies and did well. The niseis in total, whether they had the education or not, did very well. So, I said, there's millionaires all over the place but I said, until you have two million, you are not a millionaire, you know. [laughing] You know, you sell a house and you could make half a million easily, you know, for some of them, eh. So, the one thing that the niseis sort of benefited was that they bought their house years ago and then, you add another zero. Well, this is at least a bit helpful.

LU: Yeah. Oh wow. And how else have you participated in with the Japanese community? I know you've mentioned quite a bit already on how you've helped out. But did you ever run any events or anything at the community centres in Montreal or-? You've already mentioned a few.

RA: Well, I've, most of them is, of course, that's why like-. I didn't keep track but I have had the faculty club at McGill University. When they have their parties and they want the Japanese, you know, we would do the presentation and food. I've done so many nursing homes. So many seniors. I don't know. So, when I, you know, I sometimes think, gee whiz, and in [Eaton's Sun Creek], the Sun, working with them and the Japanese was the Olympics and that. Other than the Japanese, the traffic association. We did that for about three years. It was a group of about a thousand people that attend. So, ten to a table and that's a hundred tables we are decorating plus the hall. St. Mary's ball was in Mississauga. Watanabe did the Ikebana, you know, and what they called the taisaku, you know, the big arrangement, it's exquisite, you know. She was very, very good.

LU: How long have you been studying Ikebana for?

RA: I started when I was about 13 or 14 in Vancouver. And I still have that dish that I first bought and in those days, it was a Mrs. [Mitsui?]. Anyways, we had to learn Japanese manner by, you know, composing yourself. Onegaishimasu sort of thing. Now when you go, it's chit chat too noisy. Yeah, this is why the [gishgai?], the women's children group, the teens, the early teens-. See, we were too busy with our own Japanese traditions because Eventually, the parents, at one time, had thought of making money and returning to Japan. That was their intent when they came. But once they had their children and that so-. Even after the war, there are niseis that married in Japan and at that time, they never thought they would be living in Canada. They thought, oh well so many years, they would go back. But then, when

the children are born, they decide they got to stay permanently. That's how it started, even the post-war Japanese. So, with the temporaries too. Once they retired from the company, you know because of the children, they stayed.

LU: Oh wow. I think we are all set. Is there anything you'd like to add or-?

RA: I don't know how much I've been useful to you.

LU: Oh, all of it.

RA: No, no.

LU: No, it's great. Thank you very much.

RA: Well, you can have a little tea while you are putting your equipment away.

[Interview ends]