

**Interviewee: Tosh Hashimoto,
James Koyanagi, George Masuda,
and Frank Shimoda**
Interviewer: Norm Ibuki
**(assistance from Tak Yano and Lisa
Uyeda)**
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SEDAI 
PROJECT

THE JAPANESE CANADIAN LEGACY PROJECT

[Start part 1]

Norm Ibuki: Just to remind us who you are, maybe where you were born. Give us your birth date, the internment camp you went to, and you know, just like, the basic data like that, to start off with, and then that'll give us like, a base to work – and maybe your brothers and sisters. Names of your brothers and sis – you know, give us a short biography. You know, what ken are you from? You know, are you Shiga-ken But brief, brief though!

[Conversation on setting up interview]

James Koyanagi: Okay. My name is James Jun Koyanagi. I was born in Eburn, British Columbia. That's on Sea Island, where the airport is right now.

NI: Right.

JK: My father was a fisherman and from Sea Island, you can see the North Vancouver mountains. It was a beautiful area, and when the war started, the family was evacuated to Alberta. So I finished my elementary school, high school in Alberta, then I went to University of Toronto and I got – I studied architecture and from there, I went to Japan to see my grandparents, and then I got married in Japan and I've been living in Hamilton since. Now, the reason I got this meeting today, was I've been following Norm Ibuki's writing for the last ten years, because of my interest in Japan and of your writings in Japan. And I said you have written about many, many interests in past – [since?] of, of aikido, but nothing has been written about Sunday baseball in Hamilton. And I said, I think before all the niseis who participated in the Sunday baseball – before we're all gone – somebody – I was prepared to write it myself, but I said, "I am not a reporter. I'm not a writer." So I – this is how I got to know Norm, and I, I got this idea of this article. And I have – I have two sis – two sisters in Hamilton, and I have one brother in Hamilton, and I have a brother in Langley, B.C., and my parents are dead, and I live in Burlington. My wife is from Tokyo. She's a doll maker, and I have two chil – well, I have two – two children. One

is a, a investment banker in London, England. The other one is a filmmaker in Los Angeles and okay, I'll leave it at that.

NI: You're 82 – 81, right? You're 81, 'cause I was at your birthday party.

JK: Pardon?

NI: You're 81! Right? [laughter]

JK: [laughter] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

NI: You're 81.

JK: Yeah.

NI: Okay. Sorry – George, right?

George Masuda: Okay.

NI: Right.

GM: My name is George Masuda, and I was born in Vancouver. 1928. So I'm 82 now, yes. And my parents are from Yamaguchi-ken, Japan and now they're – they're deceased, however. Went to – up to grade 9, the King Edward High School and the, the war started, we were sent out to New Denver, B.C. and I was – then I was sent to Tashme for one year, too, and from then on, we came out to Hamilton in 1946 and been living here ever since. My education – well, I finished my high school, and then I worked at Stelco, and then I worked myself up to become a metallurgist for Stelco, and then I'm retired now, so I – Well, I had two girls. One passed away quite young. The other one's living up at Port Elgin, and I got two brothers. One, Roy's, up at Thunder Bay, and Glen, the young one, is living in Hamilton. So –

NI: Thank you. [gestures at Tosh]

Tosh Hashimoto: My name is Tosh Hashimoto. I was born in Vancouver, B.C. and I went to technical school –

NI: In B.C.?

Tosh Hashimoto: In Van – Vancouver. And well, of course we went to Japanese school too, and after the war started – I used to chum around with the, the people that's a little older than I was, and when the war started, the Mounties were after them to report to – go to the road camp. So we decided that we go to the – friend's place in Salmon Arm. So we did go voluntarily to Salmon Arm, B.C., and after about – couple of months, the family told us to go elsewhere, to go on our own, and we did. We went to – we chose Vernon, B.C.

NI: Okay.

TH: But not knowing that the Vernon, B.C. was a restricted area, for commando soldiers, and the po – Mounted Police found that out, that we were there, so they told us to go back to Hastings Park again, Vancouver, and at that time, everybody was suffering from diarrhea. And [laughter] and we were inside, and we – we were saying we better not eat the food there or well, we'll be in the same boat as they are. So I asked my parents that were still outside, to get us some food for – for us – to go buy, you know, so my mum used to make onigiri, yeah, and she used to bring it to us and we went through a week, anyway. And by that time, the Vernon apple pickers – the, the owners, they went to bat for us and told us that, that we were needed in Vernon for the harvesting. So we were told that we would – we could go back to Vernon again. So we did, and after – oh, about 3 or 4 years there, we were allowed to go back to Slokan or where our – where our parents were, and from there, we came to Hamilton.

NI: Oh, I see, I see.

TH: And we started baseball – it was – I would say around 1948.

NI: Okay.

TH: Yeah, we started playing baseball.

NI: In Hamilton, right?

TH: Hamilton, and our manager was Roy Yamamura.

NI: Okay yeah, the name's –

TH: He used to play for Asahi, there.

NI: Okay. Yeah.

TH: And he was our manager, and he told us what to do and what not to do, and – and told us – well, we played in the intercounty league, you know, the Acton and Georgetown.

NI: Oh yeah, really?

TH: Yeah, and it – Toronto, of course.

NI: Okay. Let's get into that. Like, we'll just dive into that.

TH: Yeah.

NI: Just one more intro, please.

Frank Shimoda: Well, you know, I'm the new kid on the block here.

NI: Okay.

Frank Shimoda: I was born in 1934.

NI: Oh, you're – [laughter]

FS: And I feel ashamed because of all the memories these other folks have –

NI: Right.

FS: The other three here, but my name is Frank Shimoda and I was born in Port Moody, B.C., in 1934. And my mother and father came from Kumamoto-ken, Japan.

NI: Okay.

FS: I am the youngest of 8 and the recollection – recollection of my brothers and older siblings – sisters – I'm not going to go into.

NI: Oh, right.

FS: Okay? But during the internment camp – internment in Slocan, B.C., Bayfarm – my three brothers were sent to Angler, Ontario. I don't know if you've heard of that.

NI: Yeah, I think I know about that.

FS: And they spent some time there. My sisters, my next brother, and I, the five of us, went to Slocan, of course I mentioned that. And then we went to New Denver, and then we came from New Denver to Hamilton, where we met our brothers. And that was in about 1946, '47. I remember Hamilton centennial was that year.

NI: Okay.

FS: Okay. So then I went through high school, Westdale Secondary School.

NI: That's in Hamilton? Okay.

FS: That's in Hamilton. And I – from there, I worked for the department of public health, and then I got my degree from Ryerson Technical School, as a environmental officer, and that's how I retired, as a public health inspector and director in Hamilton.

NI: I went to Ryerson too.

FS: Did you?

NI: Yeah, I'm a journalism [graduate].

FS: Journalism, right. There's a lot of famous people out of there.
NI: Oh yeah.
FS: Yeah.
NI: Are you – are you also from Vancouver as well?
FS: No, I'm from Port Moody.
NI: Oh, Port – where's Port Moody again?
FS: That's by Burnaby.
NI: Okay, right.
FS: Just – so that's a short synopsis, but I'm sure there's a lot of cracks to fill if I talk to my brothers and sisters.
NI: Well, this just gets us going.
JK: You know, one thing I would like to add – his eldest brother died very tragically. Way back, there was a plane that was going from Vancouver to Japan.
NI: Is that right?
JK: It went down off Alaska. Anyway, his eldest brother was very active in the mass evacuation.
NI: Ah, the Nisei Mass Evacuation Group.
JK: Yes.
NI: Okay. Yeah, I know about that.
JK: Yeah. He was – he was one of the leaders.
NI: And your brother's name?
FS: Bob or Yukio Shimoda. He's my eldest brother.
NI: Okay.
FS: He died in that crash. Thanks, Jimmy. In 1956.
NI: That's an interesting story, too. Do you know much about the Nisei Mass Evacuation Group?
FS: I just know a little bit of what I've heard.
NI: Right.
FS: My brother-in-law was involved with that. [Tak Kambara?], as well.
NI: Oh! Well, that's Bryce's father, right?
FS: Bryce's father.
NI: Father, right. Yeah.
FS: Yes.
NI: Yeah. So – but he's – unfortunately, he's passed away, right?
FS: Yes, yes.
NI: So are there any Nisei Mass Evacuation people around still?
JK: I, I don't think – see my, brother-in-law, Ishibashi, he was involved in judo. He was another one of those, you know. And then they all went – instead of going to a ghost town, they all went, went to Angler. They say, during the war – As long as, you know, they put the Japanese in a camp – They said, they are not going to do anything to help Canada during the war. So –
NI: Well, they were the gambatte ya, right?
GM: Gambatte ya.
JK: That's right, that's right.
NI: Like, Tom Sando's boy?
JK: Yeah, that's – that's Frank's oldest brother.

FS: My two other brothers went with him, so –

NI: Yeah, you know what? That's why we have to – there's such a need to record all this stuff, you know, because the young kids don't know anything about this.

GM: Yes, that's true.

NI: Like I – you know. I guess I know. Anyway, anyway!

JK: Anyway.

NI: Anyway! Before we diverge any more – did you all, all of you guys grow up with the Asahi? Like, this just something that, you know – when you were growing up in Vancouver and around Vancouver, what was the, the role of baseball in your lives?

TH: It was Asahi. We used to watch Asahi play. Was more or less like – waiting for the Asahis to play, you know, we cherished them and we wanted them to win all the time. Yeah.

NI: So it was a big deal, right? These guy – these guys were good, like, you know? Beyond all the –

GM: I was in Fairview, Vancouver, right, and from Fairview, we had our own Mikado baseball club, you know? And they used to play – [and on] Mikado. There used to be a lot of Asahi players come out of there. Actually, like, there was – Frank Shiraishi, you know, George Yoshinaka – Nagat – what's his name – I forgot. There's all – at least 5 were promoted to Asahi. My friend, George – another George Masuda, his older brother, Mousey Matsuda, he used to play catcher for, for – way back in – one of the early Asahi players.

[End of part 1]

[Start part 2]

NI: Wow.

GM: So that's how we used to go see them all the time.

NI: Wow.

JK: Where we were, on Sea Island, I – I wasn't old enough to be playing any competitive sports, but anyway, we played lacrosse. There was a lot of –

NI: Is that right?

JK: Yeah, and they were playing Marpole, Marpole and – no, they had a North Arm and South Arm, and they're playing some of the Indian teams and – of course in wintertime, we used to follow hockey, but baseball wasn't played that much.

NI: So – so at the outset, it was more lacrosse?

JK: Yeah.

NI: The niseis were playing lacrosse?

JK: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, they had a good nisei lacrosse team.

NI: How did they get – how did they get started with lacrosse? It just sounds a little –

JK: Oh, I think it, it takes a couple of good leaders, you know, and they had the hakujin lacrosse – lacrosse player. Yeah, so but I, I never did follow Asahi that much until later on, until the war started. Just – you know, but I knew the name but I never did sit and play.

NI: Well, you're a little removed from Japantown, anyways, right?

JK: Yep.

NI: 'Cause that's quite a ways away from Japantown.

GM: I just want to add some more from the –

NI: Yeah, of course.

GM: There was Nagy Nishihara, Charlie and George Tanaka, Yukio Uno. So a lot of them came from our district, though.

NI: Well, any names that come to mind, certainly please share them, because this is the time to do it, right? So, yeah, any other Asahi memories, guys?

JK: I – when I – when I went to Japan, a lady who was a good friend of my brother-in-law, Ishibashi – she was Mrs. Nishidera, her husband was Roy Nishidera. I got to know Roy very well. Roy, I think, used to play for Asahi. And they were very – the fact that they came back on one of the repatriation ships – or maybe they came back before? No, they came back after, right after the war. They said they would never come back again. Very, very strong-minded. What happened to the Japanese. But I think he was a good – do you know much about Roy Nishidera?

GM: Yeah, I know Nishidera's – yeah, I remember –

JK: I don't – I don't know what kind of player he was, but – yeah, he worked for Takanaka Construction. Very nice, nice guy. Really genuine.

NI: Was that in Hamilton, Takanaka –

JK: No, no. In, in Tokyo.

NI: Oh, in Tokyo?

JK: This was in Tokyo.

NI: Okay, okay. Wow. Any other Asahi memories?

FS: Yeah well, I remember, as a child, in Bayfarm, there was a team that came to play and they were partially Asahi. Not wearing any uniforms, and they played the Slocan team, and I remember everybody was talking about a player named Kaz Suga.

NI: Okay.

GM: Yeah.

TH: Yeah, yeah.

FS: And –

TH: He was a catcher.

FS: No, Ty [Kenichi] Suga was a catcher. Kaz Suga –

TH: He was a pitcher.

FS: He was a pitcher –

TH: Pitcher. Yeah.

FS: And he was a pretty good hitter too.

TH: Yeah.

FS: And I think he played in Quebec, when he went to – when – after the war.

NI: After the war? Okay.

FS: Yeah, yeah. So you know, that was kind of awesome to – finally used that term as a younger person – awesome [laughter] to see him play.

NI: So they actually had a diamond that the farm?

FS: They did. They did, yes.

NI: And baseball was a regular weekly occurrence, I guess?

FS: Well, yeah, I think it was, and they – they had teams there, if I remember. Yes.

TH: You know, the – the place where the Asahis played, there used to be a – they called it Powell Grounds, you know? And they – it wasn't a square, it was more or less like a rectangle.

NI: Okay. [laughter]

TH: So in other words, left-handed batter would have a terrific, you know –

NI: Shorter hit.

TH: Yeah.

NI: For a home run.

TH: So home run – but they put a – I think they put a restriction on – if there's any ball that goes over the road, it is a home run, but if it rolls in there – well, it's only a double.

NI: Oh, that's funny.

FS: Let me just clarify what I just said about Kaz Suga. He came from another centre, from – I think it was Lemon Creek?

GM: Yeah, he was Lemon Creek.

FS: Or something. Lemon Creek. They had a team and they –

GM: Yeah, they were good.

FS: So it was just – maybe that weekend they played twice, maybe.

NI: So all, all the different camps had their own baseball teams?

GM: That's right.

TH: Yeah.

NI: They all have their own teams.

GM: And when all – most –

FS: Some of them had leagues, too.

NI: Is that right? Wow.

GM: Most of the camps had a Asahi player. Like, Kaslo had Nagy Nishihara.

NI: Okay.

GM: New Denver – George Yoshinaka, okay? Slocan – they had a number of them. And then Lemon Creek had Kaz Suga.

NI: Oh, I see.

GM: So, that was pretty good.

NI: Yeah, but of course those guys were the leaders of those teams, right?

GM: That's right. Yeah, they had a tournament in Slocan. All the teams.

NI: Wow, wow.

JK: So how did Maw Mori put up against these guys?

GM: Well – yeah, he was good!

JK: He was good, was he?

GM: He, he – Maw Mori was one of the younger pitchers who came up and he was playing for Slocan.

NI: He's, he's – Maw, Maw – he's still around, right?

JK: No.

GM: The others passed away.

NI: Recently?

JK: He died about two years ago.

GM: Yeah.

NI: Oh, okay, 'cause he's was well-known as a general athlete, right? He was just great.

GM: Oh, oh yeah. That's right.

TH: Bowling, yeah.

GM: All-around athlete. Yeah.
NI: So he was – was he also an Asahi, Jim?
JK: No.
TH: No, not quite. He was – he was –
JK: I wasn't old enough.
GM: Too young.
NI: He was too young? Okay.
TH: Yeah.
FS: Yeah.
GM: Yeah, but – what did he do at Vernon, Tosh?
TH: Yeah?
GM: He was a pitcher?
TH: Yeah.
GM: He used to – he used to strike out all those –
TH: Yeah.
GM: Army – army guys.
NI: Yeah, like the big white guys?
GM: Yeah.
NI: Oh, wow. Wow.
TH: Well, the – we played against the Six Nations. They were Indians, that's – yeah.
JK: Caledonia.
GM: Caledonia.
NI: Oh yeah, yeah? Wow. So when you guys were growing up, these guys were your heroes, I guess. A lot of the baseball players were your heroes.
FS: Asahis, yeah.
NI: Yeah. And they – they were the pride of the community, I guess, right? Did – did the Japanese play any other sports besides baseball? Lacrosse?
TH: The – they used to go bowling in the winter time, you know? And they had a league going on, yeah.
NI: This is in B.C., right? Before the war?
TH: No, no. This is in Hamilton.
NI: Oh, I see. Okay. But before the war, though, what were the –
JK: Wasn't there a boxer named Kato?
GM: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's right. [Gakido Karo?]
JK: [Kiro?] Yeah, there's a – yeah.
GM: He's from North Vancouver. And then there's Eichi – hmm.
JK: Kato, K-A-T-O.
NI: Okay. Yeah –
GM: And he's about – but he was a boxer. He was a pretty good boxer.
NI: So pro – pro level boxer?
GM: Yep – just about, yep.
NI: Yeah.
GM: Close to it, eh?
JK: Good, and – I guess he would be pro.
NI: Yeah, yeah.
GM: Yeah.

JK: Other than that –
FS: I think there was a bit of basketball played, too.
NI: Yeah?
GM: Oh yeah. [indistinct] Basketball –
FS: Oh, yeah. There was a bit of basketball.
TH: Basketball.
FS: I remember a team named Marpole.
TH: That's right.
FS: My brother talked about them.
TH: Yeah.
NI: Yeah, I, I was surprised –
FS: Before the war.
NI: Before the war, yeah. 'Cause I know that – I was surprised to in read a Sports Illustrated article recently that the first non-white guy in the NBA was –
FS: Wat Misaka.
NI: Wat Mi – yeah!
GM: Oh yeah.
NI: Yeah, yeah. I was surprised to – you know, to learn about that, yeah.
JK: What was he? He was something like 5'9, wasn't he? Or –
NI: Oh, shorter than – he was a tiny guy, so – [laughter]
GM: Well, mind you, judo was very predominant on the west coast, eh?
NI: Is that right? Yeah.
GM: You know, like – almost every district of Vancouver had a judo, you know, dojo.
NI: Right, right.
GM: Like Kitsilano, Fairview, Hope, [Hobu?] –
NI: Right.
GM: And then Wood Fibre had it, judo – is that Chemainus? That's right.
JK: Yep. All the way to Steveston –
GM: And then Steveston – let me see, Hammond, Maple Ridge, Mission, and we used to tra – make our tournaments all the way around.
NI: Is that right? Wow. I guess the Hatashitas were well-known, right?
GM: Hatashitas were well-known.
NI: Hatashitas were well-known.
GM: Hatashitas were very well-known.
NI: Yeah, yeah.
GM: They were tough.
NI: Yeah, yeah. Were there any other – the Hatashitas are the ones that stand out for me, but were there other families, judo families?
GM: Well, I – In Hamilton – Burlington, the Umetsu brothers, you know, they're well-known.
NI: Yeah. Okay. Well, let's get into Hamilton. Let's get into Hamilton. So – so when did you end up settling here, Jim?
JK: 1948.
NI: '48?
JK: Yep. Family came from Alberta.
NI: And why Hamilton? Was there a specific reason?

JK: Yeah, my brother – brother-in-law was here. Yeah, my sister was married and living in Hamilton.

NI: Okay.

JK: So that was more – that's a stepping stone.

NI: Right, right, right. Okay.

JK: So a lot of our relatives going back on the west coast. Well, our father said, I think, "Forget about the west coast, and all –" With all the discrimination, you know, and I think a lot of people said, you know – once they experienced that, you know, that's pretty hard to stomach. So –

NI: Right, right. Did you ever have any desire to get back to the coast at that time? 'Cause you were like, at the end of high school, at the time.

JK: Yeah, I – I – my desire was to see, you know, the mountains, the scenery, more than anything else.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

JK: And once you – once you see all that, you know, it – [there are ?] other places you look at and enjoy. But I do enjoy going to Vancouver.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

GM: Yeah, that's for sure. That's great.

NI: Well, Hamilton's got the mountain too, right?

GM: That's right. [laughter] It's a little like – a little mountain.

NI: A little mountain. [laughter] [gestures at George] Yeah, so when did you end up in Hamilton, George?

GM: I came in 1946.

NI: Okay.

GM: And naturally, being the eldest son, I had to work and try to get my parents over here.

NI: Okay.

GM: To settle down, eh?

NI: Where were they?

GM: Oh, they were in Tashme, at that point.

NI: Oh, they were still in Tashme. Okay.

GM: Well, then they came out to – I think some – one of these relocation camps, you know, but – so that's what happened. But then, other than that – that's why [whole district. In fact, when came] '46, [it dropped] '47, the [indistinct] – they used to have a Sophy-Ed Social Club –

NI: I'm sorry?

GM: I'm so – they called Sophy-Ed.

NI: Sophy-Ed?

GM: And it was a social club based out of dances at the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association]. And Frank's older brother – you know, Bob – he was one of the executives along with some other – there – I remember Katie Oyama, she used to be a –

JK: Oh, yeah.

GM: Beautiful singer and a pianist.

NI: Oh, okay.

JK: Yeah.

GM: There was, you know – so that – at least they, they started a social club for the niseis here.

NI: Right.

GM: And then from there we got hold of the Hamilton Nisei Sunday League. Okay? It just branched out into that.

NI: Wow. Wow. Yeah. [gestures at Tosh] So when did you have – end up in Hamilton?

TH: I, you know, I came in 1946.

NI: '46? Okay.

TH: Yeah, and it was pretty hard getting a job in Hamilton then. They were reverting to – from wartime materiel to peace time, right? And everybody was getting laid off, so somebody told us that the Harvester was hiring people, so here I went to get a job at the Harvester. And I was working there for about a for a couple of weeks, and then the baseball season started, and when we were – in the heat of the – the actual – the load that they're carrying is about 80 lbs, you know, and you're going back and forth, filling these molds up –

NI: 80 lbs of what? Like, molten –

TH: It's a –

NI: Molten –

TH: Yeah, liquid [mold].

NI: Oh wow. Okay.

TH: And the they – I said – after 8 hours of doing that you're pooped out and here we have to play ball again, you know? So I thought, "Holy moly. Either I quit the baseball or I quit the Harvester." I said, "Well, [laughter] I got to quit the Harvester!"

NI: Are you serious? Are you serious? [laughter]

JK: Which is priority?

NI: Okay, well, that's good. As a young guy, I'm sure that – definitely a priority.

[laughter] Wow. [gestures at Frank] So Hamilton – when did your family ended up in Hamilton?

FS: Well, you know, 1946 or '47, Norm, and – you know, I was so young. Our brothers and my mother and father looked after most of the settling, getting our housing, and that sort of thing. And certainly, you know, we started to – we're the ones who started to branch out, I guess, as far as becoming more integrated, maybe. But people at work – who went to work, maybe had to integrate, as well, through necessity, so – you know, we got the so-called hakujin friends and that sort of thing. And after that, I think we still stuck together, in a way, because we did have a teenaged club called Club Fidelis.

NI: Club Fidelis?

FS: Fidelis, that's right.

NI: This is for the niseis guys?

FS: Yeah, that's right. Most – yeah. I guess it was nisei because there weren't actually too many sanseis in those days, and – gosh, now there's yonseis, aren't there?

[End of part 2]

[Start part 3]

NI: Oh, well, goseis. Goseis.

FS: And maybe "five-seis". Goseis, goseis. But anyway, we did have a bit of a basketball team and we started with playing so-called hakujiin teams – I did, anyway – and played Sunday baseball as well. So I think we had a much better life because we didn't have to worry about settling down and getting a, you know, a house and getting education for ourselves.

NI: Right.

FS: We were probably helped out – because I was so young, you know, at the time.

NI: How about your older brothers and sisters?

FS: My older brothers – they worked at the Canadian Porcelain. My brother Bob did.

NI: Okay.

FS: Until he passed away in the cr – airplane crash. My two brothers retired from there, Mits and Harold, and my sisters, they married and one of them was a dressmaker. Married a Maikawa.

NI: Okay.

FS: I don't know if you know the Maikawas from Toronto.

NI: Yeah, I – I know Susan Maikawa well, so –

FS: Yeah, yeah. Amy, my sister –

NI: Tok, is it that family?

FS: No, it's –

NI: Well, that's [indistinct] –

GM: Related – related to Mickey Maikawa?

FS: Mickey Maikawa! That's right.

NI: Mickey Maikawa?

FS: Mickey Maikawa, the – Yeah. He's still living –

NI: Yeah. The baseball player.

FS: As a matter of fact.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

FS: Yeah.

GM: Yeah, yeah. The Asahi player.

FS: He married – she married Mickey's younger brother.

NI: Oh, wow.

FS: And Kim married Ron Grant, who became – who is a journalist as well.

NI: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

FS: And a book writer, and she lives in Montreal.

NI: Yeah.

FS: And she just lost her husband.

NI: Oh, boy.

FS: Last year, so – and I've got a lot of nephews and nieces and all that stuff, you know.

NI: When you – so when you guys –

FS: Which is great.

NI: When you guys came to Hamilton, like, was – were – where were the niseis settling? Or where were the families settling? 'Cause I've always heard that there was a ghetto, you know, quote-unquote "ghetto" of sorts in downtown Hamilton, right? I guess my, my grandmother went there.

GM: And on York Street was a –

NI: George Street?

GM: York – York Street.

NI: York.

GM: Between Queen and Dundurn, there was a lot of *nihonjin* around there.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

TH: Yeah, we had a heck of a time getting a place to stay, you know? And only place that, that we could stay was Italians and Germans and you know – and finally we found a place on a third floor, Italian place, and the summer was so hot, no air coming in, but finally we managed to save enough to buy – buy a house and it cost \$6,000 to buy a house and we were worried sick be – how to pay it. But anyway, we got a home.

GM: That was a lot of money.

NI: Oh, back in those days, yeah, sure. Yeah. How did you guys – how did you guys find each other in Hamilton? Like, how did you –

TH: Well, the community is pretty small, eh?

NI: Yeah, yeah.

TH: I would say, about 100 to 150 families? So we know each other, so better not do anything bad or else it gets around pretty quick.

GM: Well, actually, the baseball league –

NI: Okay.

GM: Made us more cohesive.

NI: Cohesive, yeah.

GM: And you know, get to know each other.

NI: Yeah.

JK: Yeah, and not only that – you know, you had the Buddhist church, you had the United Church, you had the Anglican – and wasn't there a dance group?

GM: Oh yeah, well –

JK: Some social group?

GM: Well, we had a, a Hi-Noters.

JK: Hi-Noters.

NI: The – sorry, what?

GM: We called it the Hi-Noters.

JK: Hi-Noters.

NI: High Noters?

GM: Yeah. H-I- with a dash – no, noters.

NI: What were – what were the Hi-Noters?

GM: There, there was a – every we, weekend – every Saturday we had a dance, okay? And all the niseis, you know, went there. And that's how they socialized, and some would, you know, marry each other, which was good.

NI: And there was a Buddhist church here, too? A temple?

GM: There still is.

TH: Yep.

GM: There's a temple here.

NI: Where's the temple?

GM: Down on –

JK: Outer east, east end.

NI: Okay.

GM: On Tate Avenue, east, yeah. The northeast end.

JK: Not only that, but there was a hockey team, you know, and they used to play Toronto at 4 o'clock in the morning. That's the only time they'd get ice at Barton Street Arena.

NI: Is that right? Wow. So these are nisei teams?

JK: Nisei teams, yeah.

NI: So the nisei team in Hamilton would play the nisei team in Toronto?

JK: Right.

NI: And there was a nisei league as well, at the time?

JK: Well, no. It was just exhibition games.

NI: Oh, I see.

JK: Yeah, a bunch of guys who knew a bunch of guys in Toronto.

NI: Right, right.

JK: So it was just a friendly exhibition game.

NI: Oh I see. So how did the Hamilton league get started? Like, what was the beginning there?

GM: Well again, I think that –

NI: For baseball.

GM: I think it's Frank's elder brother Bob who really got the things going, you know, from this – and since all his other brothers – there's four other ones, they're all ball players so that's how we, you know – we all got together. People got together. That's what I think, anyway.

NI: Yeah. What do you guys remember about the, the beginning of – the beginnings of the league? Like –

GM: Well, the reason – the reason was I was with a club called Sox – like, I worked with –

JK: Yeah, that's good. You know –

GM: Harold and [Michimota?] at Canadian Porcelain for a while.

NI: Okay.

GM: So – and so it was Mit and Frank, who worked there for a little while. So with that group we had a team right there.

NI: Okay.

GM: Now, I don't know how many others got together.

NI: How many teams were there?

GM: Maybe three or four.

NI: Okay.

FS: I think there were four.

GM: Four –

FS: Remember there were two games every morning?

GM: Yeah, that's right.

FS: Sunday morning?

GM: Yeah, I try and – yeah, that's true.

JK: [looking at a photograph on the table] Frank, are you in this photo?

FS: Yeah.

GM: Frank's in there.
NI: Oh, okay.
JK: I thought he was a bat boy.
GM: No, no. [laughter] Yeah, yeah!
FS: Yeah, I was about 15 at the time.
JK: Oh, no, this is good, you know, because this – I don't know who else has photographs of – you know, going back 50 years.
GM: I think I [indistinct]
NI: Oh, yes. Sure, sure.
GM: Yep.
NI: Wow. So who are the guys in this picture here, then? [points to photograph on table] Do you – do you know these guys?
GM: Yep, I –
JK: George is him. [points thumb at George] Oh yeah, he –
NI: So George is the bottom right.
GM: Okay, and there's Frank Shimoda.
NI: Okay, so – sorry, which one's Frank Shimoda?
GM: [circling photograph] That's Frank Shimoda, there.
NI: So top –
GM: That's George Masuda –
NI: Oh, George is here.
JK: There's George.
GM: Frank –
NI: Frank.
GM: [still circling] Shoichi Suzuki. My brother-in-law, Shig Yaguchi.
NI: Shig Yaguchi? Okay.
GM: Ted Saki. Mits Shimoda. Min Shimoda. Harold Shimoda, he was the captain, and my younger brother, Roy Masuda.
NI: Well, you don't have enough guys for a baseball team, though. Where are the other guys?
JK: Three, four, six –
GM: No, no, this is just one team, right?
NI: Four, six – you, you have nine people here.
GM: Okay.
NI: So you have enough, okay. Yeah.
GM: Yeah, if somebody got sick, we'd [indistinct]. [laughter] And then Jim, you had a team with a group – with another group, too.
TH: But then you guys had a –
JK: I can't, I can't –
TH: Pitcher'd have to play every time, anyway.
GM: That's right. We'd have the pitcher – every time.
TH: They, they play in the outfield?
GM: Well, we all took turns pitching.
TH: Oh yeah.
NI: Oh, you took turns pitching?
TH: They'd take turns, yeah.

GM: [laughter]

NI: [laughter] Wow. So what were the other teams, then? What, what other teams did you have?

FS: There was a team called the Cards, wasn't there?

GM: The Cards, and the Cubs – who was the other one?

JK: Cubs –

GM: Not sure –

TH: Well, we had – we had three pitchers, we'd carry three pitchers, in our league, anyway. And they get rested, we did – they're not supposed to pitch for – I think 48 hours or something like that.

NI: Okay.

TH: And the – every third or fourth day, a new pitcher comes in, take over from the other one. Yep. So we, we ran it like, a semi-pro, more or less.

NI: How often would you guys play?

TH: Well, we'd play – well, it depends on the schedule, too, but we usually play about twice a week.

NI: Twice a week?

JK: A week – twice a week?

GM: Is that right?

JK: Three on a weekday, or –

TH: No, it's usually Friday night, or Saturday or Sunday.

NI: Okay.

TH: If we – if we played Friday, we'd play Sunday.

NI: Oh, I see.

JK: I remember playing Sunday morning. I didn't know we played Fridays.

NI: Wow.

TH: We used to play Friday night, which was – everybody showed up on Friday, you know, the – the people that's watching the game. Yeah, they'd come after work and they'd support our team.

NI: Where, where'd you guys play?

GM: Eastwood Park.

TH: Eastwood Park.

GM: Way down on – north end of Hamilton. You know, right near the waterfront.

JK: It was a nice park and you, you had the bleachers for maybe 500 people.

GM: That's right. Or it was close to –

JK: Yeah, and we used to get – not only nihonjin, but some of the housing people, you know? They used to follow the team.

NI: Wow.

GM: [Very good] spectators, that's right.

NI: So you had a good turnout for your game?

JK: Ah, not –

GM: It was early Sunday morning, so – [laughter]

NI: Wow, wow. What team did you play for, Jim?

JK: I can't remember.

NI: Yeah.

JK: Listen, 50 years ago – [laughter]

NI: Okay!

JK: Cubs. I remember one year, playing for Cubs.

GM: [nodding] Yeah, yeah. Yeah, Cubs. Cubs. Pretty sure.

JK: And then, I know the [Comets], they were always fighting with each other, and –

GM: Yeah.

NI: What position did you play, Jim?

JK: I think I played second – second or short – second or third.

GM: Yeah.

JK: Infield.

GM: You were in infield, yeah. I remember, yeah.

NI: Any special memories, baseball memories, for you? From those days.

JK: I was shown in the – I'll try to find it. [rummages in bag, pulls out a trophy and puts it on desk]

NI: Oh, okay. I hope this is in camera, here.

FS: Oh, wow.

JK: [points at trophy] The bat's – the bat's –

NI: What is – what is it?

JK: The bat's gone [laughter] and it had a little plate there. I think that was the first year I played, you know, and – and on that thing, it had a batting average, 4.12.

FS: Wow.

GM: Wow.

NI: Pretty good average.

GM: Yeah, that's a good average! Really.

JK: I kept it all these years.

FS: Isn't that great stuff?

JK: And I – last weekend, I got to find that. Told my wife, with all my kid's hockey trophy and all this soccer – I said, "Oh, I found it." I said, "[Swear to god] Where's the plate? It's got the batting champion with my name on it!" But it's gone! [laughter] So I brought it anyway. And –

FS: Well that's –

JK: And, and there was a banquet. I, I don't know where – where you guys had the banquet. It was on James Street, wasn't it?

GM: Yeah, it was at the Centre – Central Hall.

JK: And I – I said – I didn't know what – what do you do? You know, you go up when you get a trophy? And my friend was Midge's brother, you know – [points at Norm]

NI: Oh yeah?

JK: Yosh Ishi – George. I said, "George, what do you – what do you do when you get a trophy?" "What do you mean?" "Well, I'm supposed to – I'm, I'm going to get a trophy." "Well, look, I think this is the sort of thing you should say, you know. I appreciate – you know, the –" [laughter] First time I was ever going up to get – I sure remember that.

NI: Yeah. George, any memories? Baseball memories, at all? You know, from the league.

GM: From the league?

NI: Yeah.

GM: Oh yeah. There was – you know, as I say – we, we had two good umpires, Eichi Goto and I still remember him, because he used to come [gestures at shirt] when it was warm in summertime. Nothing, no – just shirt – shirtless umpire, okay?

JK: Who's that?

GM: Eichi Go – Goto. Kojikoto's older brother, and actually, Norm Oikawa, you know – they both came, you know, religiously to umpire our teams.

JK: Oh yeah.

GM: And then, out of this league, they had this like, all-star group and Roy Yamamura was the coach.

NI: Okay.

GM: He was the manager.

NI: He's Asahi, right?

GM: He's Asahi.

NI: Asahi.

GM: And I think Frank Shiraishi – he used to live in Hamilton. He helped a little bit.

NI: Okay.

JK: He did come out, too, did he?

GM: Frank Shiraishi used to come out a little bit. So he –

NI: The – the shirtless umpire?

GM: Yeah, Eichi was. He was a good – real colourful guy.

TH: I think, Norm – he, he was a good umpire. He used to go up to a upper-level umpiring, and he used to get paid for that.

NI: Mr. Oikawa?

TH: Yeah, Mr. Oikawa.

NI: Yeah.

JK: Yeah. He was an activist. Remember the – in Ottawa, they had a big demonstration on redress?

NI: Oh, for redress?

GM: Yeah, for redress.

JK: He was right up there.

NI: Okay, okay.

JK: With Roger Obata and all those guys.

NI: Yep.

JK: And he was very strong supporter of the socialists, here in Hamilton.

NI: Oh, is that right? Okay.

JK: Yep. Yep.

NI: Okay. Oh, interesting. Wow. So –

GM: I've got the names of some of the other players –

NI: Yeah, please.

GM: Okay. [holds up sheet of paper]

NI: Oh. Oh – do you –

GM: Other – other league players.

NI: Okay.

GM: Should I name it off?

NI: Sure. Name them off.

GM: Okay. There's Ken Hashimoto, Tosh Hashimoto, Mike and Roy Honda, Herbie and Mits Izumi. There was a Chester Kariatsumari –

JK: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

GM: Hank, Kirk, and Tom Kawomoto; Jimmy, Hank, and Shores Kondo; Jim Koyanagi; Kaz Kadonaga; there's Tim, Tosh, and Mac Oikawa; Basil Shintani; Sam Sonoda; Eiji Suzuki; George and Stumpo Uchida. That's as far as I know of.

NI: And the other names to add? Anybody? Other names?

FS: Just like to add – that's a pretty good list.

GM: Yeah.

TH: So you haven't got Basil in there?

GM: I've got Basil in here.

TH: Yep.

GM: Yep, Basil's in there. That's all I can remember.

NI: Yeah. Any other special baseball memories from you guys? We haven't really – what was the – what, what do you feel the, the value then, of, of the base – nisei baseball league was for the community itself? 'Cause you guys are a bunch of people who were shipped out east. You didn't have any choice in the matter, really, and you know, you got together – you know, you stayed as a fairly cohesive unit, 'cause 50 years later you're still together, right? So –

[End of part 3]

[Start part 4]

GM: That's right.

NI: You're still friends. Was there some significance of the league that you can kind of look back at now and say, "Okay, well, it had this value for the community in Hamilton." 'Cause, you know, these leagues don't anymore, right?

JK: Yeah.

NI: The yonseis –

JK: Well, you know, what happened, Norm? After – you see, when we came, baseball – all it needs is [spite?] and a bat, and so as the nisei, you know, as they grow older, no longer could they play baseball. You know, the game of golf – they introduce the game of golf, and those who used to play baseball started to playing golf. And golf was something that you could continue into older age.

NI: Right.

JK: And so the ones who used to play baseball were active people.

NI: Right.

JK: Not the ones that stayed home, you know, not the couch potatoes.

NI: Yeah.

JK: So they're the ones – so even today. So we can count four – [gestures at each person] he golfs, he golfs, you know, he golfs.

NI: Yeah.

JK: All – so all the golfers, were ex-ball players one time, or at one time at least, as Sunday baseball.

NI: Right, right.

JK: So there's a continuity, to some – to some extent.

NI: Right, right.

JK: So – as a matter of fact, [points down the table] his nephew –

NI: Who's nephew?

JK: [points at Frank] Frank. Mits.

NI: Frank? Okay, yeah.

JK: Mits Shimoda's – Roger.

FS: Roger.

JK: I, I met him in Kamloops.

FS: Oh, did you?

JK: Oh, about 3, 4 years ago.

FS: Yes, yes.

JK: He was a teaching pro in Burlington, at Millcroft.

NI: Okay, okay.

JK: Yeah, so he moved out to Kamloops. So, you know, I was out in Vancouver, and I went to a tournament, and – and – so anyway – well, to my surprise, in Vancouver – you know, what they do in Vancouver, about 30 golfers and their wives, they take about 3 or 4 days, they play different courses. The wives that don't golf, they go to casino or whatever.

NI: Right, right.

JK: So this one course I went to, the guy said, "Hey, you know, Jim Koyanagi." I said, "I thought there was – there can't be two Jim Koyanagis." So I said, "Hey." I look and I said, "Hey, that's Roger!" [laughter] So I – the guy said – the guys I was with – "So, you know this guy, do you?" "Yeah. He's the guy that taught me everything I know. Ah, everything I know," I said. "Wait a minute, Jim, let me show your swing first." [laughter]

FS: Oh, that's a great story.

JK: Yeah! I met, I met him at the [Onteora] – I mean, the JCC Tournament.

FS: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

JK: You know, last year. No, this year.

FS: This year. He's back now.

JK: He's back? Right, he's back now.

GM: Oh, he's back?

NI: Wow.

JK: Yeah, so there's – you know – this thing, the continuity, you know, baseball, you know –

NI: How long did the league last, anyway? Like, when did you guys start to – disbanding, I guess, or what – you know –

JK: Yeah. How come it – I guess we run out of players, did we?

GM: Yeah, they were – they were –

NI: Yeah, must have.

GM: They were getting married, [too easy?].

JK: Yeah. I see.

GM: So the family came first.

NI: Right, right.

GM: Yeah.

TH: In any case, the – most of the good players went to Toronto.

NI: Okay.
GM: Yeah.
TH: And we lost one, one of the – like, Mac Oikawa, he was one of our shortstops, and he, he gone to Toronto. That was –
GM: And then Roy Yamamura went, too, right?
TH: Roy Yamamura – yeah, he was our manager, Roy Yamamura, and then he went to Toronto. Yep. So gradually, it disintegrated. Yep.
NI: Was – was there much about rivalry between Hamilton and Toronto?
TH: I don't think so. I don't think so.
NI: No? No.
TH: No.
GM: Not really.
FS: But when the all-star team did play them, of course, you want to win.
NI: Of course, yeah, yeah.
GM: Yeah, that's right.
FS: But they have a bigger pool.
NI: Right, right.
FS: Of players.
NI: Right.
FS: I think that was the other issue, is that there wasn't a huge pool. As you can see in that picture – 9 players, 10 players, on each team, sort of thing.
NI: Right.
FS: So if you lose one or two from each team, you know –
NI: Hard to replace those guys, right?
FS: Yeah.
GM: Yeah, that's right.
NI: But you guys played other teams in this area – you said Georgetown and Acton? I was surprised to hear that.
GM: There used to be a Halton league.
NI: Oh yeah?
GM: Well, which is just below – I would say below class D professional.
NI: Okay.
TH: Class D was a pony league.
NI: Okay.
JK: Yeah.
TH: They called – used to call it a pony league. One below that, I think.
NI: So you guys used to play those teams?
FS: Well, that was the all-star team.
GM: The all-star team.
NI: Oh, the all-star team. Okay, okay.
JK: Where does the inter-county – where was the inter-county?
TH: Inter-county was higher still.
FS: Oh yeah.
JK: That's below pony league, or –
GM: Above –
TH: Above.

FS: I would say B, or maybe closer to A, would you?

TH: That's right. Yeah, they're –

GM: Could be.

FS: Because they're a profe – really –

TH: I think they get paid.

FS: Yeah.

GM: Inter-county's pretty –

TH: Yeah.

NI: Wow.

TH: We don't get paid, you know. [laughter] All for fun.

GM: That's right.

NI: What – what are the – but what are the – I know, the, the memories or, or – what's the significance of the, you know, Hamilton Nisei Baseball League – you know, what is it important for, you know, future generations to remember about what you guys did?

GM: My recollection is that – okay, since we had this league – had to – we had to – I remember we had to raise some money, so we had a dance. So naturally, you know, trying to get some girlfriends – we were young, eh?

NI: Yeah, of course.

GM: Late teens and whatnot.

NI: Yeah.

GM: So it was more or less a social attraction, to try to latch on to some girls.

[laughter] You know, and if you're a good ball player, your name is well-known, eh?

[laughter] That's what I find, anyway.

NI: But is there an importance to the – you know, why – you know, why – beyond the, I guess the, the – [points at George]

GM: There was – there was like a real camaraderie, eh? Jim?

JK: Yeah, I think so.

GM: Really, really.

JK: Yeah. Yeah, you know, today, hockey player – you know, you're one, one level away – above the regular guys, if you're a good hockey player. Like, back then baseball –

NI: Right, right.

JK: Was the big, you know, like – icon. You're, you're the big – so today, you know, baseball's [raises and drops hand] really gone – gone down, amateur baseball.

NI: Right.

JK: It's almost non-existent, you know, and I think this is why people were, you know – wanted to excel in baseball. It's like, in the eastern – I guess, the east of Alberta, you know, it's pretty well dead now, but you go to B.C. – it's still very active, baseball is.

NI: Okay.

JK: Yeah. So it was quite – it was quite active and there was a lot of interest.

NI: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

FS: I think, in a sense – you've got to realize, after the war, you know, all the – you know, the Japanese, small population, and when you're thrown into a all – a different situation other than in Vancouver and ghost town, it takes a bit of getting used to.

And where do you find your comfort level? It's with people of – maybe you know, and yet sometimes you get – like Tosh was saying, you had to knock on doors to be even able to get a room to rent in those days.

NI: Right.

FS: Apparently.

NI: Right, right.

FS: So I think it showed some people that hey, maybe – you have to have some entertainment, recreation probably, to keep going. You know, morale and all that stuff. Maybe it helped, in a way – in that way. Just like any other community – Toronto, Montreal – where you're just thrown into now, hey, [phone ringing in background] make a living here and live here.

NI: Yeah.

FS: And you know, where you could – where probably you didn't want to [phone ringing in background] go in the first place, you know? You know –

NI: Right, right.

FS: Other than being sent back to Japan, maybe.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

JK: You know, like George said, I think there's more camaraderie than anything else, because you know, you had come here – like I – we came from Alberta. We didn't know that many people. Some of the ghost town people probably knew more of each other, but to exist, you know, you've got to – you've got to mix, so you've got to get along – get to know your own type, your own people.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

JK: And back then, we were still young, and all the people were in the marriage age, and therefore your, your basic instinct is that you're interested in the opposite sex –

NI: Yeah, well, sure. [laughter]

JK: So therefore you sort of mix, and that's where you like – High Step Club or whatever club, you know, this thing is active. So you work all week and Friday or Saturday, you want to go out with a date.

NI: Or play baseball.

JK: Yeah, so this is what keeps –

NI: Yeah.

JK: I think the same with baseball, you know. You kind of look forward to it, and –

NI: Did it – did it help you guys integrate into the community? Like, did it help you – like, 'cause, 'cause it was a nisei league, and nisei teams. So how did it help you guys become more integrated into, you know, the Hamilton community? Did you – 'cause Jim said it earlier, that some non-Japanese would come out to see the games, I guess. Do you think there was any higher value to that, than that? Or –

FS: Now that I think about it, maybe, you know, there is a point there, where you know, we're – we're kind of unknown, you know, at the time. Maybe the other parts of the community thought, "Oh, they're no –" As a matter of fact, in some areas, I heard there's – some people were surprised to hear that we speak English, for instance.

NI: Right, yeah.

FS: And so maybe that – there was a normalcy that we showed, about that.

NI: Yeah.

FS: Maybe that's being too – [waves hand in the air]
GM: There was a group of north enders – they're Caucasians, eh?
NI: Yeah, yeah.
GM: And – young guys, and they were interested – they wa – they'd come, sometimes come and watch us play.
NI: Oh yeah?
GM: And I think they did come – I remember there was one fellow there –
FS: Yep.
GM: Had a [bald] head. Yeah, you know? Yeah, anyway, that's – but then, the other thing was – I think the – there was an incentive for our league, because you want to play good and become a good player so that you could get into the all-stars.
NI: Oh, I see.
GM: Okay? So that's why the incentive was there.
NI: Oh, I see. Okay.
FS: The other thing is – I think the all-star team, when they went to another community, I think they attracted more than – more attention.
NI: Right.
TH: Yeah. Yeah, they did.
FS: You know, I – I think they did.
TH: Yeah. Yeah.
NI: Are any of your old uniforms still around?
TH: Oh, I don't know.
NI: Do any of the old uniforms still exist?
JK: I don't know. I don't know.
NI: Because that would be nice to have, right, for the Centre.
TH: I wonder what happened to mine, though.
GM: [pokes Tosh] You have one, don't you?
JK: [gestures down the table] Well, what happened to your brother's uniform?
FS: You know, I don't know. Maybe I should ask him.
TH: Yeah. Yeah.
FS: I don't know if there are any – maybe everybody collected it, and –
TH: I don't think we handed it in, though.
FS: Yeah, I don't know what happened.
GM: [indicating on paper] You know, our captain Harold Shimoda –
JK: Sox.
GM: He's 90 now.
NI: Is that right? [laughter]
JK: Wasn't there another uniform? You know, a full baseball uniform?
GM: Yeah, that, that was for the all-stars.
JK: That's all-stars? I remember, I was asked to play one of their games, and jeez, you know, I was so happy.
GM: That's right.
JK: Backyard, I put it on. I had a picture taken. [laughter]
GM: Yeah, that was an inc – nice uniform.
JK: Yep.
GM: Yeah.

NI: How was the – how was the community, anyways? When you guys settled in Hamilton in the late '40s, like, what – was the Japanese community like, well-accepted in Hamilton? Or did you guys have, you know, a rocky way of it? Like, to fit in.

TH: You know, it's surprising – when the Japanese found employment, the, the bosses were really – you know, they find that, that they're good workers, and they want them back, and unfortunately for me, the – I think, the – the war ended, and some of the, the product was let go, and they were changing over to another product, so most of us were like, the junior people that was, was let go first. But – JK: You know, I – I follow the history, you know, what's happened to Hamilton.

NI: Yeah? Yeah.

JK: And Hamilton's always been European, you know, central European. People don't – may not speak English. When the Japanese came, [at least ?] they're hard working, they paid their rent, and so when they got the job, they work, and – Toronto will not accept the Japanese, you know, like in housing, so they would – came here to Hamilton. Lot of the people living in Toronto first came to Hamilton.

NI: Is that right? Okay.

JK: Yep. They came to Hamilton. They stayed here until they found a better place, better working cond – better work or better condition. They moved on to Toronto.

NI: Oh, I see.

JK: Yep.

NI: After what year could people go to Toronto?

JK: Oh, this is right after – before – end of the war.

NI: End of the war, okay.

JK: Well, as soon as they got out of ghost town.

NI: Right. Okay, okay.

JK: So some of the early ones, more adventurous ones, came.

NI: Right.

JK: And those who went to university, at least, you know, they went to boarding house – they were house boys.

NI: Right.

JK: So they were working, you know, so at least they had accommodation – they had a sponsor.

NI: Right.

JK: But somebody who wanted to come here and settle, you know, they had a hard time because – Hamilton'd accept them.

NI: Oh, I see.

JK: So they were used to living with Hungarians, Polish, and all the other ethnic people, but once the – once Toronto started accepting, you know, they started. And, and in Toronto, with a lot of the Jewish people started, you know, accepting the – so Hamilton was stepping stone for many of the Japanese.

[End of part 4]

[Start part 5]

NI: Right. Right. Oh, I see. Okay.

GM: I remember working – when I was in Stelco, I met some Germans, Italians, and they told me like, the experience that they encountered during the war. See, some of them were, you know, sent to concentration camp, and some of the Italians, they said that they're restricted from doing lot of things in Hamilton.

NI: Is that right?

GM: Yeah, I was surprised. So I told our experience.

NI: Yeah.

GM: You know? Yeah, so they were really surprised by that. So, having said that, they – they felt sort of sorry for us, that we got kicked out, you know, and had nothing in our – at least they had their own property.

NI: Right, right. Right. So there's some sympathy there, for – for you.

[End of part 5]

[Interview paused for break]

[Start part 6]

JK: – enough information to write an interesting article?

NI: Yeah, we'll keep going. We're going to keep going, yeah. We'll keep going, yeah. Yeah.

JK: Keep going, okay. We thought – we thought we told you everything we knew.

NI: Well, now you're talking about the interesting subjects.

GM: Yeah, we could go into the – some of the social life.

NI: Yeah.

GM: You know, from the offshoot [from the – we have to – obviously ?] the Hy-Noters. We used to have dances, we had concerts, and all the – and most of the niseis were all in – involved somewhere.

NI: Yeah, well.

GM: Something like that.

NI: It's a different life, 'cause – you know, yeah. 'Cause you guys had a social life.

GM: That's right.

NI: And I think that's the end of it. Like, that's the end of the era, right? 'Cause the sanseis or yonseis didn't have that, right?

GM: That's true. That's right.

NI: So it was kind of an end of an era, really, so –

TH: But the golf seems to keep us going, though.

NI: Sorry?

TH: [overlap] Golfing, you know, the golfing?

GM: Golf, golf keeps us going. That's right.

TH: Yeah, because – I been playing golfing for let's say – close to 40 years, I think.

GM: Yeah.

NI: Yeah, well, you guys are good. You guys are good.

JK: How come you guys are not in the shoyu tournament?

GM: We got to have shoyu at home! [laughter]

NI: [walks over to table, looking at document] Okay, okay, she's got it working. Okay, so it's working.

JK: One – one year Koji got – he said, “Jim, okay. I’ll pick up a shoyu.” I said, “I’m not going to hang around, you know, ‘til 9 o’clock to –” So he got the shoyu, put it in the trunk, and I saw him October – November. “Hey, Jim! You know, I got your shoyu but I got a ride down so I don’t have my car.” I got the shoyu, I think, next March or April.

GM: You’re kidding me. [laughter]

JK: So I waited for what, six months?

GM: Is that right?

NI: Well, it’s fermented anyway, so –

JK: Is it – Toronto Seniors –

GM: Actually, the new Nisei Golf League was good.

NI: Oh yeah?

GM: Originated from Toronto, and then we’re invited from Hamilton to join.

NI: That’s still going, right? The Nisei Golf Tournament’s still going?

GM: Yep, it’s – it’s still going.

TH: That was a long, long day. Used to wake up 4 o’clock in the morning to get to Toronto.

GM: That’s right.

JK: You know, this place – JC [Japanese-Canadian] Centre – they still call it the Hamilton Nisei Golf – 30s. I think this year was the 30s.

TH: Oh, is that right? Here?

JK: You know, so it must be going on 30 years now.

TH: Oh, is that right?

GM: [Away from the staff volunteer, right?]

JK: Yep. So that’s 1970.

GM: 1970. Is that right, eh?

NI: So 30 years?

JK: 30 years.

NI: Well – ‘80, though, 1980, right?

JK: Pardon?

NI: 1980.

GM: 70 – years, 30 – yeah. Yeah, y – yeah. 40 – 40 years.

NI: 40.

GM: It’d be 40 years.

JK: 40?

GM: Well, this – this is 2010 –

JK: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. [points at Norm]

[muffled sounds of tech discussion, offering people Timbits; also discussion of Lisa’s employment by Sedai, and brief discussion of Peter Wakayama]

JK: What else are you going to ask me?

NI: No, you guys started talking about interesting stuff, like during the break. You guys were talking about playing the Canadian Indian teams, and you said that they were really interested in you guys. Like – like why? Tell us more about that. That’s interesting.

GM: I don't know how we got the invitation to play there – oh, I think one of – one of the fellows might have had a girlfriend.

NI: Okay.

GM: Okay? I think so. And then that's what started it. So we were invited there, and we played against them – then I guess [Tosh] said we walloped them, but next thing you know, they say, "Okay, we – we gon' play lacrosse with you." [laughter] We didn't know how to play lacrosse. But the – that ended the – I don't – we went once or twice?

TH: We went once, that I know.

GM: That's it, eh? Yep.

NI: So you went to the – is it Bradford that –

GM: No, it was Caledonia.

NI: Oh, Caledonia.

TH: Six Nations.

GM: Six Nations, yeah.

NI: Okay, okay.

TH: Yeah.

NI: So that was the extent of the – your –

GM: Yeah, [we both the] – with them, yeah. I can still remember the – the team used to go to play Christie Pits in Toronto.

NI: Okay.

GM: And it was the Toronto – Nisei League or – I'm not sure if it was the all-stars or not. What do you say, Tom? Tosh?

TH: Yeah, I think it is all-star.

GM: I remember Basil Shintani. He – he was a pitcher. He was good.

NI: Okay.

GM: He was really good. And there was Mac Oikawa – there was a bunch of others there.

NI: This is for Hamilton or Toronto?

GM: No, for – we played against Toronto.

NI: Okay.

GM: You know, and – actually, Toronto had a good – a lot, a lot of backer – you know, people to back them up, you know. Because Christie Pits was almost like the centre of the Japanese community, too, along that area. Oh, before I forget, our other ghetto in Hamilton was John Street North, between – let's see, MacNab and John Street, n-n-north on Barton, and I remember there's one family, and they had like, a – you know, place to eat and all that, and I had to live with, and most of the – a lot of the single fellows used to live there.

NI: Oh, I see.

GM: What was that, the Tamadas, was it?

TH: Yeah.

GM: Something like that. Yeah.

NI: Wow. [laughter]

JK: You know, the area where my family went – lived was Burlington and Wentworth.

GM: Oh.

JK: Was quite a few – Oikawas was living there –

GM: That's right.

JK: And –

GM: Kawasaki.

JK: Kawasaki and who was –

GM: Jim Kenoshita.

JK: Kenoshita – not Kenoshita. Across from Kenoshita was – yeah, there were two Oikawas living there.

GM: Yep, that's right.

JK: And we were there, and Hayashitas were there – and [indistinct] –

GM: Did the Hayashitas come there?

JK: Pardon?

GM: Hay – Hayashitas lived next door to us.

NI: Really?

JK: Oh, Hayashita – Hayashi – Hayashi –

GM: [indistinct]

NI: [Greg's – Greg Subayashi – Greg] – yeah, yeah. I've heard, yeah.

JK: Across from Kenoshita was –

GM: Oh, Hayashis. That's right.

JK: Yeah, there's about – and the reason there were living there was it was very close to International Harvester, and –

NI: Okay.

GM: That's right.

JK: And the steel mill. In other words, they could walk to – you know, they didn't need a bicycle or take a street car.

NI: Right, right, right. Right, right, right. Is there still any kind of like, Nikkei community in Hamilton right now? Any identifiable community – of course you have your centre here, but like, do any of your kids go to – come to the centre?

[Lisa arrives and pours everyone fresh tea]

JK: You say community or organization or –

NI: Well, I know you have the organization here, right? But you know – I know your kids aren't even in the area, Jim, but is there much of a community here? A sansei, yonsei, gosei community here.

GM: From the centre, there is. It's pretty active, you know, and there's teaching Nihongo, you know, and – again, there's, there flower arrangement, and so forth – so the, the sanseis want to know how to do flower arranging too, okay? And they want a – the yonseis, the young kids, want to learn how to speak Japanese because – mind you, even the niseis don't all – [laughter]

NI: Ah, yeah.

JK: I, I think when you get over 90% intermarriage, it's getting –

GM: That's right.

JK: Very, very difficult.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

JK: Maintain. Either you have a very distinct interest or you have other, other interests to follow.

NI: Right, right. Right.

JK: So I don't know how many sansei, yonsei come in here.

NI: Right, right, right. I don't know, is there much of a – like, what's the future for this centre? For, for the Hamilton community?

JK: I think as Roy – as Art Miki – see, I think the same right across Canada, you know? Each centre is having problems because – I think the one in Toronto, what, over 75% are non –

NI: Not Japanese, yeah.

JK: Non-Japanese.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

TH: Pretty soon there will be no more Japanese names. It'll be all hakujin names.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

GM: Yes, unfortunately, but – yeah, because once the niseis – the niseis were the, sort of the core of building up social [ability] here, right?

NI: Yeah, yeah.

GM: Now that we're getting old, [we're going to rot] it's going to be hard for the sansei, yonsei to carry on.

NI: Well, it was your responsibility to teach your kids, though, to –

TH: Oh, definitely.

GM: For sure. That's for sure. [laughter]

TH: Yes. The – the first thing – he says, "Do you want to learn Japanese?" And he says, "I know one word. Yakamashi!" [laughter]

NI: Yeah, yeah. Or benjo, right? [laughter]

GM: Or benjo. [laughter]

NI: Those were a couple of the first words I learned. [laughter] So you – so what – so what's it going to take, then, to keep this, this thing going here?

TH: Well, it depends – I would say it depends on the, the people that – friends, one thing? And the – most of the – my boy, there's all friends with hakujins, so all he speaks is English. Ain't got no time to be speaking Japanese. And he's – being a teacher, too. Yeah, so he's always speaking English. Only time – he comes to our house, and if my wife and I am speaking Japanese, he kind of gets suspicious that if I'm talking bad about him or something.

NI: Yeah, yeah. Well, it's funny because all my fr – like, the friends that's I've got who are Canadians that – and largely it's non-Japanese Canadians, who are married to Japanese women – the Japanese women always make sure that the kids grow up with Japanese. They always – the ones from Japan, they always make sure that happens, no matter what.

TH: Yeah.

GM: That's true. That's true.

NI: So what happened with the niseis?

GM: Well, I guess we were a little more liberal with our children. You know, I – that's one of the reasons my, my – mind you, my daughter married a, an issei so my grandchildren are all real, real thoroughbreds, if you want to call it. But then all of

their friends are hakujin now, so it's hard. So I think it's up to the family to try to instill the – an influence of Japanese, but it's hard.

NI: Why is it hard, though? 'Cause you – you just have to use Japanese at home? 'Cause you know, 'cause I know that –

JK: You see – you see, one or two generations before that, when ojii-san and obaa-san were still alive – Then, you know, you spoke Japanese to them, so the grandchildren would – at least would have to know some Japanese to communicate with their grand – grandparents. But now, that doesn't exist, so – our grandparents go to a retirement home. Yeah, so it's a – it's a different generation altogether.

NI: Yeah, that's true.

GM: Well, Hamilton tried to have a Japanese school going. But it was – god, it was hard to keep it going. Not like [Toronto] – but Toronto has a good system going, there. Which is great.

NI: But Toronto's got the Japanese from Japan, though.

GM: That's true.

NI: And like, that's a different –

GM: That's true.

NI: Story, 'cause the ijusha are – that's a different – 'cause their cultural connections are much closer to Japan.

TH: That's right.

JK: I hear in Vancouver, they have what, some like, 10 Japanese schools or 10 –

NI: Is that right?

JK: 10 or 15. I – and I think there are more non-Japanese people, because it's closer to the Orient.

NI: Asia, right. Yeah.

JK: And, and I hear a lot of the – the Chinese, you know, and maybe the Vietnamese, study Korean because they, they can get jobs with a Japanese company, more – more employment.

NI: Right. Do you – what do you see as the value of – because you guys are ni – I'm assuming you're all nisei, right? You're all nisei, so what do you think the value is of the, the connection with Japan for, you know, the – forget about the sansei generation. How about the yonsei generation? Their kids, right, who are the gosei. And you know what? We're going to be – we're going to be at the ro – you know, rokusei, you know, soon enough.

GM: That's, that's – that's right.

NI: You know, it's going to happen very quickly, right? I know goseis who are in their 20s, right, so –

GM: Well I think that – it's that – I try to get my grandkids to know more about Japan and I – I sent one of them to Japan for vacation. You know, to tour, and he's very interested, and hopefully that he will pass it on to his kids. But again, we're where you have to have the influence from the nisei to get them to go and learn Japan – Japanese. That's the hard thing.

[End of part 6]

[Start part 7]

NI: Yeah, yeah. Do – not to be too harsh on your generation, but do you think you guys have done – how would you assess your – how well you passed on what you guys – you know about Japan onto your kids' generation?

GM: Well, I could say for a fact that my daughter – she had three boys, and she lived up at Port Elgin. She started a judo club.

NI: Okay.

GM: Okay? And the three boys were in the judo club, and they got the occidentals to join up. She finally got the [indistinct] – all hakujin, to take over, okay? And so she tried to get that going, but there's no Japanese around there.

NI: Right, right, right. Yeah, how about the rest of you guys? [laughter]

TH: Well, in my case there were – I heard my son – “Hooray! Hooray!” [waves arms in the air] when they're watching the movie and the Japanese is losing and he's going [waves arms in the air] “Hey, hey! We won!” You know?

NI: So he's supporting the Americans, I guess.

TH: Yes, right. Exactly.

NI: Yeah.

TH: Yeah.

NI: So he didn't turn out very well, then. [laughter]

TH: Yeah, he's more hakujin than Japanese.

NI: Yeah, yeah. Okay.

JK: You know, my grandsons – they're 9 and 6. They got the FIFA – you know, the Japan –

NI: Jerseys?

JK: Yeah. Yeah. So they were happy. You couldn't buy them. My son in L.A. [Los Angeles] tried to get it. He said they were sold out, and in London, my other son is in London, tried to get in London and he said, “You can't buy.” Even in Japan. So you know, they got it. My friend – my wife's friend was travelling in Japan, so she got it online and had it delivered to the hotel. So these kids were so happy, because they live in London, you know, and – and they call it football. They don't call it soccer. And they're so proud. But anyway, when – of course, my wife being Japanese – I mean, from Japan, and she is from Tokyo. So when they were growing up, because we're going up every couple of years, 3 years, they would go to Tokyo and they got to meet all their uncles and aunts and they're going to speak Japanese. When they were in Canada, of course, you know, their Japanese was limited, but once they get there, in 3 weeks, they change from Japanese – English to Japanese. And they would be speaking fluent Japanese. They come back to Canada in 3 weeks, they forget the English and they'd be speaking Japanese to all their friends, and their friends said, “What are these guys talking about?” ‘Cause you know, ‘cause they're so – so anyway, today, of course, they went – one went to university in – U of T [University of Toronto]. One of the options they took was Japanese language, and the teacher got to know very well because this, this was staff. He said they could speak the spoken language.

So anyway, they did teach English while they were students, in Tokyo, so – and having met their relatives, so they do go back, you know. When they do go back, at least they're familiar with Tokyo, and I think they were quite comfortable, even if – so I think we did the right thing when they were small, with the – you know, try to

introduce them at, you know, at adult age to their relatives. You know, it's much – it can be done, but when they're small – They get to meet all their uncles and aunts, you know.

NI: You guys were ahead of your time, though, 'cause Kimiko-san was – like, that's –

JK: Big family.

NI: Yeah.

JK: Yeah, and of course, you know, on my side, I got – in Osaka and Kyushu, but that's a little far. But Tokyo, on her side, you know –

NI: Did she speak to your boys in Japanese when they were growing up?

JK: Yep.

NI: Yeah, okay. So that's probably a big difference, right? Yeah, with you guys. Are you guys – not to – I think we can probably wrap it up fairly soon, but are you guys at all concerned about, you know, the preservation of this kind of history? You know, for – for the future generations. You know, once we get beyond, you know – you know, it's not going to be very long before the sanseis are going to be kind of in your – in your shoes, and then we're going to have another generation away from your experiences, right? Are you guys at all concerned about, you know, preserving this for future generations and that people might forget about you know, the Nisei Baseball League and – you know, what are the kinds of things you guys want your great-grandkids, I guess, to – to remember about, you know, your experience in Hamilton and you know, certainly you had the internment experience, you had – you know, short time on the west coast. You know, we're getting it – getting to a point where – 'cause I started doing interviews probably about – about 15 years ago, I guess, in earnest, and even at that time, you know, the number of niseis was going down really fast, right? And I was alarmed then and I think now it's even more alarming, right? So – 'cause I remember when there were very few isseis around, and now I don't think there are any real isseis – like, prewar isseis, right? There are ijusha isseis.

GM: Yeah.

NI: I don't know, but like, what do you – what do you think needs to be valued in order for us to keep, you know, on track, as far as keeping a community together?

TH: I think it's pretty hard to – it starts with your friends, I think, who your friends are, who your daughter is going 'round with, and it's going to happen eventually.

You can't say too much, "Don't go, go out with a white fella, go out with Japanese."

NI: Well, they don't know Japanese. [laughter]

TH: It's pretty hard.

NI: Yeah, yeah.

FS: You may be sending the wrong message, I guess, if you take that stand, you know? Especially in the society, like, free society. You know, the question, your question, might be asked of [gestures towards the camera] –

NI: Lisa?

FS: Because, I'll tell you, does she – she's obviously in archival work, but does she think it's necessary? Do you think your kids are necessary? And that's what you're talking about.

NI: Yeah, yeah. Basically, yeah. It'd be like [indistinct] –

FS: You know, it's a funny thing about that. You know, at a certain age, you don't care. Then all of a sudden, the last number of years, I've cared. "Gee, where did I come from?" And you know, I'm speaking of – as a younger nisei, you know. What did my folks and previous generations do in Japan? And you know, that sort of thing.

NI: What was the trigger for you to – what triggered your interest in –

FS: I don't know, just maybe getting older. You all of a sudden think about the – things like that.

NI: Yeah, yeah. George?

GM: That's true, because my grandson, he's what, 25 now? He asked me, you know, "Grandpapa –" You know, I need to write a memoir.

NI: [points at George] You?

GM: He wanted –

NI: Oh, he wanted you – yeah, okay.

GM: He wanted me to write. So I started writing a memoir so that he knows our family background and all of that. So as he's – well, he went to Japan. That's why he's interested in that way. And because of that – the other thing is that if you've got a large circle of family, relatives [indistinct], and they get together, which is another good thing, if they could, you know, and so –

NI: So are you writing your memoirs?

GM: Yeah, I'm writing my memoirs now, before I forget.

NI: Yeah? Oh well, hey, I – I know a lot of people in that same situation.

GM: Yeah.

NI: Yeah. [points at Jim] Are you writing yours, too?

JK: Why, why – why did they write a memoir? You know – you know, I kept a diary. Ever since I left – long – Canada to go to Japan. Then I travelled to Korea, went to India, Pakistan, and then my first child was born in Guam. Then from there, went back to Japan and from there we spent a year travelling through Europe. So – and my son wanted – well, they said, "Why don't you write a memoir?" I said, "Well, when I think about it, maybe I will." But I'm not – I said – you called us octogen – what do you call the – what is – octogen – gener – no, what – what's –

NI: Octogenarians?

JK: Octogenarians.

NI: Octogenarians. Yeah, you're in your 80s, so yeah.

JK: You know, I – at our age, we have more problems, our own problems, you know, with our health and others, so I don't think about it. I just write to you know, make sure everything is fine. I had a glaucoma operation about 3 months ago, and I thought everything was fine. When I started seeing two golf balls – [laughter] and I went – had to see the doctor and said, "The blood pressure's supposed to be not higher than 20." He, he said, "It's up to 27." So I got to go back and get another surgery. So that's going to screw up my golf game again. [laughter]

NI: It might get better, Jim! [laughter]

JK: I hope so!

NI: Depends on how good you are, right? It might get better. [laughter] Do – I don't know if you guys know about the Sedai conference they're having in November.

JK: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

NI: [We're going to have -] I guess it's telling family stories, right? [turns to camera/Lisa] And they're - they're having workshops and they're, you know, trying to mine more of the, you know, community stories out of - out of, specifically the niseis. But what do you think - is there anything that's keeping - like, why aren't we hearing more about nisei experiences? 'Cause that's something I've always struggled with, too. I've - you know, I've been fortunate enough to hear a lot of nisei stories, but why haven't we done such a good job of recording your experiences? 'Cause I think, compared to other countries, the Americans - you know, they're way ahead of us, right? Like -

GM: That's right.

JK: Well, what does Sedai - what does it mean, in Japanese? In English?

NI: You know, [turns to camera/Lisa] what -

Lisa Uyeda: Generations.

NI: It means "generations".

JK: Pardon?

GM: Generations.

NI: Generations.

JK: Generations.

NI: Like, yeah, I guess.

JK: I - I've heard two. I've heard the one on Mitch Ayukawa

NI: Okay.

JK: And also - the other one, L. P. Tommy Takahara. He's a good friend of mine.

NI: Okay.

JK: And he, he was another one. There's a tape on him.

NI: Yeah. But what do we - what do we have to do, though, to get more of your - you know, to get - get to the heart of what it is to be a nisei, you know? 'Cause I, I still don't think sanseis really understand, right, and now it's becoming a lot more complex because of the - we've got ijusha experiences, we've got generational experiences - you know, the language is definitely a part of it. You know, the sanseis and yonseis don't know anything about Japan, basically. They've got very clichéd, you know -

JK: Now, is this - is this for preservation? Who's this directed towards?

NI: [looks back at Lisa] I guess the centre, right Lisa? Sedai's for the whole Toronto - I guess greater Toronto community, I guess.

JK: I guess -

GM: Actually, you haven't touched on the different churches. There's a lot of niseis -

NI: Right.

GM: You know? And I'm sure that the other - the church members who are niseis, and sanseis, were - will be able to you know - you know, give you some information.

NI: Yeah, that's another part of it, too. United Church -

GM: That's right.

NI: United Church and us specifically. Mormons.

GM: And the Mormons.

NI: Yeah, west, specifically. I know there's a lot of Mormons out there, so - yeah, it's a very complicated story.

GM: It is. But since we're all sort of segregated from each other, it's – it's kind of hard, though, you know? But Hamilton – we're small, but at least, you know, we have a – a annual [keido-kai?] or you know, [shibuka], whatever, which – which you get all the people together, and at least that's sort of a – gives us a little more camaraderie when we haven't seen each other for quite a while, you know? But –

JK: You, you look after the senior room – group, too, you and Kay, don't you?

GM: Oh yeah. We have – we have a [keido-kai], 60 plus, seniors' club, and so everybody, if you're over 60, you're all welcome, and then it's strictly social, non-denominational of any religion or [indistinct], okay? So it's a good group, non-political, you know, really – [laughter]

NI: How many members do you have?

GM: Well, we have around – let's see – 70? And when we have a monthly meeting, we average around 35, you know?

NI: Yeah, yeah.

GM: But then our annual Christmas dinner, where we have a potluck lunch, is better than a shogatsu spread. It's really – you know, you'd be surprised how much the nisei ladies know how to cook. [laughter]

JK: [points at table] I, I think that's a, you know, coming back to Sunday baseball –

GM: Sunday baseball –

JK: That's, that's a good one.

GM: That's the only one that I got.

NI: Okay.

GM: But if you want pictures of other groups, I'm pretty sure –

JK: Unless Frank [points at Frank] can dig up some [indistinct] –

GM: [indistinct]

FS: I could, I could check.

[End of part 7]

[Start part 8]

GM: And check – and check the uniform, too.

FS: Yeah, I can check, but I'm not so sure –

NI: [picking up photographs] These are great, yeah.

FS: I'm not so sure.

NI: Stuff like this. [holds photographs up for Frank to see] You know, that's priceless, right? Especially if you have – if you can identify the people in the pictures, too?

GM: Oh, I've got the names of the picture of that names. [hands paper to Norm]

NI: Oh, so these are the guys in the pictures, here?

GM: [pointing] At the top there.

NI: Okay. Can I take this?

GM: Sure.

NI: I'll return it to you.

GM: Sure.

NI: Okay. Sure. Thank you very much.

FS: Can I have a copy of that after? Or give it to me and I'll make a copy.

JK: Boy, George, aren't you lucky you kept that?

GM: Yeah, I know, right? [laughter] That's for sure!
JK: You didn't know what you were doing.
GM: That's right!
FS: Have they got a photocopy machine here?
GM: Yeah, I'll – I'll get you one.
FS: Yeah, okay.
NI: I'm sure, yeah, you can get a digital – you know, digitize this print, so. Yeah – I don't know. Yeah. Do you guys want to say anything else, about the baseball league or experiences you guys had? Anything else, Jim, that –
JK: Well, the – too bad the other guys who didn't come, they don't know what they're missing.
GM: Oh, yeah.
NI: Who are the other guys?
GM: Wally Fukumoto, and –
JK: Yeah, I – Wally, Butch Nishimura, and –
GM: I don't know why they didn't come.
JK: And that's it. Wally Fukumoto and Butch Nishimura.
GM: Yeah.
NI: Do they have a lot of memories of those days?
GM: Well, Wally was – played, you know, on our team – excuse me [coughs into hand] – in our, in our league, and he was on the all-stars, too.
NI: Okay.
GM: And he's from Wood Fibre, so –
NI: Oh, okay.
GM: So he's got a lot of good memories, if he – if he was here.
NI: So he's – Tom Shoyama was up there, right? Wood Fibre.
GM: That's right.
TH: Yeah, that's right.
NI: Yeah, yeah. He used to work up there, during the summer.
GM: A lot – a lot of niseis went to Wood Fibre.
NI: Is that right?
GM: And after high school, or university, they go Wood Fibre.
NI: Why's that? Why was that?
GM: Oh, that was the only place that where all the second-generation –
TH: They could get hired.
GM: – Could get a job, yeah.
NI: Is that right, eh? Yeah.
TH: I think the, the owner was a Japanese, wasn't he?
NI: Ah, okay. So that's part of it.
GM: I thought so.
NI: Yeah.
JK: Hey, Frank, you used to play ball with – football with Russ Jackson, didn't you?
FS: No, I played baseball with him.
JK: Base – baseball?
NI: Yeah, really?
JK: Now, you come to Westdale, you know, the –

FS: He, he – I didn't play football there. I was too small.
JK: Baseball.
FS: Yeah.
JK: I remember one year I was on the East – East Hamilton – oh, Christ. [rubs temples] Anyway –
FS: Hey, watch your language! [laughter]
JK: And – and the coach, the coach – the manager, I think he played for Montreal Royals.
NI: Oh, wow.
JK: Yep. And boy, that was a tough, tough guy. I think he played third base. We played at Scott Park. We played at Scott Park, and I, I – I don't know whether I was playing second base or – I think I played second, and you know, Harry [Howe?]
FS: Yes.
JK: Was playing. Harry Howe hit the ball over the fence. I think it went about 330 –
FS: I remember that.
JK: Eh?
FS: I remember that.
JK: Yep. I was playing. I said, "Holy Jesus! What're – what – what am I up against?"
FS: That was the all-star team playing against –
JK: Was the all-stars? Were you playing?
FS: No, I wasn't. I was watching.
JK: Pardon?
FS: I was watching.
JK: Yep. I, I –
FS: It went right over the football stadium.
JK: Yep. He hit it over the fence, you know.
NI: This was during a baseball game?
JK: Baseball, yep.
NI: Like, of the nisei league?
JK: No, it was exhibition game.
NI: Oh, it was the exhibition game.
FS: Exhibition game, yeah. The all-stars against this – he was playing junior at the time. That was against the junior team, I think.
JK: What – what do they call it? Some –
FS: AKO, I think it was.
JK: A-K-O?
FS: Yeah, I think it was AKO.
JK: Yeah.
FS: You know, delivery.
NI: Oh, oh wow.
FS: Can't remember yesterday, but I remembered that! Yep.
NI: Well Jim, maybe – do, do you think these guys would come out at a different time? Like, if we would – arranged a time?
JK: For what?

NI: Oh, I don't know. We'd just talk about the same thing. I'll, you know, transcribe the tape and we'll all come out and maybe fill in – you know, Wally, I guess, and who was the other fellow?

GM: Yeah.

JK: I – yeah.

GM: Butch Nishimura.

JK: Pardon?

GM: Bart Nishimura. Butch.

JK: I, I don't – I don't know how much more they can –

GM: I don't know.

JK: I – I think we pretty well –

NI: Covered it, eh?

JK: Yeah.

NI: Yeah, okay. Well, okay.

JK: And – and – you know, it's just a – general, you know?

NI: It's pretty general.

JK: Talking about the – how it started.

NI: Right.

JK: And you know, how many times you played. It was strictly nihonjin.

NI: Right.

JK: There – there was no hakujin.

NI: Right.

JK: And you know, how many years it lasted.

NI: Right.

JK: We did banquets, you know. Did some fundraising.

NI: Right.

GM: Right.

JK: And how it folded, because you know, a lot of guys got to be married, eh? They got horny and they got girlfriends and – [laughter]

GM: Oh, oh yeah. That's right, because we were having the baseball – being in a baseball league, and then we have the Hy-Noters, which was a teenage social group, you know? So after we go there, and if they know that you're good ball player or whatever, you get well known amongst the girls, eh? [laughter]

JK: Yep.

NI: Where did you guys used to meet?

GM: We used to go to the All Peoples Church basement. We used to have a Saturday night dance.

NI: Oh yeah, yeah.

GM: And round a couple of blocks away, there used to be a Chinese restaurant called Yellow Restaurant. We all used to go there, after the dance, and have a nice big Boston cream pie. [laughter] But [you always like ?], it's a hangout, on Saturday night.

NI: Yeah, you guys had a lot of fun when you were younger.

GM: Oh, that was [indistinct] [laughter]

TH: That was [indistinct] Yellow Restaurant?

GM: That's right, Yellow Restaurant.

JK: Yep. You know, was – was any of this written up in New Canadian, or way, way back, or – do you know?

GM: Not – not that I know of. Nope.

JK: Yeah.

GM: Things are just kind of coming back to us right now.

JK: But, you know, I think it's a good thing, you know. At least it's in – it's recorded.

GM: Okay.

JK: Somebody's going to, you know, down the road – you know, someone may do a, a research – research on you know –

JK: When the Japanese first came to Hamilton. Why did they come to Hamilton?

GM: Right.

JK: So – what did they do? You know, okay, this is some – some of the young people, you know, some – some people may start doing, you know, they may get – NAJC [National Association of Japanese Canadians], you know, they're the scholars, you know, to get some money to do some research, you know, and –

GM: Sure.

JK: At least they got something –

NI: To work with.

JK: Something, you know, that – from people who took part.

JK: You know, so –

NI: Yeah. Well, in the States they've got a lot of this stuff –

GM: Oh boy, they have.

JK: Yep. I think it's – I think it's a good, good thing.

JK: It's a positive thing.

GM: Sure.

GM: Well, it's a good thing – do you have the history of the centre onto your [indistinct] How it started, and then transferred over here?

NI: Yep, yep.

GM: You know? Get the story.

NI: Were you at the interview I did a couple years ago for – we did a, a history of [gestures around at the room they are in] Hamilton interview, couple years ago, with Tak? Tak was there, too. Were you there?

GM: Um –

NI: I've interviewed you before, though.

GM: Could be.

NI: Yeah. I think I've – I think you were there a couple years ago. [laughter] I'm sure you were there, George.

GM: Getting too old now.

NI: I'm sure you were there.

TH: Old age.

GM: Yep, old age. Right.

GM: No, it's good to – as Jim says, I think it's a good thing to get it going.

JK: Oh, sure, you know.

GM: Before we all forget.

JK: Yep.

JK: Give and take another 10 years, who knows

GM: Oh my god, yeah. That – that’s right.

NI: I think 10 years is – is – there’s not going to be much left.

[conversation about another possible interview and about a film]

[End of interview]