

**Interviewee: Kay Fujiwara**  
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THE JAPANESE CANADIAN LEGACY PROJECT

**[Start Part 1]**

Peter Wakayama: This is an interview with Kay Fujiwara. Today, we are going to talk about her brother, Tak. And so, Kay, can you just give us your family background? Of your mom and dad and your family?

Kay Fujiwara: Mom and dad came from Japan, Fukuoka. We settled in place, small town called Duncan but we lived on the, on the borderline. Dad, well, we had a farm. There was an old existing house with a barn and- A creek ran in front and then it was the railroad track. But it was a nice little place that we settled, they settled in. We worked the farm and dad would go fishing or- He did all kinds of things. Helped people find jobs in the logging business, and things like that.

PW: What did you farm? Do you remember?

KF: We had lots of vegetables. Grandpa was with us, too. So, he loved gardening and we had to help sometimes. It was veggies, and we had chicken, pigs, and I remember, one time, we did have a cow. [chuckles] And lots of fruit trees.

PW: Did you know why your parents came to Canada?

KF: Why? Well, I guess for employment. Dad and grandpa and his brother came first.

PW: And your mom and dad were married when they came to Canada?

KF: [shaking head] After.

PW: Oh, after they came. So did your father come first and then go back and get-

KF: Yes.

PW: -married your mom?

KF: Later.

PW: Later.

KF: Yes.

PW: Do you remember your grandfather?

KF: Oh yes.

PW: What was he like?

KF: Grandpa was grandpa. Tak really loved him, and he used to speak of him a lot because he used to piggyback him and sing songs. He used to use the adding machine. He loved to make shochu [?] and stuff like that. But he was a great gardener; he loved the outdoors.

PW: Can you tell us about your siblings and where Tak fits into the whole picture?

KF: Well, we had- I am one of ten. Tak was the oldest and then it was Tomi [?], Fudge, me, Kimi [?], Yuki, Doris, Frank, did I miss somebody? I didn't miss somebody. Dougie [?] is the youngest, who did I miss? [Kimi. Kimi?] comes after me.

PW: And then, what did your brother do when you were in Duncan?

KF: Well, because of the big family that we had and- It was during the- Well, it was bad times. He had to quit school around Grade 10 and help the family. He probably found jobs in, well, there were lots of sawmills in the area and [unclear] travel [?]. He helped, and dad used to- also owned a logging camp at one time, and he worked in the logging camp. I don't know, we did a lot of fishing and dad sold the fish to these- took the car and [sort of things?].

PW: So, your brother did go to school in Creston?

KF: No, this is Duncan.

PW: Sorry, not in Creston, sorry, Duncan, I am sorry?

KF: He went to school until Grade 10. Yes.

PW: [And then he had to leave?] because of the family?

KF: Because of the large family, he had to help. And so did my two sisters, they only went to Grade 10, too.

PW: You had some people write to you about your brother, old friend, Pat? Can you remember what Pat-

KF: Oh, during his younger days, yes, I was told to tell stories about Tak. But I was eight years younger than Tak, so I didn't know a lot of things, and I was quite happy to find some people who knew Tak in his younger days. [holds up a picture of Pat] And Pat had some- We could go on for hours and hours, just talking about the good old days. But Tak knew Pat because Pat used to come to our house to have ofuro. When she moved to Duncan around the age of ten, they did not have an ofuro like we did.

[5 minutes]

So, often, she would come play with my old sis- My oldest sister, Tomi. One day, oh, Tak used to have some secret things he would do with. He had his room above the woodshed, that was his private room where he would have all his gadgets and stuff. One day, Tomi [?] said, "Let's go to his room." And she says, "Try touching that doorknob, but don't grab it," she says. Tak wasn't home, anyhow, but she just touched it and she got a real zap and- [chuckles] He didn't want his sisters to be snooping around when he's gone. Another time, she said that Tak had a lot of cars, different cars at times, and he would- 'Cause he used to fix, fix all kinds of things. He used to fix since, at the age of 12, he would, he would go to the junk yard and pick up stuff and make it work. But this car that she was in, Tomi [?] and Fudge were in it, she said. They realized after that he didn't really have a gas tank. His gas tank was a senbai [?] can on the floor and he had a hose, she said, that went into the floor and that was the gas line, which operated very well, But she was thinking, "Oh, my

goodness.” [laughs] It could’ve been a serious accident or something, but nothing happened.

Lisa Uyeda: Just going to stop for a moment while the train passes.

KF: Is it okay?

LU: Yep, yep. Just this one is really loud.

KF: Oh, the noise.

LU: Yeah, the train-

PW: Yeah, there’s a railway line.

KF: When might you go through-? When might you-? readingreadingAre we repeating something?

PW: No, we just talked about with Pat and his cars. So next thing, I will ask you about Mike.

PW: Okay, so it was okay.

LU: Oh, it was perfect.

PW: We will just wait until the train goes by.

KF: Wait a minute, Pat had another great story. But we don’t have to-

PW: You had about the room and the finger. And then, you talked about the old cars and the tank. So, you talked about the senbai [?]. What you said was, they were all young so they never realized how dangerous the situation was to drive around with that. [laughs]

KF: Yeah. I didn’t say that but that’s okay.

PW: He drove them around to different hill crests and [unclear], and they had lots of fun singing-

KF: Oh yeah.

PW: -songs from your [unclear]

KF: Oh well, you don’t have to put that in.

PW: Well, It’s up to you.

KF: Do you want-?

PW: Well, it’s up to you. Sure. The stories-

KF: I don’t know if the [unclear] was on. I know we used to just sing songs.

PW: Yeah, well-

KF: Yeah, I think it was late that-

PW: Did you go with them?

KF: -we used to sing [unclear].

PW: Did you go with them?

KF: No, I was too young

PW: Too young. These were eight years older- older people.

KF: Yeah. But I do remember-

PW: Singing?

KF: Is it on yet?

LU: Yep, yep.

KF: I do remember other cars that we used to go on because, because there they were so different, three seated car that, that I remember. And then there was a rumble seat car that I used to be thrilled to go in the back of it, because-. On top of that, we would be signing signing singing at the top of our heads and enjoying the scenery at the same time.

PW: And then he had another friend, Mike Kawabata, who remembers his unusual technical skills. Can you talk about that?

KF: Mike was a very, very good friend of Tak. He actually didn't- He was sent to Japan at a very young age and returned when he was about eight, and he didn't. He only went to Grade 3 and he had a rough time learning the English language, and his mother had asked him to sort of look after him and tutor him. So, they became very good friends. Mike and Tak would do all kinds of things together. Yeah, the way he had some- Oh, I am sorry, I am goofing it up. He- Tak didn't have very much money but Mike was always allowed to, had an allowance of 25 cents.

[10 minutes]

KF: And they would go to the movies every weekend, 10 cents each, and that took up 20 cents. He had five cents left over, and he gave that to Tak, because Tak bought these popular mechanics magazines where they tear off the cover [?] and you could get it for five cents. So, he had lots, lots of popular mechanics magazines, and I think that's where he- He used to read a lot. I remember seeing him reading a lot every time I went to pass the outdoor toilet. We had a big outdoor toilet with two holes, and it would be open wide, the door was on the front and the sides were open, [motioning with hands] one to the garden and one to get in. So, I'd see him reading a lot. [laughs] Anyhow, if you had to go, you could go and sit beside him and enjoy- [laughs] The view of the garden at the same time. You can take that out, if you want. Also, Mike, Mike used to have a bicycle because his father loaned it to him. And they double rode to the junk yard. They would scavenger around and pick up all kinds of wires for his radio, whatever they could find, they would bring it home, and they did that almost every good day on a weekend. And Mike told me the story that he was very interested in photography, too. And in order to print a photograph, he needed a red light and to get that red light, he said, Tak got this long board and carved it into a [propellor] and put it high up on the ground. And then he got it working with a generator at the bottom. So that's how he was able to get the red light to use for his photography. I saw many of his results. It's pretty good. [laughs]

PW: So, he was into photography and cars very early on.

KF: Yeah, he liked to do those things. Even at the age of 12, he could fix a radio to work. That's what Pat told me, too. Was there another story about him?

PW: No, I think that covered everything. Then the war came. Can you tell us what happened when the war was announced and-?

KF: Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor. I wasn't at home with the family at the time because- We had to leave our farm house because the highway was gonna go through. It's kind of a little bit of a story, but I wasn't at home. Because of that fact, we had to move into- Well, the family decided to go to Pauldy [?] because they had a big saw mill, and dad would be able to work and Tak would be able to work. But because I was having dance lessons in Duncan, my teacher used to teach me for about four, five years, she was giving me lessons for free. And I said, "I am going to have to quit. I won't be able to come because I won't have the transportation to get to my classes." She had a sister that taught in Victoria. She says, "Well, I really want you to continue the lessons," she says, I will find a place for you in Victoria." And that's where I was. I was with a family. I was doing domestics and I had to look after three children right after school. It was like me being able to still go to school, plus take lessons on Friday and Saturday, and that's where I was in Victoria with a hakujin family, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, they were really nice people.

PW: How old were you then?

KF: I left just after I started high school in Duncan. I was only 14. Dad let me go, I guess it was one less mouth to feed. [laughs] Anyhow, I was enjoying my studies and lessons, especially the lessons because that's something I loved to do. I was taking tap and ballet, and drama, things like that.

PW: You had painted a picture, an oil painting of the house in Duncan.

KF: Oh yeah.

PW: Maybe you would like to show us that.

KF: We never had a photograph of- Even though Tak took a lot of pictures, we didn't have a photograph of the house. [holds up a picture of her painting] By memory, I was able to remember every window and door, and we even had a balcony and apple trees and-

[15 minutes]

KF: Around the back, we did have a barn, a huge barn beside the- way beyond the woodshed. Over here, [pointing at the woodshed] there's a woodshed, there's wood- And that was where Tak's room was, above the woodshed. So-

PW: So, ten members lived in that house?

KF: Yeah, well, there was a room up there, too. We had upstairs rooms. There were two big bedrooms downstairs and the middle room had a one pot-belly stove. And then, they added the kitchen later. Tak had built a, you know, a cold shelf way down under the ground and used a pulley system to bring up the milk and the meat and things like that. That's something he invented, also.

PW: What kind of weather would you have in-?

KF: The weather was much milder than here in Toronto. It was great because you could practically garden all year around. We did have ice sometimes. We did go skating. It was milder, not as humid. Vancouver people complained about rain a lot.

But we were in the valley, Cowichan Valley. I don't ever remember complaining about rain. I guess we, we wanted rain for the garden and things like that. It was nice. It was comfortable.

PW: But you were in the interior BC [British Columbia] which is a little drier than Vancouver which is right on the coast. And so, probably that's why, you didn't get as much rain as, say, Vancouver.

KF: I don't think we did.

PW: It's a much more temperate climate, I would think.

KF: Yes, yes. I think Victoria was drier still because I often saw their grass very brown whereas it was green in-

KF: Did you get snow there?

PW: Very little, very little, but we did get ice. I remember we had a pond and a lake not too far away. And the fields would just get flooded sometimes and we'd go skating.

PW: And you went to school in Duncan?

KF: [nods] Mhm.

PW: Yeah. Public school?

KF: [nods] Yes, yes.

PW: What do you remember about that? Your public-school days?

KF: Oh, it was almost all hakujins.

PW: Yes.

KF: There might have been one or two, well, one Japanese, only Japanese-Canadian and a Chinese-Canadian, and the rest were all hakujins. I had a lot of hakujin friends, but we did go to Japanese school. After school, I used to play hockey a lot, hockeyhockeyokie a lot because I played hockey, grass hockey, or basketball or whatever.

PW: What kind of food and meals would you have prepared in those days?

KF: Oh, Japanese style, everything.

PW: Everything was Japanese style?

KF: Oh, we were real Japanese, yeah.

PW: And you were growing a lot of vegetables and that from your farm?

KF: Yes. We practically could live off the farm. I know when we bought oranges or something, dad would buy them by the crateful and that. I remember the orange boxes. [laughs] And the fishing was great in the area, because when dad took us to the wharf, we took the washtubs and fill it with perch sometimes and come home with it. It was just amazing. Couldn't do it nowadays, I don't think.

PW: So, your memories of Duncan was very good?

KF: I wrote a poem on that, I won't read it now but- They were, I called it, "My Childhood Home in the West." [laughs] I think my childhood was very, very happy time.

PW: So, you were in Victoria when the war came?

KF: Yes, because I was looking after a family and going to my dance classes.

PW: But your family was still in-?

KF: I am sorry [it ending with ?]the story but that's where I was. We have to get back on track.

PW: So, Tak was still with the family?

KF: Tak was still with- Paulyd [?], they built a house in Paulyd [?] and that's where the family was. And I had- For two years, I had never seen that big house because I was working and I was busy. So, when I heard the news, that Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, I was just devastated, and I just felt almost ashamed to be of Japanese descent because at one time, I just loved the culture and everything else. Why, why did they bomb Pearl Harbor? All the news were saying, Japs this and Japs that. And I just felt ashamed of myself.

[20 minutes]

KF: Anyhow, I was crying and- I don't know- Mr. and Mrs. Thompson wondered, "Why?" and I said, "I just wanna go home." So, they let me go, and it was just December, December, early December, I was able to go home.

PW: So, you went back, joined your family and then your family then went to where?

KF: We were herded on, on a bus, and then to to Chemainus. From Chemainus they shipped across tto Vancouver, where we stayed in the exhibition ground, just like the CNE [Canadian National Exhibition] here, and lived in the horse, the animal- where the cattle-

PW: This was the Hastings Park internment camp.

KF: Yeah.

PW: And how long were you there?

KF: We were there from- Well, it was spring, early spring. We were there 'til about July. It was, it was great because we met all these people from the east coast and people who became friends with us later. We just had a good time there.

PW: So, your memory of Hastings Park was good or bad?

KF: It was like an adventure, again, because we were young, and meeting all kinds of other young people, we played baseball and- We did have school, though, a little bit. There were people like Albert Takimoto, who taught correspondence course, and helped us.

PW: So, you were about 14 when this happened?

KF: No, I was already 16 when the war started, and 17 by the time we moved.

PW: So, your brother was with the family, Tak was with the family at that point?

KF: Yes. We were very fortunate to move as a family. We went as a family with grandpa, too. A lot of people had such a bad time, having to go to the sugar beet farms and-

PW: So, your family, as a group, then moved to where?

KF: We were sent on a train to Slocan. We never knew where Slocan was, but it was probably 100 miles in from the west coast. Slocan was a ghost town because it was

an old mining town. And I have pictures, there's a picture of Slocan in the old days. It was a real booming town at one time, with swinging doors and the saloons and things like that. Anyhow, we got off that train and looked outside. Oh, it was so beautiful with the lake and mountains and the river. It was just a lovely place.

PW: When you first got there, because the house, everybody couldn't live in the town.

KF: That's right.

PW: You lived in tents. Can you tell us about that?

KF: Yes. Our houses were not quite ready when we got to Slocan. So, they had tents for us to stay in, and in order to have our food, they had a big ice rink in Slocan, so that ice rink was cleared out. And a lot of the fellows that were working had their bunk beds on the side..[emphasizing with hands] But we had our meals in the rink. We stayed in tents until November, until our houses were built.

PW: And Tak wanted to do something else. Tell us about that.

KF: Yes. Tak was- He decided not go to the tents, and he wanted to rent and be quite independent. He found an apartment, well, a flat in a hakujin home and he allowed him to stay there. He could cook his meals, he allowed him to cook his meals in his kitchen, so that's where he stayed.

[25 minutes]

KF: And my oldest sister was married with one child. They stayed in the renovated apartments in Slocan City. So, the rest of us, being still a large family, well, eleven of us left, there was grandpa, too. We had two houses and an outhouse. They were made of one by four wood, and kind of cold in the winter. It was, it wasn't very good for grandpa because he took sick that first winter and he passed away, which was sad.

KF: And then, the Slocan area, there were four family camps. Popoff [unclear]Farm, Lemon Creek, and Slocan City.

KF: That's right.

PW: Tak set up his photo shop and the studio-

KF: In the city.

PW: In the city. And then he did other things for the camp too. Can you tell us some of his activities in the camp?

KF: Oh yes. The reason why he wanted to live there, because I think he wanted to start a photo studio, so he was able to find ways of buying chemicals and stuff, and he started to develop pictures for other people. And then he eventually rented a building right across the road where he used it to photograph people. And that's how he started his business.

PW: So, he then took portraits and weddings and that in the Slocan area?

KF: And if there was a picnic or whatever, he was out there shooting.

PW: He had a friend or a helper named [Min Nakahara Nakahara?].



KF: Yes.

PW: Can you tell us about Min?

KF: Oh, this is Min. [holds up a picture of Min] I also worked with Tak, I had a job. [chuckles] So I was a receptionist, and helped him in the dark room sometimes, and I helped retouch. And Min came along. He wanted to help out, so Tak says, "Okay, you can do this and that," and he allowed him to work with his radio shop that he had also in that building. And helped him with his film when he went to show movies, and helped him with all kinds of things. He was a young boy then, he was only about 17. He left kind of early. When he left, I don't think he paid him when he came to work every day on his bicycle. He happened to give Min a whole bag of coins, [chuckles] and he was happy with that.

PW: Now, Tak set up camp dances or the dances you used to have in that area?

KF: Oh yes. We used to have a club called SMC, Slocan Music Club. I think there are pictures of us in the club, and we had fellas, they helped also. In the beginning, he had a lot of university students that were there, but they left early, but they kind of helped him get records and stuff. It was a long-playing record in those days. We did have dances and concerts and all kinds of things like talent shows, and [shibais]. We even had a drama club and put on plays.

PW: Now, I understand he even used to set up the sound system in the camp concerts?

KF: Yeah, Tak did, even though- Yeah. Somebody, there's another fella, too. He told me that, [Roy Kudita?].

PW: Yes.

KF: [holds up picture of Roy] Yeah, he told me that even at a picnic, he would set a sound system and he used the generator out of the car to get the loud speakers. And Roy just wondered how, how he could even take photographs when we weren't allowed to have cameras and things like that. I think I heard the story that the RCMPs [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] were really good to him. [chuckles]

[30 minutes]

PW: He took all the official photographs at the camp?

KF: Usually at schools and events, and there are many photographs, different groups, the hospital staff and funerals, whatever.

PW: You had beach parties. What did he do for your beach parties?

KF: Oh, we had beach parties, [we had weiners?]. Yeah, he would set up the sound system for music and-

PW: And he often ran out of his battery, I understand.

KF: Yes, I think. I can't remember, but that's what I was told.

PW: And he also had a vehicle. Tell us about his vehicle.

KF: Oh yes, he had bought the first car which looked like a wreck [?]. [holds up a picture of the car] This is the actual car that he bought from someone who had it in

his backyard. Somehow, he got it running. [holds up another picture of the car] This is what it looked like. Well, he put the scribbles on it after, but he did have tires and [old tubes?] in it. And it had a crank so he was able to start it. [laughs] When this tire got so bad, he couldn't get any more, well, he couldn't patch it very well so he took the tube, tube didn't work, so he asked, I think he asked Min or somebody to go to the sawmill and get it filled with saw dust and wrap it around with ropes. And it worked. [laughs] He had ways of fixing things.

PW: You also worked at Tak's studio?

KF: Mhm.

PW: How old were you then when you were working for Tak?

KF: Well, I guess I was 17, 18, 19 until I had to leave. I left in '45.

PW: What kind of work did you do in the studio?

KF: I helped him retouch the black and whites, and he bought me this set where I taught myself how to touch it up, he just showed me what to do. On top of that, he bought me a set of oil paints for photos, which he said, you know, "You can learn it and you can do it." So, I did my best. And people who ordered colour photographs, wanted to have their photographs coloured, that's what I did, too.

PW: Then he got married?

KF: That was- After we had left, 1945, we were told at that time to go east of the Rockies. Yes, he stayed behind and he got married in 1946, I think.

PW: Yes.

KF: To Betty Umakoshi. [searching for pictures] And she's a lovely lady.

PW: It's on your lap.

KF: Oh, here it is. It dropped here. [holds up a picture of Tak and his wife] This is his wife and they were married in Slocan. He was allowed, because of his independence and not getting help from [?] the government, they allowed him to find a place in the British Columbia wherever he wanted. He drove his new Pontiac, he bought a car later, a real car, Pontiac, and he drove around British Columbia and found this beautiful little town called Creston, and that's where he decided to settle.

PW: Do you know why he moved to Creston?

KF: Because he loved it. He loved the area, it was in a valley with orchards, little town. I just- Somebody told me, they passed by Creston and they said it's a beautiful place.

PW: So then, he went to Creston, tell us about what he did in Creston.

KF: Well, he first started his photo studio again there but it didn't work out because he had a fire, and he lost almost everything. Later, he decided to have a repair shop where he fixed- He was very good at fixing, anything from toasters to any appliances.

[35 minutes]

KF: The business was good and it got better, so he decided to go bigger and start selling refrigerators and stoves and things like that. And then, furniture later. He really went bigger, and bigger, and bigger. By, oh, over 20 years after that, he had four chain stores in the area of Creston, from Creston to Cranbrook and Fernie, where's the other one? Oh yes, Golden was a little farther north, but he had those four chain stores. They sold everything from- Well, he started selling even motor boats and engines and services for electrical things.

PW: Tell us how he was the first to get cable TV.

KF: Yes, he was selling all these televisions. Cable wasn't in anywhere in the area and he decided to go climb Mount Thomas, and he took a [unclear] Jeep with the group. I don't know how they worked it, but he was able to get signaling from some of the cities in the States and bring in cable television and that. I read in the paper once that he was the first to bring in cable TV to eastern, southern, southeastern British Columbia. He was very happy going around to all rural people, setting antennas up for them. He just loved to do things like that.

PW: He became very active in the community, both as a businessman and as a community leader and activist. Can you tell us some of his activities that he did?

KF: He had done so many things during his business. On top of all his business, I am just amazed at what he loved to do. He loved to work with the young people and the older people, because he was the chairman for the Blossom Festival that they have every year and he did that for about six years. He also started the big band contest- No, what do you call it? Some kind of a-

PW: Big band contest.

KF: Not a big band, it was- The Battle of the Band, he called it, and they had young people competing, and so that went on. He also had talent shows. There was one talent show that he had- There was, I don't know, 1300 people attending it. You know, Creston is a very small town, but I think they came from all over. And he had judges, it was a big talent contest. He also- There are so many things, I had it written down.

PW: He also became involved in some of the clubs in the city like-

KF: Yes.

PW: -Chamber of Commerce. Kiwanis Club.

KF: He was very happy to be in the Kiwanis Club. I think he was the- Oh dear, Governor General for a while. He attended many mayors' conventions in British Columbia and sometimes in the States.

PW: So, he even became involved in the municipal politics.

KF: Yes, he was on the board for many years. I haven't studied too well on that.

PW: I think he was the President of the Creston Chamber of Commerce as well?

KF: I think he was at one time. Yes, yes.

PW: Then, he semi-retired?

KF: Well, after that, yes. No, before that, he also instigated- He was a great fundraiser to build this recreational centre. And he was instigated to ask every family in

Creston for 200 dollars. He did it with a group of people, went around to every single house and they were able to get this great big recreational centre, made for the young people. That was another event that was big.

[40 minutes]

PW: So, he was very active, both as a businessman and as a community people. But then, he semi-retired at a certain time?

KF: [nods] Mhm, He decided to go back to- Did I tell you? He went back to get his diploma in high school, diploma in high school, and he did. He gave his general managership over to his first son, Ron. He took over, over Tak. Tak's work but every weekend, he would come home. No, he decided to- Because he couldn't be in medicine, he went into psychology, the University of Calgary, and took up psychology. Every weekend, he came back with a truck load of furniture to Cranbrook for Ron to look after. And then, he would spend the weekend his family and go back to school on Monday.

PW: And he was quite honoured by his community as Citizen of the Year. Could you tell us about some of the honours that he received?

KF: Can I take a break?

PW: Yes.

[interview stopped from 41:48 to 47:50]

PW: Tak decided that he wanted to continue his education and so, what did he do?

KF: Well, he finished his high school and received his diploma, and he decided to go- he wanted to go to medical school and apply but they refused him because of his age. So, he decided to take up psychology at the University of Calgary. He just enjoyed his classes. Two years, he was studying and one day, he took sick. Well, he felt sick, so he decided to stay home that weekend and saw his doctor in Creston. He would just send home with pills. This happened twice. On the third time, he decided to drive himself and get one more checkup because he was in such pain. He died that night. It was so sad 'cause he was only 56. I don't know what to say.

PW: And so he passed away, I understand you went his funeral in Creston.

KF: Yes. It was the most difficult thing to tell my mother. This happened and she wasn't well enough to travel with us. Yuki and I went to the funeral. There were many, many people there. Mr. Ribert [?], who spoke of Tak, about Tak, and he said that Tak's magnetism and tremendous drive in community service was an inspiring interest- was an inspiring interest in promoting young people's activities. I am sorry, I goofed that.

LU: No, that's fine.

PW: It's okay.

KF: Can I just repeat that over again?

LU: Of course. I just have to run downstairs quickly; I will be right back.

[50 minutes]

PW: Yeah okay. No problem.

KF: So, it will be-

PW: Just say, when you start over again, just say that Mr. Ribert [?] spoke-

KF: So, at the funeral, Mr. Ed Ribert [?] who spoke of Tak's magnetism and tremendous drive-in community services was an inspiring interest in promoting young people's activities, and said that he was a giant among men. I thought that was a beautiful eulogy for my brother, Tak. I was sad, he just died so young at the age of 56. I am sure he had many, many interesting things to do in the future days [?].

PW: Listening to your story about Tak, I just find it a tremendous story about-

KF: Thank you.

PW: -about a person who, in his days, was a unique, innovative, and service that he provided to his community, and that he had a business sense as well as, you know, doing all these community things, it's really an inspiring story, so thank you so very much for telling us about Tak. Couple more things. Among one of the things that used to work for Tak, in his younger days, was Mr. [Garry Weimer?] who is now the president of Westinghouse Canada.

KF: We found an article in the- from the Hamilton paper and it was titled, "A tribute to roots", which Mr.- because [Mr. Weimer?], as a young boy in high school in Creston area, he went to work for my brother Tak and- He really found him very- such a good mentor because he's- This is what he says, "a key influence during Mr.-

PW: [Weimar Weimar?].

KF: -[Mr. Weimar?] [unclear] was Tak, owner of the electrical appliance shop where Mr. [Weimar?] worked part-time after school, and Tak was the first to bring cable TV into BC [British Columbia]." He spoke about that. And then- I don't know, he just learned a lot from him, running his business, and customer service. He really looked after his customers. So, he became president of Westinghouse. He was retired when he wrote this but- He attributes his- a lot of his expertise, I think, just by working- from things that he learned from Tak. And I thought that was very nice.

PW: Another tribute that the town of Creston and some of his- one of his former groups that he sponsored, The Ambassadors, I think, from the band.

KF: Oh yes, after his passing- The young people never forgot him, and one of the bands that won, in the Battle of the Bands, that's called The Ambassadors, yes. They got together and they formed a reunion for- in honour of my brother, Tak. And it was such a great, big affair, I think you will see some pictures of it later. Yes, that was- hundreds of people just came and they played- the band played. One of the singers was the winner of a talent contest, and she sang the very same song that she

sang at the competition. And she- everybody was enjoying it, but she just choked up near the end and she just couldn't finish it. She jumped up the stage and she went to give Betty a big hug. [chuckles] So, they really honoured him with a great, big plaque that's going to sit in the recreational building that Tak had a great deal of promoting. He raised a lot of money for it so-

[55 minutes]

It's there now and the plaque is sitting- is decorated on their wall.

PW: And then, Tak and Betty had children.

KF: Oh yes, they had a family of three boys and a last girl was Joy. And what a joy she is, she really is. [holds up a family picture] This is an older picture of the family, I don't know if the camera will see it. Just before he passed away, I guess this is the last photo of the family. [holds up a picture] He also got to see a grand- a grandson in this photo, Roy's first child- Ron's first child, that is. Anyhow, he had a good life, a short one, but sad to see him go so soon.

PW: And his son is now the mayor of Creston?

KF: Yes, Ron has become recently the mayor of Creston and I do wish him well. Yes.

PW: How was your relationship with Tak?

KF: I- We got along very, very well. Yeah, it was- it was great, great to have a brother like Tak, and I am so proud of him.

PW: Your family is a very large group of family-

KF: [nods] Mhm, we are a big family of ten children. My mother and my auntie were sisters, and my father and my uncle were brothers so, we have first cousins and they had 13 children so- We still have big family reunions, I think family is just wonderful. We still get together every single year, as many Toyotas as possible. Now we can use Caledon [?] again, and we congregate on the last Saturday of June every year. [chuckles] It's great.

PW: I just want to ask you a couple more questions about Duncan. You mentioned that your family had to move from the farm. Can you tell us about that story? Why, why did your family have to move from Duncan?

KF: Oh yes. The highway was going to come through, directly over our house, so we just had to move, and decided to go to a mill town where my father and my brother could have jobs. So that's why we had to move.

PW: Tell us about the family that provided you with the land on which you did the farm.

KF: Oh, we lived on the farm, but I don't ever remember dad paying rent for the land that we were working on. I think they were just generous people. He had acres and acres of land and probably gave him little portions to live on, when dad arrived from Japan. Such nice people, Mr. McKinnon [?] and his family, they had a dairy farm and they had their milk on top of the hill, and we were in the valley, but it wasn't very far, it was just a short walking distance so- I think we just bartered [?] and helped

each other, gave him- We probably traded vegetables and often we had milk. We'd go up and he'd give us milk. [chuckles]

PW: When did your parents come to Duncan?

KF: 200- Well, dad and my uncle and my grandfather came in the year of 2000- 1907 and so, 2007 has passed, so we've been here for over a hundred years.

LU: [to someone off-screen] Yep, that's okay.

PW: [coughing]

KF: So, is that okay?

LU: Mhm.

PW: Okay, we can start again.

LU: We will just wait for the train

PW: Oh okay.

KF: What was that?

PW: No, I just want to thank you for the interview and finish off the interview.

PW: [coughs]I think we covered all the-

KF: Oh, I forgot to tell him how he died.

PW: Oh yes, you did.

[60 minutes]

LU: No, not on camera.

PW: Not on camera? I thought we captured that.

KF: Not on camera. I'm sorry.

LU: No, that's okay, we can include it in the final-

KF: You have to go back and forth.

[interviewers and Kay talk about cutting and splicing video, recounting the interview so far, and how Kay will discuss her brother's death until, what Lisa was doing when she left the room until 1:01:25]

PW: Well Kay, that was a wonderful story about your brother, it's very inspiring actually, and a moving story about a person who did so much. As a person, as a-

KF: Maybe I want to thank you-

PW: You do whatever you want.

KF: Can you put it on?

PW: You're on now.

KF:Okay. I really want to thank you, Peter and Lisa, for your expertise in your camera work, I hope it works. Okay, [for me?]. I appreciate this very much. If Tak were here, he'd very happy, and if my mother and father were here, they'd be so proud to have his [?] story told. Thank you very much.

PW: Thank you.

**[End Part 1] @ 1:02:16 [Peter begins saying he wants to ask more about Kay's history, then footage skips, and they discuss how to begin the next part of the interview]**

**[Start Part 2] [starts at 1:02:57]**

PW: This is September 24th, the second part of our interview with Kay Fujiwara.

Kay, tell us when you were born and where you were born.

KF: I was born in Duncan.

PW: And your date?

KF: 1925. The date? 1925 so, 85 years old today.

PW: Your mother and father were from Japan, from-

KF: Yes, Fukuoka.

PW: Fukuoka-ken. Where in Fukuoka-ken did they come from? Do you know?

KF: It was sort of- near Hakata, not too far, an hour and a half drive north.

PW: Okay.

KF: Beautiful country, and my mother always said for me to try to get back there.

PW: Did you ever get to Japan?

KF: I really did, and it's such a beautiful area. She used to swim in the river behind her house. Actually, we went to her house which was renovated larger. Mountains in the background and the river is now a stream because they had a big dam up ahead.

PW: Did your parents- how old were your parents when they came, do you know?

KF: I didn't know- Dad was in his late teens. By the time they got married, a few years later, I think my mother was in her late teens, too, still.

PW: And your father came first, is that correct?

KF: Yes. And she didn't come for another three years after, I think. Few years after.

PW: And was your father married in Japan?

KF: No, no. They both married after she got here.

PW: Oh, after she got here. Okay. But they had met in Japan? Do you know?

KF: They might have, they might have known each other. I am sorry, my biggest regret is not asking questions.

PW: Well, that's problem with all of us.

[65 minutes]

KF: Just the biggest mistake-

PW: That's true for all of us though.

KF: -regret.

PW: So, you were born in Duncan, were you born at home?

KF: Yes, well, I was born at a hospital.

PW: Oh, you were born at a hospital-

KF: I think before my mother married, she worked in that hospital, and she got to know all the doctors very well, and so whenever any of us got sick, she just looked



after us so well, she made sure that she got a bed in the hospital, too. [laughs]

PW: And what was your mother and father like?

KF: Oh, what were they like? Oh dad, we thought he was very strong and handsome, and [?].[?].otoko-rashii [laughs] And my mother was petite, a little plumpy as she got a little older, but she was- she only had Grade Four education, but she just seemed to be so intuitive about everything, and even bringing us up and cooking, I mean, she never had recipes to read, or whatever, but she still made tofu, and kamaboko, and udon, and she used to get my son to get the old wringer-washer, the head of it when it was gonna be thrown out, she kept it to make her spaghetti and roll it out and cut it all up, and she used to make chow mein [unclear]- and she loved people. She could tell who- I mean, I don't know, she just loved to talk to people.

PW: And did you speak principally Japanese in the home?

KF: Half and half.

PW: Half and half. Were your parents ever- did they learn English for very much [?]-?

KF: Not very well, but by the end of my mother's late years she was travelling across Canada by herself to her son's place, and she managed to get a- we took her to the plane, maybe, and somebody would pick her up, but she- and even, she came back on trains sometimes, with a bag full of vegetables from the garden in the [other bag her clothes?]. And she managed to leave one bag at the station but come back on the streetcar with the other, and I said, "Why didn't you call us?" And she says, "Oh no, I can make [?]-" And she spoke broken English.

PW: And then how long did she live?

KF: She passed away when she was almost 83, 82, yeah.

PW: And your dad?

KF: He was younger, 69.

PW: And was he in Toronto at that time? Did he pass away in Toronto?

KF: Yes. They were both in Toronto after coming from the farm in St. Catharines.

PW: So, your days in Duncan, in terms of schooling, and your friends, and your- what you did after school, could you tell us about that?

KF: Well, it was a small community of Japanese-Canadians, and my friends were all hakujin. And so, it was- but we still had Japanese school, after school. But I only went to Grade Four.

PW: And who taught the Japanese school?

KF: There was a man- do you remember the judo [Gen Nagahara?]? Nagahara-san? He was sensei, and then Mr. Kawaguchi [?], I think, is related to GenGenarry [?].

PW: Yeah.

KF: Kawaguchi-san [?], yeah.

PW: Now, what kind of sports activities did you do in Duncan?

KF: Oh, lots. I loved running, and I loved anything that was sports, grass hockey, and basketball. But my biggest achievements were in Sports Day. I think I got my stamina strength by running up and down the hill for school, and lunch, and back

and forth. It was a steep, steep hill that they closed down in the winter, because it was so steep, but I used to love to run it every time. Non-stop, non-stop, to school. And so, I think- and that's how, I think, I used to win all the races. And I used to have trophies for primary and junior, intermediate, but not in senior, I came in second. [laughs] I guess my legs got shorter. No, no, the girls had longer legs. [laughs]

PW: You told us that you were taking dance lessons. How did you get interested in dance?

KF: Oh, dance classes. My hakujin friend decided that we should go and take tap lessons, so we started, and I had to find 25 cents somehow, which dad reluctantly gave me for the first one.

[70 minutes]

KF: And so, we did go to some lessons, and I loved it. She stopped before I did, and I kept trying to get 25 cents every week, and sometimes I'd go up the hill with my wagon and vegetables and try to sell it, and things like that, to earn some money. And then the prices went up to 50 cents, oh dear, I had to quit, I just had to quit.

PW: And how did you like school?

KF: Oh, I was only good in some subjects.

PW: But did you enjoy it?

KF: Hm, yes, yes, I liked school, I would say. I wasn't a very good reasoner, I think, I didn't even know what a library was. Things like that, where I didn't really study very well-

PW: And how did-

KF: But I was good at my Home Ec[onomics] class. I remember her telling- she got married to someone in British Columbia who was in politics, and she met my friend Masako Yoshita, and they were talking about Duncan- because that's where she came from- [redacted at the request of the interviewee]

PW: So, your Japanese name is Kazue [?]?

KF: Kazue [?].

PW: And did you enjoy Japanese school?

KF: Yeah, yeah, it was fun, it was great. I learned calligraphy, you know, and things like that. I mean [miming brush strokes] you had to write it so perfectly, and I loved art, so.

PW: So, then you told us you were in Victoria when the war started, tell us about that.

KF: Oh, yes, I was in Victoria because- I had to quit dance class. Oh, I'm sorry. [puts down water bottle she was holding] I had to quit dance class because of the prices going up. But she had seen me on the street and called me back for classes, and she says, "You come back to all the classes and you won't have to pay me." I was sort of flabbergasted, but she meant it, and she asked me to come back and I did for about four more years in Duncan, until the highway went through, and that's when my

house, that's when we had to move and build a new house, and that's when she said she would find a home in Victoria for me, and I would still continue my school, and- but I would live in a home where I would have to do some chores and-. I was paid four dollars an hour- I mean a month, [laughing] a month, and that's when I bought my first second-hand bike, for four dollars- 14 dollars. I waited three months for- four months, just to pay for the bike.

PW: And you were- in Victoria, did you meet other Japanese-Canadians?

KF: Mhm, [nods] in high school I met a lot of Victoria girls, they're still some of my good friends.

PW: So, they- so you were in high school in Victoria, were you?

KF: Mhm, yes.

PW: And you were a [house-girl?] [unclear]-

KF: And doing domestics whilst [?] having my lessons on Friday and Saturday. But this was the sister of the teacher in Duncan who taught me.

PW: And this was tap dancing that you-

KF: Well, I did-

PW: Other things-

KF: Various, tap, ballet-

PW: Ballet?

KF: And she had drama and stuff [?], a lot of different dances.

PW: Were there many classes, and many people in the classes?

KF: Not in Duncan, but my teacher, Dorothy Scutin [?] in Victoria had a big, large studio, so she had many little girls.

PW: So then, you were in Victoria when this happened, when the war started?

KF: Yes.

PW: And so, you went back to Duncan to join your family, is that correct?

KF: That's right, yeah, I had to leave the family, and that's when I went back- not to Duncan, but to the brand-new home that was built in Pauly [?].

[75 minutes]

PW: And then from there your family, all of the family, moved to-

KF: Yes.

PW: Were taken to Chemainus [?], where you had to leave for Hastings Park-

KF: To Hastings Park, to Slocan.

PW: And then, so- Hastings Park was at a terrible [?] place, or- how well did you remember Hastings Park?

KF: I just remembered it as a place we had to go, and, yes. Into the cattle building, and it really, really had the remainders of horses living there, or cows, or whatever. But when you were young, it was an adventure. So, we didn't mind because-

LU: Sorry. [unclear]. Yeah, it's the train. Sometimes it's the construction [unclear]-

PW: We're going to pause for a few minutes so the train passes, the train's going

through.

KF: Oh, okay, okay.

[1:16: 01, interview resumes at 1:16:12]

KF: So, the question was?

PW: You were in Hastings Park, were there any incidents in Hastings Park that you recall?

KF: [laughs] Well, it was just a wonderful place 'cause we met all, so many people from the West Coast, and people- friends we got to know, and still remember the happy time. Yes [?], we had baseball games, and could take a pass and go out to the city sometimes. And one day I was in the kindergarten room, and there were two fellas chasing me, and I stepped over the kindergarten table, and then when they came and stepped on, the table went onto my heel, and I had a very bad gash in the back of the heel, so there was a doctor there [unclear]. And in those days, they put your foot into a basin of soapy water and scrubbed it. And then they get the needle, and some kind of a thread, and stitched it. And they gave me about nine stitches, right then and there, on the right [?] foot on the floor, and they stitched it, and I had my sister Fudge with me, and I just- she just hung onto me while he did it.

[laughs] But then, that was- I had to wear crutches the rest of the time there, well, for a while, anyhow, until it healed. But I got to walk faster than the people- I walked along faster with [?] my crutches than the people with two feet. [laughs] Oh, I'm bragging again.

PW: So how long were your family in Hastings Park?

KF: We stayed there 'til July, from spring, 'til July, and then we went on a train to Slocan.

PW: And how was your train ride from Vancouver to Slocan?

KF: Well, that wasn't bad, I remember the train ride going out to Toronto was, you know, very dusty, sooty and [laughs] wasn't very comfortable. But you [?] didn't mind as a kid.

PW: So, you arrived at Slocan-

KF: Mhm.

PW: And then, because the- your accommodations weren't ready yet-

KF: Still in tents, that's right.

PW: You had to stay in tents [?]. How did you find that?

KF: That was fine, it's like camping, [laughs] only it got pretty cold by November. We left- we were in houses by the end of November, so.

PW: By the end of November, so you were there about two, three months?

KF: Mhm, mhm. [unclear counting the months]

PW: And so, you moved in these cabins in Popoff[?], was it-

KF: What? Yes, they were shacks made of one by six, the boards.

PW: What were your memories in Popoff?

KF: Popoff? I didn't have- well, I didn't have school, so I had a job working at [my brother's?] studio, as I said in the last story, so. So, a lot of older girls have jobs,

there's the office in the city, or the stores, and- but they eventually had, a year later they had the crash course for teachers, for girls to become teachers, or [?] men, and a lot of them went back to school. But I didn't, I had grade-

[80 minutes]

I went up to Grade 11 class [?], half of Grade 11, that's all.

PW: So, then you were working in-

KF: In my brother's-

PW: Tak's [?]-

KF: In my brother's studio-

PW: Studio, and helping out with various activities there. What did you do like after hours when you weren't working in his studio?

KF: After hours there was swimming, and there was a lake, at [?] the cliffs, and mountains to climb on the weekends, and we had clubs for different events, we had a club that we met to organize dances and concerts and a lot of things.

PW: Were you dating in those days?

KF: Friends, had friends, mhm. [laughs] I was, oh yeah, 17, 18. And that's where I did meet my husband.

PW: In Slocan?

KF: Mhm.

PW: That's where you met Ozzie [?]?

KF: Yeah, he was working on construction on top of the roof, he said, for when he first saw me. [chuckles]

PW: Oh. [laughs]

KF: Coming off the train.

PW: Oh, that early on [?]?

KF: Yeah, coming off the train.

PW: Okay. And how 'bout your brothers and sisters, what were they doing?

KF: Well, my eldest sister- my brother had the photography store- studio. My oldest sister had a child, and they lived in the apartment. But Fudge had a job in the grocery store in Popoff. And then there's me, and Kimi [?] and the rest went to school. There was a high school in the city run by the nuns, so if they were of age for high school they were able to continue, and then they had the elementary school children later. So, there that was great.-

PW: Did you not want to finish your high school, or did you feel [you wanted to work-

KF: Well, I kinda had to go to work, so- to help the family. And so that's what happened in those days.

PW: Right. And how did you get along with your siblings, and your parents during those days?

KF: Always very well. Always, we just got along well.

PW: And where did you get your food when you were in the internment camp?

KF: Well, that's why we did have a store, but we always- my mother was very garden-lover, and she grew these vegetables, and we helped her, but there was, there was, I don't think we starved, it was great.

PW: Did you have a ration coupons and that when you were in Slocan [?]?

KF: I remember the days in Duncan we had ration, but I don't know if- was there-

PW: Because I remember in Tashme, they had these coupon books-

KF: Oh yeah.

PW: And, you know, different colour-coded coupons. I just wondered if you had anything in Popoff or not?

KF: [I don't know?]. I don't know about that.

PW: And then you- was there a grocery store you could-

KF: Mhm. [nods]

PW: Was there one in Popoff [unclear]-

KF: Right in Popoff, we [?] could just go to buy our meat or-

PW: And who ran that?

KF: By Mr. And Mrs. Graham [?], hakujin [?], and there were all Japanese girls, Japanese-Canadian girls who worked there.

PW: There were quite a few Dukhobors in that area-

KF: Yes.

PW: Do you-

KF: Popoff was named after a Doukhobor, and he rented the land to the government.

PW: And how was the Doukhobor community?

KF: They didn't- we didn't associate with them at all, but we just saw them around, and-

PW: Did you dance and act in shibais and concerts when you were in-?

KF: Mhm, we had a lot of that happening, and people who knew how to teach would help us, and we helped others, with things and, I don't know, some of us, we snuck some those kimonos into those big bags that we carried with us. So, we all had costumes and things like that.

PW: [Yeah, you did?].

KF: Otherwise, we made it.

PW: Yeah, because I've often wondered when I look at some of the-

KF: Yeah.

PW: Photographs of the internment camps, a lot of the girls had kimonos-

KF: We had- I had 'til this day, there's about three kimonos in my suitcase under the bed.

PW: And did they come from, originally from Vancouver Island?

[85 minutes]

KF: Oh, we did, we did learn odori in our, you know, in our small towns.

PW: Oh, you did?

KF: Yes.

PW: Okay.

KF: You know, there's always somebody teaching-

PW: Oh, I see.

KF: Somebody who may have remembered from Japan, and we had- we were lucky to have someone to teach us.

PW: When you were in Duncan, were there- how many Japanese-Canadian families or Japanese families [were there?] in Duncan?

KF: There must have been a dozen families-

PW: Oh, there was [?] as many as a dozen?

KF: Yeah.

PW: And do you recall what they did in Duncan? Pre-war?

KF: Yes, they could go out if- the fellows could go out to logging camps, and things like that, or fishing. But if they were older, they just stayed at home and did their own farm- gardening, things like that. Yeah.

PW: In Popoff, did you go into Slocan very much? Or Lemon Creek, or that area?

KF: Oh yes, all the time, all the time! It wasn't that far. We even walked to Lemon Creek; that was seven miles away, just to go skating [?].

PW: So, there was a fair amount of interchange between the four camps?

KF: Yes, yes. They would even come- well, our movies would go there, too, but they would come to the dances and things like that. Somehow, they got there. I don't know how. [chuckling]

PW: Where do you think they got the- like, the music and that [?] for?

KF: Well, as I said before, my brother had some friends from university and- I don't know, they somehow managed to get the long [?] playing records, which we used for the dances, and somehow, they rigged up speakers and everything.

PW: Which your brother did, I understand.

KF: Well, my brother helped with other people, too.

PW: The other thing is, in terms of- you said you played quite a bit of sports activities, did you have Japanese- were you taking any Japanese classes at Popoff?

KF: No. [shakes head]

PW: 'Cause you weren't [in school?]?

KF: But I studied- Would say I studied pattern-making from a woman who was very good at it, and we had lessons from her, and I still have this day how to make your own clothes from your own measurements. So, you know, we made the best of a bad situation, we helped each other learn things, people learned- for me, if I had to teach, maybe a simple task [?] or something, I could do that, but- And we learned odori from other people, and we just sort of taught each other things. In fact, with drama club, somebody liked to write plays, so we used his plays, and we'd act it out. Made our own costumes and had fun.

PW: So, you were quite active in the after-hours activities of the Slocan [?] and

Popoff.

KF: Mhm.

PW: Do you have any regrets about what happened in Slocan?

KF: Do I have any regrets? I don't think so. I think that we moved and we gained [?].

PW: After the- Slocan, where did you go?

KF: Well, we could not live in Toronto at the time, they had a commission, they had [unclear], we had to go and check in there, and they said the farmers in St. Catharines needed big families to come there. So, we went to St. Catharines. And we met lovely people there, but yet the papers were saying, "Get rid of them, get rid of them bodily [?]," and things like that. But we never felt that discrimination, as far as I'm concerned. Mr. Togama [?], the farmer who hired us there, he allowed us to have a house, a little house. The heating was only a kitchen stove, but a pipe went up to the second floor and got a little heat there, but sometimes we'd go to bed with a bottle of water, hot water, and drop it on the floor- in morning- and it would be frozen..[laughs] But I don't know, we survived somehow, and that was still, I would say, it was an okay life, we enjoyed it.

PW: How many of your family were in St. Catharines by that time?

KF: Well, you see-

PW: 'Cause your brothers were married.

KF: Yeah, Tomi [?]-

PW: Sister?

[90 minutes]

KF: Yeah, my brothers wasn't there, but my oldest sister, she did not come with us because she went to Montreal to study design, dress design, and she became a good seamstress after that. So, from me down there was [counting on fingers] the farm. Picked peaches, cut asparagus, things like that.

PW: And there was a fair amount of Japanese-Canadians in the St. Catharines area by the- after the war, wasn't there?

KF: Mhm, yes there were.

PW: Did you have much contact with them?

KF: Mhm, they were in the area-

PW: Yeah? What did you do?

KF: Oh, we just met them in the orchard or wherever we were, but my parents- we didn't have aait boring or anything, there was always- we had a radio.

PW: Did you- how long were you in St. Catharines?

KF: I was there about two years, I would say. And then in winter, when there wasn't any work on the farm, I had a job in the city. I went to a photo studio and they hired me full-time during- as long as I wanted to, because I coloured- and then I coloured portraits all day long with another girl, and it was great.

PW: And this was part of your training and background in [unclear] your brother-



KF: Yes, I was very fortunate I'd learned that I had this job.

PW: And so, then when did you move to Toronto.

KF: Fudge had already- was already still in Toronto. She didn't leave 'til after- she didn't leave to [?] Montreal. But she had a job in Toronto and- where I went to room with her in 1946- or was it- '46. And my parents moved into Toronto a little later, yeah. We [?] managed to get a house for them.

PW: And you were still single at that time when you were-

KF: When I went to Toronto, yes.

PW: So then, what kind of- what did you do in [?] [[Ontario-Toronto? unclear].

KF: Well, in Toronto I found all kinds of work. The Jewish people hired us to sew. So, I sewed at many different places, starting off with the army [unclear], and then to men's trousers, and then- I [I didn't want?] to work at men's trousers anymore. I was- I got a - would have gotten more pay to go to the blast [?] factory, so I decided to go there.

PW: And what kind of - that was your work situation, what was your recreational activities, what did you do?

KF: Oh, there was tennis, and there was a Japanese-Canadian group that played tennis at Trinity [Trinity Bellwoods?] and I learned to play tennis- 'cause Ozzie [?] already knew how to play a little bit of tennis. But that was great. And then there was swimming on Centre Island, we'd go, and in those days, we could swim in that lake. [laugh]

PW: And then when did you meet up and get married with Ozzie [?]?

KF: Oh, I was married- the flame was still burning. [laughs] So, we did get married in the end of 1947.

PW: In Toronto?

KF: [nodding] November 27, we got married.

PW: And that was- did he court you very strongly then?

KF: Well yes, he used to come on the boat across the St. Catharines to visit me, and I would go and visit my sister and-

PW: Okay.

KF: We'd [?] see each other. [laughs]

PW: And so, you got married.

KF: Mhm.

PW: And you raised a family.

KF: Mhm.

PW: And how many[ - what is your family? unclear]?

KF: I had three children, but we were living in flats with two- until my second daughter was two years old. And then we finally had enough money to put a down payment to buy a house, so. [unclear][Denise?] was two years old when we got the house.

PW: And you worked- did you work in the garment industry all this time?

KF: No-

PW: Or did you do all these other things you did..?

KF: No, I was a- after I had my first child I stayed home, and I still knew how to colour photographs, so Greyhound Photo used to deliver me photographs one day, and then I'd do it, and the next day they would pick it up and give me another bag, so- it wasn't very profitable, but it was a job, and that's one of the, *one* of the jobs I did as a stay-at-home mother.

[95 minutes]

PW: And what of the other jobs that you did?

KF: Oh, by the time we got into the house, well, I did home sewing, I used to alter clothing for people in the neighbourhood. I didn't have to advertise, [they just- word of mouth?]. I just got so busy I was able to- I had an old, old machine, but I soon was able to buy a brand-new machine. Then I had done a little babysitting and things like that. One time there was an ad in the paper where they were looking for people who would work for this- the young couple- two girls who came from England, and they called themselves 'Opportunity Angels.' And the jobs could have been anything, from playing bridge, to walking a dog, looking after old people, giving birthday parties, all these things, sewing. And I said I could do certain things, but not play bridge.

[laughs] And they hired me for various things, which I did. And then I- I decided to- I saw Bonnie Prudden [?] on the television- oh yes, I earned a television, too, by that time, I worked enough to get a television- and she was already 43, and I thought, "Wow, she's cheeky [?], fitness at 43, I wonder if I could do that." [laughs] Anyhow, I took courses learning to teach, instruct people with exercises, and I started- I was hired in Scarborough to teach at the various schools. It was evening or afternoon classes, so for 15 years I taught fitness in the daytime and then I took an instructor's course for swimming, so I taught at night, sometimes, teaching swimming. Where [unclear] [was home?], so that's two- few of my jobs.

PW: Where did your artistic talent get to go, how did that- I mean, you were quite artistic-

KF: Well, I just went to some different teachers to study, oil-painting on canvas, and I just loved it, so- then I started selling some of my paintings, too. [laughing]

PW: But you also designed sets. Where did that, how did that come about?

KF: Oh, designing sets for dances? Well, whenever I was asked to do some theme, I would just go to the library and just try to pick something out to- appropriate for that theme, and I would design it and- I don't know, it just, I just enjoyed doing that.

PW: Tell us about your skydiving experience.

KF: My skydiving. [laughing] Oh, Ozzie and I loved to travel to the nice, warm country, and we went to Cuba once, and I've always wanted to learn to jump out of a plane and parachute down jump, but I couldn't get anybody to go with me. So anyhow, I saw this sign [?] in a hotel room and it said 'Tandem Jump,' which was a lot easier, you can go with an instructor, so I just raced up to Ozzie's room and I said,

“Oh, do you think you [?] would let me jump out a plane?” [laughing] “And do a parachute jump?” And he said, “Oh, okay,” so. So, there I was, they picked me up and we went up on this rickety old plane. I think that was scarier going up the plane, ‘cause the doors were wide open and-. And then the instructor tied me to him, and I was in the front, you see. But you know, it was good because I didn’t have to jump forward when [?] I jumped out of the plane. He went- it's like scuba diving, he falls backwards, and then he rolls over, so you freefall [raising and lowering hands] for 40 seconds, 40 to 45 seconds, straight down. And I was screaming my head off [lifts arms]. [But when?] I stopped screaming it was so quiet, [laughing] and it’s very exciting. Freefalling for 45 seconds, [right there down and then?], and everything is like tiny, tiny below you. And then he pulls the cord, so. And then, you just go ‘whoom,’ up in the air, but you just float down, he just guided this thing around, and you could see practically the whole of Cuba, as I was going down. [laughs]

[100 minutes]

And I landed right on my hotel beach at noon, high noon. And when they saw me, our plane go over and we jumped the plane, they gave us a great big hand. [laughs while applauding] It was great.

PW: [laughing] That’s amazing.

KF: [chuckling]

PW: And how old were you when you did that?

KF: Oh, I think I was, I think I was around close to 70, or thereabouts. [laughs]

PW: And what other adventures have you had? You traveled a lot, where did you go?

KF: Yeah, yeah, I’ve traveled to different places. Luckily, most of my trips in the very beginning were free because I had a three weeks’ trip to São Paulo, taking a beauty pageant girl, and we were- there were very kindly, generous people helped us and our trip was free, so. Then I had jobs which took me to different places. With a photography crew, ‘cause I was a stylist later, too, fashion stylist, or clothing.

PW: How did you get into that role?

KF: Oh, I got into it after I stopped swimming and teaching swimming, after the kids were all in high school, I decided to find a job. And when I applied as a seamstress at one of the photo studios, they used to always fix clothing by machine, just make them fit. Not nowadays, they just pin you up the back, but in those days, they used to make sure that the clothing fit them well, so they needed a lot of seamstresses, and they hired me for that. But one day- I [didn’t like that?], just stand around and ironed, sewed [?], so that was kind of boring. They asked if anybody would like to style beds and drapes, and later I was- well, I wanted to do that, so I quite enjoyed that, and then off-figure [?] styling came in, and they used to, a lot of illustrations in books before, and now they photograph clothing that’s not on the model sometimes, and clothing that’s off-figure meant that I would drape them on the chair or fold them and things like that, and that was my job. So, I worked with many

photographers all over the city, I freelanced after that, and so that's my job.

PW: So, these were some of the assignments that you were getting, were you- these were some of the assignments that you used to get [unclear]?

KF: Yes. And then we'd go on trips sometimes, like Cuba, and St. Lucia, and Costa Rica, yeah.

PW: You've had a very, very interesting life, full life, actually, at 85-

KF: Yeah.

PW: What was your involvement with the Japanese-Canadian community in Toronto?

KF: What's my what?

PW: Your involvement in the community?

KF: Oh, in the community. When we came to Toronto? Well, we couldn't do very much at first, because we were a struggling couple with three kids. And, you know, even just to have us arrive [?] we had to rent upstairs, but we did get into the Centre, and did volunteering work, and that's how I got to know a lot of people. Oh, and that's when- not not the voluntary work so much as getting into a ballroom dance group, that's how I got in to meet more people.

PW: Would that be the Sunday-nighters?

KF: Mhm, [nods]that's how we started, yes.

PW: Were you one of the originals?

KF: No, because I couldn't get Ozzie to come with me.

PW: [laughing]

KF: I had to beg and beg for three years on my hands and knees, "Please, Ozzie, let's go ballroom dancing," [I said?]. Oh no, it's always, "No, no," for three years. And finally, he gave in. And then we enjoyed life a little more. [laughs]

PW: [And how I?] got into it was-

KF: How did you get in?

PW: Oh, 'cause my cousins used to- Shig [?] and Kimo-nista [?]-

KF: Oh yeah.

PW: They were- [Ethel's cousins?] and they kept telling us, inviting us to these dances-

KF: [nodding] Yeah.

PW: 'course we didn't know how to do a foxtrot to samba [?], [laughing] you know, but eventually, I guess, I thought, "Well, it's Sunday night, I'm not that busy during the week, so maybe we'll go."

[105 minutes]

KF: Yeah.

PW: And then I started. And then they had these wonderful breaks that-

KF: Oh yeah.

PW: Every in between [unclear]. [laughing] And these ladies brought these

beautiful-

KF: We had topa [?]-

PW: Topa [?], we had these wonderful snacks-

KF: [nodding] Food.

PW: And then- so that even made it more enjoyable, so-

KF: Yes. It was a lot of fun.

PW: It was a lot of fun. And yeah, you met a lot of people.

KF: Mhm.

PW: And I found that there were quite a few new immigrants who came, [and that's a way?]-

KF: Yes, that was a good part of it.

PW: Way to meet- make [?] an acquaintance with the actual Japanese-

KF: Very nice.

PW: Japanese immigrants, so- which still- I'm sure you do still keep-

KF: Yes, we still keep in touch-

PW: Keep in touch with many of them.

KF: And it's so nice.

PW: Yeah. What were your thoughts when Redress came about?

KF: What-?

PW: What were your thoughts when Redress came about?

KF: Well, I felt like the way the isseis felt. And, you know the isseis were not pushing it, they didn't mind a little bit of redress, and it took so long to get to the Redress point of receiving it, but our parents had already died by that time, but had it been earlier and they didn't want much, but they just wanted an apology and some reimbursement, maybe, and I think they would have been satisfied with that. Anyhow, it was wonderful to receive it, of course, because, for me, I was able to finally repay my dance teachers, whom I always felt a guilt for when I left the island, and I was able to [help them?]. They were both alive at the same time, and we all just cried with happiness. [laughs]

PW: And were you involved with the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre from the beginning, or [unclear]?

KF: Sort of, I was bringing up the family a lot in the very beginning, yeah, we were tied up with the children.

PW: And what do you think of the Japanese community now?

KF: I-

PW: Currently.

KF: I just think it's a wonderful thing that we do have a Japanese community. I just feel comfortable. It's like- it's almost like home now, isn't it, when you mingle amidst the people that you have known for many, many years and [still keep-unclear]. That's how I feel.

PW: And do you have any regrets of any kind? About your life or anything?

KF: Oh, my regrets are just not asking my parents questions, 'cause I really didn't

know their past very much, and as a kid you don't ask those questions, and why didn't I ask them later? I just- that's one of my biggest regrets. So, I think the Sedai group is doing a wonderful thing, it kind of makes the children ask more questions, too, about their family and past, and.

PW: Have you thought about what your life might have been if you hadn't moved out here..?

KF: Yes, I have. I thought, well, what would [?]- the older girls did was do domestics, and at that time they didn't allow us to become teachers or doctors or anything like that, and, you know, there was a lot of discrimination in those days, and Toronto being so cosmopolitan, it's been wonderful.

PW: Did you face very much prejudice when you came out east?

KF: No, I didn't feel it, there might have been a few incidents but minor, and you just take it and say, "Well, that's their problem." It never bothered me.

PW: Who do you think helped you the most in your life?

KF: What-?

PW: Who do you think helped you the most in your life?

KF: Oh, the most. I don't know, but I just think family, family means so much to you, and I've had help all throughout my life from various people, and- people who are so generous and teaching me different things without any question, and I just love it [unclear].

[110 minutes]

PW: As part of the Toyota family, there's a huge clan-

KF: I know.

PW: Tell us a little bit about your Toyota clan.

KF: Oh, because we have close cousins [?], father and mother, father and brother being married to two sisters we're close relatives. And what was your question?

PW: You have a reunion picnic every summer?

KF: Yes, we still get together, and it's always family, family means a lot, and it's wonderful. Even at Christmas we- you know, we have- the houses are getting- they're big, but they don't accommodate a lot of people. But last year I still had 60 people in my recreation room, and then we take turns, my daughter will have it next yea- this coming Christmas, so. The family always want to get together and I think it's wonderful.

PW: And you still cook?

KF: Oh yes-

PW: A lot?

KF: Yes, you know, I still do what I can.

PW: Does- do your children, like your daughter Denise, cook Japanese food?

KF: Oh yes. They love Japanese food.

PW: [Oh yeah, they do?].

KF: Yes, it's always- usually rice with chopsticks. [chuckles]

PW: [chuckles] [And we?] just add shoyu.

KF: Oh, if I was on an island with three things, I think I'd want rice and shoyu and- [chuckles] And I'd go and fish for something. Maybe eat grass for my greens. [laughs]

LU: So, you've heard about our cookbook, *Just Add Shoyu*, that's coming out-

KF: Oh, I didn't, I didn't enter anything, but I'll be-

LU: Oh, that's okay.

KF: But I'm looking forward to having to buy it.

LU: I just wanted to ask if you had any memories about family times, and gathering around the dinner table, and New Year's-

KF: Oh yes.

LU: What kind of foods remind you of family?

KF: Oh, it is- it is what my mother used to make, and that's, you know, you are reminded of the old days. [It's just very-?] Still my favourites.

LU: What were some of your favourites?

KF: My favourites. My favourites that I cook is still, you know, a little bit of meat and lots of veggies, and stir-frys, and I love fish, so. The [?] plain rice, shoyu. [laughs] Those are my favourites. Simple, but healthy, I think. Lots of veggies.

LU: And what do you remember about the atmosphere at New Year's? Did you family celebrate New Year's? When you were younger?

KF: [nods] Very much. So, back home we had mochitsuki like the olden days in Japan, we put a hole in a stump, and the big wooden smashers with the rice, so- the older people, they all took turns to do it, and we used to have a whole rack of- to put the hot- [rubs hands together] to put the mochi on it. So, it was a real gathering and a festive time to make New Year celebration things [?].

LU: Mhm.

KF: It was great.

LU: Do you have any other questions, Peter?

PW: No, but I think it's- again, thank you very much, Kay, for telling us about your life-

KF: Well-

PW: And I know how energetic you are, and so talented, and I just admire you for that. You are a unique person and-

KF: Thank you very much-

PW: Thank you for the interviews, it's been great.

KF: I think if [?] we stayed positive and happy and it's good for us.

PW: Okay, thanks, okay, that's fine. Great!

LU: Perfect!

PW: [Wasn't that relaxing?]?

KF: Well, I don't know, I went off the beat and-

**[End recording Part 1]**

**[Start recording Part 2]**

Lisa Uyeda: Okay.

Kay Fujiwara: My name is Kay Fujiwara, Kay. There I go, I stopped- I'll start again.

Peter Wakayama: It's okay, go ahead.

LU: Okay.

KF: My name is Kay Kazue [?] Toyota Fujiwara. And Tak Toyota is my older brother, and I'd like to share his stories with you today. So, thanks, Peter, for helping me, and Lisa with the camera. I guess we'll get-

PW: Kay, tell us where you were born?

KF: I was born in Duncan, British Columbia, Vancouver Island. And born on a farm, it was a beautiful place for growing up, because we lived in a valley and the earth was black [?], and we had lots of vegetables, fruit trees, and- we even had a creek running beside our- not too far from the house, although we had a railroad track [for further?] but it was okay, we'd always wave to the people in the caboose, and we had a big wood shed, dad and grandpa would chop wood all the time, and Tak used to help. We had chicken coop, barn, and pigs. So, it was a great life because we had the Japanese ofuro, and a big outhouse, with two holes, by the way. It was- the doors were open all the time, so, I don't know, it never seemed to be closed. I would always see somebody sitting there, and it didn't matter, it was all family. [chuckling] So-

PW: Could you tell us about your parents and where they came from?

KF: My parents came from Japan, Fukuoka[?], but dad and his father came before- earlier, and momma came later and married dad. So, that's how it happened.

PW: Which part of Fukuoka [?], which is part of Kyushu, which part of Fukuoka [?] did they come from, do you know?

KF: The northern part, the northern part.

PW: When you were growing up on the farm, what did your dad do?

KF: Oh, dad did so many different things, my sisters used to say dad was like an entrepreneur. We'd have people over often and he'd find jobs for them, and this was things he did, and he would- one day he would go out working for another farmer, or- and he'd go fishing- in fact, we all went fishing sometimes- and catch a tub full of perch, it's just wonderful. And with the live shiners [?], and he would just take the fish right away to the camps where the Nikkei people lived, and he would sell them, plus with vegetables, and he just had all kinds of jobs. One time, he came home with bark from trees, and then he put a canvas out, dried it out, and he'd ask all of us to step on it after it got dried up. What's this for? And we'd step on this, [stomps feet on floor] and crush it all up, and he'd sack it and say, "That's cascara [?] bark," he said, "It's medicine." So, he had a job doing that sometimes, or- [laughs]. So it was always different.



PW: Your grandfather was also with you at that time?

KF: Yes, he came with dad. Actually, his wife came later with momma, probably, and she didn't like farm life, so she just didn't want to stay. So, she went to back to Japan and grandpa stayed with us.

PW: Tell us about your siblings.

KF: There were 10 of us, so. And Tak was the oldest, and so it was wonderful.

PW: And how many brothers and sisters did you have, [of the 10?]?

KF: I had six sisters and three brothers.

[5 minutes]

PW: So, it was a large family in Duncan.

KF: Mhm.

PW: And so, you grew up, and did you go to school in Duncan?

KF: Mhm, always. Well, I did until I was- just before high school.

PW: And tell us about some of the earlier, early recollections [and years?] of your brother?

KF: Well, this is the- kind of difficult, because I was seven years younger than Tak, and I really didn't know a lot about what he did and how he felt. But I do have a story that he wrote in his later years and he was studying psychology at the University of Calgary, and when he came to visit me, I had- [holds up pages of paper] I'm glad you asked that question because he gave me this, he came to visit and he was very happy and enjoying his psychology classes and he looked healthy, and happy, and anyhow, he said, just before he left, he gave it to me, and after I read it I found- because it's called "The Study of Personality of Self", it's going to- [points down at papers in hand] I would like to rely on reading a little bit for you. Would you like to [unclear]?

PW: Thanks[?].

KF: About his childhood, okay, on page six, the [ball game?]. And he titled this certain part "The Molding of the Personality." [reading] Individuality, ability to risk non-conformity. [To interviewers] I can't understand some of this. [chuckles] [reading] The subject- [to interviewers] he's speaking in the third person narrative. [reading] The subject was first born and much attention was lavished on him, especially the fact- [puts on glasses] Oh, I need glasses, when you get to be 86 your hearing- I have hearing aids on too, by the way. [chuckles] Now, this is a little better. [reading] Especially by the fact that he was male. The atmosphere in infancy was of acceptance and low control. The child was brought up according to old-world Japanese culture customs. He was not punished, rather, a diverse technique was used. He was breastfed, and carried about piggyback-fashion, which created a secure atmosphere for the child. He did not suffer from sibling rivalry, in that there were five sisters before a brother was born to the family. He had the added advantage of having a patient paternal grandfather in the family, who acted as tutor

and confidante in the formative years. [to interviewers] And that's how- I'm glad I have this 'cause that's how he felt, and- but on the next page he [wrote up a little bit?] and would probably be in his school days. [I'll read that to you?]. It's about- [reading] The individual suffered considerable rejection in childhood from his peers, due to his lower-class status and ethnic origin, but was able to stand up to this onslaught due to the secure atmosphere in childhood. In the confused period of adolescence and youth, there was much soul-searching and disappointments. It was only through great determination, value, segregation [?] that he was able to overcome the inferiority complex of this period. [to interviewers] So, I think he really thought about this as he was growing up, and it motivated him to be good and just show them- them meaning the people who classed him as second-class citizens- that, you know, he can do just as well as anybody, so.

PW: So, what do you remember of him when he was in Duncan, 'cause he wrote this particular thing while he was in university.

KF: Yes. Well, what I remember, also again when he was having all these hobbies, I didn't know how he got all these things that he brought home. I had- I have a friend, I did a lot of research to try to find people who knew him at that age, and I have stories of two of his friends that told me very interesting stories, so should I go into his hobbies?

[10 minutes]

PW: Sure.

KF: Yeah, his name was Mike Kawabata [?], and he- we didn't have electricity in the younger- in my younger days, and he needed- well, we had kerosene lamp. But he wanted to do some photography, and because we didn't have electricity, he- it was necessary to have this red lightbulb. Have you ever done photography? Well, you need red lightbulb, you cannot use any light when you're developing the pictures. So, Mike told me that- he was very good friends with Mike, so they knew a lot about each other- and he said that Tak just got a board about seven or eight-foot tall. He made it into a propellor, he hoisted a 25-foot pole up, with a wire coming down to a generator below, and he generated electricity, and that's where he got his red lightbulb. [chuckling] So- but I just wondered- and then, Mike used to receive 25 cents a week for allowance, so he had his father's bike [?]- well, no, before that, I'll tell you that with this 25 cents they spent 20 cents on matinees, every Saturday they'd go to matinees, 10 cents each. But he had this 5 cents left over, which he gave to Tak. And Tak bought the *Popular Mechanics* magazine for 5 cents, as long as that cover was torn off, so this was where Tak had saved all these magazines, which I used to see in the corner of his room and, yeah, I noticed him reading a lot, too. [chuckles] But that's how he spent, and where did he get all the stuff that- we had radios, we had microphones, loud speakers, and he got- he and Mike used to go to the junk- dump, city dump. [I said?], "Where was the city dump?" He said, "Oh,

across the city.” He said they double rode [?]. He told me that Tak was bigger so he sat on the seat and pedaled, but he was- so, he sat on the bar. I said, “How did you carry all this stuff?” He said, “A box on the carrier, and a basket on the handles.” So, they went to the city dump, which was, he said, across the city, near the river, behind the bushes. And they collected all kinds of stuff, like old batteries, old radios. Brought them home, he said, and Tak could fix them. So, we had gramophones and radios when we were little, and it was really great [chuckles].

PW: Is there a- when you were growing up, then, with your whole family, what was life like at Duncan?

KF: Duncan had a population of 14,000, probably about 12 Japanese-Canadian families, which wasn't too many, but it was really nice to me and to our parents, it was comforting to have, you know, them around, and so-and they're not too far away, Duncan is just a small city and we were on the outskirts, right on the borderline of the city, so our big house, which was not very nice, because it was very, very old, but it was two-storey, good enough for us, anyhow, the people were friendly and we just got along very well.

PW: So, there were about 12 Japanese-Canadian in Duncan-

KF: Mhm, mhm.

PW: Do you know what they did in Duncan?

KF: Some of them farmed, and a lot of the menfolk would go to logging, or whatever, and I heard that Mike's father used to have a secondhand store.

[15 minutes]

KF: And he- I didn't know that, but that's what he had, I guess for a while, and he said, “Your brother-” no, and father- oh no, it was my father that drove the truck. He said he used to take him to Victoria to get, you know, get things for him from Victoria.

PW: And were there a lot of nisei kids in Duncan as well, with their family?

KF: Yes, every family had- not as many as we did, but they had, you know, four, five, six children. We did have Japanese school, too, after school.

PW: Oh, you did?

KF: Mhm.

PW: So, you went to public school in Duncan?

KF: Yes.

PW: And then you had Japanese school after school?

KF: After school.

PW: And what were the hours when you went in for Japanese-?

KF: Oh, it was right after school.

PW: Every day?

KF: Every day.

PW: And how much of it did you retain? Quite a bit?

KF: Oh yes, I could still do- I went to Grade Three and a half I think, close to Four. And I can still write all my hiragana and very few kanji. [chuckles] But I used to be able to, you know, write hiragana to my mother if I was away.

PW: Right. Now you said your brother was- went to- he went to high school.

KF: Yes. And he-

PW: In Duncan?

KF: During the Depression, that's when he had to stop in Grade Ten.

PW: Okay. And then what happened after that?

KF: Well, he went to work because my father had a- at that time he owned a logging camp, and he hired about 12 people. And my older sister, she was in her early teens, but she was a very good cook, and she cooked for all those men. I used to see all these black lunchboxes for their lunch that she would pack for lunch, and she'd have the supper ready, and the bath- they had a bath, too, that was ready. And he also had two huge pool tables for them to play on. [laughing]

PW: And was this logging camp on Vancouver Island?

KF: No, it was in Kapoor, it's closer to Victoria.

PW: Oh, I see.

KF: And it's in southern Vancouver Island.

PW: Okay, but your family still lived in Duncan on the farm?

KF: We always had the farm?

PW: You always lived there as a family.

KF: Yes. And I was visiting one time, in the summertime, and there was lightning, and that's when the mountain very close by started a fire. And it got closer and closer, and I remember vividly that we had to rush to the car, and Tak had a three-seater, three-seater is like the middle row would fold up to a seat, so there's about ten of us crammed into the car. And then dad had a truck, so the rest of the men went on the truck. At least we were all in safety after that.

PW: So, your father had a logging- he actually had a logging camp, he owned it?

KF: Yeah, he owned it for a while.

PW: Ah, that's amazing.

KF: Yes. And so-

PW: So, how many people would he have employed on that logging [?]-

KF: Well, he only had about 12 work-

PW: Workers?

KF: Yeah, Japanese-Canadian people, they were younger men.

PW: So, how far would it be from Duncan to the camp [unclear], would you say, roughly?

KF: Well, Victoria's about 40 miles, so I guess that place would be close to that, so it just sort of went the other way.

PW: So, it was a bit of a trip to go from home to the logging camp everyday-

KF: Mhm, oh yeah. No, he didn't go every day-

PW: Oh, he didn't?

KF: Oh no, they would stay until the weekend, [and they might come home?]-

PW: Okay, so he stayed at the camp.

KF: Yeah. And dad didn't always go.

PW: Oh, right.

KF: He owned [unclear] it, but-

PW: But somebody else would be running-

KF: Yeah. And dad has a truck so- He used to drive; I don't know how he did because he couldn't read English. [laughing]

PW: Maybe they didn't need licenses in those days.

KF: No, I don't think they did.

PW: Yeah, right. [laughing] Now, is your brother then- Depression came, so he went to work, but when you read that essay about his self, where was he when he wrote that?

KF: Well, he was studying after his successful business, he was able to go back to school.

PW: Oh, this was after, that's right, yes.

KF: Yes, that's the end of the, near the end of his life [?].

PW: Okay. Are there any other stories about David, from his friends, from his early days that you'd like to talk about?

[20 minutes]

KF: Yes, he had a- well, my sister had a girlfriend and she was more Tak's- closer to Tak's age. So, both she and Mike are in their 90s now, and I was able to capture some of her stories, and she said that because- she knew Tak quite well, because she used to come to our house all the time for ofuro [?] when she first came to Duncan, they didn't have an ofuro [?], so. So, she said that one day they- Tak used to fix a lot of cars, too, so this time he had a car, but he and Tony, and Pat, and my other sister, Fudge [?]- she's older than me, too- they were on this car, and Pat remembers very well that he had the senbei [?] can on the floor, and it was filled, it had gas in it. And there was a hose at the bottom of the senbei [?] can went through the floor or the car, and that was a gas line. Can you imagine? [laughs] They were so young and carefree. And luckily nothing happened. [laughs]

PW: Were there any stories you'd like to tell? That you got from your friends?

[unclear]

KF: That- in his hobby time?

PW: Yes.

KF: Yeah, I'm- I guess those are kind of the [unclear] things-

PW: The highlights, okay.

KF: [chuckles]

PW: And then, and when you were in Duncan what did you do for recreation?

KF: Oh, I wasn't old enough to go to dances, but Duncan, they did have dances in the Japanese language hall. And as long as they have a chaperone- my father would chaperone, or Pat's- Tomi's friend, Pat, her mother would go sometimes. So, they took turns to chaperone and they often had parties. So, we were [chuckles] not restricted in that kind of way.

PW: What did you do?

KF: Well, I was still young, I used to take tap dancing lessons. I started, but then 25 cents got to be too much, and that's when I quit. Even- I tried to sell vegetables, too, on the street with my wagon and tried to get my- but it was hard. [laughs]

PW: So, were you taking tap dance classes in Duncan?

KF: Mhm.

PW: And that's [unclear]-

KF: My hakujin friend, we started [go together?] and then I had to quit because I couldn't afford it anymore.

PW: Do you still keep in touch with some of your hakujin friends?

KF: Yes, I had four friends that I used to write to, even in later- after I left, and I corresponded- except one girl, she never wrote to me. But about 20 years later, when I met her at a high school reunion, or- no, she wrote to me first and apologized for not writing because she said I guess her father died, and she wrote and she said, "My father never allowed me to write to you."

PW: Oh.

KF: So, there were people that felt badly about us [?]. The girl, you know, she was a lovely girl and [?] when we played together.

PW: So, did you have both hakujin and nisei [?] friends in Duncan?

KF: Oh yes, I had hakujin friends, right.

PW: When you were in Duncan, what kind of food did you have?

KF: Oh, it's always Japanese food. Always.

PW: Always.

KF: Always. My father would have it three times a day. [laughs]

PW: And what kind of- where would they get some of the ingredients from?

KF: You know, we had stores, we had Japanese people- I don't know how we- I don't remember how we got Japanese-

PW: Probably-

KF: [I guess it came from?] stores from Vancouver.

PW: Stores from Vancouver. Or Victoria, 'cause [there was?]-

KF: Yeah, it was ordered.

PW: Yeah.

KF: In fact, we used to make tofu-

PW: Oh, you made tofu?

KF: Later on, as I was growing up, I remember grandfather and walking around, the beans, the beans would get ground up. Mhm.

PW: What do you remember about your father and mother and grandfather in Duncan?

KF: In what way?

PW: Well, what were they like, how they treated you.

KF: Oh, well we're- they were very- they weren't strict.

[25 minutes]

KF: I don't know they never scolded us if we were late or anything, I don't remember that. We had the freedom to go swimming at the river, ice-cold river, and that's where we learned to swim. And if they had seen what kind of river it was, I don't think they would have allowed it because it was swift and cold, and yet we managed to learn. [laughs] It was fun.

PW: Yeah, I think that's probably true with a lot of the nisei people who were allowed to do that-

KF: I don't know, some families were strict, though.

PW: [laughs]

KF: They didn't allow them to go dancing or things like that. But in Duncan, most everyone was quite carefree.

PW: And what was your grandfather like?

KF: Oh, he was gentle and nice, he was very- gave us advice, if I was having sports day, he would make sure that I ate my egg, and- [laughs]

PW: So, were you active in sports and-

KF: Yeah, very much so.

PW: What kind of sport did you, what did you do?

KF: [mimes running] Oh, I was always- I was very good at running. Because we had a big hill in front of our house, 'cause we were in the valley, the hill was very steep, it was so steep that they closed it down in the winter and you could sleigh-ride on it. But that hill, I used to challenge myself every day, noon and morning, run it all the way to school and all the way back. So, my legs got pretty strong, and I would win the Junior Championship, the Majorette [?], the Intermediate. Not the Senior, I came second. [laughs]

PW: How far did you go in high school- in school in Duncan?

KF: Me?

PW: Yes, yourself.

KF: Well, I only went to Grade- I was 16, almost 16- yeah, 16 when I was in Grade 11-

PW: Grade 11?

KF: That's when I stopped.

PW: And then the war came.

KF: Mhm.

PW: What was your feeling when that happened, when that news came out?

KF: Well, it was very sad, because I just- when I heard the news and heard the radio saying 'Japs' this and that, it was horrible. I was away from home and I was living with a hakujin family- I was doing domestic because I was getting [?] dance lessons complimentary dance lessons because my teacher wanted me back to school. And because- I didn't stay in Duncan when I was 14, when I was going into high school because we had to move, a highway was going through our house,

PW: Oh, I see.

KF: That's what happened. So that's where I was, away from home and feeling really bad, and I just told them, I just wanted to go home. Duncan [?]-

PW: Where was that, were you staying, what city?

KF: In Victoria. Because my dance teacher in Duncan had a sister who taught in Victoria.

PW: Right.

KF: So, it's kind of confusing, but that's what happened.

PW: So then, you moved to Victoria to be with the teacher's sister.

KF: Yes. Actually, even in Duncan I only went to dance classes for a short while and I quit. When my teacher found out that I quit because I couldn't afford it she allowed me to come back and take all my lessons. Wonderful people, wonderful people.

PW: So, you were in Victoria when the war came, but your parents were still in Duncan?

KF: No. Actually, by that time they had moved to Pauldy [?], a mill town [?].

PW: Where is that?

KF: [A mill town?] is nine miles north, or northeast, of Duncan. And it's a [mill town?] where a lot of Japanese-Canadians were there, lot of Hindu, Indian people, were there.

PW: Okay. And your father still had the logging camp at the time?

KF: No, no, because of the fire we lost that-

PW: Oh, you lost that with the fire?

KF: We lost that with the fire. We lost- And then we lost the house with the Trans-Canada coming through it.

PW: Oh right.

KF: Mhm.

PW: So, was your family's home and property expropriated?

KF: Oh yes, they just- it was gone completely.

PW: Did you [know a thing about?] [unclear], probably not.

KF: I don't know, I don't know anything about that.

PW: Right, right, right.

KF: So, my brothers, father, uncles, they all built a brand-new house in Pauldy [?]. A beautiful two-storey house. That's where they were-

PW: When the war came-

KF: When war broke out, and I came home, that's where-



[30 minutes]

PW: And you came home-

KF: [unclear]

PW: And then what happened?

KF: Well, that was wartime, so the cars were confiscated and the cameras, and the radios, and everything except one box. When they came to [unclear] they didn't know it was a radio, it was a homemade thing that Tak made, [laughing] and so we had music 'til we had to leave, we were so lucky that they didn't take it away. But we didn't carry it away. When we had to take [unclear], we just took what we could carry. So, it was, it was like boarding everything else up. The sewing machine, and the dishes, and all they got boarded up. All my costumes, and so- in the hopes that we were coming back.

PW: Was your family all together at that time?

KF: Mhm, all together.

PW: Including your brother [?]?

KF: Yep.

PW: And from there where did you go, where did you go [unclear]?

KF: When we- well, we had to board a bus to go to Chemainus [?], and then take a ferry across to Hastings Park, Vancouver.

PW: And how long were you there?

KF: We were there for three months and then we had to go on train to somewhere in the west, into the interior of British Columbia. We were very fortunate we were- we moved as a family, whereas many of the families had their menfolk leave to go to camp, or they had to go to sugar beets, and that wasn't very pleasant. And we went into the interior to a ghost town, it wasn't supposed to be a ghost town but it was Slocan, and it was an old mining town that had burned- had a big fire in 1900. But they had some houses and the menfolk from Vancouver went there earlier to fix up some of the older houses for apartments for the people, and then they built Bay Farm [about a mile?], and then Popoff, and then [seven miles?] beyond that was Lemon Creek. So those were the community groups in the camp.

PW: [Slocan valley?].

KF: Mhm.

PW: What was your recollection of Hastings Park?

KF: Oh, when you're a kid and you see all these Japanese-Canadian people it's amazing because, wow, we were free to do what we wanted, we were in the fenced-up thing but we were allowed to go into the city, if you had a pass.

PW: Did you have any bad memories of Hastings Park?

KF: Well, dad got a job right away as a dishwasher and- no. It was okay. Some people complained about the food, but I don't remember getting sick. I did get the mumps, and I was quarantined for a while. [chuckles]

PW: So, this is- your whole family were relocated into the interior to Slocan, was the whole family together as a group?

KF: Yes.

PW: Which is very unusual, 'cause that didn't always happen to everybody, did it?

KF: Yes, that's true, that's what I said, we were lucky, we were lucky.

PW: Do you know why?

KF: Why we [unclear]?

PW: Yeah.

KF: Well, most of the- they didn't take the menfolk from the island as much as they took- they took the menfolk maybe from the mainland, I don't know, to road camps and that. But from Slocan they- some of the menfolk had to leave if they didn't have jobs or something. Although they were very busy in beginning building for the different groups.

PW: And so, you were in Slocan, and you had- where in Slocan did you live?

KF: Well, first we had to stay in tents until- we went in about July, but we had to stay there until November. But Tak was very independent, he went to the commissioner's office and asked if he could be independent and not get help from the government, and so he went to a local person and rented a flat so that he could start a business, which is his amateur photographer, wanting to become a professional. He would, he- I don't know how he did it, but they allowed him to do that.

[35 minutes]

And the landlord was very nice, he said, "You can use my kitchen anytime you want to," so it just worked out. He started very small, but- just developing pictures. The homemade- it was a box made out of wood. And I used to see him at- the thing goes up and down, and that was his enlarger, and he made it homemade [chuckles].

PW: So, it [?] was very inventive, actually.

KF: Very, very, very. And I think I have to thank Mike for giving him that nickel to buy those magazines. [laughs]

PW: How old would he have been when he started his own business?

KF: When?

PW: When he went to [unclear].

KF: Let's see, I was 17 by that time, so, and he's seven years older.

PW: So, he was 24.

KF: Yeah.

PW: Yeah. When you went to Slocan, did you continue your schooling?

KF: Well, I didn't have- they didn't have at first, but they did have the nuns teach high school first, and I had a job myself because Tak asked me to work for him-

PW: Okay.

KF: And I learned to retouch all the black and white pictures, and sometimes I helped him in the dark room, so. And later he bought me a box of oil paints, and I taught myself how to paint photographs.

PW: Oh, right.

KF: So, it was good that I learned right there, because when I went- later, I had a job, full time job, painting portraits. [chuckles] For a while.

PW: What do you remember- what about where you lived in Slocan, when you- after the tenth [?]?

KF: Oh, after the tenth [?], well it- we- being a big family, we received two houses and an outhouse to share, so. So, it was okay, because we had the kitchen in the big house, they're all double bunks. The only thing was, it was very hard on my grandfather. So, he wasn't well the first winter, and he died in in the spring. So, we lost him. He was quite healthy until then.

PW: How old would he have been when he passed away, do you remember?

KF: He was- he was close to his 90s, he was in his 80s, I think. Yeah.

PW: And in Slocan, you were working for your brother. What kind of other activities did you do in Slocan?

KF: Oh, it was full of activities. We made the best of a bad situation. We formed clubs- in fact, we were called the SMC group, a bunch of girls, Slocan Music Club. And Tak had a lot of helpers, and he, he had, you know, made his loud speakers and all this stuff, so we held dances, concerts, drama club that we formed. There was a tennis court, if you had racquets, to play with, and so. And of course, we had this beautiful Slocan Lake to swim in, and climb, climb the mountains, and- Oh, it was- it was just a resort place, I found it absolutely- in fact, my father loved it so much he wanted to retire there.

PW: [unclear] Camp Valley is a beautiful-

KF: It is.

PW: Part of BC [British Columbia], isn't it?

KF: Mhm.

PW: Yeah. Do you recall your mom and dad talking about what happened to them at all?

KF: No, and- you mean- when?

PW: Well, we know they lost everything in BC, and they did [?] [unclear].

KF: Oh, well, I've never heard them complain about anything-

PW: Never complained.

KF: No. Well, it was an act of nature for the camp, and I wasn't there when they moved, I was in Victoria by that time because they asked me to start school, you know, my teachers really wanted me to continue. [chuckles]

PW: So that's why you still- that's why you're so good at [tap dancing] and painting-

KF: Well-

PW: All your physical activities. From a young age.

[40 minutes]

KF: Well, I think- yeah, I think it's good to be physical. And I was very fortunate to receive all those lessons, I was so grateful. And after the war, I felt so bad leaving without being able to pay them back, but when Redress came, I was so happy. I was able to give back.

PW: In Slocan, what were- you described some of your recreational activities, what about all your friends and all the people that you met in Slocan.

KF: Well, they're the same. We just enjoyed each other's company and did everything together.

PW: And after, then, Slocan, what did you do?

KF: I'll tell- [just a minute?]- before that, I'll tell you there's a letter I received from somebody who worked with Tak, if you don't mind. [pulls out paper]

PW: Yes.

KF: And he wrote to me, and he said it best, so I'd like to- he wrote about Tak and his name is Roy Kurita- lot of other fellows worked [?] too, and they gave me letters, but I'll just read one. And- [reading] Tak Toyota was my mentor in Slocan. After over 6 decades, my admiration for him has not diminished, even with the passage of time I still remember him very fondly. [to interviewer] See, I'll [unclear] it, I'll go on.

[reading] Tak took pictures of my family during a memorial service for my sister. We were a little short of full amount [?], we owed Tak, so I promised him I will give him balance as soon as I can. Instead, he offered me a job around his studio and radio shop to do odd jobs. And one day, he was tied up with something and he was supposed to go to Lemon Creek to show his movie- [to interviewer] like, he even showed movies, so- [reading] He asked me to go instead, and he said, "This is fine." I knew how to rig the projector- [to interviewer] 'cause he was taught by Tak. To set up the mirrors, 'cause it was such a funny shaped-room, it wasn't a solid room, he had to angle the projector [into a mirror?]. And he knew how to do that, but he says [reading] "How was I going to get to Lemon Creek," he said. "No problem," Tak said. He gave him the three-minute lesson to drive his car, and- he had never driven a car in his life before, he said. He sent me off to Lemon Creek with all the equipment I needed. I never told Tak, but, you know, I drove to Lemon Creek and back all in second gear. I was too bloody scared to put the car into third gear, just in case I couldn't get from third to second, but I made it back and forth to Lemon Creek [chuckles]. And so- he had some more stories, can I go on?

PW: Yeah, absolutely [?].

KF: He said [reading] Tak taught me to enlarge photos, dabble in the radio and all the other stuff he had, from projectors to PA systems. Tak was this kind of a guy, he said. One night he was showing a movie *Going My Way* with Bing Crosby playing the role of Catholic priest in a lower-class parish. I was going to the Catholic school in Slocan in those days, and all the nuns who were teachers came en masse to see this film. They all lined up just like the other people, and you have to see this picture.

They were all in their black nun habits. Quite a sight, he said. Tak either saw or heard about them, and he came down from the projection room, escorted them to their seats past this long line up, and- with no charge. [chuckles] He said, yeah, so anyhow there's one more story- or a couple more. Is it okay?

PW: No [?], please.

K: Tak did all the official pictures of the schools, the various group community activities, funerals, weddings, Tak supplied the PA system for all the many dances we had in Slocan. Even at beach parties, Tak rigged up his PA system so that it ran off his car battery, and in ghost town the only entertainment- [to interviewer] well, he had, that's what he says- [reading] dances and occasional movies.

[45 minutes]

KF: [His service?] was cherished, but because he came late maybe he didn't have the concerts that we used to have- Ida -[?] left in '45, and he came around that time. And he didn't see all the stuff we did before that. Apparently, he was a self- he's talking about Tak now [?]- he was a self-made man. He did not have much formal education, but he knew, and what he did not know he found out. He read the magazine *Popular Mechanics Popular Science* from cover to cover. Said [?], "What a guy!" How did he sweet talk his way into running a studio with cameras and the whole bit when the Japanese communities were not even allowed to have a simple box camera? "What a guy!" he says. How did he sweet talk his way into running a radio shop with all the equipment needed when a Japanese-Canadian were not allowed to have any radios? Even a crystal set was frowned upon. What a guy! How did he sweet talk his way into getting a vehicle- [to interviewer] And by that time he had a little money, so he got this Pontiac. Before that, you should see what he had, and he fixed it. [reading] When all the Japanese-Canadians had their vehicles confiscated, sold as scrap, or at scrap prices. [chuckles] He had to get gas for that car with gas severely rationed. He says, "Quite a guy, quite a guy, what a genius." And he said, "I pay tribute to him, even to this day, for his entrepreneurship, but I pay tribute to him because Tak was a man among men." [laughs] End [?] Roy Kurita [?]. [to interviewer] Isn't that a great letter?

PW: That's a wonderful tribute to your brother.

KF: Yeah, yeah, I just love the way he wrote it. [laughs]

PW: Yeah, so, did you spend time with him- I know you worked for him- how much time did you spend with him [in Slocan]?

KF: Well, I [saw him?] every day that I could.

PW: Yeah.

KF: And there's people that came in to have photographs taken every day, especially during that time when the people were leaving, they wanted to give the photos and exchange, so hundreds of people would just have little pictures taken of themselves.

PW: Right. I guess that was very common in- especially when they were departing for [the east?].

KF: Yes. A lot of them left early, in fact a lot of his friends in the beginning that worked with him were university students and they left early, mhm.

PW: And then, did Tak- what- continue the story with Tak, what else did he do besides his running all those activities that were mentioned in the- ?

KF: Well, he didn't have that much time, although he enjoyed the beach parties and- we had a lot of parties. We had barbeque parties and- and he participated in everything, even with our drama club, he would get right into the play with us. So- and he operated the projectors all the time for this and that, or the lighting for the concerts, we had the concerts, odori, and talent shows and fashions shows, and it was all- he was busy. We went mountain climbing together, you know, as a group. [chuckles]

PW: So, there was tons of activities, actually, that you all did in those days.

KF: There was a lot to do, in fact, I even studied dress designing by a woman who knew- who used to teach it, probably in Vancouver. So, I learned a lot about how to make your own pattern for clothing and things like that. And we knitted, we knitted socks and sweaters, I knitted a full sweater. [chuckles]

PW: Where did people get your supplies from?

KF: Eaton's catalogue.

PW: And where did the- some of the Japanese supplies come from, do you remember?

KF: I don't know, but we did have rice.

PW: And shoyu.

KF: Yes.

PW: And miso.

KF: And we had stores-

PW: You had store in Slocan.

KF: Yes. My sister used to work in the grocery store. So.

PW: So, then the war ended, then tell us the story after the war ended.

KF: Oh, the- well, we were- oh yes, that was 1945, we had a choice.

[50 minutes]

KF: Naturally, we wanted to go east of the Rockies. But Tak was allowed to stay, he could stay wherever he wanted to in British Columbia. So, he- by 1946 he was married, we were already east, and he was married and he went for a honeymoon looking for a place and stayed in Creston [?] for the honeymoon.

PW: Oh, right.

KF: But we went east. My sister came first to find out what the situation was, and they didn't allow any more people in Toronto at the time. But the farmers in St. Catherines wanted big families for vegetables and fruit trees. So anyhow, we had a

farmer [?], Mr. Trigano [?] in St. Catharines waiting for us, and he had that little house for us, and so we were very lucky.

PW: So, then Tak actually- Tak went to Crestron [?], then, from Slocan?

KF: Yes, in '46. And we were- we left in '45, and we were settled by that time.

PW: And then, maybe we'll continue with Tak and we'll go back to you, can you tell us about his career in Crestron [?]?

KF: Oh, he started off a small business, which was a repair store, like, he knew how to fix toasters and all that stuff, so it was an electrical- a small appliance repair shop. And got bigger and bigger, and he went into furnishing, selling furnishing and appliances. Big appliances, so that that's where he started. And he was so involved with so many things, but he was very, very happy to become a member of the Kiwanis [?] Club, which he did in the beginning. So, he enjoyed the company of the friends in the club and, you know, his wife was able to enjoy them, too. He had so many things- [looking down at papers] could I read some of it to you?

PW: Yes, please.

KF: He was- for six years he was chairman of the, of the Blossom Festival they have, lasting for a whole week. And he was busy all the time. Then he would- he started the Teen Towns, they would have teenage dances every Friday night, and things like that. They were- he started the Battle of the Band, which was huge, huge. It's a small town; so small that they didn't even have a mayor at that time, but he organized this- the Battle of Bands, they came from Kaslo, and Trio [?], and Nelson, and 1500 teenagers would be there to watch the competition. He would MC, and I remember that he told me that the group that won used to start- started off in his basement, practicing. So, he was very good with the young people, too, but he was also with the city council and- [looking at papers] I can't find my notes. What did I do with it?

Yeah [unclear]- just have to have a pause 'til I find it. [I thought?]-

PW: [unclear]

KF: [It's okay?]. Some of the other things were- he held- he was first to start these talent shows, and every year it went on. And one of them- the sixth annual one, I saw a little news clipping many [?] years ago- but when his daughter was five years old, she sang a song with her girlfriend, and they won the grand prize [chuckles]. And they sang, they were so cute, I think I have photographs of them.

[55 minutes]

KF: They- and he also organized- they used to- [looking at papers] darn. I guess you can stop the camera- no, wait, don't, it's okay, I'll find it. Yeah, he was chairman of the Kiwanis Club for a long time. And when he was with the Kiwanis Club, he became a lieutenant governor, which he was- they covered the western lore [?] of British Columbia and Idaho and Washington, so that was kind of nice, he was pretty proud of that. So those are a lot of things- there's so many things he did. And people were very, very happy that he came to live there.

PW: Didn't he have another store in another city?

KF: Well yes, his business grew to the point that he had four large retail home furnishing appliance stores in the area, and- starting off with Creston [?], he had Cranbrook [?], Fernie [?], and Golden, Golden was a little more farther north. So, he- he- his [?] business was very good, and at that time he was around 71 when he decided to retire. And he was confident in getting the manager, handing over the management to his eldest son Ron, and he decided to complete his dream that he wanted to finish high school, which he did, and he went to a college in Alberta and he did that in six months, and he got into- he really wanted to go into medicine, but they wouldn't accept him because of his age, so he chose psychology and that's when he was into it. Loving it, and that's when he wrote [unclear] and it was on a weekend in February in 17- 19- what was it?- 1973, that he didn't feel well. And he decided to see his doctor in Creston, and that's quite a long drive home, but he did it every weekend, taking furniture, and that's what he did, he took the furniture to the Creston, and went to see the doctor several times, he died suddenly, he just had a congested lung, and his heart wouldn't take it, so. It was so sad because he was healthy, and I don't know-

PW: And he still was a fairly young age, right? I mean, he would be in his [unclear]-

KF: 56, 56.

PW: That's really young.

KF: Mhm.

PW: That's really young.

KF: And so- his family was ages 15 to 26, I think, around that time. And he had a grandson by that time.

PW: But you he was 50- he was 76-

KF: 76. Well, when he- it was 1973.

PW: But how old was he then? By [that time?]?

KF: He died when he was 56. That's the age that he passed away.

PW: At 56, okay.

KF: Yeah. He was born in 1917.

PW: Okay, okay.

KF: Is that right? Mathematically?

PW: Yeah, [unclear].

KF: Yeah, so that's [unclear]-

PW: So, he was a great entrepreneur, a businessman.

KF: Yes.

PW: A great community leader.

KF: Yes, oh yes.

PW: And participated in all his community-

KF: One of the things I forgot to tell you was he was- they had fire with their recreation hall, and they really needed this 180,000 dollars, they just couldn't get it wherever, and he had the idea that we could do it, and he formed this committee, or



there was this committee and he had each one of the committee members to just go to every house.

[60 minutes]

KF: And they had their list, and request 200 dollars from each family. And- which they got, and they managed to get that. [chuckles] The amount they needed for this recreation hall.

PW: Do you know why he chose that particular town when he went around looking after his [unclear]-

KF: Oh yes, after they got married he did travel around and looked around and it was a beautiful valley, and so that's where he chose. He just wanted to go into a nice little home with a pleasant neighbourhood, and that's what he chose. And I think he just- his wish was to be accepted by the people, just- he didn't- he knew that he might be discriminated, but he wasn't, and it was wartime.

PW: Yes.

KF: They still-

PW: Yes, it was still-

KF: Even in St. Catharines, when we went there, the papers said terrible things. "Get the Japs out of here bodily," and things like that, so. No, [we had that?].

PW: Did you go and visit him very often after?

KF: My mother did.

PW: Okay.

KF: My mother did- I did see him when we passed through, we drove through there. But he sent my mother fare to go whichever way she wanted to, plane or train, and my mother- after my father passed away, we thought she would be lost, but somehow she started getting about in Toronto, even, by herself. So, we figured she'd be able to take a plane as long as somebody picked her up at the other end. And that's what she did every summer.

PW: Wow.

KF: Because she loved gardening. Tak loved gardening, but he let mother do it when she got there. [laughing]

PW: Now back to your story. After Slocan, the family moved to St. Catharines. Can you tell us about that? That period.

KF: Oh yeah. There were two other Japanese families there, in the same farm. And Mr. Trigano [?] was a very, very nice man, and dad and he got along very well. We worked the farm when it's asparagus time, and we worked the farm to pick peaches. They had a packing house, too. It was a big farm. So, whenever there was work we all did it, we helped.

PW: So, the whole family, your [?] brothers and your sisters, were they [unclear]-

KF: Well, not all of us, because I was the oldest by that time, because Tomi was married with a child, and so she could [?]- had gone to another place to live. But- in

the east- and my sister Fudge had wanted to study fashion design, so she went to Montreal, and from- yeah. So, she was there while the rest of us were helping on the farm.

PW: And how long did you stay in St. Catharines?

KF: I only stayed there two, a little over two years.

PW: But your parents would [?] stay there, when did your parents move?

KF: Oh, they came- they moved out of St. Catharines a few years after that, yeah. They came to Toronto.

PW: And there was a lot of- still a lot of discrimination when you came to St. Catharines?

KF: No, we didn't feel it-

PW: You didn't feel it-

KF: We didn't even know that they felt that way, but I read-

PW: Read the papers.

KF: Read it after. And saw these things that were said, "Get them," you know, the paper said, they were on Trigano [?] farm, and things like that, so. But the people were so friendly around there, the children, we got along well with them and- and never felt any discrimination at all.

PW: There were quite a few Japanese-Canadian families that moved into St. Catharines area [unclear]-

KF: In that area, Niagara area, there was quite a few because the farmers needed them. Or- that's where they went, yeah.

PW: And then after St. Catharines you came to Toronto?

KF: Mhm, after St. Catharines. I happened to know- meet Ozzie in Slocan, and he used to come and visit by boat to [unclear]. [laughs]

[65 minutes]

KF: And so, we managed to keep the fire burning.

PW: So, he knew your husband and [unclear] in Slocan?

KF: That's where we met. But we were just friends-

PW: Friends at that time. And then the romance bloomed, [chuckling] he courted you-

KF: Yeah.

PW: And you came to Toronto. Is that where you were married?

KF: That's right.

PW: And what did you do in Toronto?

KF: Oh, so many things. Because I didn't have very much education, but I managed- because I sewed, I was very good in school, I used to get A in sewing and home economics, so I went into sewing first, in the factories, and we used to do the army pants first, and then I went into ladies' wear after. But in Toronto it was great [?]

'cause we played tennis with a group of Japanese-Canadian people, and I went to the Y to swim, and I took up swimming. I used to be in the club there.

PW: And you raised a family.

KF: Well, they didn't come 'til four years after we were married. We had to save some money. [laughs] We didn't even- in fact, when they did come, we didn't get a house until just after the second child.

PW: And how many children do you have?

KF: I have three. So, I'm very lucky, two girls and a boy.

PW: And now, you have been very active at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre.

KF: Mhm, here and there. [chuckles]

PW: [chuckles] But you were also- you were also in [?] graphics, too, is that- if I remember- were you at graphics?

KF: Oh-

PW: I mean, you had a varied career, tell us some of your varied career.

KF: Well, I just- I could say I bluffed my way through.

PW: Whatever you did [unclear] many, many things. Tell us some about what you did.

KF: Oh, I did drafting for a while, only for a small company [?], but that was at night, when the children were small. But I did- ah, I did so many things. I guess if you get paid that's- it's a job, isn't it?

PW: Yes, it is. [chuckles]

KF: [chuckling] Yes, I was a swimmer, I never had swimming lessons but when I came to Toronto, they had to test me, and they put me into seniors right away. And I used to- I taught myself how to dive in Slocan, we used to cliff dive. And I taught myself how to dive and after I became- I took a course to become an instructor, and so I was teaching in Scarborough for the Scarborough Parks and Recreation at all the different schools, and that was when the children were in school, I taught at nights. And I took a course- yes [?], and once I had to teach diving. I said, "I don't know how to teach, I've never been taught to really teach." They said, "Well, you're the best diver in this group of five," and they said, "you're gonna be the teacher," so I bought books. How can you learn by that? I went to phone Don Webbs [?], he was the national coach for Canada. Can you imagine, I had the nerve to? I said, "Don," I said- I gave him the situation, he says, he said, "Come on down to Leaside pool on Monday nights." And here I am, diving between a Canadian champion and a Chicago champion. And he takes me to- and he just, every time I did a dive, he only told me one mistake, and the next time he'd tell me a different one. So, I learned to springboard dive the proper way, [laughing] at least, and that's when I was able to teach for my classes, so. So, a month went by, and I said, "What do I owe you, Don?" And he says, "Nothing." [laughs] Isn't that nice? People have been giving me free rides all the time. Even when dancing, I couldn't take lessons. And I- there was- I was teaching fitness by that time, when the kids were small, so. I didn't have a full-time job yet, I just had bits and pieces of teaching this and that. So, I was teaching fitness,

and there was an actress in my class, and she said, "Oh, they're hiring dancers, Oriental dancers." I said, "I don't do Oriental dancing, I've done Japanese, a little bit." "Oh, go anyhow!" She forced me to go. [laughs] They were auditioning for Chinese dancers, and so I got to do that.

[70 minutes]

KF: I was- got into the group, and when CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Company] went across Canada to choose ethnic groups all across- different things for the Queen, because the Queen [Elizabeth II] was coming. So. [laughs] When they came to Toronto, the Chinese did their practice, and we got chosen out of- for Chinese dancing. So, that's when I did Chinese dancing. I had just come back from Mexico, I think, 'cause I- I was chosen to dance for Canada, folk dancing, that's why I had to learn Chinese dancing, and they, they- this was free also, I didn't have to pay for this. Whatever I do is free, it seems like. [laughing] So, they were choosing people, people to represent Canada for the Olympics in Mexico. And were to perform all around Mexico, in the different little towns, for nine days. [laughs] Or, no, we were there for two weeks, I think, in fact, longer than that. So, when I came back, I said to Mrs. Lum [?], who was gonna send us to dance with the Queen, I said, "I can't go, I just came back, I can't leave my children again." Now, my oldest was about 15, so it wasn't too bad. [laughing] So, I went, with three children with Ozzie like [?] [unclear]. And I said, "No, I can't go," and she said, "Well, if your children- if I put them in the dance, will you go?" So, I got to dance for the Queen with kids dancing, too. [laughing] So, that [all the?] fun things I've done in my life, and then later I- I was a fashion stylist, or product stylist. It could be anything that the photographer shot- wants to shoot. So, it could be anything from beds, drapes, shirts, clothing-

LU [?]: [unclear]

KF: Especially clothing, that's what I liked to do.

PW: So, you're really multi-talented, actually [?].

KF: Yeah, like-

PW: Tell us- tell us about the time you skydived.

KF: We were holidaying in Cuba, and- how old was I? I was close to 70, I think. And I've always wanted to skydive and take lessons in Toronto, and every time I went to work and asked somebody, "Would you go with me?" Nobody wanted to go, "My wife won't let me," or whatever. But I was so- and then I saw this sign in the lobby: "Tandem jump," which is, you don't have to have lessons. And I went upstairs to Ozzie to ask, and he gave me his blessing, so off I went. [laughing] And it was the most thrilling thing to- to- I- it wasn't jumping headfirst. It was like you scuba dive, and you- like, going backwards, [spreads arms] and then he rolls you over, but I'm in front of him, and you're freefalling for- for 40 to 45 seconds, straight down! [laughing] And after I stopped screaming, it was so quiet. And so beautiful, and then he just operated it, so you just turned around, all the way down, we went slowly to

the bottom. And he landed me right on the beach, and I was- I was at. And they all gave [a big hand?]. And so, I was like a celebrity- I was the only Asian person in that group, so.

PW: [Probably the one lady that?]- [laughing]

KF: Yeah! [laughing]

PW: [That age as well?]. [laughing]

KF: And, so I- they did take a film of me, but I didn't have a- they didn't have a camera. All I wanted was a picture. But they said the camera was broken, but the video's okay, so I had to have a video. But the man at the bottom, he took a- he was from France, he says, "I took a beautiful picture of you." I said, "Oh, I'd love to have it." He says, "I will send it to you." And he- he did, and at the time he said, "Oh, you must come to visit me in France, in the vineyards." [laughs] So.

PW: [laughing] You should still go.

KF: [laughing] But he did send me a picture of- just as I was landing.

PW: Right.

KF: So, it's [?] good.

PW: Would you like to say anything more about your brother?

KF: Oh, yes. My brother. What- you're good to keep asking me questions, you're very good, Peter.

[75 minutes]

LU: Did you have a story about your brother cutting out little articles from the mechanics magazines and putting it up in the outhouse?

KF: No, he didn't do that. He- we, we had paper on the wall all the time. It could be the paper from the [orange juice?] or the Eatons's [?] catalogue papers, but they would be on the walls because we didn't have the right paper to use. In those days. [laughs]

PW: Yes, I- there's- when you have outhouses, you use whatever paper you can find.

KF: [laughs]

PW: If it was magazines or something you had to scrunch it, 'cause they're all [unclear]-

KF: Yeah. All rumpled and crumpled.

PW: So, it would feel softer for the wiping.

KF: Mhm.

PW: Is there anything else you want to say about your brother?

KF: No, that I-

PW: We covered everything that you'd like to say?

KF: I think we have, I'm pretty proud of him, and- yeah. Wish he was here, but- he would be in his 90s now.

PW: Right, yeah. Well, couple more questions, Kay. I mean, we have- you went through the- the Depression, and even through the evacuation and all that, how do you feel about that experience in your life, of that period?

KF: The period of?

PW: You know, the evacuation, when your parents lost their property, and you had to go into the interior. How did you feel, any comments about what happened during that period of our Nikkei history? Do you have any comments about that?

KF: Well, because it was Japan bombing the Americans, our good neighbour, we felt bad that it was Japan. And I think we just moved and did whatever we were told to do. We didn't argue that [?], fight back, it just felt- and that's how I think our parents might have felt, I don't know, I never asked them, but they never- even when we had the choice to go to Japan, they just loved this county, and they wouldn't think of going back. My father loved this county. I know, he said so, and.

PW: Have you ever gone back, have you ever gone to Japan?

KF: Oh yes, I visited twice-

PW: Twice.

KF: Very nice, back to the hometown where [?]-

PW: So, do you still have relatives there?

KF: Mhm. Yes, we keep in touch.

PW: Keep in touch, nice.

KF: Yeah.

PW: What do you feel about what the role of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre does for the community?

KF: Well, I think it's wonderful, I think it's wonderful. It's just that I think we're going to lose our people, because- I don't know, our children are so busy with their own life, and they hardly frequent the Centre, if you know what I mean? I have to get them involved into volunteer work, and that's the only way I think I can get them in, or take a lesson in something, but it- unless they do- like, caravan was good, I think, because a lot of the young people came at that time. What else can we have, what do you think?

PW: Well, we're talking about you, so that's why I volunteer to do all the things I do, especially to keep the Nikkei history.

KF: Mhm.

PW: And record that, and do as much as we can to keep the history, because that is so important-

KF: Mhm.

PW: In our own history, which is, you know, not a very long time in time period, as such. And I think our parents, and people like you, have gone through enormous change in their lives and our lives, in a very short time, and look how far we've come through all that. So, I think it's important that the people, the Nikkei community, in whatever diluted fashion it become-

KF: Mhm.

PW: Is still retained. Because it's still important, I feel-

KF: Yes.

PW: An important part of our history-

KF: Mhm.

[80 minutes]

PW: Our background, how we became what we are.

KF: Yeah, yeah.

PW: So, I think that's important. And I think it's important that people like you, that we capture your stories, because, you know, it's a very key component of people's lives that happened in this time period, so that's why volunteering is important, recording what Lisa's doing right now is very, very important.

KF: Yeah, yeah.

PW: 'Cause once they're gone, we're gone. It's gone.

KF: It's true.

PW: And you can read books and- but I think it's important that the audiovisual-

KF: Mhm.

PW: Recordings are kept, because that's when you actually see what people felt like, what they experienced. In their own words. And when [?] it's your brother, or yourself, or your parents-

KF: Mhm.

PW: That's an important part of what the Centre is trying to do, especially the heritage group and archives, so. What about the next generation, like your kids, how do you feel? 'Cause [we see?]- you know that many of our Nikkei community are marrying outside their own group-

KF: Mhm.

PW: And it's getting diluted by half [?], by quarter-

KF: That's true, it is.

PW: But you know what I feel, and I don't know how you feel, Kay, is that there are people who are beginning to, now, focus on their background-

KF: Their roots.

PW: And what their forefathers went through, their parents, grandparents, and parents, aunts and uncles. And I think that's- there is now, I feel, a real interest growing in the Nikkei history. How do you feel? Do you feel that at all?

KF: I don't know if I feel it in my family, 'cause the [unclear]- so, I just- I know when I said, "Well, I may as well throw all these pictures out," but no, they want me to save those pictures but, but.

PW: No, I think it's important that those pictures are kept and your story is kept, because there'll come a time, I think-

KF: Yeah.

PW: But they'll want to know.

KF: Mhm.

PW: What did my parents go through, what did my grandparents go through?

KF: Yes. That's right.

PW: If you don't have any of that, then their history is gone.

KF: That's right. [unclear] that was one of my regrets [?], not asking the questions to my mother and father [unclear]-

PW: And I think we all feel that, that, you know, there was a time when we all wanted to assimilate into, you know, the Canadian society-

KF: This what were forced to do, [to assimilate?]-

PW: Forced to do that, and that's [why we'd say?], okay, well, you don't, that's why we haven't congregated into a Japantown or-

KF: No.

PW: Into little communities within the bigger metropolitan area.

KF: Mhm, that's right.

PW: We're all scattered, and that was [?] a deliberate situation that the Japanese-Canadians went through, 'cause that- what happened in BC [British Columbia] didn't want to be [unclear] again, so- which is, in a way, [chuckling] totally the other way, [I think?], to some degree.

KF: Mhm.

PW: But you know. Yeah, so I think you've lived a full- and still are gonna live a full life, 'cause you are so active, you are so talented-

KF: [laughs]

PW: It's wonderful to have a person like that in our community.

KF: Oh, thank you very much. I- to do this, I found it very, very exciting to find people that I didn't even know, hardly, and tell me the stories of my brother, it was wonderful, too. Otherwise, I wouldn't have known some of the stories about my brother, you have to- you have to really go after it.

PW: Well, I think that's what these kind of interview or research-

KF: It [unclear]-

PW: Gets you to do things that you don't even think about-

KF: [I know?].

PW: Or know about, comes out, out of the woodwork-

KF: Yeah, you find them.

PW: Yeah. And I think that's the exciting part of what's happening, especially with the heritage committee-

KF: Yeah.

PW: These stories, like we're doing the archiving now, and they're looking at the pictures, and they have to do the details, and then you find all sorts of things that comes out using these photographs-

KF: Yeah.

PW: Which are buried in our storage area.

KF: Uh huh. [looking at camera] You can turn that off [unclear].



PW: No, it's important that we keep talking.

KF: Oh. [laughs]

LU: [laughs]

PW: [The dialogue?]. But thank you so much, Kay, it's been wonderful to hear your story again.

KF: Well, thank you both very much for having me, and having my brother's story told, and-

PW: I hope we captured everything, unless there's something else you want to ask?

[85 minutes]

KF: I would just like to thank people like Frank Moritsugu to help- he helped me with many hours putting this sort of together for me, and I really appreciate him, and the people who helped me with their stories, like Mike Kobada [?], and Pat Subochi [unclear], and Roy Kurita [?], Min Nagahara, and Mark Honkawa [?], he wrote to me, too, his stories are very similar with Min's, so I just gave [?] the one letter today. But I appreciate the help that I received, and thank you.

PW: Okay.

[camera sounds, footage jumps]

KF: In 1946, Tak married Betty Umakoshi, and they had their wedding in Popoff hall, and I just wish we could have been there, but-he- so on the- they were allowed to stay in BC [British Columbia] after they got married, so they went searching for a place in the interior of British Columbia, and they found this beautiful in Creston. So, that's where they honeymooned, and decided to go back there after they packed up again, and that's all. So, you cut me off. [holds hand in front of face and closes fist]

LU: [chuckling] Cut there?

[camera sounds]

KF: So, after 33 years, of Tak's death, Tak's- after 33 years after Tak died, the people of Creston remembered, and especially the ambassadors, they were the ones who wanted to reunite, and have- and honour my brother, Tak Toyota. They planned this in a park, in the summer evening, and they wanted to- they represented the family- Tak's family with this beautiful plaque, and that [unclear] with Tak's picture, and- honouring- they were gonna put the names of all the other people who were honoured. So, there were hundreds of people that went, too, with their fond memories of the band playing the old favourites, and they had a great time, and the band played, but they also had one of the singers that won the talent shows that Tak had, he MCed. And the winner was Pat Zee [?], at the time she was only 10 years-old, and she sang the same song that she sang when she was little, and she sang so beautifully, but she- I guess her memories went back to those days and she just couldn't finish it, and she just jumped off the stage and went to hug my sister, sister-in-law, Betty, and yeah, it was very moving, I think. So, I don't know, I guess that's okay?

[camera sounds, footage jumps]

PW: Okay, yes.

KF: Tak's first business in Creston was this- a small electrical appliance repair shop, and this is what Tak loved to do, 'cause he could fix a lot of things, and he stayed there for a while, with the shop. But at the same time, he had lots of schoolchildren come after school to work. And one of them was Gary Weimar [?], who learned from Tak some of the way business ran, and he had become president of Westinghouse [?] Canada, so- but he attributes his, well, his knowledge to the roots that he had in Creston, and he remembers the time that Tak was the first man to bring cable television into Creston area.

[90 minutes]

KF: Plus, he was the first man in the whole of the interior of British Columbia [looks down at paper in lap] I could read this better, [reaches down] oh darn, I forgot my glasses. [unclear]

LU: We'll pause it.

[camera sounds, footage jumps]

LU: Okay.

KF: [looking at paper] So, Gary lived in the rural Creston area, and he said, [reading] "the key influence during his teenage years was Tak Toyota, owner of the electric appliance [?] shop, and he worked part-time after school. Tak-" Oh, I'm repeating myself.

PW: It's okay.

LU: That's okay.

KF: So, he learned a lot about running business and customer services, and he really looked, he noticed that Tak really looked after his costumers. I wanted to tell you that many of the students worked for Tak, and all four of his children did, too, and- at one time or another, and I guess his son Ron stayed with him the longest, 'cause he was really quite interested, and later Ron became mayor of Creston. [chuckles] And in fact, he did run his business after Tak passed away for a long, long time.

**[End Part 2]**

**[Start Part 3]**

Peter Wakayama: Okay, November 24, 2011, interview with Kay Fujiwara.

Kay Fujiwara: [holding up photograph of Tak Toyota] My name is Kay, and I'd like to talk about my brother, Tak. He was born in Duncan, British Columbia, and- from a family of 10 children. We were rather poor, but happy and healthy. And throughout Tak's life he was- he was- he did a lot of interesting things, and very successful in life. And I always looked up to him because he was such a clever and kind person,

very creative. But he passed away at the age of 56, and- leaving his dear wife, Betty, three sons, one daughter, and a grandchild. So-

PW: Kay, like to talk about the- your days in Duncan, and if you could tell us about your parents and where they came from originally?

KF: Yeah. My parents were poor immigrants that came from Fukuoka, Japan in 1907. That's 100 years ago. [puts down photograph and clasps hands]

PW: And they settled in Duncan?

KF: Yes. I [?]-

PW: And where is Duncan?

KF: Well, they settled in Duncan, but my father and brother and grandfather came together first. My mother came later and married dad. But they landed in Victoria, and Duncan is about 40 miles north of Victoria, and it's a small town, so dad and his brother and grandpa came through Duncan, and just on the outskirts of our house, he- they found this vacant house and asked if they could live there. That's where they came. House was at the borderline, and our garage- double garage was in the city limits.

PW: So, Duncan is on the- Vancouver Island?

KF: Yes.

PW: Right. What was life like on the farm?

KF: Oh, life, life to me was a wonderful place, I have such wonderful memories of Duncan. Growing up with nine brothers and sisters was always fun, we'd have lots to do and great vegetables and fruits, chickens and pigs, and we had a creek running by, so it was great.

PW: And what were some of the activities that you had at Duncan?

KF: Duncan was quite a- well, it was a small town, but we had lots to do because we went to swim in the river, and climb the mountains, and skated in the winter, and we always had picnics and things.

PW: And did you go to Japanese school in Duncan?

KF: Yes, that's another thing, we- I didn't start 'til I was about 10 years old, but we had two wonderful teachers from- that came from Japan, and their names were Nagahara-sensei and Kawaguchi [?]-sensei, so I really loved learning Japanese after school.

PW: So, at home, did you speak Japanese or English, or what was it?

KF: Well, I-

PW: [Or both?].

KF: We had to speak Japanese so my- that's what we learned in the very beginning. But because I had three older brothers and sisters before me, I had a little English before I started school.

PW: Was there a large Japanese community in Duncan?

KF: It was great, 'cause it was about, at least, 12, 15 families with children, and we had community events, and it was very nice.

PW: What kind of community events would you have done [in Duncan]??

KF: Well, with the picnics, and getting to know them through the Japanese language school, we got together and did things, and as they [?] got older, I didn't go to the dances, but my sister and my brother, who used to allow [?] them to have the music, as long as they had a chaperone they were allowed to go to this dance.

[5 minutes]

KF: And my father might go sometimes, my friend's mother, or whoever, they chaperoned, and it was something they did.

PW: And were your playmates Japanese, or hakuji people, or both?

KF: Both, because when I started school there were very few Japanese in my class, maybe one. Out of 30 people, there were only a few Asian. And- but we did get to know them, of course. I had both English and Japanese, yeah.

PW: I'm gonna switch to your eldest brother, Tak, because that's what you wanna talk about. And because I assume you don't remember too much about his early period-

KF: No. He was-yeah.

PW: Maybe you could tell us what he wrote.

KF: He was eight years older than I was, [unclear] and I didn't know what he was like when he was a little child, but when he- at the end of his days, he was in-studying psychology at the University of Calgary, and he had an essay, and it talked about his personality of self. So, I could tell you about him from his pages. And he said that because he was the firstborn, much attention was lavished on him, and especially because he was [shrugs] he was a male. And he was brought up in the Japanese, old Japanese cultural customs, so he feels that he wasn't punished, they used a diverse way of technique that- when he was growing up. And he said that he was breastfed, and carried about piggyback he remembers all these things when he was- not the breastfed part, because he saw the nine others being breastfed, so that's what he- why he probably said that in his essay. He was very fortunate that he had a paternal grandfather who acted as tutor, and he was able to tell him his little secrets, and he loved that.

PW: What about some of his feelings, did he have discrimination in there [?]?

KF: Well, when he started school, I think he had a lot of it [?], [holds up hands] kind of just one second-

PW: Yeah.

KF: [reaches for notes on tables, footage jumps]

PW: When Tak was growing up, what kind of discrimination did he have, or- did he have?

KF: He didn't speak English probably very well, but he suffered considerable rejection in childhood, especially from his peers, due to his lower class status and ethnic origin. And he was able to overcome this because he had the secure atmosphere feeling when he was a child. He was very confused in his adolescent

years, and so he said he had a lot of soul-searching disappointments, and he was- he said with great determination he was able to overcome his inferiority complex.

PW: And do you think that original or younger days-

KF: Yes, he-

PW: Treatment affected his later attitude and character?

KF: I think so, he thought about that, and he worked hard at it, to overcome this feeling that he had.

PW: Did you have any discrimination while you were growing up in Duncan?

KF: When I was growing up, well, I think my sisters and my brother paved the way-

[10 minutes]

KF: Because I think it was Duncan, the city of Duncan was- they might have mistaken us for Native Indians, in the beginning, mainly because- they weren't allowed to come to elementary school. And I didn't know that, but it's possible that they mistook us for Native Indian. By the time I went to school everyone was so nice and kind, I didn't feel anybody- the way my brother felt. The only one time was I went to a movie with two of my hakujiin friends, and we all paid our way and showed our ticket. But the usher, he thumbed [points thumb upwards] for me to go upstairs with Native Indians, and I felt terrible, but was too shy to complain about that, and I had to sit with the Indians, and felt very uncomfortable all by myself in this dark place. And in those days, they were smoking, and it was very upsetting to me.

PW: Must've been quite an experience for you, when you were that young.

KF: Mhm. Yes, it was scary, almost.

PW: Going back to Tak, what kind of hobbies would he have had in Duncan?

KF: Tak had many hobbies. At first, I noticed that he was very handy with his hands, and when we had our kitchen extended, he would build- [I wondered what this was, was this chain?], and I- they had asked me to pull at it. [Mimes pulling a chain] And came from the ground, in the cupboard, up came my milk- our milk underneath. And it was a cooler for all the vegetables and things. So, he made things like that. When I asked them who did it, they said it was Tak. And I remember when we had our bathtub, he rigged up, I guess, a barrel where the bottom- water was pumped up the barrel. He made this big trough to come into the bathtub. And so, we didn't have to carry the buckets to the bathtub anymore. [chuckles] So, he was very clever, and I had to do a lot of research to find out what he was like. And I did find two people that were a little younger than Tak, but they're in their 90s now and they told me some- so many stories about Tak, we could go on for hours, so.

PW: Could you give us some stories about what they told you?

KF: Yes, well, Pat was about 10 years old when she used to come to our house for o-furo-do [?], but she was my sister- older sister Tomi's friend, and Pat, Pat remembers visiting Tak's room with Tomi, and she noticed a whole pile of Popular Mechanics magazines in the corner amongst all this [unclear]- and his gadgets. And

so, well, she said that one day Tomi had asked her to come up when Tak was away, and she asked Pat to touch the doorknob, "But don't grab it." So, he had this little trick he played on us, and Pat just touched it and she got a little zap- electric shock from it. And so, she was telling Tomi that I guess he didn't want his kid sisters to snoop around while he was away. And he had the- there are also, Mike Ka [?] - not Mike, Mike was his good friend, and Mike had come back to Canada when he was about 10 years old. His mother sent him earlier to study Japanese, and he didn't know how to speak English very well, so his mother asked Tak if he wouldn't mind tutoring him when he was out playing together. And Mike had so many stories, he said his father, his father loaned him his bike, and they would go double riding to the city dump, 'cause Tak wanted to find things to fix, radios. And they'd come back with all kinds of stuff, he said, from batteries to- I don't know, we had gramophones at home that worked, and radios that worked. He knew how to fix them. But one day with this hobby, he needed- he wanted to do photography, and he needed this red lightbulb, we didn't have electricity at the time.

[15 minutes]

KF: So, he- Mike said he had this long board, about seven or eight feet, and he used it as a propellor, fixed it to be a propellor. And he hoisted it up on a 25-foot pole with a wire coming down and a generator at the bottom. And he said he was able to get his lightbulb for his photography. And I don't know how that works, but he was able to generate electricity. [chuckles] At a very young age. And some of the other things that he-

PW: So, he was quite inventive and mechanically-minded in his youth.

KF: Yes, I think it was the- you know, he used to read a lot, and that's where he was able to learn to do many things.

PW: And how was your relationship with your brothers and sisters as you were growing up in Duncan.

KF: Oh, I think it was really good, because I don't remember any bickering, or fighting, or- maybe our memories are different, where we just want to remember the good things, but to me, life on the farm was so pleasant. And I just think it was great to have- to live with such a big family.

PW: And your relationship with your parents?

KF: Oh, fine, fine, they just wanted us to be good children, and they'd warn us about not to make waves, and Japanese, you know, when you go out. And I don't know, but they were very lenient, too, they didn't stop us to go swimming in the river, where it was swift and we learned to swim and skate on the pond. They never followed us, or they didn't stop us.

PW: And what was your father doing at this time in Duncan?

KF: My father had all kinds of different things, he was always busy, I never saw him laying around, but he even found jobs for other people, we never knew what

stranger would be sitting at the breakfast table sometimes, because he would send them off to a logging camp close by, or- and he worked for other farmers, he went fishing, and- fishing was wonderful in those days, you could just bring home a washtub full of fish sometimes, just by putting a shiner at the end of a hook and- And then he would sell them to the neighboring campsites, and- with the vegetables that my grandfather grew. I- did I tell you that grandfather came with- yes, yes I did tell you-

PW: Yes- no, I don't think you did, but just tell us about your grandfather.

KF: Well, grandfather lived with us, too, and in fact- but dad's brother didn't stay with us, he preferred to go to Valetown [?], so- but grandfather was always with us. Oh, grandfather was a gentle person, too, and he had lots of men come over because he used to know how to do o-cue [?], that is mock [?] [unclear]. And I used to see him put this little wick on the backs of the men, and put a light to it, and with this incense he would light it, and- [laughs] I don't know how they could stand it, because he- they'd come in and request- they'd have to stand, and you'd see the scars from the last time. In fact, he helped other people. I met a lady that told me that they used to invite him to Victoria to come help people do o-cue [?], so.

PW: I think it must relate to pressure points-

KF: Yeah.

PW: That's in your body, 'cause I remember doing that with my mother. You wonder how the-

KF: How they can stand it!

PW: How they can stand it. [laughs]

KF: Yes.

PW: It's like burning your body.

KF: I know! I don't know how they did it. But I used to- when I let friends later, they said that their mother would put it on their hand and- [laughs]

PW: That was a form of punishment, I think.

KF: Yes, that's what I hear.

PW: Yeah, yeah.

[20 minutes]

The Depression came, and then what happened?

KF: Oh, the Depression came and Tak had to stop school because of his- well, dad wanted him to go to work, of course, and so dad happened to have a logging camp at the time. And so that's where he worked and went logging. But prior to that he did odd jobs, too, as a tactic [?], I heard he did waitering, even, in Duncan, so. But the logging he must've loved, because I've seen many pictures of him.

PW: What kind of work would he have been doing at the logging camp for your dad?

KF: Oh, he went out all- out in the mountains, and- I'm sorry I don't have this picture, 'cause I saw him at the top of a- in a picture, I couldn't find that picture, but

he was at the very, very top of a- I don't know what you call that job, when you chop all the stems down- and he's right up there. [chuckles]

PW: Then what happened to that logging camp?

KF: Oh, well, I was holidaying in summer holidays, and I just happened to be there when lightning struck the mountain, and- and the fire started coming closer and closer to our camp. And so, we had to escape quickly, and Tak had a three-seater car that we piled into it. Dad had a truck, so he was able to take the rest of the men, and so that was the end of the camp, and it just burned right down.

PW: [And there was?] another instance when [?] the highway was going [unclear]-

KF: Well, after that- see, the highway was going through, but can I tell you about his hobby before we [unclear]?

PW: Sure, absolutely.

KF: Okay. Well, could you ask me about the hobby, what other hobbies, please [?]?

PW: What other hobbies would Tak have done?

KF: Oh, I told you about his- yeah, he- I'm sorry, I gotta start over again. Yes, he liked to fix cars, all the time. And when Pat and Tomi- they're older, so Tak invited them to go for a car ride. Pat noticed that this senbai can was on the floor, with a hose attached at the bottom. And it led to a hole in the floor of the car, and that meant- Tak said, "Well, that's the gas line," when they asked. [chuckling] And they were driving around with no gas tank, and they were carefree and young, and just kept on driving, singing the songs of the parade and enjoying themselves.

PW: Was there any other hobbies that you want to mention that Tak was involved with?

KF: [unclear] What else did I want to tell you?

PW: Well, photography, did- he was quite good at photography in Duncan, wasn't he?

KF: Well, that was- he was an amateur photographer, he even made his own enlarger. And I used to see this box, made out of wood, and that was his enlarger [for photos?]. Yeah. And he made all kinds of things, and fixed radios, and we had [unclear] all the time, and loud speakers, and microphones, and-

PW: And how old would he be in that period? Late teens?

KF: Well, probably- yes, and I remember a lot of things- well, yeah, by the time I was 10 and he was 18-

PW: Yeah, 18.

KF: But he did a lot of things, had a lot of things done by that age.

PW: Did he go to Japanese school, too?

KF: No, he didn't. It only started later, when I was about 10.

PW: Okay.

KF: So, and I only went about three years.

PW: Okay.

KF: Yeah, I had to stop then [?].



PW: And then- so then you had to move to Pauldy [?], is that the place you went to, Pauldy [?], [for the?]-

[25 minutes]

KF: Well, we had to move there because- because there were- the highway- the Trans-Canada highway was gonna go right over our farm, and so dad decided that we should go to Pauldy [?]. His brother was there, and all our cousins lived there, and dad would be able to work in the mill and so would my brother, and so they decided to build a house in Pauldy [?], and- with the help of their cousins and friends, they had built a house there.

PW: So, then what- you had a huge family group there, with your cousins and them. [unclear]-

KF: Oh, because our cousins- the picture that you saw were two families. They had 13 children, and we had 10, so-

PW: That's a big group.

KF: Always, always fun. [chuckles]

PW: Then you went off to Victoria, and why did you go to Victoria, and how old were you then?

KF: Well, [I could say?], we had some very kind people, and I did start dance lessons when I was little, and I had to stop because I couldn't save my 25 cents, I used to try to sell vegetables, but- I just couldn't get my 25 cents all the time. And then the price of the dance lessons went up to 50 cents, so I had to stop completely. And when my teacher wondered what happened, why I wasn't back, I just had to tell her that I couldn't afford the lessons anymore. But she insisted that I come back to all my lessons, and from about the age of 10, she allowed me to come back and have dance lessons done, ballet, drama, whatever she taught. And so, then I- when the house was going to be built in Pauldy [?], I just had to tell her that I wouldn't have the transportation, and I wouldn't be able to continue with my lessons. And she thought it over, and she said, "Well, my sister teaches in Victoria, and I will find you a home, and you will continue your school and still be able to take your lessons." And I thought, "Wow, that's very kind of you." And so, I- my mother allowed me to go, I was only 14, I was just going to start high school, and so this is when I went to Victoria to live with a family.

PW: The war came, 1941.

KF: Oh- I was- yes, that's where I was at the time-

PW: How did you feel when you heard the news?

KF: When I heard the news on the radio, they called us 'Japs,' and they just- they were so horrible, they wanted to get rid of us, and then I was- I don't know, I was angry, too. Why did Japan- why did Japan bomb Pearl Harbor, you know, our good neighbours? And- I really felt bad about that, and I- I just- I was crying one day, and she said, "Why are you crying?" I just- I just wanted to go home, I felt so

uncomfortable, although she was very kind and very nice, even though we were talked about badly.

PW: So then, you returned to Pauldy [?]?

KF: So, I did go home, I did go home. And I was able to see my new house for the first time in two years.

PW: And so- and that- you'd been away for two years from the family, so it was a great reunion. But then, under very bad circumstances.

KF: Yes, yes.

PW: So, then the evacuation notice came around, and where did you go? Where did the family go?

KF: Yes. We had to- we were forced to leave our home, we boarded everything up, and in- you know, thinking that we might be returning, so we left the sewing machines, and all our belongings. We boarded a bus to Chemainus, and Chemainus, from there we took the ferry across to Vancouver, and- to the Hastings Park in Vancouver.

[30 minutes]

PW: And what was your recollection of being at Hastings Park?

KF: Hastings Park was a real eye-opener, to see all the Japanese people from the coastline, and- not all, because the Vancouver people were still in their homes, but it was mostly from Prince Rupert and all- and the people on the island were all there, and- And when you're young, it's almost like an adventure, but- and they did- the accommodations were bad, but we survived.

PW: What was your recollection of the- sort of the- living accommodation arrangements, and did your- were you with your family, or were they split?

KF: Yes, we were all together as a family, luckily, and [unclear] some people were separated, and that was kind of sad, because they were separated.

PW: So, you were- you moved in April '42, how long did you stay in Hastings Park?

KF: We were in Hastings Park until July, yeah. Until July.

PW: And so then, where did you go after July?

KF: And our turn was to go east, into the interior, we didn't know where we were going, but we were able to go as a whole family, and we came to Slocan, British Columbia.

PW: Your father did not want to go to Japan?

KF: Oh?

PW: Oh no, that was after the war, sorry. So, you all had to move when you went to-

KF: We all-

PW: Went to-

KF: Went to this place called Slocan. And it was a beautiful place, beautiful place with lakes and mountains.

PW: Tell us about what Slocan city was like, and the history of Slocan.

KF: Oh, Slocan- they called it a 'city,' and it really was a city in 1900. It was an old mining town, and it was booming with men on horses and- anyhow, they had a very bad fire in 1900, and it was almost demolished. But it was- they had built it up by the time we were there, it was 1942, I guess it was still 1942, and there were buildings that were livable, in fact, [unclear] a lot of the Vancouver people were there earlier to fix up the places, and they- so, we- our quarters for living were not ready, and so we had to live in tents for- 'til the end of November. But my brother Tak wanted to be independent, and he asked the BC [British Columbia] Commissioners if he could- to have his- have a business- live independently, be self-supporting, and they allowed him to do the photography that he wanted to do, and that's what happened.

PW: Which was rather unusual for that to happen, I think, at that time.

KF: I don't know how he thought of something like that, but they allowed him to get whatever he needed to start his own little place. And he lived- not with us in- he didn't have to live in the tents, or go to Popoff, we ended up there, but he found a local resident and asked if he could have, you know, live in his- if he had a flat. And so, he did find a place where there was the second floor that he could use, dark room, and a bedroom. And the place that he went, the man was so nice, he said that you could use the kitchen anytime you wanted to. So, he was very fortunate that way.

PW: And [?] what were some of the activities that Tak was involved with when he was in Slocan?

KF: Well, he started with photography, and he became very busy at that.

[35 minutes]

KF: But the activities, there's so many things, 'cause he loved to make the loudspeakers for the events that we had, and-

PW: What were some of the events that you had in Slocan?

KF: Oh, well, we had dances, and dances were not just once a month, it was more often than that, and- because there was a very good existing hall there, in Slocan, and- with a projection room upstairs, where even showed movies later. So, I don't know how he started all this, but he knew what to do, and he showed movies in Slocan and the other camps that were beyond Slocan, later.

PW: Now, Tak did a lot photography around the area-

KF: Mhm.

PW: Around- for the residents around. And he showed movies. How did he get around to the different areas?

KF: Yeah, he needed a car, and he did find this old, old- I called it a jalopy, but it would [?]- they told me it was a 1925 Oldsmobile. It didn't- it had a rim [?] on the [unclear], and it was really- no windows, but there was the canvas top, and he-it's

amazing, but he made it run. It even had a crank in the front. So, he made it run very well, and it was working.

PW: You helped in his studio, what did you do?

KF: Yes. He asked me to help him, so I was able to learn some photography. But when he printed the photographs, I was able to retouch the black and white photographs, and with no colours. No colours- so, he even bought me a set of colour paints, and when anybody wished to have their photographs painted, I learned to colour, and helped around in different things.

PW: Did he pay you for your work?

KF: You know, that's a funny thing. I don't even remember being paid. Is it-either my memory's going and gone, but I guess he was helping the family all the time, and- I- [laughs] I don't remember!

PW: Probably if he did, probably you put it into the family coffers.

KF: Yes, it's all good, 'cause when I worked, half of it went to my parents anyhow, we all did that. And-

PW: So, what did you do in Slocan?

KF: Well, I helped my brother. I didn't go to school, 'cause- there was a Catholic school, but I- that didn't come 'til later, but I already had a job. A lot of people had different jobs, like working in the hospital, or- my sister had a job in the grocery store, and there's the office staff. And Tak would take pictures of all these different things and places.

PW: Can you elaborate more on some of the activities in Slocan?

KF: What was that?

PW: Can you elaborate more on the activities that you did in Slocan?

KF: Oh, yes. We went swimming, we went diving, and we had a lot of parties in the beaches. In fact, we had a party in between our two houses in Slocan. There's a picture here in the archives. [chuckles] It was a wiener roast that we had, and Tak, I can see the picture of Tak's homemade speaker, and- what else did we do? Oh, we had many, many concerts, and competitions, talent reviews, and song contests, and- it was all- oh, we even formed a drama club and, you know, acted out plays and things. It's always something to do. I even studied how to dress design from a lady that could teach us these things. There was so much to do.

PW: So, you were heavily involved in these activities.

[40 minutes]

KF: In the activities, yes, because when Tak formed us- he organized a group of us to help him when we had these events, and we were all SMC, Slocan Music Club, so- all my friends, there was about eight of us, I think. And there was some fellas, too, that helped Tak all the time. In fact, he had different assistants that have helped with stories about their little life with Tak.

PW: What were some of the activities in the wintertime?

KF: Yeah [?]- [video skips 40:41, seems some footage is lost? ] rink, after we, you know- first it was bunkhouse for the men that were working, and then they used it for our meals when we were in the tents, and later they opened it up for skating in the wintertime. But before that, the young boys would make rinks beside the houses, and we skated. In the wintertime, there was all the indoor events with, like I say, the dances and things like that.

PW: Tak had a couple of assistants when he- at his photo shop.

KF: Mhm.

PW: Could you talk about some of the stories that were gathered by- that you got from them?

KF: Yes. Min Nagahara's [?] was one, he was only about 15 when he came around and asked Tak if he could help around, and Tak allowed him to. And Min said that when he went to Lemon Creek to show movies, Tak noticed that it wasn't possible to show a movie, because it wasn't a big, long hall like the one we had in Slocan, so he figured something out, Min said, and he said- this place was a schoolhouse, so- but it had all the partitions, but it- there was a long big hallway to enter all the classrooms. So, Tak figured out a way to show the movies. And what Min told me was, he said he and Tak built a- not a platform, but it was like a platform, to put the mirrors onto it [?], I don't know what, but he projected it onto the mirrors and onto a large makeshift screen, then he was able to show movies. So, I don't understand the- but Min was helping him, and he just, I mean, amazed at my brother.

PW: What about the story about the car tires and the- his car? With Mark?

KF: Oh yes, this car ran pretty well, although it steamed up sometimes- it had a lot of trouble, but somehow Tak made it run. It was still running in 1945 when I left. And yes, Mark wrote a letter, too, that he helped. The two became inpairable, at one time. And so, he- Min- no. Mark and Tak filled it up with- the tires up with sawdust because it couldn't use the [tube?] anymore. And they wrapped it around with rope, and it worked, he said it worked for quite a while, but eventually [it went?].

PW: [laughing]

KF: He had a way of fixing things if it didn't work. [laughs]

PW: And the war over in 1945, the family had a decision to make.

KF: Oh yes, in 1945 we had the choice: going east of the Rockies, or going to Japan. My father would never think of going to Japan, he loved Canada, he- regardless of what happened- he wanted to stay. In fact, he would have loved to have retired in Slocan, but they told us that we had to go east of the Rockies otherwise [?], so my sister came earlier to Toronto to find out what the situation was. And the farmers in Ontario really needed helpers. And so, she was able to get us onto Tregellas [?] farm in St. Catharines, and they were waiting for us to come, which was very nice, because that's where we went.

[45 minutes]

And Daff [?], the family, we were very happy there. Very cold in the winter, though. [laughs] Very, very cold, 'cause there was only stove that, like, heated the whole house. And the chimney went up to the second floor, so that was our heat in the wintertime.

PW: So, how many in the family would have come at that time?

KF: Yes- Tak stayed behind because he was allowed to find a place in British Columbia because of the [?] situation that he had in the beginning. Anyhow, he didn't come join us, but- and Tomi was married with two children by that time, so she went to Mount Forest. So, the rest [unclear]- and Fudge was older than me, and she already had a job in Toronto by that time, and she stayed there. But the farmers were looking for big families, and we still had some of us to work on the farm.

PW: So, Tak- so you stayed on the farm, but- and your family did, but Tak decided to stay. Tell us about what he did in BC [British Columbia].

KF: Yeah. Well, after I left, I found out that he did have a girlfriend, and he met her because she came to have a photograph taken with a family, I think, he got to know her while I was away. And they were married by the end of '45. [laughs] I wouldn't [have been able?] to go to their wedding, though, and he- for their honeymoon they searched for a place to live in eastern British Columbia, and-

PW: How did he find the place to go to?

KF: Well, he drove around to various places- he loved Creston, it was a lovely place in the valley, and he had an eye on that place, and they even honeymooned there for a day or two. But when he came back, he used to subscribe to the *Nelson* paper, and he noticed an ad that said this electrical fixture store was closing, so he jumped to that, and he went to check it out, and found that it was just thing he would like to do, 'cause he knew how to fix everything, from toasters to radios, and so that's what he did. He bought the business, and that's where they went to live.

PW: Then he got- there's a repair shop, then the business gets bigger. TV comes into being-

KF: Yeah, yeah, the- his store was getting bigger, his business was getting better, and television, like you said, was coming in. And because of the mountainous area, they didn't have a very good reception. So, Tak, with his jeep, took some helpers and the equipment up to the top of Mount Thompson, and- to find the signals from American cities. He found Spokane in Washington, and so he was able to bring in cable television for the people in Creston.

PW: That was the first of southeastern BC having cable television, is that right?

KF: That's correct, it was, yeah.

PW: Now, he became very active in the community, and can you tell us some of the organizations he joined?

KF: Yes, well the- well, he was very happy that he was able to join the Kiwanis Club and- because at the time they didn't know very many people, and he and his wife would be able to socialize with the members of the Kiwanis Club. So, that's what he got into first. And so, his family started growing, too, and he- yeah, he-

PW: Tell us about the sponsorship of the Battle of the Bands that he sponsored.

KF: Oh yes, he- while he-

[50 minutes]

KF: It was lucky he was in with the Kiwanis men [?], because they kinda helped to sponsor things like this. And the Battle of the Band was something that Tak initiated, and they just came from all over the area. In fact, they even came- two groups came from the United States, they came from Nelson Trail. Even a place- Kaslo, and 15,000 people came to see this Battle of the Band in this small town, and they even had judges from out of town [unclear], not from Creston. The competition was so great- well, mainly because the ambassadors of Creston were the winners. [chuckles]

PW: Now, I think Tak even operated a TV station in-

KF: Yes, he did, later he owned a television station, and he operated these facilities, and over the years he provided free to anyone who could better the community.

PW: So, he was very generous with his time on TV?

KF: Yes, even with whatever, loudspeakers, anything, he would loan it to any group that-

PW: And he became also involved in the municipality as being on the council, you wanna talk about that?

KF: Tak- [he was on the?] Board of Trade for a while, and he did become president, he also- the Chamber of Commerce, and he was- I think at that time he re- what is it? Re- my [unclear]- he wanted to do the Blossom Festival to come back to Creston. So, that's when he- what did he do? Oh yes, the Kiwanis. While he was with the Chamber of Commerce, I think it was the talent- he initiated the talent contest, talent review, yes. And at one of the talent reviews his own daughter was a grand prize winner, was just- she sang a duet with another girl, she was only five, but they were so cute, they did win a prize.

PW: And he also was involved with the Creston Chamber of Commerce?

KF: Yes.

PW: And what did he become?

KF: That's when he helped the- oh, he was president for six years, I think, for that. No, not for six years, but near the end of it. He only stays with these things for about six years, and then he moves onto something else. [laughs]

PW: But he was also very interested and involved with the youth of Creston.

KF: Yes. He liked to help the young people, and he liked to- when they had their graduation parties, sometimes they didn't like- they'd used to have a lot of troubles after, so he and his wife chaperoned the grad parties after that. With three other couples they chaperoned, and they called it the all-night grad parties. So, I think they had fun at the same time.

PW: What about the Friday nights?

KF: Oh yes, that was a Friday night hop- what was it called?

PW: Teen Town Record Hop parties [?].

KF: Teen Town Record Hop, every Friday night the teenagers would go to this dance, and he would do the DJ [disc jockeying]. And it went on for a long time. Yeah, he loved to do things like that.

PW: What about the Creston civic centre?

KF: The civic centre- well, they had an old one that burned down several years- before they started [unclear]. They really needed one, and they started building a new recreation centre, and they ran short of money, they just could not finish it.

[55 minutes]

So, Tak and the idea that they could get the amount they needed, and he had a great volunteer to go around to canvas a certain amount of money from each family, and they agreed to that, and so they did. And some of them were not able to contribute the amount, so they had been inspired to really work hard, and they had- people did things like fundraising for themselves in order to get the amount that they needed to donate. And finally, they did get the amount that they needed, so they, you know, the whole town was very happy that they went through it, with his [?] canvassing [?].

PW: In 1972, something special happened to Tak.

KF: '72?

PW: Yup. Citizen [unclear].

KF: Oh yes, he actually wanted to retire by this time because his business was so good, and he had four chain stores by that time, and furniture and appliance stores, big ones. And so, he had a dream that he wanted to complete his high school education, and that's what he did, he confidently gave over the managership to his eldest son, Ron, and so semi-retired, and was studying in Calgary. And then, he went- decided to- he wanted to go into medicine really, but they didn't allow him because they said he was too old. So, he chose psychology and he was enjoying it thoroughly, and that's when he- he was a year and half into it, and-

[phone rings]

PW: [Let me turn the?]-

[interview footage skips]

KF: Yeah, he was about a year and a half into psychology, he was enjoying it thoroughly, but a weekend he- one weekend, he just didn't feel well, so he decided to go home to see the doctor, and he usually takes a load of furniture back to Creston-area, and that's what he did. He loaded up his truck and went back to Creston, and saw the doctor several times, and he died suddenly at the age of 56 in- it was very shocking, because he was only 56, leaving his wife and three sons, one daughter, and he had a grandson by that time, too.

PW: So, there was a funeral, and there was a very moving eulogy by Mr. Rhymer [?]?

KF: Yes, yeah, there- the church was full, full of people, and he did- Mr. Reaper [?] said a moving eulogy, and he said some very nice things about Tak. But at the end,



he wanted to thank Tak's family, he was so grateful to Betty and the children for sharing this man, he said, so generously. And so, he said that, "he was a more than responsible citizen, and a giant among men." He said, "Farewell," to Tak, and thanked him "for being you." So, it's sad that he's gone.

PW: Well, 33 years later, after he passed away-

KF: Oh yes-

PW: There was a very special event happen-

KF: Oh yes, 33 years later, the youth of Creston never forgot him, and it was the ambassadors who won that- the Battle of the Bands that- they wanted to make tribute to Tak, and honour him with a big party in the park. And hundreds of people came, and I wish I'd known about it earlier.

[60 minutes]

KF: They didn't tell me, they said it was a surprise for them. So, they only knew at the end, the family. And they had a wonderful time bringing back old memories, they even had a- they played the band, but they even showed a clip of Tak MCing at one of the talent shows, and- Patty, that won- Patty the girl, 10 years old, went up to sing. And she was already close to 50 by this time, but she sang the very same song that she sang when she was 10 years old. And when- after she started, the band picked up the tune, and they played along, and- near the end of the song she just choked up, and she couldn't finish it, and she just jumped off the stage and went to hug Betty. So, that's very touching, I thought. They never forgot. Anyhow, they- the family received a beautiful plaque, and- honouring Tak. They even had a picture on the plaque of Tak, so- it was going to go up in the recreation hall, where [?] Tak did so much to help.

PW: Several- there was also an article in the *Hamilton Spectator* about Tak [unclear].

KF: Oh, yes, yes. People never forgot him because he was such a- you know, he- Mr. Rhymer [?], Rhymer [?], yeah, he was living in Burlington at the time- it was the big write up in the *Spectator*, *Hamilton Spectator*, and my sister gave it to me, 'cause she knew [of them?]. Anyhow, in this paper, he became the president of Westinghouse [?] Canada, and he attributes his success to his roots, and he- he used to bike ride to Tak's after school to work for him. And he Tak being the first man to bring in cable to British Columbia, eastern British Columbia, and- anyhow, he- what he did was [unclear]. No, he was so impressed with the way Tak treated his customers, and I remember Phyllis telling me, because she knew, that he told Phyllis that Tak had said this to her, he [?] says, "It doesn't matter if you- what they look like, or what they're wearing [?]," he said, "just treat them as if they were the president of the United States," and this was a kind of advice [?] he gave some of his people. I never knew that, but. So.

PW: Obviously you're very proud of your brother, and his family that- would you like to say a few words about them?

KF: Yes, and I'm sure Tak would be very proud of his family now if he were here, because his oldest son, Ron, is a retired businessman now, and he was re-elected mayor of Creston just recently. His other son, Gary, was a schoolteacher, and he is now involved in ministry. Brian, the third son, he's in Australia, he's a very successful design director of a company there, and he travels to Malaysia and China a lot. And his youngest daughter, Joy, she and her husband work for a company called Cedar Creek Winery, and she is senior accountant, and he manages the vineyard, so. They have eight grandchildren, and five of them are married, happily married, and he has five great-grandchildren. And the last child is a boy, and they named him Tak-ayo [?] Toyota. So, I think his name will carry on somewhere.

[65 minutes]

PW: Well, that's really quite an informative in-depth story of your brother, and I'm sure you're really very proud of the accomplishments for a person in your family who passed away so young, and that's unfortunate.

KF: [Oh, I know?]. Thank you very much.

PW: Thank you.

KF: Thank you very much, for doing this for me.

[footage skips]

PW: There was another assistant to Tak, and his name was Roy Kurita [?]. Would you like to say what he wrote about Tak.

KF: Yes, Roy said to me in this letter he wrote me [unclear], he was so enthusiastic about working for Tak, and he says he was my mentor, and that it's 10 decades [?], over 10 decades [?] that he saw him, and he said his admiration for him is not diminished a lot in all these years. And he met him because Tak took memorial pictures of him at a funeral for his sister. And when he came to pay, it just didn't have enough funds to pay for it all, so he said he would pay back as soon as possible, but Tak instead said, "Well, you could come and work for me for a while if you like to- there's all kinds of things to do." So, he took him up on that, and he went to work, and he said, "Tak taught me how to be a photographer, he taught me things in the radio shop, and he taught me how to project the movies, and he was really enjoying himself." And he was amazed at what he did in Lemon Creek with, he said he- with the way he projected the movies in such a small place. And then- he used to go to Catholic school, he was- and one day when Tak was showing the movies in Slocan, he saw all of the teachers that taught him, they were all lined up just like the other people, and he said it was quite a sight. But Tak noticed they were lined up, too, so he came down from the projection room, he said, and Tak just let them into the hall, and past all the lineup, all the other people, and took them to choose seats in theatre, and he didn't charge them. And he said that Tak was that kind of a guy, so, [chuckles] it really shows that he was a kind fella. What else did he do that he said? Anyhow, I know Tak was kind because I'd like to tell you about Tak picking up people along the

highway when he was driving home from- he- every time he travelled from Calgary to Creston, Betty told me that he picked up people all the time and brought them home, hitchhikers, and give them a dinner, and send them off. And one morning she woke up and there was a stranger at the breakfast table, and Tak had brought him [?], allowed him to sleep in the basement and send him off. [laughs] Well, one time I found out that he picked up this fella with long hair, it was in the hippy days, and he was Asian. And- but he saw the sign, Tak's furnishing, and he said, "Do you own this truck?" he said to Tak. He said, "Yes, I do." He said, "Oh, well you must be my uncle!" [laughs] And he was going to- he was going to Creston to go to my brother's son's wedding, so that's why he picked him. [And that?], like Roy said, he's just that kind of a guy.

**[End Part 3]**