Interviewee: Thomas Matsui
Interviewer: Lisa Uyeda
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**** Note that this interview contains a reference to anti-Asian language.**

[Start Part 1]

Lisa Uyeda: Okay. Wonderful.
Thomas Matsui: Okay. I've written three pages of family history. Part of it is my father, and part of it is mostly my mother's side, because I know more information because my father died when I was five. And therefore, I didn't hear very much of it, except what I heard from my mother, right, so. What I know about my father is through stories that my mother told. So, Zenzo Matsui here, was born in 1978 in Hikone, which is Shiga-ken, which is near Biwa Lake, which is the middle of Japan, near Kyoto. And he had a brother, Tetsu Jiro, who was the second one. Usually *Jiro* is second one [holds up two fingers]. *Ichuro* is the first, *Jiro*, *Saburo* is third, *Shirou* is fourth. You know that, eh? So, Tetsu Jiro was the second brother. The third brother, Yuro Saburo. See, *Saburo*, the third one. And a sister, *Yoshi,* she was born. And I showed you before, the fourth child, a girl, was adopted when she was found on the doorstep of the Matsui family. And she was named Osutei[?], which is, as I said, su-te [?] means to be thrown away which is a [little unkind?]. Now, Zenzo was a trained Japanese carpenter, and Japanese carpenters can build a house without using nails. In Japan, they built houses without using nails. This is the old style. And there- When I went back to Japan, there was- On one trip, I saw a brand-new house being built with no nails, the old-style Japanese tongue and groove and peg type of construction. So, he could build houses without- without nails. And in those days, to make the joints, they had to make it themselves, a tongue and groove. You know, very precisely. So, he was very handy. Anyway, I don't know what made him- I presume he volunteered with the Russo-Japanese War. So, the first photograph I have of him is in his uniform, and I presume that he had it taken so that he'd made sure that at least he left something behind. But, I guess it- it was the first that he travelled out of Japan and a foreign land, and it must've got into his blood, because by 1908, as my mother tells me, he went to Singapore, to Hawaii, and then ended up in Vancouver. I- Well, as I'd say, in those days, Britain was an ally of Japan during the Russo-Japanese War. They had provided- They had sold warships. They had sold railroad stock,

because in Japan used to have the same narrow gage railroad as Britain. And of course, they still drive on the wrong side of the road, the same as Britain because they sold automobiles to Japan. Anyway, he eventually ended up in Vancouver, and he ended up at Hastings Sawmill, and there were a lot of Japanese that worked there. From what I understand, Hastings- The story I get was he was a mayor of Vancouver. Anyway, so, because he was very handy, he ended up looking after the sawmill machinery. And as the mill expanded, he brought in his brothers. The third brother came first, and the second brother came over after, and they all worked at the sawmill. And I presume they all worked on the maintenance of the machinery.

[5 minutes]

TM: And- Let me see- Later on, in 1929, when the mill burnt down, the three brothers who were out of a job. Zenzo then, my father, bought the bicycle business, Temi [?] bicycle shop. The second brother, Tetsu Jiro, went back to the family home in Japan and started a tobacco business. Later on, his daughter turned it into a pharmacy. Anyway, and the third brother, Yuro Saburo, he and other Japanese worker- workers joined a partnership, and they started Powell Lumber, and they became very successful, but he died in about 1938. So, by '42, they were successful. So, that's the story of how we got into the bicycle business in 1929 when the mill burnt down, and he bought the bicycle business. Now, going back to 1908, he came over, and as he got the job and got settled down, he was looking for, I'm sure, a wife. So, as I say, in my lecture in- in the wartime experience, I have a photo of- of him- [starts looking for photo on the table in in front of him]- I have it here too, I think. What you sent back to Japan for pic- picture bride [shuffles papers as he speaks]. Photo bride. So- And this is the photo [holds up the photo]. I'm sure he sent back. I never found out from my mother how she met my father and got married, but the only suspicion I have is from these photographs and I suspect that he sent these back. And of course, he sent it back in Hikone where people knew him, so. And in those days, you know, the ladies in Japan, they were married off, sometimes sight unseen to between, like they call go-between or *baishakunin.* So, getting married to somebody that they didn't know, but at least they knew the background, family background, so it wasn't so bad. Anyway, he had come in 1908, and according to my data, they were married in Hikone, 1912, February 14th. And they applied for permission for Mother to immigrate to Canada, and she was granted a visa, and- on 1913, February 16th [shuffling papers in his hands]. [muttering] This is- Okay. Now, and she [pauses to read from paper] ap- she applied for a visa, and she was granted the visa, and- [pauses] Think I'm missing a page here [chuckles]. Anyway, she came- she came over, I think, in- [pauses to read paper] very shortly after February.

Anyway- Well, going- going into the did [?] a little bit about the mother- father's background, I'm going to my mother's background. She was born- My mother was born in 1893, April 22nd, to Hajime and Mia Mayata [?]. In Shi- Hikone, Shiga-ken. Well, her father Hajime, was an officer in the Japanese army. And after retiring from the army, he was the Hikone railway station master, to ensure that the trains ran on time. You know, in the old days, the station master carried a watch [imitates holding a pocket watch in his hand]. And when it came time, he blew a whistle, and the trains left the station. And that's- that's how it started way back even in 19- probably, 1900s.

[10 minutes]

TM: Anway, father Hajime had five children in the Mayada family. The oldest one, Masan- Yi- Yisaburo, born in 1890, [Shizui?], my mother- This is an old one [chuckles, referring to paper reading from]. I have the date on the other one.
LU: Did you want to switch?
TM: Yeah. Hang- Just hang on I'll get some other-
[camera beeps and the recording pauses]
[recording resumes]
TM: Okay.
[camera beeps]
TM: There are five children in the Mayada family. The oldest son, Yisaburo, born in 1890, Shizui[?], and then Haruo, the name is usually given to a boy, which confused a lot of people, which is the second. She was born in 1896. And then Imasa, the third girl, was born in 1901. Imbata Kaziori [?], the youngest one, was born in 1903. And he's the only one that stayed in Japan. The oldest brother and the three sisters immigrated to Canada when my mother, Shizui [?], kinda called them over. Now, my mother, Shizui [?], finished ladies high- ladies high school in Hikone. And then went on to women's teacher school in Ōtsu, Shiga-ken for one year. And she received her teaching degree. You only had to go one year after high school, in those days, back in early 1900. She taught for two years at a public school before marrying Zenzo. After she married, she departed Yokohama on the Shizokamaru in 1913, March twen- March 12th, and then arrived in Vancouver, on March 29th. The couple lived on the second floor of the Hori[?] food store on Powell Street, across from the Powell Street [Ground?]. It used to be called *Ho-ri-zeng*. Everybody called it *Ho-ri-zeng*. After my mother immigrated to Canada, she called her sister, Haruo, to join her. And you saw the photo of her hair [gestures towards his head], which single women had. And Haruo eventually married Yosaburo Kitamura Matsui. Now the second- the third son, the Matsui son, and got as a *yoshi* which was a common thing in Japan, to take

another family's name. If they didn't have any sons, they would ask family with boys, could we have one of your sons to take the name, so he- he took the Kitagawa name. Kita- Kitamura name. And mother also called Yisaburo, or the oldest and youngest sister, Masa, to Canada. And as I say, only Kazuyoshi Maida [?] the youngest, stayed back in Japan. And I- I've lost track of- Though, my mother always said he was in- I'm sure it's Tokyo. But I- I- because I didn't keep up with my mother, I've lost track of that. When the growing family of three children, you know, like Matt, Frank, and Dick- There was actually another one, Misao, the second child, who died of a whooping cough when she was about probably a year and a half old. When the family outgrew the rented space at Powell Street, Zenzo bought the property at 617 Powell Street in 1922, October, and built the family house with his three brothers. That family home that you saw in the photo was actually built by three brothers, because he was a trained Japanese carpenter. Used to building houses, so. The house was completed in 19-3. The three younger Matsui's, Minoru, Tom, and Mary, were born there. And that's- I know- I'm sure only Tom, Mary and Tom, were born there. The two-story family house was equipped with a Japanese-style bath. You know, the one where you sit [holds hand against neck] up to your neck?

[15 minutes]

LU: [chuckles]
TM: Have you he- Have you heard about the Japanese bath?
LU: The O- Ofur- *Ofuro*?
TM: *Ofuro*. Yeah.
LU: [chuckles]
TM: So, my father had- had a Japanese-style bath. And when he bought the bicycle store at 112 Main Street, he also built an *ofuro* in 112 Main Street. So, all our- all our younger lives, we always had to have a bath, every night. And- and the house also boasted a garage at the back of the house to house the Model T Ford. As I say, he was- For a immigrant Japanese, he was quite successful in having a family, a house, and a car, which was- is quite a- quite a feat for somebody who came over probably and didn't speak the language too well. And as I say, Zenzo bought the Tim- Tami bicycle shop when the mill burnt down in 1929. Now, oh, I'll have to say a little bit about my mother when she was a widow. So, when husband Zenzo died, Shizui, my mother was not quite 40, and she was left with the responsibility of raising the family. Yoshomat was not quite 18, Frank, 14, Dick 11, Jack 8, Tom 5, and Mary 2. So, in those days, you know, in 1932, we were still in the middle of Depression. And to try and raise a family of six children must have been quite a feat. But fortunately for her, of course, Father had bought the bicycle business. And so, when he decided to

go back to Japan, when he had- when he knew that he had terminal stomach cancer, when he decided to go back to Japan in February of 1932, the older brother, Matt, who was in Vancouver Technical High School, had to drop out and- and to start work in the family bicycle business. And of course, it was full time, after April, when father died in Japan. Now, Mother, Shizui kept close control of the finances of the business to ensure the shop was run properly. And the business was very slow during the Depression, and it took time to grow. But gradually, the business grew, and Mother expanded the rear of the store for more bicycle repairs. And she also improved the store front. Now, at that time, the Japanese feared discrimination from occ- the occidental population. Especially during Halloween, when the Georgia Street gang, they were famous, came down through Chinatown and down to Japanesetown, breaking windows, storefronts, and looting. So, every Christmas, the boys were required to stay in the store, and we were armed with baseball bats, ready to protect the store. But fortunately, the gang would come down Main Street and then would turn left at Powell Street and go down to Japanesetown. They never came down- half a block down on Main Street, to our store, so. Although, we were prepared. So, all the boys were armed with baseball bats. Now, the business grew and we started- Or Shizui started a new store at Burrard and Nine in Vancouver to service the [Fairview?] Japanese, they were in the Kitsilano district, and so they were far away from da- from Main Street. So, she decided she'd open a store to service them, but also as a second reason was that the second brother was graduating high school and no job, there was no jobs for Japanese.

[20 minutes]

TM: So, the store was- was his to run. And I spent a lot of time going on Saturdays. That was opened in 1939, so I spent my Saturdays bicycling up there and helping out. But when the- when the war started in December 1941, and we were told to evacuate, we had to wind up the stores. But of course, there were no buyers and the stock of the- both stores were sold cheaply to other bicycle stores. And the C.C.M, you know, Canada Cycles and Motors, still around, the salesman helped sell us the- sell the goods, but I don't know whether he was helping us, or he was helping the other stores. So, the hard work of Zenzo, when he started the- bought the bicycle store, my mother Shizui, who worked with books, stock, and everything else, and my brother, who had to quit high school in 1932, and worked till 1942, so there was 13 years of hard work in- in expanding the business. It went- all went down the drain during the war. So, the evacuation of Japanese for the 90-mile zone created a pro- problem for the family. Of course, Mother wanted to keep the family together. So, she decided that we would go for an interview in Mission- I think it was Mission,

with a sugar beet farmer from Lethbridge. And that we would go together as a whole family to the beet farm. But after the interview, two of my brothers weren't impressed, and they decided that they would go to Ontario, to Mitch Hepburn's farm. Mitch Hepburn was a former liberal premier of Ontario. And I think he got quite a few Japanese Canadians to come to his place and I suspect that he kind of farmed up the boys to help out in farming. Now, when the two older brothers decided to go East, then my mother decided, well, the three youngest and herself, we would go to Lillooet- East Lillooet, which was a self-supporting community. So, rather than the two suitcases that was allowed for the other people going to places like Tashme and Slocan, we had no limit. Since we were paying our way, we could take anything we wanted. 'Cause we had to pay way at up to East Lillooet. We had to pay a freight for our stuff to go up there. So, we paid everything, so they didn't care how much we took. So, my mother took along the kitchen wood stove and we had three bicycles and a couple of double beds and all that stuff we took. Because we paid our way, it didn't matter. So, that's how we got to Lillooet, we paid. Now, one person was missing, my brother Dick, the middle one, was in second year university at UBC [University of British Columbia] and he wanted to continue university, so he went to Kingston, to Queens University summer school, hoping that he could continue in the fall and finish his university education. But unfortunately, the three eastern- big eastern universities, McGill, Queens, and Toronto, would not accept any Japanese for the war. They finally opened up after the war in 1946. That's when the Japanese could finally get back into the university. So, Dick went from Queens to University of Manitoba which accepted him.

[25 minutes]

TM: And I think there's a little story there. When Dick was in UBC, and I think Fred Sasakitei tells the same story, all able men at the university, during the war, you know, war with Germany, all the males were enrolled in Canadian officers' training. So, the university stud- male students who were enrolled in univers- this officers' training. As soon as Pearl Harbour happened, all the Japanese were kicked out of the army. Now, Fred tells me that he was honorably discharged, and he says he still has that piece of paper as a souvenir that he was in the army, and he got discharged. But anyways, that's the story- And then- and then, when brother Dick wanted to go to University of Manitoba for acceptance, he went from Kingston to Winnipeg. But in those days there's- you realize we had to carry those registration cards. You've seen that on my photo. And you had to report that you were leaving this area, and when you got there you had to report to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] that you arrived there. So, he ended up in Winnipeg, and sure enough, there was an

RCMP officer waiting for him. And he- he said, “What are you here for?” He said, “Well, I'm going to an interview with the u- University of Manitoba to enroll.” “You sure?” so he said “Yeah”. So, the officer said, “Well, in that case,” he said, “I’ll take you there.” So, he took him there, and when he finished his interview, he took him back to the station. So, then I said to him, “Didn’t you feel like a- like a prisoner, or- or- or, you know, jail bird, or something?” He says, “No, well,” he says, “I didn't- I didn’t care,” he said, “I had a personal chauffeur for the afternoon, and he took me there and took me back, he saved me taxi fare.” [chuckles] You know, he had a sense of humor, even though I would've been kind of annoyed at- at being treated like a- like a- whatchamacall- a prisoner. Anyways, so, let me see [pauses to read]. Oh, I guess our story is then what I had the story to tell at that wartime experience, at Lillooet . So, I don’t know if you want to go over that.
LU: A couple quick questions first. Why did your family decide to go to the self-supporting location and not to a different camp?
TM: Well, first of all, they had to wind up the store. Two stores. And if- if you realize like Lillooet, McGillivray Falls, Minto Mines, and Bridge River, they were self-supporting. And most of the people there were businesspeople, okay? And those businesspeople, I think, form- formed a little committee and I think they probably made a deal with the BC Security Commission. And I guess they got permission to go to these places, but at our own expense. So, if you were gonna go to those camps, you still had to live off your- your funds until it was gone. But why not spend it on your own? So, that’s what I suspect is- is why we went, and Lillooet was composed of two sections. One was a Haney group and was a Vancouver Steveston group. And the Haney group were very successful farmers. Vancouver, we had storekeepers, businesspeople, shipbuilders, people that were- They had probably made a fair career for themselves.

[30 minutes]

TM: And if they had the money, well, they were going to where they could control their own destiny. Now, okay- I was going into this Japanese National Canadian-Japanese Canadian National Museum. And I was going through, and I went down, and I know the Tsuyuki [?] which was- which was the head man in the Haney group, a very successful farmer. And he was the one that was able to bring a three-ton truck. Nobody else was allowed anything, but a brought a three- brand new three-ton truck to load away. And he was the one that brought in all the water, and everything else that we had to live with. And when I went through the Vancouver Museum, there was two sections by the Tsuyuki family, what they did in Lillooet, because it was too long. But when- In 1943, the summer we started to rundown

because we had to live on our own money and in October we went to- There was a call for apple pickers and- and we went, and we came back, and then in '43, my brother and I left, November we left for BC, so I didn't know what happened to East Lillooet. But going through the Tsuyuki story in the National Museum, Mr. Tsuyuki and his friends from Haney started a tomato farm in Lillooet. First year, they were successful. But the second year, they- I think they started a cannery down in Lillooet. And what was most amazing to me was one of the partners in this business. There were several of the occidental farmers that were in there, but one of the person that I was looking at was called "Ma" Murray, Mother Murray. She was- she was the mayor of Lillooet when we went there. She was the one that really opposed us from going to Lillooet. And by the third year, she's a partner in Mr. Tsuyuki's cannery and farming. And according to that they were- Lillooet became a boom town because they were farming, and according to that story, farming tomatoes. They were shipping it down to Vancouver. They were canning. And all this occidental opposition were in partners with Mr. Tsuyuki. And so, I take a hat off to Mr. Tsuyuki. He must've been quite a businessperson to- to bring these people online. So, I was very amazed to read what happened after I left Lillooet. Anyway, so, that's a story, and then I- You wanna follow through what I did after, or?
LU: After Lillooet, or-?
TM: Lillooet.
LU: Just before the war years started, what do you remember about going to school? And where did you go to school?
TM: Oh, well, in Vancouver. Most of the Japanesetown, then, we– bulk of them, went to Strathcona Public School. And there's a story that- Also, in the National Museum, that when the order came to evacuate, half the population of Strathcona Public School, and that's over 600, left, and all of a sudden, by June of 1942, when there were roughly about 1200 students in Strathcona, they were left with 600. So, that's where I went. And then after Strathcona Public School, I went to Britannia High School for two years. That's where I learned how to play rugger [chuckles].

[35 minutes]

LU: Rugger?
TM: Yeah, rugby.
LU: Oh, rugby [chuckles].
TM: Rugby. And there's a story to that, too. My brother, Dick, who went to university, had also gone through there, and he played rugby. And when you won the city championship, you got your photo taken of the team. And it was hung in the hall, you know, it's a wall of fame, if you wanna call it. City champions. So, I got in about two

photos in there. Anyway, when I got to high school and it happened that the rugby coach said, “Your name Matsui?” I said, “Yeah.” “Did your brother ever attend this school?” “Yeah,” I said, “yeah, he played rugger here.” He said, “Okay, you're gonna turn out for rugby” [laughs]. That’s how I got into playing rugby. And I carried it through, I actually played rugger for University of Toronto [chuckles lightly]. So, that’s how I got started in rugby. But I went to UBC- no [shakes head], Britannia High School I was c- It was a small high school, only about 450, so they had trouble getting enough athletic people to fill in the team. So, in the early- Soon as you got there, the rugby season started so all the students hadn't- in Phys Ed, the Phys Ed teacher would be looking at the potential people and kind of asking them, “Hey, do you wanna be a football player? Rugger player? Or-or field- track and field?” And so, when you- when you considered that they only had about two- two hun- over 200 people to pick all these teams. So, a lot the- the students [unclear] rugger, played rugger and then in the spring, we played Canadian football. So, a lot of them were two and three sport people in this small high school. So, from that- Grade 10 I went to Lillooet, and of course, Lillooet didn't have any high school, so for about year and half, from May of ‘42 to November of ‘43, I kinda wanted and I- I did get the BC correspondence course, but my heart wasn't quite in it and I didn't do too well. So, I [laughs] I went, as I say, apple picking, and then after I came to Toronto, I went to Jarvis Collegiate. I got to thank my older brother because he took me to Jarvis and- and got me in there. And because I had quit early in May to evacuate, I didn't complete Grade 10, and by the time I came to Toronto in November, you know, September, October, had passed by in Grade 11 and I wanted to get into Grade 11. But they said I missed a good two months of high school. So, they said, “Would you rather go back to Grade 10?” I said, “No,” and luckily for me they- one of the teachers said, “Okay, we’ll put a trial, if you pass the Christmas exam, then you can continue.” And fortunately, I did, so I didn't- I didn't- I started in Grade 11 and finished the senior [matric?]. And then I graduated in 1946, and of course, that's the year they finally opened up the university. So, there was a large amount of Japanese that graduated from high school, and we also had an influx of university students from McGill. Or people trying to get into McGill. And McGill had quite a restriction, race restriction. So, when they came over here- When they opened up, it was strictly on your marks.

[40 minutes]

TM: And so, they were able to get in if they had good marks. We had quite a few medical students at that point. I think there were six or seven Japanese Canadians got into the medical school, which was quite good. I went into engineering school.

But there's a story there too, the returning veterans in the war that finished in '45, a lot of them wanted to go back into educa- back into education and a lot of them hadn't finished high school, so they had a crash course for the veterans to finish their high school. And so, these veterans that had the crash course in '45, '46, were ready to enter university. And for engineering, the total engineering students normally from high school, would total 450 for University of Toronto. In our case, we had 2200 students applying for engineering. So, they didn't have room at the campus here, so at Ajax, there was this Defense Industries Limited which made munitions. And they had barracks, they had a cafeteria, an auditorium, gymnasium. So, that part was okay, could handle the number of people. And the lecture rooms were these parts of shell filling buildings. And these were separated about 500 feet each, and they were connected with wooden sto- wooden floors, and they would actually carry the explosives in buggies on rubber wheels, and they would go over these wooden floors so there would be no static electricity. And so, we had these lecture rooms far apart and we had, you know, a standard tractor trailer, you know, the big trucks. Well, they- We called them green hornets. They were converted to buses, and they would have just couple of seats, and everybody stood in, and jam packed, and we would go from one building to another building. And we'd call them the green hornets. And there, we spent two years at Ajax. And during the two years, they were building new buildings on the campus here, and so when we came back in '48, they were ready. And, of course, the numbers were down because as in any normal university, first year, about 25% [points downward] drop out. So, they could handle the numbers in two years when you have about, let's say, close to 50% drop out. So, while I was there, okay, I went in for mechanical engineering and in those days, you had to have six months of machine shop experience, certified, or else you did not get a degree. Same thing applied, I heard, like at UBC. At UBC, a friend was saying that one of the Japanese wanted to do mining engineering. He got his degree, but before- No, he didn't get his degree- Before he could get a degree, he had to spend six months- three months, or six months- underground in a mine before he could get his degree. But pre-war days, nobody would hire a Japanese, so he never got his practical experience. But anyway, getting back to my own practical experience, I was able to get a job at a Massey Harris in Bradford, Ontario, for the summer.

[45 minutes]

TM: I went there and I worked. But then you had to room and board [chuckles] and so, I was paid 59 cents an hour, union wage.
LU: That's a lot for then though.

TM: Huh?
LU: 59 cents is quite a bit compared to-
TM: Well, I was w- Well, I worked all during my high school at 45 cents an hour, so.
LU: Wow [chuckles].
TM: Excuse me [coughs]. Excuse me [takes a sip from mug]. But at 59 cents an hour and we worked ten hours a day. From, let's see- There's two shifts, seven to [closes eyes in concentration] I think seven to five. Yeah, seven to five, and again seven at night to like five in the morning. Something like that [coughs]. But by the time I paid my room and board, had [not much?] money to- to save for my tuition, so. In '47, they- they had the opening for the army- Canadian Officers Training Corps. Same kind of deal, but my brother was in for the summer. It did a couple of things. By going to the- this Royal Canadian Electrical- Electrical Mechanical Engineers, I got machine shop time, which was certified. Not only that, I got room and board, and I paid some, I think, $450 for three months. But then I could save enough for tuition 'cause my tuition was only- I believe it got a little higher- When I started, it was $250 a year. So, out of the $450, even if I spent some money, I could save $250 which it was- which was my tuition fee. Which I couldn't do when I paid and room and board and travelled down to Brantford. So anyway, in order to- to apply, I had to write a exam. All the people wrote an exam and if you passed, you were accepted. And the other reason was, I think I was one of the first Japanese to be accepted into the Canadian Officers Training Corps. And the thing was, all the higher com- higher command were people that had been in the war, so, I'm afraid they weren't too friendly to the Japanese. 'Cause they were in the war, right? All these majors and cap- captains, majors, and colonels had been in the war. 'Cause it was only about three years after the war. So, anyway, I went to Kingston for the basic training. Wherein that's, you know, army basic training. You learned how to march, you parade on the army square, how to carry a rifle, march in step, slow march, ceremonial steps. And then we went through, of course, shooting a rifle, a machine gun, sten gun [closes eyes in concentration], ren gun, sten gun. Sten gun was a commando type machine gun that sprayed the room [imitates shooting the gun with hand]. And then the nine-millimeter [imitates aiming with the gun] Browning which was a pistol. And we would- we shot those at the range. And then, first year, we had orienteering. You were blindfold- You went in a blind- blindfold truck and you were dropped off with a map and compass and you were told to get back. Learn how to- In the war, you had to go by so-called map and compass. So, that was kind of training.

[50 minutes]

TM: And then we were also trained in the machine shop, welding machine shop work, sheet metal work. The idea was that in the wartime, mechanical engi- engineers, which was my section, that you should be able to make any machine part regard for army equipment with a chisel, hammer, piece of elec- metal, and a file. And make a piece. And we were required to learn how to make precision V-Block using that and we did.
LU: That's possible [chuckles]?
TM: [nods] Yeah. Oh yeah. Oh, it's possible. With a coal, chisel, and a hammer [demonstrates with hand]. And a file. Make car parts and tank parts. And that was the basic training, the first year. The second year, that's when I went to Montreal, '49. That's when I met her, of course [points]. And there we actually did practical work in- it was in Longue-Pointe in Montreal, all the war materials had come back. Tanks, guns, you know, ri- and so on. And we were cleaning up and storing them, and you should see the tanks they stored. You had to be strictly in line, strictly- [chuckles]. And so, we repaired tanks, trucks, and guns. But the electrical people went into communication equipment repair. And- and so after you finished the second year, that was the requirements for lieutenant. Anyway, when I finished university in 1950, there were so many veterans that graduated. And the government said, you know, any first considerations should be given to a returning veteran who graduated, he should have a job, and that was rightly so. And- But even at that, for every engineer we had fi- [closes his eyes and shakes head] engineer job, we had five engineers applying. So, I had decided, well, I need to go [unclear]. So, I went back for my third year in Officers Trainings. It qualified me as a captain. And I did get my [draws out square in the air with finger] commissioned piece of paper saying that I had qualified as a lieutenant in the RCM- RCEME [Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers], signed by the defense ministry, so. And I- And I kinda suspected I was one of the first ones to receive a commission after the war, you know, as a Japanese Canadian. Anyway, I couldn't find a job. So, I went back, and I knew that I had to look for a job. So, that summer, when I got some of the money from the army, I bought a 1937 Plymouth [chuckles slightly] which I overhauled while I was in Camp Borden. And after I got out and started looking for a job, and fortunately, I got a job at John T. Hepburn here in Toronto. They were looking for a maintenance engineer to look after their factory. And they had three factories, a structural steel job, a foundry, and a machine shop. And so, they wanted somebody with some experience, and I guess I qualified because I had spent three summers maintaining all kinds of equipment in the army. So, that's how I got my first job. But then I worked for the- Mr. Hepburn's oldest son, as a plant engineer. So, I knew that [holds up hand], you know, the ceiling there, he's vice president, I'm working with the vice president in a family business. So, I'm keeping an eye out for

another job. And when this advers- advertisement came out that Canadian Industries was looking for engineers for this nylon intermediate plant which was- It's like a refinery.

[55 minutes]

TM: It's two ingredients that make nylon. You know, nylon, you put these two chemicals together and heat it up, it forms a long-chain polymer. Anyway, I said, "Well, what the heck, I'll- I'll try for the job" [chuckles]. I only had one year of real practical experience in industry. Anyway, so I applied. And I think it was fortunate, I was interviewed by this man who had returned from the war but- And I suspect that my resume said I had spent three summers in the army, and he was a veteran. So, and- It was still the second class of veterans had graduated and it was still the government saying that veterans should have preference. I wasn't a veteran, but at least it was three summers of the army experience behind, so I suspect he took kindly to me. And I got the job, so. Anyway, that's how I got into CIL, which is Canadian Industries Limited. And it was half-owned by Imperial Chemical Industries of England, and half by E.I. DuPont of the U.S., so-
LU: I think-
TM: How we doing?
LU: This tape is almost there. So, I'm just gonna switch it here [camera beeps]. You're able to take a short break-
[recording pauses]
[recording resumes]
[camera beeps]
LU: Okay.
TM: I think we were just at the point- I- Exchanging jobs to Canadian Industries Limited. It was a big re- like a refinery job, and they wanted a lot of people. And as I was saying, the CIL [Canadian Industries Limited] was half-owned by Imperial Chemical Industries of England, and half by Du- E.I. DuPont of U.S. However, the actual management, top management of CIL was always somebody from Imperial Chemicals, English. And I think I was probably the very first Oriental to be hired in CIL in a professional sense, that is, as an engineer. When I went to [unclear], I found Frank Matsubushi. He was a veteran, you know, from the war. And he had gone through a crash course on drafting, and he had found the job at CIL. So, he was in the engineering department, as a draftsman. But- but I was- I was hired as an engineer, so. After I was hired, another Chinese engineer, Elmer- Elmer, what was his last name? Elmer Chung, Chang, Chan? He was hired a year after me. So- So I was- I believe I was fortunate to kind of break the trail into professional ranks because

before the war, nobody in Vancouver would hire a Japanese Canadian at- in a professional job, period. So, we were- At this stage, I thought we were still kind of probing into- getting into the professional ranks. So anyway, even if I got there, the job was one of designing the plant with equipment and the- If you want to call it the dirty job of designing all the piping that connected all the vessels. That was a detailed, humdrum job. And of course, most of the people wanted the glamour of designing a big distillation column, about 50 feet tall and about 10 feet lo- wide, and so on and so forth.

[1 hour]

TM: But to design pipes [shakes head], they didn't want it. So, I got into the piping by default. And I didn't know anything about piping. The only thing I did was I put in a few pipelines at Hepburn's. So, what they said was, "Well, here's a set of drawing, equivalent plant drawings from E.I. DuPont, you study it and then you can do the engineering," and I'm like [shrugs]. So, I take a crash course, read all about piping. Unfortunately, one of the key things was to design hot pipe, because hot pipe expands. And if you don't watch it closely, there could be accidents. And later on, in 1974, somebody in Flixborough in the- in nylon intermediates plant, made a temporary piping which was not done properly. The cyclohexane, which is one of the hydrocarbons, escaped and blew up. Blew the whole plant down, and killed about 45 people, and flattened about half of the town nearby. So, it showed the importance of piping design. And same thing happened to us. We- In 1958, we designed a polyethylene plant. And we were starting it up and a fire broke out. Fortunately, it didn't burn or explode, but the plant was shut down. And I went down to- I was sent down to check because by this time, '58, I was supposed to be an expert at piping. And soon as I looked at it, I knew exactly what was wrong. They had not- One of the engineers in our department had not done a stress analysis and the pipe was too rigid. Fortunately, it didn't break open or else we would have had a ethylene fire. But anyway, we took that and then designed the flexibility in it before we started up the plant again. But- So, there's two examples that even though it was a mundane job of piping, that if we didn't design it properly, you could explode the whole plant, kill lots of people. Or, in the start-up, we could've burnt down our whole plant. Fortunately, we didn't. Well, I gradually started piping, and then mechanical, and then I got into spinning machine design. So, the last job I did for DuPont was a nylon airbag machine. You know you drive a car? Kay. You've got the airbag in front of you, passenger airbag, side airbag, now they got the airba- The first machine that I was in charge, that's the last job I did for DuPont before I retired. But when we were designing it, and we were halfway through the job, the salesmen

were already out in the road selling this stuff, and I couldn't even guarantee that the machine I was designing, constructing, would have first-grade yard. And here they were out selling the stuff [chuckles lightly]. And by that time, the thing has changed. Before we- In engineering, we had permanent employees. We had- At the- at the peak, we had about 300 people working in engineering division. But then at slack times, they- they couldn't keep all these people and pay the salaries, so what they did was cut down the staff and we went to renting draftsmen from consulting firms. Which was fine to the management, they could say, "Oh yeah, well, we cut down the number and we cut down the overhead."

[1 hour and 5 minutes]

TM: But for the poor project managers that had to deliver plants on time, you got in this influx of design people that didn't know anything about spinning machines or nylon business, and you were still stuck with the same schedule. So, by that time, the stress was too much so I retired in '89. So- Anyway, so, it was very interesting that I started from the bottom, I worked myself up. And because a lot of the problems in the plant had to do with equipment and piping, I became kind of a, you want to call it, troubleshooter for the company. And one of the incidents is [clears throat] we were here in Toronto from '76- '66 to '76, and I moved to Kingston in July of '76. First of July. So, we just moved into the house and we didn't have a phone. And E.I. DuPont had an explosion in the explosive plant. When that happened, all explosive plants in DuPont had to shut down till the- till the problem was solved. So, our explosive plant in North Bay was shut down. And they were- they were looking for me and I had just moved, I had no telephone, and they couldn't get hold of me [chuckles]. But anyway, they finally got around to getting me and we flew up to North Bay in a four-seater, [demonstrates plane turbulence with hand] it was like this [chuckles]. A small plane. To inspect the plant. And then after the inspection, we said, "Yeah, if you changed a few things, you could start up." So, as I say, that was the start of my troubleshooting. And when Flixborough, when that nylon plant blew up and killed all those people, the company formed a safety team of a company safety engineer, a plant engineer, and the engineering service manager, and myself the worker [chuckles], and we went and inspected all our plants and we spent something like 18 million dollars in fixing up deficit- deficiency in the plants. So, we were- DuPont was a very safe company, we made sure that if there was any doubt, you shouldn't start up, and if there was any deficiency, we had to fix it up. So, anyway, I spent 38 years in engineering. In the engineering division, most of the time we were lucky. We were designing new plants because just after the war, after '51, when the Korean war started, we built the nylon inter- intermediates plant. And,

you know, freon, you know the coolant in your car? That was the second plant I had a hand in, I did the piping on that one. And then the paint plant, DuPont, is still making paint for cars, and their factory is at Ajax and of course, G.M. is at Oshawa. There's a tie-up between that because G.M. U.S.A- E.I. DuPont had bought 25% of G.M. in the Depression, and of course, so they had an inside track to General Motors. And they had 25% stock but, in 1953, the U.S. government said, "You must sell your shares from G.M. 'cause you have a kind of a monopoly in selling paints to G.M". Of course, they also said that E.I. DuPont and Imperial Chemical Industries was controlling the chemical industry in Canada and they had to split up.

[1 hour and 10 minutes]

TM: So, in '54 they we split up, and because I had worked on the nylon section, I went to DuPont, other people were CIL. So, from CIL I became a DuPont employee. Anyway, it was kind of interesting. So, let's say it was nylon intermediates, freon, paint, polyethene, tire yard plant, and then some other yard plants, and did some explosive work and some- We also had a cellophane plant in the old days. And the cellophane market was really the packaging material for cigarettes. You know, the clear plastic around the cigarettes were all cellophane because it was the first film to come out way back in the 30s. But again, now that other cheaper plastics came along for packaging, cellophane went out of business. And other- Yeah- It really an interest- interesting career in designing new plants. And the most interesting part though, was starting them up, 'cause nothing started up without some problems.
LU: Do you think you would've went into the career of engineering if the war never displaced the Japanese from the B.C. coastline? Would you have still aspired to go to university and to complete the program at U.B.C.?
TM: Well, I went to- into Britannia High School, which was an academic, not technical school, like my brother, oldest brother, went. He wanted me to go to technical school because he thought that probably I would have a better chance in landing a job graduating from a tech- technical school rather than a university. But I said, "No," I wanted to go to university. But since I had [clears throat] I had worked, ever since I was about 13 in- in the bicycle store and doing mechanical work, you know, bicycle work [chuckles]. So, I wa- I guess I tended to be inclined to that mechanical engineering. So, that's how I got in. Would I have stayed in it? Yes, I would have. I would've tried.
LU: Mm.
TM: So, for us, for the younger nisei's- And I was 15 when I got evacuated, but people like my brother who were in 20s, late 20s, it was a sad time, because when they came out here, the occidental people would not hire a Japanese during the

wartime. Most of the jobs that we got in that wartime experience, I even worked for Carlton Cards which was owned by Mr. H. H. Harshman, a Jewish person. And the people that would rent rooms to us, apartment and flats, were the Jewish people. And one of the fellas here, [Mas Chin?], he came to Toronto and he was trying to rent a place. And he was looking around the west end. Soon as he looked up the- the accommodations and he went to the west end, soon as he opened the door and saw who it was, they slammed the door on him. And most of the Japanese people lived east of Spadina, most of them lived east of Spadina. We did. And there was a lot of Jewish per- people that would rent us the place, others would strictly, during '43, would just slam the door on you. Yeah, it's quite the [daze? days?] if you- if you read some of the stories, and if you read [closes eyes in concentration] Reverend-

[1 hour and 15 minutes]

TM: What's the name of the guy? Anyway, I've got his story in another story I'm writing of the Carlton- Carlton Street United Church. It's no longer there. It was near Yonge and Carlton Street. He befriended a Japanese couple and the congregation was not very happy. But he was a good man, he- he was Reverend Finlay. That's right. He- he was a very fine orator, and we went to his services, and he had the United Church Young People's Society. And he invited us Japanese Canadians to participate with their group. And he was one of the few ministers that welcomed us. This is even a United Church, we had gone from Powell Street United Church, a Japanese United Church. And the other social place was Ms. Florence [Bird?], who used to teach us English in the Powell Street United Church. She was transferred to Metropolitan United Church. You know where that is, eh? Queen and Church. There's a big United Church there, and there's a big gymnasium attached to the back of the church. And she was there, and she welcomed the Japanese Canadians and we had- We played badminton there, and she also had us do debates.
LU: [chuckles]
TM: I got roped into one [chuckles]. So, there were two places that the United Church was- was the Metropolitan United Church and- and the Carlton Street United Church. And the badminton group that started there, like, I don't know if they're still operating, if I went in 70- '66 to '76, we came back, the Metropolitan badminton church- badminton club was still running. You know Mickey Matsubayashi?
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: Yeah, well, I played badminton with him for ten years here, while I was here. And he was my partner in the men's doubles.
LU: [chuckles]
TM: But he's still around. He's still playing tennis on his wonky two knees.

LU: Mm-hm. That's right.
TM: [laughs] Oh, he was my partner. We played-
LU: Was-?
TM: Quite a few tournaments.
LU: Was religion always a big part of your family when you were-?
TM: Who? Who?
LU: Religion. When you were growing up, was it always a big part of your- of your family?
TM: Well- [clears throat] you'll have to go back to the Japanese immigrants, 'kay. When they came here, a lot of them, and probably 99% of them, didn't speak English. And so, around Powell Street, there were three churches. The Powell Street United Church, and north of- No, south of the Powell Street Grounds, which is now the Oppenheimer Park, there was the Anglican Church. And on the west side of Powell Grounds, was the Catholic Church. Those three churches took all the young people, like my brother, the oldest brother, he went to Powell Street United Church. Others that went to Anglican, and others went to Catholic. And because they were taught by that church, those young people turned to that denomination. Before that, when the isseis came over, and there were Buddhists or Shinto or whatever you want, there were never any Anglicans, or United, or Catholic. But it's because those churches [clears throat] taught their children English. That's how we became United Church members.
LU: Did your parents learn any English? Or were they sort of fluent at all?
TM: Well, my mother spoke English. Father, I don't know, but he must've learned enough that he became the chief millwright of Hastings- Hasting Mill, to look after all the machinery.

[1 hour and 20 minutes]

TM: He must've done well because, as I say, he was paid well. He must've paid- been paid well because [shrugs] who else would have a house and car, in those days. Because we know that the- after my father died, my third brother used to deliver newspapers, and newspaper were only two or three cents an issue, that was about 15 cents a week, and we had a hard time collecting from the Japanese if they couldn't afford it. And one of the- I don't know who I was talking to, but they say, "Yeah, when he came over, he was a house boy, and he was paid five dollars a month, room and board."
LU: [coughs]
TM: So, that's how much money we were- they were making [shrugs]. But one of the- To buy land and build, he must've been doing well.

LU: When you spoke with your parents, would it be- Or, I guess, mostly your mother, would it be in English or Japanese?
TM: Japanese.
LU: And what about amongst your siblings?
TM: English.
LU: That's very interesting [chuckles].
TM: Well, same as- same as her [moves head to his left]. I bet she probably spoke English with all her sisters.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: Because- Well, to bring another example, my- one of my daughters married to a Swiss German, and when she was raising the family, and before they went to school, she spoke to them in nothing but English. And so, they spoke English very well. But soon as they went to the Swiss schooling system, it was all German, and then her- their English started to get worse because they were speaking German all day at school. And then when they came back, they spoke German with the father. But the oldest one has come over here for summer school, which is run by my niece's husband. So, she took up some English. But they- Both of them still speak English. They come over here about once a year, anyway, so about a month and they speak English. So, they're not too bad. So, it's like that if they speak the language at school, that becomes your primary language.
LU: Did you go to Japanese language school?
TM. Yes. I went. I went, and we were the last graduating class. I guess it's equivalent to Grade 10, eh [directing question to person off camera, sitting beside him, most likely his wife]?
Shizuye Matsui: Grade 8, here.
TM: Mm?
SMi: Grade 8 [chuckles].
TM: Grade 8? Anyway. Anway, we were the last graduating class. And the principal always used to put a name to the class. It's ta-ba-kai [or *tabatai*?]. And I went to school after public school. Right after public school. And then in high school, I went to night school after Grade 6? Six was in high school, wasn't it? [directing question to wife]
SM: [laughs] After Grade 8, when you were in high school, that's when you were at night school, that- that you came into the class after-
TM: Yeah.
Uknown Person/ Mrs. Matsui: -I was- I- After, presumably, I left. But anyway, my sister was no longer in your class at that point.
TM: She dropped out.
SM: Because she dropped out after Grade 8.

TM: Anway, yes, I did go to Japanese school. But then I spent- What? 15 years in- in Montreal. Ten years here. And then 31 years in- in Kingston. And in Kingston, [turns to wife] there was one family were close to that spoke Japanese.
Uknown Person/ Mrs. Matsui: Oh, yes. That spoke Japanese, I was-
TM: Yeah.
SM: -Going to say-
TM: Yeah.
SM: [Nobuchis?] didn't speak Japanese.
TM: No. No.
SM: [unclear]
TM: No, they didn't.
SM: Educated in Japan.

[1 hour and 25 minutes]

TM. Yeah. So, for 31 years, didn't speak- And when we came to Momiji, we enrolled in conversational Japanese. And believe it or not, we're probably at the level of Grade 3.
SM: [chuckles]
TM: We can't read the kanji [chuckles].
LU: [chuckles].
SM: Well, really kanji, we're at Grade 3 level, but I think we're getting pretty efficient at speaking Japanese. At least, I think my Japanese has gone back to what it used to be. I mean, I didn't speak Japanese for 31 years, but it's coming back.
TM: Oh, yeah. Oh, it's coming back.
SM: People are amazed at that we are speaking more Japanese now.
TM: [laughs]
SM: At least for me. Because I came here thinking I don't know the word for this, I don't know the word for that. So, now I can speak. But as long as I know the word, I- I think I could be, you know, fluent in Japanese.
TM: [chuckles]
SM: I know the meaning of so many words.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: My granddaughter there [points to his right], that one there. She's taken, what, three years of Japanese at University of Calgary?
LU: Oh wow.
TM: And her teacher is real Japanese. And she-
SM: You could tell.
TM: Yeah.

SM: Her accent is good.
TM: She came here for visit in the middle of March- [shakes head] April.
SM: February.
TM: February?
SM: During reading week [laughs].
TM: And so, we took her down to the Japanese class, and she took part, and the teacher says, “Oh, your pronunciation is very good.”
SM: It is. Excellent.
TM: Yeah. Oh yeah. So, she can read- She knows probably as much kanji as we do. And so, she’s very good.
LU: Mm-hm. Wow. I have- I remember seeing that you played basketball in your later years in, I think, Toronto?
TM: Yes-
LU: In the league Aces [?].
TM: There’s a picture that I found in JCCC [Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre] one-one time, with the team picture, and it didn't have a single name on it, and I put some names in it.
LU: Was that at the conference?
TM: No. No. It was quite a long time ago. And since then, I haven't seen a photograph display to add names, and I used to say, “Gee, they must have thousands of photographs with lots of names missing.” I don't know why they don't display it- [coughs]. Excuse me- Because- [takes up mug from table in front of him and takes a sip from it]
SM: I found a picture of David-
TM: [coughs]
SM: -Square type picture, and Tom blew this up [referring to picture she is holding off camera], and so this is- this is Montreal Team. And so-
TM: [coughs]
SM: I gave this to [Kaz Nishio?], who’s here. This is [Kaz Nishio]. So, he was at the conference. So, I gave him a copy of this because I thought he’d be interested, but I didn't talk about this at all because I don't know how I got the picture.
TM: [takes a sip from mug]
LU: Oh!
SM: But we do recognize a lot of names. But if you ask [Kaz?], he has this picture. But if you would like that picture, you can have it too. ‘Cause Tom makes copies-
LU: Oh! That’d be wonderful! Thank you.
SM: So that’s- I know that that’s [unclear] on camera. That’s [Kaz Nishio?]. Shadow- What's his real name? Nataska. Larry Nataska.
TM: Yeah, Larry [clears throat].

SM: [unclear] And I don't know this could be [Scott's] brother.
TM: [coughs]
SM: They kind of look alike. He has a brother, older brother, [Todd?], but I don't know if that's him, 'cause I don't recognize him.
TM: [takes a sip from mug]
SM: Hiro- Hiroshida. And that's all I recognize.
TM: You ought to write that down, at the back.
LU: Yeah.
TM: Write it down in the back [clears throat].
SM: She puts little figures on the faces-
LU: [chuckles]
SM: All along, and then you could-
TM: Anyway-
SM: But that's-
TM: Before we get into that, we'll finish our- [chuckles].
SM: Yes.
LU: [chuckles] What other sports and activities do you remember playing when you were younger? Back in-
TM: Well, I started badminton in Grade 8, and I got quite proficient at it, and my partner and I in Montreal won the men's- Montreal Men's B-
SM: [unclear] Who in Montreal?
TM: Gordy Chan-
SM: Oh, okay.
TM: And then one from Pointe-Claire. We won that twice. And we won the Murray League Provincial Chan- Championship. [points to his wife] Both of us were on that team. Provincial championship. And- and one of the famous ones was this Montreal Amateur Athletic Association. It's like the Granite Club here. You know the- You know the Granite Club?

[1 hour and 30 minutes]

LU: [presumably shakes head off camera]
SM: It's like a social club.
TM: Toronto cricket? You know one of these high-priced clubs?
SM: Yeah.
LU: Oh, okay.
SM: We weren't members there or anything, but they [ran?] the tournaments there.

TM: And we were- we were in the B section. And I had my partner, [points to his wife] and she had her partner, and in the finals we met. And guess who- who they were cheering for? [points to his wife]
LU: [chuckles]
SM: The underdog. I wasn't that athletic [chuckles].
TM: And guess who won with the [boos?] [laughs]
LU: [laughs]
TM: And then we came to- to Toronto and, as I said, we- I played-
SM: Church of All Nations group, right? Church League, anyway.
TM: Well, we played at Metropolitan Badminton Club at- What's that high school in Yonge Street, north of Sheppard? Anyway, I played with Mickey Matsubayashi. And we entered tournaments; we never won anything. And we had a, what they call an inter church league, league between various churches, and I played and won with my oldest brother, soon as I reached 40, I became a senior, and we played in the senior doubles, and we won that one. I played with Ethel Matsubayashi, you know, Mickey's first wife, and we won the North York Mixed Couples. So, I wasn't a top player, but I was a fair player, that's all I was.
LU: [chuckles]
SM: And when we moved to Kingston, actually, we started playing badminton, but he tore his Achilles tendon.
LU: Ooh.
SM: 'Cause he's so competitive, he won't let a shot go, right? So, after that, I mean- Well, we had already joined the golf club there, so we kind of changed our focus to curling.
TM: The story is-
SM: Yeah, so we curled. We still curl.
TM: The story is I was playing Mixed Doubles with my daughter, and when I went- I overstretched my old body and tore my Achilles, and it was so bad I ended up with a cast up to my hip [chuckles].
LU: Wow!
SM: He is- he is competitive.
LU: Mm.
SM: [*Makenki*?] in Japanese. You know, don't want to lose?
LU: [chuckles]
TM: So, after that, we concentrated on golf and curling.
SM: And we still golf and curl.
LU: Oh wow.
SM: We joined the Scarborough Golf Club when we came.
TM: Oh yeah.

SM: So, we still curl [chuckles].
TM: So-
SM: They- It's like our old club in Kingston, they have golf and curling. So, they have golf and curling, anyways.
TM: Well, we did well in the Master's Over 60.
SM: Curling.
TM: Curling, yup.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: There you can see some of the trophies behind you on the- on the-
SM: Doesn't matter [chuckles].
TM: Various sports.
LU: Oh, up there! Wow!
TM: Badminton. I just kept- kept token number because didn't want to bring all that with no room here.
LU: Mm. Did you get through all of-?
TM: [shakes head] No.
LU: No? Where did you stop? Do you remember? Did you wanna finish-?
TM: Well, I-
LU: -Finish it before?
TM: I kind of stopped, and I went to the very conclusion. If you go back to the conclusion, I'm saying that we did have a lot of discrimination, but I have to give thanks to some of the people that helped me, you know. One of them was my homeroom teacher who helped approve that I stay in Grade 11. And in senior matriculation, the vice principal at Jarvis Collegiate arranged the bursary for me for two years at the University of Toronto. So, most people helped me. And then, I gotta say that in order for me to survive here and earn some money while I was going through school, I worked at Carlton Cards for three years. Mr. Harshman gave me a job, and that kept me in [unclear] money because my brother paid for the board in my uncle and aunt's place and my older brother, he was working and he paid for the room rent. And so- But I didn't have any money, so I worked, and then I had to save up enough money to go to university.

[1 hour and 35 minutes]

TM: And so- And then, as I say, in the very last, I worked at Carlton Cards and the ladies there, they weren't getting paid much more than I was, at something- 45 cents an hour, even less for the ladies. And when I said I was going to university and I was quitting, they actually gave me a wallet and money in it to help me go through

university. So, I appreciate those people that helped me. But there was a lot of discrimination, but as I say, there are some people that helped us.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: I did that conclusion, but there might be some pieces missing that I didn't cover.
LU: There was a lot more detail in the wartimes- wartime years that you have in here, but I don't think you covered it.
TM: No, I don't think so. I don't think you'll- you'll probably- When you run through, run through that video, the problem was that I had those photographs. And when I passed those around it took too much time, so I didn't have- [shakes head]. But just reading that, I made the 20 minutes, but when I started showing the photos, I fell was behind schedule [laughs].
SM: [laughs]
TM: But anyway, you have the newest video, and if you want to put that on the website, it's ready right away to put it on. And they- they can watch the photos and everything else with it, so.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: At least you should have one ready [chuckles].
LU: [quietly] That's right.
TM: Because I would like to see that, because the JC [Japanese Canadian] National Museum seems to be doing a lot of work.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: And I'm in touch with this fellow- He's- he's occident- Jensen, he's the fellow that's- I've been contacting him and he's the one that-
LU: Alexis Jensen?
TM: Yeah.
LU: Oh! That's a lady [chuckles].
TM: Alexis is a lady?
LU: Yes [chuckles]!
TM: Oh! Okay. She's the one that I've been contacting with.
SM: I guess you if don't see her face nor hear her voice.
LU: Yeah, if it's through email, it's hard to know.
TM: Yeah. She's the one I'm working with, and I'm kind of thinking that I might send her the photos of Lillooet to compliment the ones that the Tsuyuki's have.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: They don't have some of the pictures of the- [starts shuffling though photos on the table in front of him] I have a lot more pictures of the- like these. [shows pictures towards interviewer] They don't have these.
LU: So-
TM: Like gardens.

LU: During the beginning of the war years, were- was your camera confiscated, or is that why you have so many photographs? Because you-?
TM: Well, as I say, in that [nods toward something on table] wartime experience, I was 11 when I started in the photography, and 15, I had a two-dollar camera. Little camera. So, I snuck that in into my luggage, and a lot of roll of films. And I had learned how to mix chemicals and make developer. So, I took my chemicals and my [balance?] and I went to Lillooet, and I dug a basement in the house, and I used that as a dark room. And since we had no electricity, what I did was I used a flashlight as a source to make contact prints. But I- That's why I have pictures of Lillooet, like these [shuffling through photos], and they don't have them. So, I was thinking that I might send these to Alexis, to fill- fill up the, you know, Lillooet story.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: 'Cause- See, the people in BC [British Columbia] are interested in Western section and they're really interested, because they go to Lillooet and so on. And because Mr. Tsuyuki was such a big shot in the- [chuckles]
SM: [chuckles] Isn't that something?
TM: Yeah. And I was amazed that even the mayor got on the bandwagon. So, my providing some of these might fill out some of the-

[1 hour and 40 minutes]

LU: Mm-hm.
TM: -Stories they have there. So, I was thinking that maybe I'll do that. I'll scan these because I took the photograph and then typed on the- on these photos, but it's not a- it's not a JPEG file. And it's easier to send JPEG through email.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: [holds a picture] Chicken coop and a chicken farmer. That's me. They tell the story of how- how I exec- I was an executioner. And I said, "Now I know what it that means with running around like a chicken with his head cut off."
LU: [laughs]
TM: [holds up another picture] And here is- People don't know what a bucksaw is [points to bucksaw in picture]. Today, it's a chainsaw. Bucksaw. And we took that kind of equipment with us.
LU: And how long would it take to cut a tree that size down into small pieces?
TM: Well, with a chainsaw, you could cut it down in 'bout a couple of minutes. With this, probably about half an hour, 'cause we would- At that point of time, we would saw, and then we would use the axe to make the, like "V" [draws out V in the air with his hand], and then cut, so it would fall over, so. But in that story, we have- In my story, we went to- First year we went and cleared a forest for a farmer, for his-

expanding his farm. And one of the trees that we felled was about a four-foot diameter cedar. And I watched it go crashing down. And oh boy, was that sight.
TM: Next thing I know, a piece of the four-foot log comes down 'cause we provided a free labor for the firewood. So, it ended up on our- on our backyard.
TM: And this bucksaw [points to photo] only had about six inches [demonstrates size with hands] stroke, we couldn't cut it. So, what we did- what I did, was actually- I took off one of the handles, and I just sawed it myself. But that's a story about that.
SM: [laughs]
LU: [laughs] Wow.
TM: And then there's a story of- And you'll find all kinds of stories about these houses, made out of raw lumber, shrinking, and the wind blowing through them. And then you end up- you put tar paper on the outside to prevent that.
LU: The houses in Lillooet, who built them?
TM: We did.
LU: So, when you arrived in Lillooet, was there anything there?
TM: Oh, yeah. There were houses already there. [shuffles through photos] So, this is our house in the back [shows picture to Lisa], second row. So, when I came, this house wasn't built. And it was all cooperation, so, the person in charge, my moth- my mother probably picked that out and sent money already, because the person in front, that's where I stayed because the house wasn't built. And the- there was about half a dozen people who came to build the house. And I was helping them. And they did the- Like, we would make the walls and put it up, siding. Everybody could do that. But to make the roof [points to the roof of the house in another picture]. The roof is more complicated. Especially if they do this. The easiest roof is to straighten one across, but they did this. So, the neighbor two doors over in the front was the ship builder, and he was in charge, and his assistant, they did all the fine cutting of the roofing. But we just- All of us helped and nailed all these things together. So, it was a community effort.
LU: Wow.
TM: [picks up another picture] And this is the most important one. Woodpile. For the winter.

[1 hour and 45 minutes]

SM: So, his brother was graduating high school, right? So, he stayed behind in Vancouver.
TM: Till June.

SM: And so, he went ahead. At age 15, he was the one who went ahead to help build. And that's why he wasn't in school till June. Up to June, you know, he left before that. And then he didn't go to school for over a year [chuckles].
LU: I thought that when the evacuation process started, all the Japanese students were no longer allowed to attend school.
TM: No. My brother stayed till June and got his Commerce degree. And they allowed him to.
SM: I think it's called diploma, isn't it, at high school level [laughs].
TM: Oh, well, high school, diploma, or whatever it is.
SM: I don't think it a degree, but anyway.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: So, anyway-
SM: I stayed in school until June, the end of June. So, I finished Grade 5.
TM: But I had to go early to build the house.
SM: Yeah, so.
LU: Mm-hm.
TM: Anyway, what's- what's the story between sharing photographs and stuff with National Museum versus- versus JCC? [points off-camera]
LU: Oh, well, we'll finish this one off. Thank you very much!
TM: Yeah.
LU: I'll turn these off.
[camera beeps]

[End of Part 1]