

**Interviewee: Frank Tadao Shimada**  
**Interviewer: Lisa Uyeda**  
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THE JAPANESE CANADIAN LEGACY PROJECT

\*Note that this interview makes reference to outdated terminology regarding Inuit people.

**[Start Part 1, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011]**

Lisa Uyeda: Okay [electronic beep]. Wonderful! So, today is August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011. And can you please tell us your full name?

Frank Tadao Shimada: My name is Frank Tadao Shimada.

LU: And Frank, when is your birthday?

FTS: I was born on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January, 1926.

LU: And did you have any nicknames when you were growing up?

FTS: Taji. T-A-J-I. Mainly because my older sister couldn't pronounce my name and that turned out to be my local childhood name.

LU: [laughs] And how many siblings do you have?

FTS: I have a sister that's four years older, and a brother that's deceased, who's 12 years older.

LU: Oh wow, 12 years.

FTS: Yeah. It's easy to remember 12 because you go through the Japanese calendar, the 12 cycles of animals. So, he was a tiger and I'm a tiger.

LU: I'm a tiger [laughs]!

FTS: Eh, is that right?

LU: [laughs.]

FTS: No kidding [laughs.]

LU: And what are your older sibling's names?

FTS: My sister's name is [Claire Hiroko?]. Her maiden name is [Inoue].

LU: And um, your brother?

FTS: My brother's name is Masao. Ken Masao.

LU: Wonderful. That's great, and what were your parent's names?

FTS: My dad's name is Shinichi.

LU: And do you know his birthday?

FTS: No, I don't.

LU: No?

FTS: [quietly] Its- I- Off-hand, I don't know, I could find out, but I really don't know exactly.

LU: And what about your mother's name?

FTS: My mother's name is- Wait a minute- [laughs] Here we have a senior moment now. [scrunches eyes in concentration] Her maiden name is Watanabe. My goodness, I can't forget, I forget her name. Kiyo!

LU: Oh, Kiyo.

FTS: Kiyoko.

LU: Wonderful. And great. And do you know when- Do you remember when they passed away?

FTS: My mother passed away during the war. During the evacuations. So, it's the period between '42 and '48. Somewhere in there.

LU: And how old was she when she passed away?

FTS: 54.

LU: Oh, very young.

FTS: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. The relocation killed her for sure.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: You know, she was one of these working women and never listened to the doctor's advice or anybody's advice. High blood pressure all her life and yeah.

LU: Mm-hm. What about your father, when did he pass away?

FTS: He passed away, I guess somewhere in the 1990's, I would say.

LU: And how old was he when he passed away?

FTS: He was 71, I think.

LU: [quietly] There we go. And what do you know about your family history? Can you describe a little bit about-

FTS: All I know is that my brother tried to trace some of his background, genealogy. But they were born in- My dad was born in a prefecture called Tochigi. Which is near Nikko. Nikko is a famous resort Buddhist temple. Just north of Tokyo. And my mother's family is from Yokohama.

[00:05]

LU: And do you know when or why they came from Japan to Canada?

FTS: I would imagine he came because being from a farming village, there is no work. So, he's one of those adventurous persons, I guess, that came across, and then married, and sent for his brother. So, the two of them, as far as I know, are the family that came to- immigrated to Canada. So, my father was kind of the pioneer of the family. I met my grandmother when I went to visit my mother's side in Yokohama, when I was 12 years old.

LU: Oh wow.

FTS: And the funniest thing that happened was that my grandmother came from this rural area, and she's a very tall woman by Japanese standards. And I was sleeping. And I peeked my eyes open, and she was touching my hand, and it was all wrinkled and brown [chuckles], and I was so frightened. I had never seen an old person. It's the first time in my life I'd seen it, so it scared the hell out of me, to tell you the truth, you know. When I- Later, I realized that she was patting me as a grandmother would, eh. So, the grandfather I don't remember, I guess he probably passed away. Grandmother, I remember her as being a very tall, stately lady. She was, you know, slow walking around, but still capable of getting around.

LU: Mm-hm [chuckles]. And did your father come from a large family?

FTS: No, there was just two brothers, as far as I know. So, they both came. And I guess this is where the genealogy got lost because the two men had left the village,

or wherever they was. My brother was unsuccessful in tracing anything very much. My mother's side, we still have relatives in Tokyo. Still alive. My age or my sister, same as my sister's age. He's still alive too, so. And we keep in touch.

LU: Oh wow.

FTS: Oh yeah.

LU: So, your father's brother, was he younger or older?

FTS: He's younger [nods definitively]. But he's passed away too, eh. And he had one son, and they're all passed away, so.

LU: But he set up life in Canada as well after your father called him over? Or did he eventually return to Japan?

FTS: No, he came. He was a professional, what we call cakemaker in Japan, eh. The Japanese sweets. So, he had apprenticed in Tokyo somewhere. In a place called [Sumiyoshi?], which is an old, well known Japanese establishment, I guess, in food. So, that name he brought over, and we had a store in Vancouver where he made the Japanese treats, and my dad and mom ran a coffee shop on Powell Street.

LU: Mm-hm. We'll talk about that in just a few minutes because I have a few questions about that. But what about your mom's family? Did she have any siblings as well?

FTS: She had a lot of sisters. And one brother. They're all- We had been in touch with them until fairly recently, but they all passed away except for the one brother, who is the same age as my sister. That's still alive. And so, you know, they would be 88 or 89 now.

LU: And did anyone else from her family come and establish their lives in Canada? Or did they stay in Japan?

FTS: Yeah.

[00:10]

FTS: One of her, my mother's oldest sister came to Canada and had been scheduled to marry this businessperson from Portland, Oregon. But as we recall her, she was quite a feminist, and she upped and left [laughs]. And went back to Japan. She- But by any standards, eh, even by today's standards, she was a cigarette smoking, you know, guitar playing, type of women, eh.

LU: [chuckles]

FTS: So, I had met her too. Yeah, they're really nice people, my goodness, salt of the earth I would say.

LU: And was your mother one of the older siblings or younger siblings? Do you know?

FTS: Well yeah, right in the middle. I think they must have had six girls, so she was right there about the third there.

LU: Oh wow.

FTS: So, she was very, very close with her sisters. All her life. And I think that's why we went to visit when I was about 12 years old, I guess, probably that was her last visit, yeah. That's right.

LU: Do you know why she came to Canada?

FTS: Yeah. She came as a bride, in the sense that when my dad came- I don't know what the connection was, but I had an uncle also in Tokyo who was fairly modern by standards in those days, and he worked for Columbia Records. So, I guess that kind of recruitment kind of thing that followed suit. That's just the way I sort of read her; I've never been told exactly.

LU: Mm-hm. That's interesting though to just- Do you know if your parents knew each other before they were married?

FTS: No, I'm sure they didn't. I'm sure they didn't. There had to be a go-between which was sort of a common device used in those days, I think. Find out about the other side and you know.

LU: Are the two prefectures close together in Japan?

FTS: Fairly close in terms of being sort of the next or an adjacent prefecture.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: So, they would- In other words, they would use what's called Tokyo language- [Lingo?]. Linguistically, taste and the culture, so forth. As opposed to down further south in Osaka and Kyoto.

LU: Oh interesting. And what do you know about your parent's educational background?

FTS: My dad is self-taught for sure. He's- He could read English, basic English. He could speak basic English. But he came as, I think, a house boy originally, to some English family. And then got into the importing exporting fishery related business. And then further on, as an owner of this coffee shop, which was very well known in Vancouver amongst the Asahi baseball players.

LU: Oh, yes [chuckles].

FTS: Roy Yamamura, I don't know if you know that name, but he's one of our relatives, my wife's sister is married to him.

LU: Oh really?

FTS: So very small. Small family in a way that Roy was in our restaurant café all the time.

LU: [chuckles] And do you know when your father first came to Canada? Or how old he was at that time?

FTS: God, I'd have to trace that back but somewhere- It strikes me as being- It must have been in the early 1900's.

[00:15]

FTS: I think before First World War. Okay. Because I'm '26. My brother must have been born around the First World War. 12 years older. So, he must have been here at least in the early 1900's.

LU: Mm-hm. Interesting.

FTS: He never spoke very much about things like that. Which I always felt was, must have been a pretty hard or traumatic life for him. Really, you know. So, we all had a tough life. When you really face it.

LU: Mm. What about your mother's educational background? Do you know much about that?

FTS: No. Not much. She probably had some public schooling at best, with a big family in the middle of Yokohama. Well yeah, they had a house, but nothing elaborate. The sisters were sort of going back and forth, some were married, and some remained single.

LU: Were they a farming family as well?

FTS: No, they were city people or sure. For I don't know how long, how far back they go, but they certainly weren't cultured people, shall we say. In that sense.

LU: Mm-hm. And did your mother speak English?

FTS: No, hardly. [smiles] She was just not the type to speak English, she would, you know, she would put on her apron and she- Well, you live in the ghetto in those days, eh. Powell Street was a ghetto, really. You had your little world, three or four blocks and the community is very much like Greektown and Little Italy. The same sort of atmosphere, I think. And they were quite comfortable, I think, there.

LU: What do you remember about Powell Street and walking around and the sights and smells? If you could describe it, what would you say?

FTS: I would say, you would picture Danforth, let's say, 20 years ago, I think it was very similar. I think it was very similar. You know, everybody spoke Japanese. If you didn't speak Japanese and if you looked Japanese, you were a foreigner. And the only- The wars that you had were always with the Chinese people who came and invaded you, you know [laughs], you never talked about going over and doing anything bad on their side. But they're always invading us, so we had to retaliate- kind of mentality seemed to be prevalent, I think. And yeah, I think a small-town minority kind of, racial things were pretty well a standard, I would say. But as a child growing up on Powell Street, it was very comfortable. We could roller skate and make these, you know, little carts and things and play all day and night and put things on the firecrackers, on streetcar tracks and all these things that the kids did.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: I have- For me, it was very comfortable.

LU: Mm-hm. And where did the roller skates come from?

FTS: Well, we bought them.

LU: Just from the store?

FTS: Yeah.

LU: I've heard of some stories where people actually just made them [laughs]. Found some sort of wheel and-

FTS: No, we always bought them and then it was recycled down. Why yes, in other words, they broke fairly easily, and you could take them apart. And the two wheels in the front, and you would stick them on a piece of board, and they would become kind of a scooter of sorts, that sort of thing. You know, quite ingenious I think, as kids.

[00:20]

You invent different ways of using these things and you know, those that- those that- When you got a new one, you always threw the old- Somebody'll pick it up and use it somewhere as a recycle item.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: Same with the hockey sticks. They'd go with it eh. We'd play roller-hockey as kids, not ice hockey.

LU: [chuckles] And what are some of the other games or toys that were kind of created or invented? Do you remember?

FTS: Well, we were- Powell Street is fairly close to the wharf there, along Vancouver, and so the rest of the time we spent on the wharf. The fisherman would come, and they'd bring their fish and we'd sell their fish. We'd eat the fish. We'd fish there. Life and making rafts and paddling around. Huckleberry Finn idea. Very prevalent, you know. We were very adventuresome that way. We must have been a nuisance to the police because I remember two or three times, we were caught by the police patrol boats. Drifting too far down the little pieces of wood that we made and rode out. And the tide is fairly strong there. And you get swept away and you have a hard time coming back. We weren't in any perilous situations, but we obviously were not doing the right thing.

LU: Much different from now where every child has a life jacket strapped on them.

FTS: Oh. Well-

LU: [unclear]

FTS: It was every man for himself, you know. We learned to swim early. That's for sure. Because we could afford to go to the beach too, eh. You know, for a nickel or whatever it was, you could take a streetcar and go to Kitsilano and swim all day and buy chips and- It was a great life! Yeah.

LU: And how much would you buy the chips for?

FTS: I don't know. I think it was a nickel or whatever, you know, and you'd get chips and lots of vinegar and salt. And that would be your afternoon snack, and it'd last until- You'd leave probably right after lunch and you spend all day, you come home, I would say five or six o'clock.

LU: Mm-hm. That's a long day.

FTS: Yeah! Yeah, considering we did these things that kids today can't do because of the security idea. So, in that sense, there was a lot of freedom and inventiveness, I think. You played games that you made up all the time.

LU: And what about school? What do you remember about going to school? Or what school did you go to?

FTS: Well, early in life I grew up on Powell Street, but when I was about, I guess, eight or nine, we moved out to Cassiar, which is- Today, it's a highway now. It's Highway 2. Just off of Hastings there. And we were isolated from the Japanese. There was just one other family that went to the school. Grade school. That I went to. But because we had the store, we commuted. And that was a big commute, going from Cassiar, Hastings Park, it was called, downtown to Powell Street. And there was a

streetcar that you took. So, that was another adventurous life. I was very intimidated because I was cast into a situation from a ghetto into a white population, right, there was no Japanese there. But it was sort of a fear of the unknown more than anything. Because you were old enough to realize you were different, about something that might go bad, so I suppose the word is timid more than anything.

[00:25]

FTS: If anything, you sort of become a nonentity to get along.

LU: Do you know why you moved?

FTS: Yeah, I think my dad was adventurous, he bought a house. It was a nice house on a corner lot, and it was the only house on the block and the rest was all bush. And we had a road. And I can remember even in those days when my dad bought a car, I had to get in front of the car with a flashlight and guide him along the road because fog was a very heavy factor in those days because everybody burnt wood or coal. And I think that just added to the conditions in Vancouver in the fall. So, the fog was so heavy then, one day I actually walked into a ditch, and I got really balled out.

[laughs.]

LU: Aw.

FTS: So, things like that I remember vividly, it was quite different from what the other kids did. A lot of times I felt that while I feel isolated, overall, it was a good adventurous life.

LU: Mm-hm. Do you remember the address of the places that you were living in Vancouver?

FTS: Yes. We visited the- we took a tour of BC three years ago and the first thing that I did, that I took my two sons, and I remember there was 636 Cassiar. And the older one had a GPS, and he said, "Here it is, Dad!" And the picture came out. And this house, it was unbelievable that this thing looked so nice, it was better than when we had left the house, because of the evacuation. The only thing that was missing was the two huge holly trees and that was being replaced by just a stairway. But the house was in very good shape. We knocked on the door, but nobody was home, I guess they were all working. The other side of the street was gone because it had become a highway. It's a highway coming in. The main highway coming into Vancouver. From Chilliwack up further. Upriver, eh. And then- But they had maintained our side of the road as a service road, the other side was gone, and it was the barrier for the highway.

LU: Oh wow.

FTS: Yeah. It was so amazing to see the house there, eh, in such a good shape. And the lot was big enough that the corner lot itself was subdivided and sold and there was a triplex there now, so.

LU: And what about your- Where did you live in Powell Street? Do you remember?

FTS: We had a house on Cordova, which was one block north, or, well, parallel to Powell Street. And it was- From a business point of view, the most convenient place. But I think my dad had grand ideas too, you know. And he thought well, you know, it was a great adventurous plan, I think. Hard in a way for my mother let's say, that we had to commute and had buy a car eventually. Cars were not very reliable either.

LU: [laughs]

FTS: But it's part of the status, I guess, as well, so.

LU: Do you remember what the house number was on Cordova Street?

FTS: Three- 396, I think it was. Near the corner. Now that you mention it, it was right next door to a Catholic missionary.

LU: Oh.

FTS: Therein comes some of the Japanese who were Catholics.

LU: Oh! Very interesting.

[00:30]

LU: And do you remember, when you first- your family first got the car? And what kind of car was it?

FTS: It was- I think the first car was a Pontiac, if I remember. Or maybe, maybe not. Anyways, the first one, it had to be cranked. [laughs] And I remember my dad cranking it and my brother cranking it and they were arguing continually how to crank the thing. You had- Well, it's like an outboard motor, you had to jerk the thing to get it going, eh. Yeah. So, it was a pretty old car.

LU: And do you remember your first car ride? In the car?

FTS: I- My first ride was, I remember one of the ball players had bought a rumble seat sports car, and I got to ride there in the rumble seat. And that was, that was really something out of this world.

[both laugh]

LU: Whose car was it?

FTS: It was Frank Shiraishi. He was a ball player. And I think maybe my name comes as part of that Frank there, he was very close. We were very, very close to the ball players because we had a coffee shop, and we were very close to Powell Ground.

LU: And what do you remember about the coffee shop, and you know, who worked there? What did it look like?

FTS: It was- By size it was small, narrow, but you had a show window and on one side, we had baked goods from women's bakery. They were the caterers that supply the pastry. And the other side was Japanese dessert food, pastries should we say, that my uncle made. And there was a long hallway, and you had counter space, it was all counter seats. And there was a fountain and coffee serving, so you worked on the counter side serving the people. And at lunch hour, our clientele were all longshoremen. Longshoremen were people that worked on the pier, moving the goods coming in and off the boats. So, they would come up the hill from the wharf,



over to Powell, right on the corner. And the place would be filled with these longshoremen.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: And the back half is very much like the- I don't know if you've ever been on Lawrence Avenue. But Lawrence and Victoria Park in the corner there- We used to live there before we moved. There was a Greek Club. An old timers club, and it's very much like that, you know, it was filled with people who were out of work temporarily, fisherman, businesspeople, people in the sawmill kind of thing. Fishermen off season. So, the back half of the store was this. They played this Japanese game called *shogi*, which is Japanese checkers, eh. So, there was always somebody around doing that. And then there were the ball players. So, I was always surrounded with a bunch of people that really didn't work very hard. [laughs]

LU: [laughs] Oh wow.

FTS: Yes, it was really, you know, when you think about it, I got my formal education by reading the racing form. That was the other big hobby, you know, that my dad and them- They had the horse-racing season and there's about two or three cars that go out to the races for the afternoon. I'd go along, and you know, pick up all the loose stubs and go be a runner for buying tickets. Let you bet.

[0:35]

FTS: And a really funny thing happened, one year I went there, and my geography teacher, I don't know how old I was, I couldn't have been in grade nine. My geography teacher was standing selling tickets in the horse player's wagering side, and I couldn't get over it and he couldn't get over it either. We looked at each other [bursts out laughing.]

LU: Do you remember your teacher's name?

FTS: I- No, I forget. He was a- It seems to me that men teachers were mostly British in those days. They had an accent. I think that was a unique thing, we could never understand them because their pronunciation was so different.

LU: What about Japanese language school?

FTS: Oh yeah, we had to faithfully go every year. But we had special dispensation because we had to commute from far away. So, we had to come by streetcar after our day school. So, we were always late, but the teachers were told that we would be late, so we took advantage of that. And studying was the least of our efforts, but we faithfully attended until we graduated. We were the last graduating class to become an alumni, eh.

LU: And do you remember the names of the schools that you went to?

FTS: The school- Well, the primary school was called Franklin. Franklin School. And then the, what do you call it, it's not the high school, but we had the mid- mid-

LU: Oh, middle school?

FTS: Middle school called Templeton. It's filled with Chinese now. I went back to look at it, and it still hasn't changed at all, you know.

LU: And was there a name for the Japanese Language School?

FTS: Yeah. It's- What did they call it? The Powell Street, near Alexander Street. Yeah, there's a name for it I-

LU: What were some of your other favourite spots on Powell Street that you remember? Or in that area that you remember going to?

FTS: Well, Powell Ground was next door, so we played baseball there, we played little games there. That was where one could congregate. And the only other place that we actually called home was the alley behind where the stores were. There was an alleyway that serviced all the stores. So, the kids congregated in the alley. The owners of different businesses. And we all played there.

LU: And what about the Asahi Baseball players?

FTS: Well, when I talk about commuting down to Japanese school from Franklin Public School, well, I don't know by today's standards, it couldn't be much more than three or four miles, but it was a long hike for us. And there was a store there that was owned by a Japanese person, named [Ebata?] and that was there, the ball players last stop as most of them, or some of them, were salesmen, you see. They had cushy jobs. And they would wait for us, the boy, the son of the owner of the store, and myself, and a daughter, we'd get a ride in their car and go back downtown.

[00:40]

FTS: So, we got to know the ball players. Very well.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: My brother was a fringe baseball player. Fringe in the sense that he wasn't good enough to make the A-team, but you know, he wore the uniform and he's in the pictures around here so.

LU: He wore the uniform?

FTS: Yeah.

LU: Oh!

FTS: Yeah. Yeah.

LU: So, he must have been on the mini leagues then?

FTS: Yeah!

LU: Oh wow. And what about going and watching them play baseball at the ballpark? Do you remember doing that?

FTS: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. In fact, one of the highlights before the war was that my mother, who had no idea about sports of anything, become a fanatic of watching baseball, and she ran out with her apron on, you know, and go and sit behind the catcher there. And she and a few of the fanatical fans they were yelling and screaming, she had a great time once she- Because she knew all the players, you see. They were like her boys. They treated her similarly, same way. Some of them would

eat at- Roy would share meals with us in the back of the store. I- They were very good to me, anyways. Occasionally, I was a bat boy, so.

LU: And what would you do as a bat boy?

FTS: Well, you know, when they- Each player had their own selection of bats, and when they finished batting you had to put it back in the rack there, eh. And you know, and you had to deliver the ball to the umpire and stuff like that. It was a cushy job, you know, good for a kid.

LU: [laughs] And was that job just for fun? Or did they pay you a little for it?

FTS: No, it was pure voluntary. To get nominated I think it'd be sort of the highlight for any kid.

LU: [laughs.] And were there a lot of people going and watching these games?

FTS: Oh yeah. There's- Yeah there's- The Asahi baseball players, they had a fanatical fanbase. I mean there were literally fights that went on amongst the fans. Especially when they played some of the *hakujin* teams. They were pretty loud. Yeah, baseball was sort of the prime- kind of a totem for the community, I suppose. Everybody followed it, certainly the men did. And they were held in high esteem because of that.

LU: Mm-hm. As being part of a crowd, was there any special cheers or chants or anything to really get the Asahi baseball players going? Or was it everybody was screaming everywhere?

FTS: Yeah, I think the Japanese are not very vocal in that sense. It's more, mostly clapping and yelling rather than concert- concerted effort. It's not like cheerleading, organized in a way that you see today, but more of an emotional outlet, I think. Maybe the occasional fan would just get carried away. For sure.

LU: Oh wow.

FTS: I think we were very much like any other ethnic group in that way when you really look at it.

[00:45]

FTS: You watch the Italian soccer, you see even today, you see, even within the Chinese community, they play soccer amongst the kids there in the local park, and you see the Italian father, he is so in there [laughs]. [unclear] baseball amongst the men like them are like the Japanese.

LU: And do you have any stories about some of the baseball games that you remember? You know, I've always heard stories that the Asahi baseball players were kind of seen as the underdogs because they're so much, in comparable size, so much smaller than some of the non-Japanese teams that they played.

FTS: Yeah, they were- Well, because of the, yeah, physical difference, they concentrated on defensive baseball. They would prevent the other team from scoring any cheap runs, so that's why people like Roy Yamamura, they were highly sought in the semi-pro leagues because of his defensive abilities, eh. He was fast.

And if he got on a base, he could steal a base. Those are the things that- the *hakujin* admired about the Japanese. They were very, very skillful players that way, but they had no power. Power was- It was just missing. So, the two or three players that could hit the ball or could throw the ball hard, they were cherished players. Not too many of them.

LU: And Roy Yamamura, he played short-stop, was it?

FTS: Yeah. Yeah. [nods head in agreement.] He was by far the best player, I think. And in terms of the number of years, he really played baseball. He was about 14 or 15, he was able to play with the older players, he was that good, eh. So, he lasted a long time, and when he came out here, being brother-in-law, he had to have baseball and he became very famous within the exhibition time, baseball tournament with the midgets here. He was the umpire. He was *the* umpire for that league as a volunteer, and he was highly honoured for that.

LU: Oh wow.

FTS: Which is very nice.

LU: Mm-hm. And what else about Powell Street that you remember? Do you remember anything about the bathhouses?

FTS: Well, like everything else, you had big stores, the powerhouses like the department stores, and people there. And there were the small merchants like our place, and then there were always the rumours about the gambling places and all these kinds of things.

LU: Where were some of the gambling places?

FTS: Well, there were, there's a couple of them. There was one two doors away from our store and it was upstairs and there was always this one guy, who was a tough guy, that was watching the door. And you see as a kid, the rumour goes that, "My god, you gotta watch him, he's got a knife and everything. You don't do anything bad around him." And the guys are going in and out, that sort of thing. But the reality is we had our store, and in the back of the store, we had slot machines. They were entirely illegal, you see. And we had Japanese people who supplied these things, you know, and I guess a percentage of whatever is left we'd get as store owners, eh. And you have the other side of it, the habitual gambler who would come in everyday and play. So, these are all characters that you hear about in Damon Runyon, his stories in New York, you know, that's what was imitated in these places, very similar idea.

[0:50]

FTS: They had nicknames, they were supposed to have certain characteristics that make them newsworthy.

LU: [chuckles] Where did these slot machines come from? How were you able to get them into the back of the store?

FTS: Well, they were probably controlled by a group who did these illegal things. I think the police knew where they were, you know, and they probably got paid off. I

mean, I think it happens here. Where do the drugs come from, you know? It's here. But you definitely don't know if it's him or her. But it's there. That sort of thing. It's part of the pastime.

LU: How many slot machines were there in the back of the store?

FTS: We had-

LU: Were there a lot?

FTS: We had, there was two, there was one for a dime, and the other one was for a nickel. I remember. And the dimes were very good because the customers would lose them, and they can't find them [laughs]. It'd be part of our storage for rice and flour, you know, so I cleaned up the room once in a while and I can find the loose change.

LU & FTS: [both laugh]

LU: And were the slot machines just like the slot machines that you see now in the casinos?

FTS: Well, the old-fashioned ones [acts out pulling motion] they're cranking, with real arms. And the guys would batter them and everything, you know. It's in a closed location, so they're kept very quiet from the rest of the store. But there were every means available to cheat, you know, they'd made slugs [laughs] and all these things.

LU: And what would come up on the slot machines? I know now when you see it, you know, it's like you have to get the three cherries to win or-

FTS: Same thing. It's the same thing.

LU: Same thing?

FTS: Same thing.

LU: Oh wow.

FTS: It's the same thing. That's why, I think, in a way, this educational system and system of security is so high strung these days that you don't, the average person doesn't experience it. And I think in many ways it's sad that you don't know the realities of life. Realities [are?] bad, but you know, there's a lot of heart in there, of the average people. I certainly, I really enjoyed that part of life more than the- I could never think of myself as doing something bad, you know. There's a kind of a line that you draw for yourself, I guess, to justify it. But to me, it was a lot of fun. Hey, we made money this week. But we'd go fishing on the docks there, we'd catch sharks, and you know, somebody would find out the Chinese would buy the liver. So, we slaughtered the shark and collect the liver and take it to the Chinese people and get some, you know, a few pennies or a few dimes and nickels, stuff like that. It's being invented all the time. Partly in our imagination, partly as something you boast about amongst the group.

LU: And how big are these sharks that you would catch?

FTS: They're called dogfish there. Oh, they're fairly big. But they are feeding on the scraps from the cannery. When you had the canneries, the fishing boats are coming in and you have the canneries and they're canning the salmon, there's a lot of junk that goes out. So, these dogfishes are what you call scavenger fish. All you have to do

is to have a little meat on the line and throw it out there and you can catch them fairly easily.

LU: Oh wow.

[0:55]

LU: And what about some of the big department stores on Powell Street that you remember?

FTS: Well Maikawa's was a big clothing store, so they had men's clothing. I don't know about women's clothing. I suppose they must have had. But I remember they always sold nice suits and this kind of thing. My brother worked for them, and he always dressed nicely, and you know- a lot of status building, I guess.

LU: Your brother worked there? So-

FTS: Yeah. He worked there.

LU: So, what was his job?

FTS: He was a salesman, you know. He would wear the suit and tell them what kind of tie to wear. And these people were all hard-working people, like in the mills, fishermen, and so buying a suit would be a big deal. So, that kind of business, I guess.

LU: How long did he work there for?

FTS: He worked for a couple of years, I think, there. He got sent to Japan. Because I think my dad felt that he was getting too big for his boots. You know, he played baseball and good-looking guy, and he danced, and that kind of stuff. And he got sent to Japan, hopefully to be re-educated by his uncle on my mother's side in Tokyo, or in Yokohama. It so happened that he was a modern guy in the marketing business for Columbia Records, and he sold all these Japanese hit songs, eh. So, all they have is nothing but girls and you know, [bursts out laughing] he had a great time in Japan. So, I used to tell him, he said you know, he never talked to Dad because he was so scared of him but I think he was very thankful that he got sent to Japan, he had a great time with his uncle. And of course, his uncle loved him because he can speak English, and he could dance and do all of these things the Yanks do. So, I think they got along famously.

LU: [chuckles] How long was he there for?

FTS: He was there for a couple of years. And the unfortunate part was that he was sent to Japan at the same time that, [an Oda?] family had a family, they ran a restaurant business, Japanese restaurant in Vancouver, and he was their son, and he was getting out of hand according to their family so, they sent him back to Japan. So, the two of them got together and they had a really good time. He decided to stay but he was a very early casualty of the war. He got called into the army, and you know, I think he died fairly soon afterwards.

LU: Even though he was a Canadian, he had to go into the Japanese army?

FTS: Well, I think he wanted to stay in Japan for about- for some unknown reason my brother came back, I guess they ran out of money, I would think it was a main thing that money didn't come anymore. They had to come back.

LU: What year was it when your brother came back?

FTS: I would say probably about '38, '39.

LU: Oh wow. Just as the war was starting.

FTS: Yeah, just before, so Japan was in its heydays eh. This nationalistic jingle, and all the record making was a big, big business you see, that kind of thing, the propaganda side. I'm sure they were really going full blast, I would think.

LU: Oh wow. That's incredible. Do you remember any other stores from Powell Street?

FTS: Oh yeah, there are, we were all family, close friends with **Akiyama's** hardware store.

[1:00]

FTS: And they're a big family of boys. The boys are all gone. They're all died now, about my age or older. And the provider, the father, was a tinsmith and he got into- become a fanatic of fly fishing.

LU: I'm just gonna pause you for one second before the tape runs out. [electronic beeping, camera zooming noises] Are you okay still? Do you need a break at all? Or?

FTS: Yeah, I think it's a good time to have a break.

LU: Sure, I'll pause this one here.

[cut in video]

[beep sound in background]

FTS: There we were old timers. And hardware, hardware business in those days, a lot of repairs, and using sheet metal. So, it was all lead soldering, eh? [laughs].

LU: Oh, that's different.

FTS: Well, you know, until it became illegal, that was the only way that you sort of used metal, sheet metal, eh. So, that was a very popular occupation. Anyways, he became a fishing aficionado, and he- Fishing was- Fishing for steel-head salmon in the Capilano River and tributaries around the area. Today, it's a million-dollar business, resort business, eh. So, these were the pioneers that caught fish. His- He liked to make the spinners, you see. And they'd be welded, or not welded, but soldered pieces of metal to make different shapes in the way the action [moves hand in fishtailing movement], movement for the fish, that attract the fish. So, he was sort of what I would call a pioneer of fishing, of sport fishing in Canada, in many ways. So, that was one family, had a bunch of boys and I grew up with them. And [Sun Rooms?], another one that had rooming houses, **[Shikamoto?]** family there, another group. We all played together. It's amazing, the two girls are still alive, eh.

LU: Oh really.

FTS: [Akiyama?], the girl, [Mei?], she's a couple of years younger than I am and [Sun Room?] [Shikamoto?], Amy. They're both married, but they're both in Toronto. But I guess that's about all that's left, you know. Everybody's passed on.

LU: Mm. Mm-hm.

FTS: And the games that we played were, games that I remember we played, was called Bedlam. Ballum! Ballum. That was the Japanese pronunciation, but I think it was supposed to be Bedlam and the idea was that you had a prison, and you had all the enemies and a group of police or security, and the idea was to tag them and catch them. And it was always played in the evening. And you'd have to bring them back to the prison, you see. So, the idea was that the last one that got caught is the winner, sort of. And there were kids that were very adept at hiding and running and skillful when- There was a fellow named [name redacted], who's still around, retired, about my age, and he was an expert in doing this. [two sentences redacted]

[1:05]

FTS: Certain people were very good at certain skills which I don't know, somehow, they develop this ability, or they get created as being really an expert at this kind of thing. It's the kind of games the boys played. And then the girls played too, but the girls were always you know, you weren't supposed to play with girls, I guess.

LU: No?

FTS & LU: [both laugh]

FTS: I don't know they're- You spent- I don't remember too many bad things. I suppose maybe that's part of survival tactic, that you try and not remember too many things. Certainly, around the back alleys there, you had all this Canned Heat, which is menthol alcohol, eh? We still sell them today for lighting Coleman stoves or campfires. And you'd find these empties all over the place and the [alcies?] would actually eat this stuff.

LU: Oh.

FTS: Yeah, so. That's been there all along, faithfully [laughs.] And you played amongst all this stuff.

LU: How is it different from Powell Street at that time, versus now with you know the idea of recycling and garbage? And you know, was there a way to recycle bottles and cans and plastic like there is now or was that different back then?

FTS: No, there's no such thing as recycling.

LU: That's-

FTS: I think the only recyclers were the beggars or the junkmen. I mean they were the natural recyclers. There was a business, I think, in many of these things there was a secondary use. In the sense that, when I went to Ethiopia, that was one of the amazing things to me that they took me to a market and they said, "Frank, you'll wanna see recycling". And its back in the 1970s, they're so poor, that there's four grades of used nails. And I thought to myself, "You know, gee when you talk about



poor, there are even grades of poor eh." They're little pieces of metal versus something that looks like a new nail but used, and there's a bunch that's hammered out to be straight, and they're all graded. So, shocking. Shocking that 50 years later we're still talking about the same things, where are we anyways. It's sad. But it's really true. It sickens me when I hear about Somalia, it really bugs me that when I was there 40 years ago, they were fighting, and we couldn't get in. We had to go to just outside of Mombasa, I was on a trip with the [vaccine?] there and even at that time they were all starving, eh.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: I mean that's aside, but it's one of my pet peeves. When you see things like that and you're campaigning day and night, to get funds to do this thing, what are we really trying to do?

LU: Mhm. But that's interesting. I've always wondered about the concept of recycling back in the '20's and '30's, 1920's and 1930's, so it's- Because it's something that's more evolving now and continuing to evolve, you know, items to recycle and-

FTS: Well, I think we were much more careful in using things for one thing is that you didn't have that many containers that you can throw away.

[1:10]

FTS: I mean they were real bottles and real containers that were made properly that you could use into a flower vase or whatever, eh. So, in that sense I think, it recycled itself, the way I see it. And if you go to, let's say, India or China, it's an automatic almost, the caste system serves as that purpose, eh. There's a grade of people that never uses a vase, but they'll use a can of peaches, that'll be the vase. For them, that's it.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: So.

LU: Interesting. What other stories do you have about some major stores on Powell Street? Or some small stores that you might remember? [That you don't hear?] too much.

FTS: Well, every store was- had a meaning in the sense that they did certain things, or they had family members that did some bad things or good things, or they had nice looking girls, or- Well, I guess girls weren't that important, unfortunately, we were very naïve, I think [laughs]. Compared to today's population. Everyone would have a story attached to them I'm sure, and every story will be different according to whoever relates it.

LU: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. So, if you had one favourite spot in Powell Street, what would that spot be?

FTS: I suppose my one favourite spot would be behind- In the back alley of the hardware store. We- Somehow, we congregated there because the back of the hardware store was a mass of metal and wire and things that, you know, boys would

play around with. And- and there'd be no supervision, [laughs] and that was important. And you know, you'd hang around there and talk about things and talk about which garage you'd go and steal fruit from. Things like that I remember very clearly, that- We'd magnify it into a great big who-dun-it story, that it belongs to the Chinese food grocer, and they had prunes there that were just great for picking and somehow, we'd try and encourage each other, get enough courage to go in there and steal some [laughs]. And you wind up with some greengage that's so sour that you can't eat it, you know. [laughs]

LU: [laughs] When you spoke with your parents, I guess it was mostly in Japanese. Did you ever speak to them in English, or?

FTS: I think if it was Japanese, it was broken Japanese. It was half English. We had our special language, I suppose, of communication, yeah.

LU: Mm-hm. And you mentioned that your mother only spoke a few words of English, so she would only respond to you in Japanese, but-

FTS: [nods] That's right.

LU: What about your father?

FTS: He would understand English, okay, let's put it that way- so, he wouldn't- he would speak English, but he wouldn't understand English. So, conversation would still be in Japanese. But I- He was more of a father figure to me. It was generally when something bad happened that he'd get into the act. So, you tended to avoid him. You know- So, the conversation was not so much with him, but with Mother. Mother- I was a sort of the last son, so I guess I was pretty well spoiled silly in many ways, according to my peers, and neighbors, and so forth.

[1:15]

LU: [chuckles lightly] Were your parents the only ones working at the store or did they have other employees?

FTS: Oh, yeah. We had other employees that were- In fact, there was one- In those days, it seems to me that part of employment was that you'd go back to Japan and find somebody, a relative, whatever. And these people- My best friend died, as I told you. And the family was- I don't know what the association with my dad was, but the father came and worked for my father. And in that way, he ran a rooming house on Main Street. And one of my confessions that I made, being the Eulogy, was I- I was brought up in a lot of my younger days by this family, who had four boys, you know. 'Cause they didn't need another hand, but I was welcomed by that family and they- I- to me, I felt that, you know, they were- It was so honorable that I'm still their friend. And it's lasted a lifetime. And it's kind of a nice feeling, for myself. How they felt, I don't know, but they must have gotten along with me. We're still friends with the family.

LU: Four boys is a lot [laughs].

FTS: Yeah, so- So like- The way employment was- And there was another family that- who was also at the funeral, related to this family, his father was instrumental in clearing all the land around our house. As I told you, our house on Cassiar was the only house, and the rest was all bush. So, it was a fairly large lawn, and it seemed to me that he was there every day, cleaning and painting and carpentry, and this kind of job. And he died very early in life. Whether he died before he went back to Japan, or in Vancouver, I wasn't too sure. But as a result of that, his son had to be, what do you call, enslaved. It's not a good word but- Actually, he came when he was 16, and he came to our store. And he apprenticed as a baker and learned all the baking. He's still alive, the same age as my sister. He wants to see my sister. He's in a home in Pickering. He married wife. And when I think about it, I think it must have been hell for the guy, you know, at 16, to be uprooted, to go to a family that he really doesn't know, has to work full time, and the war itself is a liberation, the way I see it, you know. He was not used to hard work, but because he was a Canadian, he had to go to the road camp, and join the guys that, you know, they were fisherman and physical people, right. He came out of all that and became a spot cleaner in a cleaning, dry-cleaning business. Which itself, to me, is one of the most lethal businesses because you're using- inhaling chemicals all the time, right? Anyways, he survived all this and he's still living, eh?

LU: Wow, that's fascinating.

FTS: So, to keep this story, he has two sons, and I was talking with the- with the older son.

[1:20]

FTS: He is either a nuclear engineer or a chemical engineer. Anyways, he graduated from Ryerson<sup>1</sup> or U of T [University of Toronto]. He went right into Bruce Peninsula, or Bruce Reactor. The nuclear reactor in Bruce Peninsula, and then he got transferred over to the Pickering one. And 58, he's single, he's retired, and he's moved out to North Vancouver [laughs and wheezes]. So, I can't understand all this, you know, that here he is, he has a mother or father that's, you know, on her last leg, and the guy is out there living a life of luxury in BC, eh?

LU: Retired at 58! Oh, my goodness [chuckles].

FTS: Yeah, yeah. I mean that's, that's that group of people. There are several of them, you know, that have done remarkably well, eh? Mining engineers and that. You're, you're, you're hitting everything at the right time, you know. So, I said you know, I need to talk to you, because I- I think, you know, you- you don't- You're pro- Your dad has probably never talked to you about having had to serve his apprenticeship in our house. He slept in our house, right? He lived in our house. I played with him- Well, I didn't play with him, but we talked to each other

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<sup>1</sup> Now, Toronto Metropolitan University

continually, 'cause we had adjoining bedrooms in the house. Yeah, that's probably one of the reasons why dad bought a bigger house, to house some of the employees. I would think maybe, now in recollection, eh.

LU: Mm-hm. Did other employees live with you, as well?

FTS: Yeah, there was another fella, too. Who had graduated and moved on to another restaurant business. He became a chef there. Eventually, he ran his own restaurant in Toronto. He's deceased. But he lived in our house too, so. Employment in that sense seems to be somebody that you- I would say that this is what happens in Chi- with the Chinese population now. I would- I don't know, but I would think that's the way you- You get your family or your tribe or you know, whatever. Get the one that's best available.

LU: Mm-hm. And what about your uncle, did your uncle live with you?

FTS: No, the uncle had his own house. He never had any education. But he married a girl where he apprenticed in Tokyo. Sumiyoshi, name of the place, eh. So, he and his wife came to Canada. She never learned to read or write. Her checkmarks were just an X. But she survived to a good old age, you know. It's amazing how survival, people have you know. They had a very little paper stand there on Granville Street. Part of, Vancouver, really. And all they did was they sell newspaper and some fruit and all those things, eh. [three sentences redacted]

LU: Oh wow.

FTS: It's amazing what people do. And he- I would think probably the smartest guy that I've known in a long time.

LU: Mm-hmm.

FTS: You know, intellectually. [stammers] He was too smart for his own good in many ways, eh.

[1:25]

LU: Mm-hm. So, when you're- Since your uncle did all the baking for all the sweets at the store, would he make them fresh every morning, or?

FTS: Yeah, they'd have to do it every day [nods]. Yes, the Japanese- [acts out making the pastry with his hands] *Yokan*. Do you know that brown sugary paste, it's made of azuki beans. Azuki beans are a health food, but that's all ground up, and stirred with sugar so that you have a very heavy sugar paste, eh.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: And that's the main ingredient for the base of the Japanese desserts, so to speak.

LU: Mhm. So, what time would they be up in the morning to go and start baking everything?

FTS [stammers] I don't think there's any special time for that kind of business because what you make, you keep for, let's say, a week. Most of the food it's not like fresh everyday kind of food.

LU: But what were the store hours- [Both speaking]

FTS: But it's very labour intensive. Everything is an art. You make little rabbits and little tortoises, and you know, very, very fanciful food.

LU: Oh wow! I didn't know they had shapes.

FTS: Oh yeah, that's why his name was Kamejichan. Kame is tortoise. Jichan is grandfather. Kamejichan. Be- Because he would have a griddle, and he'd make little tortoises out of this griddle. Pancake-like crepes, or what I would say, eh. So, he was named- that was his name, eh. Yeah, for the kids, that he'd make it.

LU: Oh, wow [laughs]! And what were the store hours?

FTS: This- Well, this- What he made would be sold in our store. So, we'd open- I would go, when I was older- I'd- We'd go and open the store at I would say probably its between 7 and 8 o' clock. And you'd close after 10.

LU: Oh, wow!

FTS: Yeah.

LU: That's late.

FTS: Yeah, it's a very long hour business. And it- it's seven days a week, eh, really. That kinda so- Very punishing, time wise.

LU: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. What do you remember about holidays? Did you ever celebrate Christmas, New Year's, birthdays?

FTS: Oh, well. New Year's was a terrible time because this Japanese food, New Year was *the* day, so we didn't make osushi, but we made all the accoutrements that went around it, the festivity cakes, and goodies that surround the celebration. So, it was just night and day, you know, you're pounding mochi, you know, the rice? You had a machine that pounded the thing, and you know, it's a lot of hand labour involved still, you know, and steaming the rice, pounding it, shaping it, moulding it, making it into little shapes, and all these things. I remember my mother and the- they were totally exhausted. We tried to have Christmas, but I think it wasn't much of a Christmas, because, generally, it was cooked by somebody else. We were so busy from all that month, I guess. But we- Yeah, we celebrated Christmas, we had Christmas and turkey, and the whole bit.

LU: [chuckles lightly]

FTS: And presents. And they were always very joyful, expectful.

LU: Mhm. What about birthdays?

FTS: Birthdays- I don't remember having too many birthdays. I- Seemed to me my sister always had a birthday. But I think mine, being the end of January, I think it was- it wasn't a very good time [laughs].

[1:30]

KS: I had to say, who needs a holiday [laughs] if it's gonna be that much work. I think our mindset was that holidays meant work, and, you know, work was something we didn't need, so. Until our kids came, really- Or, well, until they got married, then I

realized that, yeah, people actually celebrate- spend a lot of time celebrating. We didn't seem to have time to do very much of that.

LU: Mm-hm. What about Girls' Day and Boys' Day?

FTS: That was always celebrated because of our relatives in Japan. And they insisted that we had to fly the *koi* and all- and we got all elaborate dolls and things from Japan, you know. Girls' Day was always- you had to the whole thing, that was a lot of fun mind you, putting up the shelves and things, yeah. I think I enjoyed that more than my sister [laughs].

LU: And what about the *koi* that you would fly for Boys' Day? Would it be, you know, like a kite, or would it be on a pole?

FTS: It'd be a big pole, and my uncle would make sure that he'd always sent us one, and we'd have to fly it, you know. And then- And- and you know, that was one of the things that, being- living away from the Japanese community, we had trepidations whether we should do a lot of this or not. But we always did it. But I don't think we did it in a way that one would do it, let's say, in Japantown.

LU: Mm.

FTS: My neighbors were Ukrainians. And I was horrified to see them- Horrified to see them eat salad. My God, these people eat raw food [laughs]. I've never seen- [laughs]. I said, "God, these are barbarians!" [laughs]

LU: [laughs]

FTS: And they're na- their name was [name redacted], I remember, you know, and they had a daughter, [name redacted], who's a big girl. And I saw her standing there at the counter eating lettuce, raw, nibbling away and all kinds of stuff.

LU: [laughs]

FTS: My mother was like [stammers], she'd just shake in her boots, you know. I never knew roast beef for instance, you know, until my brother got married and- and my brother's wife made roast beef, and "[Holy crow ?] does this ever taste good!" [laughs]

LU: [Laughs] And [video glitches] what about other things like ham, and bologna, and?

FTS: Ham and bologna, and- We served them in sandwiches in the store, so we were very familiar. We- So, light lunch, sandwiches, meat pies and those things. We had bologna, of course, is standard food, and every Japanese woman knew how to make bologna. In fact, that's all they knew, bologna and potatoes [laughs].

LU: [laughs] And did your family have a garden at the house, or? I guess they would have been busy to look after it?

FTS: Yeah, we had a garden, but we had a lot of cherry trees, apple trees, raspberries, stuff like that. That was one advantage of having a bigger house and a bigger yard.

LU: Mm-hm. And who looked after the garden and all the fruit trees?

FTS: Well, it's this man that I told you, right, eh? That- the one that died earlier, and his son had to come. I remember him clearing all the land, and looking after the fruit

trees, and spraying the fruit trees, and getting the raspberries and- well, of course we could get the raspberries, and stuff like that. He seemed to be the caretaker, mending the fences, painting the fences, and all of these things. He seemed to be a general handyman.

LU: Mm-hm.

[1:35]

LU: What do you remember growing inside the garden?

FTS: I don't remember growing anything. They were all perennials, the way I see it.

LU: Mm. So, no vegetables or anything?

FTS: I don't remember growing any vegetables at all. It's only during the war that I learned that.

LU: And what do you remember and where were you when you first heard about Pearl Harbour?

FTS: They- We- We lived on Cast Yard [?]and our bedrooms were on the third floor with very small windows. And early in the morning, I heard the paperboy running down the street, in those days, they used to sell papers and would- If there was a special event, paperboy would run down announcing the news. And I remember hearing a boy saying "Pearl Harbour attack," I didn't know what it meant, you know. But that's what he was saying as he went down the street. That was my first war in involvement, that I heard this thing. I think it was a Sunday, if I remember correctly. So, the next major shocking event was when I went- By that time I had graduated to go to high school called Britannia High School. And we were freshmen, going from middle school, you know, you get into the second year, and I was called into the office or the library. This first time I realized there were so many Japanese, there were about ten other Japanese, nisei kids, eh. They were all in the library, and we're all wondering what's going on. Well, we were being her- herded in there because it was a voluntary students- voluntary recruitment day. And they went around- paraded around the school with wooden rifles, eh. And we were herded here. And we had to watch from the window while they did this. That was- that was a shocker. It really shook me to hear, "God almighty, we're-" First of all, there were so many Japanese Canadians [chuckles] because going from Franklin school there was no Japanese, going to Templeton, where we had two or three, and here, all of a sudden, they were ten of us there. I knew half of them anyways, eh, but- but to get- see them in a group, being discriminated that way [stammers] that was a real shocker.

LU: So, you weren't allowed to take part at all?

FTS: No. No. No.

LU: What was the reaction amongst the other students between, you know, the non-Japanese and the Japanese after Pearl Harbour took place? Was there a difference?

FTS: [pauses to think] I don't really remember anything, you know, I think that was such a traumatic thing to me. I think I just blocked everything out after that. And I

really became Japanese at that point. Instead of trying to be an integrated individual, I think that's the way the mind works, eh, this ain't working, you know.

LU: And how-?

FTS: I didn't feel bitter at all. I think I felt disappointed more than anything.

LU: Mm-hm. And how long were you able to attend school?

FTS: Shortly after that, I don't know how long, I didn't stay very long. We were- we had to begin the evacuation process.

[1:40]

FTS: Again, here, my time scale out of whack, here. All I remember is, first of all, my mother said, "Go and help this family." They were related to us in a way of having come to Canada as an enemy alien, never registered. The father got immediately seized and sent to a road camp, and the mother had a baby and a daughter who was, I don't know, probably ten, ten years old. Or younger, I guess. Yeah, I was 16, so she must have been around 6 or 7. And my job was to tie up this big box that she had to take to be relocated to the ghost town. It took me all afternoon to tie this damn thing, and I was so frustrated, and I couldn't do anything. And I could hear the girl crying and I- It was a very sad, sad moment for me.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: [Nods] Yeah.

LU: And when did you find out that you would have to move?

FTS: We were- I think that was one of the reasons why we had volunteered for self-supporting, but it allowed- Because it allowed us time, you know. We had a store, we had a house, and we had a rooming house. And I think my dad wanted to at least borrow time as much as he could to try and settle whatever he can, out of all this, so we- I think he then decided that we would go to a self-supporting because it gave him time to try and do something. He knew that he couldn't do anything- everything that he wanted regardless, it gave him time. So, I think that's why he chose this. Because the group didn't really make any sense to us, eh.

LU: Mm-hm. So, what happened to the store and everything that was in the store, all- and the employees?

FTS: Well, first of all, the employees, there was no problem there, you know, they were enemy aliens. So, they were just rounded up and, you know, they were treated like prisoners. They had no choice, they were herded into camps or whatever, and whatever convenient. They were just shipped right out East, eh. And never mind a hundred miles. They were sent out to Angler, and Thunder Bay, and all these areas where- we'd never even heard about, it was the end of the world, really.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: So, that part of it was very simple. It was just by decree. We had a friend, regarding the store, whose name was Sandy Steam. He had married a Japanese girl, and he was part of the ball team. And he was almost like Japanese, except his name



was Steam. So, he was exempt from all of this, alright. And he had- I think Sandy used to deliver wood. Delivering wood or coal was a big utility business in supplying all solds. Or businesses with energy consumption, eh. So, Sandy used to come to the store all the time. He was a friend, and he became a real friend in helping us delay the eventual closing of the store.

[1:45]

FTS: And he had arranged somebody to help the transition of the store. And the corner drug store man was also instrumental in helping. So, the place ran for a bit. I don't know, maybe half a year or six months, before they finally closed it off. But in the meantime, we had to relocate, join this group, and there were set dates that we had to do go on. All the- these things are pre-planned. So, I went with my mother, and some other close relatives, as a group on the train. And my dad came, I remember, in September, we moved sometime in the springtime.

LU: Mm-hm. And when the store was closed did your family receive any, you know, I guess, compensation for having to sell off the store or-?

FTS: Yeah, that's right, that was left up to the third party. We had no choice, eh. So, that was sad. That was sad. I remember that my mother was so worried about the cat. The cat's been there all this time, and she wanted assurance that Sandy was gonna look after this cat for us, so. And he kept sending pictures over the years, you know, until my mother died.

LU: And the cat was living at the store?

FTS: Yea, yeah, yeah [nods slightly]. The cat was doing quite well, you know. LU: [chuckles] What was the name of the cat?

FTS: I f- I forget what we called the cat. It was probably called Pussy Cat.

LU: [chuckles]

FTS: As I recall. It was a nice black and white, big lazy thing. But you know, they're very essential, these cats, in a store, in those old stores, where you had mice running around all the time, all over the place. Especially when you had food around, eh.

LU: Oh, yes.

FTS: The cat served a big purpose.

LU: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. And what about your house? What happened with the house?

FTS: Well, the- The house is the same thing, we left it with a so-called agent who disposed of it. But by that time, you know, it was next to nothing, so.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: Like everybody else's.

LU: So, you only received a little bit for-

FTS: Yeah.

LU: For the house.

FTS: Thats right. Just a nominal fee. Whoever in between got it, that's the way it generally went, the middleman made money.

LU: Mm-hm. What were some of the items you had to leave behind?

FTS: Well, we had a piano, most of the furnishings. I remember getting rid of all the records that my brother brought back because- when he was in Japan, you know, these were promotion records, you know? But, you know, you can't use it here, but they were all vinyl, which is what they wanted to use and recycle. I remember getting like something around six dollars my- Between my sister and I, we carried and lugged the whole damn thing over to some store and getting the money. And we- I was so overjoyed getting the money [laughs].

LU: Six dollars is a lot! [laughs]

FTS: [laughs] So, [stammers] yeah. There was- that was the kinds of things you remember.

LU: Were you able to take, you know, pictures, cameras, radios, or-?

FTS: No, we didn't take it. But my brother- Because he worked for Maikawa's, at that time. They decided to go to a self-supporting place, called Bridge River, which was purely a businessmen's group, eh. But Bridge River is further north of- from where we were. And- So, he went there, so he took most of the family things that he could take.

[1:50]

FTS: We didn't have very much space to take anything because we have other family members, associates that we had to live together as two families in one house, eh.

LU: Mm-hm. And what was the self-supporting location called, that you went to?

FTS: [stammers] This place that's called Christina Lake. And if you're interested, I- there was a book written by the- one of the owners of the lumbering company that grew up in Christina Lake. It has all the history of Christina Lake, except the Japanese community thing, eh, so.

LU: Oh, interesting!

FTS: It's a really, very good historical background to how people lived. And I think when people read things like that, you realize that the conditions weren't as hard as what we make out to be. It was hard because we were urbanized city people having to adjust so much to live under basic conditions. We just didn't have the skills. That- that's what it was had. But that's the way they lived out there in BC. Inuit, you know. They were pioneers! They didn't think anything of it. So, in a way, we kind of overdramatize it, I think, in a way.

LU: Mm-hm. And what were some of the items that you were able to take with you?

FTS: [rubs eyes in concentration] What did we take? What was important for me was a phonograph [chuckles lightly].

LU: A phonograph?

FTS: [acts out winding up the phonograph with hands] Where you wind it by hand. And records, eh.

LU: How big was the phonograph? 'Cause when I think of them, I think of, you know, the big, huge ones.

FTS: No, they have little cases, like a suitcase. Size of a suitcase. And you'd open up and they're called portables, eh. So, you could take it anywhere and play it. You don't need any electricity. It's mechanical. So, you wind it up, and you put your vinyl record [acts out putting vinyl record on the phonograph with hands], and the needles moves on and in a way, you get music, eh. So, it's a very practical device. That became very important. Anything that required electricity was useless because we had to generate our own power, right. So, we have- Electricity is for lighting. Heating we had to use wood. Well, things like blankets became very valuable, winter stuff.

LU: Mm-hm. Was there a little to how much you could take with you?

FTS: Yeah, you had a- what they call a close bag. A big tarpaulin bag that was, I would say maybe, about four feet [holds up hand to demonstrate]. And three feet in diameter and- and you could carry that full of clothing, you know. It's a fair bit in there, eh, actually when you pack things in that way. Mind you, the quality is so important, eh. You never realize until it's too late, but if you had wool things for instance, it would have been invaluable.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: But- but the only things that you bought were those that you could get available in the stores. And it was because my brother worked at a clothing store that he knew what was valuable because people were just buying it up. Whatever was left, and these are the heavy jackets, woolen jackets, canvas- denim pants I suppose today, heavy woolen socks, stuff like that.

LU: Mm-hm. Oh, I never thought that you know a lot of people would go out and buy new items before they had to pack up and leave.

FTS: Well, I think we knew, instinctively, that you had to be prepared for winter. That the winter was gonna be colder than [nods] what it was in Vancouver. And it turned out that it was one of the worst winters in the history of BC, so.

LU: How far away is Christina Lake from-?

FTS: It's a- It's by today's standards it's a day's drive, I would say 8 hours from Vancouver. A good driving will get you there. It's past Kelowna, close to Grand Fork- Grand Forks.

LU: Is that more north?

FTS: No, it's parallel to the US border.

LU: Oh, okay.

FTS: Christina Lake is about 20 miles north of the US border, and it runs north, south. The south end of the lake empties into the Kettle River which crosses back and forth [twists hand left and right to imitate the shape of the river] over the US border. And the Kettle goes which way? [scrunches eyes in concentration] I forget now, I'm not too sure. I think it ends up as far as the Columbia River system, if I remember.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: But- [clears throat] the significant thing was that they had a railway line that ran through that part, Kettle Valley railway line, and it's- [clears throat] it's a heritage site, today because it had so many wooden trestles that, I guess, the Chinese built, I would say probably- probably more Chinese died there [chuckles lightly] anyway, anyhow, you know. Huge, tall things that you- in between tunnels, boring through the mountains there. So, instead of going north up the Fraser River, you see, at Hope there, at the valley, you cut straight across the US border, basically, trying to follow the Kettle Valley basin, over to Nelson. And from Nelson, you go north to Slocan where Lemon Creek, that's where the main settlement camp area was.

LU: Mmhm. So, what were some of the ways that you would stay warm during that- that frightful winter when you first-?

FTS: Well, one thing, we had lots of wood, because you- we were gonna start a lumbering camp, 'kay. So, that spring and summer, all hands were on to cut wood, firewood to fire up the stove. And Japanese- you had to build a Japanese bath, and that required tons of wood [laughs].

LU: [laughs] Was it a big bath?

FTS: Oh, yeah! It was a glorious bath. You know, you do things right, by Japanese standards [laughs].

LU: And was it for everyone in the community, too?

FTS: Yeah. Yeah. It's a public bath, eh. Yeah. Yeah.

LU: And who was in charge of maintaining the bath?

FTS: Well, well- they- I need to go to the washroom.

LU: Sure! We can pause.

[interviewee leaves to go to the washroom]

LU: Alrighty. Oh, you know what, let me just switch this very quickly.

[camera beeps]

LU: Was your wife asking how many stories you're telling me or? [laughs]

FTS: [laughs]

LU: She must be wondering where you are [laughs].

FTS: Yeah. She's wondering; "Are you coming home for lunch?" I says, "I don't think so"

LU: [laughs] Alrighty.

FTS: So, this is my interpretation of the organization of Christina Lake self-supporting group, okay. So, it is not meant to be official, by any means.

LU: Mmhm.

FTS: And it may be way off base.

[2:00]

FTS: But basically, this group was organized by a man named Mr. Kimura. And Mr. Kimura, I think, was the executive director of the Japanese Herring Fisheries group. There was an association of such, you see. And this was a fairly powerful group, I think, because there was a pretty stable business, and he was well-versed in English, and he had connections with the BC Securities Commission people who were the main authorities in organizing this evacuation venture. And they had somehow found this lodge on Christina Lake, which was in fair bit of disuse but, scr- sound structurally, on this lake. And the group, I think, decided that there is a sort of an ownership in this group that there is a mill at the end of the lake. It's a lake that runs north and south, very long, narrow lake. And they- The lumbering company was owned by Sanders. Sand-ners brothers. There were two brothers. Pioneers. Grew up there, and one of them has written this book titled "Christina Lake", which I'll bring you a copy 'cause it's very interesting reading about the- about conditions and what happened in that area, mining and these sorts of things these people had ventures in. Anyways, there was a lodge that was built in the middle of this lake, a sporting lodge. And I believe that most of the business for this lodge was sporting fishermen coming from Spokane, Washington. And there's stories that because of the prohibition, the American people would fly in from Spokane area and have this luxury resort that they would hunt and fish there. And that would fit the story because the lodge was traditional Alpine lodge, two-story building, with a first floor all with pine in-laid material with a ballroom, dining room, a bar and a basement, and a huge kitchen, and the upper floors would be motel-like rooms for the guests. They even had a piano there, even had a pool table there. So, it must have been quite a place. It was very impressive, in the middle of nowhere, to see this place on this spit of land, flat, surrounded by this beautiful scenery. Couldn't ask for anything more. No roads [laughs].

LU: [laughs]

FTS: And I guess that was the remotest part of the whole thing, that there was a logging road that- and that's all they used that area for. The train serviced the south end of the lake. And then it climbed steeply beside the lake and [motions hand to imitate steep incline] going toward Nelson, right.

[2:05]

FTS: So, you can hear the train chugging there, all the time. The concept seemed to be that they would use the resources of this lumbering camp run by these two people to produce lumber, which was in short supply because of the war. The Japanese would supply the labor. And the two brothers would run the mill. They needed a boat to pull the logs down the lake from the area where they come from, eh. And so, they hired two fishing boat makers from Steveston. That- the Kishi brothers, eh, so.

LU: Oh!

FTS: So, these are the main actors in this drama, shall we say. They were there first, and they built- started building boats- up a boat, that would be capable of pulling logs, eh. And a huge- Actually, really the timber to build a keel. I mean, you wanna talk about being artistic but primitive, eh. The whole thing is made right there on site. These were really skilled people [nods]. And we saw them, this boat, going from nothing to a real boat. The big problem was a generation Christy, the power generator they first tried to use build a dam by a nearby creek, but that didn't work. I guess didn't have enough power or know how to do this thing. So, we had limited power and all they gave us was a light for illumination, eh, for the lodge. The idea was that they would build a half a dozen or no- maybe about ten or 12 individual cabins. Cottages, by today's standards. With a living room, two bedrooms, and a kitchen area. And each family was a- Well, each sponsor had a cabin. And there was a bunch of younger people. Auditors, and bookkeepers, and this sort of young married couple who lived in the lodge and the rooms upstairs, eh. The people would then work at the mill and live in this lodge. So, the big problem, first I- to me, was that they had labourers [puts a finger down] who knew how to fish [puts another finger down], how to keep book [puts another finger down], city people [puts another finger down], nobody that knew anything about lumbering [laughs]. They knew how to fish, but we're not allowed to fish, you see [laughs]. So, I think that was the first disaster. The second disaster was obviously what happened all over, the older people thought that this thing was a very temporary, short-term deal! That by winter, the war would be all over, we'd all get back to Vancouver, and collect all our belongings and merrily carry on. Fatal mistake, eh? So, between all of these things, you know, it was really a work of folly. It had no chance [slowly shakes head] of succeeding. We produced lumber, yes, and we all went to work, even as school kids, we went to work and we had to help in building the cabin, we had to grow our own vegetables. And it was fantastic for us young kids.

[2:10]

FTS: We had to learn everything. But for older people, it must have been traumatic. And I'm sure that's what killed my mother right off the bat, like it was just too much for her, eh. And for dad, I think, mentally, it's such a disaster. And these people all waving the Japanese flag, it got shot down [chuckles] in flames very quickly, so.

LU: Why was there a restriction on fishing?

FTS: Well, there's no firearm, no fishing. And there wasn't anything allowed to make an occupation except this lumbering.

LU: But not even fishing for meal consumption or-?

FTS: Yeah, well the fishing was what started this whole thing, you see? The Japanese domination of fishing was what created this mania to get rid, I think, in part. 'Cause they owned the fishing in BC.

LU: Mm-hm. And all the canneries.

FTS: So, fishing- The word fishing was taboo [laughs]. It didn't matter whether it was land, or inland, or what, you know. So, anyways, it's a minor point that the lake didn't produce that much fish that we could live off, anyways.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: But those were the rules, eh. So, the only transportation we had was the truck and a passenger car that one of the guys had, that became part of the total supply of the group. As an example, we were one of the enterprises was this called Starfish Market. The owner of that sold all the canned salmon, and we took all the canned salmon and we- The canned salmon lasted like, about two months and [laughs] we ate it all up. It- Well, you know, even as a young man I said, "This is the most craziest thing that's going on here." It was great because this is a- Today, this place is a million-dollar resort. This Christina Lake where the old Christina Lake landed. The land next to it was bought by this Hatch family. Hatcher, I think. He was a minister of something in Alberta government. And I think he killed his wife or something. It was a very notorious thing. And he came out of this, I think, broke, but he had this million-dollar cottage there. So, it's that quality of the place. The vestiges of the cabins that we built by hand are still there.

LU: Really?

FTS: They've been, you know, fancied up and everything. And it's called English Colony or something like that. It's called English Point, ironically, that's the name of the place [laughs].

LU: And how many Japanese families- Or, what was the size of the Japanese population?

FTS: I figured we must have had about 150 people there. I would say between 150 and 200. It came and went. There was some families, came and left right away because they didn't have enough money, or whatever the reason, you know. There was some going and coming. But there were people that had money. For instance, people next door to us were named Yoshida. They were a very elderly couple. They had hired two girls to help them who were live ins, eh. These girls were subsequently married in Toronto. But both have died now. But I remembered them, intimately, very nice girls from Steveston. The people that lived in this house, they must have been big businessmen of some sort with some wealth, I would think.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: So, they were these kind of people. Like my dad was a storeowner but we didn't have very much money 'cause I think it was all invested money. What he got out was very little, so, he didn't have much to lose.

[2:15]

FTS: But still, you know, there's surely wasn't enough money. So, the venture was, you know, money-wise, total loss for everybody.

LU: How much did it cost to live in Christina Lake? And was the money going right to the lodge or? Where did the money go?

FTS: Yeah, I think everybody had to buy in, put in so much money, okay. If you wanted a cabin, this is what it's gonna cost you, 'kay? If you wanted to live in a room, this is what's gonna cost you. So, one way or another, you had to come up with the cash to keep the place going. So, the first couple of years, you see, this- you'll do okay, but the idea was that the lumber mill would run and make a profit so they would carry on, but that never happened. It made lumber, but cost of lumber wasn't worth it to make any profit. So, it was a loss in terms of return of capital, eh. For me, when I look back, that was the best thing that happened to me, I mean. You had a- You lived on a peninsula, it was beachfront, you could swim all summer long, you know. Beautiful lake. Nobody around, eh. All we had was a rowboat. You- [imitates rowing a boat with his hands] literally. Manpower only, eh.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: But I learned how to cut wood, I learned out how to grow vegetables, I learned all the things about camping that a young man should learn, you know [ticks off fingers as he speaks]. And you realize as a young man living in a city that, my God, you're useless when you don't have the basic necessities of life, so.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: So, in that way I feel very sad that I'd lost my mother. But for me, it provided me with leadership skills that we had to learn. Go to school by correspondence courses.

LU: Oh!

FTS: You know, the BC Commission set up a school- quasi school system that we had one of the supporters was a graduate of USC. You know, that's pretty big stuff in those days. And I think he had a nervous breakdown, or whatever, but he came back. And he led his family, and he became a teacher, supervised us. Built a little schoolhouse. We all had a little red schoolhouse with all the grades and did our formal studying and then you did all your own studying. Worked out pretty good, really.

LU: Mm-hm. And is that where you completed high school?

FTS: Yeah! Actually- I actually completed matriculation, believe it or not. I mean, how can you do a chemistry experiment by correspondence [laughs]? I think they were pretty sympathetic that we were handicapped, and you know, they gave us grace. They- they were good that way, I think. So.

LU: Mm-hm. So, other than working and- What would you do to pass the time? Other than, you know, swimming and row boating, were there any other activities that you were able to-?

FTS: Come September, the pipes all froze [laughs].

LU: September?

FTS: Well, you know, you're high up in the mountains [raises hand] so it's nice during the day but it freezes at night.



LU: Oh, geez.

FTS: And we were smart enough to, you know, bury the pipes, where we buried them six inches. I say, "Hey, that's fine, you know" [laughs]. So, every morning, somebody would have to get a blow torch and [laughs]. But then that lasted for about, you know, a month. By November, it was a dead loss, you couldn't use the thing, you know. So, you had to haul water from the lake. Fortunately, the lake is a stone's throw away. So, we'd get a bucket and cut the ice and bring water in. Stuff like that. And that kept you busy. Clearing snow, keeping the deer away from the garden.

[2:20]

FTS: Any garden, the green that you had. My God, there were so many deers around that.

LU: Really?

FTS: Oh, yeah! Oh, we didn't have any firearms. So, they'd walk all over us, eh.

LU: And what would you grow in the garden?

FTS: Oh, we'd grow, you know, all cabbages and beets. Beets were a very good item because you could store it. So, we learned stuff that- that you can eat fresh green leaves. They grew well. Tomatoes, they never grew well. Cucumbers, they didn't grow- grow that well. But napa, Chinese cabbage, stuff like that, grew very well.

LU: Mm-hm. And potatoes or carrots?

FTS: Potatoes? Well, we never ate very much potatoes as Japanese, eh. We ate rice. We had to import rice, eh. That was important [laughs].

LU: Mm-hm. Shoyu or miso?

FTS: Yeah, that stuff we had. We had- because we had secured the fish market store, retailer store. So, we had supplies of that. That was good thinking on somebody's part.

LU: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

FTS: But- but soon as the money ran out. The young people, especially, eh, the young married people, you know, they were forced to leave because they couldn't make a living. So, they- [stammers] They moved to the Greenwood area, Grand Forks area, where they had railway work. So, a lot of railway maintenance work was ideal because, I guess, the shortage of men, because of the war, so they needed men to maintain the railway line. So, most of them got work that way, one way or the other [clears throat]. So, meanwhile, we finished school. My mother had died, my sister had come out East with her husband, so we moved out. And I was accepted to the McMaster, right away. That was the only university I'd get in. 'Cause you couldn't get into Uof T [University of Toronto] because unless your grades were exceptional.

LU: Really?

FTS: Well, it's a provincially funded university, so, I think.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: McMaster was a Baptist church in those days. So, they were much more-

LU: Oh, really?

FTS: Yeah.

LU: Oh, I didn't know that.

FTS: Yeah. It is a nice university, eh.

LU: It is. My cousin went there [laughs].

FTS: Yeah. I had a great time.

LU: So, when- what year was it when you left Christina Lake?

FTS: I guess, it must've been '40- '47. '46 or '47. My dates are very bad that way.

LU: But there's- [unclear as both speak simultaneously]

FTS: So, I was there probably about two and half, three years.

LU: Yeah. Mm-hm. So, when the war ended, how did you hear about it? You know, what happened? What did it- What was everyone's reaction?

FTS: God, you got me there. I don't even remember.

LU: Do you remember hearing about Japan surrendering or, you know, Hitler, any news about him? Or how did you keep in touch with all the news that was going on?

FTS: I- Well, let's see, by the time the war ended, I don't think I was there. Or was it all over? It wasn't over till it was over and we weren't allowed to leave.

LU: I'm not sure if you were allowed to leave from the- I'm not sure about the self-supporting camps, if you were allowed to leave before the war ended.

FTS: I think we were allowed to go east.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: You couldn't go west, until a certain day. So, I think, gradually the movement started to go east. People that were- had connections out East, went east. Those that didn't have, stayed.

[2:25]

FTS: And then there was a group that didn't want to go back to Vancouver, to the coast, and remained there in Christina Lake. There's only one family left there [holds up one finger], still.

LU: Oh! I didn't know you were allowed to stay.

FTS: Oh, yeah! They've got a go- golf course named after their deceased father, eh. He became a, what they call an estimator. In the logging business, an estimator is a guy who defines how many useful lumber pieces you can get from a tree, eh. And it's a- quite a specialized business so he got one of those degrees, and he remained there and he has an extensive family that- they still live there. And we-I met the wife, she's living by herself, still at the- not the original site, but the south end of the lake.

LU: And what was their name?

FTS: Amagami. Big family. Tragic story, a family like that. They were big wheels in this whole bu- bus- fishing business. Many brothers. But the only one left was John who died of cancer, but the wife is still living there.

LU: Mmhm. Oh, wow.

FTS: It was so nice to see her. A really- In fact, it- it's a funny thing that you talk about that. Yesterday at the funeral, my friend here- I met this girl, and I didn't know her, but I knew her brother, younger. And she came up and said, "Do you remember me?" And I says, "No, I don't remember." "You know my husband." Well, I used to play golf with her husband, but he never mentioned it that this girl- When we were in Christina Lake, she used to come from Grand Forks, her family had moved from Grand Forks, which was the biggest city around the area. An agriculture city. And she used to come over to Christina Lake. It had one resort, and that was like about, you know, at the far end of the lake. Away from us, totally. Or, we were away from any of the civilization. And she used to work there on weekends, when the band came, and people came to visit there. And they had a lodge there. And she said she used to work there. And I- and like, you know, it's a funny thing that when you meet somebody that knows Christina Lake, you wanna shake their hand because there's so few of them left [chuckles].

LU: [chuckles] And was there any other entertainment that would be going on at Christina Lake and, I know I in some of the other camps they had put together, you know, like school plays or anything like that?

FTS: Oh, yeah. We had a nice dance hall there. And we used to play the records and have dance there, and the girls would teach us how to dance. That's how we learned dancing.

LU: [chuckles]

FTS: Seriously [?], the young person there's lots to do. We had baseball teams. That's the one thing we did. We cleared the woods to make a baseball field, and everybody played. Everybody had to play, it was conscription, [laughs] to get enough people.

LU: [laughs] And what happened with all the Asahi baseball players? Do you know if any of them went to Christina Lake, as well?

FTS: No, but they- No, they scattered all over. The Fukui family, for instance- You know, you talk about the Catholic thing here, okay. It's just an aside, there.

[2:30]

FTS: The Catholic people supported Greenwood, which is a mining town close to Grand Forks. And it's about three hours' drive from Christina Lake. And that was the closest settlement to the Japanese community. It's a thriving settlement, but they were sponsored primarily by the Catholic Church.

LU: Oh, wow!

FTS: So, there was a Catholic influence that way, there. I don't think there were too many families that were wards of the Catholic. But they were benefactors, it's why- educational needs, and things like that.

LU: Mm. Mm-hm. And what about the other Asahi baseball players? I guess they just would've been scattered amongst-?

FTS: Yeah, they were all over. They were all over. They all- Most of them, they all seemed to play baseball, in their area, wherever they went, you know. They're- they're fairly a close group that went up to Montreal, for instance.

LU: Oh, wow!

FTS: Yeah, yeah.

LU: Mm-hm. What about, you know, your friends? Did some of your friends [video glitches] go to different places as well? Or did they go to Christina Lake with you? You mentioned before that you would play with some of the boys in the back alley. Did you ever keep in touch with them over the years?

FTS: Oh, yeah. We kept in touch, but none of them came to Christina Lake. But the o- the only friend that came and- I don't know how he managed to do it, was the one that died. He was in Lemon Creek. And he came to visit one summer. How he managed that, I don't know or how my parents managed it, I don't know. But he came one summer, and we had a great time. He was a- I never realized he was such a good swimmer. I- being swimming in Christina Lake, I thought- When we crossed the lake, and he crossed that lake like nobody's business.

LU: [laughs]

FTS: Put us all to shame [laughs].

LU: [laughs] So, he was able to stay the whole summer with you?

FTS: Not the whole summer, but he came for a visit. So, he must've been there at least, I would say, a month.

LU: Wow!

FTS: And it had to be a very good summer, too. You know, warm and- [trails off].

LU: Mm-hm. Did he help work, as well, with all the lumber or?

FTS: No. No, I think was before we were- No, I think that was the time when they didn't really need us anymore. They- The men were really short of work. They- In other words, there weren't producing enough lumber between them.

LU: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Would they get paid for- ? What was the- ?

FTS: Yeah. They- It'd be wages that they're getting. So once iou couldn't meet the wages, there's trouble brewing and either you didn't work, or they disappeared, eh.

LU: Do you remember how much they would get paid?

FTS: I have no idea. All I know is that the best money that I made was when there was a forest fire, everybody was conscripted, because you didn't have people at all. And the regional director would assign you to where you're supposed to go. Take you by truck into some remote area. And one time we landed up there, and we woke up in the morning and God, we were in the middle of a fire that had gone through, and it was still warm. And it kept us warm. It was that cold, you know, so high [raises arm] up in the mountain. And the guys that were in the jail. They were- these were all the, you know, the alcoholics, and so forth.

[2:35]

FTS: The hangers on. They're happy to go on these things. Apparently, they stole all our food [laughs] and they took off. You know, all we had was tobacco. And I never smoked tobacco [laughs]. It was so funny when you think about it. But we were so mad, you know. All we had was shredded wheats, or something, and there's no milk, or anything. Stuff like that.

LU: How long were you there for?

FTS: That- Well- The fire- I think, we had to stay about a week or two weeks! Because you were posted there. You couldn't see any flame or anything, but it's the barrier- the perimeter that you make, eh. You're way away from the fire. But you're supposed to guard that area. It's a very dangerous occupation 'cause we- The one time we were very close was when the fire went above us [raises arm] onto the rocks. And the rocks got heated, and the rocks started to come down. And we didn't know, you see, the fire was up there. We were down below, guarding the- from what was coming up from below. But the fire had gone up [raises arm], and all the rocks were falling down on us. And like, they were not rocks, they were boulders. They were just raining down on us.

LU: Mm-hm. Was anyone injured?

FTS: No [shakes head]. No one was hurt. But, you know, if you got hit would it be- [shakes head]- I never realized how crazy this work was.

LU: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

FTS: That's how big the fire is, that you don't know really where the fire is. But you're stationed there, you're supposed to stay there. And I think that more people lose life because they wander away and then they're out of control of where they are.

LU: So, you'd- Do you just wait until the fire dies down naturally? Or are they trying to put out the fire?

FTS: Well, you'd build trenches, for instance, eh. You know, you'd build a- let's say a three-foot wide [stretches arms apart to demonstrate] trench, where you'd try to get rid of any grass or anything that's burnable. Combustible. And scrape it down to bare earth. And hope that that would be sort of the barrier that would stuff the flame. But generally, it's a hopeless case because the fire is travelling over you [waves hand above head]. On the trees, eh. So, there's very little you can really do.

LU: Mm-hm. Wow! That's interesting.

FTS: Yeah. Yeah.

LU: How many times did you have to go and-?

FTS: A couple of times, but this was the only time that was so bad. Where they stole our food and the next shipment came by mule train. They actually- you know, they didn't have any trucks. So, they had to use donkeys that brought you food. That's how remote it was. Mind you, it was during wartime. So, probably things were acute.

LU: Mm-hm. Did you have trouble with rationed items like milk, butter, and sugar?

FTS: Yeah. For- The families all used to pool resources. Everybody got food stamps. Like everybody else, I guess. And we had to po- to pool that to get your jam and

sweets and things. I think the baking was always a problem. We had to make- We made our own bread. You know, we had a baker there. So, we didn't suffer in terms of the rationed food. But if we had any problem, it'd probably been that we'd worry about rice being short, stuff like that. At least nobody could do very much about that.

LU: Mm-hm. Oh, wow!

FTS: But it mostly- It was the unexpected things that happened, you know. The pipes freezing, the generator going down. Certain kinds of wood that wouldn't burn too well, which shouldn't have cut and stockpiled, you know, it was a big mistake to do this.

[2:40]

FTS: Find out later that it was a stupid thing to do. But, eh, you live and learn [chuckles].

LU: Mm-hm. What about the correspondence between, you know, the various locations. Were the letters censored or looked after?

FTS: Yeah. They- yeah. We had a post office. The girls, I think, especially, were much more active in corresponding with their friends, and so forth, so.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: I don't think I did very much of that myself.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: But I think they had mail. Certainly, we- There was a mail run to Grand Forks, every once a week. The car went out. Carried mail, banking transactions, things like that.

LU: Oh, right. Right. Yeah. And, what about your uncle? Did your uncle go with you to Christina Lake?

FTS: No, they were interned right away. And luckily- luckily, he landed up as a cook in a- in a New Denver. And New Denver had a sanitarium. That was a serious thing with Asians. TB [tuberculosis].

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: And so, they had a beautiful spot there. Again, it was a- Sanitariums were, I suppose, one of the main rehab resources that they had in places like BC, where T.B. was so prevalent that you had to have places where people could stay isolated, but reasonably well looked after. And my uncle- [unclear] there were chefs there, and they supplied the food there. So, they had a very lucrative job and a sense of comfort.

LU: Mm-hm. Mm-hm, Oh, wow. Were you given the option to go out to East or to go to Japan? Or were you just given the option to go east?

FTS: No, they had a group that went to Japan. Like this Amagami family was a- They had a big decision to make. They were from a well-known village in Japan. And all the younger ones went to Japan, and they all suffered, really, eh. Timing was just terrible. So, the ones that stayed in Christina Lake, they fared fairly well. I met two or three of them.

LU: And who made the decision in your family to go to Japan or to go out East?

FTS: Oh, there was many problems there, my dad was a- Well, my dad didn't have any family in Japan, okay. So, that was no- that was a non-issue. My mother had sisters, but they were in no position to support anything. So, that was a non-issue. So, [stammers], and my sister had come out East. She came out- She was a- She taught kindergarten in an Anglican group. So, she was quite happy there.

LU: Mm-hm. Oh. Are there any other stories about Christina Lake that you can think of or want to share now or-?

FTS: I don't know.

LU: [chuckles]

FTS: I think that's enough. We can go on endlessly.

LU: [Laughs] We could! I said, I have lots of questions.

FTS: It- It's nice, you know, to be able to remember these things. I'm trying to think of sad things that happened, you know, and my mind just won't let me do that.

That's funny.

LU: Mm. Defensive mechanisms of the brain.

FTS: I guess that's what it is, eh? And yet, you know, some people seem to relish sad experiences to me. People that went to Japan, they are so full of horror stories.

[2:45]

FTS: And bitter experiences.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: It'd be very tough to live that way. I don't know. I- Maybe it's a different make up.

LU: Maybe. Mm.

FTS: 'Cause I could picture things being in Japan. I would say it would've been a horrible place to have to go back, after the war, you know.

LU: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

FTS: You know.

LU: Mm-hm. But I'm thinking about the pictures of Christina Lake that I think I saw. I remember there was a lot of slopes or- It looks like it was on a hill of some sort or maybe-

FTS: It has a grand staircase [moves hand to demonstrate].

LU: Of all the planks, right? It was covered with wood?

FTS: [nods]

LU: Oh, okay. What was the grand staircase for?

FTS: Well, it's just- It's built high, and it's got a huge veranda [stretches arms to demonstrate], okay. And then they- It's like the lodges out here. You have the stairs that come forward, and slant to the side. Architecturally, very nice, grand feeling, I would say.

LU: Was that made already before you arrived?

FTS: Yeah. They were- That was so nice. Well, it's all burned down, sadly, eh.

LU: Oh, really?

FTS: Yeah. Somewhere, along the line there, the fire n- It would've been a fire trap because it would've been a beautiful [unclear] and go up like matchsticks.

LU: Mm-hm. Mm.

FTS: So, when I went to visit there the- The old lodge was gone, but they divided the land into various sections and the lady that owned this one section, it must've been an auction of some kind; she had built sunrise cottages. It was advertised in the vacation magazines, so, we wrote to them and talked to the lady and kinda expensive, but it was a beautiful place. It was on the same location, lakefront where the building- the original building was. But it was on the other side of the road, closer to the lake.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: So, I really relived my past there. I was so- I was so happy for my kids. That they saw this thing- then they're saying, "Well, you had it real good, Dad." [laughs]

LU: Big, beautiful lake, and- [laughs]

FTS: That's what turned me to buy a cottage out here.

LU: Oh, yeah?

FTS: Yeah. I says, "Hey this is a land of lake out here, we don't use that word. It's criminal." Instead of going down to Florida all the time, you gotta get used to the mosquitoes [laughs].

LU [laughs] That's right. Wonderful! Why don't we pause there.

FTS: [Claps]

**[End Part I]**

**[Start Part 2, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011]**

LU: [laughs]

FTS: You'll have to kind of remind me.

LU: Well, we finished off last time. This is part two, August 18<sup>th</sup>, and we finished off last time pretty close to the end of the war years. So, we were just talking about Christina Lake. What do you remember about when you hear that the war had ended?

FTS: Well, I- As I told you, my vivid recollection of Pearl Harbour, I guess, was this news coming on a Sunday, which was something unheard of. At least where we lived, you know. And which is the very boundary of Vancouver City. So, that was really a shocker. And then I mentioned that- how we were herded into the library of this high school. And then I found out that there were quite a few Japanese kids who were in the same shoes as I was. And that- sort of the first time it struck me that I was really an alien. Although- and I think after that, things got more normalized, in a sense that you were fingerprinted, and after you were 16, and you were- you had to



register with the RCMP. So, those are kind of traumatic experiences in terms of recognizing, sort of, finally your heritage. I didn't go through this kind of discrimination thing, that you had with Strathcona Public School where you had a majority of Japanese kids. And the sort of a gang violence between Japanese and Chinese kids. And Japanese and white kids. 'Cause you're such a minority where I lived that you were just totally an outsider in many ways, eh.

LU: Mmhm. So, how was that experience different from when you heard that Japan had surrendered at the end of the war and that the war was over? Did you have any feelings about going back to your home and-?

FTS: Yes. I think we had a wish. I think all of us had that wish, that we could resume life. It never happened. And gradually, the information came that you could leave Christina Lake, provided that you went further east. But by the time all the people had- the people in the road camps had already been sent to east anyway, right. So, if you had any contacts out there, I had a brother-in-law, who became a brother-in-law, I guess, and they encouraged us to come out, so. And then the other thing was my mother died during the war years, so I think that sort of uprooted my sense of belonging back home. I said, "Well, life's never gonna be the same that way."

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: It was traumatic in one sense, but I think- I suppose with time, you become more positive. Or you look at the incident in a more positive light, and say, well, compared to somebody else who had such and such, you know. I really look at the good side of what I learned at Christina Lake. You learned leadership. You learned how to cope with isolation. Certainly, you learned how to cope with living on bare necessities. [stammers] I y- I was very proud of that. Coming from the city, learning from all these kids that grew up around Steveston area. They're much more country-wise. For them, I think it was- The transition wasn't traumatic at all, you know. So, they were relocated but they made things like vegetable gardens and things were just second nature to them. For me, that was a whole new ball game. It was tough but a good experience.

[0:05]

LU: Mmhm. And what do you remember about leaving Christina Lake and packing up your belongings? What did you take with you out East and where did you go?

FTS: I think we had some records; that was very important to me. They weren't my records, they were my sister's records. But by the experience of having music, modern music, very much like Frank Moritsugu relates to modern music in his tenure during the war and after, it's a very similar experience, I think. That feeling of losing your time the moment in history when you're young. And hearing music, 'cause I think radio was the only means of communication, I suppose. That's what deepened it. We didn't bring very much, coming east, because I don't think we were

allowed very much to carry anything substantial. They- they were- To me, that was the only thing that was important was some of the old records.

LU: Mm-hm. Did you have a radio in Christina Lake?

FTS: We had. In the end, it was surreptitious. Because this was illegal, to have communication with the outside world, in ways. But you had shortwave, so you could get local radio programs. Somebody always had the know-how of doing that. But the main intent of the radio was to get news from Japan, for the older Japanese. And for them, you really feel badly when you reflect that they thought well, this is, you know, a one-month, two-month summer holiday. The war will be over. They'll go back to their fishing and lumbering, or whatever and, you know. And this whole thing and upset [unclear] They just- my dad, for instance, he and his group there, the older people. Everyday they'd huddle at nighttime, or I think, in the evening, to hear broadcasts from Tokyo, supposedly Tokyo. About how the war is going and- It must have been very frustrating for them. I would think.

LU: How did they react when Japan surrendered?

FTS: I think it was just the resignation. I think they knew in their hearts that this was- [chuckles lightly] this was a lost cause that they were chasing. They were chasing a dream. And I suppose that everybody needs that dream, but to get it shattered, I think- I- You know, you look at this tsunami incident and the earthquake, and you see the fatalistic attitude that the Japanese have, eh. They've sort of become to me, ingrained in Japanese and the ability to be able to live with the trauma. And *shouganai* [translation: "It can't be helped"] is a very fatalistic, but a survival or- survival technique, I think, eh.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: It's served them well to rise again. Carry on.

LU: Mm-hm. And- So, what other items did you bring with you out East? You mentioned the records and that yo- There wasn't a lot that you brought out East with you, but-?

FTS: No.

LU: Anything else?

FTS: No, nothing very much that we had of sentimental value. There were photographs, this kind of thing. But that sort of thing was kind of very- not that important, at that time, to us. Because of my age, I think. My older brother looked at that as more important. So, all the albums and this kind of thing, were kind of given over to him. You look after it, kind of thing.

LU: Mmhm.

FTS: And he was more interested, obviously.

LU: Mmhm. And how did you travel out East? Did you go by train?

FTS: Yeah, we went by train and that was another great experience. My sister was with the Anglican ministry as a Sunday school teacher and a piano teacher. So, that was her. A vocation really- It came in very handy because through the ministry, we

were able to arrange a ferry ride from, I think, Nelson up to Revelstoke, going through the- one of the big lakes, there, Slocan, or whatever.

[0:10]

FTS: Anyways, it was a beautiful ferry ride. It's a paddle wheeler boat they used to run. And it took- It was an overnight trip. And that was still, I guess, in the summer, so it was really a very nice trip.

LU: Mm-hm. Is that one of the large paddle wheels? The large wheel at the back-

FTS: [nods] Yeah.

LU: -that propels the water?

FTS: That's right.

LU: Oh!

FTS: And that was a mode of transport in those lakes. And I suppose they're vacation-oriented [unclear]. In the winter, I guess, all the lakes would freeze. So, they probably wouldn't use it.

LU: Mm. Mm-hm. And who did you travel when you came out East?

FTS: My sister.

LU: And what about your father?

FTS: My father stayed because he had to tie up arrangements with Christina Lake as well as some business that he had in Vancouver, prior to the war. And all these things were tied up in legal matters, I guess. And there was very much leaning on to people who you could trust, so. He came later. And of course, my mother passed away by then. So, in that sense, I wanted to get out. And my sister was marrying her newly acquired husband, so.

LU: Mmhm. And he was already out East?

FTS: He was already out, yeah. And had already relocated to Toronto.

LU: Was your brother already in Toronto at that time, or where was he-?

FTS: No, he was in Greenwood. 'Cause already had a family. He had married before the war. So, he had an extra family burden sort of, to look after. So, he didn't come out East until after we had established- my dad had established himself.

LU: Mmhm. So, when did you arrive out East? In Toronto?

FTS: Yeah. My brother had an apartment in- on Spadina Avenue, Spadina and College. And it was on the third floor. And I was given a bedroom by them. And I lived there. And I applied to UofT, unsuccessfully, but they accepted me in Hamilton at McMaster. McMaster being a Baptist university, were much more accommodating. Scholastically too, eh, let's put it that way. Coming up with a correspondence course graduation is really not very good qualifications to start university [laughs].

Anyways, finally, I landed up in Hamilton. And a family called Hyodo had a house there. So, I stayed at their place and commuted to school.

LU: Who else lived at that house in Hamilton? Hyodo house?

FTS: They were very well-known. They were connected with this Reverend Shimizu, that Tom [?] had a picture on. Their daughter- I think the oldest daughter was married to Dr. Shimizu. So, they were well connected with the outside world, compared to the rest of us, I guess. And they had family. Kids who, I think, went to one of the universities around that area.

LU: Were there other students living in the house, as well?

FTS: No, I was the only one. They had a son who was going- I think was just going to high school, then, in Hamilton. But the first time I tried that.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: And I think it was very trying for me.

[0:15]

FTS: Coming in from, really, a carefree life in BC. And really not doing a hell of a lot but playing. Into a kind of a very structured society. [three sentences redacted] But we managed to get along, you know, for a year. In that second year, I was accepted into the student residence there, so.

LU: And what year did you start university?

FTS: I think it was '46. '46 or- '45 or '46 I- [stammers] forget now.

LU: Mm-hm. And what do you remember about school at McMaster? Were the students acting differently towards you, or-?

FTS: Yeah, it was more of a curiosity, than anything. I think they- They were very tolerant, I think. But more curious than anything. And I was fairly competent in sports, in one way or another. So, I actively tried out for everything, and realized I was not a real athlete to compete at their level [chuckles]. But- but that- that sort of gained you enough social skills to mingle with the students there. The- the other big, big issue there was that it was the year when the veterans all came back from the war. And they were eligible for- on a scholarship basis, of entering university. So, it was very hard to get into university. Once you got in, they were huge cliques of these students. And- I mean these were men, compared to us. They'd all been hard drinking, dirty-song-singing groups that, you know, they were having their kind of time of life, in many ways. But had experienced life, I guess, much more acutely, then we had- So, the students that we had, who didn't go to war [laughs] the *hakujin* kids were very sadly discriminated when they had the frosh- what- what do they call it? The initiation ceremony, and that sort of thing [nods slowly].

LU: Mm-hm. What about their reaction towards having Japanese students at the school?

FTS: No problem. They- they're just a minority group. Lincoln Alexander. Lincoln was the lieutenant governor of Ontario for a long time. He was very well known. He's a few years older than I am. He was one of the students, and he would certainly recognize us being different, but he was a great orator, even at that time. And he just had that atmosphere of being in the services, going to school. Became a lawyer very

easily. So, he was in the graduating class, I guess, two or three years before I was. People like that, I think, were very helpful in influencing the social side of things.

LU: Mm-hm. Do you know of any other Japanese students who were at the school?

FTS: Yeah, there was a fellow named Dick Takimoto. He was a couple years older, but he was a great United Church member. Family was very much church-oriented. So, they knew this Hyodo family and I think, maybe it was them that helped me find boarding at this Hyodo place. And Dick had- That's right, Dick had- They had moved to Grimsby, which is fairly close to Hamilton. They had the first Japanese Senior Center there [referring to Nipponia Home] [nods slowly]. If you go back to history, you'll find about Beamsville, Grimsby.

[0:20]

FTS: There's quite a story about that place there. He was very active in United Church while he was at university, so we became good friends [nods].

LU: Mm-hm. Was there any other Japanese students that you can think of?

FTS: Yeah, there was Margaret Inouye. I still remember Margaret Inouye, and myself, and a girl named Amy Otsuki. They- We all had to take French immersion classes. It was a compulsory thing. And Margaret became, I guess, a vice-president of CBC, after graduating from McMaster. Majored in English. I think she was a scholarship category student. She made a name for herself very quickly.

LU: Mmhm.

FTS: And she- So, I never knew her, intimately, except that we went to the same school about the same time [chuckles].

LU: [chuckles]

FTS: I knew a lot of people. I knew people like Bob Welch, who was a PC, opposition party leader in the Ontario legislature. And Robert Nixon, another- he was a premier<sup>2</sup>. His family was very much prominent in Ontario politics. They were two people in the same class as I was. Year, same year [nods]. They were very- So, they were very- They were persecuted, the poor kids, you know, 'cause they had not gone to war. They were good scholarly, nerdy kids, as the veterans would call them. So, they had a hard time having the first couple of years [chuckles and nods]. Compared to us. We were just nobody that didn't matter, eh. But they were targets, so.

LU: And how long did you study at McMaster for?

FTS: Three years. Three years was the shortest course I could take to get out. So, after the second year I decided, look, I said, I- My dad wanted me to be a doctor, but I wasn't to be- to have the staying power, right, that you need to be able to study nights and cram material and [stammers]. It just wasn't my kettle of fish, I suppose. So, I graduated in '48. And- Well, this lawyer, Kaz Owiwe- Oiye. He also went to McMaster. I think, a year or two behind me, if I remember, but he continued onto

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Nixon was the Deputy Premier of Ontario in the late 1980s.

law school. You know, he had to take a three-year arts course to get into law school at Osgoode Hall. So, he had gone through there, so. And he and I were classmates at the Japanese school, so.

LU: Mm. And what after you graduated? Then what?

FTS: Well, by that time, after three years there, my dad had decided that we were in the b- the restaurant like business before the war. So, he opened up a restaurant on College and Spadina. And we had to help and my brother- Of course, I think he'd bought it for my brother, basically, 'cause he had already had a child, and he was out of work. And the restaurant was a survival mechanism. But, you know, as usual, what happens in those situations, that you'd go back to the old-fashioned restaurant. And you have a Canadian-type sandwich/coffeeshop idea. But you're right in the middle of Jewish- Jewish Italian, at- in those days, section there. [sentence redacted]

[0:25]

FTS: So, it ran for about four years. And we sold it.

LU: And what was it called?

FTS: Melody. But we had some good times there too [laughs].

LU: So, after Melody closed, what happened?

FTS: I didn't work there. I had found a job at Connaught Labs. Connaught Labs was part of the University of Toronto. And it started off to produce insulin, as its one and only big product. It served as a sort of the wholesaler for vaccines in those days, in the First World War, started there to expand in the Second World War. So, there's Spadina Crescent, there's a crescent there and the old Knox College, still there. As you come down from Bloor, there's a circle that you come around before you hit College Street. And in the center of this is this old-fashioned church-like tower building. That was sort of the headquarters for Connaught. And that was just a half a block away from where I lived. And there was a job advertised there, for a researcher as- research assistant. Turned out that this was a job- My first job was to catch monkeys that they used for research in polio. So, that's what started my career at Connaught. I spent 40 years there. And I was involved with the beginnings of and the continuation of polio vaccines.

LU: Mm-hm. Tell us a little bit about going and catching the monkeys.

FTS: What we had in those days- Well, you know, you have cages, wired cages, and they would be kept in the cage, and they'd have a runway where they could run. Or you'd open the door, and you would go into this door. It's all caged area. Smelly and dirty as hell. And you'd have sort of lacrosse- You ever seen lacrosse? Okay, well there's a- Well, it's like a huge fishing net. You made this thing with a heavy twine on it as a net and then you'd catch the monkey in the net [chuckles]. And folded it so that the monkey is imprisoned, then you'd grab it by the neck and bring it in. But generally, to initiate [?] them for some experiments. So, that's the kind of thing I- It was a lot of fun, at the beginning, but it was dirty work too, eh. [chuckles]

LU: How many monkeys were there?

FTS: Oh, there were maybe 10 to 15, eh. That- that was a big cost factor. Monkeys were expensive. They were very expensive to ship. So, they were well looked after, in one sense, that you just couldn't bang them around. Like rats or mice, eh.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: But that- The ideal theory was that the monkeys were the closest to humans, and we knew that by that time the polio virus would attack the nerves- the nervous system. Cells in the nervous system. And it would be to study the nervous system after inoculating the virus. Embalming it, getting the spinal cord out, and slicing it, and making histological slides, and examining them under the microscope. See how much damage is done.

LU: Oh, neat! And what species of monkey was it?

FTS: Eh- they were- Well, the Rhesus monkeys were the ones that were available. So, that's what happened. It happened that Rhesus monkeys were susceptible to polio. Later on, we'd find out that the South American monkeys are not susceptible.

[0:30]

LU: Interesting!

FTS: Yeah. [chuckles] Those are things that nobody knows anything about, but you find out.

LU: Mm-hm. And- So, tell us a little bit about, you know, the process of the team working towards finding the cure for polio.

FTS: Okay. Well, try- You just cut me off because I- I'll probably ramble here and there.

LU: Oh, that's okay [chuckles].

FTS: So, if we go back in history, what happens with a thing like polio was that you had no means of growing the virus, unless you have nerve cells living in some animal. And it had to be a primate, or primate-related nerve cells. Rats and rabbits didn't do, 'kay. So, you were now stuck with the animals, the animals were expensive, right. So, it's a maintenance problem. Propagating the virus, harvesting or creating enough virus so you could do experiments with it. And my boss was Dr. Rose, and he decided- Coming out of the British war effort, they had done a lot of work and found out a lot about viruses and so forth because of their expedition in Africa, during the invasion back, they had come through Africa up through Italy as one of the ways of penetrating the German defenses, eh. So anyway, he was interested and so- He took the tack that if he took an isolated community such as Eskimos<sup>3</sup>, where there is no outside contact. And for most things like polio, you'll find very clear examples [video glitches] of how the virus goes from family to family. Pretty much like the flu incident we had here, where you have the genealogical

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<sup>3</sup> Outdated term for Inuit people.

history of somebody going to China, coming back, had contact with a brother, and all of this, you know, you're following clinical symptoms of what the virus is doing, eh. And the Eskimos, they really died very quickly because they were such a virgin population. No immunity whatsoever. So, that- that was undertaken by a life insurance company. Obviously, somebody has to sponsor these things, to buy the monkeys. And at the same time, in the US, Franklin Roosevelt, the president, had polio. He had hidden it for a long time, but as he became more prominent, as he became older, he became paralyzed. So, he was very interested, and he started this March of Dimes. The idea was to get the public involved in finding a cure. Very much- very similar to what you do with cancer today. If you get the public involved, you'll get the funding, the more spectacular, the more funding you'd get for the research. It was the same idea that he started, and it worked very successfully in raising money and Dr. Rose was fortunate enough to get funding, getting attention from the US of continuing his work. At the same time, there was this Dr. Salk in Pittsburgh who had- Oh, let's just go back before. Just before that, there was a Dr. Edgars at- in Boston, at Yale, who had discovered that you could artificially grow cells in a test tube, and he grew monkey kidney cells. And he found that polio virus could grow on this artificially grown cells.

[0:35]

FTS: And so, here, you started this new cell culture system, which was a huge step, experimentally, in being able to handle virus outside of the animal. Now, coincident with this discovery by Dr. Edgars, Pittsburgh, Dr. Salk, began to work after he had done research with the influenza virus in concentrating this virus, and making it into a vaccine using formaldehyde to kill the virus, retaining antibody properties, injecting into animals, testing the animals for antibody response, and found that you have a system whereby the antibody would protect new viruses. So, it's as simple as that, eh. It's- And at Connaught, we had a researcher who worked for the Rockefeller Institute in New York, doing cancer research and growing cells. Remember that I told you that this Dr. Edgar had found a way to grow cells. Monkey kidney cells, outside. And the polio virus would grow on this. And this Dr. Parker was trying to do the same thing with cancer cells, even at that time. This was- big- Back in the '40-'50s, eh. It was 1950s. So, he had acquired enough expertise, how to make artificial solutions that would maintain the life of cells, that you could propagate it. So, now you have the combination of maintaining a nutrient, and you could culture the cells, just how much as you want. Just given the size, the volume, and the time. And you'd get a virus that would happily grow in this. So, now you have a vaccine, or the fundamentals of this. And this had been tried before but very, you know- they just didn't have the resources how to test it. And they- A fair bit of accidents that- with Canadian population. Anyways, this all led to the growing of the whole industry of polio vaccine. And Connaught became sort of the forefront of Canadian participation.



And with Dr. Salk's discovery, that you can make a vaccine in small quantities, the next step was to do a giant field trial. It's never been done. In the world that's- To try and get a million people vaccinated, children. And then watching them to see if they respond. It's a very risky business, after all, you know. This virus [chuckles], if you do it wrong, could paralyze a child for life. So, there's a lot of political consequences, by the way. Anyways, we got into the ground floor doing this and in Canada they decided that we would grow production-sized unit of the viruses. Send it down to Pittsburgh and elsewhere, other drug companies. They would process it to kill the virus. And then having a vaccine to do a few trials.

LU: So, you were part of the team harvesting the live cells of the polio virus?

FTS: Yeah. Yeah. I was right in the beginning, right from the start, there. Catching monkeys was my first job but it's just- things just grew. And I happened- I just happened to go along the- with the gravy train [laughs], shall we say. So, it was really quite interesting.

LU: What were some of your other responsibilities at the Connaught Center?

[0:40]

FTS: Oh, I did everything. I've done research on cell growth, the types of cells, tests for safety, the product before we finally release it to make sure there were no live viruses that could potentially harm humans. It was a very stressful job. And as a salesperson, going out marketing, and going to countries like Japan, and Spain, Brazil, as a technical expert in how to do it, and helping these countries get off the ground. [nods]

LU: Was there any other health risks for yourself? Especially, working with these live viruses?

FTS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I found out that I probably had polio when I was young. 'Cause I have a very deformed left leg. It doesn't show outwardly but I've ever had it since childhood, and I had immunity to the virus. We find this out later on, mind you, 'kay. So- And there are other viruses that were common in monkeys. You find out that called B virus. And there are several other- Ebola virus, you've heard about probably if- Science fiction films are full of these. Things like the plague, for instance. These are real viruses that exist. And the substrate being somebody other than humans are growing as far as the animals are stabilizing, immune to them. But when the population makes a mutation and jumps, you do have a serious problem. Very much like the See- Faecalis [or facilis] bacteria. A superbug, eh? It's antibody-based, or antibiotic-based bug. If they didn't have antibiotics, there wouldn't be superbugs because they have antibiotics, they become resistant and they're mutants. So, it's the same idea. So, we have a lot of that kind of problem. Oh, I've had people- Technician's wives phone me and says he, "My- my husband is not gonna work on this," and threaten me [laughs]. And, you know, for good reason that we're a young people raising a family. Why are we trying to do this kind of thing.

You get carried away; you know. You don't realize, and I say, "Okay, I'll do it myself." But there are certain things you can't do by yourself all the time. So, that's been my last story. I worked with polio virus all my life, one way or another. And it's been a great adventure [nods]. I got to go to a lot of countries, seen a lot of things.

LU: Mmhm.

FTS: Gone to Africa, done the safari trip and all these, chasing monkeys [laughs].

LU: Not something you do every day.

FTS: Yeah! Exactly! Exactly, you know, so.

LU: Mm-hm. And what was your first trip to Japan?

FTS: I think it was back in- [stammers] The interesting story about Japan was that- It was a time, I guess, early in the 70s when Russia was just becoming a powerhouse, or the Cold War was starting. And Japa- And Russia had said that they would provide free vaccines to Japan. And the Japanese were very scared of how much research the Russians had done because they were not part of the World Organization, so you didn't know what their safety factor was, for instance. It was very much like the Sputnik thing. I suppose, in NASA, you always paint the bad picture of the other guy [chuckles lightly]. Anyways, they decided that they didn't want to buy or get the vaccine free from the Russians because the Americans would object. The American vaccine would be very expensive.

[0:45]

FTS: And it would offend the Russians. Canada, being a small country, would be much more safer people to deal with. So, they decided that they would buy the vaccine, limited amounts, from Canada. So, "Well, you're Japanese, you go." "Sure, why not." And the first thing my agent tells me, "Mr. Shimada, try not to speak Japanese" [laughs]. I thought I spoke pretty good Japanese, but you know. But if you're scientifically going, you're nowhere as close to converse- being converse- And, you know, there weren't that many translators in those days that could do an adequate translation, so. So, I spoke in English. They would understand the English part of it, scientifically. So, that was okay. They didn't want me to try and explain things in Japanese.

LU: [laughs]

FTS: I thought that was a lot of fun [chuckles].

LU: And when you were in Japan for work related business, were you ever able to go for a personal trip to Japan?

FTS: Listen, this trip was so personal, I'll tell ya. I subsequently went to Japan with my wife. But this first trip that I went with this company, dealing with the government, and the bureaucracy in governments other than Canada is quite- It's quite another thing, you know. Their graft and propaganda and it's almost like a storybook of lying to each other. So, every night you're taken out to a nightclub. And I said, "Oh God, these people are really doing me favors. They're paying hundreds of

dollars, buying me drinks and they had taken me out with a dancing girl, and of all this kind of nonsense.” And here, they're using me to- these guys have an expense account, and they're entertaining their staff [laughs]. So, I said, never again will I go and- go back to Japan, I don't wanna go to a nightclub. I wanna go to a Japanese inn. So, that's what I did when I went with my wife the second time. I don't wanna go out anywhere near a hotel. And that was a- really a nice trip.

LU: Mm-hm. Were you able- ever able to connect with, you know, family roots or with your own- ?

FTS: Yeah. Yeah. My family on my relative's side. One fellow was- worked for a giant multi-corporation. He happened to be in the tourist business, at that time. So, he was well-connected in arranging tours in Japan, Hawaii, and all of these places. And he- He was so well-connected that they sent him out to the US for his company. So, he travelled a fair bit. Landed up in Hawaii as his last place of work, so. I've been to Hawaii several times. At his expense. We got along famously. And they have a house that's walking distance from the bus terminal to the airport, right in the heart of Tokyo. So, pretty cushy, the arrangements. They're still alive. I still correspond with them. I have an uncle there.

LU: Mm-hm. Oh, wow [laughs].

FTS; My proudest moment was when I- when they sent me last time, or when we had a holiday. I said “Well, I wanna go on a tour bus, but I don't wanna go on a tourist tour. I wanna go on the Japanese.” So, I went- So, they arranged the tours for me, and we went down to Miyajima, down in Southern Japan. By the end of the trip, the people on that bus are saying, you know, “[speaking Japanese].” They congratulated me, that I'm one of them, you know. That made me feel real good [laughs].

[0:50]

LU: [laughs] And where did you meet your wife?

FTS: My wife is one of those that kind of a story- got old family ties in Vancouver. But she had to come to see our family leaving to go to Christina Lake. And she had brought her mother. She's a few years younger than I. But that was when I first met her. It wasn't love at first sight or anything but I- Subsequently, you know, we'd come back from school, and so forth. And we met at the dances. But it was really a family connection.

LU: What dances did you meet at?

FTS: Well, we had these teen dances in Toronto, generally sponsored by the churches. The church was very influential when keeping a common play, sort of hosting, these dances and that.

LU: Mm. And where were they generally located in Toronto?

FTS: Spadina and College. That seems to be the usual hang out there. There used to be a Ukrainian Hall. And there was a Labor Lyceum- was a [stammers] labor union

office, that had a hall. These were two favorite places where small groups organized, church groups, eh, generally, were- organized these dances. And word by mouth would get around that they'd have a [unclear], once a month, kind of. People would come from Hamilton, and different places.

LU: Oh! So, it's kind of a big thing.

FTS: Oh, yeah! It was a- That's how I learned how to dance, really. Which became my big passion between my wife my- She was part of this- She never tap-danced, but she was quite agile. She- The group in Scarborough, they formed a Seniors' Tap Dance group. And they were sort of the major performers for the Senior Jubilee they used to have once a year for the one week, you know just- Just the last few years that they've disappeared. But it was a government-sponsored thing. Run by- Backed by Royal Bank. And they took over the Thompson Hall during the day. So, they were sort of the- Not the major attraction, but they were sort of the background chorus line that introduced the show.

LU: Wow!

FTS: She's quite proud of that.

LU: [giggles] These teen dances that you used to go to in Toronto, were they predominantly Japanese, or-?

FTS: Yeah, they were all Japanese.

LU: All Japanese. Oh, wow. So, how many people, would you guess, may have been at those dances?

FTS: Oh, I would say probably a good hundred.

LU: Oh, wow!

FTS: They were all- Most of them- Well, [stammers] most of them would be working and then there'd be a student's group. There'd be a Hamilton group. And then there would be Burlington group, and the little cliques here and there. They were all chasing the same thing: women. And the women are looking for men. You sit on- And it happened in all societies, in those days, the girls all lined up one side, the men on the other side.

LU: [chuckles] And what was the Japanese community like in Toronto at that time? In, you know, in the '50s, in the '60s?

FTS: Ther- Well, these dancers were one the key things, the other things were bowling, was already popular. So, that was another social thing. And there were, you know, badminton clubs and tennis clubs and then [unclear] after that, golf became more popular, so. So, you had little cliques like that.

LU: What about some of the older generations, like your parents or your father?

[0:55]

LU: How did they stay connected with their friends while out east?

FTS: Well, they had what they called Sharagi [?] Club. Which is a- I don't know the translation of it. But to us, it implied older people. And it was their thing to- They

would have a one- once a month meeting and they would- Basically, it's a social group that they would talk and have Japanese food. So, it was pretty well organized, I think. We always have- Japanese were very good, organizationally, I think. They seemed to be able to find people who could lead and- and ba- a group of people would back them. Supporting them.

LU: Mm-hm. As the years went on the '50s, and '60s, and '70s, what was the discrimination like towards the Japanese community?

FTS: I think it's- I think that to me it's a very personal thing. If you look forward, you could find it. But if you accept this as being the norm, I- You didn't really feel anything. I don't know, it's because I- I've never really looked at this as an issue, myself. At work, I've worked with that- [clears throat] where at a time you needed labour, skilled labour, some university graduate types- They were all from Europe. So, you learned from them. In fact, they were better educated than I ever was, you know. Some of them were PhDs, some of them were close to being doctors, and because of the war, they had to be- immigrate. So, they've had their hard times, and I think, from that I kind of felt that well, okay maybe we had our hard time, but we weren't exclusive in the club by any means. There were Lithuanians, and Ukrainians, and Hungarians, and these people have their stories to tell. And I felt that we were amongst friends that way. I think I learned a lot from them.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: Yeah.

LU: Wanna take a short break?

FTS: Yeah, sure [looks at watch].

[cut in video]

LU: Okay! [camera beeps] There we go. So, we left off talking about the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto, at the time. And in the 1960s, when the Japanese Canadian Cultural Center first started to develop, were you active in that or do you remember that occurring?

FTS: I'm not very- I don't remem- I wasn't very active, but my wife was very active in helping out because we lived on Victoria Park and Lawrence. So, that was a straight bus run down Lawrence Avenue, there.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: So, she was handy, and she never worked, so. She was very handy in helping Bob Kadoguchi. He was sort of the driving force and the executive director. I think it was really the hardship days of getting funds for anything.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: But the volunteers were young. I think they made up for lack of money with their physical enthusiasm, I suppose.

LU: Mm-hm. So, what were some of the activities that your wife would take part in?

FTS: She would be an organizer in greeting people when they would make donations for Bazaar function or any of these functions.

[1:00]

FTS: She's very good in remembering people. She's from Tashme, which seems to have been the source of the majority of people that relocated around here. And she's very sociable. I think she's like that. So, she's a very good coordinator, that way.

LU: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. As the Cultural cCnter developed and was built in the early 60s, for events such as the Bazaar, where they would have all the cooking and food preparation, or later in the years, Caravan. Do you remember any of those events, as well? Or if your wife took part in those?

FTS: Yeah. I think is where she learned how to cook by some of these old veteran cooks that knew how to make all these Japanese foods. I was always fond of Japanese food. And she became quite an expert. And eventually, she worked or helped, assisted Ruth Ryoji. She was a sort of the caterer, I guess the first caterer that used the Center's facilities to provide sushi and basic Japanese food.

LU: Oh!

FTS: She's retired, recently. But she was by far the most well-known, conscientious person.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: High-quality food, I'd say.

LU: Mm-hm. What about in the '80s, when redress was taking place? Were you active in that? Or what do you remember about it?

FTS: Unfortunately, I was not very much a proponent of it. Mainly, because I suppose, I didn't- I just didn't feel the discrimination, personally. And I think maybe that was one of the reasons. I- I'll be very frank, I thought it didn't have very much of a chance that it would succeed. And I am so grateful that there were people who chased this thing. And followed it to the bitter end. Such a success, I think. It's unique, I think. It became sort of the formula for most of the other people that were discriminated against. Ethnic groups, religious groups, and so forth.

LU: Mm-hm. And how did you feel with the apology of redress, and how did it make you feel? I know you didn't feel that much discrimination during the war years when you were growing up but, what about your father, for example, was he still alive at that time? Was he- ?

FTS: I don't remember, really. I've never associated with it in that way. But he- I think as a family, we weren't that hard pressed. I think, financially, we were, but I suppose, in many ways, from a survival point of view, I've always believed that, look, look, we didn't lose a single person going to war and fighting, you know. That's pretty lucky, really. You suffered hardship but- So, that- from that point view, especially when I hear stories from these displaced people in Europe. They had just as equal a time of hardship and a cathartic life as we had. At least, from what they

told me about their stories, you know. So, the redress thing was very nice. I think it's a good focal point for Japanese and they should use that as sort of a formula for doing justice.

LU: Mm-hm.

FTS: But apart from that, I was very happy to get the money, I'll tell you that.

[laughs]

[1:05]

LU: Mm-hm [laughs]. And just before we finish off here, I just want to make sure that we have all the names here [sound of shuffling of papers]. Oh, before we do this. We were just talking outside about your uncle's house. Do you wanna just tell us a little bit about the house, where it was located?

FTS: It was bit of a rundown place because both my uncle and his wife worked full time at this little food shop on Granville Street, which was quite a ways. And in those days, when you worked, it was a full-time day job, and there were very little you'd do with a house. So, the upkeep itself was a basic necessity. The wife was very much a farmer type-oriented lady. She liked to grow things. I remember all the time that I knew her, she grew things out of necessity, of course, but she was very good at making pickles, and this kind of thing. Japanese things. So, they must have had a garden, to begin with. So, they must've grown a lot of things. She was very knowledgeable. My uncle, I don't think he was very much of a gardener, but certainly the wife was. The impression was that this like really a cottage-like house. Bare necessities. Fairly large yard, as properties go, but not much else.

LU: And where was it located?

FTS: It's located on Main Street, I think, as Tom says and I don't know really very much of- how the history of the place. We really didn't visit there very much. I knew he lived there. I've been there several times. But nothing to any great extent.

LU: What was your uncle's name?

FTS: His name was Nobugi.

LU: Shimada?

FTS: Yeah, and his wife is Chika.

LU: Mm. Okay. Wonderful! And did I ask you last time- Yeah, your parents' names. What is your wife's name?

FTS: Oh, Barbara Akiko.

LU: Akiko.

FTS: Okawara.

LU: Oh, okay. There we go. And did you have children?

FTS: Do we- Two, we have two boys. And- Well, one has a boy and a girl. And the other one has two girls.

LU: And what are your two sons' names?

FTS: Douglas and Jeffrey.

LU: Did you give them Japanese names?

FTS: Yes, Douglas is Tada-Aki.

LU: Tada-

FTS: Tada-Aki.

LU: Aki.

LU: It's hyphenated. Tada- I'm Tadao, my wife is Akiko.

LU: Ah!

FTS: So, it's like a horse [laughs].

LU: [laughs] And what about Jeffrey?

FTS: Jeffrey is Shin-Ichi.

LU: Shi-Ichi?

FTA: That's my- My father's name.

LU: Wonderful. That's great! And I think I have all the names for your parents. And- Was it Shi-Ichi or Shin-Ichi?

FTS: Shin.

LU: Shin. S-H-I-N?

FTS: Yeah.

LU: And then Ichi. Okay. And your mother was Kiyoko?

FTS: [nods slightly] Yes.

LU: Okay. Wonderful!

FTS: Okay.

LU: Well, thank you very much [laughs]!

FTS: Yeah.

**[End Part 2]**