Kokubo, Hideo 37:1

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Hideo Kokubo TAPE ONE

"My brother was here (in Stevdston before the war) until ten years old. He went back to Japan with my aunt. He was adopted by my uncle because he did not have a son to carry on the family name."

"We lived in a B.C. Packers" house. I went to the public school here... There was a Japanese language school too. Until I got to Grade 4, the main language was Japanese. English was about 2 hours a day... After that a change came. We learned English all day. After English school was over, we lea rned Japanese for 2 hours... We went to the Japanese school after (English) as if to go to play, because we were kids , we were tired too. It was in the same school, only the teachers were exchanged. In those days there were not enough classrooms.

Going to Jap. school was like going to play for us —?

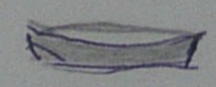
"There were a school and a hospital built only by the Japanese. We had a doctor from Japan when I was a child."

"On The present Moncton Street, also on Number One Road towards the water there were a lot of shops, barber shop, etc., from the corner of Moncton and Number One Road... A barber shop, noodle restaurant, restaurants, grocery stores, drug store, post office, hardware store. All the way, Bakery too. W

Q. Were they owned by the Japanese? K: Yes.

"In those days we could not easily fish like now. The licences were all separate. So many for the North, so many for around here. We were restricted... Those who had the licences before the restriction could keep their licences. Then gradually it became a problem. The licences that had been kept without use -- what to do about such unused licences... My papa, as he had a lot of children, he did well to keep a gillnet licences, troller licence, etc. They were transferred to me. I used them until the war broke out."

"I heard from my father when I was a child that the place where B.C. Packers is now was all covered with water, and people went there for duck hunting, did fishing, a jolly boat."



I went fishing with Papa?

"When I was just 12, in the summer vacation, ~~I acco mpanied Papa to go fishing.~~ It was the first time. I ~~was~~ was tied by a rope so that I wasn't in danger... A boat was tiny. The machine was tiny too, maybe 5 horsepower, or 8 horsepower. The boat was about 28 feet, small boat... The depth of the net is same now as then. The length was 150 fathoms before, 205 now, itwas shorter before. The ~~thread~~ cord was thicker, of linen. There were a lot of fish in the old times, there were less fishermen.

add (?) →

yarn? cord?

Q. After sinking a net, how long do you wait for?

"It depends on the current, on the place, on the time. Sometimes 15 minutes, sometimes 2 or 3 hours according to the location. At night we float the net in the ~~outside (?)~~ sea for 4 or 5 hours. When we are working we cannot have a good rest because, if a freighter comes, sometimes our net gets torn."

out at sea
deep sea?

"..the depth of a net is fixed, 60 meter (?) A net of big meshes is for deeper fish."

Q. Did it take a long time to pull up a net by hand?

"It took about 15 minutes I think. If ~~it had~~ a lot of fish were caught in the net, it took us longer. Papa pulled the front and I pulled the back and made a pile on the deck. While pulling it up we had to take off the fish.@

Q. Did your hands get sore?

"Yes, We had gloves on, but we had chapped hands and fingers. When I was sixteen, my papa was sick so sometimes I went alone and sometimes with my brother, but my brother did not do anything. He was just having a ride."

"When fishing, I was all the time on the boat. In those days, we didn't have such splendid stoves. We pierced a wire through a 4-gallon tin can, an empty rice cracker can, you know. We burnt split wood in the can for cooking. The pans got pitch black and it was smoky. We carried a week's supply of food on the boat."

"I went through many frightful experiences. Sometimes a strong wind came all of a sudden, a fast current. Today we are always listening to the weather station so we are all right because we are careful. We have telephones and all sorts of facilities now, but in the old days we worked only with a clock and compass. In a thick fog, consulting our intuition, a compass, and time, we steered the boat this way and that way.". ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ At night, the star, the Great Bear, it stays always in the North, it doesn't move, so he (my father) told me to steer at night watching that star."

"When I went cod-fishing, there were various fish markets around Nanaimo to buy our fish and Japanese people here and there who looked after us. In the evening we could take a Japanese bath. It was made of two inch cedar boards. There was a round tin stove in it, the water went around the stove to be heated."

Q. Was it like a hotel?

"No, it was just an ordinary house. We slept on our own boats. In the house, we played games, we listened to a hand-wound gramaphone -- no radio then."

traditional comedian acts

Q. Did you have Japanese records?

"Yes, we did. Such things as Manzai (comic routines) I think it was when I was eight or nine that I saw a gramaphone for the first time. It was very rare. When I was a child, I used to be deceived into thinking there were people in the box who were talking."

"I went to school until Gradd Eight. I didn't like school. I was scolded by my parents. They said, 'You will regret it when you are grown,' whenever I complained about school. Mama was strict, but I didn't like to study so it was no good... As I had many brothers and sisters, after shhool every day I carried ~~wood to burn~~ firewood with the baby on my back. After school I had to look after the babies... We had all wood stoves. We didn't have any electricity. We used lamps, oil lamps. We often had fires from those lamps."

for the fire?

K: Those days we did not have electricity. We used an oil lamp which we hung or held by hand(=) So we often had fires caused by these lamps -- they turned over, etc. We had a lot of fires. There were many canneries in the old days but they all got burnt down.

The facilities in the house were not sufficient. It was very cold in the house in the winter. Every night we used hot water bottles*(=). Once our water pipe froze & we had to go to get water in a pail from the Fraser River. I remember it well. Two buckets were tied together and I carried them on my shoulders. We filtered the water through sand & charcoal from the wood fire, and drank the water. We did it in a barrel.

Utampo

Let me see, was it when I was six or seven when I started to go to school, I was taught how to cook rice. I had to cook rice, do washing, everything. If Mama was sick you had to do everything.

M: It was a hard job to do laundry in those days, wasn't it?

K: Yes, we put the washing in a pan and boiled it. We did it when we made a fire for a bath (?) We used a wash-board and a big soap bar which was cut into several cakes with a knife.

washed in water after bath.

M: Did the people eat a Japanese diet?

K: Yes, we made miso soup for breakfast and ate rice for three meals. We didn't eat western food.

M: In your childhood you didn't have anything to do with white people?

K: No, we played only with the Japanese.

M: What kind of games did you play?

K: Well, roller skating or, when the water was frozen in the middle of the fields we played with a sled. We played baseball in the summertime, we all like baseball. Today we still all like baseball.

: When I was eighteen, Papa got sick, he couldn't work. Since then I've been responsible for the family. I took over his fishing. ...I did it alone. Those days, most young people managed to fish by themselves... I fished in the Fraser River, after that in the spring I did cod-fishing near the Island...trolling too.

M: Did you go fishing all through the winter?

egg-shaped corrugated tin bottles wrapped in a bag -

K: Yes, I did. I fished ling cod$. I worked just until December 31, left my boat in Nanaimo and came home by the last boat to spend the New Year with my family. On the 3rd I was already back at the Island to work.

M: Was Nanaimo your base camp?

K: Yes, because it was the most convenient place. My camp was about half a mile south of the wharf where the ferry arrives today.

K; If one was new, he had to be given the boat of a licensed owner, and apply for a licence with a paper which said, for example, that the owner couldn't fish because of illness, etc.

: There were not so many white fishermen compared to the Japanese. There are many Indian fishermen on the Island now still... As far as I remember, only one Chinese fisherman.

: We lived in a cannery house. We paid the rent by pieces of fish. For example, a piece of sockeye 5¢, the rent was 50¢ a year, the water 24¢. There were good years and bad years. ...In case of need, we could get a loan from the company.

M: Was the company kind to you?

K: Yes, the company was good. It was a matter of trust. If one was honest and sincere to do this work -- well, trust is everything.

M: Were there some tough guys among the fishermen?

K: Yes, there were many. When I think about them now, I think that the people in the old days were much more respectable than now. Everything is ready for today's fisherman, everything mechanized, very easy. They work for fewer hours. In the old days, the fishermen didn't know the language, they were tougher too... I think the old fishermen were much greater. They started fishing on Sunday evening at 6 o'clock, went until Friday evening at 6. On top of that, during the two-day holidays, if the nets were not damanged, we got wood to burn in the winter: collected drift wood, chopped it into even logs. We went to New Westminster to get pine bark.

M: Were there woods in New Westminster?

K: No, at the sawmills, the logs were pulled to the sawmills for sawing. They gave us the bark off these logs.

M: How far was New Westminster from Steveston?

K: We went there by boat, carried the stuff on the boat, unloaded and brought it back home. We pulled a cart by hand, which we now use to carry our nets...

M: Were the linen nets easily worn out?

K: Well, if you were careful handling them, you could use them for about two years. We used to make these nets by hand. It took us one month, maybe one and a half months. We got up early in the morning, worked on the net for a whole day until late at night, worked very hard because of so many meshes.

M: Did you buy linen ~~yarn~~ twine?

K: Yes, we bought only ~~yarn~~ twine. There are various sizes of ~~yarn~~ twine, one buys the size of his choice... The ~~yarn~~ twine comes in a roll, you hook a thread on a needle, it's the same as knitting..It depends on the size of the mesh, you hook and tie tight, hook and tie, ~~in a sequence~~ row by row. When you come to the end of a ~~line~~ row, you turn it over and start again. The meshes have to be consistent, after a while you start to have an intuition about the tightness of the meshes on the tips of your fingers. We worked very hard.

M: Did all the fishermen use hand-made nets?

K: No, you could order ready-made ones which were made in Ireland, sent over here. You could order them in time for the season. However, if you made one at home it cost less. I used to make the nets at home during the winter holidays.

M: Did you learn it from your father?

K: Yes. The net to catch (Sockeye) salmon has a lot of meshes. I used to make a net to catch spring salmon because it had less meshes.

M: If you worked for a week from Monday to Friday, did the net have a fair amount of damage?

K: Yes, it did. Sometimes it got cut by a freighter, or got hooked on something in the water. Sometimes while I was asleep at night, my net got caught on driftwood.

M: What else is dangerous at sea?

K: In ~~xxxxxxx~~ fog a boat can crash into another boat. We have to be careful.

M: How fast does a boat go?

K: Old boats went no more than 4 knots because they had small engines.

M: The waves are rough on the west coast, aren't they? Are the small boats dangerous?

K: No, not dangerous. Often when the boat gets between the waves I can't see the boat in front of me. The swell of the Pacific Ocean is like a valley, it is very high.

M: After your Father got sick, what did he do? Did he go back to Japan?

K: No, he spent his time growing flowers, etc. at home, without doing any work. He got sick when he was 54, had overworked all his life from the time he was young, so his exhaustion came out then. When I started to beoome handy, he felt easy, he was released from strain.

M: So you worked hard until you left for Japan?

K: Yes, during the winter I was 23 I was in Japan and came back after some months. Papa remained there for a while... Only Papa and me (went) because there were still small children in my family here.

M: Did you go to your father's native place?

K: Yes, we went to Aichi prefecture first, met my aunts and uncles, then to Mama's place.

M: What did you think of Japan on your first trip?

K: ...We stayed the first night at Tsutata-Rykokan...near Isezaki-cho(downtown Yokohama)... When I woke up in the morning I was very excited with curiosity and ecstasy. I still can hear the sound of ~~clogs (?)~~ geta, the sound was very exotic. I got up early and watched the sidestreet from the window.
...In Japan I got engaged, I was still young. I had gone to Japan to find a bridge. Nex t year, I went back again for the wedding and we came back together. In those days there was a regular passenger boat service ~~on~~ by the Nihon Yusen Co., ~~the~~ ships like the Hikawa-Maru, Hie-Maru and Heian-Maru between Vancouver and Japan... They were still available after the war. My brother took them a few times. He used to work here in the summer, went back in the winter.

M: Didn't your brother's wife come to Canada?

K: Yes, she was born in America, California. They preferred Japan, they have been living there. I went back to Japan, worked in the US base for six years and came back here in June, 1952.

M: In the old days, what kind of ~~pleasures~~ entertainment did you have?

K: ...On the New Year Days we played ~~Xaxa~~ Karuta (Japanese card game)... When I was small, we used to have Karuta contests.

M: Did you have~~xuch~~ festivals such as the New Year*s Day Obon?

K: Yes, the New Year*s Day was most celebrated.

K: The buddhist temple was built in Steveston in, well what year I wonder, I wonder if it was six or seven years before the war started. Before that we went to the Buddhist temple in Vancouver. We all went to vancouver for funerals, etc. It was on Cordova Street, next to Powell Street.

M: On what occasions did the Japanese in Steveston get together besides the New Year's Day?

K: Well, we had a performance of a play sometimes. In the wintertime, during the New Year's holidays, we often had a performance of a play or two... it was an amateur show but we enjoyed it. Sometimes we had professional shows from Japan. In the old days they often had Sumo games (Japanese wrestling).

M: Did you have a sumo ring?

K: We built it--I remember it well--it was in my childhood. Some who did Sumo in Jpana & liked it taught it here. Judo and Kendo were popular too...

M: Did you have a movie then?

K: We didn't have a talkie, but we had one accompanied by an orator. I remember the pictures on the screen and the orator explained them beside it... We had a little hall called the Opera House where the shows took place.

M: I heard that there were a lot of restaurant-bars on Powell Street wherepeople enjoyed themselves drinking, singing, dancing, etc. Did you go to these places?

K: No, not me. I was still young, pressed with living, as the proverb says, "No time for the poor." In the summertime the cannery opende and mama and my sisters went to work there. They also went to pick strawberries sometimes... As for me, the first time I earned money was when I was twelve at a Chinese farmer's picking strawberries and peas. I worked all day to get paid one dollar. ~~Since~~ I was child I got half-wages.

M: What could you buy for a dollar then?

K: A loaf of bread cost about 5¢ or so, I think. ~~As I was~~ For a child one dollar was quite a lot. Next year during the summer vacation I went to Haney to pick strawberries with room and board. It was such hard work. Haney wasn't developed ~~yet~~, it was a logged site in the ~~mountains~~. There were such storms of mosquitoes that I used to sleep with my feet and legs wrapped up in newspapers so that I wouldn't be bitten by them. Just to walk on the roads I had to carried a dry fern to drive them away ~~the mosquitoes~~... Our job was to pick the strawberries, to pack them into boxes. In order to take a bath, we had to fill the tub with water (from the well). We carried water in our spare time.

M: How long did you work a day?

K: Let me see, we got up at 6, stared to work at 7:30. There was

still some dew and we used to work until late at night, until the sun was down.

M: You had to bend down to pick the strawberries?

K: Yes, so we ~~had~~ got sore ~~waist~~ backs and knees. Our feet ~~also~~ got sore too because the ground was full of rocks and pebbles,--remember it was a recently ~~developed~~ ~~mountain~~ cleared site. It was also extremely hot. Sometimes it was very hard work. However, I couldn't complain, I was only an employee, I couldn't do what would please me. For the firsttime in my life I realized how hard it was to earn some money. I appreciated the value of money.

K: The first thing that happened (in the war) was that all the boats were taken away from the fishermen... we had big boats by then. I had three -- one for my brother, I used one and the last one was rented to somebody.

M: What kind of boats did you have then?

K: For cod fish, you have to keep them alive, so you need a fish ~~pool~~ tank. You need a bigger boat for cod-fishing. The tank had a plug, when you unplug it water comes into the tank. There were about 120 plugs at the bottom of my boat...

M: Do you catch cod with a net?

K: No, you fish by rod, ~~one each~~ (Ippon-zuri)??

M: Do you like Ippon-zuri?

K: Yes, it was very interesting. The bait was a live herring. You held the rod. With experience you could tell when the cod was near you. You hook it and wind up the line by ~~machine~~ reel in your hands (~~the reel?~~) At the end you pull it up with your hands. It was fun.

M: You still use your hands to fish for cod?

K: Yes, but troll-fishing is a different story. A troll-boat is moving all day, dragging such things as a spoon, flashing things called Tsuri which are made in Japan. In my days, there were no Tsuri products so we used only a spoon and a piece of brass for Tsuri, which shine in the water. It's still used by many fishermen. In the old days, each line had a lead so that it would sink...it was very exhausting to pull up each line because of the heavy lead... On top of our gloves we put rubber pieces cut out of a rubber tube. In this way when we pulled the line it would slide on the gloves. So we pulled up one line at ~~one~~ a time... I did trolling, cod fishing, and in summer I did gillnetting... At first I did everything on a small boat, but as it was small I had big boats built. Then the war started and my boats were taken away.

M: Did you save up a lot of money before the war?

K: No, not much. Well, my parents built the base for me. I succeeded so in my case it was easy. I had a licence transferred from my father.

M: Did many people come from Japan?

K: Yes, like merchants. People came in as employees of their stores and could get a license to be independent, but they couldn't be free before they'd worked for three years.

M: What form did the anti-Japanese movement take in Steveston?

K; I think that it was caused by the fact that the Japanese lived in their own community and they did very well in fishing.

M: How was the white union?

K: No, there was no white union. The Japanese had Kumiai, something like a union. Since we lived in a cannery house, we gave the cannery the sockeye which they wanted to have for canning as rent, and as for the fall fish, Kumiai sold it for us, and Kumiai had a store. We bought things at the Kumiai store as much as possible. The profit was divided among the members in the form of stocks.

M: How was the depression?

K: It was 1934 or so. At that time the price of fish was quite low. I remember I caught fish which sold for only 15 ¢ each. As for cod, one pound brought one cent. However, if we could get 5 or 6 dollars a day it was fine for the day. A boat was small and it didn't cost much for maintenance. So you can see that the annual income wasn't that much.

occupational

Maeyama

is it?

Matsuzaki tape

Murakami

Hayashi

Kokubo

Konishi

fear of ... harmony good - ... individualism bad ... killed if you do something ... suffering

tended lower classes

so they write us type ... — w/ ? pressure for the ... creates pressure ... or bottom ...

dock piece — Maeda, Kokubo Samejima

Maya's piece on interviewing

Rae, Lloyd

Daphne — explanation / prayer of book

is it a rip-off?

what is oral history?

interview format

tribute

documentary

Van. Public Library

newspaper for area?

Steveston Community Center

Accn No 89:1
AV 7
9072
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1972:1

HIDEO KOKUBO

HK I was born in 1913. in Steveston. My mother came here when she was 23 and had stayed here ever since.
My father did fishing, worked at sawmill too, did various things but mainly fishing.

K Are you the eldest son?

H Yes.

K How many brothers & sisters did you have?

H. eight

K Are they all in Vancouver?

H No. one in Japan 4 boys and 3 girls. One under me went back to Japan. Two of them died.
He said he is going to live in Japan permanently.

K Did your brothers do fishing?

H Yes, in 1952 he came back to Canada in 1952, and for 20 years he did fishing with me and last year he went back to Japan.

K How long did he live in Steveston before the war?

H. My brother was here until ten years old. He went back to Japan with my aunt, he was adopted by my uncle because he did not have a son.
to succed his family

K Have you been in Japan?

H. The first time I went over there was 1935 together with my papa. I was 23.

K. Do you remember about your childhood? Steveston was small then? Was it like a village?

H. Maybe there were more shops then than now. Steveston was mostly habited by the Japanese. There were a lot more fishermen then. They all lived in the company houses.

K. Where did you live in your childhood?

H. We lived in BC Packer's house. I went to the public school here. ( ) school. There was a Japanese language school too. Until I became grade 4, the main language was Japanese, English was about 2 hours every day.

K. You spoke English only in the school?

H. Yes. About 2 hours a day. After that a change came. We learned English all day, after English school was over, we learned Japanese for 2 hours.

K. In the Japanese school, were you divided into different grades?

H. Yes, we had separate classes like that. All the teachers came from Japan.

K. How many teachers did you have?

H. Let me see, probably 4 or 5 teachers, I think.

K. How about the subjects that you learned?

H. We learned the same things as in Japan. They taught the same subjects as in Japan, but later, we learned English for longer time, we went to the Japanese school after that as if to play because we were kids, go to

we were fined two. It was in the same school, only the teachers were exchanged.
In those days, there were not enough classrooms.
There were a schools and a hospital built by the Japanese. We had a doctor from Japan only when I was a child.

K. Is the hospital still here?

H. No it was torn down long time ago. It was on the site of a new apartment house on the No1 Road. There was the building of our union next to it, where The Region is standing now.

K. Was Moncton street the main street then?

H. Yes, the present Moncton street, also on No1 Road towards from the corner of Monton and No1 Road.

K. What kind of shops?

H. A barber shop, noodle restaurant, restaurants, grocery stores, drug store, post office, hardware store, all the way, bakery too

K. Were they owned by the Japanese?

H. Yes,

K. Did they sell the Japanese drugs in a drug store?

H. Yes, in the Japanese drug store, they sold the Japanese drugs.

K. Were all residents of Steveston the Japanese in those fishermen days?

H. Almost all were fishermen, I would say. In those days we could not easily fish like now. The licences were all separate, so many for the north, so many for around here, we were restricted.

K. Could one person get only one licence?

H. Not exactly, those who had the licences before the restriction could keep their licences. Then gradually it became a problem, the licenses that had been kept without use, what to do about such, unused licences.

K. Did you have the problem of licence cut-down?

H Ye, one time we had such problem.

K. Your father did not have such trouble?

H. My papa, as he had a lot of children, he did well to keep a gillnet licence, troller licence, etc, they were transfered to me, I used them until the war broke.

K. Did each family keep their licence?

H No, those who received the licence at the beginning could keep it.

There were only few who had three licences.

There were some who had two licences.

? I heard it from my father when I was a child that the place where BC Packers is now was all covered with wate, and people went there for duck hunting, by a jolly boat. It was not developed yet / did fishing

I went to Japan in 1935 for the fisht time. As my papa was not well, he was examined in Tokyo University

Hospital by various doctors. I accompanied him to see Japan and papa's relatives. My mama was from SHIGA prefecture and my papa was from Aichi.

K Did your mama come here with your papa?

H No, mama came much later, in 1911 or 12. I was born when papa was 36.

K Did your papa came with somebody else or alone? like with his brother?

H No, he came alone.

K Were there a lot of people from AICHI?

H Not too many, insteaston only 2 or 3 people from AICHI. Almost all from WAKAYAMA

K when did you start fishing?

H When I was first 12, in the summer vacation, I accompanied papa to go fishing. It was the first time I got me tied by a rope so that I wasn't be in danger.

K You did not have a life jacket?

H No, there was no such thing. A boat was tiny too. The machine was tiny too, maybe 5 horse power or 8 horse power. The boat was about 28 feet small boat.

K. Two people on a boat usually?

H Sometimes one, sometimes two. We pulled up the nets with hands, everything with hands.

K Was the size of a net smaller?

6 ?

H/ The depth of a net is same now and then, the length was 150 before, 205 now, it was shorter before, the thread was thicker, of linen. There were a lot of fish in the old time, there were less fishermen.

K After making a net how long do you wait for?

H ? The depth of a net is fixed, 60 m. A net of a big mesh is for deeper fish.

It depends on the current, on the places, on the time. Sometimes 15 minutes, sometimes 2 or 3 hours according to the location. At night we float the net in the outside deep sea for 4 or 5 hours. When we are working we cannot have a good rest, if a freighter comes sometimes our net gets torn.

K How far down do you drop your net to catch salmon?

H Did it take a long time to pull up a net by hands?

I took about 15 minutes, I think. If with a lot of fish caught in the net, it took us longer. Papa pulled the front and I pulled the back and made a pile on the deck. While pulling we had to take off the fish.

K Did your hands become sore?

H Yes we had the gloves on. We had chapped hands and fingers.

When I was sixteen My papa was sick so sometimes I went alone and sometimes with my brother, but my brother did not do anything. He was just having a ride.

K Where did your father do fishing?

H We had been to Skeena, around there mainly.

H In those days I did fishing only around here. After the net fishing was over, I used to go to NANAIMO area to do rod fishing.

K. Did you live on a boat?

H Yes, while fishing I was all the time on a boat. In those days we did not have such grandid stove, we pierced a wire through a 4 gallon tin can an empty rice cracker can, you know. We burnt the split woods in the can for cooking. The pans became pitch black and it was smoky.
We carried a week supply of foods on the boat.

K How about storms?

H We didn't do anything strenuous. We did not go out in a storm.

K Were you ever afraid of the sea?

H I went through many frightful experiences. Sometimes the strong wind came all of sudden, a fast current. Today we are always listening to the weather station we are allright because we are careful, we have telephone and all sorts of facilities now, but in the old days, we worked only with a clock and compass. In a thick fog, with our intuition, a compass and time we steered (consulting the boat this way and that way.

K. Did your father teach you how to steer, how to use a compass, etc?

H Yes, he always told me about such matters. At night the stars, the Great Bear, it stays always at the North, it

does not move, so he told me to steer at night watching that star.

K. When you did fishing, did you see many fishing boats around you?

H Yes friends worked near to each other. When we pulled up our nets, we passed by them to ask if they caught a lot of fish or not. If there were not fish, there was moved to another place.
When I went to rod-fishing, there were various fish markets around NANAIMO to buy our fish, the Japanese people there and their who looked after us. In the evening we could take the Japanese bath. It was made of 2 inch ceder boards, there was a round tin stove in it, the water went around the stove to be heated.

K Was it like a hotel?

H No, it was just an ordinary house. We slept on our own beds. In the house we did games, we listen to a gramaphone, no radio then. (hand winding)

K Did you have the Japanese records?

H Yes, we did. Such things like MANZAI (funny talks) (back chats) ?
I think it was when I was eight or nine that I saw a gramaphone for the first time. It was very rare, when I was a child, I was often cheated that there were people in the box talking.

K Did you have decided to become a fishermen in your childhood?

H Yes, I liked fishing. I went to school until grade 8. I didn't like school. I was scolded by my parents. they said "You will regret when you become Groom" whenever I complained about the school. Mama was strict, but

I didn't like the study, we no good.
As I had many brothers and sisters, after school, every day I carried the woods to burn with the baby on my back, after school I had to look after the babies.

K. Did you all use the wood stoves?

H All wood stoves. We didn't have any electricity. we used lamps, oil lamps. We often had fires from these lamps.

Kokubo cont'd.

(1)

M Did you use the wood stove?

K Those days we did not have electricity. We used an oil lamp which we hung or put on at hand. held by hand? Therefore we often had a fire caused by the lamps, lamps turned over, etc. We had a lot of fires.
There were many canneries in the old days. They all got burnt down.

M. Did the canneries use the lamps too?

K No;

M. Did your home catch a fire?

K. No. We were very careful.

The facilities of the house were not sufficient. It was very cold in the house. Every night we used the hot bottles. water 1 In the winter.
Once our water pipe was frozen and we had to go to get the water in a pail from the Fraser River. I remember it well. Two buckets were tied together, I carried them on my shoulder, we filtered water through sand and the burnt wood soot and drank the water. We did it for a month.

M Did you do it every winter?

K Not every winter, but when it was particularly cold when the pipe was frozen.

M. You were busy as the eldest son when you were small.

K Yes, I could not fool around so freely as now. Let me see, was it when I was six or seven. When I started to go to school, I was taught how to

cook rice. I was made to do cooking rice, washing, everything. If mama become sick, you have do to everything, so told, I was taught to do everything.

M. It was a hard job to do laundry in those days, wasn't it?

K Yes, we put the washing in a pan and boiled it. we did it when we made a bath. (burned a bath). we used a wash-board and a big soap bar which was cut into several cakes with a knife. In those days we could buy a loaf of bread for 3 cents.

M. Did the peole eat the Japanese diet?

K Yes, we ate miso-soup for breakfast and ate rice for 3 meals. we did not eat the western food.

M. In your childhood you did not have anything to do with the white people?

K No, we played only with the Japanese.

M What kind of games did you play?

K Well, roller skating or, when the rats was frozen in the middle of fields we played with a sled. we did baseball in the summer time. Now we all like baseball. Today we all like baseball.

When I was eighteen, papa became ill, he could not work since then I was responsible for the family. I took over his fishing.

M Did your father have a boat?

K. Yes, he did.

M. Did you do fishing alone? Did you have a partner?

K. No, I did it alone. Those days, most of the young people managed to do fishing by themselves.

M. Where did you do fishing?

K. I did fishing in the Fraser River; after that in the spring did cod-fishing near the island; I did trolling too.

M. Did you do fishing all through the winter?

K. Yes, I did, I fished rink-cods. I worked just until December 31, left my boat in Nanaimo and came home by the last boat to have the new Year with my family, on the 3rd I was already back to the island to work.

M. Was Nanaimo your base camp?

K. Yes, because it was the most convenient place. My camp was about a half mile south of the wark where the ferry arrives today.

M. Were there a lot of Japanese?

K. Yes, there were many who had the licences.

M. Was it difficult to get a licence then?

K. Yes, it was difficult, there were only limited number of licences granted to us.

M. Then could hardly anybody new fish?

K. If one was new, he had to be given the boat of a licence-owner, and apply for a licence with the paper which said, for example, that the owner could not do fishing because of illness, etc.

M. Were there white or Indian fishermen besides the Japanese fishermen?

K. Yes, but there were not so many white fishermen compared to the Japanese.
There are many Indian fishermen on the island still now.

M. How about the Chinese fishermen?

K Very few. As far as I remember, only one Chinese fisherman. There were hardly any before.

M. When you were young did you make money on fishing?

K No. a fish cost cheap, sometime a salmon cost only 15 cents or 20 cents.
we lived in a cannery house. We paid the rent by the pieces of the fish. For example a piece of Sockey cost 5 cents, the rent was 50 cents a year, the water 25 cents.
There were good years and bad years.

M. Can't you tell beforehand if it is going to be a good year or bad year?

K. No, impossible. We could only tell after the year was over.
In case of need, we could get the loan from the company.

M. Was the company kind to you?

K. Yes, the company was good. It was the matter of trust. If one was honest and sincere to do this work... Trust is one and all.

M. Were there some tough guys among the fishermen?

K. Yes, there were many. When I think about them now, I think that the people in the old days were much more respectable than now. Everything is ready for the present fishermen, everything mechanized, very easy. They work for less hours. In old days, the fishermen did not know the language, they were tougher too. I think the old fishermen were much greater. They started fishing Sunday evening at 6 o'clock until Friday evening at 6. On the top of that, during the two day holidays if the nets were not damaged, we made the wood to burn in the winter; collecting drift wood, chopped it into the same blocks. We went to New Westminster to collect the pine barks. We burnt these things in winter.

M. Were there many woods in New Westminster?

K. No, at the sawmills, the logs were pulled to the sawmills for sawing, they gave us the barkes of the logs.

M. How far was N.W. from Steveston?

K. We went there by boat, carried the stuff on the boat, unloaded and brought it back home. We pulled a cart with hands, which now we use to carry our nets. We used to carry things on this cart.

M. Were the linen nets easily worn out?

K. Well, if you were careful in handling them, you could use

Then for about two years.
We need to make these nets by hands.
It took us one months, sometimes one and half months.
We got up early in the morning, worked on a net for
a whole day, until late at night, worked very hard
because of so many meshes. It tooks as many hours.

M. Did you buy linen yarn?

K Yes, we bought only 1yarn. There are various sizes
of yarn. one buys the size of his choice.

M. Would you explain the process?

K. The yarn comes on a roll, you hook a thread on a needle,
it is same as knitting. It depends on sizes of the
meshes, you hook and tie, hook and tie in a sequence,
when you come to the end of a line, turn it over
and start again. The meshes have to be consistent,
after a while you start to have an ichition about
tightness of the meshes on the tips of the fingers.
We worked very hard.

M. Did all the fishermen use the hand-made nets?

K, No. You could order the ready-made ones which
were made in Ireland, sent over here. You could
order one in time for the seseason.
However if you made one at home it cost less,
I used to make the nets at home during the winter
holidays.

M. Did you learn it from your papa?

K Yes. The net to catch salmons has a lot of meshes.
I used to make a net to catch spring salmons the same
it had less meshes. at home
Far from a month to finish one net,..

M. How long would you use the net?

K About two years.

M. If you work for a week, from monday to Friday, did you not have a certain amount of damages?

K. Yes, it did. Sometimes it got cut by a freighter, or got hooked on something in the water.
Sometimes while I am asleep at night, my net gets caught on a drift wood, the net is damaged like that.

M. What else is dangerous on the sea?

K. In case of fog, a boat can crash to another boat, we have to be careful.

M. How fast does a boat go?

K. Old boats had not more than 4 nots because they had small machine.

M. The waves are rough on the west coast, aren't they? Are the small boats dangerous?

K No, not dangerous. Often when the boat gets in between the waves, I cannot see the boat in front of me. The swell of the Pacific Ocean is like a valley, it is very high.

M. Have you ever got sea-sick?

K Not me, but when I went to the west coast for the first time I did'nt feel well for a day or two. (too)
However when I am operating the boat on my own, I feel differently, (so I don't become sick)

M. After your father became sick what did he do? Did he go back to Japan?

K. No, he spent his time in growing flowers, etc., at home without doing any work. He was sick since 54 years old. He overworked all his life since he started to become handy, he felt lazy, he was released from strain. This is why...

M. When you were 18, did your brother help you?

K. Yes, only during his summer vacation. He was still small.

M. So you worked hard until you left for Japan?

K. Yes, during the winter I was in Japan and came back after ofe months. I was 23. Papa remained here for a while.

M. Who went to Japan with you? With your papa and mama?

K. Only Papa and me. Because there were still small children in my family here.

M. Did you go to Papa's native place? AICHI-prefecture?

K. We went to AICHI-prefecture first, met my aunts and uncles, then to mama's place.

M. What did you think of Japan on your first trip?

K. For the first time in my life in Japan, we stayed the first night at TSUTAYA-RYOKAN. Do you know it?

M. Was it near the harbor?

K. I think it was nearby ISEZAKI-CHO (どんぼりいせざきちょう)
But the time changed, when I woke up in the morning,
I was very excited with curiosity and ecstasy, I still
can hear the sound of ? dogs ? crogs, the sound was very
exotic, I got up early in the morning watched
the side street from the window.

M. What do you remember about YOKOHAMA? Did you
see many foreigners?

K Probably there were many but I don't remember, I
stayed there only for two days.
Then we went to SHIGA-pref. (滋賀) after a month I joined
a tour accompanied by my uncle to look all
over KANTO-district.
First from HIKONE we took train to GIFU, then to
NAGOYA, from NAGOYA to TOYOHASHI, famous
for TOYOTA INARI (TOYOTA Shrine), visited ISE
shrine from NAGOYA, then went to KAMAKURA
area, SHICHIRIGA-HAMA beach, all over, did
sightseeing in TOKYO, went to CHIBA (千葉) prefecture,
NARITA (成田) FUDO, you know, (NARITA shrine),
Then to NIKKO, stayed overnight in NIKKO; it
was in February and extremely cold so KEGON
water fall was all frozen.
Then we went to ASAMA (浅間) hot spring, visited
Zenkoji-temple in SHINANO, went through
Japan Line, the KISO-River, saw INUYAMA Castle,
and finally came back to GIFU. Right after
this tour I left for Vancouver because the
fishing season was coming up.
Cod-fishing started in March. In Japan I
engaged. I was still young. I went to
Japan to find a bride.
Next year I went back to Japan again to have
a wedding and came back together.
In those days there was the regular passenger
boat service by NIHON YUSEN, the ship like

HIKAWA-MARU, HIE-MARU and KEIAN-MARU between Vancouver and Japan.

M. What kinds of boats were they? Big? How many passengers did they carry?

K. Well, big, yes, but I forgot, I think they can carry a lot of passengers. They were still available after the war.
My brother took them a few times. He used to work there in the summer, went back in the winter.

M Didn't your brother's wife come to Canada?

K. Yes, she was born in America, California. They preferred Japan, they have been living there. I went back to Japan, worked in the US base for six years and came back here in June, 1952.

M. In the old days, what kind of pleasures did you have?

K Card games, ping pong, such things. I didn't do them.
On the New Year Days we played KARUTA (Japanese card game), HYAKUNIN-ISSHU. When I was small, we used to have KARUTA-contest.

M Did you have such festivals like the New Years Day, OBON, etc?

K. Yes, the New Years Day was the most celebrated.

M. Did you have a Japanese buddhist temple in Steveston?

K. Well, the buddhist temple was built (in Steveston) in... well after year I wonder, I wonde if it was six or

seven years before the war started.
Before then went to the buddhist temple in Vancouver,
we all went to Vancouver in case of funeral, etc.
It was on Cordova street, next to Powell street.

M. In what occasion did the Japanese in Steveston get together besides the New Year Day?

K. Well, we had a performance of a play sometime.
on the winter times, during the New Years holidays,
we often had a performance of a play or two.

M. What kind of people put on such shows?

K. Well. Some people from Japan; it was an amateur
show, but we enjoyed it.
Sometimes we had professional shows from Japan.
In the old days they [illegible]
(SUMO = Japanese wrestling)

M. Did you have a SUMO rink?

K. we built it. I remember it well. It was in my
childhood.
Some who did SUMO in Japan and liked it taught
it here.
JUDO and KENDO were popular too.
During the winter holidays the young people
entertained themselves with such things.

M. Did you have a movie then?

K. We did not have a talky, but we had one accompanied
by an orator. I remember the pictures on the
screen and the orator explained beside it.
That is all I remember.
We had a little hall called Opera House in which
the show took place.

M. Did you have many Japanese restaurants like on Powell street?

K. There were some restaurants in Steveston where we could eat the Japanese meals and noodles.

M. Did these restaurants have geisha girls?

K. No, not like that. Those were the places only to eat meals.

M. I heard that there were a lot of restaurant bars on Powell street where people enjoyed themselves in drinking, singing, dancing, etc. Did you go to these places?

K. No, not me. I was still young, pressed with living in a poor fishing village. In the summertime the cannery opened and mama and sisters went to work there, they also went to pick strawberries sometimes.

M. In Steveston?

K. Yes, in Steveston.
So for me the first time I earned the money when I was 12 at a Chinese farmer's by picking strawberries and peas. I worked all day to get paid one dollar. Since I was a child I got half price.

M. What could you buy for one dolla then?

K. A loaf of bread cost about 5 cents or so, I think. Since I was a child one dollar was quite an amount. Next year during the summer vacation I went to Haney to pick strawberries with room and board. It was such a hard work.

Hanley was not developed yet, it was logged site in the mountains. There were such storms of mosquitos that I used to sleep with the sheet and legs wrapped with the newspapers so that I would not be bitten by them.
To walk on the roads I carried a dry stem to drive off the mosquitos.
We drank water from a well.

M. Did you have to carry water?

K No, our job was to pick the strawberries, to pack them into boxes.
In order to take a bath, we had to fill the tub with water, we carried water in our spare time.

M How long did you work a day?

K Let me see, we got up at [illegible] started to work at 7:30 there was still some dew and used to work until late at night, until the sun was down.

M. You had to bend down to pick strawberries?

K Yes, so we had sore waste and knees. Our feet also got sore because the ground was full of rocks and pebbles, remember it was the recently developed mountain site.
It was also extremely hot. Sometimes it was very hard work. However I could not complain, I was employee. I would not do what I would please me merely an
For the first time in my life I realized how hard it was to earn some money. I appreciated the value of money.

M. So you had been fishing until the war broke?

K Yes, papa left Vancouver on the 11th of November 1940 for Japan.

Papa died after that so she did not know about the war

M Did your mama go home with papa?

K Yes, so did mama, at the same time she took Tsuneko (daughter) with her. Then the war started.
The first happening was that all the boats were taken away from the fishermen.

M. By that time the boats must have been quite large?

K Yes, we had big boats by that time. I had three boats.
One for my brother, I used one and the last one was rented to some person

M. What kind of boats then?

K For cod-fish, you have to keep them alive, so you need a fish pool. You need a bigger boat for cod-fishing. The pool had a plug, when you unplug it, water comes into the pool. There were about 120 plugs at the bottom of my boat. In this way the fish could stay alive.

M. Do you catch cod by a net?

K No, you fish by a rod, one each. (IPPON-ZURI)

M. Do you like IPPON-ZURI?

K. Yes, it was very interesting. The bait was a herring (live)
you hold a rod, with experiences you can tell, when you think there is a cod near you. You hook it and roll up the line with inactive in your hands. At the end you pull it up with the hands.
It was a fun.

M. You still use the hands to fish cod?

K. Yes, but troll-fishing is a different story. A troll-boat is moving all day, it is dragging such things like spoon, flash followed, for baits, which are made in Japan. (by the things called TSURI)

In my days, there were no such (TSURI-) products so we used only spoon and a piece of brass as TSURI which shined in the water. It is still in use by many fishermen.

In the old days, each line had a lead so that it could sink in wate, it was very exhausting to pull up each line because of the heavy lead.

M. The hands got sore?

K. Yes, on the top of the gloves, we put rubber pieces cut out of a rubber tube, in this way when we pulled the line, the line could slide on the gloves. In this way we pulled up one line at one time.

By troll we did fishing all day.

I did troll, cod fishing and in summer I did gillnet with nets.

At first I did everything on a small boat, but as it was small, I made big boats myself. Then the war started and my boats were taken away.

M Did you save up a lot of money before the war?

K No, not that.

Well, my parents built the house for me, I succeeded so in my case it was easy. I had a licence transfered from my papa.

M. Did many people come from Japan?

K. Yes, like merchants people came in as employees of their stores and could get a licence to be independent, but they could not be free before three years employment.

M. In what form anti-Japanese movement took place in Steveston?

K. I think the it was caused by the facts that the Japanese lived in their own community, that ~~they~~ did seem well in fishing.

M. How was the white union?

K No, there was no white union.
The Japanese had KUMIAI, something like a union.
Since we lived in a cannery house, we gave to the cannery, the sockye which the cannery wanted to have for canning as rent, and as for the ~~the~~ fall fish, KUMIAI sold it for us and KUMIAI had a store, we brought things at the KUMIAI store as much as possible, the profit was divided among the members in the form of stocks.

M. How was the depression?

K It was 1930 or so. At that time the price of the fish was quite low.
I remember I caught fish which each cost only 15 cents. As for cod fish, one pound was one cent.
However if we could get 5 dollars or 6 dollars a day it was fine for the day. A boat was small and it did not cost much for maintenance.
So you can see that the annual income was not that much.

The end of MR. KOKUBO's tape 1.
(both sides)

Kokubo, Hideo

39:2.

#39

39:2

Kokubo II ~~contd.~~ 1

M: Did the Japanese know there was going to be a war?

K: Well, I don't remember exactly...it was so sudden that we were really surprised. I had just received a telegram from Japan saying my father had died. I was just asking the minister of the Buddhist Church to have (a service forhim?) That morning the war started I came back ~~with~~ leaving (?) my boat behind in Nanaimo. When I went back to my boat, all the boats had been assembled together, I couldn't use my boat any more, there was a watchman. Coming back here, all the boats came back in a line with the watchboats beside us. We couldn't run them ~~boats~~ any way we wanted (?) When we got here, we picked up our belongings from the boats, and the next day they were gone. All three of our boats too.

M: Were you sad?

K: Yes, cut off at the root. The result of many years' work.

M: Couldn't you do something?

K: Well, since it was the war, there was nothing anyone could do about it, was there? Later, one boat was sold. I don't know what happened to the other two. I didn't get any money for those.

M: Was the one sold for a regular price?

K: No, much cheaper.

M: Who bought your boat? the government?

K: No, an individual bought it. I think they sold them by auction.

M: Did they bring you the money and tell you your boat was sold?

K: Yes, I went to Vancouver to get the money, to the Commissioner's office.

M: So you couldn't go fishing anymore?

K: No, as long as we were the Japanese we couldn't go fishing anymore.

M: What did you do then?

K: Then the order came that we had to go further than a hundred miles from Steveston. ~~Gradually~~ people started to ~~leave~~ move Those who were of Japanese nationality were taken away first. gradually.

M: What happened to you?

K: In our case, well, we were supposed to go a hundred miles away. Gradually people were sent to the road camps. The people who left first

felt easier about leaving because there were still many people left behind, but gradually there were less and less men left and we were worried about what would happen to the women and children, so we, the group of nisei's, got together and demanded that they let us go with our families to the places we had to go to. We said, after we know that our families will be safe and well looked after, then we will go to any place. When we insisted on our demand, we were taken one by one by the police.

M: How many people were in your group?

K: When I belonged to the group, let me see, maybe about 100 people.

M: What happened to your family, your wife?

K: Later they were sent to a ghost town, Slocan.

M: Were you worred about them?

K: Yes, I had a sister too. My baby was still small, about six months old. It was in the summer, hot, very hot, extremely hot, and I had nose bleeds for three continuous days.

M: Was that in the camp?

K: It happened on the way to and in the Immigration Office. They came and took me from home.

M: What did you take with you?

K: Only my clothes, one suitcase and my few belongings. And soon after that I was sent to Ontario, to the internment camp, by train. It was a cold, cold place.

M: Whereabouts in Ontario?

K: A place called ~~Angra~~ Angler, a P.O.W. camp.

M: What kind of people were sent there?

K: All the Gambari* group who persisted in leaving together with their families. We said after that we would go to work, because we could be ~~please~~ satisfied about our families in this way.

MS: But the government turned down your request?

K: Yes, the country was in turmoil because the war had started. Well, there was nothing we could do, so we gave up. So for four years I was in the camp. When it was cold, the temperature went down as far as 60 degrees below. The summer was only very short. When I first went to the camp it felt very very cold because I wasn't used to it.

M: What kind of place was it?

*Gambari: resisters. From verb gambaru= to persist in

K: Well, the building was on flat land beside the water there were tents. (punctuation?)

M: Was there no insulation?

K: No, nothing like that. Even if we had the stove burning, the inside of the windows would be all frozen and white, really white. I had to lie in bed with everything on that I had. Well, still, human beings are strong, aren't they? In one year I had got used to it. The weather was dry.

M: You were young, but were there older people?

K: Yes, there were a lot of old people. There were about 700 people (all together?), 720, only men. After supper at 7 or 8 p.m., everybody had to go inside and not go out again.

M: Was that because of the cold?

K: No, no, it was a regulation. We were treated just like prisoners of war.

M: Was the building surrounded by policemen?

K: The soldiers, guards, the guards were watching. The building was surrounded with barbed wire. Nobody was violent, nobody did anything wrong.

M: There was nobody who did anything wrong?

K: No, nobody.

M: Four years is pretty long, isn't it?

K: Yes, at the beginning I felt it was verylong. But in the camp we did some work.

M: What kind of work did you do?

K: Going to get coal to use everyday, cleaning, sweeping, cooking the meals for everyone. And the old people took care of the bath, and we took turns cleaning the place. Those were the things we did.

M: Were they all Japanese? Isseis and Niseis?

K: Yes, yes. We were all in a bunch. During those days, those who studied studied very hard.

M: What kinds of studies?

K: Some studied Japanese, some studied German, some studied English, many kinds. Some learned Judo, Kendo. There were various people in the camp, different people.

M: Were you free inside the camp? Were you free to talk to each other inside?

K: Yes, yes. We were all together. There was a recreation room. We could see movies twice a week.

M: Were they American movies?

K; Yes, like the movies here. So that we wouldn't get bored.

M: In the camp could you learn anything about the war?

K: No, we couldn't. Only from bosses.

M: Did you think that Japan would lose the war? The American radio must have been saying that.

K: Yes, and we were allowed to get one card and one letter a week from our families. These letters were all censored after being inspected. If there was a little bit about the war, that part was all cut out with scissors.

M: Did they understand Japanese?

K: Yes, they had people working for them who ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ understood Japanese.

M: Where was your wife then?

K: She was in Slocan.

M: I suppose you worried a lot about your family?

K; Yes of course. I wondered how they were getting along. There were supposed to be a lot of people living together, so I thought they were probably all right. Only by letter sometimes (?) And in the camp there was a store, I got all my money taken away and instead we were given weekly checks for so much of our money. With that we bought cigarettes, chocolate, at the store.

M: Did they sell everything at the store?

K: Well yes, except sundays. Clothing ~~is~~ ~~was~~ were ~~on~~ rationed. If they got worn out, as long as they kept the outline of clothing (we had to keep them?), they could be replaced.

M: Then you didn't need too much money?

K: No.

M: Could you drink?

K: No, only at Christmas--one beer, something like that.

M: It must have been hard for those who liked drinking.

K: Yes, it was hard. There were some who made a drink of raisins, fruit, fruit juice and so on. (laughs)

M: Some people are clever, aren't they? If you made it, didn't they know? (inspect you?)

K: No, they didn't know. The guys hid it properly. Nobody did anything wrong, so at first they kept a tight watch but ~~xxxxxx~~ by the end it wasn*t so strict, we could get things through.

M: Did you have a daily schedule?

K: Yes, it was rigorous. A bugle blew at 7 alm. I think, and breakfast at 8 I think. After breakfast came roll call, to count to see if any had escaped or not. Even if you wanted to visit a friend in the next hut, you couldn't do it freely once the curfew came, and at 10 p.m. all the lights were out. In bed we used to tell funny stories, jokes to each other for an hour or so before going to sleep. We were just like kids, cut out pictures from the magazines and with paste made of flour we pasted them up here and there, just like kindergarten kids. After a while we made carpentry tools with our hands, you know, the bed spring, we put the spring in the stove to heat it up, hammered it and stretched it to make a chisel. We picked up pieces of board and made picture frames . By the end we were even making mandolins.

M: With board?

K: Yes, yes.

M: What kind of board did you use?

K: A cheese barrel, round, ~~and ring (?)~~ like a hoop We cut it, attached an apple box to it and whittled it thin. Since we had a lot of time, we could take a lot of time to do things. We didn't care about time. And chains, something like that, we cut them and used the brass to make metal parts of a mandolin. Only strings--we asked the store to buy them for us. That's how we made the instrument. We could play the mandoline. ~~with a (?) the handle of a toothbrush, we cut it and whittled and glued.~~ People who did caligraphy made an ink slab with cement and mixed soot from the stove to make the ink. For a brush, we cut the bristles off a shaving brush, pasted them on to the handle of a toothbrush. So we all learned calligraphy.

M: Oh my! Great! (sigh)

K: For Slippers--you know a potato sack? We unknotted those sacks and wove them into cords, cut out the shapes of feet on hard paper and sewed the cords onto the paper with thread to make the bottoms of slippers. And belts--we were given huge pants and so on, so we cut them and for ~~belts~~ straps we used those remnants. So I think when a man has to do something, he can do anything. We didn't have a little saw you know. We made a saw out of the works of a record player and that's what we cut the board with. The chisel, out of a bedspring which we hammered and stretched. A plane--we picked up a car spring from a buggy to make a plane. So all the things--we made the tools first to make the things. We didn't have cards you know, like Japanese flower cards. We drew pictures and made the cards.



Hanafuda (Japanese playing cards with flower suits - flowers in 4 different seasons)

M: Did you rember all the pictures on the flower cards?

K: At the beginning somebody owned a pack of cards but since we couldn't buy them, we made them. We made a lot of things. For clogs, we cut the board, hammered on the old shoe leather pieces and used the cut pieces of our long pants for straps(?)

M: Did you wear clogs in the camp?

K: Yes, some people wore clogs to go to take a bath, they'd make that noise, goto goto goto. In the beginning, they had real ones but after those were worn out they made their clogs like that.

Ara! ~~(o)~~ = Yeah? Oh!
. Then when the war was over, when we were able to leave the camp, we had made so many things in the camp we didn't have anything to carry them in. So we ended up making suitcases.

M: How did you make a suitcase?

K: There were boxes, thin(?) boxes ~~in which~~ supplies came into the camp in. We got those boxes which we made into the shape of a suitcase, pasted a flour sack on top, colored it with paints or ink, and so we made a suitcase.

Maya: How marvelous. How did you make a handle?

K: For a handle, we shaped a piece of wood into a curve to make the handle. So, if a man finds himself in ultimate need, there's nothing he can't do depending on whether he's skilful or unskilful.

Mkaya: Did you hear about Mr. Yokoi who lived in the jungle for 28 years on Guam Island? He made everything himself.

K: Yes, he did it by himself. And we received socks, right? When one pair was worn out--now we kept the worn-out ones to get the wool which we all knitted...

M? Could you knit? Did you make a sweater?

K: Not a sweater, but I knitted undershirts and so on with wool. The needles, we could make those out of scraps of board. We did everything. And so after the war, after staying there for a year, I filed an application to come back to Japan, and so when I went back to Japan, I didn't forget the feeling in the camp, I had strong confidence that I could survive any hardship.

M: So the camp existed for a year after the war?

K: Yes, yes. At the end, you could go to Toronto or other places to work if you wanted. Me, my child was in Japan and since there was no communication between Japan and Canada, I couldn't find out what had happened to her without going back to Japan. I didn't know about my parents either.

M: You must have been worried.

K: Yes, I didn't know if they were dead or alive. So we went back on the second repatriation ship. At that time, my family were sent from Slocan to Vancouver where I met them and we went aboard. But on the ship we were separated.

M: Why? Was it a regulation?

K: Yes, on the ship too. When we arrived in Japan we were put in Uraga asylum where we told them our destinations. You know a lot of people didn't have any destination because they had been destroyed by a ir r aids, then after that we went back to our place. We stayed in our home fown (Hikone) for a while. The Food was very scarce, rations, you know. All of a sudden a large number of people came back from abroad, so it was tough. Since the family had a farm, our life was a little bit better than others'. The food we grew at home, so at that point we could just survive.

M: When you first went back, Japan was a disaster, wasn't it?

K: Yes indeed, after the air raids.

M: I was in Fukui during the war and didn't come back to Yokohama til four years later, so I didn't see the actual hellish scene. My father was in Yokohama during the war, he was in trade.

K: Yes, we went back to my ~~(e)~~ parents' place and stayed there for a while, but since I was never a farmer I couldn't get used to farming, so there was nothing I could do. In order to survive, I had to do something. The people I went back with advised me to work for the occupation ~~forces~~ troops. ~~At~~ I went first to Osaka and got the job and for six years I worked in Osaka in the camp. I used to be a cook in the kitchen, so I did cooking. My employer was a fine man, a major. He asked me to work for him at his house so I worked at his house for a year and a half.

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KOKUBO

M. Did the Japanese know that it was going to be a war?

K Well, I don't remember exactly ... it was so sudden that we were really surprised. I just received a telegram from Japan saying my father died. I was just asking the minister of the Buddhist church to leave, that morning the war started. I came back with the boat behind me at Nanaimo. When I went back to my boat, all the boat were assembled together. I couldn't use my own boat any more. There was a watchman. To come back there, all the boats came back in a line, with the watch boats beside us. We could not run the boats at our will. When we arrived there we picked up our belongings from the boats, and the next day the boats were gone. All three of our boats too.

Were you sad?

Yes, I passed a [illegible], the results of many years work.

Couldn't you something?

Well, since it was the war, there was nothing you could do about it, wasn't it?

Later one boat was sold. I don't know what happened to two other boats. I didn't receive any money for those.

Was the one sold for the normal price?

No, much cheaper.

Who bought your boat? government?

No, an individual bought it, I think they sold them by auction.

Did they bring you the money saying, your boat was sold?

Yes. I went to Vancouver to receive the money, to the Commissioner's office.

So you couldn't do fishing anymore?

No, as long as we were the Japanese we couldn't do fishing anymore.

What did you then?

Then the order came that we had to go beyond 100 miles from Steveston. Gradually people started to leave.

Those who have the Japanese nationality were taken away first.

What happened to you?

In our case, we were going to go to 100 miles away gradually people were sent to the Rodd camps. The people who left first felt easier about leaving because there were still many people left behind, but gradually there were less men left behind and we were worried what was going to happen to the women and children left behind, so therefore, we, the group of NISEI's got together and demanded to let us go to the places we had to go, we said, (Together with our families after knowing that our families would be safe and looked after, then we will go to any place.
When we insisted on our demand, we were taken one by one by the police.

How many people were in your group?

When I belonged to the group, let me see, maybe about two people.

What happened to your family, your wife?

Later they were sent to a ghost town, Slocan.

Were you worried about them?

Yes, I had a sister too. My baby was still small, about 6 months old.
It was in the summer, hot, very hot extremely hot and I had never bleeded for three continuous days.

Was it in the camp?

It happened on the way to and in the Immigration office,

When I was at home they came to take me away.

What did you take with you?

Only my clothings, I suitcase and my little belongings, and soon after that I was sent to Ontario, the internment camp by train. It has a cold cold place.

gambarru (V) = to persist in

Where about in Ontario?

The place called Angka, a P.O.W. camp.

What kind of people were sent there?

All "GAMBARI" group, who persisted in leaving together with the families, we said after that we would go to work, because we could please our families in this way.

But the government rejected your request?

Yes, the country was in a turmoil because the war started.
Well, there was nothing we could do, so we gave up.
So for four years I was in the camp, when it was cold, the temperature went down even to 60°F below.
The summer was only very short.
When I first went in the camp it was very very cold, because I was not used to.

What kind of place was it?

Well, the building, on a flat land, beside the water, there were tents,

Was there no insulation?

No, nothing like that. Even if we burned the stove, inside of the windows were all frozen and white, really white. I had to lie in bed with all what I had to wear.

Well, still human beings are strong, aren't they? (Eraimo no dane) In one year I got used to it. The weather was dry.

were there

You were young, but older people?

Yes, there were a lot of old people. There were about 700 people, 720, only men.

After supper, at 7 or 8 o'clock, everybody went inside and didn't go out.

Was it because of coldness?

No no, it was a regulation. We were treated just like prisoners of war.

Was the building surrounded by the policemen?

The soldiers, guards, the guards were watching. The building was surrounded with the bob wire.

Nobody was violent, nobody did do anything wrong.

Was there nobody who did wrong?

No, nobody.

Four years is pretty long, isn't it?

Yes, at the beginning I felt it very long in the camps, we did some work.

What kind of work did you do?

To go to get the coal to use everyday cleaning, sweeping, cooking the meals for everybody.
And the old people took care of both, and we took turns to clean the place.
Those were the things we did.

Were they all Japanese? ISSEIS and NISEIS?

During those days (those who studied studied very hard.

What kinds of studies?

Some studied the Japanese, some studied German, some studies English, many learned. Some learned JUDO, KENDO
Above were various people in the camps, different people.

Were you free in the camps? Were you free to talk each other inside?

Yes yes, we were all together. There was a recreation room. We could see movies twice a week.

Were they American movies?

Yes, the movies there. So that we might not get bored.

In the camps could you learn about the war?

No, we couldn't, only from bosses.

Did you think that Japan would lose the war? The American radio must have announced so?

Yes, and we were allowed to receive one card and one letter per week, from our families. These letters were all censored

after inspected. If there was a little bit about the way that we put on the bandages with scissors.

Did they understand the Japanese?

Yes, they had the people (working for them) who understood the Japanese.

Where was your wife then?

She was in Slocan.

I suppose you worried a lot about your family

Yes, of course. I wondered how they were getting along. There were supposed to be a lot of people living together... so probably all right.
Only by letters sometimes.
And in the camp there was a store, I got all my money taken away for replacement we were given weekly checks for so much money (of my money). With that money we bought cigarett, chocolate at the store.

Did they sell everything at the store?

Well, yes, except sundays. The clothings were on rations. If they got worn out, as long as they keep the outline of the clothings, they could be replaced.

Then you did not need too much money?

No.

Could you drink?

No, only at Christmas one beer, something like that.

It must have been hard for those who liked drinking.

Yes, it was hard. There were some who made some drink of raisins, fruits, fruit juice, etc. (laugh)

Some are clever, aren't they?

If you make it, didn't they inspect you?

No, they didn't know. The guys hit it properly.

Nobody did anything wrong, so at first watching was rigorous but at the end it was not so strict, we could receive things through 邮寄.

Did you have a daily schedule?

Yes, it was rigorous.
A bugle blew at 7 am, 9 wonder and the breakfast at 8:00, 9 wonder, After breakfast came a roll call, to count to see if any one fled or not.
Even if you wanted to visit a friend in the next hut, you couldn't do it freely once the time came, and 10 pm all the lights were out.
On the bed we used to say funny things, jokes to each other for an hour or so before sleeping, (we were) just like kids, cut out the pictures from the magazine, with the paste made of flour, pasted the pictures here and there, just like kindergarden kids.
At last, we made carpentry tools by our hands, you know, the bed spring, we put the spring in the stove to heat, hammered and stretched it to make a chisel, we picked up pieces of board, and made picture frames

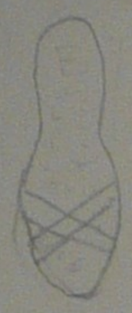
At the end we all made our own mandolines.

With board?

Yes, yes.

What kind of board did you use?

A cheese barrel, round, we cut it, and ring.
attached an apple box to it and whittled
it thin. Since we had a lot of time,
(we could take a lot of time to do things)
And " chains, something like that, we cut
it and used the brass to make metal parts
of a mandoline. Only strings, we asked
the store to buy them for us. Thus we made
the instrument.
We could play the mandoline.
A handle of toothbrush, we cut and
whittled, and glued.
People who did calligraphy made an
ink slab with cement, threaded sort of the
stove to make the ink. A brush, we
cut the brush of shaving brush, pasted
it on the handle of toothbrush.
Thus we all learned calligraphy.



(Oh my! Great! sigh)

Slippers, you know potato sac, We untied these sacs to weave into ropes, cut out the shapes of feet of the hard paper, sewed the ropes onto the paper with thread to make the bottoms of slippers, the belts, we were given thugs pants and so on, so we cut them, so for belts we used those remnants.
So I think, when a man has to do something, he can do anything.

We didn't have a small saw. We made a saw out of the clocks work of a record player, with which we cut the board.
A chisel, a spring of a bed which we hammered and stretched to make a chisel.
A plane, we picked up a car spring, buggy, to make a plane.
So all things, we made the tools first to make the things.

We didn't have cards, you know, like Japanese flower cards, we drew pictures and made the cards.

Did you remember all the pictures of the flower card?

At the beginning somebody owned the cards, but since we couldn't buy them, we made them.
We made a lot of things
Clogs, we cut the board, hammered on
the old shoe leather pieces used the cut piece
of the long pants for belts.

Did you wear clogs in the camp?

Yes, some people wore clogs to go to
take a bath with the noise GO TO GO TO
At the beginning, they had the real
ones but after they were worn out they
made their clogs like that.

Ara:

Then when the war was over, when we were
able to leave the camp, we made so many
things in the camp which we didn't
have anything to carry in. So we ended
up make suit cases.

How did you make a suit case?

There were boxes, thin boxes, in which the things came into the camp. We got such box of which we made the shape of suitcase, pasted the sac of flour on the top of it, colored with paints or ink, thus we made it a suitcase.

For: How marvelous
How did you put a handle?

A handle, we curved a piece of wood to make each handle

Therefore if a man (himself in) need, there will be nothing he cannot do, only he can be skillful or unskillful.

Have you heard of Mr. Tokoi who lived in the jungle for 28 years on Guam Island? He made everything by himself.

Yes, he did by himself.
And, we received the socks, right?...
when our pair were worn out now we kept the worn-out ones to get the wool which we all knitted

Could you do knitting?

Did you make a sweater?

Not sweater but undershirt, etc. I knitted with wool.

The needles we could make out of scraps of board.

We did everything.

Therefore, after the war after staying there for a year, I filed an application to come back to Japan, Therefore when I went back to Japan, I didn't forget the feeling in the camp. I had strong confidence that I could survive any hardship.

So the camp existed for a year after the war?

Yes, yes.

At the end, you could go to Toronto or other places to work if you wanted.

Me, my child was in Japan, Since there was no communication between Japan and Canada, I couldn't know what happened to her without going back to Japan.

I didn't know about my parents either.

You must have been worried.

Yes, I didn't know if they were dead or alive.

So we went back by the 2nd repatriation ship.
At that time, from Slocan my family were sent to Vancouver where I met them and we went aboard.
On the ship we were separated.

Why?

I don't know why.

Was it a regulation?

Yes, on the ship too. When we arrived in Japan we were put in URAGA asylum, where we told them our destinations, you know, a lot of people didn't have any destination because they were destroyed by air raids. Then after that we went back to our place.
We stayed in our hometown for a while. (HIKONE)
The food was very scarce, rations, you know all of sudden a large number of people came back from abroad, so it was tough.
Since the family had a farm, the life was a little bit better (than others), the food we grew at home, so at that point

We could barely survive.

When you first went back to Japan, Japan was in a disaster, wasn't it?

Yes, indeed, after the air-raids.

I was in FUKUI during the war and didn't come back to YOKOHAMA after four years. Therefore I didn't see the exact devilish scene. My father was in YOKOHAMA during the war; He did trade.

Yes, we went back to the parent's place, and stayed there for a while, but since I was never a farmer, I couldn't get used to farming. So there was nothing I could do, in order to survive, I had to do something. The people I went back together advised me to work for the occupation troops. At first I went to Osaka and got the job and for six years in Osaka I worked.
In the camp I used to be a cook in the kitchen so I did cooking. My employer was a fine man, a major, he asked me to work for him at his house. I worked at his house for a year and half.

Kokuba, Hideo
(TRANSCRIPT)

59:4.

H. KOKUBO

(January 17,1973)

Interviewed by: Maya Koizumi

The Japanese Fishermen Don't Want Their Children To Become Fishermen. The Japanese Enjoy Their Present Life At Steveston.

R.R.A.S. Oral History Programme, Vancouver
Cultural Communities Series.

Interview No. 39, Tape No.4 , Tracks 1 & 2, Speed 3 3/4

Vancouver R.R.A.S. 1973

H. Kokubo
January 17, 1973

Interview No. 39, Tape no. 4 , Track 1

Ms. Marlatt: How did the men feel in the internment camps? Did you feel very angry or very bitter about it?

Mr. Kokubo: Some people angry, some people .....well, nobody satify. (chuckles) It's wartime, see?

Miss Koizumi: Did some people become crazy or...?

Mr. Kokubo: No, I don't think so because....when the work is just to bring all your rations and bring the coal from the train and clean the house and all those jobs. You have to do it ....for exercise any way.

Ms. Marlatt: Did you think that that was a fair thing for this country to do to the people?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, by that time, you know the.....Japanese weren't like now. You get citizen ummm.. who can do everything same as all the rest of the Canadian people but by that time, you know all the Japanese only.....we were all from the coast and citizens spread all over the country.

Ms. Marlatt: There were people who were fighting for citizenship though, weren't there? Japanese people who were fighting to get citizenship before the war started.

Mr. Kokubo: Oh yes, um-hum....but they won't....See, when first when the real war started, only Japanese Nationals, they pick up and they sent to road work and bush camp.....and like school teacher, all those people, minister...You know, like Buddhist. They're all sent to internment camps first. Second day...soon as the war started. Forty or forty-two people was took up from Vancouver.

Miss Koizumi: Old people too?

Mr. Kokubo: Mostly old people.

Miss Koizumi: You weren't Canadian, right? You weren't born here.

Mr. Kokubo: And then, after that, they say no other Japanese Nationalist will go out camping, bush work and all those places. And then third, I guess they tried to send us to work. But we have to move out from the coast. So it's okay, we'll move but, we'd like to go with the family. We told them too, you know.

Miss Koizumi: Was it a young group of people? Like you were young.

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum.

Miss Koizumi: How old? Twenty....?

Mr. Kokubo: nine.

Miss Koizumi: Nine...so that was all young people.

Mr. Kokubo: You know, all the men go out and leave all the family behind, kids and you know their wives. You have more worry...so we like to see them move out and where they stay...and then from there you've got to go out to work...for living. But they didn't do that. so we just stay and tell the government, we want to move together. So they just come and pick up all the people who are waiting.

Miss Koizumi: So you...were they were put into internment camps?

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum. Oh, anybody walking on the streets, they just pick up.

Miss Koizumi: Oh, I see...well, when was it? What date? Like was it.....

Mr. Kokubo: Huh?

Miss Koizumi: When was it? In March or... after the war started?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh...December and we went in July.

Miss Koizumi: Oh it was July.

Mr. Kokubo: Summertime.

Miss Koizumi: The Japanese were... all Japanese were supposed to be

out of....

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum...from the coast..

Miss Koizumi:....from the coast....

Mr. Kokubo: hundred mile...

Miss Koizumi: By July hey?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh no....No, some people stay longer until they find out where they go.

Ms. Marlatt: Did they tell you beforehand where you were going?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, they just asked, you know, go out....either sent to a bush camp or a road camp.

Ms. Marlatt: A what camp?

Mr. Kokubo: A road camp.

Miss Koizumi: But they do tell you exactly where you're to go..

Mr. Kokubo: No...no....so we just stay till we find out where all our family is to go first.

Ms. Marlatt: Did you know? Did you know where your family was going to go when you...

Mr. Kokubo: Nobody know.

Miss Koizumi: When did your family go? to

Mr. Kokubo: Oh...I don't know.

Miss Koizumi: It was after you left?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh yes.

Miss Koizumi: Cuz all the men were taken first, right?

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum.

Ms. Marlatt: I don't understand. When they came to take you, were you at home?

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum.

Ms. Marlatt: And they just knocked on the door and said, "You have to come with us."?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh yes...or the Mounties come and just put 'em in the car. That's it! And so I mean, immigration building in Vancouver.

Miss Koizumi: Did you take some things with you? Like...

Mr. Kokubo: Nnnnoooo.

Miss Koizumi: I mean some kind of money and things..

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, we have some spending money...so we just..nobody knows, you know, when they came....so you get ready to go any time. Some rich people made up their minds and to stay themself, you know, independent. So they can move, you know, like these prisoner camps are bad and all those. Some...

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah...

Mr. Kokubo: Some ghost town...old mining place.

Miss Koizumi: Were there a lot of people from Stevestonin internment camps?

Mr. Kokubo: No, not too many....several hundred somewhat...people all together anyway. And then, some young people from there they go out working.....to mostly...they get sent to bush work... cutting logs in Ontario. And you have to stay there for a few months and then while you was working, you find a job....in the commission work....there was a few here and there. There was a few times some minister from Ottawa come to tell us to go out and ...different places...So we told him....and they said, "Sir, you are a Canadian born and a Canadian." Well, I told them if we are a Canadian why can't we go back to B. C.? Well, then if you talk like that, he say.... just...leave it...(chuckles) And we like talk sometimes some and German peoples they stay...They just move all the Japanese people. at that time...

Ms. Marlatt: They didn't move any Germans?

Mr. Kokubo: No. Oh, during the war times they can't help it...But anything happen at home, they won't get job...they couldn't get permission.

Miss Koizumi: They couldn't get..?

Mr. Kokubo: No...What if like somebody die and that...you couln't visit them?

Mr. Kokubo: No. No.

Miss Koizumi: So you didn't see your family at all?

Mr. Kokubo: No.....until..until the day we leave Vancouver...for Japan.

Ms. Marlatt: oooooohhh.

Mr. Kokubo: They sent us on the train and immigration building and the day the boat leave from Vancouver....they send the family from Spokane.....on the train. And even on the boat..they separate!

Ms. Marlatt: Uhhh!!!That's crazy!

Mr. Kokubo: Yeah.

Ms. Marlatt: What year was this?

Mr. Kokubo: Until we get home. I mean back to Japan.

Miss Koizumi: So you didn't see your family on the boat?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, we see in the daytime..

Miss Koizumi: Oh, but...

Mr. Kokubo: We can go and...just go and talk and that's it...and even helping serving all the meals, you know, serve 1200 people going on boat.

Ms. Marlatt: 1200 wow.... What year was this? Was it that you went back?

Mr. Kokubo: ...'46, I think...summertime...We stayed in a camp one year after all. Anybody want to go to Toronto or some other place

they'll let you go...but....see, my oldest daughter, they went to visit her grandmother, that's my parents, before the war and they'll try to come back again but, the war start and there was no way they g to get back...to come back to the country again. So, we have to wait, 'til the war is over so we was . That's why we went back to Japan find out...still alive or you know...We can't get any letter or any message or anything.

Ms. Marlatt: And so then, how long did you stay in Japan?

Mr. Kobubo: Six years.

Ms. Marlatt: What did you do there?

Mr. Kobubo: Interpreting and cooking....for the occupation force. We get job in Osaka.

Miss Koizumi: Were there a lot of Canadian Japanese working?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh yeah.

Miss Koizumi: in an occupation force?

Mr. Kobubo: Oh yes. We were given the best jobs. After the war, we can't get any...hard to get the job in Japan so we have to work for occupation force....they was working for. So if anybody went back from his country because they speak English...it's easy to get a job.

Ms. Marlatt: What did the country feel like then? When you were working there?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, the Japanese people there?

Ms. Marlatt: Yep.

Mr. Kobubo: Well, I don't think they don't feel too bad.

Miss Koizumi: Do sometimes though? Like some Japanese say something nasty or something to you..

Mr. Kokubo: No,never. (laughing) No, they are really nice.

Miss Koizumi: Oh yeah..

Mr. Kokubo: Really kind.....to us.

Miss Koizumi: I guess because Japan lost the war, lot of Japanese were quite angry at the Americans, eh? You know?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, I don't hear very much...the people get angry, because I can't help it. (laughing)

Miss Koizumi: That's right.

Mr. Kokubo: They lost it...so...that's it! (laughing)

Miss Koizumi: The more you think about it...like when you think about it, now...Eh...now everythin g/ O.K. Looks kind of strange, doesn't it?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, some American people says, you know, you just wait and see for five, six years, it's going to be really changed someday.....altogether. And last time I went, three years ago, altogether different after..... Everything changed. I can't hardly tell where I was before.

Ms. Marlatt: Really? Buildings and....?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh yes, the buildings ...all modern.

Ms. Marlatt: Yes....yes...and how about the people? Did the people seem different? Their customs were different?

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum. Much difference....Not like before anyway. Mostly like....Western Styles....and before all people they like to save all their money, but then the wartime, you know,.....no use to keep all the money..so these days..all the youngest people, they never save. They just keep on spending...never save! I know. But they have a good living there.

Miss Koizumi: Is the same as Japanese people here too, like before the war, like Japanese people tried to save money?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh yes.

Miss Koizumi: Now, what you think?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, long, long time ago, you know, old peoples they came over here and they work and save money and they want to go back to old country and retire over there....if they can make it.

Miss Koizumi: So, now, like young people, you Canadian Japanese, ng/ they don't save money, do they?

Mr. Kokubo: No, not very much. They just spend and enjoy themselves, never know what happen next day...

Ms. Marlatt: ...Sounds like a lot of young people...

Miss Koizumi: What you think, you think it's a good idea or.....

Mr. Kokubo: Well, you have to save little, just in case you get sick or something, you know...otherwise.....But I think that Canada is the best country.

Mr. Weyler: You think it's better here than in Japan? to live?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, if you have lots of money, enough money to stay.. it's a nice country, to stay.....Um-hum.

Mr. Weyler: Were you ever in the United States?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, we went just for a....travelling...

Mr. Weyler: To where? To San Fransisco?

Mr. Kokubo: San Fransisco and Los Angeles...

Mr. Weyler: Yeah...and did you like the United States?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, nice country....California was nice country too, nice and warm..

Mr. Weyler: Yeah..

Miss Koizumi: Would you like to live there?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, it's too hot. All day long.....but B. C.'s the best...(chuckling) Nice climate, good waters, not so cold in winter time, not so hot in summer.

Miss Koizumi: And so do you think a lot of Japanese people in Steveston really like it here, hey?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh yeah....because most people now, they was born here.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Kokubo: ...and they've grown in Steveston and....for the people who's there now..

Mr. Weyler: What do you think of the war, now? Do you have an opinion on the war, now? No opinion?

Mr. Kokubo: .....NO...

Miss Koizumi: What do you mean the war now???

Mr. Weyler: The war, in America...

Miss Koizumi: the Viet Nam War...

Mr. Weyler: The Americans fighting in Viet Nam, what do you think about that???? (laughing)

Mr. Kokubo: Really, (laughs) kind of hard to tell...

Mr. Weyler: No opinion, huh?

Mr. Kokubo: But all the people...the Japanese people in Japan, I ask a few peoples there. They says, when they're bombing, they don't want this war any more..

Mr. Weyler: Yeah..

Mr. Kokubo: Most people they get, scared, I guess.

Mr. Weyler: Yeah.....sure..

Miss Koizumi: Japan is not very far from Viet Nam.

Mr. Kokubo: .....but it's altogether changed anyway.

Mr. Weyler: Yeah.. Well, maybe...what do you think....You think they should stop fighing or not?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, I think fighting's not so good, you know, just kill peoples..

Mr. Weyler: Yeah...yeah... I agree.

Mr. Kokubo: Someday it will be nice and peace and friendly . That's

the best thing. (laughing)

Mr. Weyler: Yeah....

End of Track I

Up until this point the tape is not transcribable as there is a very loud buzzing drowning out the voices.

Mr. Kokubo: .....but one of the brothers, he's coming back. He's come back to Toronto.

Miss Koizumi: Oh, to Toronto?

Mr. Kokubo: He's working there.

Miss Koizumi: He came back from Japan?

Mr. Kokubo: He stayed in Japan. He was born here, then they went to Japan, went to school there and then last year, he came back here. He's working in Toronto.....gardener...Oh, he's got his own truck and everything....least, I think so.

Mr. Weyler: Mr. Kokubo, we put this information that we get in Steveston, we put pictures and we write and we make a book, and if that book goes on sale and people read the book and they learn all about Steveston, do you think that's good for Steveston, or you think that's not so good for Steveston?

Mr. Kokubo: (laughs) Oh....I don't know, myself.

Mr. Weyler: No, no...say what you really think. You think that's not good for Steveston or it's O.K. for Steveston?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, I think it's O.K. You know, leave all the histories.

Mr. Weyler: Yep.

Mr. Kokubo: And so many years later, you know, lot of young peoples they might read and they figure out what was going on before.

Mr. Weyler: Some people say to us that, maybe Steveston is better if it doesn't get any publicity, you know? People can live their life there and not have people come down from Vancouver and take pictures and talk and come in here. Maybe Steveston will last longer if people

stay away. Do you think maybe this is true?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, now it don't make any difference. (laughs)

Mr. Weyler: It doesn't make any difference?

Mr. Kokubo: No. But, I know, all our age are...used to fish before so that's why we came back to Steveston but, all the young people from now on, they don't go fishing any more.

Mr. Weyler: They don't want to fish?

Mr. Kokubo: Nope. It's getting less all the time...in a few years.

Mr. Weyler: So who's going to fish? Somebody's gotta fish, hey?

Mr. Kokubo: Yes, somebody have to fish but, I don't think, not too many young Japanese boys won't go back to fishing.

Ms. Marlatt: Why don't they like fishing?

Miss Koizumi: I think fishing nice...

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, I like myself but....you know, sometime dangerous, and you haven't got enough days to go out fishing like before these days. Most people...the young people, they graduate and they get good job....so they don't have to go fishing.

Ms. Marlatt: They don't think fishing's a good job?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, fishing's getting worse all the time.

Miss Koizumi: Is that so? Was last year bad for you?

Mr. Kokubo: No, no...we have a good average every year...but you need good experience.

Miss Koizumi: Oh, you have to do it every year...If you have a son, you know, you want him to be a fisherman?

Mr. Kokubo: No, I don't think so. (laughs)

Miss Koizumi: Nope?

Mr. Kokubo: Hard work too. You have to fish hard...because it's a short season. But one thing, I like fishing is, it's own boss.. that's why I like it.

Miss Koizumi: You think you can stand working in the office in the town?

Mr. Kokubo: No, I don't like that. (laughing)

Ms. Marlatt: I don't like that either!

Mr. Weyler: Yeah...you're not the only one...

Mr. Kokubo: Own boss is better....

Mr. Weyler: Yeah...yeah..

Miss Koizumi: Did you want to become something else when you were small?

Mr. Kokubo: No...I like fishing...I like work on the sea better.

Miss Koizumi: How about your brothers? Are they fishermen?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, one of the brother..he's in fishing 19 years.. and he's finished...quit and go back to Japan..

Miss Koizumi: Oh, he went back to Japan?

Mr. Kokubo: Um-huh..and another brother, he fish for a few years but, he like business better. So he's working at C. P. now.

Ms. Marlatt: Well, what do you think will happen to Steveston if fishing....if fewer and fewer people fish, what will happen to the town?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, there's so many in the fish..is try to cut down.. so many fishermen...so- I don't think it's no worry.

Miss Koizumi: But, like B. C. Packers...those canneries have been in Steveston hey...for a long time?

Mr. Kokubo: Uh-huh...well, they got big boat..

Miss Koizumi: So eventually maybe, white fishermen....there'll be more white fishermen than Japanese fishermen eh?

Mr. Kokubo: That's right....later on...

Ms. Marlatt: And then the Japanese people will gradually move to

town...to Vancouver, right? They'll get jobs in offices and live in Vancouver?

Mr. Kokubo: There are some young couples, depend on where they work....

Miss Koizumi: Are there still a lot of young people living in Steveston?

Mr. Kokubo: Uh-huh. Quite a few.

Miss Koizumi: How about like, are there people sort of like old people and their sons and grandsons. They all live in one house?

Mr. Kokubo: No, not very much these days. Not like before. Soon as they get married they move out. They don't stay with their parents.

Miss Koizumi: young people...

Mr. Kokubo: Nope.

Miss Koizumi: How about the people of your age?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, our age, they used to stay...

Miss Koizumi: And most of them still live with their parents?

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum. But, not very these days...because they're getting old now...so most people die....already. If my age the parents should be around 85-90.

Miss Koizumi: So like when people of your age get older, they will not be living with their children?

Mr. Kokubo: It all depends, if their children want the....you know, ask to come over...they might but, it's better...less trouble, I guess...(laughing)

Ms. Marlatt: Another thing that people have said is that this book that we're doing should be really done by Japanese people living in Steveston 'cuz only the Japanese people really know what it's like to live here.

Mr. Kokubo: uh-hum.

Ms. Marlatt: Do you know of anyone who would do a book like that?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, I think you could find few peoples.

Ms. Marlatt: How do you feel about us being 'outsiders' and doing the book?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, I think that's good idea. (laughing)

Ms. Marlatt: You're very tactful!

Mr. Kokubo: To keep it...you know leave it for a few years and when the little ones grow up..then they'll want to know what was going on before....find out what...you know, grandfathers were doing and so on...and so on...I think it's interest.

Ms. Marlatt: You know there's some old buildings, where are those old buildings that you took those pictures of? Ho Wo Company down on Dyke Road...

Mr. Kokubo: Oh yes..yes?

Ms. Marlatt: What is it....what are those buildings? How long have they been empty?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, I'm sure not sure...but....oh five, six years, I think. They run a store there.

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: What kind of store?

Mr. Kokubo: A general store...they sell everything.

Miss Koizumi: Like a department store?

Mr. Kokubo: Yeah..

Miss Koizumi: With clothes and?

Mr. Kokubo: Clothes, hardware, groceries, everything...

Miss Koizumi: Was it owned by who?

Mr. Kokubo: It was Chinese people...This store...Since we was .. kids, must be over 50 60 years or more....

Ms. Marlatt: And it just closed.....five or six years ago?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, the building started getting old and then, you

know, the people die and I think, maybe the inspector/ doesn't go through. You know, it's an old building.

Ms. Marlatt: Oh yeah...

Mr. Kokubo: So it's torn down I guess.

Miss Koizumi: Did they move to somewhere? These chinese people?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, I don't know where they stay....they used to own farm there too.....all the property here...

Ms. Marlatt: oooh, the sign that's for sale....

Mr. Kokubo: And other side...other side . All those all those uh-huh...so many acres...around 25-30 acres section or something.

Ms. Marlatt: Looks like there used to be other stores around there too besides Store. There was another one just sort of across the road..

Mr. Kokubo: Yeah...across the road?

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah....

Mr. Kokubo: ....there's pool room and barber shop.

Ms. Marlatt: Hmmm.

Miss Koizumi: Were they Japanese shops?

Mr. Kokubo: Uh-hum. Most of them.

Miss Koizumi: Is this their barber shop?

Mr. Kokubo: And some little grocery store too.

Ms. Marlatt: Was that the little grey house that was right next to Hong Wo?

Mr. Kokubo: Just across?

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah.

Mr. Kokubo: On opposite side?

Mrs. Marlatt: Oh, on the opposite side?

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum. They're all torn down now. And between that....there's a few little ...candy stores and.....

Ms. Marlatt: Were those....there would have been more company houses around there and those stores would've served the people in the company houses?

Mr. Kokubo: Uh-huh...uh-huh.....They usually....the first one they come and take all the orders and they deliver..

Ms. Marlatt: Oh, I see.

Mr. Kokubo: ...oh, three, four times....a week. And quite a few of the peoples come from Vancouver too....

Ms. Marlatt: Really..?

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum..they're taking orders for the groceries and they just come and deliver..and there's about three fish markets in Steveston here....

Ms. Marlatt: And now there isn't one!!! is there? Not one!!

Miss KOizumi: Were the fish markets and people came to buy fish, hey?

Mr. Kokubo: Uh-hum... All different kinds of fish, you know.

Miss Koizumi: When are they gone? Like when did they stop fish market?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, soon as the war start...they all move out..

Miss Koizumi: Oh, I see...

Mr. Kokubo: And since after that....nobody start. That's a good business....for anybody who starts a fish market..

Miss Koizumi: Yeah...in Steveston..

Mr. Kokubo: Um-hum...or any place There's one Japanese starting in Brighouse.

Miss Koizumi: Oh sure?

Ms. Marlatt: A fish store hey? with fresh fish?

Mr. Kokubo: Fresh fish, everything....

Ms. Marlatt: Here we came down to Steveston looking to buy a fish, and we couldn't find anywhere to buy a fish. (laughs)

Mr. Kokubo: You have to go to the cannery.

Miss Koizumi: The cannery sell fish every day...to anyone?

Mr. Kokubo: No, no. Only time when the fish come in....

Miss Koizumi: It would be difficult to get one....

Mr. Kokubo: It's no trouble in spring time...

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah...yeah..

Mr. Kokubo: Soon as the season's open...but not winter time because it's closed.

Ms. Marlatt: The pool room and the barber shop that was near Hong Wo's...

Mr. Kokubo: Yes?

Ms. Marlatt: When did they close down?

Mr. Kokubo: Well, most all the store close down soon as the war start, you know.. They have to...all the Japanese have to move out...hundred mile from the coast...

Ms. Marlatt: Hundred miles? Was that the limit?

Mr. Kokubo: Yes. inland.... So anybody who been run a store business or farming or anything around Kelowna and all those areas, they have no trouble. They don't have to move. Mostly only fishermen.....anybody who stay close to the coast...they have to move.

Ms. Marlatt: Where did you go?

Mr. Kokubo: Oh, I went to Lemon Creek, Slocan ...all those area..

Ms. Marlatt: Did you go with your family or...

Mr. Kokubo: No...I went internment camp...they send us Ontario..

_____: What an experience!

Mr. Kokubo: Cold country!

Ms. Marlatt: Yeah...and what did you do in the camp? Did they give you work to do, or what?

Mr. Kokubo: Not too much. I did cooking.

Ms. Marlatt: Was it just for men?

mr. Kokubo: Uh-huh. We hadn't see any woman for four years.

Miss Koizumi: Really!!!!!

Mr. Weyler: Wow...(laughs)

Mr. Kokubo: Just like a kid you know.....we just get the magazine and cut all the pictures...just like Kindergarten. (laughs) All the movie stars, that's all.

Miss Koizumi: So you didn't see any woman, hey?

End of Track II