

Yamauchi, Peter
(Transcripts)

63-1-2

MR. PETER YAMAUCHI

April 21, 1972

Interview With Mr. Yamauchi; Born 1917; Canada; Opal, Alberta;
Farmer's Eldest Son; Grade 8; Army; England; Japanese Language
Instructor; Trading Company.

Interviewed by: Maya Koizumi

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Interview No. 63, Tape no. 1 of 2, Tracks 1 & 2, Speed 3 3/4

Vancouver, Oral History Project, 1972

Mr. S. P. Yamauchi
April 21, 1972

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Miss Koizumi: When were you born?

Mr. Yamauchi: I was born in 1917.....ah, March 17ththe date.....

Miss Koizumi: And where

Mr. Yamauchi: Eh...Welling, Alberta.....I was there for about.....two years, I think, and my parents moved over to a place called....Opal, which is about forty miles north of Edmonton....they were farmers....

Miss Koizumi: Hmmhmm....O-P-.....

Mr. Yamauchi: O-P-A-L....

Miss Koizumi: Edmonton

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...it's about seven miles west of Redwater...you've heard of Redwater oil field.....it's just seven miles west of Redwater oil fields...

Miss Koizumi: And your...your father was a farmer?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yes, he was a farmer.

Miss Koizumi: What kind of farm

Mr. Yamauchi: It was a....mixed farming....you see, in that area it's all....mixed farming. There's no....uh....say, just, you know...^{one...}one kind of grain....you have to...you have to grow all kinds of grains and you raised.....ah...animals like pigs, and cattle, and also poultry....any of them had to do with a farm we had, at that time, but ah..... the parents had quite a hard life, over there....there were no doctors then, andthe schools....was, I'll say, about five miles away or something, from where we used to live, then the parents....kind of concerned with our education, so then they moved to another farm that would..brought them closer to school. But eh....we're....when I went to school for the first time, ^Inever knew a word of English!

Miss Koizumi: Is that right?

Mr. Yamauchi: Nope. Dad thought....and his way of thinking was, he did not want us to speak with the.....broken, broken English, 'cause his was....and you see, he didn't want to do that, so then he said, 'Well, you go to school...you'll learn anyway.' And....at first, at grade one, two and three....I hardly remember that..

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) that life seems to be black.....I don't seem to remember, yet I passed all the grades.....how it happened, I don't know! And, our district was more or less a Ukrainian district.....so then, ah.....in rather strange way at home, Dad was....he was the old Japanese type gentleman...you had to speak Japanese and that's all....then when you entered school, you.....learnt English.....but then, soon as it came to recess, or lunchtime, or after school....we all did it in Ukrainian!

Miss Koizumi: Ohhhh....

Mr. Yamauchi: So then we more or less....I more less have the....there's three languages in all ways....

Miss Koizumi: Did it come to you very natural to speak three languages?

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yes...no trouble at all, because...you learnt when you're....you were a child, so when you come home, it's just natural for you to speak Japanese, even the broken Japanese.....you spoke Japanese.....when you go to school, you learn English during school hours and as soon as they go out.....the...the other Ukrainian people were the same, too...their parents spoke...could not speak English too well, so then...naturally, the kids all spoke Ukrainian or Polish, whatever the case may be, and that way, we had three languages goin'.....

Miss Koizumi:very interesting....

Mr. Yamauchi:and then it got so that it's not lettin' your studying.....in a.....when you're studying languages, up here...in school...when you have to start....as a child, and you're speaking in Japanese...you're thinking in Japanese; and then, when you're talking Ukrainian, you're thinking Ukrainian.....you don't translate or anything....that's funny. I.....I never knew that...such things could happen until when....during the war, when I was down to England, uh....I went over as a Service Corps man, but while I was there I was more or less asked to come

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) London University, where they were teaching Japanese.... and...there, uh....talking with the.....with the students, or the scholars and that.. that came to that school, to learn Japanese, we started discussing these things.... these people, the scholars....because they were English....they thought in English... when theyand then they had to translate that into Japanese before they could eh....eh....speak Japanese, whereas....in our cases, it is different. And that's the only time I.....that's the first time I found out that....uh....is there such a thing that....it was.....rather strange....actually, the first thing these boys asked.... 'All right now, when you're speaking Japanese, you....think in English or do you think in Japanese?' I said, 'Oh, no... I think in Japanese'.....then, when you're talking English with them, do you think...do you think in Japanese and bring it to English? I said, 'No, I don't'.....but eh....I couldn't do that now....'cause I'm off....of....off from Ukrainian now....I hear....I can understand some of this but it has been..... maybe twenty...thirty...thirty, forty years now.... since I was among Ukrainians.

Miss Koizumi: Uh-huh....do you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yes.....there's....ours is a family of seven. There was two girls.... two sisters....and eh, four other brothers.....one brother's in Cal...two brothers in Calgary, sister in...in Edmonton, two brothers in B.C. here, and a sister in South America.

Miss Koizumi: South America!

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah....she's in CUSO.....

Miss Koizumi: CUSO?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...she was home last fall, just a couple of months ago....

Miss Koizumi: Soat home, you spoke only Japanese....?

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Mr. Yamauchi: Yes.

Miss Koizumi: And....the food and all the....the way of life was Japanese?

Mr. Yamauchi: Uh....no, they....we lived over there....we were far from being well-off...you ate whatever.....uh....whatever you can get. I remember some of those...hungry days.....this was way back in the Hungry Thirties....uh....when we used to uh...say, grow potatoes....and...vegetables and so forth, and raise chickens, pigs, and...so forth, but...it was so hard, those days, that we'd grow our own potatoes, and we...you could hardly eat that....we had to sell it.... in order to buy some....say, buy our clothes, or anything like it....so then we can't even eat our own pot...eat our own potatoes. Same with eggs...eggs, those days were five cents a dozen....and eh.....the...some of the....these eggs, we were fairly small.....you can't carry say, thirty dozen....we used to take...we used to carry eggs thirty-eight dozen to the crate....and take them....take them up to the store, and then you exchange that....and you can't get cash for it.... you exchange for say, tea, or sugar....which you...any item that you cannot grow on your own farm. Sure.....after supper before you'd go to bed we'd get.... we'd say, we're hungry or something....first thing what we'll do is go to the.... basement and maybe bring a turnip and....eat turnip.....that used to be our...more like a delicacy, like.....it was...you know, that...that hard up times.....

Miss Koizumi: That...Hungry Thirties.... called it's Depression times....

Mr. Yamauchi: That was the Depression, yah....

Miss Koizumi: And then, more or less all the farmers....

Mr. Yamauchi: Everybody was hard-up then....and eh....fruit...things like that were just out...we just couldn't get it...even, of course....this is out in the far....out in the country, so you don't get much fruit anyways, but even then, there was no such thing as juices or anything.....when you got sick, you never....uh.... went.....well, you very seldom went to a hospital or anything like that.....

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Miss Koizumi: Like mother made special tea or things like that to cure that?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yup.....and uh...

Miss Koizumi: Can you tell me something....

Mr. Yamauchi: uh...like, for instance, like, if you get sick and you can't eat anything, that's the only time we had rice....you know, like okayu....

Miss Koizumi: Okayu?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yup, okayu. That's the only time we had...ate rice...the rest of the time we baked potatoes and things like that and uh....

Miss Koizumi: Did you use shoyo and uh....

Mr. Yamauchi: Uh...not so much but then... shoyo we used, but not very much....we couldn't.....we can't afford it!

Miss Koizumi: And also just so far from Vancouver.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yup.

Miss Koizumi: Were there other Japanese families around?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yup...there were.....sixin this....in this particular district there were six Japanese families, and there was....eh....three with children...the others was..... they were they didn't have any children....three families with kids.....

Miss Koizumi: And these Japanese families are kind of close...to each other?

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yes...they were all close together, yeah....

Miss Koizumi: I mean....distance and things....

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh distance....well...there was about.....

Miss Koizumi: Psychologically.....?

Mr. Yamauchi: Uh...yeah...psychologically, yes....they were all close....like, for instance, New Year's....when you got....certain days when we uh...we got together....the whole....the....the.....allall of 'em used to get together

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) for New Year's.....New Year'spicnics and...and things like that....but eh.....they were all.....see, and they're all about five, four, five, six miles apart, and there was no cars then this was all just with a....a team....team of horses, or you walked..... there was no otherway of getting around....so that you don't get...you never did get around too much, so ah..... it's just as thought..... though you are very close.... you know..... among them, but.....^{when} you're..... ^{in,} say... in trouble ..you know or something like that...trouble is..anything like that it's always your next-door neighbour....somethink.....well, all the Japanese that lived over there, it was almost like .

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.....hmmhmm.....yeah

Mr. Yamauchi: But eh...there, I remember uh....when my dad made up this...you know how come we....he made us learn Japanese, too.....He made up....us.... you know by himself?

Miss Koizumi: Yes!

Mr. Yamauchi: And...we played that and there in one of

I remember he used to tell us that.....yeah....

Miss Koizumi: Yeah....

Mr. Yamauchi: And then your next door neighbour was so fa..... half a mile apart..... if you ran it.....it'd only take you about ten minutes.

Miss Koizumi: These um.....Japanese people have been living there as long as your parents....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yes....

Miss Koizumi:Accordingly, your your parents moved to Alberta?

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Mr. Yamauchi: Yuh...they were....they....uh.....now there's one family....one family was there before us, in this....place called Opal. I don't know how much before us.....but they've all....left Opal now....they're all scattered now....

Miss Koizumi: Your father came to Canada like when?

Mr. Yamauchi: About nineteen-six or nineteen-seven.....

Miss Koizumi: Oh...long time.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah....it's not very much after the Russo-Japanese war, and you know, the Russo-Japanese war was nineteen-four and five, and I think he....hmmm... when he first came here, he....went fishing, I believe....yeah...I was able to dig that up!....There was a book, written by one of the Japanese over here... this . He wrote a book on it, and in there....uh...they mention my dad in there, and I read up into that, and I found out...afterwards....of course, if I had lived in...in Alberta, I wouldn't know these places where he...where he had been, but....me being....in B.C. now, now I found out where he was....like Rivers Inlet, Queen Charlotte Islands, Masset and Gibway....places like that, it's mentioned in there, which...now, see, I explained that to my brothers and sisters, I said just where these places were. Then he....uh....he was a cook or something, too, down Cranbrook area, and then.... He....and then he went to Edmonton. He lived in Edmonton for a while, then he went southern Alberta, into a....farming...some... somebody persuaded him to.....do some farming, , and I think he was kind of half-established, and then he went back to Japan, got married, and.....eh....then they....she came over, and they farmed, I think a year or two, in this place called Raymond Groves Barn , where I was born, and I think they ran into some misfortune over there with frost....they were frosted out, or something, and they lost everything there, so then they went up to....ah....Edmonton....these people, they said, 'Well, why don't you come to Edmonton...we've got a place there if you'll look after it', and that's how we he went up north to Edmonton. And uh....then...what is it....nineteen thirty-eight, he passed away, with cancer

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continued) of the liver....and uh....I was only twenty then, I think...and the rest of...all the rest of them were all younger than me, so Mother did have a real tough life.

Miss Koizumi: Hmmhmm...did your father tell you about him....like, when you were a child, like.....?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah, she used to tell us quite a bit, yeah...

Miss Koizumi: About his life?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah....and then, uh....course, you know....em, was it...I think I was about fifteen....fifteen or sixteen, and before that....well, they were always too busy...well, we never had a chance to talk too much, but then, afterwards.... well, she used to talk to....then mother used to read us diaries

Miss Koizumi: Oh, hehe wrote diaries...

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah, he kept a diary....

Miss Koizumi: I see....

Mr. Yamauchi: And uh...so that's how we got to know more about that afterwards, and then, when I went to Japan, I was....I went back to Japan about three times now....and I found out more about his family in Japan.

Miss Koizumi: Is his brothers and sisters still in Japan?

Mr. Yamauchi: No, no...they're all gone...there's none of them left now...ah... think eh...he's got...what? Two nephews left, I think, and they're all pretty old too, now...sixty....seventies now....and I met them, and I think that just the other day one of them passed away so.....

Miss Koizumi: So you are the eldest son, so you helped your parents when you were a child?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yes.....yeah....as a matter of fact, I think we all kind of chipped in and eh...more or lessyou know, stayed together....and then, when he died, then we all stuck together,...you know, and we're still stuck together, and eh... back in about nineteen-forty, after Dad died, we.....worked on a farm about two or

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) three....two or three years, with my brothers, found out, well, there's no future on a farm...let's do something else. And uh...then we moved, another brother and I, we moved out to Edmonton, and we took out...you know, training....uh...what they call war....I think they used to call it wartime youth training, or something....wartime youth training, and I....

Miss Koizumi: That was when you were like, twenty-two, twenty-three?
Yeah...

Mr. Yamauchi: / That was nine...nineteen forties...I was what? twenty-two then...

Miss Koizumi: Twenty-two...

Mr. Yamauchi: Twenty-two, and my brother was twenty-one, and uh....we said maybe we'll go into mechanics or something...we'll take up a trade, then we....course, the war was on then.....yeah, the war was on, and we were taking....we were learning to go into munitions I guess just..we were doing....I took a....^{machine...}machinist's course, and so did my brother....but while I was taking my training, I was called up....I was called up to this....I had one month's training....military training....

Miss Koizumi: Oh, in Alberta....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah, in Alberta, yeah....so uh....so then I...I took one month's training, this eh...military training, and then I came back and still took the training, and I couldn't get a job again....because....they don't know when...I...if I did take on a job, they don't know when I'm gonna get called back again...called back to military....so that then my chances of employment is very very...getting pretty slim. And my other brother...he was a...a cripple...he had one he's got a dislocated lip so...hip, so he....never so he got a job, and I couldn't....and eh...so then I thought, 'Well, then I...welll...no way if I couldn't get a job into the factory or anything,so then I thought, 'Well, gosh...I can't get a job here...might as well get into the air force.' I tried, oh...quite a few places, tried to get into Air Force, but they wouldn't take me....

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Miss Koizumi: Why?

Mr. Yamauchi: Because I think there's a racial discrimination, there...but they always had some excuse....they'd say, well, something wrong with your knee, or something wrong with your ankle, or something wrong with your eyes, or something.... say, we can't take you in the Air Force, but I knew.....the people that I.... that I had chummed around with or ah...people who were in school..... they were being taken into the Air Force, but they wouldn't take me. But anyway, we found out it boiled down to racial discrimination, so then I thought well..... and then I joined the Army.

Miss Koizumi: Oh...the Army took you but not Air Force....

Mr. Yamauchi: No.....

Miss Koizumi: Why Air Force is more

No....

Mr. Yamauchi: / yeah, I think...I think that's what it is, yeah, because I don't think there was any got into Air Force during the war, but they all got in the Army....I think there's about....a hundred...I think...I found...I read uh...some report once....there was about a hundred and sixty-five Nishis in the last war.....yeah.

Miss Koizumi: And they're all from different provinces...I mean, B.C. didn't eh....

Mr. Yamauchi: No.....B.C.....B.C. didn't take....but, I had joined up just before Pearl Harbor.....^{/see,}

Miss Koizumi: Ohhh.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah, I joined up in October of '42....Pearl Harbor on December 7th.....well, I was just in my basic training when this Pearl Harbor broke out, and eh....there was.....nothing..... nothing different anything to us.... like, to me it didn't matter at all...but eh....I I just took my training, then took technical training, then went overseas.

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Miss Koizumi: Oh....when was it?

Mr. Yamauchi: This....I went overseas in May...May of uh...forty...well, forty-two, 'cause I joined up in forty-one.

Miss Koizumi: Oh yes...and you went to...where did you go?

Mr. Yamauchi: Went to a place called eh...Aldershot....Aldershot, then from there... no!.....we went over as a....heavy mechanical....workshop....went to Aldershot... then I went into a place called Slough....Slough, Berkshire.....

Miss Koizumi: Berkshire.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yuh...think it's in Berkshire, yeah...Slough....

Miss Koizumi: Slough....

Mr. Yamauchi: And then while I was in Slough....oh, this is...the story is going back again....there was one who was in the Army and wrote the New Canadian, and said he wanted a pen-pal, because he was lonely. He was in England, he was lonely, he wanted some pen-pals....so I didn't write but anyways, I had his name and I put it in the bottom of my kit-bag and...when I got to England, I wrote him, and uh...one day we were ss.....after I wrote him, we got an answer... I got an answer back, he said....'well, we'll see you at such and such a place in Aldershot' which was in the canteen. Well, I didn't see him. About three or four months afterwards my unit had moved into Slough, and uh....there..in this uh...while we were stravin' this barracks, one of the boys came in and says, 'Hey, Yamauchi! You know what....' he says, ' have you got a brother or ss.... somebody in the...in the army? There's one fellow staying.... just /like your name in the hospital.'

Miss Koizumi: The hospital?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...in the hospital, you know....it's.....number five, General.... Number five.....General Hospital.....anyways, it was a hospital. So....I went over and seen him and all I could see is just his face....just his eyes were popping... he's all bandaged up.....he was tackled inin London by two sailors or something,

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) they tried to rob him, and they.....kind of....battered.... battered him up, you know...but he's a....a judo man, too, but then there was so many of them at it, so that's why....he lost. And he was all scratched up, so he was in hospital, and we got talking.....and I told him about these letters and everything else....we were still corresponding.....and eh.....we didn't know 'cause.....we were only one street apart when we were in Aldershot...we didn't....and here, we were still writing back and forth! (laughs) Because over there, when you write letters, you just put your name, number and your unit and c/o Army, overseas.... that's all your address. That's all your address....you could be living next door...next street down, and you still addressed it exactly the same...We didn't know...afterwards, we found out exactly where we were....only a street apart!

Miss Koizumi : (laughing with Mr. Yamauchi)
well,

Mr. Yamauchi: Then he says, uh....I'm not in thethis ordnance corps any more, I'm at London university.....I'm teaching....Japanese... got called up to do that.' And he says, would you like to try it? So uhhe says uh....you might as well try it.....and get your higher rank and everything else.....

Miss Koizumi: Oh yeah?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...so then I said, okay, I'll try...and so he went back to.....he was discharged from the hospital and went back and uh...three days afterwards I got a....the..... the adj...you know, my O.C. calls me out....he says he wants to see me... the orderly sergeant comes out-he says, 'Hey, Yamauchi', said, 'the O.C. wants to see you.', it sure scared me, you know, wonderin' what the heck it was....but anyway...the uh...the O.C. was asked to send me down to London....right next morning.... that quick it worked! 'Go next morning, and you go to such and such a place...', 'course that's the first time....I'd never been to London before.....and put me on the train and said, 'You go to such and such a place....'....gave me the address... military headquarters....from there they just eh....they don't know where I'm supposed

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) to go....each man is different, see...you go and see this man and this man takes you to this next man, the next man, he drops you off and then he keeps on.....you know That's how they do it...because, it's kind of a secret thing, you know?

Miss Koizumi: This is....i....related to secret service

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah! So this was done very great hush-hush...^{and} then finally I ended up...oh, somewhere way down in the....underground, someplace....I didn't know what was up so I went in interview and got in front of a....an officer...he was a major, and you know, he could hardly speak English? Real Japanese! he was born and raised and educated in Japan. Yeah.

Miss Koizumi:

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: Was an Englishman?

Mr. Yamauchi: Englishman, yuh. And then he had to ask me...he asked me questions in...in a....in Japanese...everything in Japanese! Not in English at all! And then.... then I came back and I went....came back the same way....took me back the other way! And I didn't understand how....how I got there and how I came out! Boy, that was.... really.....Then he said, well....we'll see you...we'll see you soon. Let you know how you made out.....That's all we left it at that and then I went back to the unit. And about five months went by....no! Four, five months went by...nothing...nothing happened, so I said 'Oh,^{well,} I guess I didn't pass it....I didn't pass the...the interview. That's all I thought. And then uh...one day, the orderly sergeant comes in, he says....'Hey, Yamauchi,', he says, 'this after...' -- this is about eleven o'clock.... ..he said, 'One o'clock you have to be on this train...get all packed up and away you go to London.'.....Yeah, and then, when I got to London....

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) and then, that time too, they wouldn't tell me where I was going or anything. After I got to London, they said you go and see such a person....then they give you a real run-around. Finally, I wound up at the London University....got in front of some of these uh...instructors and... staff....

Miss Koizumi: Japanese?

Mr. Yamauchi: No.... two Japanese and the rest were One of Japanese wife....I think he....she comes from and he taught at school and he was in this London University. first thing is, ah....just showed me a book and says, 'All right now.....simple thing....read this!' And I thought, all this stuff the start off very simply....says 'All right, now... Translate that in English', I tried to do that in English and then there's another one just the other way around. Says, 'Okay, come in tomorrow morning...' 'Tomorrow morning at nine-thirty,' he says, 'you come over here and report.' And then, when I went to report, walked into the school, he says 'Okay, now...there's your class. Now go to it.!' Just like that..

Miss Koizumi: They didn't tell you anything beforehand?

Mr. Yamauchi: Nope! And then he said, "All right. Now you carry on a conversation with these boys", and they were all squadron leaders, lieutenant commanders, lieutenants,

Miss Koizumi:all high rank officers?

Mr. Yamauchi: All of higher-ranked officers, and then.... show you I had nothing so, when I come to think of it now.../. to worry about it. They did all the questioning.

Miss Koizumi: Ohhh....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...they did all the questioning, because, you see...they got the word...they got the vocabulary from the other teachers....and eh....vocabulary,

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) grammar and everything else from another teacher, what my...my job...and a few of the others, was just to go there and converse with these with these exercise....conversational exercise.... so then, gosh...you know, they'll pop questions and...oh, everything like that.

Miss Koizumi: How many....students in one class?

Mr. Yamauchi: Well, in one class there's about eight stu....seven to about ten.

Miss Koizumi: And how many classes did you teach?

Mr. Yamauchi: 'Bout four...four classes a day....

Miss Koizumi: Hmm...every day?

Mr. Yamauchi: Uyp. But it's only half an hour a class!

Miss Koizumi: Oh. (laughing with Mr. Yamauchi) Only two hours ofworking?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...yeah....but, just the same can I remind you, I never went to school...Japanese school....

Miss Koizumi: Oh, you....how did you learn...um.....?

Mr. Yamauchi: Well, just talking with the parents...

Miss Koizumi: Did you learn reading or writing?

Mr. Yamauchi: Little bit... yeah, just right up to Book Three.

Miss Koizumi: Hmmhmm....your parents thought you.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...that's all I did, but then I got pushed into it, like that..... was really so then I had to eh....I'd get these thick books and I'd go....go home and, you know, go back to my room and study....

Miss Koizumi: Oh...(laughing) You studied Japanese.....!

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah! All these sentences and all these words and then....ah.... and the parents, you see, they were from and then they'd have their.... money, things like that, and I was bringing it out! So then uh....I remember

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Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) this Mrs. [REDACTED]

Miss Koizumi: Was she from Tokyo?

Mr. Yamauchi: She was from Shinoga someplace....

Miss Koizumi: Oh! Oh yes....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...and uh....oh, that went by for two, three months, and I was getting prettyyou know.....uh...well, all kind of worried and uh.... nighttime you can't sleep properly, and then you're

Miss Koizumi: Really?

Mr. Yamauchi:starting to shake.....yeah.....

Miss Koizumi: You were.... worried about everything?

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yeah....yeah...really worried, you know and uh....

Miss Koizumi: Wha....wha....what did you worry about?

Mr. Yamauchi: No, because then...well, I think it's because I didn't have educational...say, grounding.....didn't know how to go about teach.... you just get thrown....in...in front of these people welll and as well educated, and you go in there with no education, and these guys start poppin' questions , you try to be....try to do the best you can, learning words and and things like that, you know.... and on your own.....and then the Canadian Army came along

END OF INTERVIEW # 63, TAPE # 1 of 2, TRACK # 1

Mr. Peter Yamauchi
April 21, 1972

Interview # 63, Tape # 1 of 2, Track # 2

Mr. Yamauchi: This gave..... a subsistence allowance; they gave you \$2.50 a day, and out of that'll be...you gotta do your own....you know....you pay your room and youreh...board, and everything else...

Miss Koizumi: Was it enough?

Mr. Yamauchi: Well....we got by! On \$2.50 a day! We got by, and then ah.... you stayed in just an ordinary flat...ordinary apartment...you...you can't stay in a...in a good one, not at that price; you stayed at the lowest....uh....

we would take the least expensive... So....you were free....no.....

Miss Koizumi: No.....with the army...

Mr. Yamauchi: No. Not with the army.... at all.....you were just a civilian... you were in the uniform, but then you are a civilian. You are free to go anywhere, you...as long as you reported to work....as long as there...you were there on time.... and, you know...respectably dressed...but in...in your uniform, so....we wore clean uniforms...like they said, but we would never have to put our boots on or gaiters in.....and uh....the Canadian Army....wow, ^{we...} we used to go and pick up pay....pay and mail, and pick 'em up at the Canadian Army....and there was only four of us....there's a....four....uh...four Canadians in this outfit, so then we used to call ourselves, 'The Lost Battalion'! And uh, this was more or less a....a secret list...they call it a 'Q-list', and we were on Q-list, so that's a secret list, so then nobody knew exactly what we were doing, or anything....and we weren't supposed to say.....

Miss Koizumi: Were you kind of checked by....army people checked from time to time?

Mr. Yamauchi: Nope...no, we were just as....we were really free, and uh...the Army said, well, it said....if you don't feel like you don't like it, they said, you just come and let us know, we'll pull you out....I just said, onceWell, I'll do one more week....one more week, one more week, and that just kept on going and

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) and by the sixth time it was six months was up...they gave me...they promoted me.

Miss Koizumi: Ohhh....

Mr. Yamauchi: They promoted you every six months..... and eh.... soon you got used to it, and uh..... I thought gosh, this is all right. Of course, you know, classes becamemore classes and then there was a little more organization at the school...it was becoming more organized, so it...it made it easier.....We had a lot of students....there, andwe found out that they had a general course - general course and interrogator's course, and phonetics course, and translator's, and I was in the general course. General and interrogating courses, so uh...and then I specialized in pronunciation pronunciation and intonation.... that's like....I...I take in the first group that comes in....and I take 'em on say for seven weeks, or something...and then...there, you weed 'em out once,..... there's where your first weeding comes along.... to..let's say 'now, how's this class?'...says, 'Which ones...do you think they'll all pass?' Well, see...there's that, that, and that won't pass...you can...you get so that you could tell who'd pass and who'll make the grade and who'll not make the grade. And eh....we had fellows like Sir Robert Craichie's son...he was ambassador to Japan, Sir Robert Craichie's son....Admiral Wilson's son, and eh...what's his name there...he just died....Sir Bernard^{*} Russell's eh...nephew.....they were also the... ah....students...and you heard of Professor Darr ? He taught Japanese here. He was our student!

Miss Koizumi: Is that right?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah....I met him when he....came here. Yuh.... and well then, he was here as a professor....but he was our...he was our ss.....student, and then he was left as an instructor, 'cause he was so good. He was left there as an instructor. And uh...you'll come across some Japanese-English dictionary? Written by C. A. Dunne and Yada.....,..... C. A. Daniel...

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) eh....Dunne, was our student...Daniel and....no. Mr. Yada, he was an instructor...and they both got together...they made up this dictionary; and uh.....Then we had....well, one of our students came through here...he was a British.....U.K. trade commissioner here in B. C. ...in Vancouver....I met him once too...he came over here and eh....we had one of....some of our students....one of 'em was supposed to have interrogated Tiger Yamasta.... you know Yamasta...the fellow that was..... uh.....executed? Yamasta.....

Miss Koizumi: Yes...yes....

Mr. Yamauchi: Well, one of our students in.....ah....interrogated him.

Miss Koizumi: They were.....the students were all Englishmen?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah....all Englishmen. But eh..... the fellow who did this.... who was supposed to have interrogated Tiger Yamasata...he had a photographic memory. You take a dictionary....you show him that word once and he'll never forget it. He'll come back next morning and ^{he'll} give you a sentence. But eh....oh, we've had some real ah.....funny incidents....there too, you know. Well, one chap would give these boys certain words..... come up the next morning and bring them..... and..... make sentences.....and bring it in....bring it in and then ^{then} they'll maybe read it to me....you know, and uh.... you know, you have this word like uh....'to wash'....wash, you have

and then he'll come back the next....next morning to me, he says

(Japanese)

(both laughing)

and you know....really, that shows how hard it is for them to learn Japanese.....

Miss Koizumi: So you had to explain all this.....how they're different....

Mr. Yamauchi: Hmmhmm....yes.....and once you get in those classes, you cannot speak English.

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) If ah....if that person, if he's just brand new, comes in first and if you want him to sit down, you have to tell him to sit down in Japanese, and if you can't make him understand that, you have to motion. They are that strict, you know....during the class there, you cannot speak English. So ah.... anyway, because this is a....you know, a conversational exercise, I learnt an awful lot of a.....English history, because these fellows....see, a lot of 'em would be....they...they'd majored in history, or majored in literature....or majored in something..... they're all from Cambridge and Oxford....all Cambridge and Oxford....and we had a Sheffield.....a professor from Sheffield, who didn't learn Japanese. Eight months...we could speak anything under the sun in Japanese.....

Miss Koizumi: Eight months!

Mr. Yamauchi: Eight months... It was hard then there's some of them there....we had one artillery officerhe has an....he was another one with a photographic memory....you could write down fifty words on a blackboard, number each one no....no words related...., you know...you'd say ice cream in the one and then you could have, say...maybe a rug in number two and see....no words related. And...you'll have.. you write everything down with his back to you, then give him...say, one minute.....say, all right now.... read it....he turns right around sayall right, what was number thirty-nine? He'll tell ya. Then we'll say....uh....^{well,} okay, then, we read out say ' what number was that on?' He'll tell you what number it was on! Some of 'em were really... But there's a.....then, while we were there, we had the....we lost..... quite a few saw enemy action....while they were going for lunch...In the doodle-bug days... one of these doodle-bugs...the palister bombs, you know...the v-1's?

Miss Koizumi: Hmmhmm....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah? while the.....while they.....on the way to lunch.....one got killed.....ah, another one was...uh....yeah, he used he was maimed for life, and then we had another fellow there.....I think that was the last v-2 that fell in England....and....he died under that..... fellow

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) by the name of Cannon....and we had others there who.... because the studies were so intensive some of them had gone into a....you know.... 'cuckoo-house'....yeah, ended up in cuckoo-house 'cause they studied so hard....and then the others...sure enough , he went through a course, but then he went to the front...you know, went far east, jumped....and one of them jumped off a cliff.....cause he studied so hard, you know, that uh....he just....he just went.....berserksome of them did that. (pause) I was just looking through last night when I...when you...yeah, when you said you were coming, and then I picked up uh....the.....reading....glancing over some of the.....reports....

Miss Koizumi: Ohh.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah....and....a lot of those names came back, and I wish now that.....that.....if I was....if I was....oh, when I was at that school....at, you know, my present age now....I think I would have done it a lot different.... oh yes.....I think I would.....

Miss Koizumi: But eh....but at the beginning it was really hard for you.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yes, it was.....it was hard going.

Miss Koizumi: You thought of quitting?

Mr. Yamauchi: No.....somehow I just didn't.....I just wanted to...kept on pushing you know.....wanted to push....but I thinkeh....when I took...when I first took it on, I think I had guts enough I think I was.....you know..... had a lot of guts to take....to jump into a thing like that....I don't think...you know, I'd be scared to do that now.....^{course...course} then, you were single....you didn't give a darn, and then it meant...it meant a promotion, so that's the only reason I went in...that's the only time, I think, I saw one of the biggest gambles in my life was to take on this job and....managed to get through it.

Miss Koizumi: The job that your friend...this other man....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yuh.

Miss Koizumi: He....he was teaching too? When you were teaching?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yes....yup....yeah.....he was there before...he went in there six months before I did.....

Miss Koizumi: Hmmhmm....

Mr. Yamauchi: And eh.....and he stayed there and then he got married....and he married an English girl.....

Miss Koizumi: Ohhh....

Mr. Yamauchi: And eh....he never came back....they came back to Canada. No, he stayed there fromthrough the....I came back, and he was....he was demobilized there, and then he joined the B.B.C. He joined B.B.C. and uh...the other fellow....hehe quit....he stayed there...he got demor....he got demobbed there...and yeah, and there's another old man....by the name of....

he was a First World vet....First World War vet and he went over there as a colonel...
the batman...batman / or something, and eh.....he went over there and.....
we..... what happened to him.

Miss Koizumi: Hmmmm.... Tell me what happened to him...

Mr. Yamauchi: But he stay....he didn't come back. But he...he married a English girl in the First World War.....

Miss Koizumi: Oh! (laughing)

Mr. Yamauchi: How he ever did, I don't know...but ah....he got married and then uh....his wi...I think his wife died or something, and then his son had joined the.... joined the Army in the Fir....the Second World War....and then he was captured at Dieppe....

Miss Koizumi: Really?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah. He was a ca.....you know.... a captive there for quite a while and then he was released and then I think he wentcame back to Canada afterwards and he made a tour with Red Cross or something forrecruiting purposes or something.....k

Miss Koizumi: They say that London was kind of a good place for.....for new people....

Mr. Yamauchi: Well.....I don't know whether it was good or not...there was....

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing)well, I think....socially, it wasn't bad at all well..... it was good because there was no [Japanese] or anything.... there was no discrimination whatsoever...one thing I never have had trouble with.... no discrimination in the Army....along with thethe French..... among their own boys....but I think as far as promotion went, there was.... because we never got that promotion that eh.....that we were promised. But eh.... anyway, well we....we ended up with as a warrant officer, and that's one of the best ranks there is, anyway....better than a commission...commission....

Miss Koizumi: Eh..... was there...lots of bombing and things at that time?

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yes....oh yes...I've had some real hair-raising experiences too.....

Miss Koizumi: What kind?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah, I lived in a place called Brunswick Square for a while, and.... and I moved out....went to a place called Baron's Court, which is uh...oh, about ^{maybe} twenty minutes by tube....twenty minutes to half hour by....uh...you know, underground train....we call it the tube....and when I arr...whenever....got off..... got off the train and started walkin' out there, I did see a whole bunch of these red-capped officers....they were all, you know, field officers, you know.... red cap.....and eh....the Jerries were coming over..... you could see at nighttime.... you could see these flares and then they'd come and bomb, you know.....in that in that immediate area...we didn't know why, but anyway, the house I stayed in was five storeys and you had to climb up the stairs and eh....I thought, well....I didn't like it, so I moved over...moved over to another place called...ah....it was in West Kensington..place called 'The West Kensington'.....a friend of mine told us...told me that there was another place and if you like you can move in there, so I moved.....moved the stuff from this five-storey house, and just took the stu....my kit-bag, all my belongings over to this new house — this was Saturday morning....and Saturday night....well, as you know...like anybody, you.... girl-friends, you know, and uh...went to this girl-friend's place this Saturday night and went up...

Mr. Yamauchi: (continued) way south in London, quite a ways, and....went over to her place and.... with her mum and her sister....we played bridge, and then oh, about nine-thirty came along, so I....had to go home...nine.....nine o'clock must over there.....and eleven o'clock is legal, in those days....So, nine o'clock it's getting pretty late, so I said, 'Well, I'm going home.' And her mother said 'No...you better not go home yet!.....^{said,} Jerries are coming over.' Because, you know, the radio....well, they used to call it the wireless...they don't call it ..^{/used} radio, they call it 'wireless'....it...it was fading off... she says, 'The Jerries are coming over!' Know, as soon as she said that, the alert sounded...the alert....

Miss Koizumi: Oh...

Mr. Yamauchi: ...alert sounded, said... 'Well, you can't go now, because I.... this train has to go underneath Thames River...so then both gates will be closed and you can't get through, so it's no use going anyway, so you might as well wait til the all-clear sign. So, about....this...then we heard the anti-air guns anti-air guns, firing....lasted about forty...half an hour, forty-five minutes, and eh....some of the shots were pretty close... Get... she had things hanging on the wall....on the wall, and it was shaking, and then, the all-clear sounded, and well...at that time, we had tea until....so I remember girl said, 'Hey Pete, I don't think you can get home tonight.' What a stupid thing to say! Said, 'Gosh, we were in the same room, we're having tea...what makes you think.....'....she says, 'Something tells me that you don't...I don't think you'll get home tonight,'...she said, 'If you go part way and you get stuck, you can come back and....'.....her brother was in RAF and he was stationed elsewhere, so she said, 'his r room'... 'his room is empty, so you can stay in his room'.... I just laughed...laughed it off, then I got as far as.....i took this tube and got as far as Picadilly.....and said, we don't go any further, said we're bombed out at that head of not going any farther.... Good God, she was right! So then that.... well, I can't go back, because it's so far back again, and then....who knows, I may never... we have to have to come back

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing)

again tomorrow morning, so I....

I went to one of these Salvation Army....they have hostels all around
 So I got....I went to a hostel, and they put me up, and next morning I went to
 school....I went to the...the class, this boy who told...you know, fellow that
 suggested I move, he said, 'I won't be at the school today because I...see, we were
 bombed out last night in that area, so we gotta do some cleaning up...', said,
 'I'll have to (speaks Japanese)', so then, you know, when the class was over, then
 I went back. By that time it was clear, so I went up and...the place where I moved
 to was okay, but then, a couple of blocks down, it was bombed. And then...the
 house I lived in....had had a direct hit! Now if I had stayed in that house that
 night, I'd a been dead!

Miss Koizumi: So you were just saved.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Hmmhmm...that's one....and....that...that was a regular bomb, that...
 yeah, and then...shortly afterwards and then for....oh, but then, every night the
 Jerries were coming over...yeah. There's a real bright flare, you know...it's a
 beautiful thing .../people should see it nowadays, but at that time in England it sure scared
 you, because you know that if that thing is over you, that bomb's gonna come somewhere's
 near that...because that's the...the mark. So they were bombing that area and we
 found out afterwards Montgomery's.....Montgomery's officers were at
 Baron's Court, not very far from where I....where I lived before!

Miss Koizumi: Every night they were bombing?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...every night, year. Every night they were bombing. So then
 ...uh...we got used to it, down in that so did the others the time
 was pretty well...come about the same time every night, and what we'd do is ah..
 we'd head for a.... we'd wear our helmets and gas masks and go to...go
 in the hallway of the house, because that's the strongest...because it's got
 the best support, and that's where we'd go, and....if you don't go to the...
 air-raid shelter, that's where you'd go.

Miss Koizumi: But you had those air-raid...air-raid shelters?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah! They had air-raid shelters....

Miss Koizumi: You had lots of them?

Mr. Yamauchi: Hmmhmm....oh yeah...just all over.....

Miss Koizumi: What kind of shelters?

Mr. Yamauchi: They were.....brick....brick shelters, no more than about six feet high or something.....just so that a person could walk in.....you know....strong....

Miss Koizumi: High ceiling!

Mr. Yamauchi: It's not high! 'S about six feet high.....

Miss Koizumi: Six feet high....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah.....

Miss Koizumi: Are these....underground?

Mr. Yamauchi: No no....above ground.....

Miss Koizumi: Just above ground.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah....that's just...more or less to protect you from shrapnel. You know...if a house gets bombed near that,you don't get that shrapnel. That's about it.....just to protect you....protect you from shrap....shrapnel.... it's not gonna protect you from direct hits!

Miss Koizumi: Is it large? how many people can get in?

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh, I don't know, maybe....fifty, sixty, maybe a hundred.....

Miss Koizumi: Oh....huge things!

Mr. Yamauchi: Huge things, yeah! But they're long, you know...made of brick and concrete....but they're just...they're just...they're there just to protect you from shrapnel, like....

Miss Koizumi: So there's nothing in it....

Mr. Yamauchi: No....just a place to sit down....

Miss Koizumi:People bring blankets and things....?

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) If you had a blanket, then you could take it
yeah....

Miss Koizumi: And just wait until the...

Mr. Yamauchi: The all-clear sounds, then you go out again. And.....oh, about two days after this...and then the...this friend of mine, he lived across the street from where I lived, and uh...this one particular night, oh, I was out with this girl again...went to see a show and the ...all....uh...this alert sounded again, and now she's stuck to go backlike say, if she went back by bus, she can go, but she can't take the tube...bus'd take longer.....she said, 'I'm going to take a chance...I'm going to take the bus,' and she said, 'Never mind uh... ',.....of course, over there you don't have to....every time... take a girl back yourself because of the time problem, cause she goes home one way and you go home the other way, just like that...and...I went back, cause I heard these bombs come down; you could hear it and when I got there, then eh.. the streets all...you know, they had the searchlights on it and then they were shovelling...I thought, Gee whiz, they must have been bombing around here again, but I wasn't there....I didn't hear it, and, this other fellow next door, his house had gone, but...it didn't explode, what it...it was a delayed action bomb, so all it did...I think it was a five-hundred pound bomb...it just came right down and eh...didn't explode...but this guy was in his house and this friend, he was sitting in the...in his hallway...he'd just got up to light a cigarette, see, and he lit a cigarette...he went to sit down, the stair was gone!

Miss Koizumi: It happened so quick!

Mr. Yamauchi: Yup! He said he just.....^{he}heard this whistle, you know, from/ bombs coming down, so he just stood up and got nerv....was nervous, I guess...he lit a cigarette, then he was going to sit cigarette....his...his steps went away! And then that same night said, 'They chased us all over... chased all of us out of that district, because they said a delayed action bomb could go off any time, so you can't stay there, so we'll have to move out.' Now there's a....another....V uh...V-1, when it first came up...came down, one of our students, he was in the air force, he said...last night this was a Tues
day

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) night now...I will never forget that night, either. Tuesday night...no, it was Wednesday morning he come back..Wednesday morning he comes to school and he says,...explains it all in Japanese...he was on patrol that night, on patrol you know, watching for lights and that, you know, on top of the...their...their armories, and he said, 'Last night I think that Jerry was...Jerry's secret weapon is coming over...', he said, 'I think...I'm quite sure it is !' Well, that night...that Tuesday night, I was in bed...this eh...alert...alert sounded...and then I could hear this plane come over..and it sounded a little different.... (imitates the sound) you know, it's got...little bit different sound, and then you can hear the ack-ack...I know ack-acking.... thought, 'Gee, you know...the ack-ack is doing good tonight!' because they're bringing all these planes down, you know...cause, you know when these planes come down, you get a grreat big explosion.. oh, enough to shake the windows down! And I thought, gosh, boy...all our anti-airguns.. aircraft guns are doing good...they'll really bring the Jerries down...that's what I thought....you know, next morning, he said, he says, ' I think that secret weapon is...Jerries are sending secret weapons over...we laughed..he says, 'No, it's one of these planes that come..it's a small plane with a great big ball of fire in the back...in the tail, and then ^{quite} sudden...all of a sudden they ^{just} turn the.. then, there's a great big explosion.'...so next day, Wednesday...it was quiet...we thought, well, everything's finished...you know..no more, but Thursday...oh, right from morning the alert sounded and uh..it was kind of a cloudy, kind of a half-rainy day, you know, and this guy..there's always three of us...we always used to chum together. Yamamoto, Makiyama and myself, three of us..we all used to go and lunch together... everything... and there was always one place we used to eat...this one day, Yamamoto says..fellow that stayed at UBC, he says... 'Nope...something tells me we..we shouldn't go and eat there. We should go and eat elsewhere!' and uh...no, he just won't do it..so anyway, we finally kind of more or less half broke down and went this other way and ate, but we always wanted a beer at lunch time, so then we headed back the same way... 'No, ' says Yamamoto, he says... 'No' he says... 'No,

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) no, you shouldn't go there. Something tells me you shouldn't go there!' He trailed behind us all the time...he wouldn't walk...

you know, three across together...he's always behind us, you see.... anyway, and uh....wherever you want a drink or tea in England or London, she's got pubs every corner...you...you can have a...you can drop in any place and drink....cause there's pubs every corner,just like in Japanese like Ginza [speaking in Japanese]

everywhere. No! He wants to go and drink at this place. Well, anyway, we went to this place.....a place called Tottenham Court Road....we went along this street and then we made.... just this night..... right turn to go into Rathbone, but then...there, this Rathbone is one street and uh. ...all of a sudden, everything.....you know, we heard this great big explosion...great big explosion and ev....dust flying, dirt flying...people/squealing.... screamingand then we looked then this Yamamoto and I we just went around the corner, there was a great big bookstore, big show window... you know....we just went around that thing and then...you could see this window going out like a balloon....that window was glass...went out just like a balloon you know.....we dodged it.... and then we said, where's Yamamoto?..^{we} looked around, can't see him.... said, 'Oh oh...musta got him!' and uh...we looked around and we couldn't find him..... and he was way ahead of us....the blast carried him off!

Miss Koizumi: Oh really!

Mr. Yamauchi: Blast carried him! But ^{then} we had gone around the corner, so we were okay...the blast didn't catch us, but because he was behind us, he was out in the open, so the blast caught him and carried him about fifty...sixty feet, and he was turning circles like this..... he says, 'I told you we weren't supposed to come here....' and then we tell him, 'Well, why didn't you keep on and stay with us? Then nothing would've happened to you....'.....no injuries.....

Miss Koizumi: Very fortunate, wasn't it? Sometimes, isn't it dangerous to be carried by a blast?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah.....so, that's one of the... figure that we

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) were pretty close....

Miss Koizumi: Oh yeah....

Mr. Yamauchi: And then next day, uh....next day, too...we went for lunch the same place as we always go, but this other two...[Japanese]they said, 'well, let's go up to this other place and eat.'...You went around this....uh...block, just like this, and ^{then} we headed this way, and these guys, they went and headed this way, and then we said, 'well, why don't you boys come and have... Eat with us, said 'Well, why don't you come with us..we'll treat you.' they said 'No'... These guys went this way and we went this way, and uh...sure enough, the.... BANG! it went down....and then the.... we..... and I, we went against the wall, you know, when these things happen, you hit the wall...you go up towards....close to the wall...that's what we did, but this Yamamoto, you know....before we could we could -he was underneath the car! He just dove under the car, and uh.... came after we came back to our classes, says... 'One guy's dead.' Same group....the group that went this other way, one died and one...one's in hospital, and then he was....he was maimed, like they said he had glass...cut glass in his lungs and everything else. Yeah, we seen him afterwards, but ah.....one....one...you know, one ear was deaf, and one got killed, but....that's just our luck, you know! If we went this other way, we would've been killed, but then...just because we went this side, all.... we just got scared and that's all..

Miss Koizumi: It was the....it looks quite frightening to live in London

Mr. Yamauchi: And another one I remember...this is one more. This is eh.... June the 30th...July...July 1st is a Canadian holiday...Dominion Day, so we'd get a holiday over there, too, so....on fJune 30th, there was two or three other Canadians and I, we were living in this one particular house, you know...and uh....we were uh...we drank...we drank til about ten o'clock that night...that's when the pubs close...ten o'clock....said uh....by that time, the alert was on, anyway....it doesn't make any difference what time...you're going....the alert

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) was on, cause these things were coming over! So, we were still merrily drinking away, and then uh....as soon as the pubs closed, we said, 'Well, let's go and have tea! We'll go and have....I'll make up some tea' / ^{because} I lived just where they had gas....I was making some tea and....by the time we went to bed....'course, we were feeling pretty good....we had tea and....I forgot the name of this fellow..!Well, Pete', said, 'We don't know whether we're gonna be alive tomorrow morning or not,'....says, 'We might as well take everything what we can..we might as well... have a little fun.' Finally, he says, 'Well, I guess everything....can't have any more fun now... just go to sleep. Who knows, we may not be alive tomorrow morning!' He lived upstairs and I lived on the ground floor, you know....and uh....and then I had uh...there was ^{this}...I'll never forget her...^{this} Miss Starling, and this landlady, who was Mrs. Paxton.... and uh...I heard them calling....calling me, you know, says, 'Pete! Pete!' I thought.... gee, what the heck are they calling me....I figured it'd be about maybe, four, five o'clock in the morning, you know 'gee, that's funny'.....thought, 'oh, I must be dreaming' Because I had quite a bit to drink.. and uh...then uh....this Miss Starling said 'Hey Pete! Are you alive?!' I said, 'Why? What's the matter?' ^{Didn't} said, ' / you hear that?'....said, 'No.' and then they said, 'Well, don't get up. You just stay where you are, because there's glass all over your bed and everything else....!' said, 'This doodle-bug bomb just fell just about seventy...seventy-five feet away!' And uh....I moved around and sure enough, I can hear glasses...glass on the....you can't put the light on...the 'lectricity was out and you can't put the lights on anyway! This is blackout... can't put the light on...and then, anyway, I just put on my clothes and uh... I went out and then I...hear them shovelling, you know....said, 'Anybody want to help or anything..... like to do something if you like.' Said, 'No, it's okay...we can handle it...you go back to bed.....

MR. PETER YAMAUCHI

April 21, 1972

Interview With Mr. Peter Yamauchi; Born 1917; Canada; Opal, Alberta; Farmer's Eldest Son; Grade 8; Army; England; Japanese Language Instructor; Trading Company.

Interviewed by: Maya Koizumi

Oral History Project, Vancouver. Cultural Communities Series.

Interview no. 63, Tape no. 2 of 2, Tracks 1 & 2, Speed 3 3/4

Vancouver, Oral History Project, 1972

Mr. Peter Yamauchi

April 21, 1972

Interview # 63, Tape # 2 of 2, Track # 1

Miss Koizumi:

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yeah....and I came back, after I offered my help, and I came back and I tried to close my door..... I couldn't close my door! you know....'gee, that's funny'....anyway, it just won't close so.....next morning it was light and I woke up, I found that this piece of board had stuck up from the door...from the floor.....but....I don't know how it could have happened....that....board, too, was on this side of the....this side of the door....but what happened was....this door must have opened and then this board came up.....that was a strange thing...and that.....I still couldn't figure it out, how...that this door opened first and then the board came up.... that's why I couldn't close the door.....so that thing eh.....let's say, the shelter got a direct hit....people were in the shelter and they got that bloody..... twenty-eight people got killed, I think...in this uh... shelter....

Miss Koizumi: So there ...there are people being killed ever...every day...

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yeah.....oh yeah, every day....

Miss Koizumi: Uh....like people on the street....like there were...they were preparing to have the bombing?

Mr. Yamauchi: Uh.....yes....and when this doodlebug...these V-1's came through, they always came from say, south east...south and east....so then, you always walked opposite to it...for instance, people always on the opposite....that's what they did downyou know.....when we were uh..... after the fall..and then they said, when these things fall.....they give you uh.....instructions what to do; they said you can lie flat on the ground, like you know, but then... never let your stomach hit the ground....yeah, when you lie...maybe on your uh...knee, like.....your hands and knees, but then...don't lie flat, your stomach against the ground, because there's that shock...things like that.

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) But eh...other than that....well,

Miss Koizumi: How about the stores, and pubs and restaurants and theatres? Are they always open as usual?

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yes...they're always open.....sure, when you carry on your... you carried on. Unless of...you know, something...well, you were hit and there's no.....lights, no power, no nothing, well...that's it.....other than that, they still kept on going. The pubs were open and they'd still have their singsongs and pianos going.....I think that they more or less had....I don't know whether they had the same ideas I had --Well, who knows tomorrow? He may not be alive next day, so....might as well have fun while you can! And then...then, work.... work while you can, when your time has come, your time has come! You go! But then, if you're lucky, you just.....get by. There are some soldiers that I know who did some different things..... he was a despatch writer...he was on our uh...on the motorcycle...I think

He was..... one of the fellows I knew.....he went through all that.... all that.... the enemy fired everything else, he came back.... okay....on his going into the barracks, he had a collisionhe killed himself that way.....he'd gone through all that....all that fighting....enemy fire and everything else.....so you don't know when you're going to.....There's another engineer.... that I.....he was an...engineer this happened in Germany... he hung out his.... he was doing some washing.....he was doing some washing.... and then...he just got out to hang this washing and....sniper bullet came and hit him!..... oh, it went through his laundry,missed him! Well, that sounds real strange There was another one.... he was in the signals...this happened in Germany too.....they went ⁱⁿ to some farmer's place... I think there were twenty soldiers.....you know, one platoon.....one platoon of them....went to this farmer's place.... and uh....his name was.... Monimoto.. he.....uh.....eh.....he ran after a.....this was on a farm, so then...he ran after a chicken...^{he}said, 'We're gonna have some chicken for supper!'.so he ran after this chicken. Why he ran after that chicken....

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) he...he said 'That chicken saved my life!' All his crew.....a German tank fired an eighty-eight....and killed all these guys...his platoon is all shot! But just because he ran after that chicken, he was saved! Otherwise, he'd have been with the same crowd!

Miss Koizumi: It's amazing , isn't it?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...

Miss Koizumi: So you didn't get injured or anything like that?

Mr. Yamauchi: No....I didn't get injured or anything, no....and then...by that time you know...the end.....VE Day came along....that was a big celebration though....everybody went crazy that time!

Miss Koizumi: How was it...how did you enjoy yourself?

Mr. Yamauchi: Well, all they did was...you know, the cops and everybody else allowed.... well, like the pubs is open like, you know, and they were dancing on the streets, like on Picadilly Square there...you can't move...people are dancing, singing and uh....uh.....then they were carrying these mugs around with beer....everywhere they went they were just one large....just one large crazy thing.....VE... VJ Day wasn't so bad...wasn't much then, cause the ~~war~~ was over on that side.

Miss Koizumi: Hmmhmm...yeah....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah, then I came home....uh....about a year after. I came back in forty-six....just about a year...

Miss Koizumi: After...

Mr. Yamauchi: Afterafter VE Day.....

Miss Koizumi: Ohhh....and you were out of Army already?

Mr. Yamauchi: Then....no.....then I came back and I came to Ottawa and then from Ottawa I went back....came back to Edmonton....that's where I got my uh... discharge, then I worked in the Standard Iron Works, where they have that foundry and machine shop and uh....that time I was debating whether I should stay.. stay in the Army and go into this what they call 'Interim'....Interim Army, or take a discharge and work....but the people in Standard Iron Works, they'd say,

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) 'well,' says, 'Get your uniform off...we got a job for you.' I started working with them and uh....then, just at the time they were talking about the union...forming, you see....that....place wasn't...unionized... Calgary was unionized; Calgary was getting dol...dollar an hour...everybody was getting dollar an hour for work...seven hours, we were getting sixty-four cents, because it wasn'tunionized. So, we said, Let'ssome guy said, "Well, let's unionize it!....and I thought it was a good idea and I got on....got on the executive got the first sack! (laughing) But they....they can't fire you ...lay you off or anything because of unions....and things....they always say, Well, I have no more work or something...they...they laid you off..... and I got black-listed....then I started working for the unions outside

Miss Koizumi: Hmmmm...

Mr. Yamauchi: Yes....I can't get back to machine-shops or anything after that, because as soon as they heard my name they said 'No, no, there's not work....', so then I had to change my line of work completely.....

Miss Koizumi: Really?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...then I went into uh....spring-works....where they makes* car springs?

Miss Koizumi: Hmmhmm...

Mr. Yamauchi: ...then from there I went into uh...motor-mechanics...then from there I went to DVA....Department of Veteran's Affairs...post-office, and then I came here....to Vancouver....

Miss Koizumi: To Vancouver....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah.....and then got in with my brother-in-law's import and export business...

Miss Koizumi: Oh....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah.....

Miss Koizumi: Is that Mr. Costa? He is your brother in law?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah, he's my brother-in-law....his wife and my wife are sisters.

Miss Koizumi: I see. Hmmhmm....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah.....

Miss Koizumi: When did you get married?

Mr. Yamauchi: 1950.

Koizumi: Oh, so you came back...uh....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah, after I came back from the war....yup.

Miss Koizumi: So during the war you were...in London all the time....

Mr. Yamauchi: About.....I was in London about three and a half years....

Miss Koizumi: Yeah...

Mr. Yamauchi: Yup....see, I was in the army about a total of uh....five years in the regular army, but then I belonged to the reserve army, and I have served with the reserve army...for about twenty....so I've got about twenty-five years of military service under me....

Miss Koizumi: Oh...well, is this only.....

Mr. Yamauchi: That's uh...you know how....that's a part-time army thing.... and uh....it's...you know, civilians go out there if they want to ...twice a week... and take training, or they don't know what to do, but I....I didn't take any... well, I did take training and then I went into what ^{they} call Quartermaster... I was in Quartermaster there....Quartermaster...Quartermaster Sergeant...we call it CQ...I was CQ for about....I got my long service medal...and I think uh.... anyway, at the time, I was ^{the} only a...uh....you know, the uh...Japanese-Canadian with a long-service ^{medal} / yeah..... now I think there's....there should be quite a few now, I think.....but you have to stay twenty-two years service before you can get a long-service medal.

Miss Koizumi: Why uh.....you think there are not many other Japanese?

Mr. Yamauchi: 'Cause they haven't uh...served...served that much time...in...in the army...see a lot of them did get....they were in there, maybe some of them were in there before me, but then they quit...they never carried on....and I...

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) I carried on with the reserve army, so your reserve army counts toward that service....so I got my long service medal plus the clasp to my long service medal.. Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: Were there people in your army from B.C.?

Mr. Yamauchi: Not...not....uh....not with us, but there were a number of 'em, but then, they weren't....they took school here...I think they had what they called where they talked Japanese.... and uh..

Miss Koizumi: Oh in Canada....

Mr. Yamauchi: In Canada, yeah....over here at West Van someplace....and uh.... guess you've heard of McKenzie? He's the uh....he was the head of the the uh...UBC here....Professor McKenzie...and he was Colonel....Colonel at the time... and he was Colonel of the school. And there's a lot of Japanese that....Suzuki...

he lives in town here....he lives in Surrey....Suzuki is a and Ito... yeah, they're in....they're in Vancouver...and eh..

oh, there's a number of 'em who took the school.....and then they went....^{they}went to India....India or Malay...not to India but then to Malay... Malay and Singapore.....

Miss Koizumi: So they really fought against the Japanese Army....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yes....they did behind the line work

Miss Koizumi: Ohhh....

Mr. Yamauchi: Fellows like Harold , he's in Winnipeg; and Elmer , they wore these New Zealand hats, 'cause they were in....they were in the Canadian Army, but then they were.....more or less

to either New Zealand or Australia or something, so they wore these funny hats, you know....and uh....oh, there's a whole bunch from down east right now...they're all living down east now, Toronto area...there's quite a few in there.....

Miss Koizumi: Ohhh....

Mr. Yamauchi: I met quite a few ah...coming through, because they'd come through London....

Miss Koizumi: Yes...

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah, they'd come through London and then from there they used to branch out to go to New Delhi or uh....New Delhi, Karachi, and Singapore...that's how they went in there. Oh yes...there's another man over here...he....he lives in Port Moody...Kuto...Kuto is another one...he's here now...he's....I've seen him a few times...the others...I don't....I haven't seen very many of them. I've...met them, but you never remember their names.

Miss Koizumi: Like...like in B.C., they...they lost property and things like that, right?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...

Miss Koizumi: In Alberta nothing happened?

Mr. Yamauchi: Nope! Not in Alberta, no...nothing happened in Alberta...

Miss Koizumi: So people in Alberta just....kind of....

Mr. Yamauchi: They were just ordinary people....

Miss Koizumi: The same as anyone...

Mr. Yamauchi: They weren't...they weren't even treated as aliens....where those that lived in B.C., 'specially in the ^{Coast line} coast line, they were treated as aliens....or as....uh.....

Miss Koizumi: As ... enemies.....

Mr. Yamauchi: As....as enemies.... whereas, we weren't that's if you haven't experienced it at home I don't know.... my wife had experiences but I haven't.....

Miss Koizumi: So that you....uh....joining the army and things...wasn't a natural thing....like, you know....

Mr. Yamauchi: This is as a...as a volunteer.....just a plain volunteer....

Miss Koizumi: You can really feel that you are Canadian and not Japanese?

Mr. Yamauchi: No, I never felt Japanese.....I think if Dad was living, I would have joined up in the first day, I think, 'cause he told me to join up...

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) if Dad had lived.

Miss Koizumi: So you went back.... you went to high school.....?

Mr. Yamauchi: No! I didn't go to high school. I've only got grade eight.

Miss Koizumi: Like...you went to school how many years?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yup...just grade eight....

Miss Koizumi: Grade eight...and then...you started to work?

Mr. Yamauchi: And then I worked, yeah.....I had to work, because of the Hungry Thirties.

Miss Koizumi: Yah.

Mr. Yamauchi: I had to work..... you know....

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.....what kind of work did you do?

Mr. Yamauchi: Farm. I worked on a farm help....farm...farmer's helper....

Miss Koizumi: Oh...farm....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...farmer's helper....and Dad....Dad...we lost our farm through the Hungry Thirties, and we couldn't pay off the farm, so when Dad lost his farm so we had to go out and work.....in the meantime, Dad got sick.... he was sick for about two years before he died.....

Miss Koizumi: Uh...what kind of father was he....

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh, he was a real.....he was a real strict man...he was really the Japanese type....yeah....

Miss Koizumi: did he beat you if you don't listen.....?

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yes....oh yeah...he was really strict and uh.....he was even strict....when Mom left I....I kind of feel sorry for Mom all the time there, thinking that she went through all that....though she's....actually, sure it is unfortunate that she lost her husband, but then, in a way, I think for her sake, just the same....

I think you know.... maybe it was better....i don't know....that's not the way to look at it....

Miss Koizumi: I see.... your father tried to discipline you?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yup...oh yes, but now I can see that he was...he was doing right...
but at the time...at the time, there....we thought well, he was...even now I
think.... it was, you know...there was...quite a bit of....uh....
wasn't within
reason. Sometimes he was a little too far out...and he was awfully short-
tempered....but eh.....

Miss Koizumi: Did your father tell you that you are Japanese and things like
that....the Japanese traditions?

Mr. Yamauchi:
yeah...he mentioned that, and uh....and then watchyamacallit....then he always
used to say that..... that you know, what's the....samurai or something,
you know....but then, when I went to Japan they were saying that we
we do hail from that.... that's what
they say, but how do I know? But that's the thing that the old man used to
talk about, too, you know.....

Miss Koizumi: How about....uh...honesty and things.... ?

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh that....he was really strict on that....he was quite religious
too....

Miss Koizumi: Oh...was he Buddhist?

Mr. Yamauchi: No....he was just....straight from the bible...he was always
reading bibles...yeah, and he...you know...oh yeah.....honesty and uh....
that means trusts, which he was very strong on that

Miss Koizumi: Did your father say you should be ambitious or something like that?

Mr. Yamauchi: Uh...not very much at that.....uh...well, yes
that's one thing.... uh, learning Japanese....you've got to learn Japanese..
he said, 'That's gonna be one of the...gonna be one of the necessities of your
life...'
you gotta be crazy!' That's what I thought, you
know, you.....I couldn't say that to him, but then I thought in my mind, I thought,
'Holy smoke, what are we gonna do...what are we gonna do with the Japanese language...'

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) you know, on the farm...and then, you're living among Ukrainians....what are you gonna do with it? I thought... there's no use, except to talk with the parents and uh...his friends...that's all I thought..... but then

that's what I first thought when I went to London University....'Gee' I thought, ' who ever thought that if I knew I was going to do that, sure...I would have...maybe.... I'd a been more earnest in my studies....but...even then, what little he did tell us, I think that helped me towards.... university to gain certain experience which others might...not have got.

Miss Koizumi: Hmmhmm.....(pause) How about your brothers and sisters... did they all speak Japanese?

Mr. Yamauchi: Uh.....not much, no....because after Dad...you see, they were still young when Dad died, but eh...they still speak some of them....not very.... you know....much....course, my way of speaking Japanese is because I...because, you know, I have to study there and that's the only reason....

brothers' and sisters' way of talking and my way of talking...two different ways of talking.... the old broken way..... well, not to say that the broken way... but they're not as you know....progressed as much as I did....I had to go through it....but when I first came back...people were surprised, you know...because you can't speak English during class hours... we had to speak Japanese...I mean

Miss Koizumi: How about that union thing....

Mr. Yamauchi: The union?

Miss Koizumi: Yeah....you worked for unions?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah I did...I did at the time, and uh....I worked for them for a while, and when I got into ah...civil....civil service...when I got to the Department of Veteran's Affairs...actually, it wasunion work gave me foundation to get into DVA, because I didn't know...you know....bookkeeping...at most...I acted as secretary, you know...secretary-treasurer, so then, because I worked in unions, I learned all this...we had quite a bit of it, and with that knowledge

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing)that knowledge helped me to get into the Department of Veteran's Affairs, then when I got into the Veteran's Affairs....says, 'All right now...in the civil service, you cannot stay in unions...either you stay ...go out...either you leave the union or you leave us...so then, that's when I had to leave, I thought, well, that was my work.... better hold onto my work, can't stay in the union, and that's how I left the union.

Miss Koizumi: Why uh....why you cannot belong to unions

Mr. Yamauchi: I don't know why. but that....that's the policy....and you cannot....at that time, you see, there was no union in the civil service..now there is....now, see...civil service has got the...they got a union...at that time there was no union....and then, partickarly...I think, their office...you know, the...maybe civil service union would have been different, but I was in another union completely different, because it was Mine, Milland Smelter workers, but now...Mine, Mill and Smelter workers are branded as Reds, as communists.....

Miss Koizumi: Oh yeah?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...mine, mill... / at that time.... back then, there was a bit of...you know, communism...

well, it wasn't looked down as much...but mind you, they did a lot of uh...help to the community...the union going in....and uh....so, that's how Ileft... left the union. And then uh....when I came to Vancouver, you know, the Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association...the JCCA?

Miss Koizumi: Uh-huh.....hmmm....

Mr. Yamauchi: Well, we had founded a JCCA in Edmonton and uh...well, I was more or less...yeah, I had to do the executive work over there in Edmonton ...had to form a JCCA there....then when I came to Vancouver, a cousin of mine was treasurer or something at the time, I think, for the JCAA, but then...he was in Japan, so somebody had...

Miss Koizumi: Oh!

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...he was in Japan at the time....and he more or less

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) left it up to me...JC.....so then, I.....I was more or less 'jobbed' into Vancouver JCC treasurer, and then later on became a secretary and a treasurer....I was there for about...I did that for two or three years, I think, and then I became treasurer...no, secretary for uh...provincial JCCA, and then the liason officer for national JCCA, so then that'd become too much, too involved....and then another thing, there....at the time I was still in the army, see....I was doing both....

Miss Koizumi: (laughing) You were very busy....

Mr. Yamauchi: So, I figured then....you know....then there was others who....
into JCCA
you know....to come / so I thought I'd gradually let the JCCA go and uh...one thing that kind of...uh... pleased me too, is cause I helped the JCCA...

Miss Koizumi: (laughs) Well...how did they like....?

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh, you know....you try to....you can never satisfy everybody...

Miss Koizumi: Oh.....

Mr. Yamauchi: And in the meantime, the army was getting more and more work, and then I got promotion...promotion in the army, see...brought my rank up...gave me more responsibility, so then I....eased off JCA and ^{then I} went over army.... thought I'd better start putting all my spare time into the army....

Miss Koizumi: Hmmmm...

Mr. Yamuchi: But uh...for a while, the JCA* was....it's a good thing, but ah... JCA now...it wasn't....isn't a....sure it's a necessity, but not as much as it was when JCCA had taken over these relocation matters and uh...compensation and things...see, the important part of them...the JCCA....the Japanese got the franchise, so then...some of the...the main eh.....jobs were done...so later on it became more....sure... it....it still is...

Miss Koizumi: ..of a social club...

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah....social and of course, you know...they're still...now they're start...startin' to think of, say, senior citizens' home and various other... you know, projects that they're working on...but eh....just about the time when I... when I was leaving, I thought well, those major things were gone...and then it's more...you know...liason between old and new.... between the...younger folks and the older folks.....just about the time when I...when I got in there

[Here Mr. Yamauchi mentions Japanese names of people in the JCCA]

see, they were the can't get together...and before....they did have, but the broke up...they didn't get along too well, and then, just about the time when I got in there, like, it was we got the older folks together again, because there was little bit of language barrier, also....but anyway....between us then we kind of together again, so they worked together for a while.....but now I think they're kind of..... they have two different groups it is... not as bad as before we came in....

Miss Koizumi: Hmmm....when was it that you came back to Vancouver?

Mr. Yamauchi: Hey?

Miss Koizumi: When...when was

Mr. Yamauchi: Fifty-three....

Miss Koizumi: Oh, it was fifty-three.....oh....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah....came in fifty-three.....

Miss Koizumi: So it was around that timethe fifties....

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...fifty three, yeah...fifty-three...fifty-four, and fifty-five, I think, I was really active with the JCCA .

Miss Koizumi: Did JCCA exist during the war?

Mr. Yamauchi: they did have some yes....I think so, they ha....but then they called it different, I think....there was another name, but you see, that's before my time....I wouldn't know...and me being...living out in the country, I wouldn't know these things...I didn't know that...only after

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) the war, after I came back, that these things cropped up, and I think if I had lived in Alberta all the time I guess maybe I wouldn't have done it, cause there was no...they have no....they had such thing as a need but it wasn't to say, urgent, as it was maybe in B.C.

Miss Koizumi: During the war, when you were away, lots of Japanese went to Alberta.

Mr. Yamauchi: Yes....oh yes....

Miss Koizumi: But you were not there...

Mr. Yamauchi: Hey?

Miss Koizumi: But you were not in Alberta, whereas these Japanese were....

Mr. Yamauchi: No.....no, see...they went in there during the war.....this is...while I was overseas, that a bunch of them had moved in there... but then, I was living in another district, and I didn't uh....so....

Miss Koizumi: Oh I see...

Mr. Yamauchi:so I didn't mix in with these people.

Miss Koizumi: Hmmhmmhmm....

Mr. Yamauchi: Andoh, except for a few families in Edmonton.....but those in Southern Alberta....there's a whole bunch of them back here...they're all fishing and oh...doing all kinds of things now....whole bunch of 'em back in tow....back in Vancouver, Steveston, Surrey area now....

Miss Koizumi: Hmm...how did they....choose those areas....like, southern Alberta instead of northern Alberta.....? And things like that.....

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh, I think they were more or less eh....how did that thing work (calling to someone in background) Was it their choice, to go to southern Alberta, the sugar beets?

Voice answers in background.....

you go on your own or you go to

Mr. Yamauchi:camp.....yeah, go there or go to the camp...concentration camp

Voice: Or, you go

Miss Koizumi: And Mrs. Yamauchi

Or you go on your own....your own expense and everything.....[conversation continues in Japanese]

Mr. Yamauchi: Then from there they moved into Greenwood.....

Miss Koizumi: after your coming to Vancouver then
you are...you

Mr. Yamauchi: 5 Yeah with Niko, yes....yeah, I been with him since. Course, that's the only reason I came out here...I came and I been here with that company, since.....now we're in commercial fishing gear, selling nets and bringing and bringing nets from Japan and...selling trolling gear. So, now it's adirectly connected with the fishing....fishing industry. Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: Very interesting, what different kind of jobs you went through...

Mr. Yamauchi: Oh yeah....I think maybe for some....some people think Gee whiz, always kept on moving.....

but now as I still do, I was...in connection with this fishing, I'd travel up through...say....from here to...you know, Rupert, and then to...well, Rivers Inlet, Rupert, and to Alaska....you know, southeastern Alaska-Ketchikan, Juneau, Randolph...and then south as far as....far as up to the border of Mexico there.....

Miss Koizumi:

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...now
have to travel that...not too often, but eh.....

Miss Koizumi: Oh, so your company does trade with uh.... trading places.

yeah,
Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...well see, we sell, you know, various items for.... commercial fishermen...nets, and then there's the hooks, and ropes and lines

Mr. Yamauchi: (continuing) twines, and the lures....and lures, you see, we bring in from Japan, and nets come from Japan.....Uh...our Golden Gate lures for their..... They're quite a good item, and it's well...ah...liked by the uh...by the fishing trade, so that's that's keepin' us quite busy....

Miss Koizumi: So you import these things and sell them to...all over North America

Mr. Yamauchi: Well...along the Pacific coast....

Miss Koizumi: On...all the way Pacific coast?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah.... all the way from.... not so much in California yet, but then...way...from California way up to Alaska.....right on the whole Pacific coast now. That's a small item, but...you know.....

Miss Koizumi: necessary.... for fishing?

Mr. Yamauchi: Yeah...yeah....

Miss Koizumi: Is this the company that started before the war?

Mr. Yamauchi: No...just fifty-two....

Miss Koizumi: Oh, so you started...

Mr. Yamauchi: No, Costa started more or less....see, it was started in sixty-two and Costa....Costa was on his own You know, Costa and another fellow, and uh...business was getting busier, so they asked me would I come in? And I was working at the post office and I was quite reluctant to come to B.C. then, but eh....he wrote quite a few times, said, 'All right now, this is the last time... I'm never gonna say any more', he says, ' You come^{or} or you don't....' said, 'this is my last time...I'm not going to say any^{thing} more' so, we pulled out lock stock and barrel, and came to Vancouver.

Miss Koizumi: Oh....

Mr. Yamauchi: Course, my wife, she likes it better here...cause she was born and raised here...she was born and raised on the coast. But now I...now I wouldn't go back...I...never go back to the prairies now....no. No way...I...I think I'm quite happy in....Vancouver area....

Miss Koizumi: (laughing) Well, thank you very much....

END OF INTERVIEW # 63, TAPE # 2, TRACK # 1 - MR. PETER YAMAUCHI