

MINATO, MRS. NOBUE

(TRANSCRIPT)

3164: 1-2

Incompletely transcribed

Mrs. Nobue Minato, ^{nee Shiga}
Dec. 3, 1977.

Accession No. 3164; Tape No. 1; Track No. 1.

Ms. Okay... just to start with, Mrs. Minato, could you give us your full name, and your date and place of birth?

Mrs. Minato: Nobue Minato.

Ms. Is that N-o-b...?

Mrs. Minato: u-e.

Ms. N....?

Mrs. Minato: N-o-b-u-e. Nobue.

Ms. Okay...

Mrs. Minato: Okay... People... you know that my friends call me "Nobu" for short, but... I'm Margaret to the Caucasian friends, you know...

Ms. Right... right...

Mrs. Minato: yeah. And I was born on April the fifteenth, 1911. Uh-huh. So that's my age.

Ms. And you were born in Vancouver?

Mrs. Minato: Yes, right on... either... around Powell Street somewhere, I think. I'm not sure. Um-hmm....

Ms. Were you born at home?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes. There was a mid-wife... at that time, you know. I don't know who she was. There was quite a few mid-wives then.

Ms. Yes, so we understand. Gradually, you know, we're finding out that that was the way most people were born....

Mrs. Minato: Um-hmm... Yes... Oh, yes... at home. And they were very efficient. They stayed with you, I think, ^{the} twenty-

four hours. You know, right 'til... And so...

Ms. From the onset of labour, right through...

Mrs. Minato: Yes. And so, you were never... worried, I think, you know... everybody had it that way. I had the first two by mid-wife...

Ms. Oh, did you?

Mrs. Minato: It was in the home.

Ms. Gee, that must have been much nicer.

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes. She was with me. I... you know... during... and... it was really nice. There was no anaesthetic or anything, and... you knew exactly what was happening, and... it was very good.

Ms. Can they handle complications?

Mrs. Minato: No, they get a doctor right away. Um-hmm... So... you don't worry about that, you know. And... the third one was at St. Paul's and the last one was born in Vernon at... in the Jubilee Hospital. So... I remember all kinds of experience. Um-hmm... Um-hmm...

Ms. Now, when you were little, and you were born in Vancouver, your parents had been here - or at least, your mother had been here only a short time...?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes... Uh-huh... She came in 1910, in the spring, and my dad was here I think in 1906 or 7 and... he was... I think he went back before then, too, you know, and... because my brother was born in Japan... you see...

Ms. Ah... I see....

Mrs. Minato: So... she stayed, I guess, for a couple of years there, you know, and then she came and I was born the next year, like...

Ms. Uh-huh... When he first left Japan, did he come to the United States?

Mrs. Minato: Oh... he... he's... when he first left Japan, I think he went to Manchuria and then to Korea and then to Taiwan. My mother went... but I don't know when it was, but... because my mother went to Taiwan with him.

Ms. Oh!

Mrs. Minato: And then he went to Hawaii, and then he was in San Francisco, and he panned for gold, so... so... you know, that's before he settled here...

Ms. Right. So he was really a traveller?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes. So he... he's been around. Um-hmm...

Ms. Was he a younger brother?

Mrs. Minato: No, he's an only boy.

Ms. The only one...

Mrs. Minato: Um-hmm... So... like... he's... he has no, you know, nobody else. But... his uncle, I think, and his friends, ... and were very adventurous people and/then I think that way, he was always in with a group. You know... when they left ^{there?} See, they were from Kochiken, Japan, you know... It's on... on Shikoku Island, facing the Pacific, and I think they feel, looking out, you know, that they want to go somewhere, you know.

Ms. The sea beckons.

Mrs. Minato: Yes, ^{he...} /he's been around. Um-hmm...

Ms. He... mus--... when he was in San Fransisco, and panned for gold...

Mrs. Minato: Yes...

Ms. He went... I guess he'd gone up into the hills...

Mrs. Minato: Barkerville, is it? Around there...

Ms. Well, Barkerville is in B.C....

Mrs. Minato: No, no... Not Barkerville... You know...

Ms. Highway 49, there are a lot of...

Mrs. Minato: Somewhere... yes...

Ms. towns along there....

Mrs. Minato: ... right around there, yeah....

Ms. Uh-huh... I don't... can't remember. But anyway, he got up his "poke", and... the story he told us, that... everybody had a poke, and they had their name on, you know, and then... and they put it into one trunk and... all the way -- it took maybe how many days to go back?-- twenty days, or twenty-five days... and one fellow would sit on top of the bo--... ^{... he} the trunk -- with two guns... you know... and so, he/was watch-man. And then the next night, there was somebody else. And they got there okay, and they got their... Took their go--... And so my dad's uncle -- this smart fellow -- and said, "Well, *you'd just spend it all* so why not buy a little piece of land?" you know. And he had it... for quite awhile. Sold it, you know, and not... we remember so it's... um-hmm...

And then he said, "Do you mind if I'll take a wife?" Then he got married, and... he ^{left?} ~~met~~ her, you know, because... he... and then he went to Taiwan with her, I think, and then... she was pregnant, and... so my brother was born in Japan. And then she came in 1910, and then I was born the next year.

Ms. Did your mother ever tell you her first impressions when she landed in Vancouver?

Mrs. Minato: Well...She... she never said very much, you know, but she ... she was very... wanted to learn things, you know. And so, she was... first, when they come to Vancouver, was right down on Powell Street, you know, and... I think they... they had... they had the... my... father bought a... some rooming house or something, and she had the... she was bo--... doing the boarding house, because all the Japanese single would go to fishing, or logging, and then in the winter, I guess there was no work, is it?

Ms. That's right.

Mrs. Minato: And so she... they would board, and she says, well... they ^{brought} ~~got~~ the money, and... and then they paid for the board and that, and then... you know, you kept them going like that for years, like... and she said she'd cook, and... And then she thought, "Well, maybe this isn't..."for her, and then... Dad got a job at -- he was working for the Morrison Wire Company, you know, and so we moved away from there, to Cordova Street, I guess... Uh-huh... But... that's when I was around Powell Street, you know.

Ms. Uh-huh... She must have been working quite hard with a family....

Mrs. Minato: Oh, yes... yes ... Uh-huh...

Ms. ... of little children, and taking in boarders. Did she do all the laundry herself?

Mrs. Minato: Yes...

Ms. Huh...

Mrs. Minato: And...with hands, you know. A little washing board, and... and... Oh, she... she said, you know, she would buy meat, you know, the... like... cheapest place, and then cut the... the good part, to make sukiyaki, and then the other part for stew, you know, and had all of this, and... so I guess it was an all day work for her. Um-hmm...

Ms. Do you remember how many boarders she would have at a time?

Mrs. Minato: I don't know. I was maybe three, ^{yeah?} or...you know--I don't remember, but there was a... always... you know, a lot of people there. Um-hmm. And then... I don't think she had it for very long. And then she... then we moved to Cordova Street, at ... I guess... that was when I was about six or seven, I guess, and... 920 Cordova Street, you know. Well... Dad was working at the wire mill and mother went washing, to the... home... So she ^{went} every morning.

Ms. To people's houses?

Mrs. Minato: Yeah... And I don't know... See, at 920, it was a big house, and we weren't alone -- see, there was always some

Was to
be omitted:

new people coming with a new wife from Japan, and then they would -- they weren't boarding, but they would have one room, and cook in there... you know. And... we usually had somebody there. So I think there was somebody looking after my two sisters, I guess, because I was going to school. Just starting to school. And... you know, when I was six, I think I went to... just the Japanese School, you know, and there was an English teacher taught us to read and spell. So it was... the Japanese curriculum was number one, and then... I guess about at that time, they decided to... no, that that was wrong. "These are Canadians, and they should go to..." you know, "the ordinary public school first, and then... the extra reading and writing in Japanese." And so... I don't know when it changed, but then, we were going to the -- I was going to Seymour School, and walking to the Japanese language school, you know.

Ms. Where was the Japanese language school, then?

Mrs. Minato: It's the same place as where it is now, but it ^{the} was/old building, so it was farther... you know, next to

Ms. Oh... Mrs. Minato:
it./ It was an old wooden building...

Ms. On Alexander Street...?

Mrs. Minato: Yes... I thought there was... I don't have -- there was a picture of the school. But anyway....

Ms. There's the Japanese Community Hall there now. Was the building on the same land, or...?

Mrs. Minato: No...

Ms. Next to it...

Mrs. Minato: But... next to it.

Ms. I see...

Mrs. Minato: It was a wooden building, and we had the
and
assembly in front of it,/ We all lined up, you know, and
then went in to our classes, you know, and then they built
that in 1928, next door to it.

Ms. Uh-huh.... Right. How many rooms would be in the
small, wooden building?

Mrs. Minato: One... two... three, four... Maybe six, or... So,
I can't remember very well. Maybe six or so.

Ms. Did it have heat by a stove, or was there... some
kind of central heating, or?

Mrs. Minato: No, I think it was that we had a stove in each
room, wasn't it... in that wooden building. I kind of think
it was. Um-hmm... And... The... where the building stands
now -- right to the corner -- was our grounds. And we had...
First of July, we would have games... you know, like sports,
you know... And... All the parents came to see it, you know,
and... it was quite a big "do" for the Japanese community,
you know, these... school "do's", you know.

Ms. Do you remember any of your teacher's names, at
the school?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes... oh yes. Like Mr. and Mrs. Sato....

Ms. Oh, they were there at that school, too?

Mrs. Minato: Oh, yes. And there was... before Mr. Sato, there
was a Mr. Tashiro -- this is the Principal's name -- and Mr.

Inouye -- that was another Principal's name, and then Mr. Sato became Principal. And... We knew Mr. Sato, and then we knew when the... Mrs. Sato came to Canada. Uh-huh... because I was -- how old was I then? About nine, or... so... Ms. Uh-huh... It's ? to remember...

Mrs. Minato: Yeah... oh, yeah. And... they've been very good to us. We... Yes, and there was Mrs.... there was Mrs. Iizuka, Mrs. Heike, Mrs. Furushyo... these are all... not my teachers, but you know... ? around... Mrs. ^{Oh, and?} ^{Sp?} Nyaga was here, and Mrs.... who else did my ¹ sons have? Oh... quite a few teachers, you know. They would come from Japan. Um-hmm... So... That's the way I... we learned. We went to ordinary school and then learned this extra Japanese, you know.

Ms. Before, you mentioned learning -- there was an English teacher who did teach you some reading and writing, although the curriculum was mainly Japanese...

Mrs. Minato: Um-hmm... um-hmm, um-hmmm...

Ms. ... So this English teacher would come in for a part of the day at Japanese school?

Mrs. Minato: Yes... yes... uh-huh...

Ms. I see... Uh-huh...

Mrs. Minato: ... and... she would give us an English name, because our names were so complicated, you know. So she said "May"... and... you know, or "Alice" or... whatever she... you know, so that everybody had an English name, you know. She was quite a nice teacher. I don't remember her name.

But then it changed completely [?] so we went to Seymour School for the... from/three....to three-thirty, and then we walked to the other school... I guess it started at four, I guess.

Transcript omits a section of the taped interview....

Transcript resumes:

Mrs. Minato: ... Mrs. Monroe had about eight children, so... she would bake, and she would teach Mother... She couldn't speak very much, but she was very fast to catch on, you know. She would bake, and we'd go home... (sniffs)... smell this fresh bread, and we'd cut it, and... thick like that, and put butter and... and jam, on, and that was our in-between snack, you know, and then we'd walk to school eating that, you know... the Japanese School, and we'd ch--... leave our homework here and then... take the Japanese schoolbooks and go on, you know, and... That's why I think we were healthy because we sure walked a lot.

Ms. (laughs) Yes. That would be... that would be quite a few blocks, to walk from Seymour to Japanese school...

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes... Um-hmm... Yes. But then, you know, you go down Cordova Street, right down to Jackson or so, and walk down, you know... you get used to it, so it's not that far.

Ms. Could you tell us a bit about what the terrain was like, when you lived on Cordova there? That was in the dip --

the land drops... ?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes, Has--... Yes, well... you see, after Monroes, there was a long kind of a... what do you call -- you know, k--... houses with just one room for single men...

Ms. Uh-huh....

Mrs. Minato: And there was maybe five... five... you know, in one cabin, like, you know...

Ms. Uh-huh...
/Tenement...

Mrs. Minato: And... yeah, tenement... and then... there was nothing but bush and water -- you know, little... not lake or anything, just little puddles here and there, with skunk cabbage, and... you know. And in the winter, it would -- if it's cold, it would freeze up, and then... we'd just slide on it, you know... on the ice, and... we would... in the bushes we would play "Run, Sheep, Run" and, you know, all those old games. You know, you hide there, and ... and you give them a clue when they say something... you know, it's a clue, isn't it? I don't know how it was played, but... and... So we played there. You know. There was not very many people. And then, on the other side, there was a big, reddish building on the corner, and then there was about one, two... three houses there. And then it was nothing, up... And then on the corner by ^{the...}the rail--... next to the railway track, on... east of it... was the Ramsay Candy Factory.*

Ms. Oh, it was right on Cordova? Was it?

* Ramsay Bros. Co. Ltd. candy mfrs. 998 Powell.

Mrs. Minato: No, but... it was facing Powell, but you see the end of it was on Cordova...

Ms. Oh, I see...

Mrs. Minato:... because, you know, it... the railway line this way, and then... that was the building. It was like this, you know... long... longish. I guess it^{...}was it... is that Glen Drive there? I think so. It goes under that bridge...

Ms. Raymur... Is it Raymur?

Mrs. Minato: Ray~~---~~...No... is it... maybe... it's...

Ms. I think it's Raymur -- now it's Raymur. Maybe it had another name then.

Mrs. Minato: Maybe. Yeah. But anyway, that was a street, and it goes under... under the bridge, like ... you know.

Ms. Um-hmm... um-hmm... So the Viaduct on Hastings was there when you were there?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes... uh-huh... I remember.

Ms. Could you walk under the Viaduct, and was there a dip, all the way to False Creek, do you remember, or...? ^{ground}

Mrs. Minato: No, I don't think so. We walked under that viaduct ^{when?} and... then we went to Seymour School. But it was mostly, I think, houses, but on the^{...}west side I think it was all bushes... kind of thing. But I... I can't remember very well.

Ms. Was there a railroad track through... underneath the Viaduct then?

Mrs. Minato: Yes. Oh, yes, oh yes. The track was...

Ms. Uh-huh... So you would walk along the tracks...?

Mrs. Minato: No, there was another street over, and we went along that street... down to Keefer wasn't it? I think Seymour School was either... between Keefer and... and Georgia, is it?

Ms. Um-hmm... Yeah, it must be.

Mrs. Minato: So... yeah... it was somewhere around there.

Ms. Umm... So... I'm a little confused about which corner the Koshevois were on. They were on the corner of Campbell and Cordova?

Mrs. Minato: Yes... On the... south... side.

Ms. On the south...

Mrs. Minato: And... and the...

Ms. ... the southeast?

Mrs. Minato: ... on the north side was... Yes, southeast... yes,... uh-huh...

Ms. Uh-huh... I see. And on the north side, you were going to say?

Mrs. Minato: Was a...a reddish, big house there, but I don't know what it was. It had a big la--... Now this is where the St. Joseph Ho--... you know, T.B. Hospital was built.

Ms. Uh-huh...

Mrs. Minato: Yeah.

Ms. Was that the same as St. Joseph's Oriental Hospital? Was that the... the full name for that hospital?

Mrs. Minato: I don't know.

Ms. 'Cause I've seen a hospital referred to as that, and I can't find out which hospital it was.

Mrs. Minato: Well, Saint... well that was... I don't know if it's St. Joseph's or S--... or what, but it was a T.B. hospital... you know. For orientals. *

Ms. Uh-huh... Well maybe it's the same, then.

Mrs. Minato: Yeah. Right on the corner... on the north corner, of Cordova, between Powell and...

Ms. Yeah, right...

Mrs. Minato: ... Cordova.

Ms. Right....

Mrs. Minato: Yeah...

Ms. And that was there when you were there?

Mrs. Minato: No, it was a house, because I knew... I think there was a fellow named George Mackintosh or somebody lived there, and we used to call him "Georgie Porgie", and (laughs) he used to come and play over at... you know, with my brother, so... I'm sure it was a private home, you know. But it was a big land. You know, they had a big lot there. That's what I remember.

Ms. And trees... did you have lots of trees there?

Mrs. Minato: Yes...

Ms. In that block?

Mrs. Minato: Yes. There was... great, big maple trees, you know, in front of... Monroe's had two, big, huge maple trees and... every fall, you know, they would have a whole pile of

maple leaves you know, and then we'd pile it up high and we'd jump from the... between the branches, you know. And so we... we didn't have much toys, but we really played... outside, and we had a lot of fun. I've never owned very much toys...

Ms. The waterfront... you mentioned last time, going fishing with your father...?

Mrs. Minato: Yes.

Ms. Could you tell us where that was again?

Mrs. Minato: Oh. It could be... I was talking some--... it could be the city wharf... It was just a wooden, you know... wharf, going out maybe a hundred... not a hundred foot -- fifty foot. And then we would fish there, but... I just can't remember where it... whereabouts it is, you know. But there were little boats moored, and... we fished for "shiners", you know.

Ms. And it would be a wharf that was built up, off the water level, or was it flat...?

Mrs. Minato: No, it was just a floating thing...

Ms. Uh-huh....

Mrs. Minato: with the... logs underneath....

Ms. Right....

Mrs. Minato: ... you know, and... you know, it was a...

Ms. Was it one of the only public wharves there, or was it the...?

Mrs. Minato: I don't know.

Ms. Uh-huh...

Ms. This would certainly be before ^{Ballantyne?} ~~Ballentyne~~ Pier
had been built?

Mrs. Minato: Oh, yes. Yeah, way before. Yeah. Oh, yeah.
Because ^{Ballantyne} ~~Ballentyne~~ Pier is... after we've been... almost
teenagers, I think, you know.

Ms. Uh-huh... It was the late 'Twenties, I think.

Mrs. Minato: Yeah.

Transcript omits a section of the taped interview....

Morrison Wire & Steel: 1905 at N. end of Victoria Drive.

Transcript resumes:

Ms. So was that when you started the bathhouse?

Mrs. Minato: Yes, I guess so. I... I would think so. Uh-huh...
^{like?} ^{kind of?}

Ms. So that... you were...

Mrs. Minato: So... that will be about nineteen...

Ms. thirteen....?

Mrs. Minato: Must have been about nineteen thir--... no,
nineteen twenty-- twenty-three, I guess.

Ms. Uh-huh... So you would be...

Mrs. Minato: Twelve...

Ms. Twelve...

Mrs. Minato: Um-hmm... Eleven or twelve. Twelve, I guess. Um-
hmm.

Ms. Can you tell us again, about the bathhouse? First
of all, where it was?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes. It was on 318 Powell Street, you know. On the corner was, I think, Mrs. Hamanaka's/^{...}kind of a ... a confectionary grocery store. And then next to it, was Nakamura's Florist Shop, and then next to it was a... a shoeshine, you know, where Mr. -- I don't know what his name was -- but he was shining shoes, and so... the florist and the shoeshine people just had a... not a very big store, you know. Maybe, say, twenty-five feet. And the rest of the back was vacant, and my dad rented it for putting all the wood there. You know, the four foot length wood, you know. Cords and cords of it... for... for the... for... for the ste--... you know, the hot water boiler. So... And, we moved to 222 Gore Avenue, and our back door came into this lot where my dad would be chopping the wood, you know. And there was two... two houses facing Gore Avenue, and the other house was Mr. Miyasaki's I think, and he had... he was selling, you know, bean curds and chicken meat, you know. And... so they... they... their back yard was facing our dad's wood... wood lot, you see. And then, right ^{on} was this Mrs. Hamanaka's... (phone rings) Excuse me.

Ms. Um-hmm... We'll turn the tape recorder off.

Mrs. Minato: Hamanaka Store. You see, there was... you know. whole...
So... Now it's the Sunshine ^[Sunrise] Market takes the/whole thing right to the alley...

Ms. Right...

Mrs. Minato: ... to the... to the lane there. But there was

two small houses and then the store, before, you know.
And upstairs was the... our bathhouse, was the... I think
it was the Lion's Room.^(Lion Hotel) You know? 318^(Powell) I think. And
then in front was a little confectionary store run by a
Mrs. Hamada. And then... behind the... there was a... like,
a store here, and behind there was an office here. Behind
it was a... taxi. I guess it was the Powell Taxi.

Ms. Oh. Behind the confectionary?

Mrs. Minato: Yeah. And then, the... the bathhouse was from
there on, right to the back. You see. You know.

Ms. So... to enter your bathhouse, people came through
the confectionary....?

Mrs. Minato: No, not the store. There was a... like a... this
wide of a hallway.

Ms. Oh, I see.

Mrs. Minato: You know.

Ms. Uh-huh...

Mrs. Minato: Well, maybe more. You know, five foot or so.
And we had our own door, and they went in, and at... and...
you see, where... where the two stores came and then that...
it turned, curved, you know, so our place got -- we took the
whole building then, after... after... we turned the corner
there, you see. The taxi was here, and... facing with the
... almost identical, on the other side, was our little office,
where we collected our money and... you know, gave them the
towels and... to have a bath, you see.

Ms. How much would it cost, to have a bath?

Mrs. Minato: I think it was ten... fifteen cents at the most. I... I... you know. And... you... they were supplied with soap, and two towels, and... you know, there was a... the men had their own... to shave, there was a couple of, you know, straight razors there. So... even if people just come in from anywhere, you know, before even they went to even a restaurant or a Chinese, you know, ^a/chop suey house, they could have a bath first, you know. And so... Yes. It opened at three in the afternoon, and it stayed 'til eleven, I guess. You know. And then my... Mom and Dad would clean up -- wash everything up, and go to bed, and then Dad would get up in the morning, and start the boiler again, you know. But it was quite a...

Ms. Full time...

Mrs. Minato: Yes. Um-hmm. And then, any extra time he had, it was chopping the cordwood. He had some help, too... to chop the cordwood for him, you know. They were in big -- like this, you see, so...

Ms. Was that about five feet?

Mrs. Minato: Four... I'm sure it was four.

Ms. Four.

Mrs. Minato: Um-hmm. But it was... and he had this big wedge and the big wedge hammer, you know, and...

Ms. How thick would the four foot lengths be?

Mrs. Minato: Well... you see... If the lo--... if the log

was like this, this would be chopped into four.

Ms. I see... Uh-huh....

Mrs. Minato: You know. So you'd be... each piece would be about... like this, then. You know.

Ms. Yes. So about six inches.

Mrs. Minato: Yes. Uh-huh. Yes.

Ms. Do you know where he got his cordwood from?

Mrs. Minato: I can't say. But it certainly was a lot of wood. We were just... you know, it was like... right along the whole building, you know, against it, all piled up, say... six foot high. You know, it must be cords and cords, we were...

Ms. Did you all help stack it, as children?

Mrs. Minato: Well, we didn't... we helped.... well, we helped with the... see, they would wash the towels every day, you know, maybe twice a day, and then we would help put... hang it up on this dryer, you know, on top of the boiler, there was lines... maybe twenty-five lines there, you know, and then we would just hang it up and... so that it would dry, and then we'd fold it, you see. That... so we... we had to clean the halls and help with the towels, you know, and ... that was about all. Fold the towels.

Ms. Tell us again how you fold them? There's a special way of folding them?

Mrs. Minato: Yes. You fold them -- you know, the towels were

about... the... the wiping towels were maybe... you know, like our... not as big as a... the real bath towels, but a medium size, and then you'd fold it into three, you know, and then you'd fold one side and then the little towel was... the... you know, the kind the Japanese use to wash..? You know, they're about 'eah... 'eah wide, and about...

Ms. So about a foot wide?

Mrs. Minato: Yeah...yeah....

Ms. And... what four feet long?

Mrs. Minato: No... three...

Ms. Three feet... Just for rubbing the back?

Mrs. Minato: Yes, uh-huh, so... and it's made with cotton -7-

Remember? You haven't seen one?

Ms. I've never had one... no....

Mrs. Minato: Oh... I'll show it to you...

Ms. I'll flick it off... (tape recorder is turned off / for a moment...)

Mrs. Minato: Yes, well the big one, you fold it into three, like, and then you fold one end like this...

Ms. Over...

Mrs. Minato: Yes, and then you put this one in here, and then you fold it over, and this... this is how it stood on the... you know, in the... where I had piles and piles of towels, you know. Yeah. And my dad used to buy^a Castile soap--you know, the fine soap--by the cases, and then he would cut them, you know, like... then they were square. You know,

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Castile soap. And... he would let it dry out so that... they wouldn't melt so fast, you know. So he would have a case... buy it a year before, like, you know, and dry it up, so we had soaps by the caseloads, and

End of Track 1.

Mrs. Nobue Minato.
Dec. 3, 1977.

Accession No. 3164; Tape No. 1; Track No. 2.

Mrs. Minato: ... tenugui...

Ms. Tene... tenewui?

Mrs. Minato: Tenegui, yeah.

Ms. Tenegui. What does that mean?

Mrs. Minato: Towel to wipe your hands, like a... a handtowel.

Ms. Handtowel.

Mrs. Minato: Yeah. So...
the...

Ms. And... the.../just before you go, the cakes of
soap -- the big bars of soap -- you would chop into small
cakes... is that...?

Mrs. Minato: Well, they came in a long... you know, pieces.
Say, like this, and say, this wide, you know... So there
were...

Ms. A couple inches wide?

Mrs. Minato: Two inches... yeah... And maybe one and a half
inches, and they would be about twenty-four inches, and then
my dad would cut it... you know...

Ms. Across... crossways...

Mrs. Minato: Yes, and then we would have... dry it, you know.

Ms. I see. Uh-huh...

Mrs. Minato: That... that was it. Yeah. So... bathhouse was all
tile. You know, beautiful.

Ms. From floor to ceiling?

Mrs. Minato: Yes, where.... where they bathed. And... it had a
kind of a corrugated celing with skylights, you know. Uh-hmm...

Ms. When you say "corrugated", you mean....?

Mrs. Minato: The... I don't know what it was, but it had designs on it. You know, it wasn't just a flat wall, you know, when you look up. Um-hmm. And so, the other side, where people put their clothes on the knob, had the... those mattings -- what do you call...?

Ms. Tatami?

Mrs. Minato: Tatami. Yes. And...

Ms. And the floor... was it a wooden floor, or a tile floor...?

Mrs. Minato: Which? In the bath itself?

Ms. Yeah... in the bath.

Mrs. Minato: All... everything was tile.

Ms. Everything was tile.

Mrs. Minato: Yes.

Ms. And then, when you step out, what... what would the floor be like?

Mrs. Minato: The tatami floor.

Ms. Oh, I see. Right immediately.

Mrs. Minato: Yes... Uh-huh.... Oh, yes. And they had a... a kind of a mat -- a thick mat -- where you would wipe your feet, when you come out of the wet -- you see? -- onto the tatami floor.

Ms. Uh-huh... And how big was the bathtub?

Mrs. Minato: Well the bathtub was... the main bathtub where you went in, after you had a wash, was... five, six foot by... I don't know... ten... about here, I guess. You know. Six by te--... That's nine, is it, or... ten... you know....

Ms. Yeah. Something like that...

Mrs. Minato: But before you go in there, you see, they have a round tub about four... four feet in diameter, and... there's hot and cold water running in it all the time, and you go in there, and you wash first... you know, really clean yourself first, and then you soak in the big tub. And then you come out and you wash.. thoroughly, this time... even your ears, and... you know. And then, you go in and then you come out, and you're finished, you see. So it's quite a ritual...

Ms. Yes...

Mrs. Minato:.... you know. See a lot of people with three or four children--well they wash them all before they went into the big tub, and... you know.

Ms. And the... how deep would it be, for little kids. Like....?

Mrs. Minato: Well, there was a ledge on the... on this big tub, so the little kids would stand on the ledge, and they would still be... you know. And the ladies, too, would... could sit on the... ledges. I never went into the men's tub. I... but.../men's ^{the}tub were bigger, I think, because there were more single men... and... so, I think the whole thing was bigger than the ladies'... you know, part. And... one side, the hot water would come in, you know, and so people who like it real hot, would converge around there, and people... and one side they'd have the cold water tap, so... people who didn't like it so hot, well... would turn

the cold water on. You know.

Ms. Oh, so you could... you could regulate the heat ^{ing} yourself, when you were in the bath...?

Mrs. Minato: Yes. Uh-huh. Oh, yeah. So people that, you know, wanted a real hot part, would go in the hot...where the hot water's coming in, you know. So it was... well, it was big enough that people could swim a few strokes back and forth, when there's not mu--... many people in there, you know.

Ms. Gee... How... well, how deep would it be, for...? Like, if an adult sat on the bottom, about how high would the water be?

Mrs. Minato: Oh, you couldn't sit on the bottom...

Ms. Oh, you couldn't..? It was too deep?

Mrs. Minato: Yes. You... Well, I guess if you crouch like that, I guess... you know...

Ms. It would come to your chin?

Mrs. Minato: Yeah... chin... uh-huh.... So it... it is a big thing. I think a little... children would drown, you know.

Ms. Did the bathhouse seem new to you then, or do you know if it was built....?

Mrs. Minato: A little before, I'm sure, because there was... two or three people before us, I think. And then we s--... went... Dad sold it. You know. I think we bought a rooming house, then. ^{I think?} Uh-hmm...

Ms. Uh-huh... What was it called? You mentioned a name, last time...?

Mrs. Minato: Matsu-no-yu.

Ms. Matsu-no-yu.

Mrs. Minato: Yes. That's right. I'm sure a lot of people remember. Matsu means "pine"...

Ms. ... means pine. Yeah..."Bath of Pine?"

Mrs. Minato: Yeah.

Ms. Uh-huh.

Mrs. Minato: I think it was one of the bigger ones. I'm not sure. I haven't been to other ones, so I couldn't tell you. It was all tile, you know, and very clean. Um-hmm... So I...

Ms. Oh, and the boiler -- I want to ask you about the boiler. Do you remember how big that was?

Mrs. Minato: Oh, yes. It was... I guess... you know, an ordinary -- you... you've seen a steam boiler... you know... and it had one of these gauges on top, where/they would tell you... But it must...

Ms. So it was a... a big, round tank?

Mrs. Minato: Uh-huh.... Big, round tank. It must be... ^{have been}

Ms. It was four feet... diameter...?

Mrs. Minato: Diameter, and maybe six, you know.../long...and ^{feet}
I guess all the hot pipe--... hot water pipes, were in there, you know. So that was a big thing. We weren't allowed to go near the -- Dad was the only one, you know, so we... we just look at it, and... that was it.

Ms. So the wires where you hung all the towels, were in the boiler room?

Mrs. Minato: Above it.

Ms. Above the boiler...

Mrs. Minato: We had a kind of a... a stairway, going up to a little... it was kind of... it was just about that wide, but... like a... the ceiling... say/ ^{...} we could stand on it, so... I guess about this... and this wide, and....

Ms. About....

Mrs. Minato: ... we can go up... Uh-huh....

Ms. ... three... three feet high, and...

Mrs. Minato: No, it was higher than that, because...

Ms. Higher than that....

Mrs. Minato:... you know, the ceiling, ^{It's not a nine foot ceiling.} you see. The bath-house... maybe twenty foot ceiling is it? Or fifteen foot ceiling? You know... We had to go up quite a few steps to this landing, like, you know, and it went right along this back part, where the washing machines were, and the... and the boiler was, down here, you see. So we'd go up, and the... and they would... hundreds of -- really, you know, so many lines there, and... we would/ ^{...} hang onto it. There was no dryer, you know. So...and we used to help with that. It was very hot up there, because... when you hang... because this heat from the... the boiler. So it just dried in no time. That's what I remember about that, you know. Um-hmm...

Ms. Oh, that's marvellous.

Ms. I wonder if any of the tile's left in there, or any... or if... ^{there are of the?} any signs....

Mrs. Minato: I haven't been...

Ms. ... of the bathhouse are still in there?

Mrs. Minato: ... I don't know anything about it, you know. It was there til the war-time, I'm sure. So I don't know what

Ms. Yeah. Mrs. Minato:
happened since, you know. /Um-hmm...

Transcript omits a section of the taped interview....

In this omission, Mrs. Minato lists stores & owners in the 300 blk. Powell Street in detail while looking at a map.

Transcript resumes:

Ms. Tell us the story again, about your father buying land in Burnaby...

Mrs. Minato: (laughs) That's really... Well, my dad bought it from this man here....

Ms. Ah...

Mrs. Minato: You know... Mr. Okumura. And... so... one day, well, we said, "Well, we'll go and see where Dad bought the land," so, you know, we come way up on the streetcar, up to the boundary, and... we walked down, you know -- I don't know if there was much street, or not, but... we came right down here to the end of Charles Street, you see, and there was nothing... it was really a ravine, you know. Way down, and Mother says, "Oh, Dad, is this where you bought it?" and my dad says, "Well," he says, "On the map, it was flat."
(laughter) But anyway, we had a nice day out, you know, but we could ne---... I could never forget that.

Ms. That's really a Vancouver story, you know, because so much land was sold like that...

But it...

Mrs. Minato: Yeah, and... So anyway.../it's coincidence that I am living, you know, next is Charles Street, you see, and I always think well, right by the playground there, where the swings are, about the place where Dad has his lot, so I just laugh, you know. Funny, isn't it?

Ms. Yeah... yeah...

Mrs. Minato: You know, after so many... fifty years.

Ms. That's right. *Ms. Minato: Yeah...* How long did he keep that lot?

Mrs. Minato: Oh, quite a while. He was paying taxes.

But anyway, he says, "Oh..." He quit. It wasn't very much of a tax, either, I don't think, you know... In the bushes, here. Well anyway, it's ... really, it's so funny, because that's one thing that comes to my mind, you know.

Ms. Uh-huh... Right.

Mrs. Minato: Charles Street. Yeah, that's really comical.

Ms. I'm wondering whether any of the little cafes on Powell Street -- not necessarily in this block -- were Chinese-owned at the time that you were down there? ? ?

Mrs. Minato: Oh, yeah... There was ^{... a} a/nice *Same Peking* or something, up... up... up on some of the... you know, top where they had, you know, a restaurant in this block. I'm sure there was. It was a very good restaurant, ^{I...} /I kind of think. And the... the Japanese restaurant was somewhere around here -- oh yes... this is... I think it was called *Maruichi (Sp?)* You know...

Ms. 393.

Mrs. Minato: Yes. But... actually, there was a store in front, and I think you went into a... thing... into the back, for a restaurant. I couldn't remember, you know.

Ms. Hmm... Hmmm... We have an even earlier map of that area, which is very hard to read, I'm afraid, because it was smaller print... But I noticed on it... let's see, (rustling) where are we here... Oppenheimer... Powell... there's Dun--... Dunlevy and Gore... right here -- so this would be on the south side of that three hundred block -- there's a theatre. Sun Theatre.

Mrs. Minato: Is that so?

Ms. But this is 1912, now, so that's quite a bit earlier...

Mrs. Minato: Gore, and Main, so it's got to be like this, eh..?

Ms. Um-hmm...

Mrs. Minato: Gore and Main... Dunlevy... no, I can't remember. Um-hmm... We used to go to the Star Theatre somewhere, on Main Street. On Hastings, eh..? Yeah, right here there was... used to be a Star Theatre here. Used to pay a nickel.

Ms. In that block between Hastings and...

Mrs. Minato: And... Cordova.

Ms. Cordova. Right.

Mrs. Minato: Yeah. Uh-huh. And then you go down Main, there was Rex and, you know, quite a few theatres down this way.

Ms. Uh-huh... You mentioned last time there was a Japanese man who ran the Star Theatre?

Mrs. Minato: Well, he... he worked there, you know, and he would

take the money and he would pump the organ, you know, in the...
where he collected the money, you know... yeah.

Ms. To... keep... to....

Mrs. Minato: The music....

Ms. ... The music to the movie....

Mrs. Minato: That's right. Uh-huh... uh-huh. Yeah, so...

Transcript omits a section of the taped interview....

Transcript resumes:

Ms. Oppenheimer Park has historically been used for
gatherings of labourers and unemployed people. I wondered
if you remember any of those gatherings, when you were
living near Powell Street?

... the
Mrs. Minato: No, we always remember the/Japanese baseball
team, you know, they... Oh, my... my dad used to... see, he
used to be a caretaker at... on Cordova Street. This Anglican
Church... Holy Cross Mission, there. In the middle of the
block there.

Ms. Um-hmm...? Oh....

Mrs. Minato: Yes. And, you know, he could see the...

Ms. Uh-huh...

Mrs. Minato: And... everybody was... you know, there was a
.... Japanese baseball teams... everybody was so enthused,
you know. And... that... it was used for a lot of things,
you know, like "do's". But I can't remember exactly... what.

But it's nice that they fixed it up again, eh?

Ms. Yeah...

Transcript omits a section of the taped interview....

Transcript resumes:

Ms. You told us last time a little anecdote about the
tofu seller and how you scared him?

Mrs. Minato: Oh, you mean...? Oh yes, Mr. Miyasaki. Well...
we were...we... it was, you know, April Fool's Day...

Ms. Uh-huh...?

Mrs. Minato: ... so we said, "Well, we'll... tell Mr. Miyasaki
all..."you know, and we went over and we said, "Well... all
your chickens are gone." You know, he used to have a little
shed in the back, you see, with... you know, little trays with
live chickens, you know. And... so, he just come rushing back,
you know, and then we said, "April Fool's", and we... we felt
very badly for doing that, but, you know... it really took
him for... surprised him. But you see, he used to sell this
tofu, and then, we'd go and say, "Well, give me enough chicken
for five people or so." You know, it was already cut up nice,
and then you could buy chicken bones for soup, you know, and...

Ms. Uh-huh. That was the only meat he sold? Just
chicken?

Mrs. Minato: Yeah... Oh yes, uh-huh... and it was fresh, and
you could see... you know, he would ^{was?} ... you would order it, and

he would kill the chicken, clean it all up, and then... there was nothing but meat, you know... You could make anything. Sukiyaki, or... put your tofu in there, you've got your supper. A little green onion...

Ms. Tell us again, how you make tofu? How he used to make it?

Mrs. Minato: Well, you... you soak the... well, I'm not sure, you know, but... just my watching him... we were very fascinated, you know, but... it was soaked... the soya beans... and then, they have this big stone grind, like, you know. And it would... it was... with a motor, it would... you know, there was one stone this way, and on top, another stone, and it would grind up, and make it into a kind of a... a real, smooth, pulpy-like thing, you know. And then... I don't know if they cooked that, or... I guess they did, and... they put it into little boxes, you know, and... press it on and a... individual tofu would come out, you know. They would be about... four inches by three inches, and they'd be about two and a half or three inches deep, you know. That was the...
would be?

Ms. What were the boxes made of?

Mrs. Minato: Wood.

Ms. Ah... Do you remember the flavour being different from tofu that's sold today?

Mrs. Minato: No. Just the same.

Ms. ... Very same...

Mrs. Minato: And... when it's put through silk, I think it's

finer, and it's smooth, you know. Smoother. And... there's a difference between some that's put through... I don't know what it is, but they say, and... when it's put through cotton or silk, there's a difference in texture, you know.

Ms. What do you mean, "when it's put through"?

Mrs. Minato: The... the... whatever, you know, the kind of a thing that is... ground it out... I think... yes... they must...

Ms. Oh, they... they put it... the seive it...

Mrs. Minato:... they must...

Ms. ... through the...?

Mrs. Minato: ... yeah, I think so. I've ne--...

Ms. Oh... strain it -- that's the word.

Mrs. Minato: Yes, I think so. But anyway... Oh yes, and that's... that's really good food.

Ms. Um-hmm...

Transcript omits a section of the taped interview....

Transcript resumes:

Ms. Would you have... would other people come in to Powell Street? Like, did you have Chinese shoppers coming to the fish stores, or... Caucasian shoppers coming to the fish stores? Or was that unusual in those days?

Mrs. Minato: Unusual, I think. I think... you know... I couldn't remember very... not very many, you know. Like now, it's so Cosmopolitan. You go to Chinatown and you see every

sort of people there, you know, but I... I think it wasn't like that. You know, pre-war.

Ms. And I guess the community would be a lot larger, pre-war?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yeah. I'm sure. You know.

Ms. Do you have any idea how many people?

Mrs. Minato: I... I haven't got a clue. But they were, P--... you know. And there were quite a few around Fairview way, you know, there's all the sawmills they worked. Japanese workers there. And people around Marpole, too. And then... in Richmond, you know. There was... and... these stores all delivered, too. Took orders, and deliver. So... even if you didn't have a... a store nearby, you see, you could... you could... the order man would go, or else you could 'phone in, I'm sure, and you could get your things, you know, delivered on a certain delivery day, I think. They were really... good service, I think.

Ms. And the drygoods stores, that sold clothing, would they sell Japanese clothing, or would they sell western clothing?

Mrs. Minato: You know, all western clothes. You know, and your un--... our undershirts, panties and slips and... you know, winter coats and everything. And... they sold materials, too. Because a lot of Japanese were... sewed, you know. Everybody sew. You know, my mother, she... she learned to sew in Japan, but she never learned to sew western way, but she

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really... you know, look at the store and look at the style,
and see the tucks in there, and she would come home and cut
it up, and sew, you know, and... she used to get a lot of
clothes given to her, and then she would... undo it all, and...
and fix it for us. We... we were always well-dressed. Spic
and span. I was a real tomboy and I'd come home with a tear
here, and a... I used to get bawled out, but you know, we
were... That's one thing... they didn't want us to look shabby.

Ms. Um-hmm....

End of Track 2.

Mrs. Nobue Minato.
Dec. 3, 1977.

Accession No. 3164; Tape No. 2; Track No. 1.

Mrs. Minato:...it was easier to put on, you know. They had that... that name... not like a... not an undershirt, but a cot--... cotten... like something with gauze, you know, with ... the Japanese style, and you... put your... and then you put the top nightgown on top of that, you see. And ^{then?} you have the sleeves doubled in, so when you put the... lay the baby, after you bathe and wiped and powdered, you put it into that, and you'd stick the two arms in, and then you fold this over, and... there's a tie, and tie it and then you put the longer nightgown over and then you tie it, and it was just as snug as a bug, you know.

Ms. Ah... gee...

Mrs. Minato: And... we thought that was very handy.

Ms. Right... of course. Yeah, well...you keep the things that are of benefit, you know...

Mrs. Minato: That's right.

Ms. ... that are better than western style...

Mrs. Minato: Yes, that's right, because undershirts, you know, you have to put a button on and everything, well... Yes, that's... so... that's the way... that, when the baby real--... not now, but at that time, the layettes were Japanese style. Um-hmm... But then, we used the triangle diapers...

Ms. Yes.(laughs)

Mrs. Minato: ... with the pins.

Ms. You were raising your children before antibiotics

were... popular...

Mrs. Minato: Yes... yes, yes.

Ms. You mu--... did you know a lot of methods of, say, stopping infection, or did your mother pass many of the old-country methods to you?

Mrs. Minato: Well... for ins--... when you have, like a... you'd have a cut, and it starts to fester, they... they would rub green onion leaves... you know, and put that on, and it would suck it out. And...

Ms. You'd ^{eat?} the leaves on the wound?

Mrs. Minato: Yes, and... and...tie it up, you know. Oh, there's so many old-fashioned remedies, you know.

Ms. Oh, we'd like to hear some of them?

Mrs. Minato: Well... I don't know. I don't use them so much, but....

Ms. For congestion or colds, what... what would be some of the methods that your mother or you used?

Mrs. Minato: Well, it was mustard plaster with us. Um-hmm... That's... that's a Canadian way of... we... we were given mustard plasters. You know. And... for... temperature, I don't know. I think there was some sort of medicine, but... I think they... they would... some people would give them worms...you know.

Ms. Worms?

Mrs. Minato: Yes. Earthworms... boiled up. And that would bring down the...

Ms. Hmm?!

Mrs. Minato: ... down the... Yeah, I think so. Now I'm not sure, because... we never had worms, with... I... I think that's one of the remedies. And... quite a few of... you know... in from... And, when you had a stomach ache, they would give you bear's... they say bear's stomach, but I guess it must be... their gall bladder or something. You know, it was all dried up, you know... cold, you know. And... it would ... they would give you just a little bit of... you know, like a... oh, maybe just a little itty bit, and that would cure it. That... that medicine all came from Japan, you know.

Ms. This was... this was the animal, bear...?

Mrs. Minato: Yeah, I think so. And for measles, I think it was... some animal's horns, and that was, you know, steeped and... so that it would come out in a hurry, you know. I... I couldn't... it was called saikaku* or something, but I'm not sure. Some horn of an animal. And there was all kinds of... remedies, you know.

Ms. What would be used for pain killer, say, in child labour, or...?

Ms. And broken legs and things?

Mrs. Minato: I... I don't know.

Ms. Were there any little herbalist stores, on Powell Street?

Mrs. Minato: Yes, yes. You could get... And for/women's troubles, you know, the---... they would... they would...
x

Oh, all these troubles used to sell the herbs from Japan,

correct! (checked with Japanese speaker) rhinoceros
* english spelling is approximate: it was rhinoceros horns, said the interviewee at a later date.

you know. There was potions for... for menstruat--... you know, trouble with menstruating that, you know, that they would steep out and drink it, you know. I've never used it, but... there's lots and lots of... a treatment like that, I'm sure.

Transcript omits a section of the taped interview....

Transcript resumes:

Ms. How did your parents feel about... coming to^a... to the "New World" in a sense, and... and having a completely different life-style from what they would have had if they'd stayed in Japan?

Mrs. Minato: Well... see, Mother's been to... Taiwan, and so, she... she wasn't... you know, I'm sure she... she adjusted right away. And Dad has been all over, so it... you know, he ... he's a... he just came here to settle down. He thought it was a very nice place to settle down, you know, so... after he's... he's been all over, you know, so I think ... they... they... the only thing was the discrimination, but you know, he... he was... he had a good job in that wire mill, and... and he spoke... not fluid English, but he understood, and he could get along with his broken English, you know. And he... I think they... they made well. And/they instilled on us about education, and we sure had to do good at school.

Ms. Yes... (laughs)

Mrs. Minato: Um-hmm... Yeah... So....

Ms. Did he... how did he feel about the evacuation?...
and what happened during the war?

Mrs. Minato: You mean... the evacuation? Well, he was an
old-age pensioner then, so... You know, it was hard. And he
had arthritis, you know, so... when... see, when... you know,
usually, the oldest son takes the parents, but you see, then,
when we... they were... had a chance to go to Slocan or
somewhere, you know, I said, "No... we'll... we'll go with
Dad... will come with us," and... my husband was taken to a
... road camp, on March the third -- one of the first, because
we had a store, on ... Hornby and...corner of Hornby,
and... next to Burrard, is Howe... Hornby... not Howe...

Ms. Drake?

Mrs. Minato: No... on Hornby and... Nelson. That's right.
Hornby and Nelson. And so... See, when we were in the front
line, ~~when~~ ^{and} people said, "Well, they're still here", you know,
what do you...? So, he was taken on March the Third. We only
had half a day's notice...

Ms. Really?

Mrs. Minato: ... so he made a...power-of-attorney for me
right away, so that I could get rid of the stores and that,
and then we went to the Hudson Bay -- it was Wednesday, so
it was half a day, so we got him, and we heard that Alberta
was very cold, so we got him leather coats and leather jackets
and warm underwear, and, you know... ^{to} get him ready. And my

youngest boy was two and a half years old and the girl was eleven and the boy was ten, you know. So... it was a... quite a shock. So... but anyway, I ^{had} ~~have~~ the power-of-attorney, so... we got... we sold the store... just for the ^{stock} ~~stuff~~. They wouldn't give us anything for the... the ice... the refrigerator, the counter or anything, you know, because they knew we really... we had to go. So, we just...

Ms. Who did you sell to? Not the name, but... what kind of people?

Mrs. Minato: ... Chinese... people. And he was... he was from Canton, and he was so good... he let us... well he said, he'd never had any experience in business -- he was a banker, like, he worked in the bank, so he says, "Would you help us?" so I said, "Sure." So... he came to the store, and we'd stay in the back of the store, just as we were... you know, in our living quarters. And we told him... and my husband ^{was} / already gone, you see, but we told him how to run the store, and how to... the business. And then we moved upstairs, to a rooming house, you know, until my husband... we could call him back, either to Vancouver... you know. But there was no way we can call him back, so we said, "Well, we'll go to Lilloet on a... self-supporting, so that we can go with my mother, father and our family", so that way, my husband ^{can} could come back to Lilloet and build a... twelve by twenty-eight shack for seven people. In Lilloet...

Ms. Ah... That was all you were allowed to build?

Mrs. Minato: Yeah. Well, there ... smaller, but that was one of the biggest ones, because there were seven of us... you know. So... he... he went to Lilloet, so, we... I had the power-of-attorney, so I sold the store, and... But... you know, every day there was rumours and there was this... where you can't go out after certain hours and... you know, everything had to be covered up, because.... the blackouts, you know, so we bought yards and yards of black cloth, to cover the store windows and... we never went outside[?] after dark, and... after sunset, and... it was... really, the most traumatic time of our life, you see. The young one was two and a half, and... when my husband was leaving, it was March the Third, and it was a girl's festival day, you know, so... mother said, "Well, he's going, but anyway, we'll celebrate", so we had fish with the head on -- that's good... good luck, and the... red rice, you know, with the red beans in for good luck, and... it wouldn't go through, you know, you're st--... you know, but anyway, and...

Ms. You couldn't eat it...

Mrs. Minato: No... it was... so heartbroke.... And then, we... we put name tags on all the children, in case we got separated, you know, and... in... on cloth, we wrote it down, and... we put a little sum of money on the bigger ones, and the baby--
 I knew I would carry him/^{for}wherever I go, so... And... we all had name tags, in case we got separated... you know, died, or somewhere, well we... they knew who we were. And so we...
 had that, and then... I got rid of the store, and... I went

to the... the place where you register for the evacuation, and I was watching, you know, and the man says, "What have you got?" and I was watching him... "Table"... Well, he would just write "Table" and he wouldn't write the amount, you know. You know, that it was a... a home-made table, or a table that was antique, or... you know, like... So I said, "Well, this is no good", so when it... my turn came, I says--"Have you got anything?"... I says, "No, I have nothing to declare." So I went back/^{...}home, and then I packed everything I could, and I asked this Chinese gentleman, that bought the store, if we could... there was a little, sha--... a shack-like shed, you know. I says, "Could I put everything there, and... if we settle somewhere, would you send ^{it} ~~them~~?" He says, "Sure". So we... we were very lucky. We... we sold everything that we couldn't take, you know. So... that way... we went to Lilloet for ten months, and I said, "Well, this is no place. We should get out." So we... my husband went apple picking at that time, that fall you know, they came, because there was no labour in... the Okanagan, and... Mr. ^{Hau?} Howe...his... his boss, Mr. ^{Ponsdell?} came to Lilloet, and... hired m--... I don't know... maybe sixty young men and... you know... to... picking apples? And... ^{there} ~~they~~ were fishermen, and everybody that never had done labour like that, but anyway, they went, and... and when they... he come back, ^{he} ~~someone~~ ^{a... there} says, "There's a high school there, and there's... the people aren't friendly, yet, but... you know," he says, "It's good for

the children to get to school." So I says, "Well, we should..." And then we wrote, you know, back and forth, and then Mr. ^{Howe} Howe said, well, we could come. So... we were the first one to get out of Lilloet, you know, and they didn't like it, because they thought the whole -- if everybody went out, the whole community would fold, you know. But... I was so worried about the... see, I/^{had}...I left the children... we took the children, and... when they didn't start any school in September, you know... we were there, about May, and we played all through summer and September, they didn't... ^{wouldn't?} So I said, "Well, this is no good." So I wrote to Mrs. Lucas -- she was the head of the correspondent department at Victoria--and I says, "I have a son who's in Grade Seven and a daughter who's in Grade Eight, and I don't want to miss... because they have good grades in Vancouver, and I don't want them to miss a whole year. So, is it possible that I could teach them by correspondence?" and... she says, "Certainly." So, I got all the ... for Grade Seven and Eights, and I got all the things. And then I started teaching the... our two, and my son, you know, he was eleven and he said, "Everybody's out in the Fraser Valley, swimming, and I have to go to school..." So I... I went around the neighbour and said, "Is there any Grade Seven boys?" and there was, luckily, two, you know. So it... and they were willing to have them educated, too, so I says, "Well, I'm not a teacher or anything, but I'll try my best, you know," and -- with the correspondence, ^{and if you read it up,} /you get the... So then, I got

a... another little girl come, the same age as my oldest daughter, and... So I... I baked bread, I read at nights to study for tomorrow, and I had this two year old... two and a half year old, and seven of us, you know.

Ms. Gee... *rough...*

Mrs. Minato: Really.... You know. And... so then, when I started that, ^{they} / kind of... it dawn on them that... Sep--... October, November, well... you know... that... it was no use letting these kids -- these were all Canadians, you know, and... to let them do nothing...^{eh?} / So then they... they built a school...

Ms. Who built the school?

Mrs. Minato: The... the community.

Ms. The whole Lilloet community?

Mrs. Minato: Ye--... not the Lilloet community, but... *me?*

Ms. Or... the Japanese community....

Mrs. Minato:... the Japanese community in Lilloet.

Ms. Uh-huh... uh-huh...

Mrs. Minato: And they were... a lot of people that had... university and high school graduates, and... and so, that's how they got on there, you know. So... we didn't have to worry, but they went... when... we came out from Vernon... I guess, about November, you know, to Vernon... and so I left the children to finish 'til June -- my mother and dad stayed back, and... So that... they... they came... No, it was spring when we went to Vernon. That's right. But anyway,

they stayed two or three months, and they took their exam in Lilloet, proper -- at ~~the~~ their school there, and they all passed. And when they come to Vernon, they went right into their next grades.

Ms. Huh! Gee...

Mrs. Minato: Yeah. So....

Ms. So you were successful, - ? -

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes. Uh-huh... And they did very well. They were good... good children, you know.

Ms. How... how was it, being in Vernon, at first?
Were you.... did you encounter any hostility?

Mrs. Minato: No, not where we were. We were in the country, you know, and Mr. Howe ^{was} * was very nice, and Mr. Postill * was nice, so... and... there was... I don't know, maybe... a hundred and fifty Japanese hired there, you know, and there were teachers and there were fishermen and dressmakers and... you know, professional people, that... we all worked. We really worked. You know, it was war-time and they... they had... they were growing seeds, too, not just apples. Seeds, for England, you know... Europe. Onion seeds, carrot seeds, beet seeds, you know. And... we worked at... very, very hard. At first, you know, you didn't know a... a weed from a... a pigweed from a... a beet, you know. And then...

Ms. Yeah... They're hard to tell apart.

Mrs. Minato: Yes. And... really, you know, weeding, and... spacing things and hoeing - we did a lot of hoeing, for...

X
* Mr. Arthur T. Howe and Mr. R. Postill

Ms. What...

Mrs. Minato: And it was twenty-five cents for the ladies, I guess, and thirty-five cents for the men, at the start... You know, hour... And then it went up a little ^{by the way?}

Ms. Did they supply you with housing?

Mrs. Minato: Yes, they had to. And it was... where we went first, in Vernon, it was a... a bull barn... bull pen, you know...

Ms. ^{Gee...} Really?

Mrs. Minato: ... and... so... they... they kind of cleaned it up a little bit, and... put partitions in, and there was two families. Well, the one where we lived was... maybe from here to that... that wall, you know.

Ms. About...

Mrs. Minato: To that wall...

Ms. ... six feet.

Mrs. Minato: Yeah. And... so... we had bunks for the children, and there was... you know... and... one bed, and... ^a and/kitchen -- everything in the one room, you know.

Ms. Gee.... It must have been cold, too?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes, but anyway, we had a stove. And... every time... you washed the wall, you see, it would smell of manure. But... But, you know, it was a place to stay, and then... they moved us into a... real home, you know, later, and... ^{and?} I lived with a... Caucasian people, half of the house, you know, and that wasn't bad. But... Oh, when we went -- moved to Vernon,

and Mrs. *Posdell?* came, and said, "you know, ^{they said} "The house will be ready when you come from... from Lilloet," and I... I didn't have the older children, but I had Roger, you know, the youngest, in my arms, and... she said, "You know, the house isn't ready yet, so do you want to stay with us for a day?" You know. I just ² broke down. I... it was such a traumatic feeling, you know, after months of, you know, making arrangements, but anyway, we got that... ~~no~~ ^{bull} ~~no~~ ^{bull} barn, so that was... for awhile, you know, we were there, But we had so many... you know, three children, you see, so they thought, well, we need a bigger place, you know. So... they moved us, and then... my father died at Lilloet, that... that spring, and ... while we were in Vernon, you know. That was the... year after/... the children came in June, year after, and my father died there, so we got him buried there. So we go to Lilloet once in awhile. And... my mother and my youngest son is buried in Vernon. You know. And my oldest daughter is buried in Toronto. So we're all... over the... Canada.

Ms. I don't know Lilloet at all. Did many of the Japanese stay in Lilloet?

Mrs. Minato: No, just about two... two families, I guess, that stayed. Because we weren't in Lilloet proper, you see. We were in East Lilloet, ^{...on} on/the east part of the Fraser River, you know...

Ms. Across the Fr---... river...

Mrs. Minato: Yes. Uh-huh...

Ms. Oh, I see.

Mrs. Minato: I went to see it about three years ago, and... where we made... where we... you see, it was so hot... you ... you built your house, well, we had to dig into it in the summer to make a... a place where you stayed in the daytime, you know. From the heat.

Ms. Oh... underground, you dug?

Mrs. Minato: Yeah. And we put rocks in, so that the dirt... earth wouldn't fall in to you, you know. It wasn't a cellar, it was a... a... to get away from the heat, you know. Oh, and... oh, it was hot. And then in the winter, it went down as far as fifty-two below zero, so...you know, even a rabbit would freeze. We had to buy water there. There was no water there. So we used to have to buy water from ^a fountain, you know, and it was fifteen cents a barrel, you see. So... when they put the water into the buckets to fill the -- well, it would almost stick to you in the winter, because it was... that cold, you know, and it was not water. It was going to ice, you know...

Ms. Oh... ^{it was} / sort of gelled already.

Mrs. Minato: Yeah, uh-huh.... Yeah. Oh yeah, so it was... And so one... when it's cold, well, my husband or I would take turns to be up all night so we'd have the stove going. Even the kettle... vinegar froze, too.

Ms. Really?!

Mrs. Minato: Yeah. And so... you know, it's just a one...

one light plank, you see, and it... it was wet when we built the house, so it dried up, so we had to chink every... every... you know, crack, and there was icicles and the... there was heat going, but you see, it was so cold, and when you were asleep, well this would be like ice... right by the sheet where your breath was, you know. Oh, and it was cold. I got so...

Ms. So there was only one layer of wood? That's all?

Mrs. Minato: Yeah, that's all.

Ms. Was that common in Lilloet?

Mrs. Minato: That was what?

Ms. To build so...^{so...}/with no insulation, or so...?

Mrs. Minato: Well, the houses I guess were okay, but that just was/something temporary, eh? Oh, yeah...

Ms. Did you have to build your own house?

Mrs. Minato: Yes... yes. So, my husband went first, and then there were already people that started it, you know, so then they... each guy would help build the next guy's house, like, you know... And, so...

Ms. And you had to build according to/^{Mrs. Minato: Yeah, what... Ms.}...government specifications?

Mrs. Minato:... what we paid... we had to pay, you see.

Ms. Oh...

Mrs. Minato: You know. So... whatever... what size you want to build, okay, you pay... you see, everything... We didn't ask the government a cent to move from Vancouver to Lilloet... We never asked -- that's one thing I'm very proud of. I thought, "Well, we won't be a burden on Canada." You know, even if they

were kicking us out."

Ms. Yeah... Right...

Mrs. Minato: Uh-huh. We lost... that was the biggest thing, but... what hit us was, we lost our son in Vernon, you know. That death was really --/^{it}was the saddest part of our life, you know. And then father...

Ms. Was that... that was an accident, was it?

Mrs. Minato: No, no. He... he was sick. But... you know... it was. We...we moved to Vernon, because... we knew we were/^{we were} near a hospital and near a good medical, you know, and everything, because when... when we were in Lilloet, you know, my son was helping a neighbour chop kindling, and he... he broke his nose, you know, and so we have to get a permit from the Mounties, you see, to go over to get a... and we... I took him over to this doctor, and he... he was... well, you know, a country doctor, like that... and... he just ... you know, he says, "Oh... you broke your nose," and he just...

Ms. Ugh...

Mrs. Minato: Like that, and he put a plas--... I said, "By golly -- I could have done that at home." You know, after all the... hours of getting a permit to come over, and...

Ms. And get bad care...

Mrs. Minato: Oh, I said, "No, I don't..."

Ms. He just pushed it straight, and...

Mrs. Minato: Yeah...

Ms. ... stuffed up...

Mrs. Minato: Pla--... adhesive over it...

Ms. *Oh - ?*

Mrs. Minato: But Lilloet has a nice doctor now, this... he's retired now, but Dr. Miyasaki, you know... Japanese doctor and has been there, you know, / it's really... I think -- he's retired now, but... that was very good. But when we were there, there was... So I said, "Well, we'd better get out to somewhere there's medical attention", especially when you have children. Yeah. So it was... quite a thing. Oh well...

Ms. Did they... did they give you decent medical attention in Vernon? You didn't have any trouble getting attention there?

Mrs. Minato: Oh yes, well... it was... one you/ ^{...} the doctors came and... you know, no... no... I don't think there was any discrimination. They were very good. I think so, because I spoke out, in every way, you know. I wasn't going to take... I said what I wanted, and... be assertive, you know. ^{Box?} And I never....

The remainder of this track of the interview is omitted from the transcript....

End of Track 1.

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