

LOI ADDITIONAL CONTENT

Bud Madokoro Interview, by Alexander Pekic

NOTES: Bud passed along a book, *Settling Clayquot*, to Alex during the interview. One of Bud's ancestors, John Madokoro is featured as an interview participant in the book, from page 51-70. The interview material is set in conjunction (almost discussion?) with other participants.

Several pages from the book featuring John's words have been scanned for our records.

1.

JOHN MADOKORO: Most of the first generation didn't come here to live, they came here to make money. There was no work in Japan. The fishing was poor and the farming was poor, so they would come to Canada to make a bundle and go back. At that time Canadian money was worth a lot. If you had a hundred Canadian dollars, boy oh boy. My father went back to Japan to marry, but then he bought an acre of property here and built a nice house in Tofino and then he never talked about going back.

HAROLD KIMOTO: Between Tofino and Clayoquot there were about 30 families. We all settled here in the spring or fall of 1923. We were like the pioneers, the first Japanese group. Maybe some Japanese were just here to work and then go back to Japan, but Dad and Mum couldn't afford to go back. We had ten children, at least until one drowned.

TOMMY KIMOTO: I was born in 1915, pretty near pension age now. I was six or seven when we moved up to Clayoquot. We went up in dad's fishboat. I was seasick most of the way up.

When we got there the only house available was an old abandoned hotel on Stockham Island. Three families moved in there. That hotel used to leak. We'd put pots and pans all over the place. It was pretty wrecked and it was haunted. Dad used to go and sleep on the boat because an old Indian woman came down and choked him every night. He told us that after we moved.

We lived there about a year and then dad built a house on Clayoquot Island. Mr. Dawley leased us the land. He was a nice sort of person, but of course, he got the business too.

I guess you could say the place on Clayoquot was more or less a shack, but it was nice there. We used to grow Japanese vegetables and things. There was an old jail there, and my mother used to lock my kid brother in it when he was bad.

The wife of the secretary of our fishing co-op used to teach Japanese. We used to study out of a Japanese textbook, just enough so we could keep talking to our parents. It was tough on kids you know, five or six hours of school and then three hours of Japanese school.

I lost my dad when I was 16. In those days we had no anchor winches. I guess he got tangled up in the anchor line while letting it go. Good job he had the other end tied to the boat or they never would have found him.

JOHN MADOKORO: I was the first Jap boy to go to school. We all went, myself, my sister, my brother. We didn't have a hard time. We got along good with the boys. I would fight, you see, and they were scared of me.

We worked hard but we had fun too. We would all go to the dances. Even the first generation used to dance. I remember there was one particular small man, he just learned to dance a little bit, you see, and here was a tall, tall white woman and they were dancing together. That was Mr. Nakagawa and Mrs. Abraham. We laughed our heads off.

TED AND DOROTHY ABRAHAM

MRS. ABRAHAM: They used to bring us fish. One of them would bring us a huge salmon in the morning and perhaps another one would come in the afternoon. They didn't sell them, they gave them to us. And you would have to take them. Sometimes we had so much we used to put them straight in the tin for the chickens.

MR. ABRAHAM: They were very generous, weren't they?

MRS. ABRAHAM: Most generous, yes. I think they liked us and they knew Ted was the magistrate and sort of an important person.

MR. ABRAHAM: I used to write letters for them, and for the Indians too.

MRS. ABRAHAM: He wrote letters for them always.

MICKEY NICHOLSON: Dad had the beer parlour so we were on Clayoquot and we saw a lot of the Japanese. They were good customers. The Japanese liked beer. They made a point of trying to get along with the white people and they did.



One of the Japanese ladies was a nurse, but the way they taught nursing over there she was almost the same as a doctor. Everybody depended on her whether it was a broken bone or a poisoned hand. You see if you get a jab by a codfish or a dogfish your arm can swell right up. Now they have antibiotics, but in those days, they just had to cut you open. I remember my two brothers-in-law holding my arm down, while Mrs. Igarachi cut it open and squeezed out all the pus. It had gone right up to my neck almost. She did an excellent job and she wouldn't take any pay, but I think we bought her a rocking chair for the house.

JOE MCLEOD: We always got along good, around here anyway. Ian McLeod and I started trolling about the same time and they helped us no end. I went fishing with Johnny Madokoro for a week just to find out how to catch fish.

TRYGVE ARNET: Boy, they were good! They made all their own spoons. They'd get these big pieces of brass and cut them and polish them up and bend them the way they wanted them. Then they'd try them in the water, pulling them along to see that they worked right. I fished right amongst them. They were really good.

JOE MCLEOD: The Japanese were the main fishermen around here in those days. But they were never allowed up around Kyuquot or Winter Harbour or those places. I guess the Japanese were pretty good fishermen and the white men just couldn't cut the mustard, so they ostracized them a little bit.

TOMMY KIMOTO: I became a fisherman because there was no other job. Then, when an old Japanese retired, I took the boat off him. In those days there was a quota on fishing licences for Japanese. That was in 1937, I think. We weren't allowed to go past Bajo Reef. The Americans were allowed to, but we weren't, even though we were Canadians. You needed to be a naturalized Canadian to fish, but we still couldn't go up there, because the Norwegian fishermen and the Finn fishermen didn't want us. But there was virtually no trouble because we didn't go.

Around Tofino there was no rivalry because most of the young fellows here were taught by the old Japanese fishermen, the old-timers before us. But those square heads around Kyuquot, they were real bad. The politicians didn't help any. They were working against the Japanese. Only the old CCF party was good to us. They tried to stop discrimination and get us the right to vote. We never voted until 1950. It didn't make any difference if you were born here. That's democracy, eh?

JOHN MADOKORO: One year there were no fish at Tofino and no fish at Ucluelet. We were starving, more or less. So I figured let's go up to Kyuquot, there's lots of fish up there. So we took the packer with a full load of ice. I was the pilot. We fished up there half a day. Then, when we came to go into the harbour, there were boats anchored all around the outside. The secretary of our co-op was aboard. We had to have a secretary to run the business, to plan everything. That was Mr. Yanamura, a UBC graduate. He couldn't find a job because he was Japanese, so he came up and worked for the co-op. So Mr. Yanamura went into the village and got the word. "The white people don't like it," he said, "they don't want us here, we'd better beat it back." So, okay, we can't do anything. We just came back to Nootka and fished at Hot Springs. From then on the government made it so our licence was good only up to Bajo Reef.

Opposite: John Madokoro, age 6, 1920.

MRS. MABEL ARNET: When I came here it was like there were three or four different villages. The white people were all together, but if you belonged to the Scandinavian group, you knew you were in the Scandinavian group. Or if you were in the Scotch group, you knew you were in that group. Then there was the Indian village, which was hands off, and the Japanese people. You spoke with them but you didn't associate with them socially.

JOHN MADOKORO: In 1922, Japanese couldn't buy property in Tofino. But six or seven families bought up six acres up the inlet at what we called Storm Bay. We got it from Mr. Grice, a real old-timer there. I think there was some friction, but people couldn't say too much to old Mr. Grice. But it wasn't too bad. They were mainly Norwegians there and they're a bit timid. There were quite a few bachelors, Englishmen. They all treated us good. Of course, we tried to cater to them.

ELIZABETH FINCH: The Japanese may seem now as though they are good citizens and it's really not for me to say anything else. The ones that came from Clayoquot and lived here, you know, the ones that grew up and went to school here, I don't think you could meet nicer people. But getting on to the Second World War, there was an element came in that was called the Black Dragon or the Red Dragon. I think they were sent in here from Japan, and they were a bad element. This is what has given the Japanese a bad name and this is why they took them out during the war. It was hard to tell the good ones from the bad ones, so they had to take them all. But I think the Japanese themselves know this. I think they know in their heart of hearts, that there was a bad element in here and they all had to suffer for it.

EVELYN SULLIVAN: At the time we didn't realize what was going on. Tofino was very isolated. It was like living in a different world.

You see, they were there as spies. The first influx of Japanese, whether they knew it or not, were sent in as a softening up process. The second influx that went into Tofino and up and down the coast, they were real good authentic down-to-earth spies. We found out. It was a rumour to begin with but then two families packed up and went back to Japan. One of them turned out to be a Japanese army officer.

We used to go to the Japanese village but not after the second influx came. They made the rules for the first influx. They said, "No communication with the rest of the population."

I was very close friends with a girl named Molly. The son of the head of the spy ring wanted to marry her. She didn't want any part of it but she had to obey her parents and I guess they had to obey anyone who was superior to them. So the marriage was arranged. It was a marriage of purchase. They paid \$1,500 and a number of gifts for her.

I never saw such a beautiful wedding in my life. Molly was paper white, you'd think she was Snow White. But, you know, that girl never smiled from that day on.

Well, after about ten days I went down to see her. She was my girlfriend and I missed her, oh, I missed her terribly. She stood outside the door and told me I couldn't come in and never to come back.



John Madokoro and son at
Tofino, 1940.

2.

JOHN MADOKORO: I remember when I heard about Pearl Harbor. That was when the secretary of our co-op had quit and I was looking after the books down at the secretary's house in Tofino. We were at Storm Bay, so I had about a mile to walk to get to the house. It was a Sunday morning, I think. I was walking towards Tofino and just before I got there, I met Jack McLeod. "Hello, Jack," I said.

"Do you know Pearl Harbor got bombed and Japan's at war?" he said.

"Is that right?" I said. "You're telling me lies."

"No," he said. "You better go and listen to the radio."

Before the war we all used to listen to the short-wave news from Japan. Some of the old-timers, even though they were naturalized, they figured Japan was unbeatable. They were real excited when Japan was conquering China and Korea and all that. So we all sort of listened to it. But Japan attacking the U.S. was something nobody even predicted. I don't even think anybody in Japan knew about it.

I went in and listened to the radio and sure enough. Right away I phoned our president, Mr. Nakagawa. "Gee whiz," I said, "what are we gonna do?" It never entered my head that it would be real trouble for us, because we were all naturalized Canadians. But I guess there was anti-Japanese feelings building up right from the day the first immigrants came. It was building up, building up and bang!

WALTER GUPPY: They had this building, it was a school and sort of a community hall. Just before the war, when the Japanese were invading China, they used to