

Acts of Ownership Interview

Packing tools, pots and mattresses

Betty (b. 1925) describes the belongings that her family sold and packed in 1942. Her daughter, Joy, exclaims that she still has the frying pan that they brought with them.

Excerpt from a Landscapes of Injustice oral history interview with Betty Toyota and Joy Trapnell.

BETTY TOYOTA

But what happened in Vancouver they would all come and I remember – we had a big piano. And I think it was forty-eight ... four dollars or forty dollars or something. We just had to sell it. And we were told to go and then we had a real big dining room set. That all went with our Noritake chinaware. Everything. Just to get the money. But one thing, my dad was a carpenter, he loved making little dolls, he used to make us doll houses for us. He had these tools so he made a toolbox with all his fancy tools. And he told mom, “No matter what happens, keep this. Don’t ever sell it.” So that toolbox came with us.

JOY TRAPNELL

You guys took a tool box to the –

BETTY TOYOTA

Toolbox, heavy. And anything that’s over your weight, you have to pay. Well mom did.

JOY TRAPNELL

Oh wow.

BETTY TOYOTA

And then another thing was mom had this real nice stainless steel WearEver pots and pans set. The whole thing, she had the whole thing. And that was one thing she wasn’t going to part with. So dad made a little cardboard box for her and told her, “Okay all your pots and pans will go in here. So we’ll tape it.” So we took that. I still have the frying pan, remember?

JOY TRAPNELL

She still has the frying pan! You do!

BETTY TOYOTA

I have the frying pan. Oh yeah, I'll give it to you.

JOY TRAPNELL

And it still looks like it's brand new.

KYLA FITZGERALD

Yeah ...

BETTY TOYOTA

It's like brand new. And the pot, one pot, I still have one pot.

JOY TRAPNELL

Oh my goodness.

BETTY TOYOTA

It's this real thick WearEver aluminum pan.

JOY TRAPNELL

Yup, yeah.

BETTY TOYOTA

And then somebody else told us already there in Slocan, would write letters, they would write, [Joy: Okay] they said, "No matter what happens, bring your own mattress." That was it. So we took two double mattresses with us.

JOY TRAPNELL

You're kidding?!

BETTY TOYOTA

Oh yeah, mom brought – we had our own mattresses –

JOY TRAPNELL

Oh because it all got put into storage while you were in the tent.

BETTY TOYOTA

Yeah. And another thing somebody said was being a fat girl you need your sewing machine, bring your sewing machine.

KYLA FITZGERALD

You're not the only one. I've interviewed other families who brought – and not just portable ones, full-blown Singer Sewing machines.

BETTY TOYOTA

Yeah. That was ours. The single treadle.

JOY TRAPNELL

Oh my goodness!

BETTY TOYOTA

Brought that. Yeah. I think most people paid to bring their sewing machine.

JOY TRAPNELL

Oh wow.

BETTY TOYOTA

And that was the only thing. The others we sold everything. We sold everything and took the money.

JOY TRAPNELL

But you took blankets, sheets and towels and –

BETTY TOYOTA

Oh yeah. That we could manage. Just a few towels and blankets and just the ordinary dinnerware set. Brought all that. And that was it.