Matsushita, Shoichi

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MR. SHOICHI MATSUSHITA

April 25, 1972

Interview With Mr. Shoichi Matsushita; Born 1914; Canada; Steveston; Fishing; Farming; Exhibition Park; New Denver; Sanatorium Orderly; Pavilion (1953).

Interviewed by: Maya Koizumi

Oral History Project, Vancouver. Cultural Communities Series.

Interview no. 58, Tape no. 1 of 1, Tracks 1 & 2, Speed 3 3/4

Vancouver, Oral History Project, 1972

Interview No. 58, Tape No. 1, Track 1

Friend: Were most of the..the patients in the..in the sanitorium Japanese?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes.

Friend: They came from the various....

Mr. Matsushita: from...the time of the...evacuation..came from various location...some even came from Toronto.

Miss Koizumi: When..did..the sanitorium open?

Mr. Matsushita: Ah...1943...March 1943.

Miss Koizumi: And at..the first it was called sanitorium?

Mr. Matsushita: Japanese Sanitorium.

Miss Koizumi: Japanese Sanitorium. And they...

Mr. Matsushita: It was all for Japanese.

Miss Koizumi: How many people were...there?

Mr. Matsushita: When they...was..open..I believe somewhere around seventy-five....

Miss Koizumi: Oh..

Mr. Matsushita: ..patient...actually myself came from Vancouver...from 'Asting Park.

Miss Koizumi: You were...a patient.

Mr. Matsushita: Um-hum....

Miss Koizumi: Ah..would you tell me..Sir...explain about you at that time...like..how you were put in...

Mr. Matsushita: Actually I started work in 'Asting Park as a carpenter.. and then...on..to the exact..I cannot forget..on July 24th..I came down with haemorrage..and I was...put in the...

Miss Koizumi: That was..'42?

Mr. Matsushita: '42..yes...and I was in...hospitalized in 'Asting Park..

in a horse stall...(Laughing)..which they made into a T.B...hospital.

Miss Koizumi: How was the conditions?

Mr. Matsushita: (Chuckles) The condition...wasn't very good..in the summertime was really hot..and naturally...

..it was built over the..place where it was..horse stall and..well.. actually the Agriculture Building in 'Asting Park...and..the floor was cement so they put a board floor on it..just a board floor..and you can just imagine in the summertime when the sun hits the cement building.. it can get really hot.

Miss Koizumi: And..about how many people were there?

Mr. Matsushita: Well.....there must have been quite a few..at the time when we..moved...from there..there were around seventy-five patients.

Miss Koizumi: Ah..did...these people come from Vancouver...the people in at..'Asting...

Mr. Matsushita: At first we came from Vancouver...most the people had.. moved from 'Asting Park...that's why they built this place..for the T.B. patient from Vancouver.

Friend: Did..did..did the conditions of the..of the camps... was that responsible for the...for the people getting T.B?

Mr. Matsushita: How do you mean? Well..actually..I surmise your question as..did the condition of the camp made them sick...well..I don't think so..these were brought in from Vancouver because some... the Japanese..they more or less hid the..T.B. patient at home...

Miss Koizumi: Umm.

Mr. Matsushita: ..but like..some of my..shall I say brother....my brother and sister had T.B. before evacuation...and..perhaps you might.. have heard..there was a St. Joseph Hospital on..on Columbia Avenue in Vancouver..was it..yeah..somewhere around there...Catholic Hospital...

Friend: Campbell Avenue.

Mr. Matsushita: Campbell Avenue..pardon me...that's where the Japanese T.B. patient..were..taken to..and hospitalized there...what they call.. used to call Oriental Hospital....more or less like a Chinese..Hindu.. and Japanese...

Friend: Was that a government...a government hospital or..?

Mr. Matsushita: Well more or less...the government supported that...it I Believe was a Catholic hospital.

Friend: And was that..was that before the war?

Mr. Matsushita: Before the war..just before...my..brother and sister got ....actually my father died with T.B...and we were so..more or less.. taken by a public health nurse..to have our chest X-Ray..at Willows clinics..and...that's how we were found out that we had T.B...actually I didn't have it....not then...but after the evacuation I forced myself and..haemorraged in 'Asting Park....

Friend: Was it a....

Mr. Matsushita: ..pretty near died!

Friend: Was it a common disease...was it common...among the other Canadians too?

Mr. Matsushita: I wouldn't say it's a common..but I'd say the..the living condition of the Japanese..was more or less...account for the.. number of T.B....cases....and..at the time..evacuation the medicine hadn't advanced that much..so..actually perhaps I'm to say that..well..at least fifty percent died! (Some mumbling in background)....in fact my brother had to go through a operation..what they call ...taking the ribs out...

Miss Koizumi: Umm....

Mr. Matsushita: And that...even at that time..fifty percent died..of that operation...and my brother was so worried..he...he just found out

at the hospital one night!

Miss Koizumi: Is that right!..and then he...how was he?

Mr. Matsushita: Well the...fortunately..you know..he had the operation and he came through...and he's well and..working at Pearson Hospital in Vancouver.

Friend: Do..do you mean to say that before the war they had... kind of segregated hospital facilities for....

Mr. Matsushita: Yes...

Friend: ..for..for..

Mr. Matsushita: ..that's true.

Friend: ...Oriental people?

Mr. Matsushita: Orientals.

Friend: Is that so?!

Mr. Matsushita: With T.B...especially with T.B.

Friend: And even..Canadians of Oriental descent..were...

Mr. Matsushita: Yes, that's true..well actually I'm a Canadian of....

Friend: That's...that's...

Mr. Matsushita: ..Oriental descent.

Friend: ..that's what I meant! That...That's amazing!

Mr. Matsushita: That was the..worst part..it hit us..because...I myself.. as a..my face is Japanese but I..I have never been taught the Japanese education..nor have I seen his land.

Miss Koizumi: You didn't go to Japanese school...

Mr. Matsushita: No..because my father..was more open-minded to be a Canadian.

Miss Koizumi: Umm.

Mr. Matsushita: He said..if you're gonna live here..you don't need Japanese.

Miss Koizumi: Umm.

Mr. Matsushita: So..I wasn't sent to Japanese school...and then after.. my younger..brother and sister...they start to Japanese school...

Miss Koizumi: Oh.

Mr. Matsushita: ..but myself..actually myself..no...and then the..surprising part..when my eldest sister was going to school..actually..half.. was Japanese..going to Japanese school..half to a Canadian school learning English...

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: Was half and half.

Miss Koizumi: So..anyway..from Hasting..Pa...Park...when did you come to...New Denver?

Mr. Matsushita: We came on the special train.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: Just...Japanese patient..we left..I believe we left... either 29th or 28th of March and came here on the 30th..which I cannot forget..March 30th..New Denver.

Miss Koizumi: How was New Denver when you first stopped..how did you feel?

Mr. Matsushita: Well..actually perhaps you might feel now..that the mountains seem to sort of hem you in..and the people were still..well.. actually..still some was anti-Japanese..

Miss Koizumi: Umm.

Mr. Matsushita: They wouldn't allow...

Miss Koizumi: Mmm..

Mr. Matsushita: ...a little town just..three miles from here..perhaps you haven't seen..there we had..notice..signboard..halfway on the highway here..."No Japanese Allowed Here"...on this sign!

Miss Koizumi: Mmm.

Friend: Is that so....and could they enforce that?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes, they enforced that all right...on the other hand..we were discriminate by our own people too...

Miss Koizumi: Um..what would they....?

Mr. Matsushita: Here the bath-house....some of the people who were the staff in the San..were a little..more or less discriminate from one...bath-house..by their own people..Japanese...

Friend: Because..because they thought they had..

Mr. Matsushita: T.B.

Friend: ..T.B.

Miss Koizumi: Were there..many Japanese...when you came..or later?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..the...the winter before they came here.... some /around ..October..November...there were quite a number of Japanese came here...in 1942..before we came.....it's a sad part...this..disease at that time was still....not too well known and they were afraid.. of the Japanese....perhaps....same in Japan...in olden days...they.. shunned the T.B. didn't they?

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: Yes...

Miss Koizumi: Did you have doctors and nurses?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..there were one Japanese..doctor..and..I believe.. for one of the Japanese nurse worked in the San. and the..and the nurses' aides..what they call nurses' aides..Japanese nurses' aides worked..and.. perhaps on shift there was one Occidental nurse.

Miss Koizumi: What kind of treatment did you have?

Mr. Matsushita: Well actually..myself..never had any treatment..but the first...I believe..was...either the pencillin or the streptomicin came out..'course..at that time it was quite expensive.

Miss Koizumi: Like some people are light.....you know, some people..

Mr. Matsushita: Light yes..yeah..some....

Miss Koizumi: ...not as light as some people...and..did you have all those...

Mr. Matsushita: Separately...no..it was just one open ward and..then the middle ward there had about four patient..that's what they call a sunroom..like..and then they had sun-porch...in the summertime..because it /wasn't heated..they couldn't take the patient out in the wintertime.

Miss Koizumi: There's no heat in the hospital?

Mr. Matsushita: Inside there were..but the sun-porch there wouldn't... be heat.

Miss Koizumi: So how..how long you were patient?

Mr. Matsushita: I myself....was hospitalized for about..eleven months... and I've been working ever since...ever since June 1st, 1943.

Friend: How many percent of the patients did you say died?

Mr. Matsushita: Well..I couldn't say that..I didn't mention how many percent..but...oh a number of them died...yes..but...well..I'd say a number of them got well enough to travel to Toronto....in fact..my sister.. I believe two of them...was cured..not exactly...well I could say cured.. and well enough to work....

Miss Koizumi: And they..they had meals and everything there...everything provided?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..they had the kitchen..facility and they...the cook..Japanese cook and..the meals..supplied.

Miss Koizumi: How..did you..did you think that the..the hospital was good enough or...that..lots of patient wanted something...things...?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh no..I believe we enjoyed it! (Laughing)

Miss Koizumi: How about..did you have some kind of entertainment?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..we grouped ourselves together like..staff and.. put on a Christmas party and..in fact I remember I had to be a Santa Claus! (Whole group laughs)

Miss Koizumi: So you became a Santa Claus?

Mr. Matsushita: Aaahh.....and then we....we sponsored a dance here too...once or twice....that was after people started to know..each other well enough to trust one another.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Friend: When..when did you get married...did you get married after that or were you married before...(Some laughing here)..before.. before you went into that...sanitorium?

Mr. Matsushita: No..I don't mean that...I have to ask my wife to...

(Laughter from group)

Friend: When did he get married! (More group laughter)

Miss Koizumi: So how..by that time..like in two or three years when.. was good feeling between all the people in....?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes...ummm...they start to understand one another/I think at first....it..it was hostile...(Chuckling)..in fact..we were so mad that I was...able to..what they call..used to have outside exercise..when we got better..so we used to parade around with..pyjama top on..... Laughter)..then the...poor children..I s'pose their parents musta...(thank-you)..warned them..'if you see such-and-such a..clothing worn then..to run away from them'...(chuckling)

Miss Koizumi: But didn't some patients have a family in .....?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes...they did..but they were shunned like..you know.. at first..but there wasn't...but sort of..as time went on..seemed to cool down...

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum. Did..different patients keep coming in, or..?

Mr. Matsushita Yes....the sad part..some died and some came in and some got out....

Miss Koizumi: Umm.

Mr. Matsushita: ...got better.

Miss Koizumi: And then..other patients...you said some came from exhibition

Mr. Matsushita: Toronto...

Miss Koizumi: ..Park..some came from...

Mr. Matsushita: ..like from...Kaslo or..Slocan.....

Friend: Who ran the hospital...was it....

Mr. Matsushita: The government.

Friend: ..subsidized..by the government?

Mr. Matsushita: Government.

Friend: Um-hum...but all doctors were..Japanese?

Mr. Matsushita; No....

Friend: They were Canadian?

Mr. Matsushita: ...there was one..one doctor here is Japanese and... there were...I believe at that time..I think one Occidental doctor.... and any patient that need...specialized care..some of them went to Vancouver...and I believe./some let's see...towards the end..was it Dr. Massey.. used to be the doctor that used to come in here to the San...

Friend; ?

Mr. Matsushita: Or from Nelson...did any patient go to Nelson?

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes.

Mr. Matsushita: Trail too sometimes.

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes..uh-huh....

Miss Koizumi: For operation?

Mr. Matsushita: For operations like..

Friend: ?

Mr. Matsushita: ? went to Vancouver didn't it?

Mrs. Matsushita: Wasn't it the one you took....oh yeah...

Mr. Matsushita: To take the ribs out and..put the ...

Mrs. Matsushita: Well some..some was done in Nelson.

Mr. Matsushita: Was it done in Nelson?

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah..he came back with a sandbag...

Mr. Matsushita: Bags..yeah..

Mrs. Matsushita: weight under lung..chest...

Miss Koizumi: Did...to..Vancouver..they went by train or...

Mr. Matsushita: Mostly by train, yes...with attendant..I believe I went once too..didn't I?

Mrs. Matsushita: I went...

Mr. Matsushita: You went.

Mrs. Matsushita: No I just went to..pick up a patient.

Mr. Matsushita: Pick up a patient.

Miss Koizumi: From New Denver?

Mrs. Matsushita: No from Vancouver....

Mr. Matsushita: Vancouver..coming back.

Mrs. Matsushita: ...back to New Denver.

Miss Koizumi: ..to New Denver..by train all the way?

Mrs. Matsushita: Uh-huh...

Mr. Matsushita: No the train came to South Slocan.

Miss Koizumi: Oh.

Mr. Matsushita: And I used to drive the ambulance..I used to go and meet them.

Miss Koizumi: And..oh..Mrs. Matsushita a nurse?

Mr. Matsushita: Nurse's aide.

Mrs. Matsushita: Nurse's aide.

Miss Koizumi: Nurse's aide..and you started working when the..sanitorium opened?

Mrs. Matsushita: No..1944..January...I came from Slocan.

Mr. Matsushita: It's about a year after.

Miss Koizumi: Oh.

Mrs. Matsushita: The sanitorium opened in..end of Ap..March.

Friend: '43.

Mr. Matsushita: Yeah.

Mrs. Matsushita: '43.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum...Is that how..how you met?

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes. (Laughter) (Group all talking together)..he was a..he was working then.

Miss Koizumi: Oh then.....(more laughter)...he was all...already working.

Mr. Matsushita: As I said June 1943..we came here in March '43..but I started working....

Friend: Thank-you..(unrelated to conversation)

Miss Koizumi: What..what kind of work you did in the hospital?

Mr. Matsushita: At first...what they call orderlies...carrying bedpans.. (group laughter)...

Miss Koizumi: Was it a hard job?

Mr. Matsushita: No..that's why.....oh no...what is the word....re-habitation like...

Miss Koizumi: Mmm...how..how many are nurse aides and..people working..?

Mr. Matsushita: Quite a few down there...quite a few.....they even have the nurse's aides' residence..here..which housed about..two..four.. six..eight...about ten.?..ten nurse's aide in one building there?

Mrs. Matsushita: It started with eight..and then...ah...

Mr. Matsushita: They added another porch and...

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah..

Mr. Matsushita: ..and...

Mrs. Matsushita: ..two..I'd say there was about twelve...

Mr. Matsushita: ..twelve....

Mrs. Matsushita: ...nearly fifteen...

Miss Koizumi: How..

Friend: When..when..a Japanese person got a job as a nurse's aide or an orderly or something..in the..in the hospital..would they be paid the regular wage..or would they..would they get a..a small wage.. or..?

Mrs. Matsushita: No.

Mr. Matsushita: Not by any means..it was just as..what shall I say.. just a small renumeration is it? It's not a wage...

Friend: Just a token?

Mr. Matsushita: A token..like we..more or less..somewhere around thirty-seven dollar a month...'course we had the little shack to live in..or the nurse's aide home..and...

Mrs. Matsushita: And the meal was included.

Mr. Matsushita: Included in that..

Mrs. Matsushita: A nurse's aide start with...twenty-eight dollar a month..probation for six months...and then your wages went up to thirty-five dollar...

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Friend: What about people that lived in the..in the..in the orchard and so on that didn't work..that..that couldn't..couldn't get work..did..would...did they..make out anyway?

Mr. Matsushita: They sort of got...they didn't call that minters, did they...

Mrs. Matsushita: Welfare.

Mr. Matsushita: ..welfare...

Mrs. Matsushita: That'd be through..B.C. Security Commission office was here

Friend: Ah..that's right..yes.

Mrs. Matsushita: Everything was under B.C. Security Commission during the war time.

Miss Koizumi: How...what kind of things they were given or..were they

given by..by..things or..or money..on welfare?

Mr. Matsushita: It was by money wasn't it? Only...

Friend:

Mr. Matsushita: ..their firewood was provided...

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum..so like house...

Mr. Matsushita: House and..

Miss Koizumi: ...firewood..

Mr. Matsushita: Firewood was provided...

Miss Koizumi: Water and light?

Mrs. Matsushita: Light..

Mr. Matsushita: Water was outside..tap which had..between the six houses I believe..there's one tap.

Mrs. Matsushita: Was it six..I thought it was three..

Friend: Six..

Mr. Matsushita: And no sink inside...

Mrs. Matsushita: No.

Miss Koizumi: No sink...

Mrs. Matsushita: Outside.

Mr. Matsushita: And gradually people just in the..waterpipe.. and..the sink too..but..at first..there were no sink in the house..

Miss Koizumi: So..you had to cook outside?

Mrs. Matsushita: No..the stove..

Mr. Matsushita: You had to go out and wash..

Mrs. Matsushita: ...was...

Mr. Matsushita: ..rice outside..wash your clothing outside and... that is more or less in the summertime..you had to wash clothing in there..inside somehow...

Miss Koizumi: There's no creek or anything that people can go wash..

Mrs. Marsushita: Well..they went..

Mr. Matsushita: There's a creek but...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...down to the lake...

Mr. Matsushita: ..to the lake....

..they went to the lake..

Mrs. Matsushita: ..there is there because..you know..when there's so many...people have to use one tap..and if you had children's thing..naturally you have more washing to do so they...

Friend: Must have been hard for..during the winter time.

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh..well....

Mr. Matsushita: Then...you know how Japanese old folks are..you don't want to wash undies in the same sink..what you wash the rice..in..

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah...um-hum..

Mr. Matsushita: ..outside..so you have to go somewhere...

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Friend: So like..how long did it last like..using one tub.. for instance...one ...one whole year or....

Mrs. Matsushita: Well..we still did it in '47....

Mr. Matsushita: Now..wh..when did they...we..more or less have the waterpipe....that was after we moved the house...we....

Mrs. Matsushita: It's after the house because we still had..

Mr. Matsushita: We moved...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...when we moved....

Mr. Matsushita: ..outside taps...

Mrs. Matsushita: ..to this house from another place in '47 there was tap outside...they didn't have any...water.

Mr. Matsushita: Very..few people who were..able to get a waterpipe.. that's by just..without consent..and they dug their...underground and put the water in it..into their house but..not all people..very few who

Friend: Could..could you get into trouble for doing something like that..I mean....were..were there a lot of rules and regulations....

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yeah..but..

Friend: but..some of them you could....

Mr. Matsushita: ...you know how it is..doesn't matter where you go.. the people who have the privilege..they do it.....

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: ..regardless of what people say.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Miss Koizumi: So..

Mr. Matsushita: That's what I....um-hum...privileged people..yes....so.. on that other hand...lot o' people....tried to complain but it wouldn't do any good.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum..what kind of people had privilege?

Mr. Matsushita: The people who used to work like in office..or people who used to be a plumber.....like so...

Mrs. Matsushita: Electrician?

Mr. Matsushita: Electrician...

Miss Koizumi: Oh I see.

Friend: Well the plumbers would have the pipe and...(Group laugher)

Mr. Matsushita: Pipe..yes! (Laughing) And then if you're a good friend to them..well....(More laughter)... a little bit like this..eh....

Friend: What..what about travel restrictions..like..could you go see your friend in Kaslo..or....

Mr. Matsushita: You had to ask.....

Friend: ....or down in Slocan?

Mr. Matsushita: ...first...you had to get a permit to travel.

Friend: I see.

Miss Koizumi: Was it hard to..get it?

Mr. Matsushita: No..not exactly..was it?

Mrs. Matsushita: I don't know...the only time I travelled fr.....was from Slocan to here when I got the work..that was the first travelling I ever...you know..did....since '42..I stayed in Slocan....

Mr. Matsushita: Perhaps about..year or so it was quite strict

Mrs. Matsushita: (Talking overlapping) ...and ..'44....the...first time I travelled.

Miss Koizumi:

Mr. Matsushita: Yeah..even when we..went on the honeymoon we had to... (Laughter)...

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh yes..permit...permit and everything!...to Nelson.

Mr. Matsushita: That was what year?

Mrs. Matsushita: '45.

Mr. Matsushita: '45.....

Friend: When you went outside here..this community..were you met with a lot of prejudice like..the other..Canadians...sort of give you dirty look?

Mr. Matsushita: Well we didn't feel that way..we just ignored them and they ignored us I guess.

Miss Koizumi: Was there any communication between white people and... Japanese people..in New Denver.....did....

Mr. Matsushita: Well..in New Denver it wasn't too bad...because we just go to store and...then at times...there was a little...dance party..that was so...we got together all right.

Miss Koizumi: What kind of dance.... ....you had dance party at where?

Mr. Matsushita: At Bosun Hall...there's a little hall...

Miss Koizumi: Community hall....uh-huh.

Friend: What..the...the...the restriction/on Japanese continued after the war was over...is that so? For....a year or so?

Mrs. Matsushita: Well.....

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..the war was over..what..in '45?

Mrs. Matsushita: '45..almost.....

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..there...there was still....

Mrs. Matsushita: ...still...

Mr. Matsushita: ..restriction...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...because your brother went out...and I think that was '49...that was..he was able to go out to the Coast....

Mr. Matsushita: Well actually he wasn't permitted to go but he went anyway! (Laughing)

Mrs. Matsushita: No he was able to go...

Mr. Matsushita: No..not when Takeshi / went out.

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh..I thought he was..'48.

Mr. Matsushita: That's why he couldn't get into fishing..so..I don't know how he went about but he got this..Chinese friend..somehow..and.. started....ahh...dishwashing..work..somewhere..and then some time after that..maybe half a year or so after that..he got into fishing..and even then...

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh yes!

Mr. Matsushita: ...some of the Occidental really sort of..discriminated.. my brother..they even threatened him by..pulling the boat around...

Friend: Is that so...

Mrs. Matsushita: That's right..um-hum...

Friend: That was..that was four years after the war was over... or....

Mrs. Matsushita: Was 1950....

Friend: ...three years..

Mrs. Matsushita: ..beginning of it..because..I was down there in 1950 February and I went to see him.

Miss Koizumi: During the war...did Japanese children go to school.. in New Denver?

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh yes....

Mr. Matsushita: They had their own school...

Mrs. Matsushita: ..they.....

Mr. Matsushita: ...back in the orchard... here

Mrs. Matsushita: ...yes...

Mr. Matsushita: ..here...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...orchard...

Miss Koizumi: Oh in orchard.

Mr. Matsushita: ..with..Japanese girl teaching..some of the high school girl.....ah...

Mrs. Matsushita: Graduates.

Mr. Matsushita: Mrs. Hide Shimizu was here was it?...

Mrs. Matsushita: She... was Miss Hide Hyodo

Mr. Matsushita: ..sort of..organized the school wasn't she?

Mrs. Matsushita: She did..sort of.

Mr. Matsushita: Um-hum..she's in Toronto now./now..married to a minister and she's widowed now... Late Doctor, Reverend K. Shimizu

Mrs. Matsushita: Mrs. Hide Shimizu

Miss Koizumi: So they had a..school for Japanese children?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..and they up a school board.

Miss Koizumi: And everything was....

Mrs. Matsushita: Relocated center..they all had...

Mr. Matsushita: Each...location had a school...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...school....

Mr. Matsushita:

Mrs. Matsushita: ...for the Japanese children.

Friend: Was it..was it in....the instruction in Japanese..or..?

Mrs. Matsushita: No..no..no..no..

Mr. Matsushita: No..no...English....

Mrs. Matsushita: English.

Mr. Matsushita: All they got English...and then..some them..had... their own religion..like Catholic...had their own high school....I think the....

Mrs. Matsushita: United Church...

Mr. Matsushita: ...about the elementary school...the missionary took over.

Mrs. Matsushita: The high school...

Mr. Matsushita: ..And the United Church had their own United Church High School.

Miss Koizumi: Oh..did it..even..go...

Mr. Matsushita: I think it was after the evacuation more or less....

Mrs. Matsushita: After the war..you see..she didn't start until '52 so..

Mr. Matsushita: So..went to..ordinary public school..

Mrs. Matsushita: And then they build..elementary school.

Miss Koizumi: So this..Japanese school finished at the end of the war..at '54?

Mrs. Matsushita: Aahh...

Miss Koizumi: More or less...or before?

Mrs. Matsushita: ...forty.....'48..I guess...

Mr. Matsushita: Some time after the war anyway.

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes..um-hum.

Miss Koizumi: How...how...was the..housing..and things?

Friend: You we...you were telling us about..about the..you

just began to tell us about the..condition....

Mr. Matsushita: How cold the house was! (Chuckling)

Friend: ..when you first moved in to the camp....did you come in with your family..like..was your mother and father and so on....

Mrs. Matsushita: Ah..well...

Friend: ...with..the family too..or...?

Mrs. Matsushita: ...you see....I...was..since six years old I was with my grandparents in Vancouver...and my family was out in Haney...and... every family was listed..like Haney..they had..they had a very short notice...come in to..this Ha...Ha...Hasting Park..pull-in for Japanese.. so they..just had..few things..their belongings..clothing..and..so many pounds per person..of their belongings because..I mean..they couldn't bring everything.

Friend: Do you remember about how many pounds were you allowed?

Mrs. Matsushita: I can't quite remember.

Mr. Matsushita: Yeah..about..the grown-up..150 pound..and children..75 pound.

Friend: Mmm...

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah.

Friend; ..and..how short a notice...

Mrs. Matsushita: Ah...well...they'll say we...you know..they be..moving out..but then..of course they won't say definately..they'll say this month or so and then towards the end they'll say..you'll have..everybody in a certain district has to be evacuated in..such and such a date..maybe week or ten days ahead....but sometime it'd be..two or three weeks...and then sometime there's a delay..and then you think..well..maybe you be still home for another week and then all of a sudden you just get about three or four days notice..and you have to.....you know...

Friend: So you went out with your..with your family or with

your grandparents?

Mrs. Matsushita: No..well..you see...I...being a family and I was single then..they still register my name under the family and I was living in Vancouver...so I didn't get the notice at all..and my...grandparents got the notice because he was an invalid..for many many years and through the doctor..the special train with a..patient..was gonna go on...so that was..and...I think it either was 27th or 28th of October..and I asked the R.C.M.P. that..when would I be going and he said."well..your name was listed under family..you should have been in Slocan the middle of September".and I said..I never got any notice..so they put me on... register me together with my grandparents and we get evacuated and then the Hasting Park..there's some strike on..we got the notice Thursday afternoon...and we had to move out on Monday..and the..the man that was moving...transferring your goods were on st...strike..so we had to get our own men to do it...and Friday...was the only day because Saturday wasn't any..any....so we just had..with a Sunday in between and Monday.. leaving Monday we really..had to do things quickly....

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mrs. Matsushita: ..such a short notice..Thursday afternoon and we had to move out Fr...Monday morning.

Friend: And so what...what were things like when you moved into.. into the camp?

Mrs. Matsushita: Ah..well..with my grandfather..being an invalid..first we're going together and then said "oh no..he's going into the hospital".. and he didn't want to come to New Denver so we..went into the bunk house because..it was build and there was a room available because there wasn't any houses..I mean..people were evacuating so many at one time and the building wasn't going as fastly as people were coming in...like my parents was in..Slocan...Popov...middle of September and they didn't..get into

the house.. day farm... until some time in November.

Friend: Wow. So what..were they just camped there then?

Mrs. Matsushita: Well..just..they lived in tents..and..used to have their meals at mess house..they had two big mess houses and....

Friend: I see....so how long were you in..in Hastings Camp before you moved out?

Mrs. Matsushita: I wasn't in Hastings Camp...

Friend: Oh... Oh, I see.

Mrs. Matsushita: ..I was working until the last day...Thursday..I came out..Thursday being my day off..I came down to my grandfather..and grandmothers and then the R.C.M.P. came a little after and says..."well..you.. in the next lot to move because Monday was the day that..the train had space for patients.

Friend: I see..so you got on the train and..was all..was the train full of Japanese..or was it...

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh yes..oh yes..there was a.....

Friend: ..there was a special Japanese train?

Mrs. Matsushita: ...special train...um-hum.

Friend: I see.

Mrs. Matsushita: The front train was one..the whole coach was for patient and..was board and mattress put on so..instead of sitting up all night....

Friend: And..then..then you got off at..South Slocan and..then you came up here?

Mrs. Matsushita: No we came right into Slocan City.

Friend: Oh..right.

Mrs. Matsushita: Uh-huh.

Friend: I see.

Miss Koizumi: So....did you work in Slocan?

Mrs. Matsushita: No..I applied soon as I..but..there was no work available because there was so many....

Miss Koizumi: Mmm...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...ahead and you had to wait...and there's..the first opening was the sanitorium nurse's aide work...

Friend: Were..were..were conditions pretty grim in..in Slocan when you came into there at first?

Mrs. Matsushita: Well...seeing that we were in a bunk house...that was already..you know..built and...it wasn't as bad as...individual homes that were just built like my mother and father 'cause the lumber was green and...was really..and the wood was green to burn..you had to heat it in the oven to try and get it dry in the middle of the winter so it would at least you know..feel that you...

Friend: When..when you say a bunk house..do that mean all women in one..or men in one..or everybody...

Mrs. Matsushita: No..family.

Friend: ..families..oh I see.

Mrs. Matsushita: Family..there was some family..and then there was some.. bunk for single..person...

Friend: I see.

Mrs. Matsushita: ..because...

Miss Koizumi: So..all the families are..

Mrs. Matsushita: Small family..you know..just two or three...

Miss Koizumi: Did families live alone?

Mrs. Matsushita: No..there were...I guess some there were..quite a few children too...they will have..two or three rooms.

Miss Koizumi: Could you choose the families that you live together?

Mrs. Matsushita: No..no...they'll say such and such a person..there was always...oh..looking after the camp...there's..you..you are with..to go

there..and stay there.

Friend: How was the feeling like..must have been really confused situation.

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh...

Friend: How was the general feeling of the people that....

Mrs. Matsushita: Well..you know..strange people..it's not all your /they friends or anybody that you knew before..it's totally..strangers that..

Miss Koizumi: And..especially if you had to live in the same...

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: ..house.

Mrs. Matsushita: Especially cooking too.

Miss Koizumi: Cooking.

Mrs. Matsushita: Uh-huh.

Mr. Matsushita: Fights and...misunderstanding..(Chuckles)

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh yeah.

Miss Koizumi: What kind of cooking facilities did you have?

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh....

Miss Koizumi: ...like a stove...cooking stove...

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah..well I was..like the bunk house had a big range.. but the individual had a small..what would you call it..camp stove or something?

Mr. Matsushita: Camp stove.

Friend; ..ordinary..just get...

Mrs. Matsushita: ..plain wood...was....

Miss Koizumi: And then..all the families had to use that camp stove?

Mrs. Matsushita: Well..if you were like..a big family and had one large house it'd be all right..but if there were only..three or four or something..you would have to share that one stove..the two family would have to share the..one stove with one another.

Friend: So you'd be put..maybe put three families..three small families into a little house and you didn't know the family before. You..

Mrs. Matsushita: No.

Friend: You wouldn't know who on earth you....

Mr. Matsushita: No.

Friend: ...you were getting in with.

Miss Koizumi: How did..did you have separation between families in the..house..partition?

Mr. Matsushita: Not at first.

End of Track 1

Interview No. 58; Tape 1, Track 2

Friend: language now..were..would people be talking Japanese all the time..or would..one would talk one Japanese....

Mr. Matsushita: That's true.....

Friend: ..dialect and one talk another Japanese dialect?

Mr. Matsushita: ..that...had an awful time understanding one another.. (Laughter ...group laughing and talking together)

Friend: ... ...it'd be impossible! (More laughter)

Mr. Matsushita: Well it's like the...um...shall I say..English people all....have the different dialects..Scotch has a different...but the Japanese sometime..it really..(break in tape)

Mrs. Matsushita: They cut their language really short...the words...

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes..you know..it's just like..half..and then you have to sorta' concentrate and think 'cause you don't understand it.

Friend: Well, so..after a while..say after two years or so of everybody being mixed together..would there be a kind of common dialect built up..or would...or would people start...learning the other person's dialect..or...

Mr. Matsushita: Well....we gradually...start to understand....the different family but...dialect doesn't change today very much..

Mrs. Matsushita: Of course they....

Mr. Matsushita: ...once you're born with it...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...understand it...

Friend: ...Oh yes...

Mr. Matsushita: ...it's always stay.

Friend: Um-hum.

Miss Koizumi: Like..mo....most/ of you... you spoke Japanese in that...when you lived in the house?

Mrs. Matsushita: With the..older people..but like....

Mr. Matsushita: Younger generation....

Mrs. Matsushita: ..children would be all English.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Friend: Mats...Mr. Matsushita, you..you say that.. you're Canadian...you're second generation aren't you?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes...not exactly....

Friend: You .....

Mr. Matsushita: ..my mother...well I can only say first generation because...my parents were first generation...

Friend: Um-hum....and..you..you'd be a second?

Mr. Matsushita: Second generation, yes.

Friend: But you had a Canadian citizenship?

Mr. Matsushita: Well actually born...

Mr. Matsushita: ...don't need to take out a born Canadian.

Friend: Right...um-hum..(Chorus of 'um-hums from background).. but they picked up everybody who looked Japanese?

Mr. Matsushita: That's true.

Mrs. Matsushita: Right.

Friend: Or Asian?

Mrs. Matsushita: Just Japanese.

Mr. Matsushita: It made no difference whether they the third generation or first generation....

Friend: What...what if a person were half-Japanese....I mean.. say...

Mr. Matsushita: They were picked up too...some of them had occidental wife and still they had to move...

Friend: Did...

Miss Koizumi: Did the wives

Friend: ...did the occidental wife...

Mrs. Matsushita: No...no...

Mr. Matsushita: No..some of the wives...

Mrs. Matsushita: Separated...

Mr. Matsushita: ..they would move out! (Laughing)

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah....but if it's the other way around..a girl married to a Canadian..well..she could....

Miss Koizumi: Oh she didn't have to...

Mrs. Matsushita: No.

Miss Koizumi: ...camps?

Mrs. Matsushita: No..for that case.

Friend: Male....

Miss Koizumi: Did..many people marry to...white people?

Friend: Female discrimination.

Mr. Matsushita: Not too many at that time.

Mrs. Matsushita: No, not many.

Mr. Matsushita: Now they're more or less.....

Friend: You mean...the girl..Japanese girl married to...Canadian man....

Mrs. Matsushita: Uh-huh.

Friend: ...she didn't have to come?

Mrs. Matsushita: No.

Friend: How about the Japanese man...married to Canadian girl?

Friend: No..no.

Mrs. Matsushita: The men had to...come.

Mr. Matsushita: Move...

Friend: ...wife...wife didn't have...

Mrs. Matsushita: No.

Miss Koizumi: So there are some...tragedies

Mr. Matsushita: Umm..

Miss Koizumi:

Friend: They didn't do the...Germans, did they? Italians.....

Mr. Matsushita: No..not even the Italian.....some of the national German and Italians stayed...'course they had to report that way.

Friend: What about..now..now...you people came from the Coast...

Mr. Matsushita: Yes.

Friend: ...what about Japanese that had settled in the interior or Japanese that had settled....in the prairies or something like that... wer...would th..was their treatment different..or was..was it the same?

Mr. Matsushita: I think at the time of the war they were all treated almost the same regardless how far..inland they were.....Japanese were still Japanese.

Friend: They had to move...

Mr. Matsushita: But perhaps as you said...might have been..different treatment..I don't know.....actually they moved the Japanese..what..hundred miles from the Coast....

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mrs Matsushita: Hundred.

Mr. Matsushita: Well, the coastline is....

Mrs. Matsushita: Coastline..hundred...

Mr. Matsushita: ...hundred.....

Mrs. Matsushita: ...oh yes..hundred...

Mr. Matsushita: ...coastline is hundred....

Mrs. Matsushita: ...um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: And some did..live in the interior and I don't know what..for what reason they move out to the Coast and then they'd ship

back (Chuckling)....they came into the interior.....well..who was it.. they used to live in Kamloops and they..got out to the Coast and they had to come back.....some Japanese family...and then again..if a family had a....they were working people...that were suited for the beet farm.. they were given the privilege to go to the Alberta beet farm and some, perhaps..Ontario..beet farm too..but..without father and..more girls in the family...couldn't afford to go...on the beet farm.

Friend: Was that..was that a better life..out on the beet farm that here or not?

Mr. Matsushita: Well as to that I couldn't say because I haven't been 'round to the beet farm but..some did well enough and some suffered.... the terrible..

Mrs. Matsushita: If they had....man and boys in the family...I ha...I haven't been in Alberta but I had...you know..first was really hard to settle down but once they settled down..it was easy..but if there was just father or if he had a lot of little..girls..children..they..really was hard.

Mr. Matsushita: They couldn't make it....

Friend: I see...because they didn't get..they didn't get...their.. support there..they had to make...make their own living by

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..they work...

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum...by work and....

Friend: Whereas here..you...you got food whether...whether you were working or not.

Mr. Matsushita: That's true.....true....like welfare...and then...another thing was..if the family here...moved here and had even a daughter...or a son working out somewhere....three years after we came here they tried to make them support the family here...actually my mother and sister...was in

Kaslo...and then when they moved down here my...one of my sisters start working at...welfare office...as a steno...and they sort of made her... pay for some of the food..like..the wages earned.

Miss Koizumi: So it wasn't completely welfare ?

Mr. Matsushita: No.

Miss Koizumi: So..the government tried to...

Mr. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Miss Koizumi: ...by letting people work...

Mr. Matsushita: ..work....yes....

Miss Koizumi: Were you able to get jobs...after you got job .....

Mr. Matsushita: No..in a town like this...very hard to get...job...the reason why I got my own job in my case...I started here as a orderly in the San. and kept working.

Miss Koizumi: Ah..did Japanese people work for the white people around this..this area?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes...like in the store....as some still doing....

Mrs. Matsushita: In the hospitals.

Mr. Matsushita: Hospitals...a nurse's aide....

Friend: How about..how about in the bush or in logging camps, or in mines or things like that?

Mr. Matsushita: I think....after quite a while they did work in the mines.....like Mr.Okau ...he was working in the mill....

Mrs. Matsushita: Um..mill..... mine....

Mr. Matsushita: Uh..Japanese didn't care to go underground....no experience...

Miss Koizumi: Mines...but...

Mr. Matsushita: But outside work around the mill...

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: And...some Japanese started their own sawmill like

Mr. Markham in....Slocan..

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum....um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: And there was Mr. Ono who used to have a little saw-mill here....that Mr. Ono you met that...

Friend: Could they do that during...during the war..they..they... they did that...or was that after the war?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh...sometime after the war ended...was it....but now.. time when there was a....still war going on.

Mrs. Matsushita: He went to Revelstoke when....

Mr. Matsushita: Revelstoke..was it.....anyway, they had...B.C. Security logging camp up at....Hills here...what they call Hunter's Siding...and the funny part is that they used to cut firewood and..ship it out to Vancouver....now it's a..(chuckling)..what shall I say...it's a farce, you know....they used to cut logs into four-foot firewood and..and ship it out to Vancouver on the train....

Friend: Who would...who would...who would use it in Vancouver?

Mr. Matsushita: Well I don't know....I think some stockpile got rotten somewhere in the yard...I think so...

Friend: You mean th...they were just to kind of make work....

Mr. Matsushita: Make work...

Friend: Oh yeah...

Mr. Matsushita: ...for the Japanese people.

Friend: Yeah.

Miss Koizumi: Was..were some Japanese people put in jail or something during the war....

Mr. Matsushita: Well...actually there was what you call...internment people...that came back here...few of them..and some were..not some..one was deported because...real Japanese...you know....

Miss Koizumi: That...he was nationalistic?

Mr. Matsushita: National..right..and...what is it...pro-Japanese?

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: And...

Friend: So he was deported after the war was he..or during the war..or...?

Mr. Matsushita: During the war..I believe.

Mrs. Matsushita: Repatriation

Mr. Matsushita: No...before that.

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh, before that...

Mr. Matsushita: Before that when they brought the San. patients from... Petawa or somewhere.

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh.....yes.....

Mr. Matsushita: Do you remember when....

Mrs. Matsushita: ...um-hum....

Mr. Matsushita: Wasn't in that group?

Miss Koizumi: What...what did he do after that.....

Mrs. Matsushita: ....no but.....

(Sounds of tea being had in background)

Mr. Matsushita: Anyway...was sometime...I'm sure it wasn't after the war.....

Friend: So..could have....

Mrs. Matsushita: Cold, isn't it? (Referring to the tea)

Friend: ..could it...could he be sent back to Japan during the war...I mean were there....was there channels....

Mr. Matsushita: Somehow they must have....

Friend: ...were there channels open....

Mr. Matsushita: ...um-hum....

Friend: ...where...where a person could get back?

Mr. Matsushita: Either got sent....sent away somewhere anyway.....

Friend: What...what about the re-patriation....after the war there were some kind of...re-patriation or.....

Mr. Matsushita: Yes....that was a real....not a..sort of..main events... they more or less...some of the people worked...for the government was in such a way that threatened people....they did bring out a program..you either go out East or go back to Japan.....so....

Friend: Is that so...you were told that you either had to go East....

Mr. Matsushita: Yes...we were interviewed...

Friend: ...or go back to Japan?

Mr. Matsushita: ..each one was interviewed..in fact my wife signed to go back to Japan.

Mrs. Matsushita: Because my grandparents wanted to go back. (Mr. Matsushita is chuckling at this)

Miss Koizumi: What did they say that.....was there anything good about going back?

Mr. Matsushita: I beg your pardon?

Miss Koizumi: They..how did...did they try to....

Mr. Matsushita: Well they...

Miss Koizumi: ...send you back?

Mr. Matsushita: ..tried to either..make you go out East...or go to Japan.

Miss Koizumi: Umm...

Friend: And that...

Mr. Matsushita: No choice.

Friend: ...that was after the war....eh?

Mrs. Matsushita: After the....

Mr. Matsushita: After the...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...the signing....

Mr. Matsushita: ...of the treaty.

Mrs. Matsushita: ..of August, 1945....

Mr. Matsushita: Um-hum...they wanted to...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...and it started that month..right away

Mr. Matsushita: They tried to close all the camps.

Friend: Why...do you think they didn't allow you to go back to Vancouver or something....why they tried to...discourage you to..go to East?

Mr. Matsushita: Move out to the Coast....discouragin'...the people not to go back to the Coast.....they more or less encouraged...to go out East... and most the Japanese fear..the uncertainty..of going out East..so...lot of them signed...just foolishly...to go back to Japan.....you know very well after the war...it's not going to be..easy to live in Japan....because as you know..well..you people came from Japan and we have heard that the....small country with such a big population.....and then...what would happen if I go to Japan..I don't know anything about Japan!

Friend: Not only that..you're living in the enemy country.

Mr. Matsushita: Yeah! So....with myself...I was pretty..bold enough to...say that I'm not going anywhere.....if you want to take me out, go ahead....so...all the people said...well...you watch out..tomorrow they'll come and get you...but I'm still here!

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.....so....

Friend: So..were any of them...sent out...out to the East..or.. and did any.....

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes.....well no..more or less....

Friend: ...were any of them sent back to Japan?

Mr. Matsushita: ...no choice...actually you can't say they sent you out.. you said you'll go...you signed for it.

Friend: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: So they went!

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes.

Friend: Where did they go?

Mr. Matsushita: Well...some went...well at that time..they made a provision that....the..Security Commission sent you out with so much of your baggage and...and your belongings so...

Friend: They paid....

Mr. Matsushita: ...lot of them....

Friend: ...your way there....?

Mr. Matsushita: ...yes..um-hum.

Friend: But what happened when you got there...I mean was there a job waiting for you..or...or..what?

Mr. Matsushita: I think some o' them did....

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes.

Mr. Matsushita: But some o' them...well..you know how it is...

Mrs. Matsushita: Well, you didn't know what you were getting into...you could go work on the farm, or..factory....girls...sewing...but you were hired but you...it's something new to you...

Friend: Um-hum...

Mrs. Matsushita: ...because you've never been that...

Friend: I met one lady in Toronto...whose first husband...here in the camps ...they were told to go East so they went all the way and they got a job working for the white...farmer../and then they got paid very very little...so husband had to work during the winter in a logging camp to support the family because like there were three children...and working as a farmer wasn't enough....so anyway they went to East to city again afterwards...and just last year her husband died..he was about eighty..because he was working all the time...and the wife was now seventy-something...and she was working as a maid for the...you know...

..white.... just families..that's the way she had to support her family..so probably most of the people got a job.....working for the white farmers... but paid very very little.....probably...do you think so?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes that's true at first..but then again..some..... family..was fortunate enough to get in the...well..better class of people...and then gettin' enough...more pay for it..and then..as you know...there's some of them..who had initiative enough to start something..done very well but it's not majority have done that.

Friend: A lot of the people must have felt intimidated by all that experience so that when they said...'either do this or do that'..they felt like they had to do it.

Mr. Matsushita: Well..that.....um...part of it...yes....

Miss Koizumi: So..going back to that....

Friend: Let...let's finish up about the repatriation. (Group laughs)....what...did people actually go back to Japan....then after the war?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes.....they really went....lots of them went..and they died too.....

Mrs. Matsushita: The older....

Mr. Matsushita: Not older people..like my friend..Enomoto....

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh yes.

Mr. Matsushita: ...it's sad...the man was much older than the wife...and only..two boys and about three of four girls in the family...they figured ...they're ...the farm so they went on the sugar beet farm..and...they couldn't....make it work on it and they suffered..so they decide to go back to Japan....well no sooner got back to Japan... malnutrition..they couldn't get enough to eat.....so..poor mother died.. then the father died.....but somehow..one o' the daughter..that stayed

here..was fortunate enough to have some money because she married some...Occidental man that's ...so they sent for the...younger sister and brothers and they brought them out...but...that's how it went.....

Miss Koizumi: So how did Mrs. Matsushita stop going back to Japan?

(Laughter from group)

Mrs. Matsushita: Well I married him! (More laughter)

Friend: When you si....so after you signed they didn't come and say...'you signed this..you have to go back.'...or anything like that?

Mr. Matsushita: Well...she was fortunate enough...one of the re-patriation ship was cancelled....(Whole group says: "Oh....")

Friend: Were there a number of ships...I mean...how many we...

Mr. Matsushita: I don't know how many are.....

Friend: .....were there a lot of people like that?

Mr. Matsushita: ...the last one was cancelled....

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah...the last one was cancelled.

Mr. Matsushita: ..cancelled...and some of the older folks were quite disappointed.....

Mrs. Matsushita: But we didn't want to go back.

Mr. Matsushita: ...they packed everything and...didn't get back..

Mrs. Matsushita: They came from the East...like..internment camp and they're willing to go back..to Japan...to live out the rest of their life.....

Friend: Would have been all right if they had family and so on back there....

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Friend: ...they'd have someplace to go.

Mr. Matsushita: Um-hum....be all right...

Mrs. Matsushita: Well...it was about time to come back..I was there... you remember too.....

Mr. Matsushita: Yes..

Mrs. Matsushita: ..there was nothing left there...

Mr. Matsushita: Nothing.

Mrs. Matsushita: ..there was no food..even.

Mr. Matsushita: But..some of the older folks..they were pro-Japanese.. their..never....never thought that in their mind....see..

Mrs. Matsushita: Well they still had..the same idea..thought...
..thought that
Mr. Matsushita: ../when they came up...

Mrs. Matsushita: ..that everything was the same...the way as it is when they came out...thirty..forty..fifty years...

Miss Koizumi: Was there a group of people who told other people that they should go back to Japan and things like that...that kind of... agitators or?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes..in..in a sort of way..

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh yes.

Mr. Matsushita: But..if you were sort of way..with your... such and such.....

Mrs. Matsushita: But besides you've been treated..you were born as a Canadian and you're being treated....

Mr. Matsushita: Well...what rights have I got....

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah..right!

Mr. Matsushita: ...when I go back to Japan?! I don't know any people who'll....but my father's...half brother's in Japan..but...what can I do... if I went to Japan? I know nothing...if I had a trade on my hand that's something..but being a fisherman.....so..there you are...but some people...what we'd call

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: ...said they want to go back Japan.

Miss Koizumi: Did you...did you think of going back to..B.C...to be a fisherman again?

Mr. Matsushita: No.....no...in the first place I didn't like fishing anyway....(Laughter in the group)

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: But...more or less with my...hels..(Health)

Mrs. Matsushita: Uh-huh.

Mr. Matsushita: ..I sought it over and...if I had to go through what I had been through..I might..got sick again.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: Not just eight hour job...the fishing..when the fish is running you can't even sleep! Otherwise....you'll never make enough money.

Friend: What did you do after you came out of the hospital?

Mr. Matsushita: Well actually...was sort of re-habitation..the nurse I had passed..the nurse had promised me no sooner when I get well enough.. I want to work in the hospital...so..I did start as what they call 'orderlies'...well..all right then..when the T.B. patient is getting treatment.. like..they have what they call..certain sleeping hours....well..when they're sleeping I can sleep too....I had a bed inside the same place..so it's.. more or less living in...inside the San. and working at the same time.... actually the rest hour was from eight....

Mrs. Matsushita: One...one

Mr. Matsushita: ..ten..or nine to ten..or ten to nine..ah..eleven or something.....and in.....

Mrs. Matsushita: Ten to eleven.

Mr. Matsushita: ..ten to eleven..and in the afternoon...

Mrs. Matsushita: One to three.

Mr. Matsushita: One to three...so actually you could rest while you're working.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.....and....

Mr. Matsushita: And I have worked ever since.....

Miss Koizumi: And then..when...did it stop become the Sanitorium?

Mrs. Matsushita: '52....April 1952.

Mr. Matsushita: '52 was it.....at that time they sent some of the patients of Pierson, didn't they?

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes.

Miss Koizumi: How many people...

Miss Koizumi: ...did...did the hospital have that time...in that..?

Mr. Matsushita: Very few.

Miss Koizumi: Oh, I see...the patients were all sent...

Mr. Matsushita: Yes...

Miss Koizumi: ..to different places?

Mr. Matsushita: ...they got well enough..some of them and some of them died and so....it wasn't necessary to have the place open..it was costing too much to run it.

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum....

Friend: And..and what happened to the..to the orchard in..in that time..after...after the war....um....did....now I...I...I take it that..that...that a lot of people owned their own...their own lots and their own houses and so on...did...when were they able to..to acquire those?

Mr. Matsushita: Well...what year was it..we decided...I was more or less a camp foreman..and...supervisor here was Mr. ....we sort of...started talk that..some of the Japanese who was here...is entitled to a piece of land so they can..make the place little better...and

liveable..and so...what year was that..when we decide to move the house.. or sub-divided the lot into a lot...before that it was all..just one whole place...wasn't sub-divided into a lot..we moved the house in.. that..thirteen years..was it?

Mrs. Matsushita: 19.....

Mr. Matsushita: '60?

Mrs. Matsushita: Fifty-ei....fifty-seven?...fifty...

Mr. Matsushita: Somewhere around then....we decide to ask the government...that...the Japanese...who /is here...get the privilege of owning their own piece of land.....so that came through...and..they decide to survey the land..and divide in...sub-divide into lot...which is..fifty by 135 feet....and then...that was all right..but we had to move each houses onto the lot because it wasn't squared off..and the houses was in all...places....so..we moved..and..put in the....and as you see... most the houses are in the rows now...but before that they was all over the place.....and...each family like..even...bachelor got one lot and house....we call it a house anyway..shack..

Friend: But..but say...um..did..did only the people that were living in the orchard get that..or say people that were...that moved out.. say up in the hills or....

Mr. Matsushita: No...

Friend: ...into New...New Denver..the other side or so...

Mr. Matsushita: ..no..just the people in the orchard and then some of the people that came in never got the privilege.....oh..there was a.. quite a squabble after.....yes...and then...like myself.....I was doing the foreman so I got a lot o' complaint because my house was sittin' here on the..corner...which straddled the two lots..and I had two lots and..there was..'bout three or four other family...house was straddling the two lots....ah...we decide not to move those house...we...sort o'

...save the labour of moving them....so..I suggested that we pay..some money for the extra lot...well..some people said no....not gonna' pay for it..the government said they were gonna give it to us but not everybody had two lots....so....I walked out on the meeting one night...madder..(Chuckling)...than a hornet..(More laughing)....and then...somehow the government couldn't charge anything for the extra lots so we got it free like anybody else...but...just the privileged few that got..extra lot

Mrs. Matsushita: Umm..

Mr. Matsushita: And then..as you know there's somethin'...just the same as any Japanese..somebody else gets it..then..somebody will get jealous...(chuckling)..

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum...especially when the peop...people live so close to each other.

Mr. Matsushita: Close yes.....but on the whole...even the old people improved it quite...a bit to their own houses...

Miss Koizumi: Yeah.

Mr. Matsushita: Here I got...again I get...got the pleasure of gettin' an extra house....so I /started it on the back there..and then..renovated...

Friend: This..this was...originally..I mean..the basic frame of this is..was one of the...

Mr. Matsushita: Oh it was up to here....I extended that...and...I wonder if....there is any small houses left...the small houses was 14 x 20... just a shell...nothing...no walls inside..the bare 2 x 4's stickin' out and..and 2 x 4 rafter on the top.....and my garage there is 14 x 28..that's a large house and you can see it inside...it's just a skeleton...actually I raised the ro...ceiling...ah...thirteen inches...I made a mistake..you can see it..the board here is not...fixed yet!..(Laughter)....but all the house these days have standard..two by four which is eight feet and I

s'pose it's about seven foot six..so it's..the ceiling's quite low... have you noticed...you haven't been in the other houses, have you? If you go into ol...old people's houses..the ceiling's lower.

Miss Koizumi: Umm..

Friend: How many people...live in this village...when..the largest..Japanese community...

Mr. Matsushita: Well..at one time there were quite a...large number o' Japanese here....just even the Orchard had what..some around/.500 or more.

Mrs. Matsushita: Oh I think more than that, wasn't it?

Mr. Matsushita: Between here..Rosebery..and....

Mrs. Matsushita: Harris Ranch.

Mr. Matsushita: ...Harris Ranch and Sandon..over 2000 people...Japanese.. Japanese alone.

Friend: How many people now....now?

Mr. Matsushita: Now..about fifty.....

Miss Koizumi: Fifty..

Friend: Fifty now...

Mr. Matsushita: Fifty or sixty.....

Friend: What happened to the...most of the people...moved out?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..a lot of them have moved out and then..some of the old people passed away....

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: Um-hum....

Friend: A lot of young..people don't want to stay here anymore?

Mr. Matsushita: No.....no...

Mrs. Matsushita: No...no future for them...

Friend: In..in the little communities there's not..every...all the young people...move away.

Miss Koizumi: Right.

Friend: Like..you built the Toree Gate..

Mrs. Matsushita: What was that?

Friend: Toree?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh yes..that's..one of the May Day's project.....

Friend: I see..

Mr. Matsushita: ...from the float.

Friend: And when did the May Day project start?

Mr. Matsushita: (Chuckling) Now...let' see.....

Friend; You had a lot of Japanese festival?

Mr. Matsushita: I beg pardon?

Friend: Did you have a lot of Japanese festival here?

Mr. Matsushita: At times when there were all...a number of Japanese here..we had..festival here..on the ground...

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah.

Friend: Festival?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh..well that's the Buddhists.

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Friend: New Year's?

Mrs. Matsushita: No...oh well..just....

Mr. Matsushita: For private parties.

Mrs. Matsushita: ..private parties...

Mr. Matsushita: Um-hum...

Miss Koizumi: So you had a...May Day and a

Mr. Matsushita: May Day's was...Occidental....

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum.....

Mr. Matsushita: ...actually when..perhaps a..few years after we came here...we get to...got to know each other..it's like..you know...Occidental and Japanese...they start..combine...sort of like a .....

Mrs. Matsushita:

Mr. Matsushita: ...community thing.

Mrs. Matsushita: Was it '49 the first year you belonged? I remember '49 but who.....

Mr. Matsushita: I never remember the years.....(One of the group laughs)

Mrs. Matsushita: It was somewhere around then.

Mr. Matsushita: ..but more or less I got pulled in..the most of them anyway...you know...

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum...you are...you worked as a kind of..mediator between white..society and the Japanese ...

Mr. Matsushita: Not exactly...it....in a way..like at the May Day... part of it yes...even though.....we had the Japanese community...our own organization..like..Joahkie..(Kyo-Wa-Kai)

Miss Koizumi: Oh...

Mr. Matsushita: ...so..they communicate..like..a town organizers communicate through

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: And then we decided what to do...

Miss Koizumi: I see.

Mr. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Miss Koizumi: You start in 1959 did you say?

Mrs. Matsushita: Ah...I don't remember any earlier..they may have put out a float for...Victoria Day..but I.....

Miss Koizumi: Well...do you remember why...the people started this...

Mr. Matsushita: Well actually..it doesn't matter where in B.C.....May Day's a May Day....

Mrs. Matsushita: Umm....Victoria Day.

Mr. Matsushita: ..and even back home....we took a holiday....

Friend: Victoria you see..it's strange.. anachronism....I know...Britian doesn't celebrate it..but it..it's a

leftover from the Colonial past...it's Queen Victoria birthday.

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes...

Friend: I...I knew that but it's..just that..looking at those pictures..you know..it's just..typical Japanese float.....

Friend: It's a spring festival...I mean it feels /like festival...

Friend: Yes...

Friend: ..when all the..all the....

Mr. Matsushita: Well..actually..like they would like to see some... culture of Japanese....shown at the time of the festival..like after the festival.....um-hum.....

Miss Koizumi: The..the things you do in the festival is make a float?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes they have a little parade.....

Miss Koizumi: And then you give a prize?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes...

Miss Koizumi: And the Japanese groups got prize all the time?

Mr. Matsushita: Most of the time! (Laughter)

Miss Koizumi: Like..you have ten floats..or float?

Mr. Matsushita: Beg your pardon?

Miss Koizumi: How...like...how many..like...?

Mr. Matsushita: Oh..that../the whole town....oh not too many...that time there were around ten..but.....

Mrs. Matsushita: ...

Mr. Matsushita: ...some years it just..more or less..Japanese float was just...total attraction...

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum....and do..do you have..ah...like do you pre-pare Japanese food...things like that too..that kind of...?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes...some time after they start and..asking for chow mein...(Laughter from group)...they had it...almost every year..Japanese ladies...organization has put out chow mein....and some..time...I believe

the Doukhobour woman...

Mrs. Matsushita: Yes.

Mr. Matsushita: ..has made what they call borsch...if you know...

Friend: Soup.

Mr. Matsushita: ...you've been born in Nelson so you should know borsch... ..that's..Doukhobour..sort of a...dish.....and one time they had a barbecue...beef..... open-pit....barbecue....

Miss Koizumi: Are you going to have this year too?

Mr. Matsushita: Well we haven't...'course I'm not on the Japanese Committee now, so I...I haven't heard anything..but..most likely there will be something.....but gradually the town is..more or less...shall I say..dying....

Miss Koizumi: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: ...no mines...and..less Japanese now..so....

Friend: Is the population of the whole town getting smaller and smaller now or..just ....

Mr. Matsushita: Well I wouldn't say getting smaller..smaller now because...it's gone down as far as it gonna go because most of the mine has closed down..there's only one mine open...Salmana...

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Mr. Matsushita: ..or Kam-Kota or something like that....that's about all..and then..the saw mill in Slocan....and..public works..that's about.. and then the...Youth Centre and the Pavilion.....that's about most of the main work.....there is.....

Miss Koizumi: So...that...when the Pavilion started it was...Japanese..

Mr. Matsushita: Japanese Pavilion.

Miss Koizumi: Yeah....only Japanese.....

Mr. Matsushita: Only Japanese.

Mrs. Matsushita: Japanese men.

Miss Koizumi: Men!?

Mr. Matsushita: Men only! (Chuckling)

Mrs. Matsushita: Men only.

Mr. Matsushita: Then somehow the woman sort of...crept in...and....

Mrs. Matsushita: One side was for the out patients..one side for the bed patients...

Mr. Matsushita: But gradually the woman got in..then one side was for woman...wasn't it?

Mrs. Matsushita: Now..yes.

Mr. Matsushita: Now..there's Occidental..more of them than the Japanese.. they kept it going.....I believe one of the government's only...old people's home..like...they still run under government.....

Miss Koizumi: Do you have lots of ap..applications from..old people?

Mr. Matsushita: I believe so.....it is more or less kept quite filled..

Mrs. Matsushita: Um-hum.

Friend: Most of the people come from....New Denver..do they?

Mr. Matsushita: Not all.....not all of them...

Mrs. Matsushita: Around the district.

Mr. Matsushita: Some of the occidental has come down from Arrow Lakes...

Mrs. Matsushita: Yeah.... Lakes.

Friend: The people living in this area now..Japanese people.. the houses they live in...are owned by Japanese now?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes....um-hum...

Friend: The lot too?

Mr. Matsushita: Yes.

Friend: When you left Vancouver did you lose a lot of properties.. and belongings and.....

Mr. Matsushita: Well the question is yes but..how much....(chuckling)... as...perhaps you have heard about..this..the boat being sold....read

in the paper..if you have...the..the...little article..they asked me about.. about my boat...well actually it was..worth something more than what they paid for it...the same with the land...the poor people who used to own the land...at that time well...the /custodian ..you know..what they call the custom took it over and...they priced it..and..the money..you either take it or leave it....you get nothing or just..take what they're gonna offer... so...what..could the people do..they took it and the sad part..they.. had a..test case...was it Salt Spring Island?

Friend: Yeah..I remember that.

Mr. Matsushita: ...the Japanese/man owned quite a bit of large property... if he was able to have kept it...the price would have gone up what they are worth now..but he accepted.....

Friend: Over a million dollars they think..

Mr. Matsushita: Over a million dollars but he accepted somewhere around 12,000....at that time.....

Friend: Did anybody not accept it..and then get the..get the property back at the end?

Mr. Matsushita: I doubt it....I doubt it.....cause...very few smart person.....they accepted the money....and if they were able/enough to pay double the price and buy back the property.....they made a fortune.

Friend: Could they...could they buy it back and double the price?

Mr. Matsushita: They could.....think maybe double or three times when they got back after the war.....that B.C. Parker property there...that ran into Mr..... property.....

End of Track 2