SHINICKI, HARA
(TRANSCRIPT)

3173:1-2

... = omission

Mr. S. Hara born 1900 Interviewed Jan. 30/78
Accession: # 3173

Tape 1, Side 1 Literal transcription

(introductory comments on dog--voice test)

Mr. Hara: I have a job. You know that Nelson Brothers? The first time I work for him buying fish, 1933, he bring up from barefoot that time [he worked himself up from]. He have nothing, he not forget--'cause I know, I work for him. And I'm buyer, but you see I have no education. They like me to stay but, see, you got to have education, because if you've got no education you got to stay in the same job forever(? labour?) So I have to quit. I quit myself. That time my wife come from Japan, he help me $300 that time, and $300 big money. Yeah, I talk to him, he's a nice man. And another company I work, Mr. Millard, Francis Millard, I work for him: same thing, they like me to stay but -- I'd like to stay but I have to stay in labour whole life so I quit myself and I start to work myself, my own store. That's the only way I can work because, no, can't write, can't read, so I start... 19- , 1926 I think, Main and Ninth.

Ms. How did you manage to keep the books for your store?

Mr. Hara: That time don't need books. Even licence, if you have no money, city wait for you [to pay] by the month. I forgot how much but very cheap. I have no money to pay licence and inspector come from city, no money. Ok, you have to pay a dollar a month for licence. 'Cause no jobs, so many people no jobs. For $13.50 rent a month [store]. You know that Ninth and Main? a little bank on corner, used to be a small candy store and the next house a Brown's flowershop--all $13, 14 a month then, but hard to pay the 13,14 a month. I made pretty good money that place, so... & and I sold place for $1200. Somebody come, year after, so I sold, $1200, and I start grocery and meat and fish on Twenty-seventh and Main, corner. I forgot to pay rent and you'd be surprised--people come to me, they come to get bone, no meat, no money, 3¢, 5¢, so I have to close the store--no money. This 1927. No jobs, nobody. So I have to close down then I broke. Ok, 1927 and I, oh, I went to Queen Charlotte Islands. I got a job from American company, fish buyer, Massett, place called Massett, Queen Charlotte, and I have $150 a month, ~~bet~~ board and food, everything cheap, big money up there... Four young people went there, work four months, they only ~~have~~ save little bit money. Then I start come back here. You know, I come here,

I come from Queen Charlottes to Vancouver eight days, that time, in a ship ~~and sick~~. Union Steamship Company, eight days. Then I come here and I want to try to, hundred per cent try to come up, so I tried sugar business from Cuba--r import from Cuba to Japan that time sugar $3 or $3 something, 100 pounds. And I try to buy sugar and buy from Cuba to here and from here to Japan. Japan that time 5¢ [for] $5 sack. I never, and I spend the money on the business and only a few hundred dollars gone, can't do any more now, stuck, you see. So my friend come--pass away 1927 and 1928, * & I'm really broke and [illegible] [he say] people want to go on work, you want to come work to Port Alice, B. C. Pulp Company. 40¢ an hour--pretty good money that time. And I work 19 months, 19 months I never stop, work every day, and I saveda little bit of money, then went to Japan-- I left October I think. Then I married this wife. 1927 I work Port Alice, 1929 I came back to Vancouver, 1929 October went Japan, yeah, married 1930 in Japan. Then start hard time, yeah, start hard time.

Ms: Did you know your wife? Did she come from the same town?

Mr. Hara: No, my, you see I left four sisters, one brother, myself. And mother passed away already before I come here. Still father there and when I go home, let me see, two sisters pass away already, and only one brother and myself, yeah, two sisters and my father still in Japan. I bought little old house and I fixed it up and got married. And I came back here 1930 March [by] myself. If only you see you be surprised, 1930 March. People hungry and die, down on the beach. Three stakes and a sack, that's home. Miles and miles.

Ms: Which beach?

Mr. Hara: Down here, just down by the, just go down Dunlevy Avenue, go down [to the end], both sides, [where] Hastings Mill used to be, miles and miles, both ways. Hungry. Kids... start with what they call revolution, you know, trouble in the city. They have iron bar, they broke window with bar and go, Woodwards, no windows, all help themself, people help themself. You see, no job and no food, so police can't do [anything with] so many--whole city, whole city. Woodwards' store empty--paper sack, everybody. And the garbage can--I told you other day--Hastings Street, Granville Street, the garbage can, eat [from] garbage can. [Mother with little baby lift up the lid & lay upside down on top, chicken bones, right away 3, 4 kids

* i.e. 1927 and 1928 are over

standing around, eat chicken bones] Until 193..., I don't know how long but I left Vancouver springtime April or May, I jump on train, shipyard, half a dozen young fellas. We ask em butcher shop, we hungry, any old so you can give us? so they give old bread and meat, put em in a sack and tie it on your [back?].

Ms: Who gave you the bread and meat?

Mr. Hara: Any place, any butcher shop, ask em and he give, liver, any place liver free, and we put em in a sack and-- More than half a dozen young fellas, 25, 26 [age], and shipyard train, lumber train, we go under lumber...in the shade.

Ms: Where the ends stick out?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, and we get to Vernon, you know Vernon? It start to rain, go in ~~[under the lumber]~~, we all soaked. So we have to get out--we wanted to go other end in Canada, but all wet, so I jump out and one go this way, two go this way, and look around, and hungry, look for job. I find a job. Japanese farmer, apple farmer. I know this man before in Vancouver here, he have a taxi driver, so he start farming in Vernon, in apples. I work two months just for eat, no one cent. He say you can stay all time. Farmer hard work, no one cent, so I left him. Two together, they go to work in Okanagan center, for two, three days we have no eat. Pretty hungry. Eat anything.* So we knokk, knock house. Young lady come out, she askin, What d'you want? We look for food, three, four days we no eat. Oh, she says--two [of us] I think--come on in, and make good dinner for us. My husband soon be back for lunch and might be he find a job for you. And husband come back on horse and, Ok, we find a job. Called Okanagan Land Company, 360 acres apple orchard, and good job. Thirty cents an hour, nine hours, very good job. I save a few dollars. Then 360 acres that big place, all together one more comin, two more comin, and twenty-two boys after, you know, season start. I don't know how much box, I forgot, you know, how much box pickin apple. We pick 60 acres, good place, 300 acres no touch. Lay on the ground--

Ms: Why?

Mr. Hara: No market, people got no money. And that time Vancouver apples $3 a box. Over there on the ground. This company try to control the price. Three dollars. Three dollars.

* They ate grass, interviewee later told us.

Ms: And you saw people being hungry in Vancouver.

Mr. Hara: Yeah, hungry. Apples, pears, anything, on the ground. And hungry, everybody hungry. For (?) milk, and beef. My friend--I have lots of friends, but all lost, all all gone. Then I come back...yeah, come back from Okanagan 1933, then I work for Mr. Nelson, yeah. She come 1933 over, and I ask rich Nelson--I got no money and $300 he let me have. $300 you can ~~pay~~ buy house, (it was) a lot then. But I have no education so I have to leave. Today Mr. Nelson--I think he pass away--his son working, a multi-millionaire. They have a hard time, same like me, maybe more. Mr. Millerd, same thing.

Ms.: So with the $300 that Mr. Nelson gave you, you set up your own store?

Mr. Hara: For lent, I mean, I lent (borrowed) until season ~~(over)~~ then I have to pay. See I good wage that time, top wage, see I buy house. Mr. Nelson ask me, ~~Harry,~~ Hara, how much you gonna pay this? He ask me first. He know, but I have to tell how much we pay this, so I work, very good money that time. Pretty near five, six hundred ~~dollars~~ a month--for buying fish. That big money but only four months... just the season. Then season over I came back, then I started hard time again. You know, hard time all life. That's the story but I don't want to tell you everything--o lots of fun.

Ms: When you were working for Mr. Nelson, that was down in Steveston?

Mr. Hara: No, in New Westminster. Lots of stories. Very ashamed to tell you all the things.

Ms: Will you tell us a little bit about where you grew up...?

MR. Hara: Where I born?

Ms:..in Wakayama?

Mr. Hara: I can tell you, Oh yes. Hard time. I born 1900, May 28th. Left home 1910--over 16 (?) from then to Osaka, 10 years old. Two cents a day. I left home 10 years old. You know, shipyard, I work two cents. Then my uncle stay here Galiano Island and he came back: this kind of job not for ten year-old boy, you

killed, easy killed.

Ms: What were you doing in the shipyard? What job?

Mr. Hara: You see today shipyard different. That time, I don't know--charcoal, you know charcoal? make fire. Charcoal and rivet, you know rivet? And machine bring piece here--

Ms: Metal plate?

Mr. Hara: Metal plate. Bring the (gun here?) man inside and outside and holding there and I have to make a fire, make it really hot, and young fella come and, fifteen rivets, put em in bucket, bring to give to man. Man wait for rivets. And hold inside and outside and rivet go inside and both sides hammer, see? That kind of job for two cents. But, oh, big shipyard, too pretty high. See they make step, floor on ship they making, they walk in here but nothing here, just go like this and people work on top, but very high place--

Ms: Scaffold?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, scaffold. Seven thousand ton ship that place hold. So I work six, seven months. I go back. My uncle come here, take me back, put ~~em~~ me in another place--I don't like [to] get killed.

Ms: This was on Galiano now?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, he cōme back and my father say, take to Canada, too small for fishing. So I put in another place, island, oh, another place dōn't like, so there, there, there, there. Time passed. Sixteen years old I find a job myself--butcher shop, seafood butcher I find, in Japan, in Wakayama. Nice place, big company. I stay to 24 years old. From 16 to 24. Then I come here, my uncle says I big enough to work to saltery. So I came here 1924--1924 December 21st came to Victoria Island,* 21st, 3 or 4 days before Christmas. I don't know Christmas myself, I just come in and stay one night, rooming house. Next day come to Vancouver, stay 391 Powell Street, rooming house, stayed there. Then my uncle say we take you up, you stay here. I think I went to North Galiano Christmas time I think, but I don't know

* Vancouver Island.

Christmas myself, workin Christmas Day, New Year Day, work just the same, no holiday, hard job...fishing herring, salt herring, really hard work. $75 a month for season work...See my uncle got fishing boat catch herring, bring in to camp, and put em in a tank, ten ton each time [tank?], all by hand, and as soon as finished in a camp then we have to go fishing again. Lots of herring that time, lots of herring. I work I think two years, yeah.

Tape 1, Side 2

Ms: Mr. Hara, when you were on Powell Street in 1924, can you tell us what it was like?

Mr. Hara: More cleaner. That time more clean. You see, no Indians and nobody drunk. No beer parlour. Everybody no extra money to spend themself, everybody have to work. Lots of Hastings Sawmill people work. No fool around. Stores all clean. And I still remember Japanese people when they get up, first thing in the morning they got to clean the front--you know, brooms...on the sidewalk. Same [as] Italian people. And washing window, clean the sidewalk, everybody cleaning up. Nice in store--clean. And ways (?) are cheap. But no Indians. Very bad for Indian that time. Indians, soon as Indians come into town, police catch em and take em back... because, you see, Indians go after liquor, booze, so they take booze, they don't know nothing that time. Today is better Indian people. So when Indian come into town police catch em & take em back. Because they go looking for booze. And lots of white man he sell to Indian too [much] liquor. So he take em back, yeah, and not very much Indian people got there, yeah, very few.

Ms.: And many Japanese people worked in Hastings Sawmill?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, quite a few, quite a few. I think about a couple hundred. Yeah, 'cause all by hand, you know. And cheap too, cheap. You see, I don't know how much, I didn't work in a sawmill, most I worked for myself. I thinking, not very good wage. But they have enough to live on. But I knew myself, I never living--I broke all time. This store here, 327 Main Street (post-war)—I start, (1920's) came here, first time I start sell grocery by the truck, from Vancouver to Port Moody one day, from here to Port Moody. That time lots of Japanese that place and the sawmill, so I go camp to camp, I making a few dollars. And next day, go New Westminster, and next day Port Hammond [Port Coquitlam?] this side of Haney, and next day Haney. Four days a week, in truck. But that time truck--all same one, same one--I put the lantern in the back and lots of times stop, can't start, so I quit.

Ms.: What were you selling--fish or vegetables?

Mr. Hara: Fish and tofu, you know tofu?--tofu and some kind ofgrocery, and Kamaboko , you know? fish ball. I put in truck and go round, house to house. And that time, white people round that way. I ask them you want to buy fish? Nobody eat fresh salmon--we throw away, yeah, threw it away. Big salmon like that (about three feet long), 10¢, 25 lb. one piece, 10¢. 1926, yeah, I give it away. And red salmon, some people--I think it's 5¢ a pound, salmon. Then I work [for] Mr. Millerd. He says he want to can salmon 'cause nobody buying, throw away. Mr. Millerd, he start to can salmon. This kind of can, not [round?] and tomato on top...

Ms: So not very high?

Mr. Hara: No high, no. Flat (makes oval-shaped gesture) and tomato, they cook by tomato and put em in can and he start can. The Chinaman, no machine you know,.. make it, what you call? make it hot...and all round these and top down there [seal it with solder?] can--

Ms.: Seal the edges?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, seal. And so many sometime and put em in cold storage.

Ms: Where did Mr. Millerd have his cannery?

Mr. Hara: That time Mr. Millerd's plant, let's see now, this did Mr. Millerd #2 or #3? I think an old plant--he got to have ace- -- no plant, no plant, he got ocean, nearly Stanley Park, this side, little little place.

Great Northern Cannery in W. Van?

Ms: On the waterfront near Stanley Park?

- West Van?

Mr. Hara: No, on different side. I buy fish. I think he canning somebody else place. He got no money either. Yeah, I buy for him salmon 10¢ fish, big one. 10¢ salmon. And then he broke, so company stop. I remember. He go city, he got 3 or 4 children. After 3, start, start to leaving. I cleaning and I still remember I start to cry. They have Frank and Don, [and] just one boy and a girl, 4 children and a wife, himself, and so he go city and he find food, city, what they call-city relief that time. And, oh, everybody hard time. And I am broke too myself.

Ms.: Could you get city relief?

Mr. Hara: That time? Oh I don't like it. No. I try myself [to look out for myself]. Because I am no children. You see I am my self, 1930, '31, '32.

Ms.: But did you have any friends who had children? Would they give it to them?

Mr. Hara: Oh yeah, anybody, $8 a month. You have to pay rent and--$8 a month. Just [enough] to keep alive. Mr. Millerd and myself I work hard. He lost one boy, [in the war] youngest one. No school, he don't go to school, that time he come over there already I work for him, young fella I forgot [his name]. He sleep, he make a house in a box ...(?) four feet a box you know. That time Mr. Millerd start up again, so three boy work for him. This young boy he don't want to go to school, no money to go to school, sleep in a box. During the war, killed. That time 1942 he lost his life. In the war. I hear he pass away, somebody says he tried to, plane burn him so he try to jump out but commando (?) machinegun, machine gun shot him. He gone, young fella. Two brothers stay here, Frank and Don. Mr. Millerd, I think he pass away.

Ms: When you were buying fish for Mr. Millerd, where did you buy the fish?

Mr. Hara: Down here New Westminster. Lots of fish that time.

Ms.: Was there a fishing fleet down here... (off Powell?)

Mr. Hara: That time I buy Mr. Millerd fish and Mr. Millerd no plant, no plant. Put em in Mr. Walker--he had cold storage in New Westminster, so I have to take it to New Westminster cold storage in Mr. Walker's own place, B. C. Packer. Put em in there every day, ten ton, fifteen ton, and Mr. Walker ask Mr. Millerd to pay for cold storage--lost em all. Mr. Walker and Mr. Millerd good friends but business different. He got no money to pay the cold storage, because no plant.

Ms: I was just wondering whether in the 1920's there would be a Japanese fishing fleet down here, near where Ballentyne Pier is now? Would there be Japanese fishing boats down there? in the 20's or 30's, that early?

Mr. Hara: No, not very much. 1930 not very much. Most in Steveston. Not much here. Lots of young fellas come from Japan like today, come to Tonari Gumi, young fellas

you know, but this one don't want to work. But we looked for a job, we looked for a job. Anybody, shipyard, and C. N. R., and logging camp, and boats come in need a ten, fifteen young fellas, and come to look for man to work in the bush or any place. And we going to see the job, and thick hand, the skin-- [she'd] see the hand, soft skin; I tell you after bye bye-- no job. (laughs) Yeah, I work in the boneyard (?) I work. I find a job in the boneyard, Mr. .... (?) nice man. Lots of stories, lots of fun. Another one good story but this one I keep to myself and some day I--really nice story, very nice story, never find this kind of story.

Ms.: But you want to keep that one?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, I keep.

Ms.: Ok, umm-- Mr. Hara, I want to move on a little bit with the 40's-- 1942 you had a fish store then?

Mr. Hara: No, I had-- you know Carrall Street, Carrall and // (Hastings), corner you know that little park there?

Ms.: Pigeon Park?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, other side corner used to be Bank of Montreal, then next my coffee shop, seafood, that my store. Yeah, next to the bank between alley, called White Cap Seafood. And open, two chefs [shifts?], good business that time. I make really good money. Thirty-five people working. First time seafood in Vancouver city.

Ms.: Where was your family living then?

Mr. Hara: That time 846 East Cordova. But I start to take that place for lease eighteen years. And I start to make that for coffee shop, it cost me $11,000 and I have no money myself. So I lent [borrowed] money from friends, this side, this side. I have a few thousand dollars but it cost me $11,000 I spend that place, 1941, March. Big money. Then I-- own seafood store that time, little high class place called. I make good money, 60¢ on the dollar I made. Good money. Everything cheap, cost. And I thought this time I make a million dollars. War come.

Ms.: So when war was declared and the government passed the law that Japanese had to go inland-- ?

Mr. Hara: I have a friend of mine working in Japanese community so he says, you got to go, [if] you stay here they catch you, put em in a camp--just you and your children and your wife, different, separate camp. So he says, you better leave. Then next day somebody come to my house, two Mounted Police. Friend of my wife telephoned. [If] I go back--I know--camp, what they call Ontario. They want me to go in country.

Ms.: They wanted to send you to Ontario?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, because you see ordinary working people, they don't bother very much, they got their freedom. But like me, I have quite a few employees, I have another store too, so they want this kind of people, catch em and send em away. This war dirty, you know, just for the government. So I left then. He says, we catch ... (?) So I left home to New Westminster. I didn't come back. That's all I see my store, that's the last time. Never go back.

Ms.: Did you ever get any money for your store?

Mr. Hara: Not a penny, not a penny. You see, you can't get it because they say is custodian, they hold em, but liar. They hold em and they sell auction, and auction [works like this]--you take how much and you take how much, I take how much, and how much left pay for expense. Here two dollars for you, two dollars for you. All expense. What you say? Can't say nothing. So, I forget, I forget. And I save a little bit money [at] that time [in case] anything happen--I have four children I think, so you got to have. And I save dollar silver that time. Any dollar silver I put em away, don't matter what does it leave, I put em away. I save three or four thousand dollars. Wife don't know. Then my debts--one man four thousand, about forty-five hundred dollar I owe money my friend. But I ask my friend, you take my store, for you want to right away. He says, you go and I sell your store and I get the money back.

Ms.: Was your friend Japanese or white?

Mr. Hara: Japanese, yeah. Ok. So this and this and this and this. I have another store, seafood store. I sold to Chinaman for $700. Even one scale $700 that time. So I leave to my friend that coffee shop and went to New Westminster I have friend. I stay New Westminster, not come home 'cause they (Mounties) come home. March 6 my friend says, Harry, you got to go. Twelve o'clock you go. truck you can't pass

this bridge, they take your car and truck and everything. So you better go before twelve. So I left, I passed that bridge March 6 eleven o'clock, one hour time.

Ms.: Did you have your family with you?

Mr. Hara: No, myself, just self. 'Cause I don't know Kamloops very very much, just once I went a long time ago, so I try to find a place, then I try to catch them. Take four days to go to Kamloops. I have to have a map, you see I never drive to Kamloops, and very afraid to go there--oh, bad place [road] that time, slide time March and April. Ooooh. So I have to be careful to go there. I went to [arrived at] Kamloops March 9. All newspaper propaganda, everybody scared. "Lots of Japanese spies coming into Kamloops" --newspaper. I don't know who did it. When I went there, everybody scared, even Indians are scared. I see the Inspector Barber, you know, police head, inspector, his name Barber. I go see him. He says, very bad Japanese news--old man you know--he says I don't know who write this newspaper propaganda. You fellas come from Vancouver to Kamloops--"Japanese army"--so you not going to stay here 'cause somebody kill you. Ohh. Ok, Mr. Barber. I went to Pritchard, eighteen miles from Kamloops.

Ms.: Did you know Inspector Barber before, or did you just go there?

Mr. Hara: No, I just go and see him, [I thought I'd] better see him. Nice man. And I go to Pritchard. I know a man, Frenchman, I forgot the name now, but he had what they call a homestead--two homesteads, 320 acres. He stay there. You know this job? that place lots of snow, sometimes six, seven feet of snow. So animals, lots of animals, no food, die. So coyote eat, so left bone. So this old man...

Tape 2, Side 1

Mr. Hara: Then I went not very much -- but I know this people, very old man, and this old man's friend, Nova Scotian people, MacKean's the name. MacKean talk to this man, he said I send one Japanese boy [to] your place, he said welcome. And I go, other side of river. I take truck, about two feet high snow. So he says, Ok you come, welcome. We gonna job, gonna find the bones, in a sleigh. You see, lots of animals die and left bone and make you one car so much come to Marpole-- Marpole bone factory, they buy them, animals' bones, called bone mill (meal?). So him and I today go, tomorrow not go -- not very cold go, in the sleigh. You know what we eat? He have dozen chicken and we eat honey...(?)...we make honey by the axe, we see the tree and tree cracking and bee make honey on the inside, sometime tons, nobody know. So we catch em by the axe, and honey bring back -- no coffee, no, what they call wheat, no coffee, we make bran wheat and honey and eggs. That's all we eat. Three times, four times [a day]. Sometime we eat, we shoot, coyote...(?)... We eat that, this kinda animal. Little healthy, not eat you know (meat? (much?)), sometime eat a chicken. And no expense, on the place, living same place, big camp...(?)... lots of wine and that. I stay two or three weeks then I come down and news regular news, little better, so I come down to Kamloops and I got to have something to make income. So, start something, I like to start a farm someplace. Then I find a job there and there, there--no pay, no pay, you know, but everybody welcome, young fella, work hard, you see, no pay, "come to my place, other side, come to my place"--room and board. Then my wife and children, they want to come. Oh, even toy they bring in a box man let em off, nothing carry--four children come CPR train. I ask em, my children, my wife say this [is] your father-- no look like it, look like a hobo. Boy! There, there, there, and I start the farm. No experience. Absolutely hundred percent I don't know farm. Then I start farm, go broke. So, complete, nothing left. All gone. I had nice place for a place to buy, thirty-five and fifteen, fifty acres, very nice place for $5,000--four miles away from Kamloops. And you can pay how much, anytime you pay, no money, don't matter, any time you pay. I shoulda buy that place and stay. Today city-- (laugh)..... ? ..... . Land nothing that time. Cheap. Thousand dollars big money that time. Nobody got in store hundred dollar bill change. I buy butcher shop, grocery, take hundred

dollar bill -- no change.

Ms.: So after your farm went broke in Kamloops, what did you do?

Mr. Hara: After farm, I sold farm, come back here. I left my family in Kamloops, I come myself and then I put em for sale that place-- six acres and nice place. That money -- this house, store, school-age things, that's the start of hard time again.

Ms.: Was that when you started the fish store on Main Street, 327 Main?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's the one. But not enough money, you know. See, I only got $6,000 that time -- $6,000 big money, but buy house, open a stores, and children go to school -- not enough.

Ms.: At that time how old were your children? When you came back?

Mr. Hara: This one (points to photograph of youngest) year old.

Ms.: The youngest? And the oldest? / Mr. Hara: (asks wife in Japanese)

Mrs. Hara: No, that one last one, two year old that time. Oldest one nineteen...

Mr. Hara: ...Normal School year.

Mrs. Hara: ...nineteen or twenty. / Mr. Hara: He's in Victoria.

Ms.: So you had to start paying for higher education for your children?

Mr. Hara: At that time, yeah. Then second boy go to U.B.C., then hard time start. Big family.

Ms.: Mr. Hara, I think Mrs. Benny told us that you had this house before the war?

Mr. Hara: This one here?

Ms.: Yeah, that's not right?

Mr. Hara: No, after the war. Yeah, Mrs. Benny's -- I look around for house, you know, close to store. Oh I look round every day after store close--my shoes hole in the bottom, you know. Then I come here, I see 'for sale.' Mrs. Benny's store that time small store, candy store. I ask her. She says good house, this one, and good people used to be living here -- buy. I forgotten how much -- six and a half, or seven? I've forgot. But that time this kinda house here, all three, four, five thousand dollars. 1952.

Ms.: What was the neighbourhood like then for bringing up a family? What was the neighbourhood like in 1952 around here?

Mrs. Hara: Chinese, Chinese but other side Italian.

Mr. Hara: Lots of Italians that time.

Ms.: Did it look different from now? from today?

Mrs. Hara: Oh yes.

Mr. Hara: Oh yeah. But city's government spend lots of money in here, you know, Strathcona area, you know -- they pay for house last few years. Otherwise, oh, yes, garbage can house. They never fix house, you know.

Ms.: Was the street bad?

Mr. Hara: See, most Italian people bootlegging [when] I come to Vancouver. Eighty percent bootleggers, eighty percent. Gore Avenue, Dunlevy, and whites kill each others. Oh, bad place. And MacLean Park bushes.

Ms.: So what was going on in MacLean Park?

Mr. Hara: Now MacLean Park, but used to be bush, tree. And I hear Mrs. MacLean make big money on booze and they have no children, leave the city. All up and down area [bootlegging].

Ms.: Do you remember Hogan's Alley? off Main Street between Prior and Union Street?

Mr. Hara: Priors and Union? an alley? Prior, let me see.

Ms.: So it'd be the next alley over, right off Main Street. Lots of bootlegging?

Mr. Hara: Oh, terrible. Everyone, everyone. All young people passing -- click, click ... [tapping]

Ms.: At the window?

Mr. Hara: Oh yeah, all over. Eighty percent. No work, no job. And lots of coloured people too, Union Street.

Ms.: Was it safe in the neighbourhood for your children? They were going to school in part of the area?

Mr. Hara: Now it's ok, that time-- 1950, not too bad, but still lots of Italian people bootlegging. But when I come to Vancouver they kill each other. Lots of coloured people. I still remember, bad news, lots of people lose life, they kill each other.

Ms.: These would be fights or what? Why did they kill each other?

Mr. Hara: This kinda people don't want to work, they live without work, so gotta be trouble. Gamblers, bootleggers, sport houses. And 19- - -- after war little bit better. Then Chinaman come in here. Chinaman no bootlegging; gambler, but they [gamble with] each other. They gamble [with] each other. They do gambling themself, nobody bother (don't bother anybody). But Italian people used to be wine, 25¢ a glass you know, I used to go. And the bowling, Italian bowling--lots of trouble. Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night--three nights.

Ms.: Lots of noise?

Mr. Hara: All night, fight, fight. ~~Little bit white~~. They beat the wife. Crazy. ~~Little bit white~~. They beat The wife. Is really crazy.

Ms.: Mr. Hara, before the war, when you were living in the 800 block Cordova, what was that like, Cordova Street, in those days?

Mr. Hara: Let me see. I think Cordova Street pretty near same. Not too bad today, Cordova Street. But most poor people. Most Japanese [were] fishermen or common laborers, sawmill, poor people.

Ms.: 800 block Cordova Street then was all Japanese people living there?

Mr. Hara: No, is most Chinaman now, Chinese.

Ms.: Now. But then, when you were living there?

Mr. Hara: That time Japanese, Japanese, yeah.

Ms.: So that area, Powell Street, Cordova Street, many many Japanese people there?

Mr. Hara: Most from, you know, that corner church on Gore Avenue, what they call? big church on corner....St. James. From there to end of Cordova all Japanese both sides. Eighty-ninety percent Japanese.

Ms.: Where was the end of Cordova then?

Mr. Hara: That time? End of 900 block, that end, junkyard now. Used to be nothing that place. This man buy, Russian-Jewish people, I know him, his father pass away. Multi-millionaire now, yeah, used to buy beer parlour.

Ms.: How many thousand Japanese people would you say lived there before the war?

Mr. Hara: In here? In Vancouver?

Ms.: Around Powell Street area.

Mr. Hara: I don't know exactly but I hear altogether Vancouver six, seven thousand. Strathcona's [School] most eighty percent Japanese kids. Today Chinamen now, all Chinamen. Not much different you know. I think a little ~~bit~~ better times, people of all nations closer and closer, nowadays. I can see last half century, nations they closer little bit at a time, closer. But one more bad news, Russia and States can't get together. Same thing one house two boss. And they settle, put us out of war, that's best. But don't look like it.

Ms.: You said last time we came to see you that you thought it was a better life without so much money, in the old days.

Mr. Hara: Today thousand dollars, two thousand dollars big money but I have no money all my life from 19- -- no debts and all clear, 1956. 1956 first time I had money 'cause I had money every day but this money from bank and friends and I pay back and come back, and my ~~life~~ wife the best ~~life~~ wife, wife and I, never had money. But you see on the table, kitchen table, we sit and ate every day supper. One chicken not enough, gotta have two chicken, but two chicken cost too much money to buy, so wife cut half, put em away. One half for supper. One time one month, chicken [once a month]. Mostly fish, seafood, 'cause we had store. And we had one hundred pound rice, my wife cook for supper--every supper we cook rice, for seventeen days one hundred pound rice. Big cook. I like [to] show you--

Ms.: It would last you seventeen days?

Mr. Hara: Yeah, seventeen days one hundred pound rice. And lots of food and I buy crabmeat, man fish for me crab for 25¢ a pound, crabmeat. Shrimp meat 35¢ a pound. Pretty nearly nothing in the store I [don't?] bring home, we never asking how much, and crabmeat nice one. My wife, Tonight we crabmeat salad--pound and a half, more than a pound. Tomorrow, shrimp meat. Lettuce 5¢ one, big lettuce. And .... 10¢ big bowl of crabmeat and mayonnaise sauce and seven people eat. Nice. Tomorrow shrimpmeat. Oh we have a good supper every day. Onee a month chicken. And we start [to get] a little bit money, and we buy car, buy three car--two girls, one boy, myself truck. So, you see every door--this all used to be good door, all broke, upstairs all same. They fight each other--you know kids, full up and one toy and three, four children-- they, "this mine" --fight. They catch and come here and shut the door, and the other one (makes struggling gestures). Every place broke and don't bother, broke all you want to. So, not good house, this kinda house I don't care broke. So, one boy he want to ~~learn~~ run car, everyday tank empty, come back-- no empty no come back. Four dollars gasoline every day, for one boy. I say, ok, I make enough, I buy gasoline and put em in gas, don't matter. So 1956 I start: Japan's, everything ready, I send a few dollars, enough for everybody, and debts all I pay back and I got a few thousand dollars in bank, and buy chairs and this and this. Then hard times start. We make money and hard time. No money's no trouble.

END

OM- Let's erase tape at this ending?