

Legacies of Silence Interview

“She was always very bitter about it”

Bruce (b. 1949) describes his mother’s silence and bitterness about the dispossession and growing up not knowing how strongly the sale of the family home impacted his family.

Excerpt from Landscapes of Injustice oral history interview with Bruce Yoneda.

KAITLIN FINDLAY

You said your mother would often talk about the internment or –

BRUCE YONEDA

Oh no, she didn't like talking about the internment, but when she brought it up, she was always very bitter about it.

KAITLIN FINDLAY

So what made her, was it you asking that brought it up? Why would she start talking about it?

BRUCE YONEDA

Yeah, we definitely didn't – . She definitely didn't like bringing that topic up, but ... So I think that the time that it did come up for, when she was talking about, you know, wanting to get financial security for the family and whether they were ever going to get, you know, any compensation back from the government for, you know, that beautiful house on the Gorge that was confiscated, and of course, nothing did come out of that. Except for that Redress thing, which by then it was a kind of a token, she called it a slap in the face to give them [\$]22,000 for that beautiful house on the Gorge which was uh – but I think that she purposefully tried to avoid even talking about that. And in certain my father didn't talk about it at all. You know, he just sort of felt it was a done deal, he was just getting on in life and you couldn't undo that, so why worry about trying to undo it.

KAITLIN FINDLAY

Did your grandparents talk about it?

BRUCE YONEDA

No. No they never talked about it.

KAITLIN FINDLAY

Did you ask?

BRUCE YONEDA

No, cause I wasn't really too aware of what was going on. It's bad that I wasn't too aware until I saw that letter that Jordan showed me that my grandfather had written to the government and you know, that's when I realized it really must have profoundly affected him, because he had this complete trust that justice was going to be done and that he was going to get all his belongings back, and his property back. Of course he didn't, but [pause] you can see it when you read between the lines of that letter how you just assume that the Canadian government is going to do the right thing and reimburse or at least give him some sort of compensation for what was taken away from them and you know, it was kinda heartbreaking. [Pause.] But until I saw that letter, I didn't know he had any feelings about it at all. Cause I didn't know and I wasn't aware of it.