

Barbara Heeren (nee Shorey)

Interviewers: Marilyn Clayton and Marie Bannister (for the Britannia Heritage Shipyard Project)

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EDITED TRANSCRIPT - RESTRICTED MATERIAL REMOVED

BH: Is this just... oh this is... its so in my mind.

MC: Its so different.

BH: Its so in my memory. Its so much larger.

MC: This would have been the boardwalk.

BH: I know, that's what I'm thinking. I thought this was the longest walk.

MC: Oh really.

BH: I guess I was so little it was long.

MC: You thought that from the boardwalk...

BH: From the plank boards over here to Daddy's....

MC: To the ships. See this part here (of the boardwalk) would have been replaced. Like you can tell. But down there, and we'll walk down along there later, those, I think those are some of the original boards. Because you can tell by the way they go vertically. So you remember walking along here and seeing all the traffic?

BH: Oh yes, oh gosh. Well, only when it was time to stop work and lunch time but other than that there wasn't much, very little.

MC: So.

BH: It was when, you know, they were off for their lunch.

MC: Who would be walking along here?

BH: Oh, the Chinese.

MC: The Chinese.

BH: And then we used to see them on the weekends. Sometimes they would get a day off, but that was after the cannery was working. And they would be lying just in heaps of humanity. My brother and I used to go there and peak in, with their long opium pipes. You know it was just...

MC: Where would that be? Like up...

BH: Just, Hong Wo's. The next place up. They'd be, there was a building on that side. And I mean that they were slaves really. The Chinese were, not the Japanese ever. But the Chinese were, and they worked in the cannery and they'd come up and down. With these long pipes, just you know, and at that.. We didn't know, we just know that they were asleep, was how we saw it, except one of them would lift his head and go (shows puffing a pipe), you know, and draw this on his pipe and that's how they spent their day off, if they ever had one. But we always went to look. (saw this only twice)

MC: So just mats?

BH: No, just on the floor, mud floor, just lying there, all up against each other because they were all in a... Well of course, we know now what it was. But I guess that it was opium, we were told that they smoked, after we were adults. That was...

MC: This is [].

BH: No. I say, I don't think that I can be really very helpful because, you know, I left here so long ago. And I was only a little child here and I'm 63. So this is a long time, this is a long time ago.

MC: Well now, when you were a little child on this site, where would you have played?

BH: Inside. Well, the boats, the boats would be lined up, you know, thick, two or three thick, and we knew that was dangerous because Mr. Seaton had drowned, a friend of mom and daddy's and ours, and Herbie, a bookkeeper, drowned. So we, I just didn't play out here on the dock, I played inside. Daddy, where daddy had his lathe and did work with the brass, I used to sit underneath and get the brass curls and make little dolls with brass curls that would fall from the lathe. That was kind of fun.

MC: And you'd attach the brass curls for hair on the little dolls.

BH: Oh yes, just stick them on wood and they all had this beautiful golden curls.

MC: Oh, isn't that great.

BH: And then when daddy was working with steel well then I'd have grey haired dolls.

MC: They'd be the old dolls.

BH: Yeah. So I played under where daddy was working.

MC: Okay.

BH: And because you know, it just wasn't the place to play. It was too far away from our house.

MC: Did you ever go over to the little island? Over to Shady Island and play over there?

BH: No.

MC: No. I guess....

BH: I'll tell you. I had this... Can we talk about weirdness. I know I'm on tape, now this is just for your use, just for the office. Well, you see, I have this, well, I probably was a strange little child. This was a very isolated life really, it truly was. There was no neighbours except, you know, it was removed. Anyway the Japanese houses of course were over the river and I used to observe and figure out, oh my goodness, they're going to the bathroom right in the river. I mean it doesn't take much to figure that out. And at a very early age I made up my mind I wasn't, you know, going to put my hands or my feet or any part of me in this river. So I was a germ freak. And you know, when I was in high school, my friends would go up to a little beach up there and they'd swim. Not me, I'd just sit, I'd just sit there and watch them. That was that.

MC: Did you ever tell them why you wouldn't?

BH: No, oh no. I swam in Point Roberts. We always went to Point Roberts, and I love salt water. I used to do all my swimming there. Now that was funny.

MC: Now, Gerry (Miller) told us that you and Jim, Jim Kishi... Do you remember Jim? Jim Kishi?

BH: Sort of.

MC: Sort of. Like he never went in swimming either. He was here yesterday.

BH: He didn't swim either.

MC: And he said that very thing to us, that he never ever swam.

BH: No, I never would.

MC: But he said he used to play on the net racks.

BH: Oh yeah, sure. But I don't think they were out here, were they?

MC: No, there was, there used to be one on the other side there.

BH: On the other side of there, there was one and we used to learn to balance and walk along the railings, like, like balancing. And there used to be another one down there I guess, more attached to the cannery. Yeah, we used to play in that way.

MC: Did you play with the Japanese kids at all? How would that work?

BH: No, not when I was little. After I went to school, of course I made some, some friends. There was, there was quite a division really, I felt between us. It was and yet not in school. [Maybe it was because I lived so far away, I really don't know.] The ones I made friends with, my dearest friends, were closer to the little town (Steveston). Like the one that ran the dry goods store, those two boys were my, just bosom buddies. I loved them. I've lost track of them.

MC: [Do you remember their names?]

BH: Miyashita, Setsuo and Mitsuo, but I've lost track of them. And Yashiko, they were all living sort of in the town so I didn't really have any of them here that were terribly close. I didn't really play with any, and I knew who Gerry Miller was and... (Remembers riding bikes with Lanky Mizuguchi)

MC: He didn't live right on the site did he? He lived over...

BH: No, he lived up that way. I don't know where he lived, I never saw his house ever. But I remember him being up that way. I remember the first day of school, he cried so hard. It was...

MC: Because he didn't know anybody?

BH: I guess that was it. So the teacher was saying, ""Does any one know this little boy?"". So I was, I was as scared as he was, but I knew him. So, so we had to sit together. Had our desks together, both shaking because we were both isolated. This was hard to imagine but we were really, really isolated. And the Japanese were wonderful people but maybe there just wasn't any little girl around my age, I don't know.

MC: So that's why you, you probably invented your own games? And making...

BH: Oh yeah, I'm, to this day I'm a loner. I mean you have to be. And yet my brother wasn't. But I keep trying to just think of things that.... The Japanese were so respectful that they got, you know, they were so respectful that they always got off the sidewalk when I was a little girl walking along here. I was treated so, so well by them.

MC: Why don't you tell us a bit about, about your dad.

BH: I should get the notes.

MC: Everything, everything that we know is just hearsay. Describe him [for us].

BH: Oh, daddy was a man, I think the word that would come to mind would be integrity. He was a man of his word and he... He had no prejudice, which was one good thing for the job he was in, with all the different people, daddy... People were people and daddy respected all of them. And he was a very, very hard worker and he had a, oh a dry wit and a good twinkly sense of humour.

MC: Was he a tall man?

BH: No, he was a short man.

MC: A short man.

BH: Mom was tall. Daddy was short and dark eyes and dark complexion and always smoked a pipe. I think he was a very good natured man and he loved his bridge game almost as much as he loved running this place. He loved bridge. He lived it.

MC: Did you have like card game groups and things?

BH: Oh yeah, daddy, yeah mom, they gave so many dinner parties, dinner and bridge and...

MC: Because your home was.....

BH: ... badminton in the net loft.

MC: it was close by wasn't it?

BH: Oh yeah.

MC: Oh badminton in the net loft, now that sounds interesting. That would be...

BH: In the one on that side.

MC: Okay.

BH: Everything looks so much smaller than I remember. This was, everything was massive in my, in my memory.

MC: Well, you were just a little...

BH: I was smaller. It was my perspective, yes, the perspective. Yeah, they used to give, have badminton games up there. And of course everyone from Vancouver loved to come out here and just tour around the docks and the nets and the boats, it was all so interesting. This was the...

MC: At Christmas time back then, did you, did you have groups come out?

BH: Oh, we did, mother entertained all the time. When I think of it again. But she would get a couple of girls from Steveston, from the town, to come and help her prepare and clean and set up. Yeah, we had huge family Christmases. And not only family, Mom and daddy had a lot of friends in Vancouver and they entertained a lot, teas, dinners.

MC: Just lots of gatherings. Jack Weinrauch, does that name ring a bell?

BH: No.

MC: He, he told me now that his daughter-in-law (correction: Jean was the mother of Jack's daughter-in-law), when she was just a little, little girl, and her first name is Jean, that your mom used to look after her and she was one of three sisters.

BH: Oh Jean, yeah, I don't connect the name Weinrauch, Jean Gilmore. Yeah, she used to live with us. (Jean went to live with the Shorey family when she was 18 years old. She used to look after Barbara and her brother George.)

MC: That's it, that's the name.

BH: Yeah, she used to live with us. She was like a live-in mother's helper. And...

MC: Oh, that's how it worked. B S: And, but actually that's how it was supposed to work, that was the idea, but the idea really was Jean was a daughter to mother. They were like mother and daughter, they were very, very close, yeah. (Jean and Mrs. Shorey remained very close until Jean passed away in mid 1980's.)

MC: This, I guess over here was where the desk was (George Shorey's desk in the shipyard), somewhere. So you must have been tucked down underneath there making dolls curls.

BH: Yeah. But I seem to remember it being over there but, where the lathe was, where the brass lathe.

MC: Oh that, okay there was a little lathe here. So you used to sit down underneath here?

BH: Oh, I'd scoop the stuff up from where ever I could. And then Uncle Dan Patterson used to work in that part when I was little, and he made beautiful doll furniture for me, tables and chairs and cribs and a beautiful cabinet. He was a great guy. The rest, they've all told you about Dan Patterson, some have.

MC: That is, that is a name that we've got, but we've never delved any further, that's why you're here.

BH: Yeah. Well, I used to call him, anyway, Uncle Dan and he was just a lovely person. And he lived down in Norman Goble's house after my mom and dad lived there. Then uncle Dan lived there until he left this area and went over to Vancouver Island. Then sometime after that, long time after that, I think Norm and Edie came. But the funny thing, when I'm looking around here, I remember the phone. It used to be so funny the phone, and daddy... Our number here or daddy's number here was Steveston One and I always thought that was, people used to laugh, Steveston One.

MC: You mentioned that because that's significant in that it probably means that that was the very first telephone in the area. (correction: first phone was in the town of Steveston)

BH: I would imagine, yes.

MC: So where was the phone?

BH: I always thought it was down there (gestured in direction of George Shorey's desk) or it could have been, it was either.... But now that I'm here it could have been there or there. Can't remember. But anyway it was fun having that number Steveston one and our house, over there, we were Steveston 3. So we thought that was... In fact, I think until I left home, we kept that number for a long and the shop did too. That was funny.

MC: Would that have been like a wooden box phone then?

BH: Yeah, right. With operator knowing everything. I was going to get, now you were going to ask me things and I was going to get my notes out, cause....

MC: Sure. Well, you just fire away anything [that you want to mention].

BH: I've noticed that I'm not quite sure. I just wanted to mention everything I remembered.

MC: I mean its so fascinating to find out little bits about, about your dad and there's not that much written so we just have to.... Jack remembers, Jack Weinrauch worked here as a carpenter,

MC: and he remembers your dad oh vividly and talking with him. And he told us about the pipe and...

BH: And always had a dog with him.

MC: A dog.

BH: Yeah, always a dog came. Well for years it was Moses, the one, the dog we found in the ditch, it was crippled. But she just loved him. She was a girl but we called her Moses, we didn't know. And you know, daddy always had a dog, it used to sleep (here) and go back and forth with him. And has anybody mentioned the hours daddy used to keep?

MC: No.

BH: Oh yeah, babysitting the boats. He would, sometimes we wouldn't see him 'til three or four in the morning. And mom would be worried so she would get my brother and I up, because we couldn't be left alone, and we'd all have to come up, up the dyke in the dark to see if daddy was all right because by 3 or 4 in the morning, its a long time. And he couldn't always hear the phone. So we couldn't always get him by phone because he'd be down in the boats doing the engines. Or else out on that slip working in the engines where he couldn't see the phone. So he kept some hours. And then if the winds would blow, daddy would have to get up in the middle of the night and trot up here and secure all the boats and make sure that nothing was happening.

MC: Do you remember any specific storms or anything?

BH: No, I remember flood. You know, really a bad flood where he had to row up here and he tied the boat to the front

of our house and got in a row boat and rowed. That was strange.

MC: Actually Gerry (Miller) mentioned about going along the boardwalk to school and sometime the water level coming right up and soaking him on his bicycle so...

BH: Yeah, it got very, very high.

MC: Do you ever remember it freezing here?

BH: Yeah, in the back field, there would be, where it would flood, then it would freeze and we could skate. Yeah, I remember that now but I wouldn't if you hadn't mentioned it. If you hadn't mentioned it. But now that you mentioned it, sure. That was when it was great because it was nice, nice for ice skating and daddy was a pretty good ice skater.

MC: So as a teenaged girl then, you lived here as well?

BH: Um huh.

MC: Did you bring like class mates down to the site? And have big parties and...

BH: Yeah, at home, over there (Shorey house), yeah. We didn't really do much here, I mean. But one thing I think is remarkable, when you think of it compared to now- a-days, you know I was a little child just running free and I really did get freedom. And I never was spoken to, even in an unkind way or a thoughtless way, so with that much freedom all my life, running around here with so many quote, unquote, rough types. They were certainly excellent quality rough types, I'd say.

MC: Excellent quality! A good calibre of rough types.

BH: Yeah, yeah, right, right. But with the Chinese and the Japanese people that.... The Chinese people were, except for the Chongs that lived behind. But Mr. Darling, Magistrate Darling, he has nothing to do with, with this place. I keep, I just have to keep clued into this place because they just lived on our road like when the cannery road was just planks and boards and we used to walk up. Yeah, as a teenager, we'd just, I would bring kids home for parties and our parents all chaperoned us and we went all over the island to different homes on Friday nights and we'd have parties. But we didn't ever come up here to the site. It just wasn't...

MC: Now to get to school how would you go? Would you walk to school?

BH: I always went down the cannery road whether it was planks, and it was planks. Down to, was it Moncton Street, and along and then up No. 1 Road. And then when we went into Cambie (High School), we could ride the tram or we could ride our bicycles. So I did both of those. But I didn't walk along the dyke, Gerry probably did. I, we could go along the dyke down towards the Imperial Cannery. Really there was a lot of competition between the canneries because I didn't want to go anywhere near the Imperial Cannery. I was convinced it was full of danger, all kinds. Numerous dangers.

MC: Did your dad ever tell you stories about when the cannery was converted from, you know, from being a cannery to a shipyard? Did he ever tell you about that?

BH: No.

MC: That would have been beginning days and of course he was the manager here.

BH: No, no, because the only thing I can remember is, I don't think I really... I just remember it as it is now. Yeah.

MC: There was a packing house to the east, do you remember that?

BH: A packing house to the east? A packing house? No.

MC: We thought you might have known who, who took it down.

BH: No, I don't remember that.

MC: And, and the fire of 1918, did you ever hear anything (pertaining to that)?

BH: No.

MC: I'll just keep asking questions.

BH: In Steveston?

MC: Yeah. That was the one when quite a number of the hotels were flattened and...

BH: Oh, I don't know.

MC: Now, you wouldn't have been around.

BH: No, no.

MC: Did your dad ever tell you stories about the rum runners?

BH: Oh yeah, yeah, but I don't really know anything about them other than that they came and went and I guess they used this place. That's all I really know. I can't add anything to it, because I, my memory of it is so dim. But I just remember, you know, hearing about it.

MC: Was this place called the Britannia Shipyard or was is called the Britannia Machine Shop?

BH: Oh, that's, that's funny. I don't know what people called it, people who did business here, I have no idea what they called it. We called it daddy's shop, that's how it goes. This whole area is daddy's shop. But it was, I heard the men referring to it, they just say the Britannia.

MC: The Britannia, okay.

BH: Yeah.

MC: When did your dad retire? What year was that?

BH: Oh good question. Oh boy, lets see, he died in '67, I think. Probably '64, I'm not sure.

MC: The family home here, how long did your family live in that?

BH: Let me see. Now, that's another thing I'm not sure of too because I don't know when they moved from the house that was uncle Dan Patterson's house into the... Oh, I guess you just mean on the site, you don't mean necessarily.... Oh well I guess, daddy must have come in 1919 or 1920.

MC: And your mother lived there right up 'til...

BH: Til a year after Daddy died, that would be, I think it would be '67.

MC: That's a long time.

BH: Yeah. It's over 40 years but I just....

MC: Do you know who built the house? Was it, was it built by ABC or...? Actually your mom might know that.

BH: She might know who built it. I don't know, the Lords lived in it before we did. Bill, Bill Lord and his family lived in it. But who actually built it? I did understand that it was added on to by different people. (Bill's wife's name was Vida)

MC: What about the orchard? We've heard lots of good stories about the orchard. Do you know who planted that?

BH: No. The Mars lived there, the Mars family.

MC: I don't know how safe it is to walk along here.

BH: I don't know who planted the orchard. No, because it was, it was a good size orchard when I was a child, so it must have been planted long, long ago.

MC: It seemed to be a real draw for all the kids around.

BH: Oh yeah, it was great. It was nice and big and wonderful to play there and very beautiful. Yeah, there was lots of good places to play.

MC: Do you know who, like your Dad would have had a boss. Somebody...

BH: A boss?

MC: A boss.

BH: Oh yeah.

MC: The name Buster McKenzie does that...

BH: Oh sure, Buster, yeah

MC: So you do remember there was a person.

BH: Oh, yeah, oh, I thought you were going way back when I was little.

MC: Oh no, no.

BH: Oh I thought, oh sure, I remember bosses since I was, when I was older, I thought we were still back when I was little. Oh sure, yes, and I remember, you know, Bill Lord, and yeah, and Buzz, sure. But when I was little I don't remember anybody. I don't think there was, there was no body at the cannery there couldn't have been anyone. Because the cannery wasn't working and there was nobody, there was no office, there was nothing. Yeah, this was a later time. Oh sure.

MC: One of the aspects that we haven't been able to get too much information on is the internment. And if you can remember [it happening].

BH: Yeah, I remember that. Yeah, I do remember that.

MC: Did they just, did they just all go away and their places deserted?

BH: Yeah, it was so sudden for them. They tried to give their belongings to people that would look after the things for them and yet they really didn't have very much, a lot of them. Some of them did but very few really. Most of them lived a really stripped down life style so that there wasn't much to give away, in a lot of these places where the people that worked in the cannery lived. Other families did have things and they tried to give them to their Caucasian friends that would look after them until they came back. And we had quite a few pieces of furniture, and an encyclopedia, and a sewing machine, and a bed suite and stuff that we looked after for them until they, you know, could come back and get it, which they did.

MC: What was the feeling, Barbara, that you had in school?

BH: Oh, just devastating sadness. I mean, I used to just start to cry every day because they were our school mates and our really close friends. It was horrible and the Japanese themselves were crying. It was awful.

MC: Now some of them would have come back and then were you would have been re-united, but I'm sure not all.

BH: I don't... None of the ones I knew came back. I've lost track of the ones that I knew really well. And of course I think I was gone from here before any of them were, get around to coming back really.

MC: Did you know it was going to happen? Or was it, it..

BH: No, it was sudden. I was pretty young though, 9, 10 years old. It was sudden I think we had a few rumblings that trains were going to come, where the tram always ran, and the trains were going to come and then there wasn't... It was sudden. It just seemed that, then every day the trains were there and after school on the way home I had to cross the tracks, so I would always see the people on the trains weeping and the kids waiting and crying. It was, it was a really sad time.

MC: I can imagine. After they left, Barbara who built the boats then? Do you recall that?

BH: They got more in because the war was on. More Caucasians and I don't know who they were or where they came from, I really don't. More came around, that's all I know.

MC: We're standing right in front of this wonderful old building, right now. Can you remember what this might have been used, used for? This is what we call building #13.

BH: Gosh. No, and what about the Japanese store?

MC: The Japanese store?

BH: Okay, okay, just... Well, I just think people lived in here, didn't they? That's what I think.

MC: That's good, that's what we thought too.

BH: I think people lived in here, and these were sort of what I was talking about, I think some of these may be the houses that I was saying where they were really primitives they didn't really have much to give away because or to worry about when they left.

MC: Because it wasn't a large living space.

BH: No, no. But as I did say, some of them did have beautiful things, very nice things. And then there was a man named Yoshida who was the head honcho of all the Japanese.

MC: And do you know where he lived?

BH: He lived on Moncton Street in a big house, I don't know whether its still there, it probably is.

MC: Yoshido?

BH: Yoshida.

MC: Yoshida, okay.

BH: He was somehow, I don't know what he had to do with the Japanese, I don't know, except that he was the important man. And he gave beautiful gifts, I know that, to mom and daddy and I think he gave me a beautiful china doll one time. It was a gorgeous thing. I remember him and I do remember people living here and then there was a little store between daddy's shop and here, a little Japanese store.

MC: Really! Was it on the

BH: On the water side. With the funny... I can see that lady more clearly than I can see anyone. That little old Japanese lady that ran it. It had sea weed and candy. That's why I know about it, candy.

MC: So and did you stopped by here then?

BH: Oh yeah, on the way up to get... Because the only time, we... We did have really strict orders and I was very obedient and we were never allowed to go to Hong Wo's, that was dangerous and perhaps they knew about the opium smokers, I don't know. Mom and dad did maybe, I don't know. But we did together, my brother and I. But I could only go to daddy's shop and only at the time when daddy would be coming home from work, I could come up and meet him. Other than that I wasn't supposed to be running around.

MC: The little shop that you say was here, the little Japanese shop...

BH: Yeah, that was on the way and I would get pennies and stop for candy, on the way.

MC: Okay. What other things would they sell in there?

BH: Sea weed, candy, beats me, pop.

MC: So it wasn't just Japanese articles then, it was....?

BH: Well, it was for Japanese people, it was for what they liked and I guess. I seemed to remember maybe some little orange pop. I don't know, I didn't drink pop. But I think they had that and the candy and the sea weed and it smelled very Japanese when I'd go in. There's a different smell in a Japanese store and it was an interesting smell. And she was a very old lady, unique little lady.

MC: Tiny?

BH: Tiny, yeah, real tiny. Real Japanese in [her], but very little English.

MC: What about [these here] does this bring back any memories?

BH: Oh yeah, this should. But what was in here? Boats maybe (looking at building #12). I think, it seems that they must have done work on boats in here, to me. That's what I would remember as I was coming up.

MC: It has that shape and height doesn't it? There's another one down here a little ways that we're really interested to show you. Would you have, you would have walked along here then to get to your home?

BH: Yeah, on the planks, yeah.

MC: You've got all your notes there, if you think of anything...

BH: Well, I'm just... Its good that you're asking me questions I could scan these notes forever.

MC: This one here, this great big long building (#11).

BH: Isn't that strange now, I'd swear I've never seen this before. Strange looking place, I mean look at it.

MC: Well, you know, it might not be so far fetched that you say that because we understand that it has been relocated, that it used to be right against the back fence.

BH: Oh, okay, that's better, that's better.

MC: We didn't do it to trick you or anything.

BH: No, no, I don't remember anything like this being here.

MC: Actually in this photograph here if you look really carefully, yeah, there we go. Right here, now that's the roof line, this is the roof line of the building as it is now, and if you look really carefully see, you can see sort of an outline of where it used to be.

BH: Oh yes, an outline, that's probably where it used to be.

MC: That's where it used to be way back there.

BH: That makes much better sense.

MC: And so what the Japanese told us, that when they were interned it was there (at the back of the site) but when they came back it was here. So it relocated probably for a different use.

BH: Yeah, the soft, the really soft feeling of the thing changed when the war came, of the place. It...

MC: The soft feeling changed?

BH: For me, yeah it did. Oh yeah, because there was more, more activity, more, more people.

MC: Different people?

BH: So you know, I don't think I'm as full of knowledge as I could be and I always envied everybody that went to Japanese school after school. I thought that was great, all the Japanese kids.

MC: You know Gerry Miller speaks Japanese.

BH: Good, good.

MC: Which is fascinating.

BH: Good for him, that's great.

MC: This area here that's all burnt, that was the Kishi Boatworks and unfortunately it burnt down. Can you show us from here, where...

BH: Oh I guess, where's uncle Dan's? Everything's gone.

MC: [If you can give us a feel for where....] Okay, now the family home and the grove area, the orchard...

BH: Yeah, and ever uncle Dan's place is gone. Must have been right about here, I guess. Right, right around in here. Is there anything on the map of it? No.

MC: I've got another one. Lets see, this is the one, its a reprint of the one that Buster McKenzie sent to us. Okay. Now see this building here is that one there, the net loft, okay. And this one here is that, is that long house, that was relocated up. Now your home, that must be it there.

BH: Right there, right there.

MC: Okay. Okay now, so that's just over in that area. Does that make sense?

BH: Oh, what were these houses? I...

MC: Do you remember those?

BH: No.

MC: I think they were housing for some of the cannery workers. This is what we've been told anyway. And there was a store in here somewhere too.

BH: Yeah, I guess, I guess it would be that building right behind the office.

MC: Okay.

BH: Right there.

MC: Now where, is this the orchard that everyone talks about?

BH: No, no, this is our, the trees around our house. It's over here. Lets see, the office, and our place, and up the dyke, along here. That's it with the big verandah, it was a cook house and a house.

MC: That's what, that's what Jim said, that there was a cook house and I think he said there...

BH: The cook house and the house and the orchard were all there.

MC: What kind of fruit trees were there? Do you remember?

BH: Oh no, I don't. There was a huge pear tree in front of our place. Up the dyke from our place. Doesn't look very huge (looking at the photograph). It seemed huge then. And I don't know what kind of trees, its just that, it seemed like there was more foliage. What year was this taken I wonder? It must be fairly old.

MC: Yeah, it is fairly old and do you know I don't know the exact date. (photograph taken in 1947)

BH: Because the store wasn't always there.

MC: No.

BH: So its not very old either.

MC: But this was the, this was the one photo that Buster was able to lend us.

BH: Yeah, that's good.

MC: But this is kind of fascinating.

BH: And there was this... Well, this place down here that, where mom and daddy started out, where Dan Patterson lived, there was a long board sidewalk down and then there was all meadow and then the cook house. Yeah and there was always a big wisteria on the side of that house.

MC: And that's the home that Norm Gobles...

BH: Norm and Edie lived there for a while.

MC: ..after..

BH: After they were married.

MC: Norm's going to come and talk with us one day with Buster (McKenzie) and Gerry (Miller).

BH: Oh, that'll be good. Yeah, cause I think Norm came when I was quite small. I can't remember, in pig tails anyway. So, just before the war I guess.

MC: Did you keep in touch with Gerry, you went to school with Gerry but then...

BH: We must have travelled in different circles. Cause you know I can't remember him except for first grade. Just off and on and I don't think... I can't really remember him very well. Yeah, well, if you go with different groups. I can't... We had this little teen club and such but I can't remember Gerry being in it, I don't think he was. I'm not, I'm not sure of much. I think Norman will be full of information because he, I'm sure he remembers and he was here all the years I wasn't and I think he'd just be an excellent resource. And of course Buster.

MC: When you were walking along there, what kind of memories did it bring back to you? Can you see things again? Can you see the boardwalk and...

BH: Oh yeah.

MC: ...and the workers walking.

BH: The boardwalk and the way people used to just come up and down the dyke. But there wasn't, I guess when I was older, I just didn't walk around very much. When I was littler, it was, everything was just slow, peaceful. With such polite, polite Japanese people, so, so very polite.

MC: Specific restrictions of some areas (discussing roped off areas on the site). It must have been fun to have been able to bounce along here and to explore where ever you wanted.

BH: Yeah, kind of. In a way it was, in a way though it was just so lonely and isolated. I don't know.

MB: It seems to me that it might have been a bit dangerous playing around here.

BH: Oh yes it was, it was terrible. If I raised children, I would be long gone. Yes, the edges, and the, those big vats of lye for the nets.

MB: Oh yeah.

MC: Where would they have been?

BH: Out on, out on the wharves there, where the nets were. Just huge wooden vats full of lye and you know I think of teetering along there looking in the lye, oh my goodness.

MB: Even when you were playing in the machine shop with all the tools and such.

MC: [And the lathe].

BH: Yeah. I didn't have any restrictions there, only when, when daddy was welding, I couldn't get too close or not look. But yeah, right. It seems so, so long ago. So very long ago.

MC: We're walking over to the boatworks there. []

BH: What I do know is that I think my dad was a very special man in his devotion and that he was very fortunate that he was so happy with his work and he loved it. And I think that was, made a great life for him and he didn't mind the long hours, it was fine, because it was his love. And other than that he played bridge a lot. Another love of his was ball games. What was it he went to, I don't know, I think it was maybe soccer. Maybe that was it, maybe football, soccer.

MC: Did he play sports himself?

BH: Badminton, other than that, no.

MC: That's where you said the net loft was.

BH: Yeah and I don't see it there, its sort of those strange buildings that weren't there, are there where that one was.

MC: We'll just move over this way a little bit.

BH: Sure. Oh, and I was recalling that daddy made candle sticks and lamps and he made a smoking table and ash trays. And he made a wine goblet that he gave to mom on the night he asked her to marry him. That's really pretty and he made all these things on the brass lathe. So he's made some really nice things. Other than that...

MC: Other workers remember a really tiny lathe, the 24 inch one.

BH: Maybe that's the one he did the finer work on, yeah.

MC: And that was just by his desk.

BH: Yeah.

Bad sound, lots of interference

MC: They are supposed to be about one, about one month away from (completing the skiff).

BH: From completion. As I look at that now and see how, see how really interesting it is but what I remember, I mean this was all so ordinary and we were all longing for something else. I mean this was just well, drab. Terrible so it just wasn't all that interesting.

MC: And now its fascinating.

BH: Oh, of course, now its just great.

MC: Now it lost, close to being a lost art.

BH: I should say.

MC: Okay, maybe we should walk back this way, Marie was saying that there's interference. The metal roof up there now, is that how you remember it?

BH: No, no, I think I remember shakes. I think, but I'm not sure of anything.

MC: Actually from some of the old photographs we could see that there was a little bit different roof line, as well.

BH: And daddy was the air raid warden for the dyke during the war. I don't know whether anyone mentioned that.

MC: No.

BH: We had gas masks, it was a riot. We had, in our house, we had to, of course, make the big black out things for the windows, daddy made. You know, get all that. And then daddy being the air raid warden, we'd try on the gas masks, and then I guess I was old enough to go, my brother was too little, but I'd go with daddy up the dyke at night and I'd think it was fun cause I got to wear this helmet thing and carry a gas mask. It was so stupid. Well, I guess you know it wasn't really. But it felt funny and it was a great lark. Go out with our flash lights and checking to see if there was any lights up and down the dyke, it was kind of funny. But that's you know, it just seemed so deserted too, it was because the Japanese were all gone, there was just nothing for a while there. It was just, it was ghostly going up the dyke with, with no people. And they were, they were the best neighbours. We, we never locked a door, I mean they were so honest.

MC: Did they have gardens? Do you remember that?

BH: Yeah, they had, they used to raise their gardens. Sort of around the cook house and around in there, there was some Japanese gardens. And they did...

MC: You mean they were in like boxes?

BH: I don't know how they raised them up but they would raise them because the ground was very wet.

MC: Yes.

BH: So I can't remember how they raised them, I just know they were up high and we thought it was interesting that there were garden plants up high somehow. Yeah, they had, they had gardens around here on some of the cannery land down that way.

MC: Jim Kishi, the fellow who's the mentor for this (skiff) project right now, he lived right in behind there, in behind the boatworks. There's another name, does the name Lanky Mizuguchi?

BH: Yeah, Lanky, Mizuguchi, yeah. Yeah I remember those guys.

MC: You remember those?

BH: I didn't know them well, but we all knew.... It was sort of, we all knew who each other was, the ones that came up here.

MC: Now this boardwalk here, that just ends there now, do you recall it?

BH: It goes straight up. Because the planks were, of course were going the other way, yeah.

MC: Okay.

BH: And went up to Hong Wo's.

MC: About how far up was that Hong Wo Store? Where you peeked in to the... Was it quite a, quite a little jaunt?

BH: Yeah, it would be the same probably as from that large building, that far again, up to there. And Hong Wo had a big fancy store. And then we used to see the China men after, I don't know where did they come from, well I guess when the cannery was open they used to parade single file with their strange clothing and the big Chinese sun hats on. Just I, they were something. They'd go back up to Hong Wo's to their, to their quarters. I guess as I say they were, they were really slaves.

MC: They walked along here in single file?

BH: Yeah, single file, yeah. When I think about it now it was quite... And then when I got a little bit older and the war was still on, we used to help in the cannery if our grades were good enough we could get out of school and work, if it was anything to do with producing food for the war. So I used to do that. And work up in the... Come home from school and then my girlfriend, Shirley Fisher and I would work up in the can loft. Just helping out. And there was an old Chinaman up there. I still eat canned salmon but.. But, and he [used to], you know he was just a little tiny shrivelled up, little old chinaman but he used to urinate in the cans and then send them right down the line. You know, just right down the line they'd go. And my friend and I were just about fainting and then, so then we went to whoever, I've forgotten who was in charge, Pearl I think, and we told her we couldn't work up stairs and we couldn't help there any more. We couldn't work up there any more. So we didn't. But that's just a memory that stays. But you see, I

wouldn't swim in the river you notice, but I do eat the canned salmon, yes. So there's a discrepancy there or something. That's just not hanging together is it.

MC: Now your friend's last name was Fisher, would that [have been a relative to Cec?]

BH: Yeah, Cec's daughter. She and I were best friends.

MC: And what was her name?

BH: Shirley.

MC: Shirley. If you're too chilly we can stand inside there.

BH: Oh sure. Well I've got this scarf on because my grandson has a sore throat and I don't want to catch it, I'm just keeping the scarf around my head.

MC: See this old winch in here.

BH: Oh yeah.

MC: We're just in the process of, John, is in the process of getting it all cleaned up and see he's just discovered these two, you know, brass handles. It's wonderful.

BH: Oh wow, all right. Isn't that, yeah, that's great. I remember the boats coming up on the winch.

MC: Do you?

BH: Yeah. The Laurel Leaf and the Fir Leaf, all the names of the old, old boats.

MC: The Pine Leaf. And there's, there's an owl that lives in here.

BH: Really, oh how nice, great.

MC: We haven't seen it for a while. Way down in the rafters. Lots of activity must have... Did you, you come through here, I guess to go down to your dad's?

BH: Oh yeah. Up through here and up there. Yeah, there would be big packers usually, up on these slips and daddy would be working on them. He'd come along and jump over the water, the water was, seemed to be higher then. Or maybe the river was higher then, who knows, sure.

MC: Do you ever remember your dad having any accidents or ever hear of any accidents on the site?

Brief unrelated conversation with Jim Kishi

BH: Yeah, I think that's really all I remember. Accidents, no I really don't, I just remember Mr. Seaton drowning up here at the shop, up here on the site and Herbie, Herbie drowning.

MC: Seaton, that's, that's not a name that sounds familiar, what would his job would be?

BH: He was just one of the men that worked here. I don't, you know, I don't know what his job would be. I, I really don't know.

BH: And his son drowned in the river, not here at the shop but somewhere down towards the Imperial Cannery, his son drowned. So it was a sad thing for the family. We helped them move into Vancouver. So I only remember the two drownings. I don't really remember any accidents that I know of. I don't think daddy had any.

MC: Do you know how they happened? Did they just slip off the dock?

BH: Slip. They usually just slipping. Yeah, that's why we would worry so much at night when daddy was really late. We used to worry because he'd be up here, you know completely alone and he was a good swimmer. And that was his other love, by the way, was Point Roberts, daddy dearly loved our cabins there. We're at the bottom of a 100 foot cliff. And there's just, there's just nine of us, and we're all... Mom and daddy were the first and so they're all good

friends of mom and daddy's and my cousins next door. So its nice, its remote, its not like regular Point Roberts.

MC: That's the big clay cliffs there?

BH: Yeah, there's nine little cabins down at the very bottom. So that was his other love. And I guess these men slipped just jumping from boat. They used to jump from boat to boat, sometimes if the boats would be two or three deep they would. The men would just jump. It was precarious I guess. And Herbie was the bookkeeper.

MB: So he really shouldn't have been jumping from boat to boat.

BH: I guess he was coming up here with a message. I saw him go up, I was sitting on my front steps and I watched Herbie go up the dyke. I watched Herbie a lot. Herbie, his hobby was shooting cats and I'm a cat lady. I love cats. I mean, I just I loved all my cats I had at home and I've always had a cat no matter where I lived, I had a cat. And Herbie, I had my eye on Herbie because he said he'd shoot....

MC: What did he use to shoot? A pellet gun?

BH: Some kind of a long, I don't know. I never got close enough to the gun but it wasn't a little revolver. It was a long thing, a little rifle, I don't know what it was. But that's what he did. And then one day he went up the dyke with a message from the office and I waited and waited a long time and he didn't come back. And finally he came back on a stretcher or, you know, something they'd made to carry the body, with a sheet over it, so. So he drowned. Well, I wasn't that mad at him, I felt terrible that he slipped and drowned. But Herbie was an epileptic and they think that he may have had a seizure when he was jumping around the boats. That's just what they surmise. But that's the only accidents that I know of. There probably were a lot after I left. But I left, I think it was 1947, I went to Bermuda. So you can imagine a little girl who just ran around these dykes and I spent a night in New York city all alone, I mean I always had guts but that was funny to me. When I look back now I think that was pretty funny.

MC: You went to Bermuda and did you just vacation there?

BH: Oh no, no, no. I lived there for about three years. -----

BH: I'm planning on bringing some of my grand children when its more complete, take them through here.

End of Interview