



PACIFIC MOUNTAIN REGION

**Bob Stewart
Archives**

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

Interview with Margaret Eto

December 2nd, 2019

Oral History Recording Summary

Interviewee: Margaret Eto

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Transcribed by: Victoria McAuley

Interviewed by: Kimiko Karpoff

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Time Log (minutes)	Description of Content
00:01	Beginning of Interview. Introduction, permission, and information about early church involvement
01:56	Sunday school in Rosebery and Bayfarm
02:56	Moving to Vancouver and attending VJUC
05:48	Church activities (including: Baby Band, serving on the board, purchasing the church, and the bazaar)
10:39	Influential congregants (including: Chizu Uchida, Tosh Seki, Keiko Goto, and Frances Miyashita)
12:00	Christmas dinner
12:53	Impact of moving churches
14:36	Rummage sales
16:40	Powell Street United Church and pre-war Vancouver, specifically: Japantown

Time Log (minutes)	Description of Content
20:01	The war years and internment (including Rosebery and Bayfarm/Slocan)
23:16	Post-war and moving to Japan
26:41	Returning to Vancouver (including: working at a Japanese military base, and as a typist)
28:32	Returning to the United Church in Vancouver (including: Nisei Fellowship, writing/performing skits, and ladies' choir)
32:56	Chizu Uchida and Grace Namba
37:27	Culture change from Japan to Vancouver
43:10	Final thoughts
43:51	End

KK: This is Kimiko Karpoff and I'm here with Margaret Eto. We're in Vancouver. It's December the 2nd, 2019. Margaret, I just need you to confirm that you understand that you're being recorded and that you're fine with that.

ME: Yes, I am.

KK: Great. So, we're here talking about the Vancouver Japanese United Church. And Margaret was someone, you were someone who was there back when it was formed. So, I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about just your involvement with the church and then we'll just kinda have a conversation.

ME: Actually, I became involved with the United Church when I lived in Rosebery, I was only about 11 years old, but Miss Gwen Suttie started the Sunday school there, in Rosebery.

KK: Oh, okay.

ME: There was no other denomination except for maybe a Buddhist group or something, but there were no Christian churches in Rosebery. So, the United Church was the only one and they started kindergarten there and Sunday school. Which I start attending. And...

KK: That was your first...

ME: The first involvement with the United Church. Prior to that, I was, I belonged to the Anglican Church...

KK: Okay.

ME: In fact, I was baptized Anglican...

KK: Ah.

ME: While I lived in Rosebery. But, [laughter]...

KK: Okay.

ME: That's another story. So Miss Gwen Suttie was a lady who started the kindergarten as well and my younger sister was involved in the kindergarten and I went to Sunday school. And, belonged to the Explorers Club at that time.

KK: Um-hm.

ME: I remember studying the scriptures every week.

KK: And so, tell us a little bit about the Sunday school during that time. Were there lots of children in that Sunday school? Was it only... 01:56

ME: Well, I can't...

KK: Was it only Japanese children? Or was it mixed?

ME: Oh, just Japanese children. 'Cause there was only one Caucasian child and she was the station master's daughter. She was the only Caucasian we knew, other than that they were all Japanese.

KK: Oh, okay. Alright. And what size of a Sunday school would it have been?

ME: It was a quite small as I recall.

KK: Okay.

ME: Yes. Even when I moved to Bayfarm a few years later, there was no United Church in Bayfarm, so I used to walk over to the Slocan City Anglican Church because there was no United Church in Bayfarm. But even at that there were only about two of us attending Sunday school in Slocan City.

KK: Oh, okay.

ME: So, you know, most kids, I guess, didn't attend anywhere; they just, you know...

KK: Okay. So, how did you come to be in Vancouver?

02:56

ME: Well, we went to Japan in 1946. No, '48, I'm sorry.

KK: Uh-huh.

ME: And came back. I came back 10 years later. I'm sorry it was 1946 to '56. So I spent 10 years in Japan.

KK: Okay. As a teenager.

ME: Yes, as a teenager. And I came back in 1956. I was 19 years old. And I started going to the United Church when Sumi Yoshida, who's still really active in the Uni[tred Church]—she was the one who introduced me to the United Church.

KK: Okay.

ME: So I started going there. And in the beginning, I think one of the services I used to attend was under Rev. Tad Mitsui. He was the one who was, well he was their Japanese minister.

KK: Okay.

ME: But he also had a service for the English-speaking people. Separately.

KK: Right.

ME: Um-hm, and that's what I attended.

KK: You attended the English-speaking one.

ME: Yes, English-speaking one.

KK: Okay.

ME: And I, in those days, I recall that Rev. Val Anderson was quite involved. And he would, you know, we would have some services.

KK: Um-hm.

ME: ...with him. And also there were house meetings as I recall. And Rev. Val Anderson would chair those too.

KK: Um-hm.

ME: Then, shortly after that, I think we moved to the Renfrew United Church upstairs where [there was] a small room [where] we used to hold our services.

KK: So, when you first arrived, where were the services held?

ME: On Columbia Street.

KK: Okay. On Columbia Street.

ME: Yes.

KK: And then you moved to Renfrew.

ME: Yes. And it was there in Renfrew that we got Rev. Kenneth Moy as our minister.

KK: Ah, okay.

ME: And that's when we became a separate congregation. English-speaking congregation was established there, while we were there.

KK: So, you would have still been a young adult. Were you part of the Young Adult group that was happening?

ME: No, I was an older adult actually; I was late 20's then.

KK: Well that's still pretty young!

Both: [Laughter]

ME: But at that time, you know.

KK: Okay.

ME: Mhm.

KK: What kind of activities do you remember doing with the church?

ME: Well, I should also [mention] Grace Namba, you know. I'm sure her name came up quite a bit...

KK: Yes.

ME: Yes, she was really involved then; of course, she used to have Baby Band, and I wasn't aware of what that was all about, but she would invite, you know, all the students, the service for adults and so on. And when she found out I took shorthand, she recruited me to be a board member and a secretary.

05:48

- KK: Oh.
- ME: So that's how I got involved, and...
- KK: Ah. So you were on the board?
- ME: Yes. So, I was involved in that part of the church.
- KK: So you were on the board during what years would that have been?
- ME: Well, actually it would have been from about 1969 to even after I retired. 19... I moved to Port Moody in 1990 and [pause] and I had been attending regularly prior to that, but after I moved to Port Moody I couldn't attend, you know, on every Sunday.
- KK: Umm.
- ME: So my attendance dropped off a bit. But it was then that I stopped being the secretary.
- KK: So you were quite involved then between like 1956-ish--
- ME: No, no I wasn't.
- KK: Oh.
- ME: I wasn't aware of what happened prior to 1958.
- KK: Okay.
- ME: So this is a gap where maybe someone like Sumi Yoshida can fill in a bit.
- KK: So you were there from 1958 to 1990.
- ME: Yes.
- KK: Okay. Can you describe some of the highlight activities that you remember participating in with the church?
- ME: Well of course, the biggest thing was the purchase of the church.
- KK: Okay.
- ME: Which was engineered by Gordon Imai.
- KK: Right.
- ME: And the Japanese minister was Rev. Norisue but it was Gordon Imai who, you know, was the architect for the whole deal.
- KK: Right, and what do you remember about finding the church and the conversations that were happening when that was going on?
- ME: Well we had already been attending the church on Victoria Drive, along with the Caucasian group who was already there. But because they wanted to sell the church...
- KK: Umm.

- ME: ...due to the decrease in attendance; the congregations getting old and all that, so that's when Rev. Imai thought it would be a good idea to try to purchase a church.
- KK: So, I'm interested in hearing about the activities of the church. 'Cause I know there was lots that happened there.
- ME: Oh yes. Of course the big one was the bazaar which we did jointly with the Issei. We couldn't have done it without them, because they were the ones who taught us how to make the manju and all that.
- KK: Um-hm.
- ME: And that was a big seller. But we participated in different ways with the dried goods and the baking.
- KK: Um-hm.
- ME: And, in the early years we used to make cherry blossoms. That's why we called it the Cherry Blossom Bazaar.
- KK: Right.
- ME: And Keiko Goto was responsible for getting us all, for organizing that. And we did that for many years.
- KK: Um-hm.
- ME: We [took] branches and put artificial cherry blossoms on it.
- KK: So you learned. Did you learn to make manju from the Issei congregation members?
- ME: Well, the people who were involved, yes. I wasn't but a lot of them did learn from the Issei congregation.
- KK: And what did you do? What was your speciality?
- ME: Well, nothing much.
- Both: [Laughter]
- ME: But I usually enjoyed making the cherry blossoms. One year I remember, Gloria and I co-chaired the bazaar.
- KK: Yep.
- ME: But the other years were co-chaired by Keiko Goto, different people.
- KK: Um-hm. And so what does it mean to co-chair the bazaar?
- ME: Well, it means organizing everything, and making sure you have enough staffing for this and that.
- KK: Um-hm. Tell me some of the people that you remember, who were there.
- ME: Very active then?

10:39

KK: Yeah.

ME: Of course Chizu was always front and centre in everything then. And she was the treasurer [for] most bazaars, bazaar fund, and that type of function.

KK: Yep.

ME: She used to sell the tickets and Tosh Seki was our treasurer. He looked after all the financial part.

KK: Um-hm.

ME: And, Keiko Goto, she was very active, but it was people like Frances Miyashita, Becky's mother, she used to organize the udon. And the udon was so tasty. She used to make it from chicken, you know, base, make her own base and it was very popular because it was one of the best udon you could ever have.

KK: I remember, actually.

ME: Oh do you?

KK: I do.

ME: Yes.

KK: I went to those bazaars. [Laughter]. Yes. Maybe not back in the early days, but certainly in the '70s.

ME: Yes. That was one big event, and the other event was the annual Christmas dinner.

12:00

KK: Okay.

ME: Here again. Frances was the one who organized the dinner itself. And people would bake the turkey at home, several people would volunteer; your aunt [Gloria] was one of them.

KK: Yeah.

ME: You know, they would volunteer to make the turkey and bring it. So we would have several turkeys, and we sold tickets to these dinners. They were very popular.

KK: So was it traditional?

ME: Traditional.

KK: Turkey dinner?

ME: Turkey dinner. With all the usual trimmings.

KK: Right.

ME: Yes.

KK: And who would come to those dinners?

ME: Well this is where people other than the regular church folks would come. They would bring their family or friends, and so yes, we had a good turnout.

KK: I wonder... I guess part of what makes up the history of a place or a group like the congregation, is really, it's really about the people as much as the building. How did moving, or *did* moving to that building... how did it shape the congregation do you think?

12:53

ME: Well it did affect us in some ways. Mind you, Renfrew was not a very central location, but this Victoria Drive, people would have to travel from all over, you know, 'cause very few people lived close to that area. And so we had people come in from far and wide. But they faithfully attended, you know.

KK: So people drove in.

ME: Drove in. Even from, say, North Vancouver, Richmond, you know.

KK: Um-hm.

ME: But, as you grew older, this was one of the problems. Because, you know, it was not centrally located. A lot of us would stop driving, had stopped driving.

KK: Ah.

ME: And so...

KK: Right.

ME: ...this became one of the problems.

KK: Yeah. Um-hm. I'm picturing the building. What do you remember about that space?

[Pause].

ME: All I remember is that we used to spend a lot of hours down in the basement preparing for the rummage sales.

14:36

KK: Oh. How often did those happen?

ME: Once a month.

KK: I, okay, this is the first I've heard about these these rummage sales. So tell me about them.

ME: Oh is that right? That was very popular for several years.

KK: So what is a rummage sale? What happens?

ME: Well, its people who have donated, you know, clothing and different things, household items. And of course we used to sell them at the

bazaar but there would always be so much left over we would have these rummage sales every month. And people from the neighbourhood would come to them.

KK: Oh, okay.

ME: And this was a big draw. And, so, this was not a big fundraiser, but it was something that kept a lot of the women, you know, involved.

KK: Yeah. Okay, so it was clothing and just whatever people had to donate?

ME: Yes, so people would donate. Anytime people moved, they would donate furniture, household goods, everything and anything, you know.

KK: Wow. Wow. Okay, so that's an interesting thing. Once a month, and so what years would you have been running the rummage sale?

ME: It was only until a few years ago actually, you know. Before we closed down the church, maybe two years before we closed down the church. Disbanded.

KK: Um-hm.

ME: The rummage sale was being, you know, run by the other ladies. I wasn't actively involved in that then, by that time.

KK: Margaret, where, where did your family live before the war?

ME: In Vancouver.

KK: You did?

ME: Yes.

KK: What part of Vancouver?

ME: Right in Japantown.

KK: Oh, you did!

ME: Yes.

KK: Ah. And so do you remember the old building that was the old United Church? 16:40

ME: Yes, I do. Which is now the Buddhist church.

KK: Yeah.

ME: Yes, I remember the building and because I used to go to Sunday school across the street. The Holy Cross.

KK: Oh, okay. But you went to the Anglican Church.

ME: Yes, before the war.

KK: But you were in the neighbourhood.

ME: Yes.

KK: Okay. Tell me about that neighbourhood.

ME: Well, it was very comfortable you might say being, you know, mostly Japanese, and yet, I can remember some European children, European people came to live close by and we became friends right away.

KK: Um-hm. Yep.
ME: But in the beginning it was mainly Japanese.
KK: And so you spoke Japanese in your family?
ME: In the home yes. And we attended Japanese school.
KK: Okay. And how about the church?
ME: The church. Like I said, we all went to kindergarten there but, I was the only one who stayed in, you know, with the church.
KK: So, you went to kindergarten? Tell me again.
ME: Holy Cross.
KK: At the Anglican Church.
ME: Yes.
KK: And was it in English or Japanese?
ME: It was in English.
KK: Okay.
ME: Yes.
KK: So you learned English from going to kindergarten.
ME: Well, I'm sure it helped.
KK: Right.
ME: Yes.
KK: Because you spoke Japanese at home.
ME: Yes.
KK: So yeah. So you would have had to learn English.
ME: Yes.
KK: Not at home.
ME: That's right. It was definitely an advantage going to Sunday school. In fact, even when I was older, I used to think it was an advantage going to Sunday school because you know something that other people may not be aware of with the Bible and stuff like that.
KK: Okay.
ME: I found that [to be true], you know.
KK: Mhm. And so were you born in that area?
ME: Yes.
KK: Okay. So you were born in Japantown? Was there a hospital?
ME: Yes. Oh I was born at home.
KK: You were born at home.
ME: Midwife. Yes.
KK: With a midwife!
ME: Yes, in those days, yes.
KK: Ah, okay. Oh that's interesting. What do you kind of remember about Japantown? Do you remember the shops, or do you remember the activities that happened there?
ME: Not too much except that we used to attend Strathcona, which is, you know, quite close. Strathcona School.

KK: Okay.

ME: From Japantown.

KK: Yep.

ME: Then, after school we would run and go to the Japanese school. Grabbing a bit of snack as we go. And so, it didn't leave too much time for play.

KK: No, I guess it didn't.

ME: Yes.

KK: And so what do you remember about the time when the war happened? How do you remember that happening? 20:01

ME: Well, the fact that we didn't have to go to Hastings Park.

KK: Yeah.

ME: We did visit a friend of ours, a family friend of ours, and I just remember the stench of the place.

KK: Mmmm.

ME: But, as a child you know...

KK: You were how old?

ME: I was about 10.

KK: You were 10. And so how did you become aware that something was happening?

ME: Well, I think, you know, as children we're quite... We thought of it more as an adventure, you know, having to move all the way, you know, going on a train, taking that trip to Slocan Valley was very... it was exciting for us as children.

KK: Mmm.

ME: You know, it was not a bad feeling.

KK: Okay.

ME: That's why when some people say... I think there were older ones who were more affected by it, you know. But the younger ones, I think we just saw it as a vacation. Almost like a holiday.

KK: Right. But you were changing homes.

ME: Yes.

KK: So, what kind of home did you live in in Japantown? And then how did that change when you went to...

ME: Oh, drastically.

KK: Yeah.

ME: Yes. But like I said, we almost thought it was temporary, you know, like when you go to camp or something.

KK: Mhm.

ME: You know, a temporary abode.

KK: Right.

ME: So, I think when you're a child it doesn't affect you as much. You know, those experiences we just... In fact, I personally thought of it more... I can remember only the pleasurable part of those years.

KK: Okay.

ME: You see? So when I read something like "Child in a Prison Camp," I can't understand why she had such a bleak look when, for us, it was just an experience with, you know, it was just like going on a vacation for us.

KK: Right. And do you remember how your parents were reacting in that time?

ME: I think maybe that may have affected us too in the household. Our parents were not really people who took it very hard.

KK: Mmm.

ME: At least, that's my impression.

KK: Right. And so, after you were in Rosebery, you said you went to Japan.

ME: No, we had to move to Bayfarm.

KK: Bay...

Both: Bayfarm.

KK: Which is Slocan. Okay.

ME: And that was a much bigger community, you know, relocation centre.

KK: And was that after the war?

ME: No this was...

KK: Or during?

ME: It was 1945 to '46, so the war had ended.

KK: Okay. And so you were moved, you moved from Rosebery to Bayfarm.

ME: Yes.

KK: And then...

ME: I spent a year there.

KK: Uh-huh.

ME: Before leaving for Japan.

KK: Mmmm.

ME: Because our parents had signed up to go back to Japan.

KK: Right. And so you say it was an adventure to go from Vancouver to Rosebery. How did you feel about going to Japan then?

ME: Well, here again too, I guess all I can think of [is] that: "Oh, I'm just going to be able to wear one of those smart looking midi uniforms." [Laughter]. And I could only think of, really... in fact even for our parents], I'm sure they were shocked when we had, you know, the situation, [how] things were in Japan.

KK: Yeah.

ME: It was such a big shock. Prices were, you know, black market.

KK: Yeah.

ME: And you couldn't even buy rice.

KK: Okay.

23:16

ME: That was a very harsh time for us in Japan, the first few years.

KK: Mmm.

ME: Mhm.

KK: And did your father continue to work through all of this time?

ME: Well, he had property in Japan so that's why he wanted to go back. He said, "No problem. We'll be able to build several houses with the money he has." And he had other properties, paddy fields, you know he's a country boy so...

KK: Oh, okay.

ME: ...paddy fields and so on. So we were quite, how shall I say, we were not concerned. But the whole situation in Japan after the war was just so bad that here we were exposed to things that we never would have imagined. Mind you, moving from Vancouver to the relocation camp, that was such a drastic change, like, outdoor outhouses and that sort of thing in the relocation centre. 24:32

KK: Yeah.

ME: And then to go to Japan, so it wasn't too drastic. It's not like going from Vancouver directly to Japan after the war. So there was like a stepping stone, so it really wasn't as much of a shock as if we had gone directly from Japan, to post-war Japan.

KK: Mmm.

ME: [I mean], directly from Vancouver.

KK: Mhm.

ME: Living in the relocation camps we had to survive a lot of cold, harsh winters without heat and it was a kind of communal bath.

KK: Mhm.

ME: And it was pretty rough in that respect.

KK: And even so, your memories of it are...

ME: Yes, are just...

KK: ...mostly positive.

ME: Yes, yes.

KK: Even though you had no heat.

ME: No heat, no. [Laughter]. Well, we thought that the icicles—we'd never seen icicles like the ones in Rosebery. Just really big, heavy icicles and it was all exciting for us. We learned how to skate!

KK: Okay.

ME: Which we probably wouldn't have done had we lived in Vancouver.

KK: Mhm.

ME: So, we learned how to skate, we learned how to swim because the beautiful lake. And so, I guess it was an adventure for us.

KK: It was an adventure. And then you adventured over to Japan.

ME: Yes.

KK: And...?

ME: That was a bit of a trial.
KK: Yeah.
ME: We adjusted; I mean, we had to. It was the times.
KK: Yeah.
ME: You look on. Everybody's in the same situation.
KK: Yep. So, what made you decide to come back to Vancouver? 26:41
ME: Oh, it was always our desire to come back.
KK: Mmm.
ME: Because it was our father mainly who wanted to go back anyway in the first place.
KK: To Japan?
ME: To Japan.
KK: Mmm.
ME: So, you know, once each one of us, one-by-one, started to come back here, and so it was just a natural step for us to just come back.
KK: And did you parents come back too?
ME: Eventually, yes. We sent for them.
KK: Oh, okay.
ME: Yes.
KK: And, what did you do when you were... Did you have work, did you have a job?
ME: Oh in Japan?
KK: Either place.
ME: Well in Japan, yes, because we spoke English.
KK: Mmm.
ME: All of us were able to work in the military camp nearby.
KK: Ah okay. Alright. And then when you came to Vancouver what did you do?
ME: Oh I found a job through [unclear] here.
KK: What was your career?
ME: Oh, I was a secretary typist (sten[ographer]) but I gradually became a purchasing agent and then operations manager, because I worked for the same company for many, many years.
KK: Oh, okay. Okay. So you were a, a young woman and you were working and you attended the church. Did you live close to that church? What part of Vancouver did you live in?
ME: I lived—no, it wasn't too far.
KK: Yep.
ME: Victoria Drive, yes, where I lived. No it wasn't within walking distance; if you took the bus it was very inconvenient.
KK: Mmm.
ME: But, if you drove it was, you know...

	Time
	28:32
KK:	Mhm. So now you're back in Vancouver, and someone invited you to the church.
ME:	Yes.
ME:	In fact, at that time the Nissei Fellowship was very active.
KK:	Oh.
ME:	But they shortly disbanded. I mean, they disbanded shortly after I started going to the church.
KK:	What were they about?
ME:	I think it was more of a social group.
KK:	Okay.
ME:	Yes.
KK:	And so when you first went to the church, were you part of that?
ME:	Yes I was.
KK:	Yeah.
ME:	Yes, that seemed to be part and parcel, because most of the people [who] came to church were also in that Fellowship. They were very active in that Fellowship. So I think that maybe Sumi can tell you more about how that evolved.
KK:	Right. But what do you remember doing with the Fellowship folks? What did you do?
ME:	Well, I wasn't involved long enough.
KK:	Mmm.
ME:	But I think they had a lot of social things.
KK:	Right.
ME:	Like dances, and...
KK:	And then they disbanded, and did something replace that social gathering?
ME:	No, I don't think so, no. No.
KK:	Mhm. What can you imagine/remember as a highlight moment for you of the church? Something that really stands out?
ME:	I should have given it more thought, but [pause] oh.
KK:	Do you have a story about something, a Christmas concert, or a particular bazaar or...
ME:	Well actually, because my memories are all about the good things, I used to write skits for the church and we used to have skits. Back in those days it was more like a social group, I think, 'cause I used to write the skits and we used to have... [Laughter]. You know, it was not very spiritual, what...
KK:	Well, so tell me about the skits, what were they, when did you perform them?
ME:	Well, like when each time a minister retired I would write a skit about him. [Laughter].
KK:	Really?

ME: Yes. And there was one skit I did which was like a short operetta based on popular songs. But it was about the nativity, which was a bit of a spoof I did, and maybe it wasn't appropriate. [Laughter]. But, you know...

KK: It was fun.

ME: It was fun. At least for me it was fun. It was nice that the people—it's amazing that even the shyest people would get involved. So that was a good thing for people to get involved in.

KK: Oh, okay.

ME: Yes.

KK: Oh, wow. So, did you keep copies of these skits?

ME: Well no, I didn't.

KK: [Laughter]. Well that's too bad. That would have been fun to see. Skits about some of the old ministers. And Christmas. Wow.

ME: Yeah.

KK: Okay. What other things did you do?

ME: Well of course, for a while there we had ladies' choir.

KK: Uh-huh.

ME: And, of course, Gloria was one of them, you know, she has such a lovely voice. And May also—May, Komiyama.

KK: Mmm.

ME: But the rest of us, of course, we just blended in.

KK: Right. And, what did the choir—did you perform at church? Did you do concerts?

ME: Well, you know, special occasions like Christmas or a fair or dinner or something we would sing.

KK: Mmmm. Do you remember any of the most popular things that you liked to sing?

ME: I'm sorry, I can't.

KK: Okay, so you wanted to talk about Grace Namba and Chizu Uchida.

ME: Yes, Grace Namba, as you know, was a deaconess and she was the one who was, she would recruit all these little kids for the Baby Band. Then of course the mothers got involved in that way and they would eventually come to attend church.

KK: So the Baby Band...

ME: Yes.

KK: Is that what you called it?

ME: Yes, that's what it was called. Of course, not being a mother, I wasn't involved in that respect but even Becky could tell you something about that.

KK: Mhm.

ME: She may have been one of the Baby Band, because a lot of the little children at that time, you know, became involved in the church through

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that. The parents got involved in the church through that. The parents might not have been Christians but through their involvement with the Baby Band, the mothers, I'm sure, started coming to church.

KK: Mhm. And that was Grace Namba.

ME: Grace Namba.

KK: Mhm.

ME: And I'd like to see her remembered in some way too.

KK: Mmm.

ME: She would drive and pick up all these kids and she even used to pick me up sometimes, before I started driving. And of course she's the one who encouraged me to become involved.

KK: Okay. How did you know her?

ME: Prior to that, I didn't know. I only met her through the church.

KK: Ah, okay.

ME: Yes. But apparently she was quite involved in the war years. In Greenwood, I believe.

KK: Okay.

ME: And some of the people lived in Greenwood could tell you something about her past.

KK: Mhm. Yeah. Her name, her name comes up often and fondly.

ME: Yes.

KK: Yeah.

ME: Yes, so, I would like to have some mention made of her.

KK: Great. Thank you.

ME: And also Chizu Uchida because she was an organist from probably around 1955 all the way until her demise, you know, which was, what? A few years back. Two years ago?

KK: Okay.

ME: Until our group got disbanded. She was a very dedicated person. She was on the trustees, she was on the board, and so, of course she was our organist and she missed very few Sundays. Very few Sundays, you know.

KK: Mmm.

ME: Really remarkable record.

KK: Wow.

ME: That's why we honoured her at a special luncheon maybe five years ago.

KK: Okay.

ME: Yes. Before we all got scattered or passed away, or whatever.

KK: Right.

ME: So, aside from that, I think she deserves special recognition too somewhere.

KK: Yeah.

ME: Yeah. I would like to see a tree planted in their honour, you know.

KK: A tree planted.

ME: Yes.

KK: Oh, that's an idea.

ME: Yes. That's something I would like to suggest.
[Pause]

KK: Do you have any particular stories about either of these two women?
[Pause]

ME: With Chizu it would be, it has to be, her dedication and she used to be so outspoken that even the Issei ministers were afraid of her.

Both: [Laughter].

ME: Not the ministers but Issei board when we would have a joint board or something. [Laughter]. Very outspoken, and I thought that was wonderful. Having come from Japan, I thought: "Wow, how refreshing to be able to speak up like that."

KK: Okay.

ME: [Laughter] That was what impressed me.

KK: And what did she speak out about?

ME: Well, of any issues she would speak out and not like the Japanese way of women not speaking out and all that.

KK: Mmm.

ME: I thought that, coming from Japan where we would just say "hai hai" to everything. [Laughter].

KK: Right.

KK: And how was that for you to be changing cultures? You went from Vancouver to then... 37:27

ME: Japan.

KK: Well, yeah, Rosebery.

ME: Yes.

KK: And then Japan.

ME: Yes.

KK: And then back. How was that for you? I mean, you grew up in Canada.

ME: Yes. But like I said, going to internment camp was not as [unclear] going from Vancouver straight to post-war Japan.

KK: Right, I was imagining that to be kind of about the living conditions and stuff, but what about the cultural stuff?

ME: Oh cultural, oh yes, there was the cultural diff[erence]. Like I said, in just even in personalities, you know.

KK: Um-hm.

ME: Like, in Japan, you would never speak out again a senior person like that. Especially a minister or someone, you know.

KK: Mmm.

ME: And so, that sort of thing was kind of an eye-opener for me.

KK: So did you feel, did you feel like you were Japanese when you were in Japan?

ME: No.
KK: Or did you feel...?
ME: No, it's the opposite, you know.
KK: Different.
ME: You feel, felt like you were an outsider in Japan.
KK: Mhm.
ME: And actually when you come back here, you feel like you're home.
KK: Oh okay.
ME: You know.
KK: So when you came to Vancouver, you felt...
ME: ...like you...
KK: ...like you were home.
ME: ...belonged here.
KK: Yeah.
ME: Yeah. More than, like, I was there in Japan for 10 years but you never really felt like...
KK: Right.
ME: ...you belonged.
KK: But when you moved back to Vancouver...
ME: Yes.
KK: So, you were raised in Japantown, so, very Japanese-Canadian.
ME: Yes, yes. Very Japanese-Canadian.
KK: And then...
ME: Not really assimilating with the...
KK: And in Rosebery you were with Japanese...
ME: Yes, yes, yes. So it was...
KK: So when you...
ME: ...so it was predominantly, yes.
KK: Coming back to Vancouver, though, there was no more Japantown.
ME: No.
KK: So it was different.
ME: Different. Different.
KK: Yeah, how was that for you? Like, I guess part of my wondering is if, um, did being part of the Japanese congregation, in particular, was that kind of a place where you felt more belonging? Maybe? Having grown up in the Japanese-Canadian communities and then coming back to Vancouver when there wasn't really one in the same way. Do you know what I mean by that question? Or maybe not. I'm just curious, I guess. I mean, you spoke English, you could've gone to any church, but you chose to go to the Japanese church.
ME: Oh that. I never thought of it that way. Yes. Why wouldn't I have gone to...?
KK: I'm just curious.

ME: Yes.

KK: If there was, it was a place that you felt a different belonging or...

ME: I guess it was some kind of comfort in being among the Japanese-Canadians.

KK: Mmm.

ME: Rather than being exposed straightaway to the, you know, the white community.

KK: Because I imagine in the rest of your life, you were just integrating in with everything.

ME: Oh yes, yes. Because in my job there were no other Asians.

KK: Yeah.

ME: Yes. I just wonder about that too. [Laughter].

KK: Yeah, I'm just curious. Um, because it's, I mean, they speak English, the Japanese congregation was the English one that you went to.

ME: Yes, yes.

KK: You didn't go to the Japanese congregation.

ME: No, no, no.

KK: So what, why not? You spoke Japanese too.

ME: Yes, I did.

KK: Yeah. So what...?

ME: But I felt more comfortable among the Niseis.

KK: Okay. Yeah. Yeah, I'm just curious about it, 'cause there is a cultural difference between the Isseis and the Niseis.

ME: Yes, yes. In fact, I don't think maybe...

KK: But I don't know if we can name it.

ME: I don't think [we really] were able to close that gap.

KK: Mmm. You never felt that that...

ME: No.

KK: Those congregations were very separate?

ME: Yes, I would say so. Yes.

KK: Yeah. And did the two congregations... Okay, you did the bazaar together. Were there other ways that you integrated at all?

ME: Well, we had joint services. Several times a year.

KK: Yeah. Hmm.

ME: And of course, the trustees were made up of both congregations.

KK: Oh. Yeah. And did you say you were part of the trustees?

ME: In the beginning, yes.

KK: In the beginning, yeah. They're responsible for the building.

ME: Yes.

KK: Yeah. Mmm. Is there anything you really want to make sure gets named? 43:10
And you talked about Grace Namba and Chizu Uchida. Is there any other people or events or moments that you really want to make sure at least get named as something? Even if you don't know a lot about them, but

	Time
that, that people can then find out about if, if, if they're kind of significant? Is there anything? [Pause]	
ME: I can't even remember names. [Laughter] End.	43:51