

Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission Oral History Interview

Narrator: Patricia Matsunaga Imada

Interviewer: Morgen Young

Location: Ontario, Oregon

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Transcribed by: Kimberly Haysom

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YOUNG: This is April 15, 2013. My name is Morgen Young. We are interviewing Patricia Imada at Four Rivers Cultural Center in Ontario, Oregon for the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission. Can we start with you stating your full name, your birthdate and where you were born?

IMADA: My name is Patricia Eiko Imada. I was born in Portland, Oregon, April 23, 1942.

YOUNG: And you were born in Portland, where were, were you born at the Portland Assembly Center?

IMADA: I was, I wasn't born there but I was six months old when they put us in these, I was six months old and they put us in the horse, where they raised horses.

YOUNG: Right, mm hm.

IMADA: Yeah, that's where they put us first, so it was in those stalls, six months old and I lived in those stalls.

YOUNG: Wow.

IMADA: I was six months old and then they shipped us out to Minidoka.

YOUNG: Oh, okay.

IMADA: I was in the Minidoka camp, yeah assembly center there until I was three and then they sent us to the CCC Camp in Cow Hollow.

YOUNG: What did your parents do before?

IMADA: My dad worked in Washington, in saw mills up there. And my mother was a housewife in Portland, yeah, her brother owned a greenhouse so she worked for brother in Portland.

YOUNG: Did you have siblings?

IMADA: Yes. I had three brothers.

YOUNG: All older?

IMADA: Well there was two older ones. My oldest brother was Jerry and the next one was Smitty and my younger brother, Melvin was born in camp. Yeah, he was born in Minidoka camp.

YOUNG: Wow.

IMADA: Yeah so.

YOUNG: And you were probably too young to have memories of Minidoka?

IMADA: Yeah I don't remember at all, except my older brother Jerry did. He, I remember him telling me about was the barbwire fence and the soldiers that were guarding it and tower with the guns; he remembered the guns, yeah. And my parents never really talked much about it, being in camp. Yeah. They were, I guess being Oriental and Japanese, they just, in Japanese I guess, they never really talked too much about it, and I guess it's still true of our history. My grandsons are ten and eleven but they're, we call them hapas or half white in Japanese so they won't, what would I say, Japanese, gama, you know, they don't understand at all and so they don't understand how our parents went through all that and when we talk about all that. So we don't really know what they all actually went through. And camp wasn't real easy for them but they never would talk about it, you know. They just kept it to themselves. So we don't really know how much they suffered in camp, you know, so.

YOUNG: Do you know how they moved? Or why they moved from Minidoka to Cow Hollow?

IMADA: That's, the... a lot of them moved that way, you know because they needed, the farmers needed people to work in the field and so a lot of them did move from camp to the Cow Hollow to work as field laborers. And that's how we got there. But, as field laborers, they never complained either, just, you know, I was young yet too, three. But, when they went out to work, we went along too, to help. Help there too you know, so. When they'd pick potatoes, and we shook the potatoes off the vine and everything else too, you know. We just right along with them. You know, get up at three or four in the morning, my mother would make lunch, they called bento, you know for us, and she was a hard worker. She never once complained about it. You know, and in camp where the house that we lived in is the only one with a running toilet. We were very lucky at the time and I didn't realize it at the time. But all the others had outhouses, you know and they had a communal shower house. It was clear across; in fact it was next to the wash...

YOUNG: The washroom facilities.

IMADA: Washing facility. Yeah. The washing facility and then the shower, communal shower was, I would say would be on the left side of the washing facility, yeah communal shower. And so, before you would go in you had to make sure that no one, no man would be in there or no, you know, you would have to holler, “Who’s in there?” before you would go in, yeah. And everybody would take turns, the boilers, you know, make sure that there is hot water and stuff like that. But it was clear across from where we lived. You know, it was quite a walk for us, but we never really complained because we were very lucky to have the only house with a running toilet.

YOUNG: So I went to Cow Hollow for the first time this morning.

IMADA: Oh uh huh.

YOUNG: And so I saw there was a big line of tall trees.

IMADA: Uh huh.

YOUNG: Were those trees there, that tall?

IMADA: There was a lot of trees as you’re going down. I don’t know which way you went, ‘cause you could go clear around you know, and so, the road that we would go down on would be the left hand side row. Yeah, on the left hand side and there was always a lot of trees and so where we lived, we’d go down on the left-hand side and our house stood on, where the hill is on the left-hand side. Our house was on the left-hand side of the row. And there was a two-story house on toward the hill there, on the backside. And I figured that’s where, at the time I didn’t realize it, but when the camp was built I figured that they must have had single men there. And it was empty when we moved over there. There was no men there, ‘cause we used to play in that house, two-story house. And then the hill in the back, we used to go sledding down those hills all the time, and so, our house was on that side of the Cow Hollow part on that side. And so, where the shower house was and the washroom was on the other side, we used to always have to walk clear across to get to the shower house and the wash rooms and stuff, that’s the way that we always went. And the other side of the row you know, and so it would go completely all around, you know but, no, so, the way it is now. We went out there oh about three weeks ago because I hadn’t been out there in a long time and my husband had never been out there but it sure has changed a lot out there. But I remember the trees and everything out there. A lot of it in the back of the hills is all dead and stuff, but it’s quite something out there now, you know.

YOUNG: How many buildings, I mean, these were former Civilian Conservation Corps buildings?

IMADA: Yes, uh huh.

YOUNG: And your house was the former barrack or?

IMADA: Yeah it was like a barrack. Yeah, it was a barrack and so the house that we lived in had, we were lucky to have the one with the toilet and shower. It had a shower in there, but the boiler room, we couldn't use the boiler room, but there was a boiler room in there, but you know, we could use the boiler room but then we couldn't have a shower. But there was a built-in shower there, but was able to use the toilet and stuff. Toilet and sink in there, yeah, and the room that we had, had a bedroom off where the toilet was, where my parents lived and then it had a big kitchen. It had a wood stove and everything. And then it had another bedroom where my brother slept in and then I had to sleep towards where the living room was so I had to sleep where like the living room was and that was it. Because it was one big room and I had to sleep in part of the living room area.

YOUNG: But the whole building was for your one family?

IMADA: Yeah the whole barrack was like for one whole family. So there was just like rows of barracks, yeah. It was a barrack.

YOUNG: How many families do you think lived there?

IMADA: Oh there was quite a few families, where we lived and the Takamis lived. We lived in one barrack. The Takamis lived, well our barracks were like here and the Takamis lived over here, next to us. There might have been one more barrack here and the Takamis lived in this barrack. But there was rows of barracks on both sides and the, rec barrack, the recreation barrack had a piano in it. But you know, by the time us kids got through with it, you really couldn't play it. But there was a recreation barrack there. Then there was a real barracks on this side, over there, on the other side. So I couldn't really tell you how many barracks there was.

YOUNG: But a number, I mean.

IMADA: There was a number of barracks and a number of people that lived in all those barracks. And one by one the families would move away you know, but we were one of the last ones to move out of there and the Takamis, they left after we did.

YOUNG: Yeah I think the Takamis were the last family, that's what I've heard.

IMADA: 'Cause we were one of the last ones to leave and I think the Takamis were one of the last ones. Yeah and there's a house, if you drove up there, there's a house there's a road that goes clear up on top, there's a house up on there.

YOUNG: Yeah.

IMADA: And I had heard that they just built onto that house. When we moved out, we moved up the hill. My senior year, I moved out of there our senior year, yeah and

when we graduated, we moved up on top of the hill there and I had heard they had just built onto that house up on top of the hill and uh, so that's where we moved to from camp to up on top of the hill.

YOUNG: Not very far away.

IMADA: We didn't move very far. Yeah and then after we moved on top of the hill I think that next spring, they moved into town. My folks moved into town. In fact, they moved into the town in the house that we live in now. Yeah and we build on to the house that my folks moved into. We remodeled the house, we build onto the house that we live in now. And we live in the house now that my folks owned or now for forty-five years.

YOUNG: Wow.

IMADA: We've lived there for forty-five years. So we've been back in Nyssa for a long time. Yeah.

YOUNG: Where did you go to school?

IMADA: In Nyssa.

YOUNG: Okay.

IMADA: Yeah I graduated in 1960, yeah. It's been a long time. Moved away for about eight years and came back, drug my husband. Ha ha! He was born and raised in Hawaii. Well, not actually raised in Hawaii, he went to California to farm with his parents and then he joined the service and they shipped him right back to Hawaii. And then he came back after the service and went to farm with his parents. And I went to school in Stockton, and then, to college over there and his sister was going to college. That's how I meet him and drug him back over here.

YOUNG: What's your maiden name?

IMADA: Matsunaga.

YOUNG: Okay. And when you went to Nyssa, did a bus come to pick you up at Cow Hollow?

IMADA: Yes, uh huh, we would have to walk from our house clear across the, they wouldn't come across the, that creek there. We'd have to walk across the creek. And sometimes it would flood over, 'cause the creek would flood over, so we'd have to cross over the creek there, yeah. 'Cause there was quite a few kids over there, you know. Yeah so we'd have to cross over the creek. Yeah so, it's quite interesting.

YOUNG: And your parents were working as laborers throughout the area? On fields?

IMADA: Yeah, uh huh, they were, what did they call them? They were in crews, yeah, laborers, yeah, they would hire different crews to work for different farmers. So farmers would call them up and say, "I need a crew for this field or that crew for that field." And so eventually my dad would become a, he was good at lawn work, so he would do lawn work. So he would cut shrubs and stuff so eventually that's what he eventually ended up doing. Yeah, when he had time he would do that.

YOUNG: What about your brothers, did they work in the fields as well?

IMADA: Yeah we all worked in the fields until we went off to college, yeah. Yeah they all went to college, yeah. Or the service, yeah. They joined the service, the Navy. My older brother went into the Navy and then eventually when he got out he stayed in California and worked for the State of California and then my next brother, Smitty he lives in Vancouver now and is retired and then my younger brother is also retired. He joined the Navy, so yeah, but, so.

YOUNG: What did you do for fun when you were living in Cow Hollow?

IMADA: Oh, we used to play baseball, softball.

YOUNG: Was there a baseball field at Cow Hollow?

IMADA: Well we played on the lawn.

YOUNG: Okay.

IMADA: We had great big lawns over there, yeah. And, um, one of the buildings on our side, it was empty, the building was empty and the post office would be in one of the empty buildings. He would come around on the other side of the road and come around and then the post office would be, they had little boxes and it was empty. Because our house was here and the building that was empty was on this side and he'd come on this side and then the post office would be in one of the empty buildings back here and he would drop it off the mail over there. And we had little boxes, you know. So we would all go over there, get our mail and everything, yeah. So we'd check the mailboxes and everything, yeah. So just like a regular post office, little slots and everything. Yeah. So.

YOUNG: Would you ever go into Nyssa and see a movie or go to the soda fountain?

IMADA: Oh yes, we would come into, they had a little theater then and two drug stores at the time, yeah. Had two little drug stores, yeah, Nyssa had two drugstores and they had a clothing store Bracken's and then the Wilson's clothing stores and we

were really all treated really nice. Most of the people in town treated us well you know; they weren't prejudice or anything so, yeah. So we were treated well, so.

YOUNG: And the same thing in high school, you were well treated?

IMADA: Yes, we were well treated. There was four Japanese girls in high school, yes, we were all treated well.

YOUNG: Do you remember their names?

IMADA: Uh, there was Jolene Morinaka, Ruth Yoniyama uh, and myself, and Bonnie Airai, yeah so. And um, the three of us from the top ten. I think Bonnie might have been, Bonnie or Ruth was valedictorian yeah and I think the only one that wasn't in the top ten was Geraldine. She was a playgirl of our class! Ha ha! There's always one, isn't there? Really nice girl, she was a lot of fun. Yeah but the rest of us was in the top ten of our class. But uh, let's see, Ruth Yoniyama.

YOUNG: And you mentioned her in an email that she lived at Cow Hollow too?

IMADA: Yeah, she lived in Cow Hollow too. In fact, we lived in this barrack and she lived in the far barrack over here. Yeah, she's in California, I think Redmond, California, she lived in Redmond. And I tried to get her phone number, but it wouldn't go through and I don't know if she's moved or what. You know and I tried to talk to Bonnie. Bonnie Airai didn't live there and Bonnie said she didn't know you know, and I saw Gerry, but Gerry wasn't in contact with Ruth either so, you know, so I didn't have any luck. And Ruth was one of six sisters, so you know, that would've been interesting to see if I could've gotten a hold of her.

YOUNG: No brothers, just sisters?

IMADA: They are all sisters.

YOUNG: Wow.

IMADA: Six sisters, yeah and she was a third of the youngest, yeah. So, six sisters, yeah. So it would've been interesting to see if I could've got a hold of her but I don't know if I could have or not but, you know. But, too much stuff going on so I didn't get around to it.

YOUNG: So living in Cow Hollow, more and more families just kept moving out over time?

IMADA: Yeah they kept moving out. There were some bachelors there though, yeah, and they just lived in the individual barracks themselves.

YOUNG: Was there a sense of community living there?

IMADA: Well I, in a way there was, depends on the different families, you know. I remember when Ruth and her family moved out, you know, we rode the same school bus you know, so that was okay you know and then I saw her at school all the time. We were good friends. Ruth and I were good friends. But you know once they moved out and you go to high school and then you move away you know, you don't stay in touch too much. We had our fiftieth class reunion about two and a half years ago and they were here and I visited with them and it was sort of sad with Ruth, because she didn't have any kids and she's lost two husbands. So that was sort of sad and so I don't keep in touch and now. But, Bonnie and I keep in touch but then, you know, like I said she wasn't at camp so you know, stuff like that so. Yeah.

YOUNG: And your other friends that lived um, like Bonnie, where did Bonnie live?

IMADA: She lived up in the hill, on the top of the hill, where the house that we moved into.

YOUNG: Oh okay.

IMADA: But they didn't live in camp so, you know. Yeah.

YOUNG: And, so your father started doing um, land, like yard...

IMADA: Landscaping.

YOUNG: Landscaping.

IMADA: Yeah, landscaping. He was very good at landscaping, yeah.

YOUNG: And they decided to stay in the area.

IMADA: Yeah my parents did yeah.

YOUNG: They must have liked it after.

IMADA: Yeah, they did like it yeah and my mother died at sixty-eight of liver cancer and then my dad eventually moved to California with my older brother and he died at seventy-nine of spinal cancer, so. You know, it's just the way life goes.

YOUNG: Did you have aunts and uncles on either side that were from the Portland area or from Washington?

IMADA: My uncle, my mother's brother, the one that owned the greenhouse eventually still had the greenhouse but he eventually passed away. He had diabetes real bad so, and then my other brother, mother's brother, lived in Homedale in Roswell but died of a heart attack at fifty-eight. So, you know, and now my older brother he

died of stomach cancer at sixty-eight you know. And the thing of it is, he ended up with all my, I would have pictures, he ended up with all my dad's photo books and pictures, that I could've gotten back but then his kids have them and so, you know, they would have had the pictures of like when we lived in Cow Hollow and stuff. But I don't have no communication with them so I don't. He was, I shouldn't say this but he was the greedy brother! My dad was happy here in Nyssa because his friends would come and see him and he lived in the assisted living facility, then it was a nursing home. People would come, his friends would come and take him out for coffee or lunch and stuff but he took him back to California with him where he didn't know anybody. So he lived only a couple years, yeah it's sort of sad, yeah. It was really sad. And so he decided well he ended up changing the will and all this kind of, yeah. Not what my mother wanted, you know? But you always have one in the family I would think. And so he ended up with all the photo books and all the pictures and his kids won't give them to me so, I don't pursue it anymore. But.

YOUNG: What sorts of activities did you or your parents get involved with in the community?

IMADA: Not really much, my parents didn't. But, in school I played sports. I went out for sports. I wasn't very good. I'm left-handed when I hit stuff, but then I also catch left-handed so I used to always have to take my gloves off to catch anything but yeah. I was quite athletic. I loved to play sports. I ran for anything that came up in the office, you know the school office. Yeah, I was one of those. Even in junior high, I ran for everything that came up! I didn't keep my mouth shut. I guess that what it is. Ha ha! I don't know I guess, either.

YOUNG: And you were good at school, did you have favorite subjects?

IMADA: What did I really like? I didn't really like math too well. I think I liked English teacher, I like literature and things like that, you know. Yeah. I did. I think it depends on the teacher; we had a good English teacher. I liked Mr. Swisher really well, so.

YOUNG: And then you left, you went to school, you met your husband, and...

IMADA: I went to business college in Stockton.

YOUNG: Okay.

IMADA: And I stayed with my aunt and uncle there. I think she would've liked me to have been a nurse because she was a nurse. But I liked business, so I went to business college over there. And then I worked for the Heart Association in Stockton, then I met my husband and he was called back to the, when they had the Cuban crisis yeah. So went back up to Washington, Fort Lewis, Washington when he was called back into the service. And so then, when that tour was over, I think that

was less than a year, yeah so we went back to Stockton, he went back to help his folks farm and one of my parent's got sick so we came back this way. And, then I went to work at the school district for a while and there's an opening at Les Schwab Tires for a bookkeeper in sales and service, so I went to work for them. Yeah, so. And at that time, they called us bookkeepers but eventually they said sales and service so then I started selling things too! Yeah I worked for them for almost twenty-five years, so. Everything turned out good. We had a good program.

YOUNG: And you lived in your parents, I'm sorry when you moved back, you moved into your parents' house?

IMADA: Yeah because they were renting it and so we moved in there, so we decided we'd just remodel it, so we had two big bedrooms added on and remodeled that one bedroom, smaller one into a bathroom. So an extra bathroom, a shower, and we already had a bathroom so we just remodeled it and we've been there ever since. And I've been into quilting so I had a quilt shop built, ordered a long arm quilting machine, yeah and I was doing long arm quilting until my daughter got married and was gonna have a baby and that took over that. And then Howard decided to bring his mother, she decided she wanted to move from California, over here, she had two daughters, but she wanted to move here. And so once we brought her over here, my son came to California one weekend we went together, brought her back, the following week to bring her stuff over with a moving van, we were putting stuff in the trash bin, she was crawling in the trash bin, great big trash bin, she was crawling to take things back out. 'Cause she thought she needed. And um, and so, we had to close the door and I broke my wrist and anyway, so moved her here and um, with her here and my daughter having a baby and everything, so I started babysitting my grandson and stuff. But, yeah, but I still, I sew yet and quilt and stuff. Not like used to.

YOUNG: Do you keep up with anyone that you knew at Cow Hollow? I know that the Takamis are still...

IMADA: In the area.

YOUNG: Yeah.

IMADA: Yeah, I don't really see or talk to them too much, but, it would be nice to be able to visit with them, yeah. It was nice to visit Cow Hollow and we took our neighbor, our next-door neighbor because Abe was quite interested in going out there and seeing it you know. And he has one of those coin finders, those things, and he has two dogs that we spoil Molly, a lab, and Binky. That's quite a name for a dog, it's part pit-bull, you know and, so he took them out there to run around and everything. But, yeah, and so I hadn't been out there in so long that it was quite interesting to go out there to see how much work they had done out there. And I had heard that they were going to, the bulletin board that they had out in the

middle, that they are going to put pictures up may be of the buildings or something.

YOUNG: Oh that would be great.

IMADA: Yeah, I don't know if its Megan Price or one of them, may be one of the buildings what they are. But I was really curious about the building that's still there. Yeah but you were brave weren't you?

YOUNG: Well it looked like it had been converted into a home, it's not...

IMADA: Oh at one time or another.

YOUNG: Just based on that there was a little kitchenette inside.

IMADA: Oh... and I don't know who owns that property you know, or anything.

YOUNG: Yeah I think it's the county now.

IMADA: Oh is it? Oh okay.

YOUNG: But from just walking around I'd seen that building, there was a little tiny wooden building.

IMADA: Right.

YOUNG: Was that there when you were at the camp?

IMADA: No, no uh. I don't know what that is.

YOUNG: And then there was a foundation of another building.

IMADA: Yeah, so I'm not sure what that is either. Yeah.

YOUNG: But when you were there, were you able to walk around or remember where your home was?

IMADA: Well sort of, trying to figure it out from the hill you know and everything, I was trying to figure out, you know where the hill was, I mean all the trees are so badly shaped. And in such bad shape, you really couldn't tell and I was trying to figure out where the two-story building might have been you know and where we used to come down the hill to slide in, really couldn't tell either. 'Cause I just remembered uh, the hill used to be in such really pretty shape and where we used to slide down and everything, it used to be so beautiful over there, you know. And that part wasn't very pretty anymore. But Cow Hollow Park is beautiful, the work

that they have done on it, you know. But I really couldn't tell exactly where even a two-story building might have been. Yeah.

YOUNG: So it was just, the camp was just in that big space? Or was it on both sides of that little road?

IMADA: The camp?

YOUNG: Right, yeah the camp.

IMADA: The camp was, where the road is, it was inside the road area.

YOUNG: Okay.

IMADA: On both sides. And there was quite a few rows of houses actually, you know on both sides of the road. And both sides of the road and also this way. It was this side way and then this way too. Both ways. And the house, this way, a lot of single men lived in the houses on this side, the single men would live over there. Yeah.

YOUNG: Did you have any, did anyone grow any vegetables or have a little, tiny garden?

IMADA: Oh yes, my dad used to raise a garden, yeah. The garden space used to be, so houses were over here and then there was an open space over on this side and he used to raise beautiful flowers, gladiolas and stuff and then he used to raise the root vegetable like daikon, burdock, and deep down and then he would have to dig it because it's a really deep root vegetable. And he used to raise beautiful gladiolas, all these beautiful flowers and stuff and he used to like to give them all away. Zinnias and all that, yeah and he raised uh a garden, strawberries, everything he would raise it. And so did the others, would raise them, yeah. He used to raise them, all of them.

YOUNG: Where were your parents born?

IMADA: My dad came over from Japan in 1917 on the ship and in fact my daughter has this, what you call, steamboat trunk, yeah she has his original trunk that he came over with. Yeah, she still has it in her garage. In good shape, yeah. She's real proud of that. Steamer trunk, yeah she has that one, yeah.

YOUNG: Do you know where he was from in Japan?

IMADA: No I don't. I should know, but I don't. A certain area, they're real proud of the area that they come from, yeah so. Apparently he came from a good area. That's all I know. Yeah he came over here and he settled up in the Washington area where they did the where they did, where he worked in the lumber mills and stuff like that. Before they rounded them all up.

YOUNG: Right, and your mother came from Japan?

IMADA: No, she was born in Portland.

YOUNG: Oh she was?

IMADA: She was born in the Portland area and I don't know how they actually met but that's where she was born and raised, you know. In the Portland area and worked in the greenhouses up there, yeah. And they stored everything up there and for the neighbors to watch but, well, it didn't work well, got everything taken and most of them did, most of them did get everything taken. That is just the way war was you know. Yeah. But it was, I know it was really humiliating for them when they put us all in the horse stalls and she says it was real... that's the only thing she commented was, how bad it smelled. They cleaned them out, well they had to clean them out she says. I just remember her telling me, "We had to clean out the horse stalls before we could even stay in them." They stayed in them for like six months in those horse stalls. I mean they're not that very big to begin with, but that's where they put us she says, in the horse stall. You know and she says, "You were only six months old." She told me, yeah and they put us in this horse stall over there, yeah.

YOUNG: I can't imagine.

IMADA: So, but, the house at Cow Hollow it, I can't remember, the heating I think was oil, we burned oil and the cooking stove was wood of course, you know, but it wasn't bad. My dad built the, our table, our kitchen table. He was pretty good at carpentry, yeah, but built us the wooden table, wooden bench and everything, yeah. So, it wasn't bad at all, I didn't think. Wooden table, wooden benches you know and everything. Yeah, I don't know where he got our beds, but I had a nice bed. He managed to get us a bed!

YOUNG: Did you stay; you said you slept in the living room?

IMADA: Yeah it was called, yeah the big...

YOUNG: Or the big room.

IMADA: The big room, which would have been the living room, yeah. So I had one corner of the living room, yeah. And I had one corner of the living room and then my brothers all slept in one bed, one big bed. You know, yeah, it got a little tight when they got bigger. I think eventually they got another bed, a single bed in that one bedroom. It was a fairly big bedroom. Yeah and then they had big closets in one end of that room and so we hung our clothes there. And then my mother's and my dad's room, they had a closet in there, but we all, in my brothers' room, we

had to all share the closets in there you know. Of course we didn't have that much clothes but you know what we had.

YOUNG: Did you decorate your little corner of the room?

IMADA: Not really.

YOUNG: No?

IMADA: You really couldn't decorate. And at Christmas time, there was a backdoor there in the living room, so that's where we put our Christmas tree you know so you could see, yeah. And my folks did the best they could, they would each, they would each give us one present, which was then enough. These days kids want more than one present you know, they're spoiled I think, you know? But, those days it was nice to get one present.

YOUNG: Did your mother speak Japanese?

IMADA: Yes they both spoke Japanese. My dad spoke broken English, but they both spoke Japanese and of course we grew up speaking English, so we didn't pick up any Japanese unless it was just like a word here or there, you know, that's all we learned. And it's too bad we didn't learn Japanese, you know, we regret it now. But then it wasn't the thing to do, to speak Japanese. But you do regret it later. And my dad had spoken broken English. And I think as a whole, we were well accepted in the community, you know. In some communities you might now have been you know? I think it was may be harder in Ontario because some people weren't accepted as well as they were. There was a few families in Nyssa that accept Japanese as well as others did, you know, that's just the way it was. But in school we were well accepted as a whole, yeah. I think we tried harder, the Japanese did try harder as a whole at least, the ones in our class, the four girls in our class tried harder.

YOUNG: Tried harder in school?

IMADA: In school as a whole, we all tried harder, yeah.

YOUNG: What kind of food would your... your mother cook primarily?

IMADA: Yeah

YOUNG: What kind of food would she make?

IMADA: Oh rice and may be like stir fry food you know, that I grew up eating.

YOUNG: And your father was growing daikon and...

IMADA: All that vegetables, yeah uh huh. So I grew up eating that kind of food. Yeah.

YOUNG: Was there any place that one could buy Japanese ingredients in town? Japanese rice or...

IMADA: I think in Ontario we bought stuff, yeah because they had a Japanese store in Ontario. And in Ontario, there's someone that made the tofu and stuff like that at the time. So we were able to purchase stuff like that you know. So it made it easier. But my dad grew a lot of the vegetable that we did eat, so that helped.

YOUNG: Were there any Japanese customs that he taught you or anything? Did you go to Church?

IMADA: No not really. We didn't go to Church. He didn't profess being a Buddhist either, so, you know and neither did my mother. She wasn't Buddhist she was, no neither one of them were Buddhist. You'd think my dad would be Buddhist but, they weren't Buddhist and as we were growing up we didn't really go to church and then when Howard and I got married, we went to the Baptist church in town. And then eventually my parents went to the Baptist church, so yeah.

YOUNG: Did you ever go to dances in high school?

IMADA: Well did I go to dances? I might have, I don't remember! I don't think I really did. Yeah, I went to the rodeo. My dad was quite protective I guess, over me, yeah because he had to know who. If they were my brothers' friends, he'd let me go with them, to the movies. They had to be my brothers' friends; in fact there was two of them. Yeah I went with two boys, two of my brothers' friends to the movies. We went to two matinees. They were both my brothers' friends so, then it was okay. He wouldn't let me go out that much! I think it was because it was a Japanese custom I think, yeah. He just didn't, yeah it was my brothers' friends, they were older. But I did go out with them, to the movies. So I didn't go out much.

YOUNG: And you would work in the fields, you said?

IMADA: Yeah, when, we'd get up real early. My mother would get up around three and make bento, make lunch and we would have rice balls, she would make Spam, we ate an awful lot of Spam. You know how that is? We ate a lot of Spam! Yeah and she had more energy than... you know, she never complained and then we'd get up about five and we'd go out and either pick potatoes, clean onion fields or beet fields, you know as kids, and they didn't have no laws then, restriction of age or anything. We'd do all that beets and onions you know and potatoes, yeah we did that.

YOUNG: Was it hard?

IMADA: Yeah, no as kids you don't think of it being real hard but then later on, you think, "Gee I wonder how my mother did it all that, my mom and dad did all that work." You know, but they did, to make a living, you did do that. But they all did that in camp because they had to work, make a living.

YOUNG: Would they work until sun down?

IMADA: They work until like four, five in the afternoon, they had to come home, do the laundry and laundry wasn't easy because they had the wash, where you did your laundry. Clear across the thing and then they had the ringer washer, you know, you had to heat the water up you know, it's not the simple way now, you push a button, you know. Then you had to hang up your laundry, you know, so it was hard work. I don't think women are built that way anymore. Not me! And I don't ever remember her being sick. You know I'm just amazed just how hard they had to work. Oh they had, my dad raised chickens, rabbits, then he had to butcher them, kill them and then we had to eat them! Yeah but I remember all the rabbit cages and the chicken, you know, and goats! I remember goats too. Yeah, we had goat and as my brothers got older they joined FFA, yeah we had cows, yeah. We had cows too, so. So we had all those kind of stuff. Well actually it wasn't too bad living out there really. Oh they used to play softball out there in the park, you know on the lawn, 'cause we had a nice lawn, you know they used to take care of the lawns. Different ones had each of their lawns and stuff yeah, so. As kids you don't realize it, you know, I don't think.

YOUNG: So you had a fun childhood?

IMADA: Really I think so and in the wintertime we used to slide down the hill and stuff like that. And then had, uh, cement drain thing down there and we used, ha! Go down the water thing too, you know. Then the creek used to, waddle in the creek, you know, roll up the pants, go down, walk in the creek, yeah so actually I did have a fun childhood, living there. I can't complain, really. I just think it was hard for my parent's really. They had a hard life, really. But as me as a child, I don't think, I don't regret living there.

YOUNG: When you would work in the fields would you work before going to school or just primarily in the summer?

IMADA: No, sometimes I would work before going to school too. You know, and then go to school, come home, go to school, yeah I remember doing that, yeah. Or even after school. Sometimes you do that, you know once you learn to drive, you do that.

YOUNG: And then you would get a wage as well? Like your parents?

IMADA: Oh no.

YOUNG: On no?

IMADA: Ha ha no! No, I wouldn't get paid! You just work. Yeah, you just work, yeah. That was just part of it, you just work. That was it, yeah.

YOUNG: Any other memories of growing up here or Cow Hollow or your parents that you want to share with us?

IMADA: Well let's see, I just wish I could've found those pictures, that's all. I did look, I know I didn't throw them away even if they got wet you know yeah, I just wish I could've found those. Yeah.

YOUNG: Well may be they'll turn up when you're not looking for them.

IMADA: I know I have them I just don't quite remember where I put them. Yeah.

YOUNG: Well I think this is great. I really appreciate you sitting with us.

IMADA: Well you're more than welcome. I wish I could remember more.

YOUNG: No, you remembered an incredible amount.

IMADA: Well thank you.

YOUNG: No and you're very charming and ...

IMADA: Well thank you, thank you.

YOUNG: And it's impressive, you're parents sound like really incredible people.

IMADA: They were, they were wonderful people, yeah they were. Only wish I had the photo books!

YOUNG: Yeah.

IMADA: I would've had more of a story.

YOUNG: Well I know Megan Price is collecting photos as well, so.

IMADA: That's good.

YOUNG: May be there will be some that you'll recognize.

IMADA: Yeah I hope so.

YOUNG: From her collection.

IMADA: Yeah I hope so, yeah. It would be interesting to see.

YOUNG: Yeah! Well I'll have, I'm meeting with her on Wednesday, maybe we can make photocopies and have them mailed to you or something.

IMADA: Okay that would be great, yeah.

YOUNG: Okay. Well I think we are done.

IMADA: Okay, well thank you very much Morgen.

YOUNG: Thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW

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