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Connie Sugiyama: Yes. I am here with Margaret and I was wondering, Margaret, if we could first go back and talk about your early years. Tell me about your family and your recollections of those early years before the war.
Margaret Lyons: Oh sure. Well, I should, first of all, say that I was brought up pure Japanese Canadian. No English spoken until I went to kindergarten and I come from a very traditional Buddhist background, at least on my mother's side, which was the more influential side. My grandparents, my grandfather, was very influential in the Buddhist community both in Mission City and my village and in the Buddhist community generally in the lower Mainland. He was so devout that he managed to send his younger son on a scholarship to study in the seminary in Kyoto just before the war and his name was Takashi. His religious name is Kenryu and he became the first American born bishop, Buddhist bishop.[1]
CS: And where do you fit into the family? How many siblings do you have?
ML: I'm the oldest of a family of six. I have three brothers and three, two sisters.

[5 minutes]

CS: Tell me about family life at that time.
ML: It was, well, our family was the only one I knew, of course. Our own personal one and the extended one. And I, looking back, it was a hard life. Farming life was very hard, everyone had to put their hands to farm work. Both my parents, my mother especially was very, very achievement-oriented, wanted us to succeed. But not too much that women became too lippy and that was my problem. She pushed me, my grandparents pushed me, and like any precocious brat, I tried to please them and was reasonably successful. But my mother did not like what she considered my adopting communist views as I got older.
CS: Did you go to regular public school in Mission?
ML: [nods] Yes, the village school. I'll tell you a little bit about our farming community. The Japanese Canadian farmers were fairly successful, kept to themselves. When the Japanese get together, if there is no community system to support them and before the war, there was no such thing. The farmers got together and organized a co-op, which they called Nokai. They were a community of agricultural workers. Actually, it was a farmer's producer co-op. It was run pretty well. They marketed the soft fruit we grew across the country. They hired a special

[1] Reverend Kenryu Takashi Tsuji

manager and they were fairly successful even through the Depression, although my family suffered greatly through the Depression
CS: What was your social life like in public school?
ML: In public school, let me tell you first. Thanks to the Nokai, they gave, provided all the social services that built the cultural centre, etc. They looked after the entertainment, the welfare, etc. They decided that the kids because we all grew up speaking unilingual Japanese. Before we were thrown into the public system, which was English, of course, we had to go to English Language Training. So, we were the only group that had kindergarten in English. They hired a Baptist, retired Baptist missionary, a lovely lady called Mrs. Barnette. She taught all of us our numbers and letters, our alphabet. We, most of us were fluent. They were Buddhists like us, although there were others too. We grew up. We learned English saying Jesus loved me, etc and the family came to Christmas concerts, etc. So, there was no division between the groups like that.
CS: So, this was a preschool?
ML: [nods] Preschool.
CS: That was strictly for the Japanese Canadian community?
ML: [nods] Yes.
CS: And the farming families in Mission?
ML: Yes and they paid for it. They paid the teacher. Mrs. Barnette was devoted, very devoted to the kids and she led all of us on our first day to proper school.
CS: How was that? How was the transition for the Japanese Canadian children?
ML: It was fine because by that time, we could speak English and we knew our alphabet and we knew our numbers. So, the teachers liked us, of course. We were biddable and we didn't run around making a nuisance of ourselves. So, I think we were rather privileged.
CS: How many children were there relative to the rest of the population in Mission?
ML: I had the impression that we were dominant but looking at the class, we actually weren't as numerous as I thought. In retrospect, the war must have been very hard on our community in Mission because I still regard my village as my hometown. Because what happened to the [unclear]. I wasn't interested when we left. If the majority of the well-to-do farmers were [unclear] and we were suddenly sent away and no one immediately took up berry farms, I often wondered about that. They must have had a very hard time.
CS: I'd like to come back to that in a moment but just continuing the train of public school, what was your experience? Were your friends, primarily Japanese Canadian children or did you mix with the rest of the community? Tell me a little bit about that.
ML: Well, so far as I recall, there was no division between the language groups or between the ethnic groups. But then, after school we kept very much to ourselves. We didn't mix socially.
CS: What did you do after school?

[10 minutes]

CS: Did you have to go to Japanese school?

ML: Well, when we were younger, yes. It was run by the Nokai. We went long enough. We were allowed to go enough after school until our hands were needed on the farm. So, it only lasted three or four years when we were too young to work on the farm.
CS: So, who were-?
ML: But by that time, we learned our basic alphabet, hiragana and katakana.
CS: Who were your good friends in school?
ML: My very best friend was not Japanese because I was always the smallest in the class and she was always the biggest. She sort of physically protected me, not that I needed protection, I don't think, [chuckle] because I was perfectly capable of slaughtering anybody verbally.
CS: How about your siblings? As the big sister, what was the relationships with the other children in the family and the other children in the Nokai Japanese school?
ML: Well, being the oldest, I think, in retrospect, I was privileged because being the first grandchild, I was a favourite of my grandmother, whom I adored. My mother wanted me to do well, which I succeeded. I was sort of closeted, I think. In retrospect, and my father, like ordinary Japanese would, wanted a son and when I came along, he said, gotta make do with what I got. He treated me as if I were a boy, which was a trial I tell you because I'm not very physical and he was very outdoorsy. Because I was expected to, I did a lot of the heavy work. That included being able to handle a cross-cut saw to cut the firewood because all our fuel was wood.
CS: So, on a normal school day, you would go to regular public school and you would come home and then, would you have Japanese studies as well?
ML: No, we went directly from our school to the community hall where we had Japanese lessons and then we went home from there.
CS: And in growing season, were you also expected to help in the fields?
ML: Yes, growing seasons, forget about Japanese school. As soon as the work started, all hands on, in the fields.
CS: Tell me about the strawberry farms and your recollection of the very lucrative successful farms in Mission.
ML: I think so. Although my clearest memory is the Depression period, which was kind of rough. In the early days, I think, as a toddler, I remember that we had, we picked our berries. We had strawberries, raspberries, and other soft fruit. My grandparents had even more soft fruit. The way they harvested was to recruit Japanese boys from Vancouver and the parents rather liked to get them out of their hair and they were off the streets. They were well-fed on the farm. We always had a bunkhouse full of teenagers. That was, you know, forbidden for us toddlers. Don't bother the boys, you're not supposed to go into the bunkhouse. They brought sophisticated things like portable record players. I thought they were very exotic.
CS: Was the market in Vancouver the primary market?
ML: Not really because the co-op market right across the country to Winnipeg. So we loaded up first up the season to Winnipeg. Winnipeg and Calgary were the principal market.
CS: Did you get outside of Mission at all when you were a child?

ML: We had expeditions occasionally to Vancouver but that was a real thing because not everyone had a car. My uncle had a car so several times a year, It was a great expedition.
CS: What do you remember about those trips?
ML: It was a long trip. It seemed to be dark most of the time because it was winter. In the summertime, we couldn't take time off. By the time we got to Port Moody on the outskirts of Vancouver, we thought we were in Vancouver. But then, it was very foggy because the prevailing wind comes inland and it was always a terrible drag, very scary, to go up the narrow roads through Port Moody to Vancouver. We had relatives who lived on Powell Street and friends who lived in Kitsilano. So, we kept in touch, visiting a couple of times a year.
CS: These were more family excursions rather than school organized trips?
ML: [nods] Schools those days didn't have organized trips or at least my school didn't.

[15 minutes]

CS: So then, what happened from primary school to high school? Did you go to high school?
ML: Yes, we went to high school.
CS: Tell me about that.
ML: Well, I was reasonably successful academically throughout and I enjoyed high school very much. Most of, many of our teachers were Scottish in the lower mainland. In our lower teen years, people would say we sound slightly Scottish from the lower mainland. We had two teachers. In primary school, we had a Ms. Murray who still had a strong Scottish accent. She was very influential. In high school, our French and Latin teacher was a highlander with a very thick accent.
CS: What were the early influences in high school? Did you have favourite teachers, favourite subjects?
ML: English, of course, was easy for me. I don't know where I picked up the idea but I always wanted to be a journalist and I think that probably started in high school and I think it started with the encouragement of our English teacher. Because as long as I could remember, I was meddling around with the school newspapers. So, I was working on the high school newspaper.
CS: Were there are other Japanese Canadian students involved in this?
ML: As I recall, not really because we didn't think in those terms, who was Japanese and who wasn't. It was really wide open. The teachers were all very generous and the teachers naturally like biddable, bright kids. So, I was quite privileged.
CS: So, what were your recollections then? I take it, sounds like you had a very happy-
LU: Pause for a second. The train is coming by.
CS: Oh good, thank you. I wasn't even, I didn't even hear that.
LU: It's usually quieter in the other room but we can't all fit in the office.
CS: We are thinking of building a soundproof room as they have it in Densho. Their room is quite claustrophobic but it's sort of, almost like a walk-in closet, covered in- You would know this better than I, from CBC, has a waffle foam.

ML: But that's not natural. I think I prefer slightly brighter sound cause soundproofing. That's old-fashioned idea.
CS: It has given a uniformity to their interviews.
ML: [nods] Doesn't it take away the brightness of the voices?
CS: It's not bad. If you haven't been on their website. We might do that and they have interesting material on their website and they, again, we debated with them and debated among ourselves whether we would go there with very, very uniform in background and in tone. First of all, we can't afford some of these things and secondly, we had taken the cameras out to people's homes. In one case, to a hospital to get the interview. So, there is quite a variation in the background that makes it more interesting. Before we go back, do you think it was unusual? Was Mission an unusual school?
ML: Well, it was certainly different from Vancouver. In Vancouver, they were such a large group and they were cohesive and they had language school and cultural activities throughout the year. Whereas we were only partially insulated that way. I think, probably rural life was easier. We kept the languages separately. We used to joke in Mission that the kids in Vancouver spoke bad English and bad Japanese because they tended to mix the two. And you will notice, people who grew up in Vancouver did not speak English all the time.
CS: Or didn't speak it well.
ML: You probably heard the story about Steveston which was sort of 90% Japanese. They taught the teacher Japanese so they didn't learn much English.
CS: It's very, it's interesting and I'd like to come back to this because I think most of the people we've interviewed who grew up in Vancouver, their recollections in public school and high school were that they were different.
ML: Of course, because there were so many of them, concentrated.
CS: Right because most grew up on Powell Street and then when they went outside of Powell Street, they felt a certain amount of discrimination whether it was at movies and swimming pools and other things, which was not your experience.

[20 minutes]

ML: No, it was not. I feel very privileged, you know, that we didn't suffer this kind of sort. In fact, we were pretty awful as kids. Let me tell you a story.
CS: Let me put this back on. Turned on?
LU: Yep, it's rolling.
CS: I'm sorry, I interrupted you.
ML: As children, you don't know any different and this was long before the days of political correctness. So, I remember a famous, very well-known in school, a sort of kids' chant to which they skipped rope. One of them, in recollection, is the most awful thing you could ever teach kids. Red, white, and blue. Your father is a Jew, your mother is a Chink and so are you. All of us didn't think. The teachers didn't think to stop us.
CS: Growing up in Toronto in the 50s, there were very similar things.
ML: Yes.

CS: Maybe things haven't changed as much as we think they have. So, tell me, I would be very interested to know. Coming back to your experience in public school and high school that this was a farming, rural town. It seems that relationships were very harmonious.
ML: Well, as I recall, we didn't mix socially. Yes, and I don't think, I wasn't involved in the grown-up world but I don't think they took part in municipal politics. They looked after, the Nokai looked after the cultural centre and they looked after their own. Within the Japanese group, the Buddhists, of course, were very cohesive, well organized bunch and they looked after their own and religiously festivals and that kind of thing. Big items in our eyes.
CS: How about your best friend? Did she come to your house? Did you go to her house?
ML: No, she didn't. I visited her house. Well, we were two miles out of town, so, on a farm. If we lived in the village, I think, we might have been.
CS: How did you get to school?
ML: We walked, we walked. It's hard to think back as a five-year-old going to kindergarten, we walked.
CS: How about the other, your other siblings, how close in age are they to you?
ML: My sister is two years younger, my next sister, and the other one is four years younger and my brother, Roy, is eight years younger than I.
CS: Did your mother participate equally as a farmer or did she mainly concentrate on the home front?
ML: Well, farmwives had a very hard life because they not only looked after the family, the kids but they also took part in working the fields and getting the fruit ready for market.
CS: Were you left on your own a lot? Did you have to pick up some of the responsibilities in the house and your siblings-
ML: We were all given chores and my chore because I was the oldest and my father expected me to- He didn't think of any discrimination. Here I was doing the heavy work like chopping wood and sawing and bringing in wood for the stove and that kind of thing. That my responsibility. Hauling water for the ofuro, the bath because we didn't have municipal water. Our water was from a creek with- The headwaters was a lovely spring away from the farm and we had to haul water for cooking, bathing, and everything else.
CS: Was it a communal ofuro or a family?
ML: No, family. All the farmers had their own. First thing the Japanese do is set up their dwelling and then, they build an ofuro.
CS: So, tell me a little bit about the food. Did you cook and what did you eat?
ML: Well, as I recall, I didn't cook too much except I became the designated pie maker when I was about twelve or so. My grandmother never mastered Canadian cooking. So, I was, whenever I visited, I was expected to make apple pie. Later, when I was able to, I made lemon meringue pie, my uncle, of course, loved it. I mastered making pancakes at my grandmother's. I didn't do very much at home for some reason. I can understand in retrospect. My mother refused to go to school. She hated school so she never knew how to read English and yet, she knew a far amount about

Canadian cooking. So, how did she pick it up? I don't know because she certainly didn't have English friends but she could make sponge cake.

[25 minutes]

ML: She could make custard, donuts, that kind of thing.
CS: Did the other women in the Nokai share this skill? Is that-
ML: Yes, they did. I think that's probably how they got their skills. Off seasons when they aren't required to farm, then the women and the Buddhist group would get together and have a gigantic exchange of recipes. They studied Chinese cooking and I suppose, they studied Canadian cooking and that's how they learned.
CS: On a day-to-day basis, in your household, was it primarily Japanese or Japanese Canadian adopted food? What do you remember from those days?
ML: We ate pure Japanese. We had sushi for breakfast with pickled vegetables with rice three times a day. On the farm, you took out great rice balls. Couldn't stop and come in for lunch, rice balls with pickles. Farm onigiri is the size of a softball. I found it very moving when I first moved, visited Hawaii as a tourist. Like all tourists, we weren't white but I wanted to get into the centre where the real life was. I wandered into Woolworth and they had a great deli counter but the deli counter had a lot of Japanese. [unclear] Waikiki beach, they had these modern, delicate sushi but you go to Waikiki in the Woolworth and they had great trays. None of this presentation nonsense. They had great sloppy things of stewed vegetables and onigiri. I felt like home. Very huge onigiri not the deli stuff.
CS: Did you take a traditional bento to school with you?
ML: No, my mother decided it would single us so we had sandwiches to take to school.
CS: Same things as the other kids at school?
ML: Yes.
CS: Isn't that interesting? So, she must have learned that skill from the other women as well.
ML: I think they tried to be good parents in the Canadian community.
CS: So, how old were you in 1941?
ML: I was 18, going on to 19. Fortunately, I had just finished high school.
CS: Tell me what happened to your family after Pearl Harbour.
ML: Well, I personally escaped a fate that was all mapped out for me from my mother. I wanted to go to university because my English teacher wanted me to try out a scholarship for UBC. My mother forbad it because first of all, they couldn't afford it and I was already uppity enough, thank you very much. It would make me unmarriageable so she wouldn't allow me to leave and at that time, I suppose I accepted that proposition and the war came along. I thought, well, I want to finish my education cause she, it was very sad because my mother was a very able woman, not domineering, dominant. She ran the family and what she said went. I wouldn't have, I would have been very hard-pressed to break that rule and go off to university on my own. Besides, I didn't know anybody in Vancouver. How was I going to support myself? But then the war came along. All of a sudden, things were collapsing. You had to function in an English-speaking world. My mother couldn't.

My father, fortunately for the family, was working part-time, as a lot of farmers did off-season, in a sawmill just outside of Hope. So, he was just outside the security zone. There was a security commission recruiting agricultural families for the sugary farms in Alberta and Manitoba. At the time, the Japanese families were given an option, especially rural ones. We had a choice. Either we went as a family group to the beet farms on the prairies and if we didn't like that option, we could split up and then we would go to road camps. The women and children would go to Stanley Park for other dispersal. We thought that was not an option, we would rather stay together. At least, I thought we would rather stay together. My father was worrying and twiddling his thumb but they were not allowed to travel. Once they were outside the security zone, you weren't allowed to come back. He couldn't do very much. So, I said, right, we don't want to go to Stanley Park so let's go to, where shall we go?

[30 minutes]

ML: The furthest away, the better. Stick a needle and we went to Winnipeg. At that time, the head of the Security Commission was the head of the Winnipeg Grain Exchanges. His name was Gram, I cannot remember his given name and he painted a very rosy picture of how fine it was going to be. The family could stay together. We would have no trouble getting a place on the farm, etc. Quite, maybe he didn't know but there's a world of difference between fruit farming in the Fraser Valley and beet farming in the Prairies.
CS: Did you settle and did the family stay together?
ML: Yes, we stayed together. Then, we were all herded together in the immigration hall, the old immigration hall which had been opened especially for us in Winnipeg. They wanted to clear the place as fast as possible. So, as fast as the families came in, the farmers would come in. It was a slave market, you know. They would look them over and count heads. What they didn't tell us was that the farmers were only interested in able-bodied hands, especially male hands. Our family was only kids and females so there were no takers for us on farms, which was just as well. Farm life was very hard in Manitoba especially if you are not used to Manitoba winters.
CS: What happened to you?
ML: What happened was the Security Commission was getting desperate. They had to get rid of us cause they wanted to close the immigration hall. So, finally, they decided my sister and myself, my sister was two years younger, as a breakout would be hired out as, farmed out as domestic help in a prosperous family and the first takers were another prominent Grain family. They desperately needed household help but the war was on and all the Ukrainians and Mennonites who were household help had gone off to do war work. So, we were taken on, I don't know what they expected but they expected people who couldn't speak English, etc, etc. They were quite delighted to find two little teenagers who could speak English.
CS: You moved in with them?
ML: Yes, we were hired but get this, Winnipeg like all, many cities had exclusionary laws. We were not allowed to live within the city confines that was why we were all split off to farms. We were taken on by this family at that time at a new development

called Tuxedo, which was a very wealthy development. They, the municipal council, had to have a debate as to whether they would allow these very dangerous enemy aliens, these two teenagers, into their midst. And get this, the mayor of the town was a man called Finklestein and he wouldn't allow any Jews into Tuxedo either. Those were the times but because my employer was very influential through the grain exchange and they were the real power in the city at the time, they persuaded, he persuaded the municipal council to let us stay. They were young, had three four kids and desperately needed help. My sister was the nanny, nursemaid, and did the upstairs work. I was the cook, housekeeper, and did the downstairs work. At that time, I knew nothing, well very little other than being able to make pancakes and apple pie. My first, my very first chore was roast chicken for dinner. We had a chicken farm but I didn't do anything. So, I was handed this fowl and, in those days, the chicken didn't come eviscerated. The chicken came with feathers and guts. I said, what do I do with this thing. I worked on a chicken farm but I didn't know what to do. Luckily, there was cleaning day. A lovely Mennonite lady said, this is what you do and she eviscerated the chicken. Fortunately, I could read so I learned from cookbooks. I must say, I feel sorry for my first employer because I was learning on the job.
CS: Did you actually have to dispatch the chickens?
ML: Oh, they, it came dead.
CS: You just had to defeather them and-
ML: Yes, chop its head off and take its guts out.
CS: And how many years were you with this family and with your sister?
ML: About 18 months. Just long enough during my [unclear].
CS: What happened to your brothers?
ML The family were not allowed to stay in Winnipeg. They had to be relocated to a tiny village called O'Bluff which is now part of greater Winnipeg and they were found a home until Winnipeg changed its mind. It did change its mind about excluding these horrible enemy aliens.

[35 minutes]

ML: They discovered we were quite harmless so, after about a couple of years, they were able to come into the city.
CS: What did they do during that period when they were living outside of Winnipeg?
ML: Well, fortunately, my father was sending them money so they survived and we contributed, my sister and I contributed a bit from our salary, which wasn't very high. Our wages, sorry, salary.
CS: Oh, so, our father was still in Hope?
ML: He was still in Hope. We were there and my mother particularly didn't want to go back. My father decided to stay there with a good job and contribute to the support of the family.
CS: So, it was your mother and your brothers?
ML: I had two brothers and a sister there.
CS: Okay. Must have been difficult for them.

ML: It was very difficult. Although, they had very good Czech neighbours. Got along very well with them and they showed them how to survive the winter. In Winnipeg, it was quite primitive to insulate the house. They would pile turf on the outside. The Czech farmer neighbor did that for my mother. They piled about a foot of turf and that insulated the house from the outside.
CS: How many other Japanese Canadian families went to settle in that area?
ML: I cannot remember you know. Well, we were dispersed so they were all over the place on the farms and sugar beet area. A lot of them, the farmers were, had not been instructed on how to receive these families and a lot of them did not have living accommodations so I was volunteering in the office at the immigration hall to keep tabs on people, to make sure they got homes, etc. to take complaints, etc, and the complaints were many and they would come back. Some families that couldn't be adequately housed would come back because all they got when they went out there was a chicken coop, not insulated.
CS: Just one question before we leave that, how did you get from Mission to Manitoba? Was there a special train you were taken via?
ML: Oh. I don't know why we went by CP because north of the river was Canadian Pacific and south was CN but we left via CP and we passed through Calgary. We were given tickets. We were bought tickets. We were allowed to take 150 pounds with us. People didn't dream of putting stuff in storage in those days. We just left it The custodian, we were assured that the custodian of enemy alien property would look after all that.
CS: And what happened to the family farm in Mission?
ML: Well, it was taken over by the custodian and sold off, auctioned off for a pittance. My father vaguely thought of a class action, organizing a class action suit but he didn't have the wherewithal and there wasn't enough support and people said forget it. You know, you are going to lose. It's a losing proposition. So, I think there were various pockets of people, I think you having researched this would know, trying to start class actions suits against this arbitrary seizure.
CS: There were a few. They weren't successful.
ML: I think, I think my father heard that.
CS: So then, all of the farmers In Mission, all of the farms were then disposed of by the end-
ML: Yes, by the custodian.
CS: -By the custodian of enemy property. When did your father join the family in Manitoba or did he?
ML: Oh, he never did. Shortly after I left, it was in '49, wasn't it, when Japanese were allowed to go after the coast. My mother went back, she couldn't get back fast enough whereas I had this feeling I didn't want to see the place, thank you very much.
CS: After 18 months, you left and then, what happened?
ML: Well, we went, a lot of us went to Hamilton because Hamilton was one of the very few eastern cities that did not have exclusionary bylaws. Toronto did. As you probably know, in 1946, they passed one but there were Japanese sneaking into Toronto. It wasn't enforced but Hamilton welcomed us with open arms because the city council was very left-wing. In fact, some people were active communists then

and it was a labour dominated city as you may recall. McMaster was hiring labour because labour was very scarce. So, some men worked in the kitchen, [unclear] kitchen, and there were two of us. A good friend at the time, I lost track of her but her name was Mary Shimizu and two of us were chambermaids in the women's residence. They paid us reasonably well and I did that for a year to earn enough money for tuition. Besides, I only grade 12 and in Ontario, you had to have grade 13 for university entrance.

[40 minutes]

ML: So, I went to night school.
CS: Did your sister go with you to Hamilton?
ML: No, she didn't. She stayed on in Winnipeg. She took over the senior position of housekeeper after I left.
CS: You taught her how to deal with the chicken?
ML: Yes.
CS: So, when you went to Hamilton, you still had your sister in the home where you had been, your mum and other siblings in another place outside Winnipeg, and your father in Hope?
ML: By this time, Winnipeg had relented and they were living in the city. So, that wasn't quite so desperate as living in O'Bluff. My sister who lived and my brother seemed to have very good memories of being in O'Bluff. They went to school there.
CS: They were finishing high school then, were they?
ML: No, they were still in primary, the youngsters. My sister never got through high school. My immediate younger sister never got through high school. The war interrupted that. She never went back.
CS: She didn't finish high school?
ML: She didn't finish. Besides, she wasn't too keen about going to school, I think.
CS: So, what was the route then to university and where did you go to university?
ML: Well, I went to McMaster. That was my target because they were welcoming. McMaster, being a religious place at the time, it was still a religious college. They were completely, what shall I say, internationally minded. The Baptist missionaries were working all over the world so they were scholars and they knew about other cultures. I wanted to go there because of the atmosphere.
CS: What did you take?
ML: I took economics.
CS: Tell me then, from university what was your path to England?
ML: Looking back, it seems very rough and irresponsible. Young people don't change very much. Well, I said, we've got to see the world. I got married. I met my husband at university and we got married on the day we graduated and set off for London. We thought, as naïve Canadians, that we could just work our way around the world just as we had worked our way through university and McMaster. When we got to London, it was an entirely other world. It wasn't that easy to pick up enough money to go to the next leg of our international tour before we settled down.
CS: Where was Edward from, your husband?

ML: He was born in Hamilton and spent some time in Windsor. He comes from a reasonably well-to-do Hamilton family. His family are reformed Jews. Reformed as in, you know, like I don't think they do speak any Hebrew at all.
CS: At that time, the concept of inter-racial was still not that common, am I right?
ML: Well, I do not have the sense we were regarded as unusual, you know. Maybe it was because I wasn't interested in observing what others thought. My husband's family were already gone to the dogs because my mother-in-law was Scottish, Irish, Presbyterian and her husband was a reformed Jew so they had to get over that one in that generation. So the fact that their son married a Japanese-Canadian was no big deal.
CS: What did your family think?
ML: Not very much. I didn't ask them. I just announced that I was getting married cause I knew exactly what their reaction would be. They did not approve of mixed marriages in those days.
CS: Did they ever express that to you? Was that ever discussed?
ML: Oh. Quite clearly. It was made very clear to me what my responsibility as a well brought up Japanese woman was. You know, if I hadn't intervened, my mother had all laid out that I was to go to Vancouver to be finished that is, you take sewing and flower arrangement.
CS: And marry-
ML: Yes, that's right.
CS: -Appropriately?
ML: And that would make me marriable and please, do not get into political arguments.
CS: So, you got to London and then, what happened? How did you make your way to the BBC? Tell me about that.
ML: Well, like a lot of Canadians, I knocked on the front door and went to the North American Service and said, I'm from Winnipeg, I'm from Ontario and I've got my degree in economics, an Honours degree in economics.

[45 minutes]

ML: I worked for the student paper and I think I could do, you know, do very well for you. So, the head of the North American Service said, thank you very much. What do you know about radio? I said nothing but I can learn and I'm a fast learner. He said, when you learned, come back. So, I said, well, that's not getting me anywhere so how do I practice? I went to an employment agency and the BBC was always looking for dictation typists. They were always looking for dictation typists. There was a high [unclear] rate. I hired very easily on a temporary basis because I was reasonably well-educated and you have to be very well-educated to be a dictation typist because in those days, journalists did not type or at least the English, the BBC journalists did not type. They stood over you and dictated, the latest Independence Movement and all that.
CS: Directly to the typist?
ML: Yes, the typist so you had to be able to type at dictation rate and of course, you had to be familiar with all the international names that they were talking about. The

typing pool, the dictation typing pool were all very well-educated. They were novelists trying to earn money on the side, actors resting, etc. So, I enjoyed myself there, met a lot of interesting people and then, the BCC which at that time had a very good in-house training system, said they needed a news clerk in the French news service. So, she comes along, the woman who ran Human Resources, and she says, so you're Canadian. I assume you are bilingual. I said, oh, yes. I mean, I can manage. A fat lie because I could read and write French but I certainly could not speak. So, I worked in the French news service for a while as a news clerk and then they said- Again, she said, well, your background says you're of Japanese origin. I can speak Japanese so I said, well, I can get along so I was sent as a program assistant to the Japanese service where I learned a fair bit about broadcasting because the boss- This is a very interesting aside. The boss was a brilliant man. The whole program organizer for external services, his name was [Trevor Lagen?] and I found out subsequently from a Frank Moritsugu that his Japanese was so good that he was teaching the intelligence group including Frank and the British army Japanese.
CS: So, what year was this that you went to the BBC?
ML: This was '49, '50. I started the BBC at '50, 1950, and I worked my way up. I worked in the Japanese service and all the broadcasters were [unclear] so their Japanese was impeccable. There was no way they would let me in or near the microphone, which was well, I was kind of disappointed, but I did everything else. As I started to say the boss was brilliant but he hated chores, administration, so he went off to play, go and practice judo and play the piano and whatever else he did. Dumped all the office work and the studio work on me so I had to learn very quickly. But then, he was very fair-minded and he said, you shouldn't be doing this, you know so he recommended me to the staff training school where I learned the art of production.
CS: Now tell me what the- I'm sure it was not that long after the end of hostilities between Britain and Japan, that London would have been a very different place than it is today. Both as a woman and someone that is Japanese Canadian, you must have been a bit of a novelty.
ML: I think I was a novelty and I was treated as a sort of a pet. No, I didn't feel any discrimination. I thought I had a competitive edge because I thought I was reasonably well-educated, you know. Young Canadians are rather arrogant that way but when I, after I had my staff training, then I had to compete with everyone else who were applying for jobs at the BBC. I competed with the best of them. My competition were graduates from Oxford and Cambridge which was the main source of recruitment. They were very [unclear] young men and I was rather older than they and I could do a lot of the practical things they couldn't do cause they were the really spoiled upper middle class people.

[50 minutes]

ML: Academically, I was able to compete with them because McMaster education was very good, I thought. And anyway, I had a degree in economics, that gave me an edge. That's why I took economics because it would give me an edge.
CS: What was Edward doing at the time?

ML: Well, he decided to polish off his education so he went to LSC and he took a second degree in statistics. He worked at applied statistics where there was engineering or finance or whatever.
CS: So, what next in your career at that time?
ML: So, I got a job as a producer in the overseas service in the far eastern section, not exclusively Japanese and I was working the international scene at a very interesting time when, you know, the East Asian colonies were getting their independence so I met all these people including Lee Kuan Yew, who was as you know, Trudeau's buddy, best buddy. He became Prime Minister of Singapore and he was Head of Negotiation for the Malaysian bunch, broke off for Singapore. He was a really awful person. His, he was not Chinese like a lot of overseas Asians. He was completely assimilated and his name was Harry Lee. His father was a worker for Shell Oil and he went to Cambridge on Shell Oil Scholarship. He was, he came to the interview wanted to tell us, tell me what he should say. I said, oh no, no, no that's not how we operate. We have editorial control. Then, he accused me publicly in a press conference of being a [unclear], a sellout to my roots because I should favour Asians against the Whites. I said, thank you very much but I think you are being racist. Anyway, I'm not Chinese, thank you very much.
CS: So, were you interviewing him or-?
ML: Yes, we were interviewing him.
CS: So, did you ever have it out with him?
ML: Oh yes, I did publicly.
CS: On air?
ML: No, publicly but he tried to organize the broadcast to be in the favour of the independence group.
CS: So, who else did you meet that you remember from those days?
ML: Well, I'll tell you. Lester Pearson, of course, on his way back from having got the London Peace Prize. Another person was Howard Green, whom you may recall. At that time, he was there as the Foreign Secretary for the [unclear] government. Before that, during the period where they wanted to get rid of us or some aspects of the Canadian society thought the final solution and he coined the phrase final solution to find some-. This has been forgotten but he coined the phrase final solution. Find some tropical island and send the whole lot of us there.
CS: I did not know that this was actually espoused within the government circles in Canada.
ML: No, he wasn't. He was the one who proposed it. Course he didn't get anywhere but it received a fair amount of publicity then.
CS: This was post, this was his idea-
ML: At the time of the Great Debate whether to repatriate these people or not, his thing was get rid of them once and for all, the final solution. He actually used that term.
CS: That was to send Japanese Canadians to an island?
ML: Yes, every single one of us. Yes, to some tropical island.
CS: Did you ever have the opportunity to talk to somebody like Lester Pearson about treatment of Japanese Canadians?

ML: No, I didn't. Of course I didn't have time there because he was a very important person. But I was going to say Howard Green came through as Foreign Secretary for the [unclear] government and stopped by to be interviewed. I can't remember what we interviewed about and he wanted to shake my hand. I said thank you but no.
CS: Because you knew this about him?
ML: Of course. I thought, what gall you know?
LU: Sorry, we have to pause again. The train, sorry.
CS: Yes. Sorry, I've been so absorbed in this discussion that I didn't even hear the train.
LU: I missed the last one.
CS: Just tell me when we go back so I won't stumble like I did the last time. That's interesting. I did not know about Howard Green. I have not heard that name. What happened after he was the Minister?
ML: Obviously, that was an off-the-cuff remark, I guess, at the moment. He completely forgot about it. Otherwise, why would he want to shake my hand?
CS: Could you imagine today? I mean, he would be the Mel Gibson of Canadian politics.

[55 minutes]

ML: Well, people said awful things you know.
CS: That was never picked up or not remembered. We didn't have Facebook. We didn't have YouTube.
ML: No, no. I'm surprised more Japanese Canadians don't remember this because I remember it very vividly.
CS: How did you find about Howard Green?
ML: Well, it was well-know. I mean, The New Canadian talked about it.
CS: Interesting. I have never head of that.
ML: He wasn't the only one but he was the one who used the term final solution.
CS: I don't remember that actually being picked up in the Politics of Racism or the Enemy That Never Was. I'd remember it if it had. Isn't that interesting?
ML: So many people were saying awful things, I guess he was just another awful one.
CS: That one is particularly-
ML: Well, Lester Pearson told me on the way out, he said, why are you working abroad? You should be back home working as a good Canadian in Canada. I said, well, that's a good idea. Near the end of my period in London, I had thought about it for a while and I had been working, I think, six or eight years and thought it was time for a career change. My husband decided it was time to come back and he came back because he wasn't getting anywhere. We came back. 1960, we came back and I was ready to come back.
CS: 1960.
ML: Because at that time, everybody both in England and in Canada, they were going from radio to television. I thought I'd like to try television. At that time, the woman in charge of television, current affairs or public affairs, was a very tough-minded woman.
CS: Who is that? What was her name?

ML: Her name was Grace Wyndham Goldie. She was very well known because she personally practically revived British television or British series television. Her way was you can't change things with a bunch of old fogies who want to do things the old way. Her notion was to get young radicals and train them. It was unfortunately at that time that I was an old fogie and I didn't get the job. I was too indoctrinated in old-fashioned techniques.
CS: In the BBC sort of culture.
ML: Culture, exactly, culture. And it was, BBC culture was fairly rigorous. You are a public servant and don't you forget it.
CS: Yep.
ML: You had to be fair and balanced, etc.
CS: I just went by England. I was in England for about two weeks for my daughter's graduation in Edinburgh. We walked by Fleet Street and walked by the old BBC headquarters because they are now somewhere else.
ML: Bush House was the central of the Overseas Service.
CS: What a fascinating time though to be over there.
ML: It was. It was at the time of the Swiss crisis, the Independent movement in Africa and the Far East. I covered most of those conferences.
CS: You never met Herbert Norman, did you?
ML: No, I didn't. I wish I had.
CS: Interesting. Is it gone?
LU: It's gone.
CS: Just for a minute though, where did we leave off? We were just talking about BBC radio and your responsibilities there so I'll go back. At the BBC, what were, what was the totality of your responsibilities? In those days, did interviewers actually plan?
ML: I was actually a producer and occasionally, I did the interviewing. As you saw from the photographs, I did the occasional performance. I've said very vigorously and I still believe this, that you cannot be your own producer. You shouldn't be part of that. Producers all want to go on air. So, I very rigorously stopped myself from going on and I wouldn't have been allowed.
CS: So, what's your favourite recollection of those days in radio in London?
ML: Oh, I'm very proud of the fact that during the Malaysian negation, Independence negotiation, people are always complaining. The BBC listeners that happen to overhear overseas broadcast said that the BBC foreign broadcast was biased against the British foreign policy.

[60 minutes]

ML: The colonial office was negotiating with the leaders, leaders of Malaysia. So, there was huge complaint from the foreign office because the external services are partially funded by foreign office. A complaint was sent to Bush House. At the time, the director was Hugh Carleton Green who was the cousin of Gram Green, a very well-known war correspondent. At that time, I was called to the carpet and I thought, what did I do this time? I had been criticized from both sides. From Hugh Green for not favouring the Independence people and from the British listener or the colonial office, for not an unbiased view in quotes of the office's position. So I get

called into Hugh Carlton Green's office. This was over the head of my supervisor, immediate supervisor, fear and trepidation. He said, so, what did you do? I explained very carefully what we were up to. He says, oh good and that was the end of the discussion. Then, I got a merit increase and Hugh Carlton Green subsequently went on, he was a very tough cookie to become Director General for the BBC.
CS: There was no foreign interference from the foreign office?
ML: They were always trying in order to get the best picture.
CS: Having had a fairly successful career at BBC Radio, what brought you back to Canada?
ML: Well, my husband came back and he had had it in London and I thought it was time I branched out and did something different. So, I wanted to go back to print when I got back to Canada, not that I maintained any connection but I thought I could do it.
CS: Had you started your family? Did you have children at this time?
ML: Yes, I had two children born in London.
CS: How old were they at the time?
ML: My daughter was almost nine when I came back and my son, who is now dead, was 18 months.
CS: Before we talk about coming back to Canada, tell me what it was like at that time to juggle your career and family obligations in London.
ML: Fortunately, I don't think I could have done any of this without my husband. My husband was very well brought up. His mother was a working woman. So he was brought up to be independent, supportive. There was no division of responsibilities. Both sides looked after the children and everything. When I was working, my husband looked after the kids. We had a very good circle of child-minders that were very helpful.
CS: Your children started public school in London?
ML: Yes, my daughter started. The schools in London were being, the system was very mixed. The independent schools were church based to start with and were considered to be better than the general public. So, I found a very good school and that's where my daughter started off. It was a formal independent Anglican school.
CS: Within the BBC at that time and among the producers and the people who were on air, were there many women? Were there many working women at the time?
ML: BBC has always been gender blind. Yes, my boss was a woman and we had, the group there, one of the producers was equally divided between men and women.
CS: We come back to the transition from London back to Canada. You said your husband wanted to come back and was probably time. What happened next? Where did you move? What did you do?
ML: Well, I wanted to start looking around, you know, knocking on doors of newspapers. But before I got there, the CBC needed a producer yesterday. They are always looking for experienced producers yesterday. The man who was in charge of recruitment for public affairs in the CBC, I knew him. This sounds like awful cronyism but he was working for the CBC and he was head of a unit that needed help desperately. So, when he found out that I had come back, he said, you need a job? I said, not particularly. I'm looking for something else to do. He said, well, we need a producer very badly and offered me a salary.

[65 minutes]

ML: I still didn't bite so he kept upping the ante. He made me an offer I couldn't refuse. It was a very lucky move because as I said, most of the BBC and CBC, there was an exodus towards television and radio was more or less ignorable. Morale was very low because they felt no one was listening. The glamorous jobs were all in television, etc, etc. That was when, the then President, the newly appointed President who came from civil service looked at the books and said, why are we continuing with this service that is diminishing audience? He told the new Director of Radio. This was after a few years. He said, his name was George Davidson. He was a very funny man. He said, show me cause as to why your service should continue?
CS: He was asking about CBC Radio in general?
ML: He was asking the Director of Radio whose name was Jack Crane. He had a huge study and I was part of that group. Not really close but other people came up with a formula to give reason of why radio should be allowed to continue.
CS: Obviously, you were successful.
ML: Well, yes, it was hard going because at that time, they managed. Then, my immediate boss was Peter Miggs. The radio change was as a result of the study that he and Doug Ward conducted. They recommended a complete revamping of the radio service. I was recruited to do the practical because these people did not have practical, on-the-ground experience. I did have. So, they set up the parameters and I drafted the schedule of how we could realize that.
CS: What happened next?
ML: It was tough going but then, people got excited because we were changing and we were able to recruit brilliant young men and women.
CS: How did you do that? How did you affect that change at the CBC, get the resources to do it, and push that forward?
ML: Well, I didn't, it was the Director of Radio who was able to but he had to have a successful crew behind him. So, it was a good series of events. Politically, it was very well played. When the reform of radio, when the Miggs and Ward report was finally approved after about a year of very careful analysis, the budget was approved by the head office. CBC sounds like an unwieldy bureaucracy but they do things very systematically and they have a huge plan outlined. The radio plan was approved including the abolition of commercials. It took a long time to get rid of commercials. The whole plan said that we were to distinguish ourselves. We were using a format that sounded vaguely commercial but the difference between ourselves and the commercials was that we were serious about what we were discussing and we would no longer have commercials.
CS: And this was what year now, roughly?
ML: I took a few years. I started in '60. About '66, I guess, '68, studies started and '70, when the whole schedule change started. '71, the schedule change was complete.
CS: At that time, there was CBC AM and FM?
ML: I was only responsible working for AM. I was on the serious side, the public affairs, the current affairs side as we called them. The arts were someone else's responsibility until I became Program Director of the whole thing.

CS: Tell me about that. Tell me about the various promotions through CBC and I'd also like to know some of the changes you brought about because you are credited with a number of innovations at CBC and a number of the key programs that I grew up listening to. Tell me about your past.
ML: Well, I have to say, wherever I've went, I've always been very lucky in my bosses and I consider myself lucky in radio because Peter Miggs was very sympathetic. He was very organized. His views, his philosophical views were very revolutionary.

[70 minutes]

ML: Doug Ward, who was a member of the Young Canadians, was at the forefront of all that. He was practically marching in the Selma kind of person. Their views, they started off by thinking about how to best serve the consumer, the listener. It started basically as that. Previously, the radio had become more about- This seems so common sense but the producers were very much left on their own, demoralized, and they were producing for themselves and their friends. They thought thinking about ratings was very prude. Nobody serious public-mind broadcasters thought about ratings. It doesn't matter. What you were doing was fine. It didn't matter that practically nobody was listening but we thought that was a bad use of public money. We weren't doing anybody a service if we weren't doing programs useful to people. They had to be serious in intent and had to be useful. We had to deliver the service when they were there previously until the time we made the wholesale change. Most of the effort was going on in the evening but common sense would have told us, anybody was watching television at night. It was really a waste of effort and money to be putting all your effort in. You should cover late evening but you should put your effort where the audience is and that meant early morning.
CS: What were some of the innovations you brought about at CBC as part of this change? Some of the programming, some of the things that were different.
ML: Well, good service- First, we divided the day into local and network. That was rather expensive proposition because eventually, we had 26 stations across the country. By local, you can have very bare skeleton programming in the period between six and nine. That meant you had to have 26 across the country doing their local thing. We couldn't afford that for the whole day. We had periods, we charted the listening. Most of the audience was at prime time radio-
LU: Sorry.
CS: End of tape?
LU: End of tape.
CS: Didn't realize that was 1968. Let's go back to some of the innovations that you brought about. You were talking about he local versus network programming.
ML: Yes, we divided the day between local and network responsibility. To analyze the philosophy, you have to serve the audience where they were and their needs. Common sense will tell you, today, it's so common sense that it hardly bares repeating. At that time, we had to be told. You had to serve people with the kind of material, the kind of approach to a need that has to be accessible. What do people want? We analyze it. What do people want? Service information, you have to relate, tell them about their community, politics, the whole range of things. Their

immediate neighbourhood. That could only be done by locals. And then, comes the time. Tis was kind of an arbitrary distinction but there comes a time when everybody needs to have a nationwide perspective, broader than your municipal county. That was the time for the network. Obviously, we should take charge from the network when the audience wasn't quite so peak. So, that's how the day was divided. So, the morning period was local, afternoon drive, radio noon was a peak in listenership, and the afternoon during the drive home time were also peak, those were destinated to locations. 26. The budget was a nightmare. In between times, the more block in the morning, afternoon was also a problem and early evening, As It Happens, the World Report and As It Happens period.
CS: So, those were programs that you brought in?
ML: Well-
CS: As It Happens.
ML: Yes. I had a lot of help, of course. We couldn't have done that if we didn't have very revolutionary producers.

[75 minutes]

ML: We found them. Morningside, there was country in the morning, was dreamed up by Alex Frame. He was a real visionary. He did the morning period. He recruited Peter Gzowski. And then, As It Happens was I like to think, my baby, their evening period. I have to admit that I was more comfortable in the evening period. It took me a little while to figure out how I related to the morning show. IT was a good decision because the morning show hosts now are the stars in their locations cause they get invited to ribbon cuttings and all the rest of it. If they don't relate to the community, we're sunk. Barry used to boast that he was number one. That's how powerful morning radio was.
CS: At this time, were you in charge of all English language broadcasting for CBC?
ML: Yes, I was responsible for philosophically defining what we were doing?
CS: What was your philosophy? You talked a little bit about it. As a Canadian, was there a mission?
ML: Oh yes.
CS: Beyond the formal?
ML: Well, we had to be politically objective. We were accused of being wildly left-wing but that was by the conservative of course. It had to be balanced, that goes without saying. We had to explore and make sure that country would not be fragmented. Regions had to be involved. Decision-making had to be national so we had to have vast conferences and hear their pitches about how we were starting funds and all the rest of it. My basic philosophy was it had to be national in scope, local in delivery.
CS: That was a very exciting time in Canada because the 1960s, stand of the 60s, Expo 67-
ML: It was a revolutionary time. People forget how we were changed, changing and people like David Suzuki was marching in Selma when there was plenty was going on here. I remember, when I first started in 1960, there was tremendous antipathy to hearing anything about the Quiet Revolution. People who were opposing that,

people like, Pierre Trudeau was not at the forefront of that. People like Gérard Pelletier and Jean Marchand were all active. It was a very interesting time and Quiet Revolution was just getting underway in Quebec. Social revolution was going on when our young people were all marching and going places like Selma. Funny enough, you know, I sometimes wonder why they didn't involve themselves on the Aboriginal movement here instead minding somebody's business going down south.
CS: Perhaps because it wasn't known to many Canadians.
ML: Oh, it was known because if I recall, AIM was flourishing.
CS: In the United States.
ML: They were here too. Some of them were wild revolutionaries. It was a problem for me because in the far north which is predominantly Aboriginal, the aim to infiltrate them. They were real revolutionaries and I didn't know what they were up to. We recruited, we had real Aboriginal broadcasting, very fine ones and we tried to have more of them but it was rather difficult because they were divided as to where there loyalties lay.
CS: Where was the Aboriginal broadcasting at CBC? In the west or the north or far north?
ML: It was very, very controversial because I felt they should be part of the mainstream here again as we were discussing earlier. Just how much of your identity is with your own group and how much should relate to the wider group? The politically aware Indians were joining the really sympathetic, with the revolutionaries. They were joining roadblocks to express themselves. I think we've forgotten all that. For network purposes, we always had an hour of Aboriginal affairs because I felt very strongly that the whole country should hear about them from their own mouths.

[80 minutes]

ML: That was tricky because they were, the poor staffers were all, always subject from political pressures in the community to express their perspective and it was very difficult to keep it on even keel because we were regarded as the enemy, of course, and they should take over their time to do with what they please.
CS: What was your experience with French language broadcasting at that time?
ML: Very good. They liked to do their own thing but I felt that we should relate. It was rather difficult because the Quiet Revolution was going full steam. The radicals would rather not know about the English, thank you very much. I tried to, there were cooperative people but not necessarily federalists, reasonable people knew they had to have friends on both sides. I tried very, very hard to have them broadcast for us. We were reasonably successful.
CS: You must have been there at the time of the Quebec Crisis?
ML: Oh yes. When was it? 1970 and the War Measures Crisis, that was quite a difficult time for us.
CS: Did your experience as a Japanese Canadian give you a different perspective on the invocation of the War Measures Act of that time?
ML: Oh, yeah. Well, I could see Trudeau's point of view as well [unclear]. We didn't know at the time that some of it was instigated by the Mounties. Mailboxes were

exploding. It was a terrifying time for all of us. To be fair, Gérard Pelletier never tried to influence as a Secretary of State, never tried to influence what we broadcast. There was the awful night before the War Measures Act was passed in which on-
CS: Pierre Laporte?
ML: -October 16th and 17th. When orders cam down from head office, to this day, it's very muddled as to who gave the order. Gérard Pelletier says he did not ask the President of the CBC to invoke the War Measures Act before it was enacted. But somebody in Head Office took one jump ahead and tried to do favours. There were orders from Ottawa to cease all programming about Quebec.
CS: Really and did-
ML: This was about eight o'clock at night and the War Measures Act was passed the following morning, of course. We said, wait a moment, of course. Who's giving these orders anyway? We phoned our program which was the one of the first council. We tried to find out who gave the instruction anyway. The president says, I didn't give any such instructions. It was a very frightening time.
CS: You were told to cease any discussions?
ML: [nods] Reference, yes. In the middle of the, were live on air and we had to figure out how to figure out a way around it and we stopped.
CS: So you continued?
ML: No, we had to stop because orders came.
CS: So you stopped and how long did that last?
ML: We came to our senses oh about two or three hours later. We resumed broadcasting and then overnight, the War Measures Act was passed and certain things, you couldn't talk about.
CS: I can't remember that time. During the period when the War Measures was enforced in 1970, the CBC, our national broadcaster, could not discuss what was going on the province of Quebec.
ML: We were severely restricted. We did inform, of course, but severely restricted in what they say and couldn't say.
CS: At that time, there were other sources of news in Canada, were they subject to the same restrictions?
ML: [nods]
CS: It wasn't just CBC as a government environment. Interesting.
ML: We weren't, we were a crown corporation. We were independent of the bureaucracy and the political office.
CS: Did that have any long-term effect on those who were at the CBC at the time?
ML: People were debating internally as people are divided into what we should and shouldn't do.
CS: It's probably hard for any young people listening to this to imagine that now that we have Facebook and YouTube and other things.

[85 minutes]

CS: One might find difficult to shut down. At the time, Canadians were very dependent on local networks.

ML: Well, it seems, today as you say, wide open communication. It can be difficult to imagine how it could be restricted. In retrospect, it could be controlled. CBC has always followed BBC pattern and maintained, insisted on arm's length relationship with the government of the day. The worst example of government interference was by Diefenbaker and that was before I arrived. When Diefenbaker's, I can't remember who, relationship he was to Diefenbaker. A funny, little three to four commentary, prime time after the eight o'clock news in the morning was too controversial by half and that it should be restricted. So, orders came down so preview commentary should not be independent anymore. Whereupon, man who hired me, Frank Pierce, it was the first time and long time it happened. He said, I cannot accept such an ordeal. He walked out and all the producers coast to coast walked out with him.
CS: You are often credited with bringing a greater aspect of diversity to those not just on radio but also on television.
ML: I don't know what influence I had on television. I came, I looked around. Every name was Anglo-Saxon including mine of course. I want to see more different names. We did manage to get bright young people from non-English backgrounds, bright young people. Mark Starowicz was one of them. He was not going to be a representative of any group. He was his own man anymore. Of course, he was absolutely right. Women doing serious work was not considered seriously. They could do women's affair, consumer's affairs and that kind of thing. Although, public affairs has always had a strong core of very tough minded women. Some people would go back to Nelly McClung. They owe their heritage to that long stream of women, of prairie radicals. When I first joined, a first problem I had was my, the woman who had trained me into the sixties style had managed to get a whole series of talks by Felix Greene, who is a cousin of Graham Greene. He had just been to China and this was at the time, end of the long march. When they had finally taken over the government, and Felix Greene who was thought because he was related to Graham Greene, to be a commie. My colleague had managed to get a series off his views. Felix Greene and was a huge uproar because this was the 1960s. McCarthyism was in full flight. Canadians had bought into that. There was a fair amount of support for McCarthyism in Canada so there was a public uproar. Course we still broadcasted.
CS: When did –
ML: And anything we had to do about the Quiet Revolution, we had to be very careful in early 60s.
CS: And the made their views known to the CBC?
ML: They write to politicians and it was a huge uproar.
CS: When did the, for example, Barbara Frum and Lou Finlay. They have always been regarded as pioneers and serious, public affairs.
ML: We were very proud in radio, Barbara Frum because she was actually fired from television for being too unladylike. She was too harsh in her interview so we said, thank you very much. I mean, we need someone like that so we recruited her and she became the host for "As It Happens".

[90 minutes]

CS: And that was during your tenure at CBC?
ML: Well, I wasn't the only one. We also supported Barbara from, just felt that she would be ideal for us.
CS: Did you move to television at all in your career?
ML: I was invited to join television but then, the person who was recruiting said, I demand 24 hours of your attention. That was the price you had to pay and I can't do that because I have a family. Much as I would like to join and television was very sexist from the ground up.
CS: More so than radio?
ML: Radio was not. I never forget I was producing for radio and television but minor things in television. I had a speaker in the studio and his voice was getting dry so I said, well, because we didn't have gofer in those days, well, I didn't have a gofer. His throat was obviously being nerves being constricted. I'll get you a cup of lemon tea. When I said that, the floor director, a male, heard me and began to take orders. I was all of a sudden, the coffee girl. I said, thank you but no thanks. I'm supposed to be directing not fetching coffee for your lot. They expected that. That was a very unpopular thing but any woman in the place was automatically fetch and carry.
CS: What do you think is your legacy in CBC? Once again, coming back to the things when you reflect on your years there. What are some of the things that stand out?
ML: I don't like to take credit for it.
CS: I'm going to push you on this because I think you should take credit.
ML: No, I have to be absolutely fair. Public affairs has always been gender blind. They are regarded as being a hornet's nest of identities. They always had to be balanced. No matter what the young radicals thought, we always had to be careful, everything we put on had to be lawyered. We were responsible of getting an array of lawyers and thought about how we could get around this time without being sued for libel or whatever. I really was quite proud of the fact that as it happens [Brokley?] lead situation in this country and we got sued by the lead company, Canada Metal for a million dollars. A million dollars for libel today is nothing but in those days was the biggest lawsuit the CBC ever had stuck on it. The nerve of some people. We said that the scientific evidence that Canada Metal - It was dreadful, they were polluting the east end of Toronto, the big plant there, all the backyard was polluted with lead contamination and this was a big controversy in the states too so we got all the scientific evidence and got them to broadcast whereupon Canada Metal's great umbrage and said there's nothing to show that they were unsafe. They recruited a bunch of scientists for their point of view. And of course there was a great controversy among scientists as to who as bias and who wasn't and they sued us for daring to suggest that their scientist were less than purely scientific for a million dollars.
CS: What else? What other things at CBC stand out in your mind? Those are significant things, in a long and distinguished career, but what was-
ML: I hoped, I came into a department that was gender blind and culturally diverse. The culturally diverse part I really I wanted it to be, to stick by that and I think I succeeded in that but I can't take 100% credit because society was moving that way. Although it's hard, looking back then, the CBC actually had to have an internal study called the Status of Women in CBC.

CS: When was that?
ML: I can't remember the exact date and they went through everything and discovered the ways in which the role of women could be improved and I think there was a book at the time we were doing. We thought it was the most natural thing in the world, as we should be.

[95 minutes]

ML: But as I was saying in television and in the regions, everything wasn't quite so fair and we had to have a study. And it was a groundbreaking study, I don't think any other institution had done such a thing.
CS: When did television change? I remember watching Adrian Clarkson on television. I was struck by the fact she looks Asian but her name is Clarkson. First person of color that I had a seen in a principal role.
ML: Oh, Adrian was undoubtedly brilliant. I remember going to her inaugural broadcast and I was bowled over with how good she was. She deserved to be there no matter her background or what her looks.
CS: Absolutely, what I am getting to is, I have always credited you with those changes at CBC.
ML: No, no, I can't take credit for that because as I was saying, there's a certain group of women in CBC who proceeded me, knocking on doors and tearing them down. But I remind you that Adrian started out with doing daytime show which was regarded as a feminine ghetto. It was only later, by her own strength became evening host. CBC television had very few star women. They were not hard-driving journalists like Barbara Frum became. We had people like Joyce Davidson and Elaine Grant. They tried very hard to break out of the pink ghetto but they were doing mostly pinkish stuff.
CS: CBC has lead the way in so many respects. It has shaped our identities. It must have been a wonderful experience to have been there at such a seminal time in our nationhood.
ML: Oh, it was very exciting. After I became program director - I started out by being program director for AM network because that was my background. And then I became Managing Director and eventually retitled Vice President when I was responsible for the whole, both AM and FM, I had thought at the time we had fixed the AM, if you are not an FM listener, you are not aware of this but the FM, the entertainment side needed a lot of reform too and that was done by - we recruited bright young people in the same way that we did spoken word material. We recruited a bunch of radicals. In this day and age, it sounds like a silly thing to have change but in those days, people were purists and they said, "When we are listening to music, we like purist stuff. Don't bother me with composers, directors, composers, singers. That's something else. That's not music" We had to ween them from that. There had to be a reasonable amount of performance and information on the entertainment side too. That entered, the material had to be nationalized because nobody was supervising them. Vancouver was a major production center. They tended to churn out Shakespeare and other English things forever and I said, "Well, this is utterly boring." We should really look at – because at that time Canadian

writing was flourishing and we said we should have more of that. It took a little while to persuade the old guard, radio producers to go in for domestic production.
CS: Can you give me background on the editorial cartoon you sent me?
ML: I like that very much because it was commissioned by the staff when I retired from the Vice Presidency and went off to London.
CS: When was that?
ML: It was '86 when I asked to be relieved. I thought I had been there long enough and they asked," What else would you like to do?" And I said I would like to be posted in London so I was the Director of the London Bureau for three years.
CS: Back to London after so many years.

[100 minutes]

ML: There were two directors after me an then they had to pull in their overseas operations.
CS: The three years there, what was it like?
ML: Oh, I enjoyed myself immensely because it was my job to oversee the production from London, both radio and television. At that time, we expanded our London operation because we had to serve the Newsworld. Demanded a huge amount of programming just to cover it. Supply Newsworld was a 24 hours service. Then I was, the Office of the Directors partially supervised local output and and partially to relate to other organizations so sort of ambassadorial position so it was my job to keep in touch with European broadcasters.
CS: And the BBC?
ML: Oh yes, the BBC which was fairly easy because my friends were still there. I was there at a very interesting time – the BBC too - they were forever having run-ins with Mrs. Thatcher, [chuckle] who was wanted to dominate during the time of the Argentine and Falklands invasion.[2] My friends at the BBC were having terrible trouble with Mrs. Thatcher because – she would call them up and little thing like," You didn't say that they were our boys." So BBC recounted by saying," Well, they are not our boys, they are our British soldiers." And then, he went a bit far, he said, " I don't see any difference whether he was an Argentina or British and that got him into real trouble with Mrs. Thatcher. [chuckle] At that time, an old friend of mine from BBC base was Director General, Alistair Millen - he ran into real trouble with Mrs. Thatcher, daring to confront Mrs. Thatcher. He got fired.
CS: Did you close the London Bureau?
ML: No, it was still going on when I came back. It was strictly a three-year tour of duty so I came back.
CS: And in 1989, was that your retirement from radio?
ML: No, I said, I'd have like to serve 30 years. I stayed on for another year and did a lot of internal studies.
CS: Any regrets looking back on that career?
ML: No, I enjoyed myself mightily. I consider myself very, very lucky to have been there when this was going on and I could not have done it without sympathetic

[2] Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Margaret Thatcher

bosses – with bosses who believed – a revolution can't happen, well that kind of revolution can't happen unless you have it from top to bottom. It's very important to have the top agreeing.
CS: What did you learn that you passed on to your successors at CBC?
ML: Well, I think that is bit arrogant. I think that successors have to do their own thing. I was very careful not to hang around advising everybody. When called on, I could give my opinion but when you go, you go. The next person has to do his or her own thing. I enjoyed myself very much and I considered myself very lucky to known the producers that I did, they were wonderful creative people. Outstanding, among them was Harold Redekopp who changed the Music and Entertainment Programming on the stereo. He developed the stereo schedule as we know today. He was a well-qualified musician. Mark Starowicz of course, who is well known for television documentaries. He established "As It Happens". And then of course, I regarded Peter Gzowski as a personal friend and Barbara Frum as a personal friend so I had a good time. I knew all these brilliant people. I consider myself very fortunate to have known.
CS: What has retirement brought for you?
ML: I thought, when one retires, one retires. You don't go around minding other people's business. They had to do their own thing. I had developed an exit strategy which was, so, I spent my whole life working on my jobs, enjoying myself immensely but my Japanese-ness took a back seat and I thought, well I thought it is time to explore all that. I've always been interested in Japanese culture and history.

[105 minutes]

ML: I think I said earlier, I was brought up pure Japanese culturally, my grandparents, my grandfather particularly was very interested in theatre so there were always theatre magazines around. I was sent to odori lessons like a lot of young Japanese Canadians. The whole village, that was their means of entertainment. They worked in the summer and in the winter, they amused themselves by this kind of activity. Event of the year was the variety concert in late January after the New Year celebration were over and everybody took part. We were sent to Vancouver for costumes etc. and they're usually equivalent to taking a famous scene from Shakespeare. They would take a famous scene from kabuki and re-enacted on the stage. We would wings and everything else. Being young, I was always [playing the] part of the little boys in these plays. I don't know. There weren't many scenes with little girls in these kabuki families [chuckle]. So, I enjoyed that immensely. I enjoyed learning odori and I enjoyed the instrument that I grew up with. We were outside the electricity zone so we didn't have radio. We didn't grow up country and western music like other Canadians. The only music I knew was the shamisen and the koto, not much koto because that was considered fancy. My father was naturally gifted musically. He wasn't trained but he could play the shakuhachi. He was trying to teach himself violin which was rather painful for the rest of us so I enjoyed that a lot.
CS: How did you rediscover your Japanese-ness in retirement?

ML I wanted to see if I could learn Japanese properly because I never got beyond hiragana, katagana and the basic characters so I enrolled with the undergraduates – non of your extension courses. I started with the kids, just a limited number of language courses. It was very interesting. Discipline was very severe. I took the full four years, very fine teachers – amongst them was [Nakajima?]. Really did a great deal for us. Very rigorous teacher. Trouble was that the training was so rigorous that I discovered, when I got through, I could speak flawless modern Japanese because it was drilled into us. Can you imagine? I don't think they do this anymore because it takes too much resources. Every week, we were sent home with 20 seconds of audio tape and we had to come back with a recording, you had to get your inflections absolutely right. Non of your regional accents. My mother tongue was Kansai shiga to be specific and I had that beaten out of us because the language we were taught was standard received Tokyo. In those days, NHK didn't have regional accents. They were all Tokyo so I was taught this inflection and I can't speak Kansai anymore. I can only speak Standard Tokyo accent which I didn't realize at the time but I realize it separated my with my siblings because I'm the only uniligual member of the family. My family are all bilingual but they speak the kind of, what I call Canadian Japlish. Their Japanese was the Japanese that our parents imported which was rural and regional so there was a class difference.
CS: Did you travel to Japan?
ML: My first experience was in '56. I went there with a bunch of English journalist and it was so bad that I thought I didn't want to come back here anymore, thank you very much. To be fair, it was in the middle of the Korean war. I think the Japanese population were inclined to be hostile to Americans but they were really rather nasty. The only place I encountered sexism was in Japan. To give you a particular example of this. We arrived in July, it was typhoon season and it was raining. We got off the airline busses at the front of the Imperial Hotel, if you please, which was still standing in those days. The bus boys came out with their umbrellas. There were 20 of us, 19 men and myself. The men were all escorted under umbrellas and their bags were taken. Nobody would take me in. I had to get in there, drenched with my own suitcase.
CS: How long were you there?

[110 minutes]

ML: We were there because of the Asian tour. We were there for 3,4 days. The only person at that time who treated me decently was a Japanese journalist who I knew from London. She was a member of one of the older families and she was a very left wing journalist and she took me to the Asahi strike lines etc.. And there I felt at home being treated properly. All the men all ignored me and treated me as if I wasn't there.
CS: When did you return? How many years did it take when you went back for a visit?
ML: It was years and years later. We were touring China, and we had a stopover in Tokyo and the world was completely different. People wouldn't dare talk to you like that.

CS: Were you able to use your Japanese? Was after you had taken the four years?
ML: Yes, it was functional which made me very comfortable and it is comfortaing to be able to read the street signs although in Tokyo, most signs are bilingual.
CS: What else has retirement brought you?
ML: I've done a lot of volunteering. I'm interested in heritage preservation so I'm a regular docent at Mackenzie house, which is the home of William Lyon Mackenzie who was our first revolutionary. I'm on the board of a website which isn't doing very well. We got a Trillium grant but we have to reapply, which is a website to connect all of the volunteer groups that are trying to preserve heritage which is an uphill battle. Unfortunately, I do not take part in church or temple activities which my sisters do. The temple is their world, that's not part of mine.
CS: In 2009, you were recognized and honoured with the Order of Canada. I'm just going to read your citation because it was for your contributions as a pioneer for women in Canadian broadcasting and for your sustained commitment to volunteer.
ML: Well, I had to argue with that because I really didn't like the too much emphasis on women. I considered that the women who preceded me, like the women who headed the review of the status of women in the CBC - they did a huge, a lot of work too. I didn't like to be credited with that. I think did my fair share but I don't think I was as responsible as they are crediting me for. And the women who succeeded were brilliant in their own right, I think.
CS: What do you look forward to in the next few years? Do you have projects on the go?
ML: I studied Japanese intensively. It was a very solitary discipline for four years and then I thought I would like to get to the root of Japanese civilization. I take up Mandarin because I thought we should understand Mandarin since there are so many of us in town that are Mandarin speakers. I particularly thought of that because one day, there was an elderly Chinese lady and she spoke no English, and she wanted to know somebody to help her. "Somebody help me." She was saying I think, you know language that I did not recognize. It was neither Cantonese or Mandarin. And I wish that I were able to communicate with people. There are a lot of them in our midst. I thought I better learn some Mandarin so I studied Mandarin for two years. I found it very confusing studying Mandarin and Japanese because, you know we share the characters and when I was in my Japanese mode, the only pronunciation I can think of is the Chinese and vice versa. So, I sort of dropped that - this is silly because you have to spend a lot of time alone and I thought I should be more social, then I directed my labour to other things. Oh, I forgot. I'm also a traveling member of the Culinary Historians of Ontario. My husband is a working member, he helps write their newsletter and I help with that.
CS: Now tell me about that –what is the Culinary Historians?
ML: Well, they're serious. They put everything very academically, footnotes and the lot. They study the roots of our cooking in Ontario. They're very good at it. I have very good friends amongst them. They do historic cooking.

[115 minutes]

ML: Most of them are members volunteer historic cooks. My husband is a volunteer historic cook at the Spadina House.
CS: And do they have to go back and find the original ingredients – the heritage tomatoes and apples?
ML: They try - They have to use, when they are doing historic cooking. Like Fort York, they do open [hearth?] cooking. At Spadina, they can't use gas because the entire place is electrified but they used late Edwardian recipes. They go back to the original recipes – Mrs. Beeton and Mrs - can't remember her name. The first Canadian cookbook writer. And then there are various plagiarized Canadian cookbook too because copyright was unheard of in those days and they used to steal each other's recipes but they go back to the original 19th century particularly Mrs. [Acten?] and Mrs. Beeton and I've cooked from those books.
CS: And you can handle the chicken?
ML: Yes. [chuckle]
CS: Are there any other recollection or thought that you would like to share with us from both your career and your experience as a Canadian?
ML: Well, I've been thinking a lot about identity. I think most of us in my generation, in my particular age group, I'd like to go on record that at the time of the eviction, evacuation, we were told by Mackenzie King as official policy that we brought discrimination on ourserlves by insisting on living in visible ghettos and that they were doing us a great favour by breaking up the ghettos and you should not reassemble and to go out east because you'll only call attention to yourself and you don't want to bring discrimination on your own head. That was the advice. I cannot remember what the position of the New Canadian was to that but I think we more or less bought into that whether unconsciously or consicously. Anyway, whether it was conscious, we got on with our lives after the evacuation and we did not emphasize our background since it was too painful for a lot of us. Then it became legitimate and decent to talk about cultural diversity in this country and it became socially acceptable to state your origins are Japanese. I've never denied that. I always said that I was unilingual until I went to kindergarten and so I think we have relaxed and I think this is the cause for a lot, I hope, there's a lot of grandparents and parental support for the search of identity amongst the young people. But I think that in the search of identity, you have to remember what I like to think that we are Canadians, our experiences are Canadians, our parents were Canadians. My father who didn't bother to become naturalized had told me before he died, you are Canadian and never forget that.
CS: Thank you. That was wonderful. We learned a lot. That was a good place to stop.
ML: I think it is the responsibility of my generation to make sure our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren know where we are from, what happened, and that there is no shame involved. If they are searching for identity, we should help them.
CS: Thank you.

[End of interview]