

Interviewed: January 8, 1976

Goichiro (George) & Shizue (Rose) Yonemoto,
384 Broadway,
Richmond, B. C.

277-8091

- George born 1901 in Japan; Rose in 1908 in Japanese Hospital, Steveston.
- Started fishing at 15 years in Japan.
- Japanese boats rowed on one side like paddling.
- Rented boats, nets from companies, cotton nets from England.
- 1928 got own boat with engine.
- Made nets in winter time (at least 2) of cotton and linen, he and wife could do 10,000 mesh a day.
- Belonged to Japanese Fishing Co-op at 2nd; disbanded in War; Co-op sold B. C. Packers.
- 1949 everyone joined Union.
- 1938 fished 5 day week instead of 6 days week.
- River used to shake, now straightened.
- Used to swim in river, fishermen now use rubber gloves because river filthy.
- Indians around turn of century, no cannery boats or nets, transients, poor.
- Japanese worked harder, couldn't depend on Indians.
- Over 20 families (Indians) came to Great West Cannery.
- 6 boats over career: 3 built by Kishi's others by Taylor Boat Works.
- Used many nets: 4 3/4...5 1/8...5 1/4...5 3/4...6...7...7 1/4...8, 8 1/4...9...10...12 inches.
- 12" net, white springs in September for 4 weeks, 35 lbs. and up.
- Worked with wind and tide.
- Stored nets in company net loft, handled them himself.
- Gentlemen's agreement to fish only for one cannery and use its lofts and wharves.
- Cedar corks from North Vancouver, lead line made in Canada and cork line now.
- Japanese nylon ropes stretches too much.

- Trolled in January: used to be able to troll year round, now start in April.
- In rough weather, used shrimp nets in bays, fished herring.
- Paid \$5 for license and tide book from company boss.
- 1968 fishing licenses went from \$10 to \$200, personal licenses went from \$1 to \$5 after War.
- Lots of poachers up river, farmers fish as side business.
- Just before War, sold 2 boats, first people to sell boats, one of his new.
- Some people had no chance to sell boats, everyone got \$250 regardless of condition; navy (custodian) took charge of boats.
- Put on train to Lethbridge (families picked out like cattle by farmers who used them on the sugar-beets farms).
- Lots of Japanese moved East---Toronto and Montreal.
- Had to stay 100 miles in land, mail censored.
- Companies helped some people but George didn't want help and bought his own boat.
- Unions established in War.
- Used to get 50¢ per fish--kept small fish, threw big ones away.
- If had own home, got 10¢ more, if company rented houses, took 5¢ off fish price.
- 1953 first strike, lost season, gained prices for sockeye.
- Bonus system recently--- last 8 - 10 years.
- Superstition: "Catching sockeye on Friday - Bad Luck".
- No safety or cleanliness inspection.
- 1953 nylon nets: 3 stranded; 1967 monopy nets: multi-stranded.