

## PETROLEUM INDUSTRY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEWEE: George Kiyooka

INTERVIEWER: Aubrey Kerr

DATE: August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1992

### Side 1 only - 46:00

AK: This is Aubrey Kerr. Today is Sunday, August 16th, 1992. And I am in the home of George Kiyooka. That's spelled K-I-Y-O-O-K-A. And your address George, is?

GK: 998 Conifer.

AK: C-O-N-I-F-E-R Street and you're in the midst of the Sherwood Park complex. Is Sherwood Park village or a ...?

GK: It's a hamlet.

AK: Oh, it's a hamlet?

GK: There's about 40 thousand people here.

AK: Boy that's a big hamlet. What is do they have a Reeve?

GK: Yeah.

AK: There used to be a fella that was a Reeve here. Ralph Hoarly did the tape on Atlantic 3 when it was on CBC. I'm very pleased that you're able to help me out because you were right there when there was an awful lot of action going on. First of all George, can you tell me the year you were born and where?

GK: 1918. Victoria, BC.

AK: Right in Victoria. And your father had come out from Japan in what year?

GK: 1906. I believe he was 21 at the time and he died when he was 86. Anyway, I believe 1906.

AK: And he had gone back to get his wife, or?

GK: Yes. Yeah, I think he went back, got married. She came over and I was born in Victoria, BC. Now this part of the story really gets complicated. When I was two years old they took me back to Japan, left me with my grandparents. So actually, I grew up in Japan.

AK: Well, and what year did you re-enter Canada then?

GK: 1931.

George Kiyooka

AK: You stayed in Japan all that time?

GK: This is the reason why you can trace my Japanese accent because I grew up speaking Japanese. I'm quite bilingual because I could speak Japanese quite well at the time. Even today this is why, now. To make the story more complicated we'll talk about the war years. I was 13 when I came over here. Now I was only here for about 7-8 years when the war came. I was quite Japanese at the time because I grew up there. So when the war came we were prisoners??? in the area, even though I was born in country, I was worried that ... you know puzzled that's just what's going on here? I'm caught between the two countries. I grew up in Japan. And you know, I was only a young kid. I was more of a Japanese than Canadian at that time because I was 21, eh? So, but you see now, is the reason why I was in between the two ... who am I? Am I a Canadian or a Japanese? You know, I was a Canadian here but I/m not ??? a Canadian. This is why this military service came.

[00:03:50] AK: Yeah. All right. Well, let's just get back to '31. And when you came back to Canada, where did you settle in '31?

GK: In Calgary.

AK: In Calgary. Your father had started working in Calgary and he was working where?

GK: Well at that time he had a grocery store, vegetable store, right west of the City Hall, as it was then. They had the City Hall market at the time. He had one store there. And when the Depression came, I guess it was the Depression, he quit that 'because he couldn't make any money and then he started working at the hotel. That's why I mentioned the hotel.

AK: Yeah so, he started in the Empress Hotel.

GK: The Empress Hotel.

AK: Now both of those were owned by the Cliff ... The Cross. A.E. Cross Interests who were the brewers in East Calgary. And your dad was slinging beer?

GK: No. No, he was he was a bell hop. So was I.

AK: Oh, so when you arrived in '31, did you enter school here?

GK: Oh, yes, yes. I started grade 1. When I left Japan, I had the equivalent of junior high, but I had no English.

AK: So, you had to go right back to square one, eh? So, grade 1?

GK: That's right, for little kids. That's because, you know, the only thing lacking was my reading, so it didn't take me very long. I think I spent four years in school ... up to grade 7, before I could further my education. Things are tough see because I had to save for ... my dad says, you better stay home and help us. I quit going to school at the time. But mind you I took correspondence school...

AK: Oh you carried on? What was the correspondence school?

GK: I took two years of commercial art, see I've always been an artist in drawing. And I also went to NAIT, no SAIT at the time, up the hill. Lot of people goes there now. So I did for a little while. I still studied to further myself. Whatever I know was strictly self-taught.

AK: So, this kind of a mixture of being a bell hop and improving yourself artistically came to a shuddering halt on December the 7th,1941 when the next morning you were told the that you didn't have jobs.

GK: It wasn't the next morning but shortly after.

AK: Yeah, shortly after, yeah. And was it then that your dad and mother decided, let's move up to Opal...

GK: We had no choice.

AK: Were you allowed to travel to Opal without first having had a lot of documentation?

GK: Well I wasn't aware of the documentation, but we were fingerprinted, and we had information from the RCMP to do so from one town to another.

AK: Yeah and you had to have written permission.

GK: Oh yes.

AK: And you carried that letter with you?

GK: I'm not really sure of ??? but we had to get permission.

AK: I know, so if you were stopped, they'd say, where the hell are you going?

GK: That's right yeah. [inaudible]

[00:07:20] AK: And the reason that you came to Opal was there was already a well-established Japanese settlement there.

GK: That's right.

AK: Could you give me a little bit of a background on the settlement that you came to?

GK: Well when we went there, yeah there were quite a few farmers there. But they were very well-established people, farmers. My dad was strictly an old?? farmer, ??? very hard for you to become a farmer, it's quite a drastic change. As you say in the paper [inaudible]. So, he needed all the help from the other people, and he had quite a tough time. But he made things go. That's why I came out to help him at the time, I was much younger. But I didn't stay with my dad because I had to make my own way, so I left and went on my own until I got married, yeah.

AK: Where did you work during the war years?

GK: Oh well, I went to bush count, felled trees, worked on a farm, went down south ??? driving a tractor, grain farming, name it. I've done everything that I can think of until I met my wife, who is one of the disgraced persons who came from BC with the other people.

AK: Oh, had she been pushed into the, down there south of Revelstoke, at ???

GK: That's right. You know, her dad and mom used to farm in a place called Warlock ??? which is near Mission, eh. There quite a few Japanese people there. They used to have a berry farm. But their property was confiscated, as you know, for almost nothing. They were told to go to Alberta and work in a beet field. That's why they came. They were designated ... you had to go to a beet farm because they were short of ... that's where my wife came with her family. And I happened to meet her down there.

AK: Where did you meet her? Down in Southern Alberta?

GK: Yeah in Picture Butte. We got married there.

AK: In Picture Butte? Is that right.

GK: In the first year we worked the sugar beet field.

AK: You both worked together?

GK: 12 acres. That's our honeymoon.

AK: Had you acquired the 12 acres?

GK: No, you see ... what you do is sign a contract with a farmer. And you get a proceed of whatever harvest at the end of the year. If you have no harvest you have nothing. But in the meantime you don't have to work in sugar beets all the time. So you pick up jobs here and there, like I did, you know odd jobs.

AK: In Lethbridge you probably got jobs?

GK: Oh yeah, I had a job just north of Lethbridge, I think it's called Shaughnessy, Shaughnessy's coal mine there. I worked around there, here and there.

AK: Well now all during this time did you keep up your artistic ...?

GK: No.

AK: You kind of let that slide, eh?

GK: I had no time whatsoever.

AK: And then you started to raise a family then?

GK: Well the first child came in '47... we were married in '47, see. That's my oldest boy, yeah. That time I was back in Opal.

AK: You were where?

GK: In Opal, that's where my dad was. Because in winter time you don't have a job at the farm.

AK: So, you and your wife moved to Opal.

GK: At that time.

AK: Did you rent a house there?

GK: No, we had kind of a shack on the farm. My dad used to ????. But I went out to work in the winter time because you gotta work. That was the time I went out to the bush camp. ??? Well it was a bush camp. ??? I used to fall trees there.

[00:11:28] AK: Well then when all this excitement took place in August/September '48, what was your reaction to the fact that, gee what's this oil business all about? What was your feeling about it?

GK: Well I think the only thing we knew, when all of a sudden we had a new, acquired a new neighbor in Opal. The housing was non-existent in Redwater at the time, people were... so they were looking for some place to live and some of the people came to Opal. Rod Morrison, a lot of them. So, we became kind of a friend, my mother and Mrs. Day became friend and Rod say, I'll get you a job. He was one that introduced me to prospect of getting a job, he said, so see so, and Lauder Nowers. He might hire you.

AK: Lauder Nowers, right. But what was Rod living in? Was he living in a kind of shack too?

GK: A two-story house. Kind of run down. He had no choice.

AK: Do you remember Jean, his wife?

GK: Oh yes.

AK: Did he have some children then?

GK: Oh yes, he had a girl. I forgot the name. I'm not too sure if they had a boy. I think they had one girl. Yeah, he came from Vancouver you see.

AK: I know. He was at the same university as I was, UBC.

GK: Yeah, you see, the reason why... you say Vancouver... he knew Japanese before. When he was going to school he says to me, I tell you a joke, not a joke but what happened at one of the classrooms. He said, one of the boy's names was Yutaka, it's quite a common Japanese name, you see. And the teacher said one day, Yutaka, which means are you talking? You know, are you talking, but he said my name is Yutaka, he put his hand up. She said that sort of name ??? very well. This was Lauder Nowers. This is the

reason why I think he was, had to be a bit more helpful in me finding a job. Because of the fact that he knew some Japanese in Vancouver. It's funny how things go.

AK: Well certainly. So, you took this tip and you ... did you have a car? Or how did you get down to Redwater?

GK: No, I didn't buy a car until 1953.

AK: Well how did you get ...

GK: Well he had a car.

AK: So, he gave you a ride?

GK: Oh yes, as a matter of fact him and I went to work together for quite a while. See, it's about 8 miles to Redwater from Opal.

AK: Right. So, you got down to the office and you looked Lauder Nowers up and you ...

GK: Well I went for appointment. He was hiring a lot of local people at that time.

AK: Well then, what was the interview like? Do you remember the interview?

GK: I don't particularly remember what took place at the interview. Well I guess he knew a little bit about... Rod Morrison must have told him ????. He knew that I was Canadian to start out with, and my experience in oil was limited, eh, because ...

AK: No, you had no experience.

GK: I did mention that I do have some commercial art, but without ??? which is true you see ????. No, he didn't hesitate, he signed me on the spot.

[00:14:57] AK: All right. Now would you mind telling what your starting salary was.

GK: Well I have it all written down in a diary someplace. Probably a buck and a half or something.

AK: You were on an hourly wage?

GK: Yeah, because when I was working ... oh yeah, I can tell you. When I was working in the hotel in Calgary the hourly rate was 33 cents an hour. This was in Calgary, so this was shortly afterwards, so it can't be much more.

AK: No. So then your job was to do drafting work for ...

GK: No not at the very beginning. I was in the chicken house to start, geologists, eh, when the coal samples came in, it was all kind of ground up in small particles ????. I used to wash that.

AK: You were a sample washer, along with Lucy.

GK: Yeah. There was one other...

AK: That girl, she washed samples.

GK: I'm not too sure. There was another old fellow named Bill Hartley.

AK: Bill Hartley, now he had come from Leduc.

GK: Ah no, I think ??? he was quite an older guy. He used to live in Opal. Him and Rod and I used to come to work together.

AK: I see, and you washed samples? And you put them in little bottles. Or back in bag?

GK: Something like that, then quite often you get a big chunk of coal. Those have to be put in a box and be sent out to Calgary for analysis.

AK: For analysis ...

GK: So, it's a fairly big size box. Now, I had a job ... not a job but ???, putting an address on that eh, with a ??? machine, it's a fairly [inaudible] because I had training in commercial arts. So, the printing is nothing to me you see. From then you see that got me interested in doing some subsurface mapping with the geologist. You've probably seen those.

AK: Yeah contours.

GK: Yeah that's right.

AK: I got some of them.

GK: I did all that.

AK: I gotta show those to you some time.

GK: I did quite a bit of that for Redwater oil field. I like that 's up my alley???. From then on I did geological drafting. See that's how I got into drafting. So my artist training did some good at the time.

AK: But at the very beginning there was just Rod. Did Shatford come in when Rod was still there?

GK: Yeah.

AK: There both were there.

GK: For a while, yeah. Rod was never really at home doing what he was doing. I think he had a chance to become a district geologist at the time. I'm not too sure whether he got the job or if somebody else did.

AK: He didn't want it.

GK: He didn't want it anyway. He was a different kind of a guy.

AK: Did you remember him referring to management as the "Jesus Department"?

GK: Yeah, I think so.

AK: That what he called it.

GK: We used to go back and forth every day for work.

AK: Yeah, he would be complaining about ... yeah well that was his life to complain. You see, the story I have from C.B. Barlow, is that C.B. hired him away to work for Western Minerals.

GK: Oh, I wouldn't be surprised.

AK: You remember that?

GK: I know he had kind of a sudden [inaudible]

AK: Well then when you were working for Reg, were you still in the chicken coop or were you ...

GK: Yeah at the time, but shortly after they moved me into the main office, one of the wings. That was where I did some drafting.

AK: And when you were working in the chicken coop did you have a proper drafting table?

GK: No, we didn't have anything in the chicken coop, all I did was...

AK: You were doing washing samples, all right...you didn't...

GK: I didn't until I got to the main office you see.

AK: So what, did they give you advances in salary? They improved your salary?

GK: Oh yeah. It wasn't much I got paid. But I never was a really high tech??? drafting but you see I was quite young. I longed to be outside. You know I am quite an outdoors person. So I just couldn't cope with being in the office morning to night especially on nice warm days like today. This is the reason why I asked for a transfer on to [inaudible] that's why I went out on to production as a battery operator.

[00:19:55] AK: What year was that?

GK: '49...'53??

AK: By that time the field was pretty well ??? up.



GK: Yeah that's right.

AK: Just going back to Reg for a minute if I may. Do you remember Reg as being, how would you describe it, as a pretty academic ...

GK: Yeah.

AK: Quiet sort of fella.

GK: Not a boisterous, no not a typical guy.

AK: Not management type either

GK: So he's in between somewhere. But for some reason I really like him.

AK: Everybody liked him. And I liked him, I remember knowing, he and I became good friends and we went to Banff together. And I can't remember that. I'm been trying to look for pictures. I'll use that picture of Reg in there. Incidentally do you have, you don't have pictures of Reg?

GK: Oh no, I don't have any pictures. All I can remember that I invited him and his wife to my house for supper once. I still remember what we had, pork chop. I can remember that so well, you know at that time.

AK: And did they enjoy it?

GK: We were just trying to get acquainted.

AK: Certainly. Her name was Thelma. We got know to Thelma too, but she developed some liver disease or something and died. Of course, Reg got smashed up in a car accident.

GK: [inaudible]

AK: Yeah. But he was a very methodical and very scholarly person, would you say?

GK: I still remember him mentioning the fact that he had some shares in Kerr Addison.

AK: That's Kerr K-E-R-R - A-D-D-I-S-O-N Mines. And I wondered if he held on to them.

GK: I often wondered ... that's got to be years ago.

AK: Yeah well, he was a Hardrock??? man you see.

GK: Oh, that's right, that's why.

AK: Yeah, he'd come from Hardrock, and he had these ... do you remember doing any of the drafting that showed the faults in the sub-surface? Drawing sub-surface faults. He had maps showing that.

GK: I'm not too sure ??? he did quite a few. He definitely [inaudible]

AK: Of course, now it's all automatic.

GK: Oh yeah, it's all computer now.

[00:22:59] AK: So, what are some the other anecdotes? I'd like to ask you about Bob Elliot, R.H.J. Elliot. Because he worked for me over at Leduc.

GK: Yeah, I would say he is a kind of temperamental guy. I mean I told you about the incident with the break in the ...

AK: Yeah, the break in the light table.

GK: Yeah, I still remember that time. And he played a little hockey. Imperial had a kind of a hockey team at the time. We used to go out to Fort Saskatchewan ??? and play those guys. Bob was out there with us. That's where he broke his arm I think.

AK: Oh, he would be defenseman. Oh yeah, he was a big man.

GK: [inaudible] We had lots of fun those years.

AK: Yeah. And then to get on the record about Bob Kay, K-A-Y, who had come from the Maritimes. He had worked for me at Leduc. And then he went up and the next thing we knew he'd killed himself in the car...

GK: He had a motorbike.

AK: Do you think it was the motorbike or the car that he got killed.

GK: I always thought he was someone that got killed in the car.

AK: Well that's what I thought. Well I thought he had this jeep. He used to drive that jeep at a furious rate. But he had the motorcycle for his personal use.

GK: Yeah that's right, so yeah I don't think he got killed on a motorcycle. He wouldn't have ??? anyway, not too many of the roads in those days.

AK: Right. What about Heck McCray. Did you know him very well?

GK: Casually, you know. Just a fellow worker. I knew him a little because ... not that close of association. Overall, he was pretty easygoing.

AK: Yeah and then there was, alongside of him was Jack Nesbitt.

GK: Yeah, I saw Jack and Steve almost identical type of a person.

AK: They were both, they were kind of kindred spirits?

GK: Well, I get the impression when I look now, I thought they were [inaudible] because they were geologists, university graduates. [inaudible]. I thought they were a little bit arrogant, even though they didn't show it ...

AK: A little arrogant?

GK: Well I mean even at that time I thought that ... but I'm just saying that was my impression at the time. But I don't ????. They just came out of the Air Force, eh?

AK: Yeah they were both Air Force people and they both graduated in '49 and they were sent up to Redwater ...

GK: That's what I thought.

AK: The other thing about the geologists was, do you remember ever seeing visits by Fred Killer K-I-L-L-E-R?

GK: That sounds familiar.

AK: Kind of a reddish-faced fella. Very pleasant. He died ... he drank himself to death.

GK: I don't remember him.

AK: No. What about some of the engineers? Did you have much to do with ...

GK: No not too much. I knew a guy named K.?? Meyers, but he wasn't an engineer he was a technician.

AK: Who was that?

GK: K. Meyers.

AK: Meyers.

GK: He was kind of a technician. I don't remember ??? engineers as far as I know [inaudible]

AK: Well I thought Jack Harvey had that ...

GK: Well Harvey was actually. but K. Meyers was kind of an assistant. Just kind of helped. No, I'm not too familiar with the office group because ...

AK: Well Jack is supposed to help lay out, because he was a civil engineer.

GK: Yeah, this Meyers never was.

AK: Did you have much to do with Maurice Paulson?

GK: Not too much.

AK: What about George Bannatyne himself. Did you get to know him?

GK: Well not that much. He wasn't there that long.

AK: No, he didn't stay long because he took over from Vern Hunter, didn't he?

GK: No, it's the other way.

AK: Well who was before Bannatyne? Or was there anyone before Bannatyne?

GK: I don't think so. I think Bannatyne was the first one.

AK: Well he built that house up in the ... you saw that picture.

GK: I think Vern Hunter came after Bannatyne.

AK: Alright, well maybe he did. Maybe you're right.

GK: Bannatyne came from Europe or someplace ...

AK: Yeah, he came from Romania. And he had been a career Exxon Jersey man.

GK: Because I remember going to a picnic with him ??? No, I think he was the first one.

AK: Was he an accessible, was he easy to talk to?

GK: Well I think, I never was in a position to have much to do with him, but I did talk to him on several occasions. You see at that time I had a house ??? Imperial Oil. I had a nice garden in the front. And as you can see I was quite a gardener.

AK: Well that's good. So, they were admiring it were they?

GK: He says to me, wow you have a nice front of the house here you know. I guess he noticed that much.

AK: Well what year did you buy the house?

GK: That would be 1951, '52. ???

AK: And what did you, did you buy it through the CMHC?

GK: Yeah, but it's a bit cheaper \$1600.

AK: And then you paid so much a month.

GK: Yeah \$25 dollars a month or something.

AK: And the taxes were pretty small I guess.

GK: That's where you have to start. Otherwise I would never have a house like this.

AK: No, you had to get a start and get an equity.

GK: That's right.

AK: Then with other people from Calgary, did you ever meet Doug Lair? Will Hancock?

GK: They were pretty high up in all this. I knew them... I know the name but no.

[00:30:10] AK: That's interesting. Well what about, when you had this house did you stay in it until what year in Redwater?

GK: Well until 1956, seven years.

AK: And what happened then?

GK: What happened then was ... I always wanted my kids to have a university education, and I thought to myself if we live in Redwater it's going to be quite a commuting distance. ??? room and board and everything is going to be expensive, so I said, why not get a job in town here? Just about that time Strathcona Refinery was ??? job, this was the year before it was built, eh.

AK: Well no, the Strathcona Refinery was built in '48. Yeah, they moved it down from Whitehorse.

GK: Yeah piece by piece.

AK: But then what you're saying is maybe that they're adding.

GK: Oh, well what happened was that they added on packaging and blending. That's where I started working you see.

AK: Packaging and printing.

GK: Blending.

AK: Oh, blending.

GK: Yeah.

AK: Oh, yeah. Right.

GK: So I think that's why I applied for the job. Believe I came out in '56. The main reason is that I wanted to be in town for my kids. That's why I came out here.

AK: And did you come right here to this place, to this house?

GK: Yeah, I was in Redwater until this house was built.

AK: Is that right? And you'd built up enough equity to ...

GK: Yeah that's right, at that time, don't forget, this house, the down payment was minimal, eh. Even though the wage was low but ...

AK: Was some of this financed by Imperial?

GK: No

AK: This was private?

GK: Yeah.

AK: So, you were on your own?

GK: Yeah, 25-year mortgage. 5%.

AK: Well that's just about, you've paid that out now.

GK: Oh, a long ago.

AK: Yeah. 25 years. '56 to... it would be '81. And so, the house became a third title???

GK: Yeah.

AK: And your children were able to commute from here?

GK: Yeah, the U of A is not that far.

AK: No. Did you buy them cars?

GK: They've got their own ????. Oh yes, I've sent all my kids to university.

AK: How many were there all together?

GK: Three.

AK: They all... what degrees did they ...

GK: The oldest boy is 42, he was born in '47, no he's 45. But he was ... he went to the U of A ... he was going to be a teacher. Did a B.A., Bachelor of Education. And didn't like teaching so he went to BC. He was going to do Library Science, but he didn't use that so well. Then he went back teaching and then got married. Now what happened after he got married is he went back to teaching, but in the meantime, he

took a course in computer science in his spare time. So he went to Simon Fraser and got his Master's Degree in Computer Science. At the present time he is the head program for Langley School District, computer.

AK: Which school district?

GK: Langley.

AK: Oh Langley. Right.

GK: Last year. He has a big job now. He goes around teaching teachers how to teach computers. He did pretty good. They got work.

AK: Did he marry a Caucasian?

GK: No he married a French Canadian. Named Toupin. T-O-U-P-I-N. She's not a typical Quebec French, doesn't know how to speak French whatsoever. But does speak French. She came from Regina. She met Griffin with he was teaching school in Jasper. Three kids.

AK: And they're married, living in Langley.

GK: Abbotsford.

AK: Abbotsford yeah, and then your other child?

GK: Well my daughter is 37. She is the kind of nomadic type. She left home ... well she went to university as well, but she is just like myself, artistically inclined. So, she trained as a graphic artist and she was working in Calgary for quite a while and then she got interested in textile designing. During that trade she went to New York and stayed there for a while. There is a famous textile school in New York City, she went there for a year. Got a certificate from there and she also spent half a year in England doing some more textile designing.

Then she came back to Toronto and she spent about 2 years working. But I guess she wasn't satisfied, so she came home because her mother's death, mostly and my son's death ... now she's in Sacramento, California looking for ????. But she is something like me, very artistic, it kind of runs in the family because my two other brothers were in fine arts field. My brother Roy, he's 66, he was at UBC where you graduated, for about 20 years, faculty of Fine Arts. His name is Roy Kiyooka. You'll probably see some of his work somewhere.

AK: Is he retired from the university?

GK: Yeah just last year. He has one of his painting hanging in the National Art Gallery in Ottawa. He is pretty well known. Yeah anyway my other brother Harry, he is in the Faculty of Fine Arts in Calgary, you see.

AK: The U of C

GK: That's right. And then I have another bother, he's the youngest brother. His name is Frank. He's into poetry. He's teaching high school out in Belmont. It's kind of an artistic family ??? My dad and mom [inaudible]

AK: They weren't artistic?

GK: Not to my knowledge. They were amazed, how come my kids are ???

AK: Well I tell you the genes must have all come out the right way. So what year did you retire from the Strathcona ...

GK: Well it would be in 1986.

AK: And what were you doing all that time? What was your job there?

GK: I was more responsibility wise, working in the inventory. I used to gauge tags like you know, see what you have and from which day, how much oil you have [inaudible] but you gotta have inventory to start with because you've gotta have ...

AK: Yeah, that's right. And this was blending for... ?

GK: Lube oil.

AK: Lube oil. Yeah they made lube oil there.

GK: [inaudible]

AK: They still make lube oil?

GK: I think they still do ??? ... we used to make a lot of oil. I was there 1983.

AK: And you were in this business of inventory?

GK: That's right, I'm classified as a gauger.

AK: Oh, that was your title, Gauger?

GK: Yeah, sounds kind of complicated.

AK: Well it isn't as long as you didn't get a sniff of H2S.

GK: Well ??? but anyway. I thought about going to shift work, but I never was keen on doing that's ??? way to live ...

AK: Well now, how did you manage to have a day job on that?

GK: Well I just stuck with it, gauging that's all.



AK: So, it was a day job, you didn't work shift?

GK: No not once.

AK: Oh, that's good.

GK: But my shifts started early, half past five.

AK: Oh, you had to be there at half past five?

GK: Because before anybody else get there, eh. But I was home at 3 o'clock. It suit me fine. And I used to play golf right after 3 o'clock.

AK: Well actually... Sophie is typing this up and she'll get a big laugh out of that. Although she never come in before 10 o'clock in the morning. When she hears this, she'll get madder than hell at me. But you're a sweetheart Sophie, I don't mind. Okay, the other thing was that the racism in Strathcona, was there, were you accepted as a Canadian?

GK: Oh yes. This is one thing I'm most grateful. There was no exception made whatsoever. Oh, there might be one or two oddballs, eh?

AK: Well there are always those ...

GK: Aside from that I was very well treated, as you can see from my ??? commentary, I was very well treated. All and all there was none whatsoever, I think they went out of their way to be nice to me. Mind you I must say I really bust my ass to serve the company.

AK: Well sure, I'm sure you did.

GK: They got something back in return.

AK: Well yes and I think, now did any of your children, were any of them eligible for scholarships through the company?

GK: Yes, with the exception of the oldest boy. He was way up north at a fishing camp at that time ??? 80%. He was just shy of 80%. He had a chance to write a supplemental, you see. He could have easily applied but he said, no. But my other two kids, they all got scholarships. Yeah because all my kids did very well in grades ???

AK: So, the financial burden wasn't that great then?

GK: Oh no, as far as going to university, it was very good.

AK: Yeah, right. Well they have been very good throughout the years to a lot of people. I'm just wondering, I think we have to come back and talk again, but, I wondered George if, looking back at your career, which is a very interesting one, how would you summarize your philosophy of life as it was, say

that your chance that old Rod gave you. And I'm so grateful to Rod for having done that for you. Because Rod is a good friend of mine. He and I got along very well. But what is your total philosophy, I mean ...

GK: Well, I can tell you this much, I agree with you that he was kind of a salvation, as far as I was concerned, because prior to that time I was working for jobs here and there. I never had a permanent job to speak of. Those were also difficult years don't forget. As a matter of fact, I had a chance to work for Imperial Oil. Not Imperial Oil, but, I guess it was Imperial Oil. At that time, they were constructing the airport ??? the municipal airport ??? so that was used for airport space.

AK: Right, yeah.

GK: So, I had a chance, I was working with a crew that were starting the storage camp I was hired on [inaudible]. I was working here as a welder's helper. One day I looked up and there was a fellow looking at me up above, I was down in the pit, I guess to see what I was doing. The next day I was called in, they said, we don't want you any more, you're fired. And what happened next is that this fellow was looking at me was an American ??? figured that I was, you know spying ??? that I am doing something to sabotage something.

AK: Was this during the war?

GK: Oh yes, and then I went back to the place that they hired me. They were madder than hell, they said, they have no right to fire you, you're a Canadian like the rest of us. But they said ??? the American has got the say. This is one of the project things that happened. Now after that happened I had been with Imperial for about ???, because shortly after they went to Norman Wells. I could have worked there myself.

AK: Yeah you could have gone there. Well you might have but then there were a bunch of blacks up there.

GK: But anyhow that's for that. ???

AK: Your philosophy then is one that Canada hasn't been too bad.

GK: Oh excellent, because I don't know any other, right, to speak of, because when I was in Japan I was a youngster. What I know after 12/15??? is nothing because I was brought to my grandparents. And you know how they will teach the grandchildren, eh. Better than your own parents.

AK: You were kind of spoiled I guess a little bit. But you never took any English language courses in Japan.

GK: No, none whatsoever.

AK: You were 100% Japanese.

GK: Oh yeah.

AK: Well it's been certainly ... we're just about out of tape here, George, and it's certainly been a most interesting interview and I think it's such that I really have to get back to you because ...

GK: Because I have a ??? background ???

AK: Well then, we should have found that out maybe. Or do you still want to do that? We can turn the tape over if you like?

GK: I think ... you have enough now I think, more or less.

AK: Well I'm writing the story about Redwater a while, so I have to... but I have to use you as kind of a vignette, a cameo appearance. Well thanks very much for your time George, I really appreciate it.

GK: You're welcome. Any time you want to come.

AK: Thank you. And now its 6:30 p.m. Thank you. Over and out.

**End of Interview**