

Joe "Windjo" Yarmish

Interviewed April 6, 1972

Came from Beausejour, Manitoba in 1922 as a family - father a contractor
 -Joe was 8 years old - went to Lord Byng School which was 1/2 a 2 room
 school - teacher Miss Bothwell taught grades 6 and 7, D.J. Thomas was
 principal - family rented little house on Williams Rd., still there - walk
 to school by catching tram at Cottages Station for Steveston (2 1/2 miles)
 so used to run it - raced at school - 1920's was depression - all worked.
 -old house Williams Road was built by family - was first house with stucco
 -row hotels Moncton St. Steveston - boom slowed - father got O.K. tear
 down Commercial Hotel - lot of lumber went into their house, barn, chicken
 house, flooring.
 -hunted ducks when 16, big game - moose, caribou, elk, deer from 1936 on.
 -at school fight had nose broken 4 times - played football, baseball,
 Manager of first softball team in Richmond, in it 4 years - went North
 fishing in summer - went through Grade 8, passed (1926) - got job @ \$80.00
 a month - money needed at home - had own cows, chickens, geese, one horse
 for plough, had stone-boat, but glad no stones in land - had originally
 6 acres.
 -Municipality took 1/2 acre later for Gilbert Road - worked in cannery,
 summer - then in saltery, salting herring and chunk salmon for export -
 in huge boxes 500-600 lbs. shipped to Orient building belonged to B.C.
 Packers - brick plant there earlier - Joe worked 1928 at brick plant
 "Steveston Sandline Products" - describes brick making, firing - later dro
 truck hauling bricks to build Marine Building, Vancouver - 4 trips daily,
 2000 bricks a load, 8000 bricks a day (each) brother also hauled - Coughlan
 Bros. bought it out (Charlie and Stan Coughlan) - sold it because had
 brick plant New Westminster - Joe worked there, 15 transferred - Chinese
 took over, cheap labor - lot of clay in Westminster so product cheaper -

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-got 60¢ driving truck - fishing layoff time - 1931 fished north, Smith's Inlet in 20 ft. skiff, sockeye salmon.

-1938 had first own boat built \$435. - called Hi-Boy - 4 cylinder Buick engine - in 1933 first automatic drums for net pulling - recalled earlier hand pulling nets - recalls Sturgeon Banks loaded with fish - channel use to go to mouth of River - 1926 first time on gill net boat - make set across from Steveston on far shore by Westham Is. could drift out to Gulf of Georgia through Sturgeon Banks deep channel.

1928 - started rock wall on south jetty, Albion Drift, could go to Active Pass - river on running-out tide 3-4 knots.

Result: slowed down water flow, sand piling in - 40 ft. hole now filled in - map reference - Harlock Cannery, lots of Japanese there - only 4 left who knew fishing in area, channels: Ronnie and Bill Malcolm, Joe Yarmish, Oscar Ewen and Chris Methog - one of biggest catches got 1200 sockeye - at Canoe Pass boats loaded with fish - got 22,000 sockeye 1 week's fishing, inside, on Sturgeon Banks - on Chatham St., parked car at dyke, walked on elevated sidewalk 5-6 ft. above high water ran out, 12 - 13 houses Japanese people, Scotch Cannery on piling, sand bar protected - George Winds would recall, great grandfather built canneries there with Malcolm, Gulf of Georgia Cannery - on dyke, Russell Machine Shop 1920.

-got 3 boats, same name, sold 1964 - worked waterfront in winters from 19 - 1964 - Vancouver, Westminster, Victoria, - ended up foreman, spoke Russian talked Russian to seamen handling wheat order - shoveled wheat by hand - taught loading with machines.

-Joe Itagi shipyards - built boats pre W.W.II - Joe's 2nd boat was built for Itagi's son, re-sold when Japanese moved inland - many friends among Japanese - Matusaki's father Gene Maku, collector of fish from river

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boats - shipyard deteriorated, bulldozed down. -only 3 canneries now operate Steveston - Nelson Bros. B.C. Packers, Phoenix Cannery, A.B.C. Packing (Canadian Fish bought out A.B.C. so can in Vancouver) - another started up No. 5 Rd. the Queen Charlotte, can even vegetables.

-Joe on executive of Vancouver Fisherman's Union and of Steveston local - missed chance September 1964 return steady fish Co.

Wife - Winnifred Skellett, works for Children's Hospital

Children: Joanne, worked Bank of Montreal now Government Income Tax, (good start with Junior Achievement)

David (fished with father) MacMillan Bloedel, Personnel Manager, Kelsey Bay, Margaret, who had polio, works for Children's Aid Society, Bill, works on sawmill, to take up log scaling -

recalls his school years - gun battle outside Royal Bank of Canada, Bank Steveston, building occupied by Dr. Campbell - knew Dr. Graves - a Japanese doctor married to white woman - pharmacist was Japanese in brick building at 2nd Ave. and Moncton St., built around 1911.

-saw pictures of four masted schooners tied up - Williams Road ended at No. 3 Road - had traps all along on ditches each side - lots of muskrats

-recalls talking to Muskrat Bill - walked to Sea Island from Richmond - peeled muskrats (skins) into bags - carcass to mink ranchers - knew Rudy Grauer - rivalry teams (ball) fun - first plane landed No. 1 Road and Steveston Hwy. lost so landed in open field in 1920's.

-recalls Airport at Lansdowne Park - saw Hupmobiles here - at 13 years was given 1st car a Model T Ford by Dairy owner on April Fools Day -

recalls Deagle and Leslie families - fish prices not bad in 1920's - worse in 30's - paid as high as 90¢ for sockeye - sold pink salmon as 1 cent a fish - chum salmon got 35¢ a piece - white salmon 25¢ a piece

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if wanted (1/2 cent a pound) - changed in war years - comments on Government calling in, selling boats - Americans got boats 1/2 price - should give fishermen chance to upgrade their boats - Joe was 30 years with Canadian Fish Co. - famous bootlegger in Steveston, ran cafe - Wong - during depression fed oldtimers - B.C. Packers bought Icelanders in to handle fishing during War.

-rumrunners anecdote - end No. 3 Road ramp, loaded up - fall 1927 family went end No. 3 Road cut wood - shovel - found 24 case whisky (bottles) for Xmas - Joe tasted it as youngest - no local papers til Mrs. Tibbetts started Richmond Review.

Joe had an orchestra "Richmond Ramblers" played Orange Hall, Cambie gym etc. - played drums 3 years then guitar and sing - practiced in Harry Minns father's chicken house earlier - peat fires couldn't be put out - go way down - helped promoting volunteer fire fighters but up North - 1924 fire at Richmond Cannery, burned fish into water, big bunkhouse there earlier, cookhouse, burned 6 or 7 houses - fire hazard, chimneys from side of wall - no brick chimney until law came - father had contract to build 60 - 70 chimneys for Canadian Fish Co. and Joe helped but located job - worked at Rice Mill - describes throwing rice sacks on wharf @ 40¢ hour - then longshoring on boat at 90¢ an hour 180 pound sacks and took 2 men.

-Hawaiin quartet of Herbert girls played guitars taught by Johnny Waters - worked for Joe Steves, haying.

-story of shooting duck with Carlie Deagle and returned with large coho salmon - had hunting dogs "Murphy" pheasant dog - lots of pheasants - counted 50-60 roosters in stubble field - used to take tram to Marpole then Toonerville Trolley to Province building - pheasants all over area

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when young - lots still in C.P.R.-property - used to be allowed to shoot 4 pheasants a day, his limit was 24 - ducks were 25 mallards a day - Joe had market in Vancouver for pheasants and mallards - hung birds according to age in back of house - got a box of shells for each pheasant - used to call in wild geese - called 400 geese when friend along - decoys were pieces of newspaper - hunters to-day overcrowded compared to old days - likes Caribou hunting - good fishing, game.

-Windjo anecdote - how got the name, gambling, name of his boat - writes for papers under "Windjo".

TAPE 14 - SIDES 1 and 2.