

MARLENE (YEIKO) TAMAGI OLSON

DORIS CAMERON OSBORN

Dawson, 1973

Marlene (Yeiko) Tamagi was born in Vancouver, B.C. in 1912 of Japanese parents. Her family moved to Alberta but Marlene and her sister Winnie were sent back to Japan to live with grandparents when Marlene was four. She remained there for 9 years and then returned to Canada...speaking no English. Marlene and Winnie had training in barbering and hair dressing.

In 1939 they decided to go to Dawson where their uncle lived and worked. They came and opened the Rochester Barber Shop and beauty salon. Winnie married in 1940. Marlene married in 1946.

Doris Cameron was born in Dawson, declining to give the exact date. Her father came up in 1903 or 1904 and left in 1916 and went to Victoria and Vancouver. Doris returned in 1933 and remained until 1963. Her husband Franklin Osborn died in 1958. He was born in Dawson, too. Doris returns every summer to work in Marlene's gift and clothing store.

Marlene tells story of early permanent waves using chemicals. Madame Zumm or Zoom (really a Mrs. Corbett) liked fuzzy permanents. She was a regular customer. Drank quite a lot and most times brought her bottle of gin with her to the hairdressers. She got one of the new chemical permanents. She moved around a lot during the process, Marlene recalls, and some of the chemical reached her scalp. When Winnie took the curlers out, three fell out...hair and all. She conned Madame Zoom into letting her set her hair to show off at the party that night (instead of the usually fuzzy, frizzy look). Next day Madame Zoom showed Winnie and Marlene the bald spot...saying her boy friend liked her hair so much he snipped some off! They never told her what had happened.

The Madame was a good musician and excellent seamstress.

Marlene's husband was with the Canadian Army and was in charge of radio communications. Stationed in Dawson.