

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Japanese American Oral History Project

An Oral History with MARGARET YAMAMOTO

Interviewed

By

Alan Koch

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NARRATOR: MARGARET YAMAMOTO

INTERVIEWER: Alan Koch

DATE: April 14, 1992

LOCATION: California State University, Fullerton

PROJECT: Japanese American

AK: Good morning, this is Alan Koch talking in the library at Cal State Fullerton. This is Alan Koch. We are going to be interviewing Margaret Yamamoto. We'll read into the transcript, the introduction for the Honorable Stephen Tamura program. Our interview is being conducted at the California State University library in Fullerton. Margaret, thank you very much for coming today. I appreciate it. Tell us about your early childhood, where you were born, and what kind of experiences you might remember from your early childhood.

MY: Oh, my goodness. I was born in Sacramento in 1932. When I was eight months old, my father decided he wanted to move down to Los Angeles, and I've been in Los Angeles ever since.

AK: What is your earliest memory?

MY: My earliest memory? Oh, my goodness. I had a good life. It was a very happy life, a very happy childhood. I don't know what more I can say. (chuckles) Ask me some questions.

AK: Okay. What city did you live in? Did you move to Los Angeles itself?

MY: Los Angeles, it was in East L.A., actually. Boyle Heights, if you're familiar with that?

AK: At that time, were you in a neighborhood that was primarily Japanese Americans, or was it a mixed neighborhood?

MY: Mostly Mexicans and Italians, not so many Japanese.

AK: Did your family, at this time, speak English at the home, or did your parents speak Japanese?

MY: In the very beginning, it must have been Japanese because I've been told that my older sister, when she started school, had a very hard time because she didn't know English. And by the time I started school—we are exactly a year apart, a year and a week—but by the time I started school, I did so well in kindergarten, I had to stay only half a year there, where my sister stayed a whole year. And we weren't given English names when we were born, but when we started school our neighbor gave us our American names.

AK: Do you remember what your Japanese name was?

MY: Oh, certainly.

AK: What was it?

MY: Hiroko.

AK: How do you spell that?

MY: H-i-r-o-k-o.

AK: Did you use your English name as you went through school, or did you have a sense that you liked your Japanese name?

MY: No, actually not, I used Margaret until—I think when I got married, I had to take my birth certificate and Margaret is not on there. It was Hiroko. So, I think my marriage license reads Hiroko.

AK: What was your maiden name?

MY: Ishii.

AK: Can you spell that for us?

MY: I-s-h-i-i.

AK: Where was your father from?

MY: He was born in Sacramento, also.

AK: Are you a Sansei then?

MY: Yes.

AK: And your mother? Where was she born?

MY: She was born in Hawaii.

AK: Okay. What age was your father when he came to this country?

MY: My father?

AK: Oh, you said he was born here. I'm sorry. (laughs) I'm paying attention. When did *his* father come over here?

MY: You know, I don't know. I didn't know my paternal grandfather. But my mother tells me stories of how they went to Hawaii, they lived in Hawaii there, and then they came across to what they call the mainland. But, I don't know when that was. Although my father was born 1905—he has an older sister who I think is about a year older. She's 1904. Maybe they came across in early 1900s.

AK: So, they would have been one of the earlier Japanese American families in the United States?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: Did your family, in later years, ever talk about how it was in Sacramento as compared to what their life was like in Southern California?

MY: They were farmers. My mother, she was born in Hawaii, but when she was nine years old, her father decided they are all going to go back to Japan. So, she lived in Japan until she was seventeen, and that's when my father went to Japan to find himself a bride. He brought mom back. Mom tells horror stories about Sacramento, the farm life. (laughs) I mean, she was raised—she didn't have to do anything. Her mother did everything. She comes to Sacramento, she lives on this farm with all my father's brothers and sister. She had to do all the work, and she was so glad to leave Sacramento. So glad. My grandmother really drove her.

AK: Did your mom ever talk about her life in Japan in those early years?

MY: She had nothing but fond memories of Japan. She never really talked, too, much about Hawaii, but in Japan, she was just a little darling. Her mom and dad let her do everything. I kind of think, my grandparents—my mother's father must have made a lot of money in Hawaii, so he went back and he just retired. But maybe because he was bored or what, but my mother said he started drinking. But, he was never abusive. My grandmother, my maternal grandmother died the year I was born, but my grandfather lived, I think, till, maybe the end of World War II because my mother's brother was probably one of the later ones to be killed. He was in the Navy. And grandpa was still alive then.

AK: Did he ever visit the family in the United States?

MY: No, he never did.

AK: Did your parents or you or your sisters ever go to Japan to visit the rest of the family there?

MY: The first time my mother went back was in 1950—it was the year I graduated from high school—to visit. Of course, my grandfather was already dead. The only one that was alive in Japan was her sister, do she visited with my auntie. Geez, when was the next time she went back? Then in '82 my mom and I had gone back, and I met my auntie for the first time.

AK: Okay. So, you went to elementary school and at the time of the camp, as I recall, you said you were about ten? Is that correct?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: You had your tenth birthday at Santa Anita?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: So, that would have put you in about fourth grade, third grade?

MY: It must have been fourth because in Rohwer I did my fifth, sixth, and seventh year.

AK: Can you tell me anything about your school life before the camp? Do you remember your friends or the kinds of things you did in your neighborhood with the other children?

MY: Besides playing very hard, I know we roller-skated a whole lot. No, we really didn't have much time to play because we had to go to Japanese school. We went to Japanese school every day after school. The bus would come to pick us up.

AK: What types of activities did you have at the Japanese school?

MY: I seem to vaguely recall that we had to do these exercises. We did have a little playtime, but not too much of that because you figured, we got out of school at 3:00, picked us up at 3:30, so we really didn't have that much time.

AK: Was it primarily for language instruction or did you have other cultural skills that they taught? Art and crafts, and those kinds of things?

[00:10:05]

MY: For our level, anyway, it was just language.

AK: Did you learn it well? Or were you a struggling student?

MY: (laughs) No, not really. Well, we didn't enjoy it. I know mom and dad made us go to Japanese school when we were in camp, after camp, so that's how many years of the Japanese language education. And I can't speak it today, so that has to tell you something. My younger sister who is very vocal, very opinionated told my mother one day when she was in junior high school, "Mom, why do you waste your money? Money you give to the school, give it to me because I want to quit." (laughs) I think in my mom and dad's mind, we were going to be allowed to quit after we graduated from high school. So, my sister quit after high school, I quit after high school, my younger sister, of course, quit before that. (chuckles)

AK: Do you remember where the Japanese school was located? How far out of your neighborhood was the Japanese school?

MY: Are you familiar with East L.A. at all?

AK: Just a little bit.

MY: Okay, I lived over there close to Brooklyn and State, close to where the general hospital is.

AK: Okay.

MY: And the school was over there on Evergreen and north of Brooklyn, so not so very far. But, in those days, of course, is was because everybody didn't drive.

AK: We'll come back to this question, this era again, but you indicated that you went to the Japanese school after the camp. Did you come back to the same area in Los Angeles?

MY: Yes.

AK: And did you go to the same Japanese school?

MY: No, no, that building became—what do they call it? A hostel? Where people who didn't have a home, they went there to live temporarily.

AK: Where was the new school that you attended?

MY: It was on First and Chicago. It was upstairs I think. I think it was a dancehall at night, but they had rented it and set up tables and everything for us.

AK: In all the other interviews I've read and the people I've talked to, I don't remember anyone else talking about going to Japanese school after the war. So, I'm very interested that you said that you continued all the way through high school, so that

what have been at least five or six more years after you got back from the camp. Did the Japanese school function as a community center for the Japanese families in the area?

MY: I don't think so.

AK: Some of them did that before the war, they were just not a school, but they were a community center places where the Japanese families would have parties, get together or meetings. Maybe the JACL [Japanese American Citizens League] group would meet there or something of that kind.

MY: They might have at this other Japanese school, which was much bigger. I think it was probably the biggest; it was a better school. I don't know why we didn't go to that school. I think my parents knew the people who ran the school that we went to.

AK: This is the one before the war?

MY: Before and after, we had the same teacher. But this Kochu Gakuen was a very powerful school. The kids at that school learned. (laughs) Yes, they did learn! They were very, very, very strict. For that reason alone, we were very glad Mom and Dad didn't make us go to that school. I think they're still there today.

AK: When you were in school prior to the war, do you remember any incidences where the other children reacted to yourself or your other brothers and sisters, other Japanese American friends differently because of your race?

MY: No.

AK: How many of your friends were Caucasian or Mexican or other races as you were growing up?

MY: When I was going to grammar school, before the war, I had only one Japanese friend. The rest were Mexicans and Caucasians.

AK: Are there similarities in the kind of work the parents of these families participated in? Were your family farmers at that point?

MY: No, not when we moved to Los Angeles.

AK: What did your father do?

MY: Dad went into the produce business.

AK: And the friends that you had in the various groups, what kinds of jobs did their parents have? Do you have any idea?

MY: No, I have no idea.

AK: Would you say you were on a par economically—

MY: No, no, I think we were better off.

AK: Did your mother also work in the produce business?

MY: No.

AK: Or when she came south she took care of the family, sort of speak.

MY: Right.

AK: You mentioned an older sister, and I believe you have a younger sister. Are there any other children? Just three girls?

MY: Yes.

AK: And how much younger is your younger sister?

MY: Four years.

AK: As you were growing up, did you have some responsibility in helping your mother babysit and those kinds of things for your younger sister?

MY: Actually, not. My older sister took care of all of that.

AK: So, you were sort of the free spirit? (laughs)

MY: (laughs) Very much so.

AK: What is your earliest memory for the potential of there being a camp where you might have to go away, or hearing that you were actually going to have to go away?

MY: You know, I didn't know that was going to happen to us. It was just one day my parents were starting to sell everything in the house. Things that they couldn't sell, the cherished items, our friends said that they would take care of it for us.

AK: Which friends are you speaking of?

MY: I don't know. All I know is mom had said—obviously, they weren't Japanese people. And then, one day we just—I don't even know how we got to this place that we went to get on the bus to go to Santa Anita. But, I don't think I really understood what was happening.

AK: Did you have your own little bag of things that you were taking for yourself? Or did your parents pack what was being taken?

MY: I'm sure mom packed everything for us because I don't remember her telling me that I was responsible for this.

AK: Do you remember your bus drive to Santa Anita?

MY: Except that it was a bus ride, no, nothing else.

AK: Give us your first memory of Santa Anita? Do you remembering arriving? Or is it kind of a blur?

MY: It is kind of a blur. I don't remember.

AK: How long were you at Santa Anita?

MY: Six months.

AK: Did you have a party at your birthday?

MY: No.

AK: Do you remember being unhappy about not being able to have a party?

MY: No, actually not. What I remember about Santa Anita is—we were very lucky we got to live within the barracks. There were some people that had to live in the horse stables, and they said it was terrible. I mean, it smelled of the horse. But we were in the barracks. We had straw mattresses, so once a week we had to air our mattresses. I remember that. I also remember we were told that we couldn't have any kind of scissors, knives, or things like that. So, whenever we had to take our straw out to be aired, we would have an inspection. Mom would put all the scissors and the knives in the bag and say, "All right girls, go for a walk." (laughs) I remember that. What else do I remember? I remember the grandstand. I remember how the older folks had to work on the camouflage nets. Is that what it's called?

[00:20:13]

AK: Um-hm.

MY: We had our school in the grandstand. It was a lot of fun. I learned how to slide down the banister.

AK: (laughs) Do you remember the time frame of when you went to Santa Anita?

MY: Oh, yes, May the seventh.

AK: May the seventh. So, you had school during the summer or did it start up in September?

MY: It had to start up right away because we were only there for six months, and I remember going to school. The Japanese people were our teachers; I remember that.

AK: So, people from the camp?

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: Do you remember your parents doing anything in particular? Were they involved in parachute net work?

MY: My father was; my mother did not work.

AK: Were the people that you were within the barracks from your neighborhood? Were they people that you knew, or were they strangers to you?

MY: Actually, this whole barrack, my father being the eldest, we went in as one unit, all my aunties and uncles. And then, my auntie-in-laws' sister's family was with us. And there was a unit that was filled bachelors who were distant relatives of ours. So, we all went in as one unit.

AK: So, your family had the whole barrack to themselves?

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: Very nice. That seems unusual. A lot of families weren't fortunate in that way it seems. What do you remember about moving to Santa Anita to Rohwer? Do you remember being told to get ready for that, that you were going someplace else?

MY: No, I don't remember being told, but I knew something was happening. And then, when the day came, we had to all board this train.

AK: Did everybody in the camp leave at the same time?

MY: No, no, no because we all went to different camps from Santa Anita. I remember the shades were down, and I remember I started crying. My father asked me why, and I don't know why I cried. Then the train ride was so long and so uncomfortable, I remember that. I don't remember what it was like when we arrived because obviously the train did not stop right outside the camp. I don't even know how we got inside Rohwer. I think I just drew a blank on that, but I remember, of course, we had to stop because other trains, the military and all that, would get priority. I think that's probably why the trip took so long, and I can't remember how many days. All I remember was it took forever.

AK: I think other reports that I've read, the train took between four and five days, with sometimes two hour stops on the side of the rails waiting for another train to pass on the main line.

MY: Um-hm.

AK: And the train—at least the train that the one party referred to—went to Louisiana before it went back up to Rohwer.

MY: Oh.

AK: So, that it actually went out of its way, in a sense, but in order to get the connection, it did go to Rohwer. And at least in one case, if I remember correctly, the train did stop right by Rohwer.

MY: Oh, did it?

AK: Um-hm. And you might have had to walk a ways, but there was a sidetrack that came right up to the Rohwer camp.

MY: Oh, uh-huh.

AK: But, that may not have always been there, so maybe the early arrivals didn't do that.

MY: I don't remember.

AK: When you arrived at the camp, what was the family set up in terms of who was living where? Were you all able to be in the same building? Or did you want to be in the same building? Or did you have one big room? What do you remember about that?

MY: Yes, I remember. There was this barrack—the end units had the largest rooms. We had the largest room because there was five of us. Next to us was a smaller unit. My grandmother and my auntie and my uncle lived there. And the next unit was kind of in between size. My uncle and his family lived there. I had another uncle, whose wife didn't want to be part of us anymore, so they went to another block to live. Otherwise, they would have been there. So, we *almost* had the whole barrack.

AK: The first uncle and auntie that were living with your grandmother, that would be your mother's brother?

MY: My father's.

AK: Your father's brother, excuse me. And then, the next aunt and uncle in the next unit, they're also your father's—

MY: My mother has nobody here.

AK: So, the relatives, aunts and uncles that you are referring to, are your father's?

MY: Right.

AK: How many children were in the group? You had three in your family. Did your other aunts and uncles have children?

MY: The uncle that lived in the barrack with us, he had two. The one that moved to the next block has one.

AK: And which one of those had the baby that was born in Santa Anita?

MY: The one that lived closer to us.

AK: Okay. We are going to reference some pictures in an album that Margaret has with various activities and people within the family. So, we'll identify those pictures, as we talk about them, from her album. And we'll start with the first page that has to do with the camp pictures, and we'll sort of refer to them by page number from that page. The first picture that we have is a group of children and tell us about that picture.

MY: Since I'm not in there, I don't really remember this picture being taken, and I don't know why. I kind of think our photographer friend must have taken the picture because it looks kind of professional. He might have just gathered the children, and being a photographer, he just wanted to take different kinds of pictures. I think.

AK: And your sister's, I believe, were in that picture. Which persons are they? In the back row, center?

MY: Uh-huh. This one is my older sister, and this is my younger sister.

AK: Second row, second from the right. And how old are they then in those pictures? About eleven and six?

MY: If she's six, that would make me ten. No, I think—oh, maybe, I turned ten in Santa Anita. Yeah.

AK: Okay, on page two, top row, left, first picture.

MY: That's my uncle and his family. The baby in my auntie's arms was born in Santa Anita.

AK: In the center?

MY: The center, the men of our block would have to go into the woods and chop wood for us, I guess. Although, I do remember we used burn coal in the winter, but it must have been to heat our rooms because we had one of those bellies.

AK: Potbelly stoves?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: Some of the descriptions I've heard of the Rohwer camp, indicated that it was quite wooded around Rohwer area.

MY: Um-hm.

AK: Was the camp itself—were a lot of trees right on the camp? Or were you just near by a wooded area?

MY: I do remember that if our block was here, this next, what might have been a block was here, if they cleared it, was wooded. But, I think all along the outside of the camp there were a lot of trees.

[00:20:06]

AK: Was your camp fenced?

MY: Yes.

AK: Were there guards and guard towers?

MY: I don't think they were there at the end. I think they were there just at the beginning. I know they were there in Santa Anita.

AK: Do you remember any of the instructions you were given about staying away from the fence or rules about camp behavior for yourself and your friends?

MY: No, I don't remember mom and dad saying anything to us because we pretty much stayed in our block. The only time we ventured from the block was when we went to school. We always came straight home to our block, played with the kids in our block.

AK: Okay, the next picture shows someone that seems to be wearing a cook's hat.

MY: He was one of our cooks.

AK: And are you in that picture?

MY: No, they're just friends.

AK: Down at the bottom it shows a couple of work crews. Do you remember any of your family members in those pictures? Or are those just general pictures?

MY: Well, if we had the picture, I kind of think that my father might be there. That might be my father, but I don't remember my father having a cap like that.

AK: How about this one over here?

MY: No, I don't recognize anybody.

AK: Page three, we have some snow on the ground looks like.

MY: Yes.

AK: Was snow a common thing in the wintertime there?

MY: No, I think we had we had a lot of—I think they called it sleet. I couldn't do much with that.

AK: Had you seen snow before?

MY: No.

AK: So, this is the first time for you?

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: Do you remember throwing snowballs and things like that? Making snowmen or anything?

MY: Oh, yes. We have a snowman right there.

AK: Oh, yeah, I see it now.

MY: This is my cousin who was born in Santa Anita.

AK: Okay, so he's twoish there, I would guess. So, this would be 1944, and it's snowing. So, it's either early spring, then, or the next year. The fall of '44. And if he was born in Santa Anita, if it were spring, he wouldn't be two yet. He look a little too big to be less than two and walking around in snow, so it's probably the winter of '44, '45. Does that make sense?

MY: Well, it can't be '45 because '45 is when camps closed down, and we left. His family, my cousin's family, had relocated to Ohio. Maybe it was in '44.

AK: Okay, the next page has some different people in it. We have an older man in a uniform, and then a younger man in a uniform.

MY: The younger one is my cousin. I don't know who the other one is.

AK: Okay. And is he serving in the military at that time and home for a visit?

MY: How was with the 442nd, which put him in Louisiana. And Louisiana being so close to Arkansas, he heard we were there so he came to visit with us.

AK: Did he later go on to serve in Europe in the campaign?

MY: Yes.

AK: Did he survive the war?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: That's good. Did you ever get to talk to him about his service over there?

MY: No, actually not because this set of cousins, they lived in San Jose. It was a cousin that we really didn't know. We knew they were there. After camp, I think the next time I saw Sam was when he got married. He came down to the Los Angeles area for his honeymoon, so he came and visit with us. But, other than that, no, I've never, really, talked to any of my cousins up there.

AK: Okay, the next group, except for the young man that was born in Santa Anita, it looks like it's all girls. Is this the—

MY: She was one of our neighbors. Then it's the three of us, and this little girl is his sister.

AK: Okay, is this your grandmother?

MY: That's my grandmother.

AK: How old is she in this picture, you think?

MY: She was born in 1881, so how old would she be? (chuckles)

AK: Well, we got nineteen and forty-four, so about her early sixties, depending on what month and stuff this is. How did she fair in the camp?

MY: Okay.

AK: Did she get along—did she have difficulty walking or getting place to place? Walking to the mess hall?

MY: My grandmother always did, ever since I can remember—she did a number on me like she couldn't walk, so I was *always* there to help her. *Always*. I mean, I carried everything for her. My grandmother was never, ever without me. People in the block thought I was such a wonderful grandchild. But my grandmother told me, if she fell, if she ever fell, she would die. One day I came home from the school, and they told me that my grandmother had gone looking for my cousin, the one that moved to the next block. He had gone into the woods that was right across the way, and my grandmother fell. And I just knew she was going to die. I was so devastated. I don't know how I survived that. *My grandmother survived.* (laughs)

AK: How long did she live?

MY: She lived until she was eighty-nine years old. She died exactly a year after my father on the same day. We thought that was so interesting.

AK: Was she vocal about her experience either during this time or later? Do you remember complaining or her expressing a view about rightness or wrongness?

MY: If she did, I didn't hear. It looks like my grandma was having a good time.

AK: The young man here, it seems is being featured in this group of picture, is this his father that he is here with?

MY: No.

AK: And who is this lady?

MY: She's just a friend. Is that just a friend or is that his mother? Oh, that's his mother!

AK: Okay, is this your younger sister?

MY: No, that's *his* sister.

AK: So, we're on page five now. Some more school children—

MY: This is our Sunday school group.

AK: From where I'm sitting, I can't quite read what it says about the door.

MY: It says Saint something school. I can't make that out.

AK: Well, it's R and there's a blank space. I can't quite tell if there's another letter there or not, and then C-C Sunday School. And then, it's written in Japanese.

MY: Because I remember he was our reverend.

AK: Do you remember his name?

MY: No, I don't remember.

AK: Is this a Christian school? Had your family been Christians? When did you begin going to Christian churches?

[00:40:45]

MY: Before the war, we attended the Buddhist church. We took part in everything that was the Buddhist. Then when we went to camp, a lot of my friends were going to this Christian church, and mom said as long as you go to church, she said it didn't make any difference to her which denomination. So, ever since then, I've been going to the Christian church. I'll probably—when I die, I'll have a Christian service, even if my parents had Buddhist services.

AK: Did your parents remain Buddhist during their lives?

MY: Dad was never much on going to church, but mom had gone into the Shinto religion, a religion called _____ (inaudible). And, when she died, we had her service with the _____ (inaudible) Church.

AK: Did she so into that after she came out of the camp?

MY: Oh, yeah.

AK: Because during that period, that would have been a dangerous thing politically for her to do, to be involved in the Shinto religion, as I understand the religion.

MY: Oh, is that right?

AK: If I understand Shinto correctly, it's sort of a national religion, and it gives a certain allegiance to emperor of Japan. And the Japanese people who practiced the Shinto religion, then were thought to be dangerous because their allegiance was with the emperor.

MY: Oh, because they knew the reverend of the _____ (inaudible) church before the war, he was a friend of the family, and I remember the FBI came and got him.

AK: Probably, most of those people ended up in Tule Lake. It may not be true for all, but I think, probably, most. And I would guess that those who chose to be repatriated to Japan, for the most part, were those had the Shinto religion. I'm making an assumption, there, based on my readings because I haven't seen anybody break down the people who did make that choice by their religious preferences. But, I know from the government's point of view and the way they interrogated people and the questions they asked regarding their religious beliefs, those who practiced Shintoism,

by their identifying as being of that religion were saying that they had an allegiance to the emperor of Japan, and that made them very suspicious and dangerous to those in this country that were unknowledgeable of the intricacies of how people lived. What timeframe was it that your mother became a member of the Shinto group?

MY: Oh, well, it would be—let's see, mom has been dead for three years, probably about ten years.

AK: When you began attending the Christian church, at what point in your life did you feel that emotional acceptance of the religion, as being your religion and not just something you're going to be because your friends are going that you, in a sense, are a believer in Christianity?

MY: I don't think that happened until after we came back cause after we came back I continued going to the—well, I started going to the Baptist Church. Like this girl here, she was my closest friend, and when we left camp to come here, we kind of were in the same neighborhood. And the girls that I went to school with, they all went to Evergreen Baptist Church, so then I started going to the Evergreen Baptist Church. I think it was then I decided—I kind of liked the Christian religion because it's so simple compared to the Buddhist. I don't like the Buddhist religion because they're so gaudy in so many ways. You know, when I was a child and went to a Buddhist Church, of course, I didn't know anything about Buddha. It was just a church that I went to. So, I'm being unfair in putting down the Buddhist religion because I don't know anything about it.

AK: You weren't taught the precepts of the religion?

MY: I might have. When I was going to _____ (inaudible) they were trying to teach us something, but I don't remember. And I don't understand that, where the Christian religion made a lot of sense to me.

AK: Did the Japanese school have any religious orientation to it at all?

MY: No.

AK: Strictly language?

MY: Strictly language.

AK: Okay. Are there any pictures on these two pages that is worth commenting on it in terms of the people in them or the events that seem to be—

MY: This picture here looks like they're having a sumo tournament.

AK: It looks like pretty good attendance, pretty good crowd. Did your uncles participate in that kind of activity or your father?

MY: They did before the war. I don't think they did in camp. In fact, my mother had trophies at home that my father had won. But, I can't imagine my father participating in it. He was such a skinny man, and sumo people are so fat. (chuckles) And same with this uncle, he was the one that—

AK: Did he participate in karate or judo or—

MY: No, my father was a baseball man. He loved baseball. In fact, the team that he belonged to in Sacramento must have been quite good because they would make many trips to Japan. This uncle was, this uncle and that uncle, their father—they all played baseball. My uncle, the soldier, had no interest in sports. He still doesn't have any interest in sports.

AK: The camps frequently had active sports teams. Was your father involved in sports during the camp period?

MY: No. I think maybe he was too old.

AK: Okay, next page we have a picture of the family gathered. Tell us about that picture.

MY: I think in this picture, Mr. Eto, who was my aunt's father—

AK: How do you spell his last name?

MY: E-t-o.

AK: Okay.

MY: I think he was one of those that wanted to go back to Japan, so he left us to go to Tule Lake. The same with the lady that is next to him.

AK: Do you remember her name?

MY: It's the photographer's mother. Sakai, S-a-k-a-i.

AK: Of the people pictured there, how many do you think are in the group that are leaving to go to Tule Lake?

MY: Well, it looks like the ones who are dressed up are going to Tule Lake because I think this family went, grandpa Eto went, Sakai—I'm not sure but I think he's her husband.

AK: Do you think that it's possible that the picture is of everybody that was leaving at that time? That the whole group is going to Tule Lake?

MY: No, no, no because my mother is there. My auntie is there. They probably were just saying good-bye to them. But, gee, there should have been more people if it was

a good-bye picture. I'm guessing they are waiting for the truck to come pick them to wherever.

AK: I'm going to peak at the corner of that and see if there's anything on the back. The picture on the bottom is addressed to Patricia. Is that your older sister?

[00:50:15]

MY: Um-hm.

AK: Jane is your younger sister?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: And is that your uncle?

MY: No, no, no, Yoshitaro, he's our photographer.

AK: Oh, that's what I was thinking, that he wasn't your uncle, that was just a friend.

MY: Um-hm.

AK: And is that a picture of the camp looking at your block, or just the camp in general? Can you identify any of that places that are in that picture?

MY: No, it cannot be a regular block because of the way the building is constructed. We couldn't park any cars inside our compound, so this must be where the offices were.

AK: Okay, at the front end of the park?

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: Do you recognize the building in the picture that is next to that?

MY: I think, judging from the way everybody is lined up, it's got to be the mess hall.

AK: What would be your guess as to which Christmas that is?

MY: Gosh, let's see. Well, if we went to Rohwer, '42—because I know Yoshitaro left us early. He went to Chicago. It has to be '43. It can't be '44 because the camp closed in '45. It must be '43.

AK: Do you think that's a picture he took approximately at that time, or was it a picture he had at the camp and he used it as a way to express Merry Christmas to—

MY: I kind of think he—well, he could have sent his from Chicago, couldn't he have? It's a picture he took—maybe he wanted us to have a memento of camp.

AK: The next picture is a picture of your family?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: It shows your father, and he has a star on his shirt. Tell us about the star.

MY: Dad worked as a policeman at camp.

AK: What were his duties?

MY: I don't know. (laughs)

AK: If you were running around camp, would you see your father patrolling, or did he have an office?

MY: You know, I don't know.

AK: Is that in front of your barracks?

MY: Yes. Right behind there is where we lived.

AK: Okay, the next little row of picture here shows a group picture and area where there are some benches out in front. Is that in front of your barracks?

MY: No, we lived on this side.

AK: The next picture shows a stack of wood. Was this a community wood pile, or does that belong to a particular barrack? Did each barrack have that pile?

MY: I think that's maybe the way it was distributed. I seem to vaguely recall we would have to go after it. I remember us girls having to carry them back to our room. So, maybe after it was cut, the men would just drop them off, and we went after them.

AK: You indicated earlier that you thought they used coal for burning. What time in the camp was that?

MY: I'm just guessing, but I'm thinking maybe in the very beginning we might have burned wood. And then, I think, maybe the coal came. Because it would get awfully cold so maybe the coal was there from the beginning. I don't remember.

AK: Do you remember a time when it was cold because there wasn't any wood to burn?

MY: No, no, no.

AK: We have a group of women with some kind of diplomas—

MY: I'm not too sure what that is. I'm thinking maybe it was a sewing class that my mother attended.

AK: Her mother is in the back row wearing a light colored suit, fifth from the left. Okay, the bottom pictures in the center is a picture of a man in a uniform. Who is that?

MY: That's my uncle.

AK: What's his name?

MY: Bill Ishii.

AK: And he was the one who was in the service prior to the war?

MY: Yes.

AK: Was he in the Army? Is that an Army uniform?

MY: Army, ah-ha.

AK: Where was he stationed at that time? Do you remember?

MY: At this time he was at the one in Minnesota, Fort Snelling.

AK: The next picture shows some men and it looks like one of the trucks. Do you recognize those men?

MY: The one that is sitting inside the truck, he's something like a third cousin. He's the one that went to Tule Lake hoping he would be able to go to Japan. His family was all in Japan, every one of them, so he wanted to go back to them. But he gave up his citizenship—it was really interesting, he never made it to Japan, but they took him into the Army. Yeah, Jim served time in the Army. How could they do that? He gave up his citizenship. Or maybe if he went in, they give it back to him? Could they make such a promise? Cause we were surprised.

AK: That would be an interesting story to research. What was his last name?

MY: Kanemori.

AK: With a K?

MY: K-a-n-e-m-o-r-i.

AK: And how old is he in this picture?

MY: I don't think Jim is really any much older than I am. Maybe about twenty.

AK: And from your camp, he went to Tule Lake?

MY: Yes.

AK: And from Tule Lake he went into the service? Or was he out of the camp before he went into the service?

MY: I think from Tule Lake he went into the Army.

AK: Have you or your family had any contact with him since the war?

MY: Oh, yeah, because we are his family.

AK: Do you know where he lives now?

MY: He lives in—I think that area might be called Rosemead.

AK: So, he's still in Southern California?

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: He might be somebody I'd be interested in talking to.

MY: Oh, okay. I know he's retired.

AK: Maybe I can get his name and address from you at a later time.

MY: Okay.

AK: I think that sounds like a very interesting story, both from the point of view of being here by himself and his family not being here. And Japanese people in general—without meaning this to be negative in anyway—are very family oriented, very loyal to their families, and the fact that he remained here and served in the service, while, at the same he's struggling with his family loyalty, that seems to me to be a very interesting story to see how that worked itself out in his life. We have some baby pictures on the next page. Who are those of?

MY: That's the cousin that was born in Santa Anita and his sister. Roger was the darling of the block. I don't think there was a family that didn't love him.

AK: What's Roger doing now?

[01:00:00]

MY: Roger, is—I think he's—I don't know. This child was such a spoiled brat. He never made anything of himself. I know he's a disappointment to his mother. I think he is doing something with computers. I think he's in computers. I'm not sure.

AK: Okay, on the next page we have—

MY: This is the photographer. Amateur photographer in camp, I think. Left for Chicago and turned pro.

AK: Okay. And on the next page we have a picture of a bunch of men playing various games—

MY: That look like, Go. You've heard of that Japanese game Go with the black and white?

AK: I've heard the name and I can kind of see the board set up, but I'm not familiar with how the game is played. And a couple of pictures of the segment of the camp, one showing a chinning bar with—I can't tell what that person is doing on there.

MY: He's probably just—see, this is his head, and his body is going up. So he's probably—what do you call that movement?

AK: A somersault over the bar. I can't tell—oh, I see, it looks like the picture is cropped. I couldn't tell if he had his leg folded in a funny way or what. The picture is cropped so that his leg seem to be missing, but you can't quite tell whether they are just not there or that's the way the picture is cut. Who are these people?

MY: This is the lady when saw in the group. This is Mrs. Sakai, the one that went to Tule Lake.

AK: Okay.

MY: This photographer is her son.

AK: Okay. And do you know if she ended up making it to Japan?

MY: You know, I don't know that for certain, but I think she did.

AK: How old was the photographer at the time he was in the camp and his mother was there?

MY: I think Yoshitaro would be the same age as my auntie and uncles. So, he probably was in his early thirties in camp. He can't be because he was still single. Well, maybe late twenties to early thirties.

AK: And he left the camp early?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: I just was thinking in my mind whether he had to have signed up for or register with the draft at his age, or whether he was older and wouldn't have had to face that responsibility. Some of the men who took advantage of leaving camps early, they no more than got to Chicago or Detroit or Cleveland, wherever they might have gone, and they'd get drafted. But most of them were younger than this young man was. He might have been older than what they were drafting at that time, and thus, avoided to serve.

MY: I'm trying to think back then, if you had a brother in the service and you were going to be the families sole support, they did not touch you. And that might have been his case and if that was his case, his mother didn't make it to Japan. (laughs)

AK: Didn't make it to Japan?

MY: Must have not because I know Yoshitaro did not serve, but I know his younger brother did. But if that is the reason why he didn't serve, that means his mother never went back to Japan because he would be her sole support. I don't know, but I know Yoshitaro did not serve.

AK: Who's this young lady?

MY: Oh, she's just one of our friend's babies. She was born in camp.

AK: And here is one signed Fred. Who's Fred?

MY: He's a friend. I think he was Yoshitaro's friend who became our friend.

AK: And here is some Japanese costumes dancing. Is this a show at the camp?

MY: It might have been. I'm not sure, but I think one of the dancers was my girlfriend. Can't tell with all that makeup. This top picture is where the group of ladies in our block must have taken first aid lessons. You can tell by the way they are all bandaged.

AK: (laughs) The bottom picture on the right, is that your block or your barrack?

MY: That's the barrack that I lived in.

AK: I looks like it has some gardens up at front.

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: Did you work on those gardens at all?

MY: Dad did. (chuckles)

AK: The carefree spirit there again. Was that primarily vegetables?

MY: Yes.

AK: For food? And was that food that your family ate, or was it food that went to the mess hall and help feed everybody?

MY: No, it was for the family.

AK: Did most families have little gardens like that? Or just half of them? Or just a small number?

MY: I think a lot of them puttered like that. They had to do something.

AK: Do you recognize that man here? Was that somebody in your family driving the horses?

MY: I don't know. I don't even remember seeing horses at camp.

AK: It seems to be work clearing the land because the wagon is loaded with big chunks of wood. The logs have already been cut, and, to some degree, even shaped. Do you recognize the significance of that group?

MY: Gee, no I don't. You know, a lot of them are the ones that worked in the mess hall. I wonder if that is the mess hall group.

AK: The man on the front row is wearing a cap, chef's cap.

MY: Uh-huh. I know he was one of the cooks.

AK: And then, we have a picture of mess hall and the laundry room, and, on the opposite page, we have a picture of what would appear to be ironing boards. Are these groups of pictures here in front of your barracks?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: Because based on the picture on the previous page, it shows the front of your barracks with all the gardening and so forth, this would probably be a prior period because there is no gardening at all.

MY: Oh, uh-huh. Unless dad was rotating the crop.

AK: How long after you were at the camp, did your family begin the garden? Did they have it the first summer? Well, you wouldn't have been there the first summer. It would have been winter, so it would be the next summer.

MY: Um-hm.

AK: Did they have that there the first spring, summer period that you were there?

MY: Knowing my father, he must have because he was not one to stay idle.

AK: So, when he wasn't policing, he would come home and be involved in other kinds of activities such as the gardening and so forth?

MY: Right.

AK: Okay, it looks like a large picture of the mess hall. Is that a picture of your family in the mess hall, or just people in general?

MY: Well, we always—I know our table was along the wall so, no, this isn't any of—

AK: Did you say *our* table? Did people sort of gravitate to the same one all the time?

[01:10:00]

MY: After a while, yes.

AK: So, people go used to, that's where so and so sits? Without assigning a table, you still had a table?

MY: Uh-huh. So, we were allowed in and get a head start, like pour the water for the family.

AK: How was the food at the camp?

MY: I enjoyed it. Even in Santa Anita, you hear the adults complain about, How could they just put everything into one plate? I mean, your dessert, the Jell-O especially, by the time you got it to your table, it would be all melted and run into everything else. But, it didn't bother me. I really think the kids had a good time. Speaking for myself, I know I did. I have very fond memories of camp, where my parents were very bitter of course because dad lost so much.

AK: Was your mother glad she didn't have to cook in camp? Or would she have rather have cooked the food for the family?

MY: She never said. She might have missed cooking because my mother was a very good cook. My mother worked in camp. She worked as a waitress so she never got to eat with us, but she made sure we ate. (laughs)

AK: Was there a certain amount of discipline involved in eating, in terms of, "You took that food now you have to eat it?"

MY: Yes.

AK: You can get what you wanted but—or you had to have vegetables, you have to have this and that?

MY: Definitely, definitely. I mean, those rules were set when we were young. Everything went without saying in camp. We *knew*.

AK: (laughs) Okay, some other family pictures. Here is another picture. Is that your barracks, again?

MY: No, no, no, it can't be if there is a barrack here. There's a barrack on this side isn't there?

AK: Yes.

MY: No, that can't be.

AK: So, there was no barrack opposite where you—

MY: Oh, wait. Maybe if they took it from the other side.

AK: In the other pictures it did show that.

MY: But, I don't remember having a washtub up front.

AK: We are flipping backwards to see if any of the other pictures show that type of—there's one on that picture on that barrack, but yours was on the end. Okay, I'm trying to reference this other picture. This is an awning, and here's an awning. And there's a big tree. If we flip over to this one, we have an awning, there's an awning, and this tree appears to be an even bigger tree by this time. And this is a little different angle, of course. But, it looks, at least, that it could be the same barrack.

MY: It could be.

AK: I'm impressed by how much more developed all the garden is. Not only how full its growth is, but it seems to be a little bit enlarged in the area that is right in front of the barrack. Is this the uncle that is visiting from the Army?

MY: That's my cousin.

AK: The cousin, excuse me. The one that was in the 442nd?

MY: Correct.

AK: Did you ever talk to him after the war about his military experience?

MY: No. I do know that he was badly wounded. He had something in his head—whatever it is they put in—they called it a silver plate. He was what you call a hundred percenter, so it must have been bad for him.

AK: Is he still alive today?

MY: No, he died might be about five years ago.

AK: Did he marry?

MY: Yes.

AK: Did he have children?

MY: Yes.

AK: Did his son serve in the military at a later time?

MY: I don't know.

AK: I've come across two people who served in the military who had sons who are conscientious objectors, and I'm very interested in pursuing that aspect. I'm working on the basis of conscientious objection in our culture, as *American* culture, going way back to the colonial speech. And then as that comes forward, showing how it develops in various ethnic groups within the American scene. One of the men served in the 442nd, and his son is a pacifist. And the other, the gentleman was in the service prior to their family going to the camp, and he was at Rohwer. He's a professor here at the college. I mentioned his name to you, Craig Ihara.

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: His family was at Rohwer. In fact, he was born at Rohwer. And his family was in the military at that time, and his younger brother, Danny, was a pacifist. And Craig, I think, has an inclination philosophically to that. I haven't asked him, but I'm going to. I read his interview yesterday. Okay, there's other family pictures. Is this the three girls?

MY: Um-hm.

AK: And who is in this picture here?

MY: Starting from this end that is my auntie, grandma, my mother, another auntie, uncle, uncle, and cousin.

AK: And various family pictures. I'm pulling one out that was kind of underneath. What is that picture of, do you know?

MY: This is that photographer friend. He took this picture. I suppose if you look at it very carefully you could tell it was something they made. At a glance, it's an aerial view of this airplane, and it would be like a battleship. But, that's a blanket, an Army blanket. And he sprinkled powder, and these are all toys.

AK: Hm. Now, I didn't have that impression at first because of the whiteness of the airplane. For some reason it made me think that it was a put together picture. I did think the ship was real, but I thought the plane was imposed. I don't know why. I think overall that's an interesting shot. Okay, and who is in this last picture?

MY: This is probably our very closest friend. I went through all my school years—not all my school years because I met her in camp—but after camp, we went to junior high and high school together. Her mother, Mrs. Utsami lived with my mother in this senior citizen, in Japenesetown, Tokyo Tower. My mother and Mrs. Utsami were very, very, very close. When mom died, she felt her sister died. It's a close friend.

AK: Did looking these pictures over and talking about the camp bring back any other specific memories about camp life or your experiences at camp?

MY: No, not really. It brings back good memories, and I think that's a plus, instead of bad feelings.

[01:20:16]

AK: How old were you before you understood the legal questions? Or did you worry about the legal questions?

MY: Never. I think, basically, because I'm not a leader, I'm a follower. And whatever anyone said, that was it. I just went along. I think probably just about the last five to ten years is when I realized, "Hey, I do have a say." (laughs) So, I might lock horns with people. I know I have locked horns with my husband, which I *never* did before. So, that's probably why it never followed me. What happened, happened. I guess since Mom and Dad were so bitter, I could have been bitter, but no, it did not affect me the same way it did Mom and Dad. But, Mom and Dad had so much to lose though. Dad had his own business; practically gave it away. The furniture we had were practically given away. My grandmother sold the piano we had for \$15. And all our furniture just went, so I can see where my father would be bitter. He worked so, so, so hard to get the things that he had because in Sacramento they were poor,

very poor farmers. I know the car that he dearly loved—in fact, the neighbors used to tease my brother and say you take better care of the care than you do your wife—was practically given away.

The things that our friends, our treasured pieces, the ones that were handed down, the things that my grandmother brought across, when we came back for them, they were gone. They never returned it to us. And I know some of those things my son would have loved to have had because my grandmother's father was a samurai. My son will always lay claim to *my* side of the family, not the Yamamoto side, because the Yamamotos, I'm sure, were farmers. I don't know what my husband's side of the family did, but because I come from a line that was a samurai there. It's really too bad because we did have some things, and they're gone now.

AK: So, when you come back from the camp, you come back to the Los Angeles area. Did you come immediately to the Los Angeles area from the camp?

MY: Yes.

AK: And you came back to the same basic neighborhood?

MY: Yes.

AK: Where did you first stay?

MY: We stayed at this Evergreen, we stayed there for, gee, maybe a month. Dad got himself a job with some paint company. We couldn't stay—I think there was a time limit to stay at Evergreen hostel. I don't think it was written, but we just knew. So, my father oh, he hustled. He tried to get us out of there. But, since he couldn't find a place, we stayed at Norwalk. My uncle married into a family that had a chicken farm, and it was such a small house. Because grandpa Hatanaka had leased everything to this family, and his big house was over here. When he was in this house, his workers lived in this house, so I think he had to wait a year before the lease was up for him to go into that. So, here we are in this one little house, one bedroom the five of us. And then, Dad found a place for us.

Then we went to visit our old neighborhood. It was kind of nice I thought, the Mexican families that we grew up with. One of the families, her son was killed in the Pacific. And she didn't call us a Jap and, "Get the hell out," like some of the others did cause we were friends. And then the Mexican family on the other side, they were so warm. They were so happy to see us. It really shocked me to see how these people that we didn't even know, reacted the way they did. I mean, because we were *Japs*. When I started school, Hollenbeck Junior High, it was rough. But there was enough of us Japanese that we just all stuck together, and I think by the time we got to high school, it was all right.

AK: How long did you go to Hollenbeck?

MY: Two years. I did my eighth and ninth year there.

AK: How many Japanese families that were in that area before the war came back to that area?

MY: None of my friends were there before the war that I knew of. No, they were there, except we were at an elementary level. So, it was basically East Los Angeles. I guess we all kind of went back to where we came from, but I didn't know them then because there are a lot of grammar schools.

AK: So, in that particular area you felt quite a few of the families came back to that area?

MY: Yes.

AK: Which high school did you go to?

MY: Roosevelt High School.

AK: And did you graduate from Roosevelt?

MY: Yes.

AK: And what did you do when you graduated?

MY: Then I went to—when I first thought about going there, it was called the Metropolitan Business School, but the year I started, it became a junior college. So, I put in my two years there because I knew that a secretary is what I wanted, which was to my parents disappointment because my older sister is a nurse and my youngest sister is a schoolteacher. I was constantly reminded of that. Should have gone to a university. I did not want that.

AK: So, after you graduated from college, were you successful at getting a job right away? Or was it a struggle for you?

MY: No, actually, it wasn't bad at all. It was kind of word of mouth. My first real job was working for a customhouse broker. My auntie's friend was going to leave the company because she was pregnant, and Mr. Wiley, there just had the stereotype that Japanese were all such good workers. I mean, the job was mine. When he was told that there was this Japanese that wanted to come in, it was mine. He had to interview me, but then, no, I started, maybe even on that day.

AK: And how long did you work for that company?

MY: I worked for Mr. Wiley until I became pregnant. It must have five years.

AK: Where you already married then, at the time you started that job?

MY: No, I got married on the job.

AK: Where did you meet your husband?

MY: I met my husband through one of my aunties. The soldier? His wife is Gene's cousin. Sachi asked me one day, "My cousin Gene has a friend in town from San Jose. Would you mind going out?" And I don't like blind dates, but then I figured, if Sachi is asking me to do this, he must be an all right guy. So, I went out. I was Roy's date, and that's how I first met Gene. Gene asked me for a date the following week, and we've been together ever since.

AK: Was your husband in a camp?

MY: Yes, he was in a camp in Idaho. I believe it's called Minidoka? My husband's father is a Washingtonian.

AK: Is he significantly older than you? Or is he just your age?

MY: He's about four years older than I am.

AK: Did he serve in the military?

[01:30:00]

MY: Yes, he was involved in the Korean Conflict.

AK: What was his duties? Was he a rifleman or tankman?

MY: Well, my husband has a bad leg and because of that, they should not have taken him into the Army but they did. I think he realized—I mean, my husband didn't want to fight, so he would always complain about his knee. I know it actually did bother him, but I know one the reasons, instead of your gritting teeth and doing it, is because he didn't want to go to the front. So, he was a cook. He made breakfast for one of the officers. He just did everything for the one officer, so he was very, very, very lucky. So, my husband, needless to say, is a very good cook. (laughs)

AK: (laughs) How does he generally regard his service experience in terms of in a philosophical sense, not necessarily enjoying or not enjoying being a cook, but having to serve? And what was his reaction?

MY: You know, we never really talked too much about what he did except how he served this one officer, so I really don't know what his feelings were.

AK: Okay. When you get married and you're working with this company, it basically seems you are living in the same general area.

MY: No, actually not. By this time, my father built a house in Pasadena for my mother, so we all moved to Pasadena, and I got married from the Pasadena house. I lived in

Pasadena because mom was totally dependent on someone to drive her to L.A. where she used to work because my mother worked as a seamstress.

AK: So, you're bridging your mother in, and you are on your way to your job?

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: And how long did that continue?

MY: After I got married?

AK: Um-hm.

MY: Not very long because I got pregnant right away. (laughs)

AK: And you have a son?

MY: Yes.

AK: Do you have other children?

MY: I have three boys.

AK: How long did you live in Pasadena?

MY: Gee, maybe for two years. It was right after Greg was born. I know Greg had his first birthday in our new house. Maybe we lived in Pasadena for two years.

AK: Jumping forward to the eighties when there was a movement for some sort of redress to the Japanese who were in the camps, how did you first hear of that movement or hear of that train of thought? Do you remember?

MY: I think I first read about it in the newspaper.

AK: In this in between period, subscribe or did you take Japanese community papers or have access to them on any kind of regular basis?

MY: My mother was a subscriber.

AK: Which paper did she take?

MY: The *Rafu Shimpo* because, of course, that kept everyone current on what was happening. I remember we thought, Well, that would be nice, but we never thought that would pass. And when it did pass, and they said that the recipients would be anybody from this date forward, that made us very angry because it was the older folks who suffered. And the \$20,000 would not go to my father because my father

was gone, but I think the heirs should have gotten it. And then, cut it off on the other end, but how do you cut it off on the other end? Because my cousin, who was born in 1945, just before we left camp, will be getting her share. Yes, that made me very angry. My grandmother, she was gone. But, by the time my mother died—she died after President Reagan signed, so we did get her money. So, it's kind of nice. I haven't got mine yet, but it's something to look forward to.

AK: Sure. Have you stayed active with any Japanese cultural group of any kind?

MY: No.

AK: Do you go to an American Japanese church or a church that is Caucasian or mixed?

MY: It's mixed only in that it's mixed now with the Chinese and just a few Caucasians. But, when I used to be active, when I was going to high school, this Evergreen Baptist Church was all Japanese. Well, before the war they were called Nisei Baptist Church so that kind of tells you what kind of church. After camp, there were a few Caucasian. And then, when I moved to Orange County, I stopped going for the longest time. And when I went back, I couldn't believe all the Chinese.

AK: You went back to the same church?

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: Is that where you attend now?

MY: Uh-huh.

AK: So, you drive quite a ways to participate in your church.

MY: They're in Rosemead now. It is not quite as far as they used to be.

AK: Did the people in the church have any reaction to the redress movement? Was that talked about at the church?

MY: I'm sure it was, but then, see, I'm not active that way. I just go to church, and I come home.

AK: I can't think of anything else at this point. Is there anything else that you would like to contribute? A question that you thought I might ask but I didn't?

MY: Gee, no, I can't think of anything. I will try to make contact with my cousin, the one that you said you would like to talk to.

AK: I guess the only other thing, as I think about our interview here today, is to ask how your parents expressed their anxiety, their anger, their feelings about the camp

experience? As you returned from camp, did they continue to be upset that they had that experience?

MY: No, no. Not that I can think of.

AK: So, it was pretty limited to the camp experience itself?

MY: Yes. It was just in the beginning.

AK: Did they talk to the children about it, or was it something you heard them talk about between themselves or other adults or did they actually talk to you about?

MY: No, they did not talk to the children. My parents were really good that way. They didn't share any of their problems with. Maybe they should have, then we would more today, but Mom and Dad never shared any of their problems with us. There was times, after we got older, Mom would say, "Oh, Dad used to get me so upset." But, when we were growing up, we never saw that. Never saw that. She would tell us about how some of the things that Dad did. I mean, it just blew us away. But, when we were kids, Mom never told us anything like that. But yeah, good parents. I wish I could be more like my mother.

[01:40:15]

AK: That's good that you had a parent that you could idolize in a positive way and model ideas, expressions after. For a lot of people in our society, that's not a reality for them. Well, on behalf of the Japanese American Project and myself, I thank you again for your time and your interest.

MY: Oh, you are welcome.

AK: I appreciate it very much.

MY: I just wish I was older. Then I would be able to share more with you, but I really don't remember. But, I remember more than my older sister.

AK: (laughs)

MY: My younger sister is a total blank. Isn't that something? She's only four years younger. She doesn't remember camp, *at all*.

AK: It's interesting, some people's memories can be jarred by certain things. Some of the people that had really negative experiences have the hardest time remembering because I think there is some kind of psychological effect where it's intentional. They don't really want to relive those negative times and those bad experiences. And men in war, this is a very common thing. They don't want to talk about it, they don't want to think about it, and they have just repressed that experience totally from

their mind because they know if it is brought up, it's emotional, it's agonizing, it's unpleasant. So, they just keep it under lock and key, sort of speak.

And so, at some later time, and I don't know when that will be, when we transcribe and put together your interview, I hope that I can have access to some of the picture so that we can include some of the pictures in our publication.

MY: Oh, certainty. Um-hm, of course.

AK: Great.

END OF INTERVIEW