

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Japanese American Oral History Project

An Oral History with RUMI URAGAMI

Interviewed

By

Amanda Raine

On August 16, 1994

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: RUMI URAGAMI  
INTERVIEWER: Amanda Raine  
DATE: August 16, 1994  
LOCATION: Los Angeles, California  
PROJECT: Japanese American

AR: This is an interview with Rumi Uragami by Amanda Raine for the Japanese American Project for the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton. The interview is being held at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California. The time of the interview is 9:15 a.m. The date of the interview is August 16, 1994.

RU: Okay, I was born in 1927 in San Pedro, California. I think the sequence goes that my folks had a store in Wilmington, and they used to put me in a little crate in front of the store. The police came along and said that's a no-no, especially because of the Lindbergh kidnapping.

AR: Lindbergh kidnapping? Like Charles Lindbergh?

RU: Yes, aha. And so they said, Well, can't do that. So they thought, somebody is going to have to watch me, so they moved to Terminal Island because my aunt lived there, and she took care of me in my early years. And then, well, that's when my education started. I started when I was four-and-a-half. Therefore, they kept me in kindergarten for a year-and-a-half. That was a crushing blow! They said I wasn't old enough to go into the first grade, so that was that. So, in 193—when was the earthquake? 1933, right?

AR: I think so.

RU: Well, in 1934, I had just finished half a year of first grade. We went to Japan because my grandmother said she was dying. No, she wasn't. So there was five of us in the family; children. And so, my parents—seven of us—went to Japan. It took several week to get there on a boat. Well, we stayed there for ten months, so we came back around October of that year. My mother says, "We've been out of the country a long time, I had to start all over again from the first grade." Another crushing blow! And

so, I didn't have any problem because I was older than most of the kids. So in third grade, they skipped me half the year because I'm older. And then, in the sixth grade, they skipped me, again, another half a year. That was terrible because I only spent half a year in the sixth grade, then I had to go to junior high. And going to junior high without my friends, I was by myself. I discovered you miss a lot of history in class, so I had to study on my own to pick up on some of those histories. But junior high, I got along all right. Then I went to 1941 came along, Pearl Harbor. And Pearl Harbor, on December seventh, they picked up my father, the federal—

AR: Oh, they did? That day?

RU: Now they talk about surprise attack but a few months before that, the FBI came to our house to search the house. They talked to my father. See, my father was a community leader.

AR: They rounded up all those guys.

RU: So, then, well, like I said, surprise attack, but they knew about it. We didn't know about it, but the FBI knew about it, right?

AR: Yeah, I've heard that.

RU: And we lived near Fort MacArthur, so my mother says, "Let's not stay here," and we moved to L.A. to live with my dad's cousin. Then I went to Mount Vernon. And then, a little bit after Easter we discovered they had the curfew; we couldn't be out of the house after eight o'clock at night. And then, we couldn't go beyond at a certain radius. So, poor me, couldn't go to school. (chuckles)

AR: Oh, no! Because it was beyond the radius?

RU: It was beyond the radius. So, I'm losing all this education. Oh, I was very unhappy. (laughs) Anyway, then about June we went to Santa Anita.

AR: Oh, that was the relocation camp.

RU: Relocation camp. We lived in the stables. And the funny thing about the stables—now, do you know anything about the overhang? There is the stable part and then the overhang?

AR: Uh-huh.

RU: So they close it up so you can have two little rooms. Nobody wanted to sleep in the stable half. We stuck my brother in there! So, there was my mother, two brothers, my cousin, and my aunt. We all lived—but there was no room for all—

AR: You all had that one—

RU: Yeah, but we couldn't all live in the front half, so one had to move. My brother went to the back half.

AR: Was your father with you at this time?

RU: No, no, he was in a different place.

AR: Oh.

RU: He was in all kinds of places. He was in Terminal Island Prison, in L.A. Federal Prison, then he went to Missoula, Montana, then he went to Bismarck, North Dakota. Every few many—

AR: They just kept moving him.

RU: And he ended up in Santa Fe. From Santa Fe, then he joined us.

AR: Oh, were you still in Santa Anita? Or were you—

RU: No, we were in Colorado.

AR: You went to Amache?

RU: Amache, yeah, um-hm. But anyway, so we went to Amache, we didn't go to school in Santa Anita.

AR: Oh, really? Not at all?

RU: No, I didn't. I think they did have something, but I wasn't there. Anyway, end of September we went to Colorado. Then school started there. And the teachers there, they were mixed. Well, the way I took it. Some of the teachers were very good, some, we felt, couldn't get a job anywhere. (laughs)

AR: Oh, no. So, you just got stuck with those?

RU: Well, I think any school—but we had some extremely good teachers.

AR: Were they all Caucasian? Did you have any Japanese—

RU: No, we had some Japanese teachers. Like my science teacher was a Japanese teacher. My homemaking teacher was Japanese. We learned to cook on a—what is it called, cold stone?

AR: Oh, uh-huh.

RU: Didn't amount to anything, but ah, we learned about it. I was in the ninth grade, then. They promoted me. And then, went to high school. In high school, we had some good teachers. But some—my science teacher, I swear, I think I knew more than he did. But the other teachers were very good; I have no complaints. And then, let's see, especially my social studies teacher was very good, and a lot of these teachers they were trying to help us. Like my social studies teacher, she was trying to groom us into college, which she did with a lot of students. And ah, there was some teachers, like my math teacher, he was not he was a Japanese teacher and was a college professor at Stanford. Now, he used to teach a lot of the boys that were getting ready for college—this is extra-curricular activity, preparing them for college. I think like most of us, we were brought up that we should go to college, so we took these courses that trained us for college. But, we were there for three years. Now, I didn't graduate in high school there, but I could have.

AR: Why didn't you?

RU: I was taking extra classes. During my free period, I'd take—

AR: Another class.

[00:10:00]

RU: Yeah. Well, one reason that I didn't graduate, also, was that—well, I was only a junior, anyway. I was taking extra Spanish class, and I dropped the class. They didn't want me to drop it, but I dropped it. And also, during the summer vacation, I was a girl reserve, you know, sort of a social club. They had a camping trip in Colorado, up in Boulder, Colorado; that's near Denver.

AR: You got to leave the camp and go camping.

RU: For one week, we were able to go. So then, I missed out on my summer school class, and that left me one class short of graduation. So when I came out, I went to Dorsey High. This is in October I went to Dorsey High.

AR: This is after camp?

RU: Um-hm, I went to Dorsey. Well, actually, first we were going to go to Chicago, but it was going to cost about \$250 to finish high school for semester, so we couldn't afford that.

AR: Why did you have to pay? Is that normal? Is that a private school?

RU: No, because we were outsiders. We decided we better come back to California where we don't have to pay. So, that's why I went to Dorsey. Now, I didn't stay there for very long because a lot of us didn't have enough money. We didn't have *any* money. Also, my mother was making about \$36 a week, which did not cover too much. So, a

lot of us high school students, we went to work in homes as maids. We worked for our board and room. Actually, I worked six-and-a-half days a week cleaning the house, doing the dishes, doing the washing, doing, you know—

AR: Everything.

RU: Everything. Taking care of the dog.

AR: How much did you get paid?

RU: Twenty-five dollars a month.

AR: *A month?*

RU: Uh-huh. But that covered my needs for schooling.

AR: That's true.

RU: There was a bus hauler—school bus that would come up—I was working on Woodrow Wilson Drive, so it cost me money to go home.

AR: But, did your family come back to the same area you were in before you left?

RU: To L.A., yeah, but see, we were really from San Pedro. But, we stayed in L.A.

AR: Did you have a home here?

RU: No, we didn't. One reason we didn't have a home is that we couldn't find any property. We were not citizens—I mean, I was a citizen.

AR: But that was before, yeah, your parents—

RU: My parents couldn't own a home. We were not old enough. You had to be twenty-one to own property.

AR: Oh, in order to put it through the kids name, you had to be twenty-one?

RU: Twenty-one, uh-huh. But, after the war, we bought our house in my cousin's name. My cousin's wife, I should say.

AR: Because she was over twenty-one.

RU: She was older.

AR: Oh, even after the war, you couldn't buy?

RU: You couldn't buy, um-hm. But then, when I turned twenty-one, then we transferred it over to my name. But, when I came back to California, in high school, I discovered the curriculum in Colorado and California is different. So, I had a whole year of requirements like civics and California history—

AR: Oh, things they didn't teach you.

RU: And I had taken a science class in the lower grade that they didn't want to give me credit for, upper grade credit. So they decided that if I took 2 one hour tests from different teachers and passed it, then I won't have to take it, which I did.

AR: You passed it?

RU: Um-hm.

AR: Good thing.

RU: Yes! They didn't want me to take the same class that I had taken before. They wanted me to take physics 1 and 2 at the same time.

AR: My gosh.

RU: I didn't think that was possible for me to pass.

AR: No.

RU: So that's why they, if I took the two tests, they'd let me go. And, like I said, I spent the whole year taking \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) requirements. I barely got out!

AR: It was things they didn't teach you at the camp that you would have had at a normal school?

RU: It's just the requirements were different. Like I said, civics and California history, and then they made me take the Spanish that I dropped. That's about it. Oh, I had taken college courses. I was going to UCLA. I had my credits to go to UCLA. But then, somebody had to work in the store.

AR: And your father is back with you?

RU: Uh-huh because he was working on the farm, just making the board and room, so I went to trade school, Wiggins. I took up dress making. But dressmaking is not a very good field; it's seasonal. So, I just went and worked as office work, and then I took accounting and things at night school. I learned my secretarial skills were not too good. But that's about it

AR: Well, let me ask you a couple questions. Your parents, did they come from Japan, or were they born here?

RU: My father and mother were both born in Japan. My father came in 190-something or another. He came because the family business had collapsed.

AR: In Japan?

RU: In Japan. His family wanted him to go to school, but he only went to the eighth grade. That's required. He decided he wanted to come to the U.S., so he came to the U.S.

AR: Were him and your mom married at that time?

RU: No, no. My mother was born in 1900, and she had two years of normal school, college. And she was a second grade teacher.

AR: Oh!

RU: See, her father was a school principle, so her whole family was in education. She met him in 1919, 1920, somewhere around this year, and then later they came to this country. My father had gone back to Japan. He had gone back a couple of times.

AR: So, he went back and married her there, and then they both came to the U.S.?

RU: Uh-huh. Somewhere around 1920 they came here, and they moved to Terminal Island. And my father went into fishing. Terminal Island is a fishing community. But, he had a problem. He used to get seasick.

AR: Oh, no. That doesn't work in fishing.

RU: So, he decided he better go into something else. That's when he went into the produce business. He had the produce department in a market, just the produce section. And ah, the first two tries didn't work out. Apparently, he was a pretty good fisherman because he paid off his debts, and then he'd go back to fishing for more money. And then he's go back to produce again. So, like I said, the third time however, that's about the time I was born, things went well. In fact, he was doing quite well because by the time the war started, I think, the business was doing six figures.

AR: Wow.

RU: That's pretty good in the thirties, you know?

AR: Yeah. What did he do in the community?

RU: Well, all I know is every time they needed somebody to give speeches and represent the community or something—

AR: He was the man.

RU: He was obviously, what you call it? Go-between. In Japan, it's—you just don't find a writer, a go-between that fixes up the marriage. In a lot of cases, he was a figurehead. He may have anything to do with the marriage, but he is supposed to act as a go-between.

[00:20:08]

AR: Were him and your mom, where they set up like that?

RU: Oh, definitely. I think most of the marriages were. You know how the pictures brides came about, don't you?

AR: No.

RU: Okay, in 1907, the U.S. said no more contract workers from Japan are allowed in the U.S. Well, Japan complained to the U.S. government and said, We have all these men out there without families, wives, or anything. And U.S. said, Okay, we'll have a gentlemen's agreement. We will let them go back to Japan, bring the family, or get a wife and bring her back. Well, that was a big problem then. People, some of them did not want to go back because they didn't have the fortune they came to get.

AR: They had to pay for it to go back.

RU: Yeah, but that was not the big problem. No, the big problem was that you had to have \$800 in your savings accounts for six months, and having saved up \$800 is practically impossible. That was the biggest—well, they somehow got the \$800 in the account, and they did not want to go back to Japan because they were only going to go back if they had a fortune, right?

AR: Oh, to show everyone that they had it. Okay.

RU: So, most of them didn't. Some did go back, but a lot of them didn't. They would write home, and they would have someone fix it up. And these brides could not come unless they were married, so they had this proxy marriage. It's very simple. All you had to do is put the wife's name in the husband's family registry, and you were married. I mean, you didn't choose your wife and husband, anyway. The family did so what's the difference, right?

AR: Yeah.

RU: The thing about it is the brides were only between fifteen and twenty, most of them. The men had been here for ten, fifteen years or more. So, can you see? The brides came over on the boat, and they had a picture of the husband. Some of these picture didn't match because some of these pictures were taken early in life, shall we say, or they'd even send somebody else's picture.

AR: Oh, my goodness.

RU: When you arrive, you'd say, gee, I didn't marry that old man. And also, I think the fact that the men were farmers or fishermen, they were quite dark. It makes you look older. But they were older. Most of them were anywhere between—a lot of them average fifteen years apart in age and that a lot. Like a fifteen year old girl marrying—

AR: A thirty year old.

RU: That's an old man. Like my mother in law said her roommate wouldn't get off the boat; she went back without getting off. (laughs) And there some that said, I like your husband better than mine, so they just exchanged pictures; switched pictures. I mean, what's the difference? They didn't know him anyway. It's amazing that most of them did stick to it. That's because they didn't have the money to go back, I'm sure, and they stayed married for fifty years or more.

AR: You grow into that love. (laughs)

RU: That's right. But you know what? I was talking to some Jewish lady. "Oh, they have that in Israel, too.

AR: Even now.

RU: Yeah, so what's the difference? I mean, they stayed married.

AR: Maybe that's a good idea. Maybe we should still do that!

RU: There's so much divorce here!

AR: Let's see, what else? Oh, just before—when the war broke out, what do you remember about that? Were people mean to you?

RU: No, no. I was in L.A., and on the day, I came home in the evening.

AR: On Pearl Harbor day?

RU: Pearl Harbor day; I came home and soldiers were \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) Fort MacArthur. They were on all corners. They were everywhere, and you couldn't get in unless you lived there. Then I went to school and the funny feeling there was that the students

- from Terminal Island could not come across on the ferry to come to school. The school was about one-fourth Japanese. It was an eerie feeling. I think one of the reasons I always felt that we didn't have that much prejudice there was because San Pedro is a town of immigrants.
- AR: So, everyone was—
- RU: Yeah. There was a lot of Japanese, there was a lot of Yugoslavian, and Italians, and the parents were immigrants. Even the kids were immigrants.
- AR: What could they say?
- RU: What could they say? Someone asked me that before, and I never gave it much thought because they didn't do anything.
- AR: Yeah, that's good.
- RU: I used to go to school with a German girl, when I came to L.A. This girl didn't have a pen set, she was \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible). And she was a \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) German.
- AR: Oh, really?
- RU: And came just before. After the war started in Europe—
- AR: Right, before Pearl Harbor but after the war had started.
- RU: I used to go to school with her. I didn't think anything about it.
- AR: Nobody ever said anything to her about Germany?
- RU: No.
- AR: Well, that's good.
- RU: Well, I went to Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon is predominantly Jewish students there, and I guess they were used to immigrants, too. That's probably what it is.
- AR: That's good. You shouldn't have to feel that.
- RU: Well, like you said about school. In camp the school weren't any different from any place. They were just as bad as anywhere else! (laughs)
- AR: Right before you guys were evacuated, were there any rumors about where you were going to go or what was going to happen to you?

RU: Yeah, they said they were going to—well, the curfew came first. And then they said we were going to be transferred. We didn't know where. But, Japanese don't question things like that.

AR: I think in that whole time period, did people question—

RU: No, Japanese don't question. If the government says do this, you do it. If you don't—I only heard my mother complain once. She says, “Why are they doing this to us? We're citizens.” \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) But only once I heard her say that. They just did what government said. There was no question about that. That's why there was no fuss or muss; we weren't brought up that way. We do what the government tells us to do; that's all there is to it. But it was hard after because, like what I said, when we came back, we didn't have anything. We were only allowed one suitcase per person. Although we had stored my piano—I said, no way are we going to sell my piano.

AR: Was it there when you got back?

RU: We stored it.

AR: I mean, was it still—

RU: Well, the rat had run all over it, and it was dirty and stuff. It was only two years old, practically brand new. I knew that I couldn't afford another one. We lost everything. Someone offered \$50 for it. I said, “For a brand new piano? No.”

AR: So, you sold all your furniture and everything?

RU: Yeah.

AR: Really cheap?

RU: Like \$10-\$15. We sold a brand new stove. It was only a couple years old. Sold it for about \$25. My husband's family, they had a restaurant—small restaurant—they sold the whole thing, *everything*, for about \$100 or so.

[00:00:30]

AR: Wow.

RU: Which isn't much with equipment and everything. What can you do with it?

AR: Exactly.

RU: But people that had stored it in their homes and rooms—things were stored in here. And they were movers.

AR: What did this used to be?

RU: This used to be a Buddhist church, a temple.

AR: I think I did know that.

RU: So, we moved it anyway. In my cousin's case, she lived in Terminal Island. While they were moving, they moved certain things someplace else, somebody's house, the piano was gone by the time they came back for it. A lot of people lost everything. They plain looted. What can you say?

AR: In the schools at the camps, did you have desks and that kinds of stuff? Did you have chalkboards and books?

RU: Oh, yeah, yeah.

AR: You had all of that?

RU: At first, I think we had problem getting books and things, but they got those. I don't remember much about it because it wasn't much different. And we had school dances and things.

AR: You were a freshman. Did you have a boyfriend at camp? (laughs)

RU: No, I wasn't interested in boys. I didn't really like to dance either. I guess being young I didn't realize, when we were in high school, the boys, there was a lot of boys taking cooking class. And I thought, why are they taking cooking class? Boys taking cooking class? And I found out, you get to eat what you made. Do, it was segregated. Girls class and boys class.

AR: So, it wasn't to be around the girls. It was because of the food!

RU: I asked! "Well, we get to eat what we made." (laughs) That's another thing. The food \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible). I hated it.

AR: Oh, really? Was it a lot different than what you were used to?

RU: I had stomach problems. But, the biggest problem was after eating, I'd get the stomach cramps and dash down to the latrine, right? And they take that period to clean it. There I am running from one to the other, looking for one. That I remember very clearly. When I went to the relocation, the food was better. I think it's because they weren't cooking for so many. You understand?

AR: They were cooking for less—

RU: The blocks. You understand?

AR: There was a mess hall for each block.

RU: Yeah, you were not cooking for a thousand at a time.

AR: Oh, that would make a difference.

RU: I'm sure they had a problem with meat everywhere. Like lamb, what you call lamb when it's old? Mutton.

AR: Eww. That sounds yucky.

RU: To this day, egg foo young does not go over to well. Apparently, they had a whole lot of dry shrimp. I guess our chief cook was not very imaginative. Every block gets a certain amount, certain type of food, and if you have a good cook, he fixes it a way that would be different. Ours made egg foo young every lunchtime. You get to a point where—

AR: You don't want anymore.

RU: No.

AR: So, he wasn't very imaginative, then?

RU: No. And so, you think of that. You know what I'm getting at?

AR: Uh-huh.

RU: It really didn't taste that bad, but when you had it—

AR: Every day.

RU: Sometimes he would substitute it with frozen egg or something. But it just sort of—ug. Then we had one cook, there, he would try to say something. He'd give out chocolate and everyone could make chocolate milk. And also, he saved some potatoes, put them aside, and made some potato chips for us.

AR: Oh, really?

RU: Yeah. So, it depends on the cook, you see. I know that people in the country blocks so to say, shall we say.

AR: Oh, that lived in the country before they came?

RU: Because when you come in—like in Merced, you would go to a certain area. L.A. would, San Diego would—

AR: So, you stayed in the area?

RU: Yeah. The one Merced used to say, gee, the city blocks have better food. I think country people tend to be plain cooks, and I think that's what it was. So, it depends on the cook. A lot of us got the same amount of food.

AR: It's just how they prepared it.

RU: Prepared it, yes.

AR: Did you kitchen hop? If there was a good cook, would you go to that kitchen?

RU: We didn't do that, but sometimes friends would invite you. They didn't encourage that because every block had an allotment.

AR: You could be sneaky.

RU: I just stayed in my own block.

AR: Okay. What about the questionnaire they sent out? The loyalty stuff, question twenty-eight? You were too young for that?

RU: Okay, we were too young for that. My younger brother got one, and he filled it out. It got him in trouble.

AR: Did it?

RU: When he was drafted, they said, Hey, you filled out one of these. My brother said, "They gave it to me when I was fifteen years old. What do you think?" It was stated funny. How can you be loyal to—I didn't get one, but it was stated so that it was wrong either way.

AR: Either way, yes or no, it turned out wrong.

RU: Yeah. So, that was the biggest controversy.

AR: Yeah, there was no good way to say yes or no.

RU: That's right. (chuckles) How can you be loyal to a country like Japan when you don't know Japan? It was sort of written in such a way, how you answer it?

AR: I remember we read it for something in class. I remember thinking, You can't say yes and you can't say no. I remember thinking that, too. I thought it was weird.

RU: It didn't concern me. Now, I was at an age where—it was true, we didn't have anything. New clothes and stuff were hard to come, and we didn't have any gifts.

But, no one else did. Everyone was in the same boat so it wasn't so bad. You didn't give it much thought. I think the older people felt terrible because I had to worry about the future. Every day right? What classes we had, what grades going to be—immediate things. But the older people, even the seniors in school, what are they going to do when they get out of school? The future? A lot of them tried to relocate out east; that's what they did as soon as they could. Went out, got a job. Because you did get train fare.

AR: That's right.

RU: And so, you they'd give \$25, which doesn't seem like a lot.

AR: No, it doesn't.

RU: It was older people like my folks—my mother hadn't worked for years and years, except when she was in camp, she was a dishwasher. And poor thing, her hands were just eaten up by the soap, and she hadn't done anything like that. She was allergic to it. A lot of the women, when they came out, they worked in factories.

AR: Right.

RU: That's what they did.

AR: Did anyone that you knew go back to Japan when they had the opportunity?

RU: Yes, they did. During the war, my dad wrote and said—I told you he was in the \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) prison?

AR: Right.

[00:40:00]

RU: They were encouraging them to go back to Japan. They were told, you never going to get out of prison, so might as well go back to Japan. I heard that just recently from someone else. My dad never said anything. He wouldn't tell us anything about camp; they were very hush, hush. They wouldn't say anything.

AR: Really?

RU: Yeah. We were being used as prisoner exchange, so they wanted us to go back. And he said, Well, if the family is going to be separated, he didn't know for how long, he might as well go to Japan. But, we didn't want to go. My mother didn't want to go, so my mother and I went to see him Santa Fe. We talked to my dad, told him we didn't want to go. And so he told the government, he didn't want to go, that he was going to stay in the U.S. And what do you know? They said would he like to join

- us? I had friends that did go back, and they had a terrible time. The kids didn't have any say so.
- AR: The children, did they have language schools or anything?
- RU: Some of them didn't, no.
- AR: So, they went not knowing anything.
- RU: Some of them didn't go to Japan directly. They went to the Philippines, the South Sea Islands, out there, and some of them never made it to Japan. They were killed.
- AR: Oh, really?
- RU: Yeah. Someone told me recently that her father had been killed. Someone that I didn't know, but she came to me. But the younger children had a miserable time in Japan, because they said, Hey, you are not Japanese. You are Americans.
- AR: They didn't want to be there.
- RU: They didn't want to be there either. They were American, and they couldn't speak the language.
- AR: That would be hard, yes.
- RU: Yes, so they had a difficult time.
- AR: Did your friends ever come back here?
- RU: Oh, yeah, they came back, but they had a really bad time there.
- AR: That would be. What about Tule Lake, did you know anyone that had to go there?
- RU: No, I didn't know anybody that went there. But, see, people that went to Japan went to Tule Lake and then they went to Japan. They went from the East Coast. I always thought they didn't, but then I talked to somebody— I think they went to Tule Lake, and then *after the war* they went to Japan. I didn't know about that.
- AR: And the ones from Tule Lake that would go back to Japan, they left from the East Coast?
- RU: No, during the war. The ones from after the war went through Seattle. I said, "Seattle! I thought they all went from the East Coast." He says, "No. They went *after the war*." I didn't know about that. You learn something new every day.

AR: Let's see. Oh, after the war, when you guys came back, were you welcomed into the neighborhood?

RU: No, we didn't have any problems, because some of the neighbors we knew before.

AR: So, your community kind of went back to the same place?

RU: I mean, there were a lot of new people there, too, but there was some old ones. And I was busy anyway going to high school and doing other things.

AR: As a child, was it drastic? Did you get sad?

RU: No, no.

AR: Did you remember feeling, like, why?

RU: No, no, no. I don't remember feeling that way. I was just thinking about it today. We were talking about the \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) was dancing, only one time we were not allowed in. That was in Long Beach, I remember. But we didn't have any problems. In fact, I was thinking, some of the black people had problems.

AR: More than you?

RU: No, they wouldn't allow them in.

AR: Oh, they wouldn't at all?

RU: No. Because I remember anytime we saw them there—I didn't realize that—but anytime we saw them there is when we had a casino party, whatever it was, when they had a black orchestra, then they were allowed to come in. I didn't give it a thought. You understand? You weren't too familiar with things like that. We just thought of our discrimination and didn't think about the black discrimination.

AR: Right. Did you get any help from government resettling?

RU: No, no.

AR: Did they give you any money when you left the camp?

RU: Twenty-five dollars.

AR: Oh, everyone got \$25 when you left?

RU: Um-hm. Like we had a cousin who had a house, right?

AR: Um-hm.

RU: There must have been umpteen hundred people in there.

AR: I bet it was real crowded.

RU: But my husband and them, they owned a house, but the people wouldn't move out.

AR: Oh, really?

RU: They were paying \$35 a month for the rent in a three-bedroom house. Said they weren't going to move out.

AR: No, kidding?

RU: They went to the church. They stood on the floor of the church. A lot of people did that. I know my friend; she had guardians. The three of them worked in a home. I mean, she didn't have to work but her guardians worked in a big a home in and rented the \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) or something.

AR: Her guardians?

RU: Her parents were gone, but they were taking care of here there.

AR: These people, see, the wife, she cooked and cleaned the house, and the husband worked in the garden. But that didn't take all week, so he had some several days off. That's when he started gardening on his own. And when he started making more money gardening on his own, they were able to move out of that job and move out on their own. A lot of people did that. They needed a place to stay, right?

AR: Right.

RU: So, they worked in a home. Like we did. We worked as school girls and school boys.

AR: How long did you do that for?

RU: I didn't do it for very long. I did it for over half a year, and then my mother said I could come back home.

AR: Were you living at the home you were working at?

RU: Yeah, that's right. So, I was working for my board *and* room. But, it's hard. Like Sunday was my day off, but I had to do a lot of cleaning and stuff before I could leave and things like that.

AR: Yeah. Oh, do you ever go to any reunions or see people from camp?

- RU: Yeah, I only went to one reunion before. We are planning on another one.
- AR: Oh, really? So, you still keep in touch.
- RU: Um-hm. It will be in October.
- AR: October. Oh, that's pretty soon.
- RU: And there is going to be a big ten camp reunion in November at the L.A. Convention Center.
- AR: Oh, really?
- RU: You should come. It just shows all the camp happening and things.
- AR: That would be very neat. And that's in November?
- RU: November.
- AR: I wonder if my instructor knows about that?
- RU: We went to look at the campsite—
- AR: Oh, you've gone back since?
- RU: Just the cement foundation is there. The floor used to be covered with loose bricks. It's nice. You sweep the dust in-between the bricks, and it kept the house warm. The kids were all gone, but the foundation is there. My husband took umpteen hundred pictures and discovered he didn't have film in the camera!
- AR: Oh, no! So, he was at the same camp you were at?
- RU: Yeah.
- AR: Did you meet him there?
- RU: Um-hm.
- AR: Oh!
- RU: We weren't going around together. He was at the house every day; he came to see my brothers. We didn't like each other.
- AR: No? (laughs)
- RU: And I think that's about it.

AR: Oh, that was good. Let me see if there is anything I missed? We pretty much covered everything. Was there a lot of you to do in camp, like activities and stuff? Did you get bored?

[00:50:12]

RU: No, we didn't get bored. There were a lot of things going on in camp. Well, aside from school.

AR: Right, (chuckles) extra-curricular activities.

RU: Like my husband is a Boy Scout. His father was a Scout leader.

AR: Was that your husband that just walked by?

RU: Yeah. They were lucky. They used to get out and go camping outside—

AR: Oh, outside the camp.

RU: Actually, his father planned to clean up the Mesa Verde National Park. They'd go over there and clean it up.

AR: Oh, they would go *out* to clean up?

RU: Yes, things like that. And there was clubs, dances, and there would be movies.

AR: Like movies that were going on outside the camp, you got to see?

RU: Outside.

AR: Oh, that's good.

RU: Pretty old movies, however.

AR: Well, back then they worked, right?

RU: What?

AR: Not at that time, they weren't old? Were they?

RU: Some of them were pretty old.

AR: Were they? Oh.

RU: But, it wasn't *that* bad.

AR: Now, how often do you work here?

RU: Oh, I come here at least twice a week, and I stay all day. Sometimes I come in be more. Actually, Saturday we came for an Amache reunion meeting.

AR: Are you on the committee for that?

RU: Yeah. And Sunday I came to help because of the Nisei festival going on, but it was hot outside, so they didn't get the crowds.

AR: They were having it outside?

RU: Outside. Yeah, the thing was out there; I stayed inside.

AR: I would have, too. Definitely. And your husband comes with you?

RU: Yeah. In fact, he comes more often. It doesn't look like much, but they had to put this all up and he worked on it about three, four weeks, practically every day from about eight o'clock to nine, ten, eleven o'clock.

AR: Plus all the traffic going home.

RU: Yeah. So, he was working late every night.

AR: Well, I think we just about covered everything.

RU: Okay.

AR: Thanks for your interview.

RU: Um-hm. See that? (points to picture)

AR: What's that?

RU: That's me.

AR: Oh, that is? This is you? No, that's you. That's not you.

RU: That's me.

AR: No.

RU: Yes, it is.

AR: I guess it is. (laughs)

END OF INTERVIEW