

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Japanese American Oral History Project

An Oral History with TOKI ENDO

Interviewed

By

Alfred Brady

On May 14, 1994

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NARRATOR: TOKI ENDO

INTERVIEWER: Alfred Brady

DATE: May 14, 1994

LOCATION: Yorba Linda, California

PROJECT: Japanese American

AB: This is an interview with Toki Endo by Alfred Brady for the Japanese American Project of the Oral History Program at California State University at Fullerton. The interview is being held at the interviewee's home in Yorba Linda, California. The time of the interview is approximately at 1:30 p.m. The date of the interview is Saturday, May 14, 1994. Toki, to begin with, I'd like you to relate your personal background as an American of Japanese descent.

TE: I was born the twenty-first of January 1937 in Oakland, California. My father and mother were both Nisei. My father was born in Watsonville; my mother was born in Oakland. I have an older brother, Nori, three years older, and a younger brother by three years. His name is Kimbo. So, the three brothers are Sansei. Religion, we didn't have any particular religious preference, though we considered ourselves Christians. Education wise, I've got my bachelors of art from the University of Maryland in 1960, and I've got a master's in political science from Golden Gate University, which I got approximately in 1976. Presently, I am an assistant engineer at the Northrop B-2 Division in Pico Rivera. Previously, I spent twenty years in the military as a B-52 electronic warfare officer and retired in the first of March 1980, at which time I started working for Hughes Aircraft and went through a layoff there and then went to work for Northrop in 1986, where I'm presently employed. Does that about cover the—

AB: Yes, I think that's a good overview of your personal background. Next, I'd like you to relate your evacuation experience. I understand you were a young child at that particular time.

TE: Right, we were living in Salinas, California, and the only thing that I can remember back at that time was when we had to leave. We were being moved to the relocation center at the rodeo grounds in Salinas. I was playing outside on the sidewalk, and my brother grabbed me by the hand. And I remember I had a little metal Greyhound bus,

and he kicked he kicked it away and said, "We're leaving." And that's all I can remember. I can't remember how we got to the grounds or not. I do remember I came down with measles, and it was quite miserable. It wasn't like a very nice place—it was like a big camp—and I can't tell you for how long we stayed there while we were being processed. I do remember boarding a train and riding [for] it seemed like forever. We could not see out because the window shades were pulled down, and it was hot and miserable. And I remember sandwiches being given out, and mine, the meat was green. I asked my mom about it, and she merely took it and threw it away. And she gave me hers, which was, I guess, a little better.

Geez, it was hot though. And I remember—as in the book you showed me—getting off in the middle of a blazing—and what looked like a—desert. Actually, that's what it was. And riding buses into this place that was—this was camp Poston number two. I don't remember the block number, but it was rows of tarpaper shacks. Brand new wood—there was actually barbwire around there, fences, and guard towers, and I remember asking my mom if this was a prison cause that's all I could relate it to. I forget what she said. So, we were in Poston for just about a year. My dad was recruited by the OSS. Seems like my uncle from my mother's side happened to work for Commander Zacharias, and he was psychologist and psych warfare in the Navy Department at the time. I guess he used some pull to get my dad out because my dad was fluent in Japanese and was fluent in writing, and we ended up in Minneapolis for a year where he taught some group at the University of Minnesota. I don't know what he taught. I do remember about once a month being locked out of the downstairs area where the formal dining room was while some guests came over. My brothers and I were restricted to the second story. As I found out later, he was teaching psych warfare students or Army people, teaching them Japanese customs and so forth. And I think this particular group—never did say—but my mother thinks that they went with the invasion teams and were used as interrogators for prisoners and so forth in the Pacific campaign.

AB: If I could interrupt for a second, if we could backtrack?

TE: Sure.

AB: I believe you were saying you were living in Salinas at the time?

TE: Yes.

AB: The relocation center you were sent to, do you recall that it seemed like it might have been a racetrack? Could that have been the Tanforan center in the Bay Area?

TE: No, it was actually—the first assembly area was the Salinas Rodeo Grounds.

AB: Oh, I see.

TE: And then from there, we were trucked to the train station and offloaded, and as I recall—because later talking to my dad, the composition of the people, a lot of them

were from the Los Angeles area. There was a mixture. There was also some people from the Bay Area. So, it may have been a train as it came down the coast collecting different groups of people. So hard to say.

AB: How long were you and your family at the Poston II camp?

TE: About a year, as I recall. I can remember going through a summer and a winter, and it wasn't a very pleasant place. The things that come to mind was one: the heat. I remember my dad cutting a hole in the barrack's floor and then digging a hole in the ground beneath the barrack where he put cots where we can sleep during the summer to cool off. And I remember it was just totally dusty, barren. I got stung by a scorpion and had blood poisoning up one leg. I remember the camp zoologist or herpetologist who kept the rattlesnakes as talked about on the cartoon here. Two things that struck me that are my two most vivid memories was a Christmas dinner the first time in the camp and the mess hall served x number of people. I can't even begin to guess. But, for one Christmas, they called us all in to the dining hall, and I remember flowing by the tables. And here were these two beautiful chickens, big, just like it would if it were a turkey, with all the dressings. We filed by them and looked at them and went back out. I asked my mom about it, and she said it was the only two chickens they got for the whole group, so they had to make it like a traditional dinner. I think that was about noon because that evening, we had chicken rice soup for dinner.

The other thing I remember was my mother was very strict on manners and etiquette. One meal, my older brother—they gave us a hot dog and something else, but it was without a bun. He was trying to cut it, and it fell off his plate down on the floor. You weren't allowed seconds or anything, so I remember my brother looking up and asking my mom if he could eat it, and she said no. And I remember taking her hot dog and giving it to my brother, so all she had to eat that night was rice. So, I guess the strongest one of all of my family was my mother who put up with the most of it. My dad was elected a block leader for a group. He worked in this camouflage plant where they made camouflage—

[00:10:37]

AB: The nets?

TE: The nets, right. I remember I think it was twenty-five cents an hour or twenty-five cents a day. I remember standing by the whole fifty-gallon drum waiting for the Army trucks to come by and pick them up one cold morning, and everybody was standing around shivering. But, they had a movement there—I guess, it's the loyalty sign of the pledge versus not signing it.

AB: Um-hm. You're referring to the loyalty issue?

TE: Right. As far as I understand, there were two major camps. One was not the question of whether they were loyal or not, but it's why we should I, as an American citizen,

have to sign a piece of paper saying that I am loyal? And that was the big issue. And my dad thought it was no big deal. It's like signing your income tax forms that you didn't lie. If you were an honest person, it didn't make any difference. That was his attitude. I know it got him into some kinds of trouble—but he never talked about it—with the other men in the group. There was a very strong attitude about the differences—and I can agree with my dad, but yet, I would be angered, too. If you're an American citizen and had to sign annually saying, yes that you support the government, it becomes a little ridiculous. So, that is as much as I know about the awareness of the loyalty issue. I know the camp was divided. There was a lot of meetings my dad went to at nights. My mom had no problem signing it, even though she said it was stupid.

AB: I'd like to ask you once again, you were what age exactly during your years at Poston?

TE: Four to five years old. Let's see, we were evacuated in 1942, so '37, I was five.

AB: And I'd like to ask, are your parents still living?

TE: My father has passed away; my mother is still alive. And my two brothers are still living. One of the things I remember, now that you brought the cartoon book, was the swimming pool that the men dug there, the enormity of it. You can imagine a five year old seeing this giant hole being dug, and it was probably, I don't know, as big as this house or something. They had an island in the center with things that you can swim to. But, I also remember the water was brown, really brown. And I don't know why my mom insisted I take a shower when we came back from it.

The whole evacuation—like I said, we left the camp, people east of the Mississippi seemed to be unaware of it. Even driving through Arizona, my dad managed to get his car brought to him by the friend of the family who was the vice president, I think, of a bank where my dad had a lot of dealings within Salinas. He was quite amazed that people gave no question as to race or nationality, even during the height of the war. The people in Minneapolis, I never ran into any words of Jap or anything like that in my first grade class or whatever. So, it was totally surprising. It was like it was only happening on the West Coast. I know my aunt who lived in Washington D.C. was not evacuated.

AB: That's correct. Did you already mention the line of work your father was in prior to the evacuation?

TE: He was a druggist, a pharmacist. In fact, he was quite well-to-do. He owned several drug stores in Salina, a couple of laundries. He owned some prime property on the main street in Salinas. He owned three or four lettuce farms in the surrounding area, and he had an import/export business with his father who was a Japanese citizen. The strange thing was that when the war broke out, my aunt, my father's sister, had gone back to Japan with my grandfather, and they were both trapped there. My granddad and my aunt, during the war, were treated just as we were here in the United States,

so we had it going both ways. They were confined to their area of the house, they were looked on with suspension, and, to this day, my Aunt Toshi retains dual citizenship. She said she wasn't that smart at that time and didn't know what renouncing citizenship was. And since she was a woman, they never questioned her.

AB: Toki, since we're still at Poston, I also want to ask about the situation regarding your name.

TE: Oh, my actual spelling of my name my birth certificate is T-o-k-i-o, pronounced Tokio or Tokyo, and the city was pronounced the same way. So the O was dropped very early on in camp for my protection. My older brother is still Norio and Kimio, but I'm the only one without the O.

AB: Okay. You said that the family moved to Minneapolis where your father instructed psychological warfare to train the interrogators and interpreters?

TE: Right. He taught Japanese customs to the interrogators who were sent along with the invasion groups and so forth to interrogate prisoners that they caught.

AB: Did your father enter the military at that time?

TE: He was too old. My uncle, my father's brother did enter the 442nd. My Uncle Frank volunteered for the 442nd, went through Basic, and about that time that he finally got in they decided to have Japanese American officers, so he was sent to OSS camp. And, when he got out of OSS camp and finally became commissioned, the war had ended. My Uncle Frank was much younger than my father, so it was a little time before he was able to join up. But, he was living separately from us with young male internees. I think he was in high school there.

AB: At Poston?

TE: Right.

AB: Did moving to Minneapolis, did that represent a resumption of a normal life for your family, although in a new and strange area?

TE: I don't know if you can call it a resumption. I think a lot of us—well, when you're young, you're pretty resilient. Your mind tends to forget things and block them out. It was a change of life. It wasn't like anything we had known before. Because we were there, I'd say, less than a year—I do remember the winter and they were bitter cold; something I had never seen before. Then we had moved to Washington D.C. where my dad continued his work until the end of the war, and then he went to work as a pharmacist for a local chain drug store. I don't think you can say we resumed the life that we would have experienced back in Salinas with the wealth and the neighborhood we lived in because suddenly [we went] from very well-to-do to lower middle class. We lived in temporary housing called Calvert homes down near the

railroad tracks in Riverdale, Maryland—they were really shanties—until my dad could save enough money even to buy a home. So, I think it was very difficult to say a resumption of normal childhood or what life was like before.

[00:20:44]

AB: I take it you and your family never returned to Salinas or considered moving there?

TE: No, my father was devastated. He had no inclination to return to California. Though, I guess it was on my mother side, people were asking him to come back and return to Salinas. To him, he lost just about everything. The only thing the family retained was the title to the house and his liquor license from his liquor stores. That's right, he owned a couple liquor store, too. That was all he had; that was it. So, for him, there was nothing to—it was too hard to start again. He had no money to invest anymore. That was gone. Everything was just wiped out.

AB: If we could, at this point, I'd like to transition then to what we term as your Japanese American experience and ask about your personal feelings about the evacuation as a child or a youth, and any personal awareness of the Nisei military exploits during the war—you've already described the loyalty issue in the camp—any awareness you might have had of the legal challenges that were mounted at the time? Perhaps having learned about them later—and any personal understanding or awareness of the first compensation program that the federal government pursued in the early fifties? And finally, if you can sum up with any awareness or involvement with the redress movement that reached success during the 1980s? So again, your personal feelings about the evacuation and the Nisei military service and the attempts by Japanese Americans to challenge the system at the time.

TE: Well, let me go back: feelings about the evacuation. I can best describe it to you as two feelings: guilt and anger. Guilt—my older brother and I had discussed in high school, we had considered ourselves always a second-class citizen. So, we made a pact that we were going to prove to the people that we were good citizens, that we were loyal citizens, so we joined the military. My older brother turned down admission to the University of Maryland and John Hopkins Medical School to go fly in the Navy. I started graduate school in the hopes of going to law school, but then I turned that down and joined the Air Force. And we're both career people, still trying to prove that we are loyal citizens. Apparently, somebody must have believed us because I held such high security clearances, but it never left that satisfied myself that the guilt was over. The other anger I can best express to you—and I don't know how else to do it—when I was electronic warfare school in Sacramento, four of us decided to go to Monterey. We were all second lieutenants, and one of the fellows had a car. We were driving down there, and we had to go through Salinas. As soon as I hit the town boundaries, this unbelievable hatred just boiled from inside of me. A hatred at a town, what it did to my family; it ruined the health of my younger brother because he couldn't get adequate nutrition and medical attention. And I thought back to the time when my mom sacrificed, what it did to our family life, and it ruined my dad's

inclination to start again and chase his dream. But I still have those feelings. I can drive by 101 [freeway] in Salinas, but I would never want to go back there and live. And it may seemed strange to hate a physical town, but after all, I think that's where the hurt—I guess that's the best way to describe it, a real demoralizing hurt.

As a youngster, I really didn't know that much about the Nisei Americans fighting with the 442nd, except through my Uncle Frank was joining up. We would see gold stars in windows. We really didn't know what those were about. I truly didn't know what they did until when I happen to see a movie that my parents took me to, *Go for Broke!* [1951] with Van Johnson.

AB: I saw that—if I can interrupt for a second—just in the last six months. I happen to see that myself on TV. I found it quite fascinating the way it was made and the message that it, obviously, tried to get across. I found it quite realistic in many respects.

TE: Right.

AB: Why don't you discuss that film a little bit?

TE: Well, I saw it, and it didn't strike me—of course, I'm trying to remember when it came out. In the mid to late fifties?

AB: I thought early fifties.

TE: Early fifties. So, I think there was a bit of pride from it, seeing that the Japanese Americans had fought with valor and were very distinguished. Maybe that's what triggered my brother and I to keep proving we were good Americans. I don't remember that much of it, in the sense that it did anything really consciously for me. It made, I guess, some of my schoolmates aware that the Japanese were fighting on both sides, but that was about it, the exploits. And I wasn't aware of any of the legal challenges going on. I was thinking back after we settled in Washington D.C., overhearing my dad and my mom talking about some court cases that were still going on. No, I didn't know that much or could expand on anything about. And the article that you showed me of the speech, no, Nutsue Endo was not related, as far as I know.

AB: Okay.

TE: Unless, we went back historically, maybe about a thousand years. (chuckles)

AB: Okay.

[00:28:56]

TE: On the compensation movement, as I said, my dad was worth quite a bit of money at the time, yet he had to clear out and sell all his goods from the liquor store, his drug stores within ninety days. Anything he owned that could be accountable, farm

equipment, and so forth, from the lettuce ranches—a friend of the family was a vice president of a bank then and tried to help my dad out quite a bit. My dad got most of his business records and stored them in the garage in the house in Salinas. While we were in camp, vandals had broken in and just desecrated the garage. The bank vice president tried to save as much as he could. I think my dad came up with about a total of \$5,000 worth of bill of records of goods, and that was about it. The rest was totally crashed. Even the vice president said it was a wonder the house wasn't burned down.

After we'd settled in Washington, this compensation was going on by Congress. My dad had to appear at several meetings and things—oh, by the way, the import/export business was confiscated by Japan, so all the assets were frozen till after the war, any kind of monetary assets that were in the bank here. And since my grandfather had laid claim to them, or the Japanese government, then he passed away, I don't know what happened to him. But, my father went to many of these Congressional hearings. He got the friend who was, now, the president of the bank in Salinas to write letters, and the gentleman was even going to come out and testify on my dad's behalf. My mother estimated, probably, in today's terms of a land property and stuff, my dad was worth several million dollars. He lost the property in Salinas, and they had a neat trick. They would send him notices to clean up the lots, but they couldn't find anybody to clean up the lots. So, the city condemned the property, put a lien on it, sold off. Like I said, the only thing we came out with was title to the house, which was sold about six or eight years ago, finally. Let's see, his liquor license, which he sold in 1950 whatever. So, from Congress, I think he got back about \$400, and they were monthly installments spread over a couple of years. So, monetarily, it didn't do that much for the family.

AB: If we could, I'd like to pause and check the tape.

TE: Sure.

[recording paused]

AB: And we're resuming.

TE: The only other thing on the compensation movement with my dad, I know the effect on him was an overwhelming bitterness and loss of faith in the government and quote the legal system at that time, and I think that's what really killed off any motivation of him returning to California and starting over again. The question of why? It can happen again. So, I think he was just content to be a pharmacist working in a chain drug store, which he did until he retired.

In the area of the redress movement, I had heard things through the grapevine, reading papers, but I wasn't actively involved in it. My mother did call me a couple of times and tell me that there were representatives and Senator Inouye of Hawaii was fostering some kind of movement. I didn't partake of any of the meetings. Since I, too, had totally lost faith in the American government and the system in that respect that it would never get through. Though I was never pulled actively to participate or

anything nor did I volunteer. Then I had read in the papers that the movement had passed, so my mother contacted me and said that she was given a form through some friends of hers in the Washington D.C. area. She filled out the names of her three sons on there, and, by that time, my dad had passed away so he never saw the fruits of his labors or whatever. So, I filled out the necessary forms. Well, the Department of Justice sent me a form, and I filled it out, as I remember, and sent it back. Didn't think anything of it. I think it was 1992 that I finally received the check and the apology signed by President Bush. So, I just took the money and reinvested in an automobile, back into the American society. (chuckles) So, we used the money. Certainly, I don't think there is anybody—unless you're a multi-millionaire—that said they can't use the money. I know some people did donate it, turned it down, returned it.

But, my mother was very stoic about it, this whole evacuation. She said, "The thing is, if it had never happened, you'd have been driving new Ford convertibles, hanging around the streets and everything, just getting into a lot of trouble." She said, "Now that you had to earn your own education"—because my parents couldn't really afford to pay for my college tuition or anything. It all went to my older brother, which was a Japanese tradition at the time—"you appreciate your degree much more." And I guess that's true, but my answer was always, "Come on, Mom, I wanted to taste the good life one time." I guess, maybe that's what I miss most. (chuckles)

AB: I'd like to return later on to your personal feelings regarding the redress action by the government. But, just to conclude this, your father, you said, had passed away, but was your mother and your brothers also recipients of the redress?

TE: Yes, my mother was one of the first in the group. I remember they had a picture of President Bush awarding this lady a check, and my mother made the comment when I was talking to her on the telephone about it. She said, "Well, geez, why couldn't that have been me? You know, I got my check first." (chuckles) That was that little bit of jealousy of meeting the president.

AB: To go onto another topic, since you were a career Air Force flyer, will you recount your military experience? In particular, the event I've been told of regarding your downing of the B-52 you served in, which I assume was Vietnam War episode.

TE: Right. I joined the Air Force during the summer of 1960. I went through officer training school, and was commissioned in March of 1961. I subsequently went to navigator school in Waco, Texas, and then on to electronic warfare school in Sacramento. The tour in Sacramento was my first return, for any length of time, after the relocation. I sort of looked at it with trepidation. I didn't know what to expect, and I found out people are just people. It didn't matter. That was something that happened in the past, and California seemed to be looking to the future. From there, I was in electronic warfare school, and I served in B-52s. My first assignment was for six years in Columbus, Mississippi, which, during that time, I kept asking the Air

Force to send me back to the United States. (chuckles) I had never seen anything like that, and I always feared discrimination.

Let me backtrack a little bit in the areas of discrimination. I ran into discrimination when we were living on the East Coast. Of course, they had the black segregation going on. I wasn't aware of that; it never dawned on me. I was having too much fun living the good life as a teenager. And then, when I went to the University of Maryland, I tried to join a fraternity and was prevented because of my race. And that was the first time I ran into personal discrimination, which was eye-opening and stunning.

I found out in the military that there wasn't that much discrimination, but a funny thing happened to me. When I was reporting to Columbus, Mississippi, I drove from Sacramento. I stopped in Texas, Corpus Christi, where my brother was a flight instructor with the Navy, and I had to drive there to Mississippi. Well, when I left Texas, I crossed the Louisiana state line, and I had to get gas. And I stopped and got gas and was going to use the bathroom. When I walked around the back and here was this White and Colored. I looked at that didn't know what to do. So, I went back and I asked this gas station attendant—obviously a redneck—and he looked at me and says, "Boy, you ain't a nigger, are you?" "No, I'm Japanese." He says, "Well, let me tell you. When you're down here in this country, you use the White." And I looked at that, and I said, "My God, what a strange country I'm in." So, I drove straight through from this western Louisiana town to Columbus, Mississippi, to the base without stopping. I didn't want to go through that, and it was so startling that I didn't leave the base for the first six months because I didn't know what kind of people lived out there. After I got to know the people, they were very nice. In fact, I rented a room from a Jewish person in a small town north of the base called Aberdeen, Mississippi. And what impressed me about the town was, it was formed on, like a peninsula of the form of the Tombigbee River, and there is a bridge on both sides, south and north. And there is a sign that said, Klu Klux Klan, Keep Out.

[00:41:44]

AB: Interesting, very interesting.

TE: Yeah. And the Jewish landlord used to just laugh. Whenever Gator and I rented apartments from him, he would have us over for dinner and so forth, and he would tell us the latest things. "You know, they just asked me to join the White Citizens Council." So, it was a very strange experience, I went through the civil movement when blacks got the rights to vote. I watched college students from the North come down, and I had a maid who used to come in, very nice lady, just really nice. She didn't show up for work for a couple weeks, and I got worried so I drove down her shantytown where it was. I asked for her, found her house, and went to inquire as to her health and if she was okay. And said, "Oh, no, Mr. Toki, haven't you heard? The civil rights movements passed. I don't have to work anymore." I said, "Well, where did you learn that?" She said, "That's what those White folk in the North told us." So, I set about trying to straighten her out, and I never did straighten her out. She

never came to work again. She was probably one of the wealthiest ladies in town. Anyway, I've seen this discrimination thing from many sides. Very interesting.

Oh, back to my story. Well, we were in Columbus, Mississippi. Our squadron was deployed starting in 1965 to fly bombing missions in support in Vietnam. We flew out of Guam, Okinawa, and Thailand.

AB: And these were B-52s, correct?

TE: Correct, both the F and the D models. July 7, 1967 we were in a cell of three aircraft; we were number two. The current general in charge of the division on Guam was flying his last sortie before returning stateside to another assignment, and it was a so-called milk run. It was off the end of the Bong Suoi Woods. It was off the coast of Southern Vietnam, I would guess, maybe, forty miles from Saigon. One of the turns we had to do from the pre-initial point to initial point of the bomb run, we had to make about a 110 degree turn. It was pretty tight turn. We were flying over what they call the VFR formation. Three B-52s, the two were stacked off either wing down ten feet, aft about twenty feet. You have a monstrous aircraft like that flying, in essence, fighter tactics, slow responding airplane, and we were being directed by a ground site. And the ground site lost Red One's beacon just before the turn. He asked us, number two, to switch positions. So, our pilot dropped down and aft in the turn. And number one, was supposed to climb up, drop aft, cross over to our right, and then descend, and we were supposed to take the lead position. Something happened in the middle of this turn. We were probably in the middle of a thirty degree back angle, and later, the Red One pilot said when he rolled out of the turn to look for us because he lost us visually. His left wing cut our tail off completely. A crew from Columbus was number three. They had dropped back to change who was flying the aircraft—at the time, the co-pilot was flying the aircraft—and they saw our collision. So, our aircraft flew on a little while without its tail, five seconds or so with fire coming out, and we just disappeared in a fireball. They didn't think anybody could live through that. We probably had, let's see, probably, about 110,000 pounds of fuel on board, plus about 60,000 pounds of bombs.

And I remember feeling a slight bump, and, all of a sudden, this horrendous force being thrown to the right. I was sitting back there in the EW compartment thinking, Oh, my gosh, they stalled it ou, and waiting for them to recover the aircraft. And then I heard a voice saying, "Oughta bail out! We oughta bailout!" And then, there was this tremendous, like, decompression. And I thought, My, god, it must be bad. The navigator is gone. So, I ejected. I remember tumbling around the air and then the chute opening, looking up, and there were fiber glass panels from the aircraft flying by. There was slow debris going everywhere. And ah, I looked down—[audio skips] that was all I saw.

As I was floating down, noticed my arm was numb. So, I looked down my right arm, there was a dark stain on the flight suit. And then, I rolled my arm a little bit, and I could see some hole in my elbow. And I thought, Boy, I better take care of this when I get in the raft.

Anyway, I remembered everything from survival school: getting out of the chute, I inflated the life raft, separated the seat pack, got into the life raft. And we

were there, probably, I guess, anywhere from thirty minutes to an hour. One-o-six flew by, saw me and I waved my hands at him. He wagged his wings. A little while later, I saw a jolly green, which I think is CH-43 helicopter coming out. While he dropped the sling, a horse collar sling, and I had to get out of the raft to get it. I was hanging on to it the best I could with the left hand because my right arm, I really couldn't feel anything. He started dragging me through the water. And I thought, This son of a gun is drowning me. He probably think I'm VC. And so, I started cursing at him with every dirty word I knew. I don't know if he heard me or not or whether he was trying to get away from the life raft, but they finally hauled me up. They got me on board, picked up the pilot, co-pilot of Red One, the lead plane. And both of them were sort of in shock. Then they picked up my co-pilot, but his arm was really sliced open. And, as it turned out, it was a Marine supply chopper, so there wasn't a paramedic on board, and I saw Dean going into shock. I don't know what you do—it must be adrenaline—but you start doing things that you never thought possible. I screamed at the crew chief for first aid kit. He gave me one of these little onboard military kits. So, I broke it open, and I looked at Dean's arm. It was just like a filet, and I could see his bones in there. I broke one of the sulfur packs, packed his arm up, slapped his flesh back, and wrapped it up in bandages. Dean outweighed me about forty pounds, but somehow I dragged him back into the compartment where the exhaust duct that supplies heat to the cargo compartment. It gives a little bit of heat because he was really going into shock. I grabbed some flak jackets, wrapped him in it, got his feet up, and held on to him until they dropped him at Vung Tao. They wouldn't let me stay there with him.

They took me on to Saigon. I went through some first aid there in the Army place. I was being wheeled out in a wheelchair. I remember this Army major came up, gray hair. She's probably been with the Army Nurse Corps quite some time. And along with me were the pilot and co-pilot of the other plane; they were on a wheelchair. And the major started asking me all these questions about how you feel, what happened, and so forth. She finally stopped and looked over the pilot and co-pilot—of the other crew—and said, "Does he speak English?" And I looked at her, and I said, "Ma'am, on occasion, I've been known to." And I remember she just put her hands over her mouth and just raced off. And here I was wearing a U.S. Air Force flight suit and everything, with the ranks on it. I thought, Geez, these people are really strange around here. And even stranger, yet, were the Vietnamese. They were just watching me like some kind of strange animal. (chuckles)

[00:52:11]

- AB: Perhaps you want to—were there any other unique events during your Vietnam tour that you want to recount, or do you want to describe the remainder of your active duty?
- TE: One funny thing that hit me, when we were stationed in Thailand—I really enjoyed Thailand, and the people were so nice. Yet, when I would go with my crew—they were all Caucasian—we'd go into a local Thai restaurant, and they would hand me a menu in Japanese. So, they must have thought I was some rich businessman from

Japan or something, but that really got to me. So, I was grounded, for a little, medically, got back into the flying status. I missed the raid in North Vietnam or Hanoi. I had just rotated back from another five months there, so I missed that one. No, wait a minute, I was doing flight instructing at Beale Air Force base for people who were transitioning out of the F models at Castle Air Force Base into the G models. That's when we went through a reconstitution for generating nuclear sorties for some reason, and that's when our group came home.

Then I finished up at Mather—let me back up, in 1969 our base was closed, and for people that had over five hundred days of support of South East Asia, five hundred days over there, you were given your choice of assignments. So, I decided to go back to Mather, and I transferred there in 1969. And then, in 1970 and '71, I was sent back, again, flying more missions except in G models this time, so I ended up with about nine hundred days support of South East Asia. I left Mather and went to Castle in 1974 and served as a flight instructor, flight examiner, and became chief of their training device section where we had flight simulators for boom operators, gunners, KC-135 pilots and navigators, B-52 pilots. And, as it turned out, all through my career, I was an electronic warfare officer and that was considered discrimination professionally in the Air Force. If you weren't a pilot, you don't get promoted. I was the only electronic warfare officer who had B-52 instructor pilots and KC-135 instructor pilots and navigators all serving under me, so quite an experience. Plus, I had civilian employees, so I had pretty close, to fifty officer, enlisted, and civilian employees. That's when—my daughter was born in 1980, and I had the choice of either staying in or getting out. Financially, I didn't know what I would accomplish by staying in, even though I had a sponsor who subsequently became a four-star general. He wanted me to stay in, and it was a tough decision to make. But, I opted to go ahead and get out and started in private industry because I figured, in six years, what am I going to be worth outside? What am I gaining?

[recording paused]

AB: We're resuming.

TE: One incident did happen that racial discrimination popped into it. At the time, I think I was lieutenant colonel—maybe I was a major—and there was a younger captain who pulled an inspection, an operational readiness inspection operation. He wrote up a discrepancy that was an error. And I protested. This person's retort was, "What are you? Some kind of over achieving Asian? You got to be right all the time?" And that got to me.

AB: This was also an Air Force officer?

TE: Right. So, I talked to my wife about it because I didn't know what to do. I finally went to the vice wing commander, who eventually became a four-star, and he wanted to go after him because he said, "We cannot tolerate that kind of attitude in the military." And he wanted me to write a formal complaint because they were going to take him out—I don't know, press court martial charges. So, I began to wonder

whether it was worth that kind of retribution, to ruin a person's career that, maybe, emotionally wasn't quite right or had a tough day or whatever. So, I elected not to pursue through legal grounds. The vice wing commander did speak to the colonel in charge of inspection group, took him aside, told him what happened, and told him that if Toki wasn't an officer and a gentleman, that guy would be out in his ear right now. And he told the colonel in charge, he says, "If that guy ever shows up in this base again, I, myself, will formally press charges." I never knew what happened to that person. Hopefully, he learned from it and didn't hold anything against me. I don't even know where he was from, whether he was from Los Angeles, from Iowa, I don't know. Maybe he had experiences with over achieving Asians that ticked him off early in his career. I don't know. (chuckles)

AB: So, Toki, you retired—

TE: March of 1980.

AB: After how many years of service?

TE: Twenty years.

AB: Since your retirement, obviously, you went into the civilian private sector employment.

TE: Right.

AB: Do you participate in any veterans organization type activities or other retired military activities?

TE: No, I don't. I did for a while, that is joined the associations, but I never attended any chapter meetings. Though, close friends of mine at work that I also served with have been always after me to come out, but I just don't seem to have time to do it. It takes an awful lot of time.

[00:59:43]

AB: I'd like to turn to your civilian experience following your retirement from the Air Force. Will you describe your professional and personal life and continue into your personal as a civilian, talk about your social and political views, and philosophy? I'd like to learn if you participate or have participated in any Japanese American citizens organizations. I'd like to also have you discuss your awareness—whatever level it may have been—regarding the Federal Commission and Wartime Relocation and Internment of civilians, which, you may know, held meetings during the early 1980s, and eventually issued an official report on the wartime evacuation entitled *Personal Justice Denied* which turned out to be the foundation for the redress bill and subsequent action by the government. And sum up this topic with any knowledge that you may have had at the time of the formal redress bill proceeding through

Congress and the law which resulted in public law and redress action during the Bush Administration. I know that's a lot of sub-topics, but just—

TE: Okay. (chuckles) Let's see. When I retired from the Air Force, I was stationed in Castle Air Force Base up in Merced, and I was offered a job by Hughes Aircraft Company primarily working in their support system group working with trainers, that is developing them, helping design them. And so, when I accepted the job, my wife and I came down to Southern California from the San Joaquin Valley, and we went through cultural shock. I mean, the price of houses and so forth and all. It was just, we thought, beyond us. I had a friend that was working at Hughes Aircraft, and I stayed with him. He was the one that picked out this area because he was living in Simi Valley at the time. The support systems group was off Century Boulevard near the airport, LAX, and they were moving to Long Beach, the intersection of Long Beach and the 405. So, there was some relocation going on for employees who presently owned homes in the area.

That's when we purchased out here, I guess it was in July of 1981, and have been here since. And while I was at Hughes, we went through some periods of layoffs, and I was on loan to a ground systems group in Fullerton working on a Navy project. The Navy cancelled the project, and my program manager, at the time, knew what was going on and gave us all a heads up to go out and start looking for positions to allow us time to transition. So, I got laid off and during the time, had been accepted by Northup Aircraft in the B-2 division in 1986. I was working in aircrew training, and about a year later, transferred to systems engineering where I've been since. I think the family, for a while, didn't even know what I was working on because I couldn't tell them anything because it was black program. It's hard work. I enjoy it. Trying to put better weapon systems in the military's hands, the users. I remember many times sitting in my crew compartment in my electronic warfare years wondering why they designed it like that. You know? And I thought, Geez, maybe it's easier to modify the electronic warfare officer; put four hands on him, four arms, instead of more knobs to twist. So, that's the part I enjoy of it.

Socially, I guess, we are like any other Orange County people. The daughter is quite active in sports, so we're travelling quite a bit with the sports. My political views, I guess you could say I'm a conservative Republican. I took my undergraduate studies, when I finally decided which way to go, the University of Maryland was political science. So, I did study a lot of science, and being that close to the seed of government, you got to see a lot of things going on. And on the evacuation, that's when I first discovered that it was the result of special interest groups. And this was in the 1960s. The professor I had at the time was one of the—I can't even remember his name, now, but one of the participants in a study to determine the cause of the evacuation, and that's when I really became aware of special interest politics. He used to hold that evacuation up as a classic example.

AB: And this was at the University of Maryland?

TE: Yes. And I can't remember the professor's name, but he was instrumental. And the course I took was special interest politics. He subscribed to the fact that it was

special interest both in farming, because the local farmers could not compete with the Japanese farmers at the time and the jealousy—gee, that was 1959, 1960. So when you talk about political views, I can see special interest groups at work. Let's face it, the redress action was a result of a special interest group. Gun lobbying, things like this so it's prevalent, and I'm sorry but it's a way of life.

AB: So, you've described yourself as a typical Orange Countyan inclined toward conservative—

TE: Law and order.

AB: As a tangent to this, do you participate in any Japanese American organizations?

TE: No. I think my philosophy is that one, physically, we're very difficult to disappear into the American melting pot, physical attributes. The clannishness that the Japanese exhibited prior to World War II, being very clannish together, I guess, there was a reason, too, because loneliness, the alienness of the American society or the culture, but that tended to help them make them a focal point. And I think unless you get out and mingle with the rest of the world, you're never going to find out about other people. And that's why I enjoy—like at work, I work with blacks, Mexican Americans, Irish, Polish, German, Japanese, Chinese. We seem to be a vast melting pot, a mini-America, and we don't have a lot of people clanning around together. I think that makes for a better interchange of ideas. That's why I tend to avoid belonging to a Japanese American Citizens League and so forth.

[recording paused]

AB: I'd like to ask next when and how you became aware—if you did—during the early eighties, of the commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, the report, which they issued, and I've given you a copy of the five-page recommendation of that report. The overall official report was entitled, *Personal Justice Denied*, and I've asked you to look over the five recommendations and comment on them. As I'm sure you can tell from reading them, they translated almost directly into the actual subsequent redress bill, public law and redress activities that took place under the Bush Administration.

TE: I had heard some of this was going on, but I just dismissed it, again, to typical bureaucracy where a commission report is going to be buried someplace in the Congressional records, merely addressed and laughed off. So, I really never paid it any attention. As you can tell, I kind of lost my faith in government (chuckles) all because of bureaucracy. It's seems to me that they did come up with some pretty good rules. I am especially interested in one the people who were actively serving honorably in the military and booted out. Certainly, they should have received veteran benefits, rather than lose any entitlements. Some of these people may have been put in eighteen, nineteen years, and you really have to go to twenty years before you're eligible for retirement.

[01:00:43]

AB: Yeah, that took place starting almost immediately because I understand it after Pearl Harbor, and presumably continued up until there was a change of policy under which the 442nd, for example, was formed. There was sort of that period of limbo in which many Japanese American military received the less than honorable discharges.

TE: Right, and I can understand their bitterness. Yeah, that could have been. I'm not saying it's impossible of counter espionage activity. Maybe I've read too many James Bonds, but I won't close my mind to it. But, for the person that was honest, doing their job, and dedicated to have that happen, I can certainly understand the bitterness and disappointment. I especially like the part where Congress established upon a special foundation to re-educate the public because I think this is only the start. There's a lot of other people who were denied, especially the American Indians. I mean, that is the worst example. And I think a lot has to be done in that area. There's still a lot, and I wish justice could be brought to them, you know? Or some apology, or at least, something to recognize that they were the Native Americans. So, I think that's the great thing—and the Native Alaskans. So, I hope that that foundation is used for a good purpose and perpetrated.

AB: You might find it interesting—if I interject an observation—during this semester in talking to colleagues and friends, I discovered that of those people with enough education or curiosity to know about the evacuation situation, almost always, when they offer their two-cents worth on it, I find that their view is that the worse outrage ever perpetrated in this country was the genocide of the Native Americans.

TE: Um-hm.

AB: Number two, these persons usually ranked the kidnapping and enslavement of African people in this country. And third, they almost always refer to the Japanese American evacuation and facility.

TE: Um-hm.

AB: And that seems to be the hierarchy of consciousness of the average American person who is aware of these issues.

TE: Yeah, and you begin to wonder, too, Congressionally, were they motivated to single out the Japanese group because, really, when you talk about the one-time tax free payment of \$20,000—and they put down there that the estimates were, perhaps, sixty thousand left survivors. And, if you look at the Native Americans and Black Africans, certainly their population is much larger. So, you wonder whether it was politically motivated or not. It's easy to squash one group, sweep them under the rug and keep them quiet. I still think that all true social conscience, the United States government does have to look at the Black African American and the Native American Indian. It's only justice. It's only right.

AB: So, even though you said that you tended to come from the direction of what could be termed conservative republicanism vis-à-vis, personal politics, you see no conflict? And I think this will bear toward the latter part of the interview regarding the positions we'll be discussing on the part of a very conservative *Orange County Register*.

TE: Right.

AB: But you see, as a conservative, no conflict with what could be termed social conscience type corrective action by the government—

TE: Um—

AB: —in extending the same type of concept of apology, redress, however formal you want to consider it, to also the Native Americans and African Americans.

TE: Yeah, but I don't know how they would handle that because for one thing, as I recall after the Civil War—I'm trying to go back in time in political science—where the slaves were offered the opportunity to return to Africa? The decedents of the slaves at that time started up, what was it? Monrovia?

AB: Yeah, Liberia.

TE: Liberia. And it was a matter of exercised choice then. Now, I don't know how they would treat that because—and I don't know how well the opportunity was broadcast. How it was done in that vein. Was it just put you on a boat, send you back, and forget it? Not helping re-start a community? So, I don't know what all of the plans were. I don't know how it was publicized. I don't know how well it was explained. So, I think that would be a very difficult situation that one would really have to do some research. It's the same question of why was I evacuated? I didn't ask to be born this color or heritage, but I got evacuated. Now, you could argue the same point with a black person today. Well, I didn't ask to be born this way. I would rather be in Africa. So, I don't know how one tends to balance that. Native American Indians, how do you go back in time to readdress the lands that they owned? All of it? What kinds of lands that you gave them in return, what was the just value. I just don't know. I think it's an issue that's too big. There are too many variables to handle. I certainly think it needs looking into. I don't think that's—when I say conservative political thinking, I tend to be liberal in some areas, conservative in others.

AB: Well, in that regard, maybe we should press on to if you would recount your personal redress experience. You provided a copy of the apology letter. Would you like to outline or go into any detail you want as to your personal feelings and opinions during the actual event when you received redress? And then, perhaps, we'll go on and examine the *Orange County Register*'s position on all of these issues over the last fifty years.

TE: On the redress, like I told you before, I had no faith in it. I figured it would get beaten in Congress, so it came as a total surprise. I don't know what to make of the letter that we see here on the coffee table. It's something that my kids ought to save, and maybe in time they can tell me what it means. (chuckles) It's like your whole life has been changed. Let's say a burglar breaks into to house, chops off your arm. All right, you live. And he says, "I'm sorry, here's \$20,000 bucks." So, how do you treat that? Each individual person is going to treat it differently. One is going to think, my life is totally ruined. Another is going to say, Oh, well, I guess I have to start again. Another is just going to be ambivalent, not know what to do. So, I tend to look more toward the, What does it really mean?

AB: So, you were initially skeptical?

TE: Right.

[01:10:00]

AB: Did you feel any satisfaction or gratification when you, personally, received redress?

TE: Momentarily, I did. When I read the letter. And the more I thought about it was, It's just a piece paper. You know? And I put the same case to you. If the burglar wrote you a letter and somebody signed it for him, or stamped it and said, "Here, I'm sorry." Or the governor wrote you a letter and says, "Hey, I'm sorry," yeah, you're momentarily enthused, but then as you start thinking about it. What does it really mean?

AB: Mind if we take a short break?

TE: No.

[recording paused]

AB: Okay, Toki, resuming again. I'd like to move on to the final topic or issue of the interview, which involves the press. That is the published opinions of the *Orange County Register*, formally the *Santa Ana Register*, on three great issues. Two of them are wartime issues, and those, of course, were the issues of evacuation and then relocation. In the case of relocation, it was the actual return of former Orange County Japanese American to their homes here, and then, forty odd years later, the position of the *Register* on the great issue of redress. Since you were not an Orange County resident until about 1981, I'll briefly describe the paper's position. It's generally agreed, and the paper would insist itself, that it's a conservative political newspaper. To the point, that some of the staff members consider the *Register* a libertarian publication. The paper was owned and published—during wartime—in 1941 and '42 by Raymond Hoiles. And from studies done already by students at Cal State Fullerton, it's been documented that Raymond Hoiles and his newspaper was the only one to oppose, consistently, the evacuation on political grounds of the Japanese

American citizens. They were, similarly, the most steadfast in supporting the quick relocation, and, in fact, return to their original homes in Orange County of evacuated Japanese Americans. This position was summed up in an editorial by R.C. Hoiles that was published in the *Register* in December of 1942. And I'm going to read it and then ask for your personal reaction to that from your personal point of view as a Japanese American and as a conservative person, and Orange County resident. And this was the key quotation in the editorial, *It would profit us little to achieve a military victory over the forces of totalitarianism, if in victory, we become totalitarians ourselves.* This reflects the *Register*'s position that the real issue of evacuation was the suspension of the United States Constitution in the abrogation of the civil rights of American citizens who happen to be of Japanese descent. And I welcome your views and your reaction to this.

TE: I think I'd have to concur with that line of thought because, after all, it's the constitution which begets our law, starts it all off. Now, if we violate the constitution, what good is the document? It must be upheld. You know, it's a choice of moral right versus wrong, so I have to totally agree. Again, I remember talking about the special interest groups. If we allow the special interest groups to abrogate other individuals or groups who have been given that legal right by the constitution, what good is the constitution? So, that's my thoughts on that one.

AB: And you're speaking from the perspective of a conservative, politically enlightened person, I would assume? And, if I know conflict with what would be considered, to at least in your mind, conservative political philosophy?

TE: Well, I wouldn't classify myself conservative political philosophy. Let's say that I've been around a little bit more. I remember a test I took in political science on constitutional law, and the question was: State your case of majority will versus minority rights. Okay, now, that is a very loaded question. If I interpret conservatism correctly, it's majority rule. The majority will and the minority behind. Now, I think you have to temper that. In most cases, that's true; in other cases, there's always the exception. I have to categorize myself as, yes, a conservative a lot of times but tempered with what's really going on. So, I can't follow the hard conservative line.

AB: So, you're—

TE: Flexible.

AB: Flexible conservative.

TE: Right. (chuckles)

AB: Okay, Toki, next, we described and you reacted to the position that the *Register* took consistently during the wartime period. Forty-five, approximately, years later, at the point of which it became apparent that the imminent success of the redress move was apparent, the *Register* made another official editorial statement. I'm going to read

this on to the tape for the benefit of the future students of the interview. This editorial was published in what is now known as the *Orange County Register* on September 27, 1987 and it was entitled, "Flawed Compensation."

Last Thursday on the 200th anniversary of the signing of the constitution, the House passed a flawed effort to make amends for a shameful wholesale violation of constitution rights [off] the internment of 110,000 Japanese American in special camps during World War II. Certainly, it is appropriate for the U.S. government to issue a belated apology to those whose rights were abused. Whether that apology should include monetary compensation is a more troublesome question. In February 1942, ten weeks after Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt issued an executive order creating a program to round up Japanese Americans, both native and born citizens and resident aliens, living on the West Coast and move them to internment camps up to periods up to three-and-a-half years. No charges were filed, and there was no semblance of due process. Many homes and possessions were confiscated or left in unscrupulous hands. While there may have been some evidence of insipient fifth column activity among some Japanese Americans, this wholesale uprooting of people on the basis of ethnic origins was utterly unjustified, the result of war hysteria and exaggerated fears. Depriving innocent people of their home and their liberty is an outrage whether the relocation were torture chambers or country clubs. House resolution 442—as an aside, you might notice the number assigned to the redress resolution.

TE: Right.

AB: *House resolution 442 is an attempt at redress. It includes a proposal to compensate each interned person with \$20,000. The total bill is expected to be one and a quarter billion dollar. Is this an appropriate remedy? The Fifth Amendment requires that property shall not be taken for public use without due process and fair compensation. Certainly, some Japanese Americans lost more than \$20,000 in property without due process, let alone, the incalculable value of loss of freedom and interruption of lives. But not all losses were identical. The House rejected an amendment for variable compensation based on how long a person was detained in the camps and his age at the time. That would have been, marginally, more fair than either approach makes a more serious attempt to deal with individuals as individuals. Ironically, lumping all detainees together represents the kind of group thing that contributed to the injustice of the original internment program.*

Here's a further irony. The internment program was a gross injustice perpetrated against innocent people. The compensation program requires that money be extracted by unjust force (through taxes) from other innocent people. Those most responsible for the outrage were a relatively small and easily identifiable group of government officials. Justice and deterrence would have been better served if Congress and the courts had permitted them to be sued and held personally responsible for their actions many years ago. The present bill tells government officials, "You better not violate individual right and liberties because, if you do, we may scold you severely and sock it to the tax payers forty-five years later." Some deterrent. The best protection against future outrages cannot be bought at any price.

We need more respect for individual rights by government officials, and we need more principled people with the courage and determination to criticize the violations of rights. Even, and especially, in difficult times. Even, and especially, when the targets are unpopular. Even, or especially, when friends and neighbors think you're eccentric or unpatriotic. Freedom isn't free. It's priceless.

And this was the *Registers* official opinion on the redress program, and I invite your reaction to it as a *Register* subscriber and as a recipient of redress enacted by the government.

[01:21:37]

TE: On the whole, I agree with the concept, but I think their thinking is flawed because, obviously, the writer has never heard of the rule of estoppel, which the government has used historically in constitutional laws since what? John Jay?

AB: John Jay.

TE: So, until you get rid of the rule of estoppel, you'll never be able to do what this article wishes it to do. And there's prime examples today. It doesn't even have to do with the redress. Internal revenue service is one outstanding example. Other government employees who have done a lot of the whistleblower ties, the suing of different people in courts. Where do you draw the line? Let's go to trial and jury. If the jury finds them innocent, and this person that they release commits another act of violence, can the jurors be sued? So, there has to be some kind of line drawn. As President Nixon said so in his speech in January of this year, prior to dying, and he quoted Jefferson in saying that democracy is not necessarily the best government but it's better than any other form we have out there. I think one has to look at what we got, and say that's the best we can do. Yeah, it's a great idea, but legally and politically it will get nowhere. So, in the idea of the monetary reimbursement, I think that's the only thing the government thought they could do fairly because there were losses. And, undoubtedly, there were some people that were better off in relocation camps. It could have been Japanese American version of the homeless or whatever. But, in our particular case, it was more than \$20,000 that was lost. Granted, my family should have been able to go to court based on estimates provided to by recognized authorities then, the vice president of the local bank, as to the holdings of my father, and her should have been able to claim it. But, it's one of these cases where the court system, or this particular judicial review, found him guilty before proven innocent. So, I think the redress is some token amount to try to compensate. And in cases that we have, time periods have passed, that's the only way that you can do it. Now, I take issue with the other innocent being punished.

AB: Today's taxpayers, for example.

TE: Right. The King case—any city being sued because of an official's unjust act? Are they still not passing that to the taxpayer? If I really had to sit down and look at it—and I paid income taxes since starting college in 1956—if you totaled up how much

income tax I paid cause it's more than \$20,000. So, all I'm saying is me getting back some of my money. I don't know where the rest of it is going. So, to somebody—

[recording paused]

AB: We are resuming.

TE: Okay. I just see it as returning some of my money that I've paid in before. Now, some of the people who receive the redress may not have, so in the circumstances, I think that was about the only way they could do it.

AB: What do you think of the *Register*'s position vis-à-vis its consistency? Do you see any change from the position that they took forty-five years earlier? Or, are they still advancing, in your view, the, perhaps unique but still identifiably conservative point of view regarding citizens' rights in the face of the government?

TE: I think basically their view is still the same in essence, but it is being expanded to try to change the government's thought about individual rights, the violation of them. I think it's a good move. We don't want to get into a *Nineteen Eighty-Four* series of Orson Welles, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* big brother, so I think their approach is correct.

AB: To conclude, Toki, I'd like to pose a question that was posed to, ah, the students in our class this semester by the professor. It is being posed constantly by the scholars who devote their study to the Japanese American issues. I'd like your opinion, again, coming from the same perspective you've been presenting throughout, whether or not you think an episode such as the evacuation could occur again in this country. Or do you think there has been a substantial, or enough, change that repetition would be unlikely?

TE: I think as long as we have and allow special interest groups to wield as much hidden powers they have on our elected officials, we're still vulnerable. We've got to put more curbs on the special interest groups, the lobbying of, and so forth. So, I do see it as a distinct possibility. I'd like to reflect one thing back to the *Orange County* editorial.

AB: Certainly.

TE: I think what the person who wrote this is missing is that they're saying that redress is an attempt to compensate persons for property loss or interruption of life. I think it's deeper than that. And the representatives of Japanese American extraction who did push this bill—how do you pay for a guilt trip? That's the big issue. I was born as an American, but yet, at the time I was moved because I was purportedly *unloyal* or suspected of being unloyal. It's a heavy guilt trip, and how do you compensate people for making ashamed of their race, their ethnic background? I think one thing we've done in America is done a good job at making people feel bad about it. Probably not as bad as Yugoslavia or formerly Yugoslavia, right now. Certainly, I

would hate to see it get to that state, but how does one compensate an individual for that? I think that's the essence that if they strove the editorial people to make that point across, then I would concur that \$20,000 is just not ample way of doing it. Any kind of solution would not be a quick solution. It would be a long evolution of time. So, I hated to digress, but I wanted to add that.

[01:30:32]

AB: No, it's not a digression. I welcome any insight you care to offer. At this point, we've proceeded through the formal outline, and I'd like to ask you if there are any topics we haven't touched on you'd like to add to the interview? Or anything we've discussed that you feel may have not been dealt with adequately that you'd like to add at this point, feel free.

TE: I think that one of the things that attracted me to Orange County, or even back to California, where I reinstated my citizenship as a member of the state was the mixture of the people, the attitudes, so I enjoy that, and I enjoy Orange County. I certainly think my kids are being brought up in a multi-ethnic neighborhood where the only ills they have is a person's personal views or thinking, rather than skin color or educational background or whatever. So, I think that's what I'm thankful for. And in many ways, I'm thankful we're in the United States, though, I think the big thing is what really gets me is the evacuation, it happened, and I got to start over. And in terms of financial security for my family, where else but in America can you do this? The redress is something that is passed, and it's never going to change. I'm stuck with the guilt trip. It's never going to leave me. It's an episode in time and is best that it's like bridge over troubled water. The water just goes down stream. We look upstream to make sure that it doesn't happen again, and we learn something from it. So, that's why I think I volunteered to do this to maybe, hopefully, that some person listens to this tape would gain some kind of understanding, and hopefully, make sure that our government doesn't allow it to happen again. And that's why I thank you for allowing me to do this interview.

AB: Well, with that in mind, on behalf of California State University, Fullerton Japanese American Oral History Project, I want to thank you, Toki, very much for granting this interview.

TE: You're quite welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW