

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Japanese American Oral History Project

An Oral History with JOE YAMAKIDO

Interviewed

By

Arthur A. Hansen

On December 7, 2003

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CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: JOE YAMAKIDO
INTERVIEWER: Arthur A. Hansen
DATE: December 7, 2003
LOCATION: Half Moon Bay, California
PROJECT: Japanese American

AH: This is an interview with Joe Yamakido by Art Hansen for the Japanese American Project for the Center for Oral and Public History at California State University at Fullerton, and the interview is being held on December 7, 2003. And this is the anniversary of the sixty-second anniversary of the day of infamy of the day of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, which set in motion a lot of things, but one of the things it set in motion was the World War II was the eviction and incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry and that included Mr. Yamakido. The interview is being done at the home of Mr. Yamakido, which is in California, and the time of the interview is almost ten to twelve in the morning. So, we are going to begin the interview today, Joe, by finding out what we can about your knowledge of your family roots going back as far as you possibly can and not worrying about if it's absolutely correct or not but just what you heard as a kid growing up and later on from research or whatever else. What do you know about the family on both your father and mother's side?

JY: Well, I haven't got much to talk about because my parents didn't talk much about their life in Japan, and I didn't ask. Well, we didn't talk much; we didn't have time. Working on the farm, it's busy. And then, I went to American school. I went to Japanese school. Saturday we worked on the farm six days a week, and I took Judo two nights a week, so we didn't have much time to talk. I've always been busy.

AH: Did you ever hear anything about where in Japan your grandparents came from? What prefecture or what village or anything like that?

JY: Yeah, they're from Hiroshima. That's all I know. My folks were saying they chased it back, and they come from a samurai family. You either come from a samurai family or farmers. There's just two classes.

- AH: Did your mother or your father ever tell you about what they did when they were growing up? Were they a farming family then or what in Hiroshima?
- JY: Yeah, they were both farmers.
- AH: Okay, so they weren't living in the city then?
- JY: No.
- AH: And you, later on, in your life, visited Japan. Did you go back and go look at the area where your parents had grown up?
- JY: Yeah, I went to see the land he used to own.
- AH: And was it still farming area?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: How far out from the city of Hiroshima—which, of course, grew after the bombing and stuff, and became a major metropolitan area—and how far is the family farm from the—
- JY: It's not too far because we went there in a taxi.
- AH: (laughs) It had to be cheap enough because taxis are expensive like everything else in Japan, aren't they? And when you went out, what year was that about that you were in Japan visiting?
- JY: Oh, in the fifties.
- AH: It wasn't too long after the war. It was like ten years after the war? And what caused you to go there at the time?
- JY: Well, my brother, he was successful in a business in Japan. See, he repatriated—
- AH: Which brother are we talking about?
- JY: My oldest brother.
- AH: And what's his name?
- JY: Charlie.
- AH: Charlie, okay. So, he was successful. He repatriated from Tule Lake?
- JY: Yeah.

AH: And then, he went to Japan. What did he have success doing?

JY: In the export/import.

AH: Export/import. And when was he born?

JY: He's a year-and-a-half older.

AH: You were born in what year?

JY: Twenty-two.

AH: So, he was born in 1920?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, right now he's eighty-three years old.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow! And is he still alive?

JY: He's just barely hanging on.

AH: And where does he live now?

JY: He lives in Tokyo now.

AH: He lives in Tokyo. Now, when you went back to Hiroshima—or not back because that was your first trip there, wasn't it?

JY: Yeah.

AH: When you went to Hiroshima, who in your family was living over in Japan at that time?

JY: Well, I had a lot of cousins living in Hiroshima because that where my folks come from.

AH: Okay. Did you have more than one brother there at that time?

JY: Yeah, my younger brother was still there.

AH: And what's his name?

JY: Tad.

AH: And what's his age compared to yours?

JY: I don't know. Was he here or was he in the States? Oh, I think he was still in Japan—Tad.

AH: And what's the age difference between you and Tad?

JY: Four years old.

AH: So, he was born in about 1926?

JY: Yeah, because there's another brother in-between, but he passed away.

AH: Okay, so he was two years right in-between you and Tad? Okay, so your family having them every two years for a while?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, a total of four boys?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Any sisters?

JY: Two sisters.

AH: Where do they come in the progression?

JY: They are in the bottom two.

AH: Oh, so they're the youngest of the two. First, there were four boys, and then there were two girls? And are they both alive now?

JY: Yeah, the two sisters are.

AH: And what are their names?

JY: My youngest is Pat, and then the oldest sister is Jean.

AH: Jean. And then, what about the other brother that was the in-between one?

JY: Johnny.

AH: He's the one that passed away, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, and when did he pass away and of what?

JY: Gee, I don't remember.

AH: Was it after the war or before the war?

JY: No, after the war. He was sixty-five when he passed away.

AH: Okay, so he was sixty-five years old. What did he die of?

JY: Oh, I think he had cancer of the lungs.

AH: So, all the rest of the kids are still alive?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow, so you got a nice long-life family. Do you see the family members a lot?

JY: Not too often.

AH: I saw you with Tad at the—

JY: Bismarck.

AH: At Bismarck, Dakota, when we went up for that a while back at the end of September of 2003. So, who was in Hiroshima aside from your two brothers—you had cousins and things—who was it that took you over to see the place was that your family lived in?

JY: Well, my oldest brother.

AH: Your oldest brother?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did he take you to where your father's family lived?

JY: Yeah.

AH: What about your mother family? That was also in farming?

JY: It was in the same farm.

AH: Oh, it was. Was their marriage an arranged marriage?

JY: I think so.

AH: And did any of the kids in your family have an arranged marriage?

JY: No.

AH: So all, even the ones that were in Japan? Tad—what was your oldest brother's name?

JY: Charlie.

AH: Charlie. So, Tad and Charlie both found their own wives and stuff. So, there's no arrangement even for the daughters, sisters and things. All right, so that's helpful. And those two siblings, they went to Japan as repatriates. You know, Tad and Charlie went there as repats, right?

JY: Charlie was the only one that went on his own.

AH: Yeah, but Tad went with your—

JY: He was a younger age so he had to go.

AH: So, he went there.

JY: Same as my same as my two sisters.

AH: So, your sisters went there, too?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did the sisters come back to the United States?

JY: Yeah, I sponsored them.

AH: Okay, when was it about that they came? Very shortly after the war, twenty years after the war?

JY: No, no, no, they came right back.

AH: And by sponsoring—how does the sponsorship work like that? Provide money—

JY: Provide the transportation and signed papers that they won't be on welfare.

AH: And did they live with you for a while?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And where was that?

JY: In Los Angeles.

[00:10:00]

AH: Tell me a little bit about each one of your brothers and sisters. I mean, let's begin with Charlie, the oldest. Tell me about him. We know he was a success, but what was his personality like? What kind of person was he?

JY: He had the brains of the family.

AH: He was very bright, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: How many brains sort of show up when you were growing up? How did you see that he was smart aside from the grades that he got in school?

JY: No, every time that I tried to fight him, he tried to talk me out of it.

AH: So, he used to use good logic?

JY: Yeah. (laughs)

AH: Did you try to fight him with words or fight him with fist?

JY: Fist.

AH: Oh, with a fist! And he talked you out of that?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay. Was he good at mechanical things?

JY: No, no.

AH: What was he good at? Business things?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, he had a good business head on his shoulders? And that's later on, what he ended up doing in the export/import, right?

JY: He was selling transistor radios, watches—

AH: In Japan?

JY: No, to all these other countries.

AH: Oh, okay. I see, with the import/export thing?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Even when he was a kid growing up, did he show that he was an enterprising kid? Was he someone that got jobs and saved money and was able to work out good deals? Was he a wheeler and dealer as a young guy?

JY: No, he didn't get a chance.

AH: Because what? He had to give all his money to the family?

JY: No, it's a lot of discrimination. You go to college—a lot of Japanese go to college, come out working in the fruits stands, so he didn't go to college.

AH: But, there are some people that work at the fruit stand, and what happens with their money is they go down and they play pool and lose it like that or they gamble. Or they get in other people work there, and even though they are giving some to their families, they manage to save a little bit. They end up having a nest egg and sometimes they can utilize that. Even though it's very little, they can maximize it. Was he that type of guy?

JY: The thing is he wasn't twenty-one yet, and he was waiting to be twenty-one to start buying land.

AH: Okay. So, that's when Pearl Harbor came along?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And he went to camp?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And which camp did the family go to or did he go to?

JY: Well, we first went to Santa Anita Assembly Center.

AH: Okay, so in Los Angeles then.

JY: From there to Jerome, Arkansas.

AH: Did he go to Jerome, Arkansas?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And what did Charlie do in Jerome? What kind of job did he get?

JY: Gee, I don't remember what he did.

AH: But, he worked in the camp?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And he ended up going from Jerome over to Tule Lake?

JY: Right.

AH: And then, at Tule Lake, which was—had he signed the Loyalty Oath, at Jerome? No-no?

JY: Geez, I don't know.

AH: Well, I'm trying to figure out if he went to Tule Lake because your parents went there or because of his own will.

JY: He went because of the parents.

AH: Okay, now, when he went to Tule Lake, he did have an opportunity to make a decision about whether he wanted to repatriate or not. Did he repatriate because of his own wishes or because he thought it was the thing to do for his parents?

JY: No, he went because of the parents.

AH: Okay, so he wasn't making a free decision then? He was doing it for family purposes, right? For family welfare and stuff?

JY: He figured he was obligated to his parents.

AH: And so how did your parents feel about going back to Japan?

JY: They lost everything, our farming. They figured there is no future in the United States, and my dad had land in Japan so he wanted to start all over in Japan because over here you couldn't start again.

AH: And did he go back to Japan? Did your mom and dad go back to Japan after the A-bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, or were they there when it was dropped?

JY: No, no, after.

AH: Okay, but did they hear about what it was like over there?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And they still went?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did your mother and father lose anybody as a result of the atomic bomb?

JY: Oh, yeah.

AH: Relatives, close relatives?

JY: Cousins.

AH: Within the city?

JY: A cousin, about five years old, got killed.

AH: And you weren't around about the time they made the decision to go to Japan, were you?

JY: No, I think I was in prison then.

AH: You were in prison, and so did you ever find out their discussions about is it too dangerous to go to Japan because of the place that we are going to Hiroshima?

JY: Well, my brother tried to talk them out of it. They still wanted to go. They didn't believe it that Japan lost.

AH: Oh, okay, so they didn't think that it had happened?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay. And the farm was probably far away from the city, too. Did they own land there, or was it land that belonged to the family? They themselves owned the land?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And so, they had some place to go back to?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did they go right back to that place?

JY: Yeah.

AH: It's still in the family?

JY: No, it was stolen.

AH: When was it stolen?

JY: Well, when he was in America all that time.

AH: Oh, so when they went back there, it wasn't there for them?

JY: No.

AH: Oh, I see. Somebody else took it.

JY: No, it was relatives.

AH: The relatives stole it.

JY: They forged his signature.

AH: What was it like, because you went back in the fifties with Charlie and went to look at that property? Did you go see your relatives that were living in the house that they stole from your parents?

JY: Oh, I met him.

AH: You did?

JY: Yeah.

AH: How did they act?

JY: They didn't say anything.

AH: Nothing, huh?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow.

JY: I went to the—in Japan, they owned the cemetery, the whole plot, so I went to the cemetery.

AH: Let's stop this for a second. [recording paused] So, anyway you—

JY: My brother is buried there, too.

AH: The middle—you mean the one that—

JY: Yeah. His ashes are buried there.

AH: Did he go back at that time, too?

JY: No, no, [he was] here when he passed away. He was cremated, and we sent his ashes to Japan.

AH: Is that the plan for all of the kids in the family? Are they going to go back to the family burial in Japan?

JY: No.

AH: So, you haven't ever talked about that as a group?

JY: I already told my daughter, "Just cremate me and throw my ashes anywhere."
(laughs)

AH: Do you want your ashes out in Half Moon Bay?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, that's nice. So, you'd like to be buried here, your ashes spread here?

JY: I like Reno.

AH: (laughs)

JY: Spread towards Reno.

AH: Okay. So, we were initially finding out about each of the kids. We sort of talked about Charlie, somewhat. But then, Charlie, he went back to Japan—that was his first time to go to Japan, wasn't it? And then, they didn't have the property they thought they had, so what the heck did they do? Because Japan was in a bad state at that particular time so what did your brother and your sisters and Charlie and then your parents, those are the ones that went to Japan, right? And then, Tad went separately—

JY: No, no, we all went together.

AH: So, how did they support themselves there?

JY: Well, I worked two jobs over there.

AH: Oh, you sent money back to Japan. Where were you working?

JY: I was working in L.A.

AH: Okay, so this happened after you got out of prison, then? Okay, so then you had two jobs?

JY: Um-hm.

AH: What type of job did you get?

JY: Well, I was working in a wholesale market, food and produce. I was working at a restaurant as a waiter, extra job. And the extra job I was sending all the money to Japan, and my brother was buying streptomycin and saccharin and selling it on the black market.

AH: Oh, really.

JY: He was making enough money to feed the family.

AH: So, you send it to Charlie, and Charlie operated and made the money.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And where did the family live?

JY: Hiroshima.

AH: Oh, did they go into the city?

JY: No, out in the farm.

AH: So, they weren't exposed the radiation from—

JY: No, see, my brother—my father's buddy that went to Japan with him, well, he still had his land. So, he let them stay with him.

[00:20:00]

AH: Uh-huh. And did he let them stay for nothing or did they have to pay something for that?

JY: Yeah, for nothing.

AH: Oh, really. That worked out then.

JY: They were buddies, see. He came from Japan over to the United States together, and they went back together.

AH: And how long did it last together like that? Did that go on for quite a few years?

JY: Until my sister came back, and my brother volunteered in the Air Force in Japan. And then, my two sisters came. They made enough money. And they sponsored my folks, and then they came back, too.

AH: So, Tad went into the Air Force then?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, he was out of the family thing. Then your sisters came and lived with you. And then, when did you stop having to send those remittances—I mean, send back that second salary to Japan.

JY: Well, as soon as my brother said he could stand on his own foot. It wasn't long.

AH: Like within a year?

JY: No, like a couple a years.

AH: A couple years. In the meantime, you couldn't think about getting married, could you?

JY: No.

AH: Not really. So, you worked hard during that time. I mean, you were working night and day pretty much?

JY: Well, I don't mind.

AH: You didn't mind? You like hard work?

JY: No, but just like right here, I volunteer and helped the ladies. If they paid me, okay. If they don't, okay.

AH: So, that was sort of a way of life for you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Was it hard for you to get jobs at that time?

JY: Yeah.

AH: It was. And did that stuff about your prison record come up?

JY: No, it's not that. It's discrimination. When I first came back, they didn't want us back here again.

AH: And where is here? L.A.?

JY: Yeah, L.A. I had to work for a Chinese farmer, the one that took over our land—not our land, but a lot of Chinese took over Japanese farming, so I worked for a Chinese farmer for fifteen cents an hour.

AH: And there was a lot of farms.

JY: Yeah.

AH: L.A. still had a lot of farms in it, didn't it?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, it wasn't like it is now, there were a lot of farms out there.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And so before we get into your experience so much, I want to continue on with the rest of your brothers and sisters. Now, the next brother was the one who passed away, but he wasn't passed away at the time, right?

JY: Right.

AH: He was living—

JY: Ohio, he was living in Ohio.

AH: How did he get to Ohio?

JY: Well, he lived there from the camp.

AH: Okay.

JY: They wanted to close up the camp so they wanted to get everybody—instead of temporary pass, indefinite leave. It was called indefinite leave.

AH: What did he do in his indefinite leave?

JY: He was a bum. He was a black sheep of the family.

AH: He didn't get a job—didn't he have to get a job to get indefinite leave?

JY: Well, he went to Ohio, and he was living off his buddies.

AH: Oh, living off his buddies. And which camp did he leave from?

JY: Jerome.

AH: Oh, so he left from Jerome then. Then he wasn't part of the group that went back to Japan with your family?

JY: No.

AH: Okay, so, what's his name?

JY: Johnny.

AH: Or what *was* his name. Did he continue to be a quote, unquote bum or did he get his act together?

JY: Early forties he started working.

AH: And then, what kind of job did he do then?

JY: He was driving a truck. He's sharp, too, like my older brother.

AH: So, he's smart then?

JY: Oh, yeah.

AH: Did he ever get married?

JY: No.

AH: So, he was a bachelor then?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did he stay in the Ohio area?

JY: No, he came back to California.

AH: Did you seem him a lot?

JY: Well, yeah.

AH: Okay.

JY: I used to seem him quite often.

AH: Because he was living in the L.A. area and stuff?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, he was the brother that you saw more than anybody else, right? Because Tad was over in the Army and stuff—or Air Force, was it?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Then Charlie was over in Japan, so the brother that you saw the most, the black sheep?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did he borrow money from you for a long time or not?

JY: Who Johnny?

AH: Johnny.

JY: No.

AH: He didn't okay. So, even though he wasn't working very much and he hadn't gotten his act together till he was in his forties, he wasn't hitting you up for a loan and stuff?

JY: Well, I don't know how he lived, but, in the forties, he had a steady job.

AH: The truck driver job?

JY: Uh-huh.

AH: What about your two sisters? What were they like?

JY: They were with me for a while, but they got married young. They got married right away.

AH: What were their names again?

JY: Jean and Pat.

AH: Okay, Jean is the older one?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did Jean get married before Pat?

JY: Geez, I don't remember.

AH: And did they get married pretty soon after they got back here?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did they marry people they knew before from camp or that they met in L.A.?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay. And what were there husbands like?

JY: Pardon?

AH: What were there husbands like?

JY: Jean's husband was a repairman, radio, T.V., and all that. Yeah, he was making a good living. And my younger sister married a farmer. I think the two of my sisters, they felt bad because I was supporting them, so I guess they just got married right away when they were young.

AH: And was the youngest daughter's marriage any good?

JY: Yeah, they didn't get any divorce.

AH: Did they have kids and stuff?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, both—

JY: My oldest sister can't have kids.

AH: But, the other one can and has.

JY: She had a daughter and a son, but the son got killed.

AH: Okay. Yeah, you talked a little bit about when we were in Las Vegas. So, this would be your niece and your nephew and which one got killed?

JY: The nephew.

AH: The nephew. And what happened?

- JY: Well, they were fishing down at the bottom of Colorado, and someone on top of the cliff threw a rock. It just happened to hit him right on the forehead and killed him.
- AH: And he was a young man then?
- JY: Yeah. Oh, he was only about twelve or thirteen.
- AH: He was just a little boy.
- JY: He would have been a big man. My sister is as tall as I am.
- AH: And her husband was pretty tall, too.
- JY: No, usually if the woman is tall, the kids are taller. He was only about twelve, and he was wearing a thirteen size shoe.
- AH: Oh, my goodness.
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Size thirteen!
- JY: *Size thirteen.*
- AH: But, a rock killed him?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Yeah, what a tragedy that was. And how did that affect your sister? Losing her son, it must have been a horrible thing for her to carry around.
- JY: I know it. They didn't prosecute the kid that threw the rock.
- AH: Wow. The kid wasn't throwing it at your nephew, was he?
- JY: I don't know.
- AH: So, that's what you don't know.
- JY: But, they said soon after that family moved out so they knew who did it, moved out of the area.
- AH: Now, I met your one brother, Tad up there in Bismarck. Tell me a little bit about Tad growing-up and then his relationship with you and how often you got to see him, since he was in Japan a lot of the time? What was Tad like?

JY: Well, he was a way bigger age difference than me, so he had his friends, I had my friends.

AH: So, you didn't see him much growing up? You guys had different sets of friends and so you didn't travel in the same circles. Was he a good student at school?

JY: I guess so. But, I don't know because I was working on the farm most of the time. Because the Japanese family, their custom is always take care of the oldest son, so in case something happened to the father, he could take over. So, I'm the second son so—

AH: So, you had to take care of Charlie to make sure he was okay.

JY: So I used to have to work on the farm and used to go to school only half of the time.

AH: Oh, really.

JY: Yeah, because I had to stay home and work on the farm.

AH: Would your oldest brothers have to do the same things, stay home and work on the farm?

JY: No, he didn't miss school like I did.

AH: So, he was able to go to school. Okay, you had to be the one to make those sacrifices, and Tad was young enough so that he could go to school?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, Tad went over to Japan, not because of his own decision to repatriate, but because he was going as a minor with the family. And once he got over there, he ended-up, eventually, getting into the Air Force, and then, he made a career out of the Air Force?

[00:30:11]

JY: Yeah.

AH: And he stayed in Japan up until just recently? Or how long did he stay in Japan?

JY: Oh, quite a while but he got transferred to the United States. He got—I don't know what they call it—he was transferred from state to state.

AH: And did you see him at that point when he came back?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Was he near the L.A. area some of the time.

JY: No, he was in Georgia—

AH: Okay.

JY: Out that way.

AH: When did you see him? You would visit him, he would visit you?

JY: He visited us.

AH: He visited you.

JY: Every New Years.

AH: Did he get married and have kids?

JY: Yeah, he got married in Japan.

AH: Oh, he did? So, he married a Japanese woman. Did your older brother marry someone in Japan?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And your sisters both married Nisei?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And nobody married outside the Japanese group?

JY: No.

AH: No one in your family. So, it's a total Japanese family. When we saw Tad in Bismarck, was that the first time you'd seen him in a long time?

JY: No, I see him every year.

AH: Where do you see him?

JY: In L.A., we get together—when the Japanese celebrate New Year's, we get together for a big dinner.

AH: The family?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Is it the whole family, like the kids and everything, too?

JY: No, just with my sisters and brothers.

AH: Okay, the siblings.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And would you say you're a close family?

JY: Yeah.

AH: You are a close family then? Great! Even though you are all spread out and the war changed a lot of the place where you were living, you're still a close family. Where was the funeral for your brother that did die?

JY: It was in L.A.

AH: It was in L.A. And what kind of funeral did you have? Was a Buddhist? Was it Christian?

JY: I don't remember.

AH: Are the kids pretty much one or the other? Buddhist or Christian or most of them just don't go to church at all?

JY: No, I don't think so.

AH: You don't think they go to church?

JY: No.

AH: Do you go? This is Sunday, right? (laughs)

JY: No. I used to go, but I quit.

AH: And which kind of church did you go to?

JY: Well, they call it Church of World Messianity.

AH: Oh, really, is that a western or is that a Japanese sect?

JY: It's a Japanese sect.

AH: And had your parents being in that?

JY: Yeah, I think so. They were in it. It's all natural.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: Like vegetables and everything.

AH: Oh, so like your garden out here?

JY: Yeah.

AH: You're worshipping when you grow those things. (laughs)

JY: It's all natural. They don't use no pesticide.

AH: Really. So, it's organic sort of thing? Okay, and you've been doing that for a long time then?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Do you use pesticides? So, you still practice that then?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, I see. And did you do that as a kid when you were growing up?

JY: No.

AH: And tell me about your own personal background because it takes in the family, too. You were born in 1922, right? And you were born in Los Angeles? And the specific part of Los Angeles when you were born was what?

JY: No, I was born in Downtown L.A.

AH: Oh, you were born in Downtown L.A. at a Japanese hospital? Or did you have a midwife?

JY: Yeah.

AH: You did, okay. And so most of your siblings were born that way, too, at home using a midwife? Okay, so your family was living in Downtown L.A. What were they doing in L.A. at that time?

JY: Oh, my mother was working domestic, and my father was a messenger for a telegraph company.

AH: Okay, so they weren't farming then?

JY: No.

AH: Then how long did that go on? How much of your early years were lived in Downtown L.A.?

JY: Oh, it's only a couple of years. That's all.

AH: And then, what happened?

JY: And then they started farming.

AH: And where did they start farming?

JY: Imperial Valley.

AH: Oh, really? They went out there—was it near El Centro?

JY: Uh-huh.

AH: Was that the closest town?

JY: They found a town name Mecca, town named Mecca.

AH: Was it a small town?

JY: Uh-huh

AH: That's an interesting name, sounds Muslim, the idea of Mecca. Were you old enough to remember anything about Mecca?

JY: No.

AH: So, you were living there before you went to school?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did the family keep moving around to different places?

JY: Yeah.

AH: In the Imperial Valley?

JY: No, from there they went to Compton.

AH: Oh, so they came back to the L.A. area?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay. Did you ever talk about why they did that? Was it bad farming out there, or they didn't like living there?

JY: I don't remember.

AH: I know you don't remember. I was just wondering if anyone ever said anything about that later on. So then, you went to Compton, and I of course know where that is. what were they doing in Compton? Farming again?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And what kind arrangement were they forming? Because he couldn't buy land at that time, so he had to be able to lease or something or do sharecropping and things. And is that what he did?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And was he a sharecropper?

JY: I don't know about that, but he didn't stay very long there. And then, he moved to Harbor City.

AH: And where is Harbor City, near Long Beach?

JY: Well, it's between Torrance and San Pedro.

AH: Oh, okay. So, it's down there near the water in that area. And how long did he stay there?

JY: Well, we stayed there until the war started.

AH: Oh, you did? Right in that spot. And what were you farming there?

JY: They call it truck farming.

AH: Truck farming. And what were the truck crops?

JY: Well, everything: strawberries, blackberries, broccoli, everything. Celery.

AH: And was it a tough life as far as the income or was your family poor?

JY: Oh, yeah, things were rough.

AH: And at what age were you expected to start working?

- JY: Oh, I was working ever since I was five years old.
- AH: So, you were always a field hand. And did you go to school at the normal age about five? Or did you have to wait until you were six or seven?
- JY: No, I went to school at five.
- AH: And where did you go to school? Where was the nearest school?
- JY: Harbor City.
- AH: Harbor City had a grammar school and elementary school?
- JY: Yeah, a mile, two miles from the farm. The bus didn't come to the farm.
- AH: So, you had to walk to school?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: And you had an older brother that was going to that school before you so you had some sense of what school was like. Did you like school when you went to it or no?
- JY: Oh, yeah. (laughs) When you go to school, you get a break from working on the farm.
- AH: But, even at an early age, you have to come to school to work?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: And, as a very young kid, would you work very long hours in the summer?
- JY: Oh, yeah, all day.
- AH: And what kinds of things would a little kid do?
- JY: Everyone figures, what can a guy do when my dad does irrigation. And, when the water goes through those rows, I stay on the other side and before the water comes to the end, maybe about ten feet before it comes to the end, I put this big shovel or hoe, long hoe, so you could stop the water from the other side. You could stop it. Otherwise, if the water comes to the end, it's too late. The water will break open.
- AH: Like these flagmen that are out there on the road, you were giving them the signal. And then, as the family started to get older, did the girls and as well as the boys work out in the field or not?
- JY: Yeah.

- AH: So, all of you would be out there at one time then, each having jobs to do?
- JY: Yeah, but then when my brother, younger brother Johnny—well, Tad didn't do it. They were too small before we went to camp—but Johnny he'd sloth off, and he wouldn't go to the field.
- AH: He would just stay home and act like he was sick or something?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: So, it was mostly you and Charlie, right?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: So, what kinds of jobs did you graduate to as you got older? I mean, that job that you're describing wasn't the same one you did from the time when you were six years old till you got into camp?
- JY: No, like that and same thing as my mother, she works hard. She cooks and washed everything. But, she goes out in the field and bunches turnips, beets, carrots. She bunches them up, and she puts them in a crate, so much a dozen.
- AH: Right.
- JY: And I used to carry them out.
- AH: Oh, you did?
- JY: Yeah, I'm small so I only carried about three or four bunches at a time, take them out to the one spot, pile them up, and she packed them on a crate.
- [00:40:00]
- AH: What's the hardest work you did on the farm where you really didn't like to do it because you worked too damn hard, your back hurt—
- JY: Oh, it's the hoeing.
- AH: It's the hoeing? A short hoe?
- JY: Yeah. (laughs)
- AH: And what were you hoeing? What kinds of crops? Everything?
- JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay.

JY: You got to cut the grass so that the vegetables don't get a chance to grow.

AH: And how old would you be when you start doing that? Like ten? Or even younger?

JY: I think I was younger.

AH: Wow. That's something you did all the time?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Now, what kind of things would your dad be doing?

JY: Well, he did most of the horse work, plowing and disking and everything.

AH: And you used horses then.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did you ever get a tractor before the war?

JY: No.

AH: So, it was all horses?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow. Who took care of the horses?

JY: My dad did.

AH: He did?

JY: We had a barn. He fed them.

AH: Did you have anything else? Did you have cows or anything?

JY: No, just chickens.

AH: Oh, you had chickens. Okay, not pork. You didn't slaughter any meat or anything.

JY: Oh, yeah, we killed the chickens.

AH: Oh, you killed the chickens. And then, you got eggs from the chickens as well, too. Did you used to chop their heads off?

JY: No, (laughs) I don't like that.

AH: Who did that?

JY: My dad did. He'd chop their heads off.

AH: And then, they still ran around with their heads chopped off. It's horrible I know.

JY: He'd chop their heads off and throw it on the ground.

AH: So, he did that. And did you have pets when you were a kid?

JY: Oh, yeah, we had dogs.

AH: Dogs, do you remember any of their names?

JY: No.

AH: No dog that you had that you—see, I remember the names of every one of my dogs.

JY: No, I don't remember.

AH: Not any of them?

JY: No.

AH: Did you have one the time you went to camp? Did you have to leave a dog behind?

JY: No.

AH: You didn't?

JY: No, because one of our dogs got killed.

AH: Did dogs work, too? Did they have to anything?

JY: No.

AH: Just watchdog sort of functions?

JY: Yeah, because during the Depression, somebody poisoned our dog.

AH: Oh, really? Wow.

JY: And the vet you had to kill him.

AH: What kind of dog was it?

JY: German Shepard.

AH: Oh, really? It was a big dog then. It must have been close because they are very smart. You must have loved that dog.

JY: Oh, yeah. My dad—what do you call it? He had a revolver, a real big one.

AH: Oh, really, and he had to shoot him?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Boy, that was sad. You weren't around when that happened, were you?

JY: No. No, because a burglar was coming in our window.

AH: You were a sensitive young man, weren't you? As a boy you were pretty sensitive? You didn't want to be killing chickens and you didn't want to be around when the dog was put away. That makes sense as a kid. Were you pretty sensitive about a lot of things?

JY: Oh, yeah, because when I went in the Army, I told them I don't want no killing, so they sent me to cooking school to become a cook.

AH: Oh, really? Wow. So, this continued right into the military?

JY: Yeah.

AH: You went to this elementary school that was in Harbor City. How many years did you go there? Did you go through the eighth grade?

JY: No, sixth.

AH: And then, did you go to a junior high?

JY: There was no junior high. In those days, it was a high school. It's a small community, so from seventh to twelfth is a high school.

AH: Oh, I see. So, you started at the high school. And did you like high school?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And how did you do in school?

JY: No good because I went to school only—

AH: Half day.

JY: No, I go every day sometimes, but I always went Friday to take the test so I could pass.

AH: And what were you especially good at and what were you especially bad at in terms of school? What were your good subjects?

JY: Mechanics.

AH: Mechanics, so you were good at that. How were you at mathematics?

JY: Also in the top three.

AH: Top three in that. And then, where did you have problems? What subjects did you have problems with? Spelling or writing or—

JY: No, I didn't have no problem. Only thing I remember is singing. That's all.

AH: Singing, you had problems with that?

JY: Yeah. They had a class called music appreciation.

AH: Right. And you took that?

JY: Yeah. And I got, what do you call it—I didn't care for music. My name is Y, so I'm always supposed to be in the last seat, but the teacher always had me sit in front of her. She moved me in front of her. She told me, "Don't open your mouth. You get everybody else out of tune."

AH: Were you a well behaved student?

JY: Oh, yeah.

AH: So, you fit the mold of what a lot of teachers used to say before and after the war that the Japanese students were well behaved in the classroom. They also did well in school, and you did well in school.

JY: My daily work wasn't up to par, but I always used to pass my test.

AH: Okay, so you'll have trouble during the week until Fridays, and then on Fridays you could do okay. And that school that you were going to, were there a lot of Japanese kids in there, a lot of Nisei?

JY: Oh, yeah, there were a lot of Japanese because there were a lot of Japanese farmers around there.

AH: So, was that the majority population of the class? Were most students in the class Japanese?

JY: In my class, just about six or ten.

AH: Out of thirty maybe?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Do you remember having Kibei coming into your classes?

JY: No.

AH: Kids that have problems with the English language at all?

JY: No.

AH: So, it was mostly Nisei?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And there were a lot born around your time, too, so there were a lot of kids then. And did you go to Japanese school even as an elementary school kid?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And what was the arrangement in Harbor City? Where did you go to Japanese school?

JY: Oh, they built a Japanese school right next to our farm.

AH: Right next to your farm?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And who taught there?

JY: They had a Japanese from Japan.

AH: Oh, really? And was he somebody going to USC as a student? Is that what he did?

JY: No, he taught Japanese to different cities.

AH: Oh, so he went and traveled around?

JY: Yes, so he made enough money to just live on teaching Japanese.

AH: And who was responsible for school being built there? Did your father have something to do with that?

JY: No, the farmers got together and they built that Japanese school, and they built a dojo.

AH: Oh, a dojo there?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And who supplied the land for that? Was that on your property?

JY: No, no, it's the person that had the—

[recording paused]

AH: Okay, good. So, you were talking about the master.

JY: He was a Nisei, so he could lease land. We were fortunate, though, because he was an honest Nisei.

AH: So, he wasn't crooking people, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Because there were those who were.

JY: A lot of them charged them double, but our landlord, and the one that had the master lease, he charged what he got charged for.

AH: Good.

JY: So, he didn't make no profit.

AH: And then, there were a lot of kids that went to the Japanese school?

JY: Yeah.

AH: I mean, how big would a class be?

JY: Oh, there was quite a bit. Most of the farmers wanted their kids to speak Japanese, too.

- AH: And how were you at that? A lot of Nisei say they didn't pay much attention when they went to Japanese school. They just fooled around and they tried to get out of it as much as possible. Did that fit you, or were you conscientious because there were those types, too?
- JY: My father had to pay for it, so I tried to learn.
- AH: So, you learned Japanese quite well?
- JY: But I've forgotten. Since my parents passed away, I don't use it.
- AH: But you used it a lot as a kid?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: And would you use it with when talking to other Issei?
- JY: No.
- AH: Just with your parents?
- JY: No, no, to the other parents, too.
- AH: Oh, to the other parents, too. And then, how many hours a week were you doing that?
- JY: Once a week.
- AH: Once a week on Saturdays?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Just the morning or all day or what?
- JY: All afternoon.
- AH: All afternoon.
- JY: Saturday is a day off _____ (inaudible) Japanese school on Saturday, because Sunday you had to go pick vegetables for the market.
- AH: Oh, I see. So, that was your one day off.
- JY: Yeah.

AH: What you really got off was the morning and the afternoon you had to go to Japanese school?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did you like Japanese school?

JY: Yeah, I guess so because we used to get together, and in-between, we used to play baseball.

AH: What do you remember about Japanese school itself? What was the enjoyable part of Japanese school and what was not so enjoyable for you?

JY: Well, I don't know if it's nice to say it, but the Japanese teacher—we used to sing the Japanese anthem. One day he had me come out in front of the class, and he slapped my face.

[00:50:31]

AH: Oh, wow. Why?

JY: See, I got a low voice. So, they were singing the anthem, and he could hear my voice because it's low. He could hear my voice above everybody else.

AH: And were you saying something wrong?

JY: No, he thought I was making fun of—

AH: Oh, the anthem?

JY: Because my voice is so low.

AH: And so he slapped you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow. Was he a really disciplinarian?

JY: Oh, yeah.

AH: That was frightening?

JY: No. He was just trying to show me that I should respect it.

AH: Were you better behaved at public school or at Japanese school?

JY: Oh, same thing.

AH: About the same. So, you were well-behaved in both places? So, you didn't get slapped a lot, that was the time that you remember?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did you like the stories part of Japanese school or you read things in Japanese? Is that the part you liked the best?

JY: Yeah, the samurai and everything.

AH: And the dojo was there and the school was there, but did it become like a community center? Did they ever show movies in that building, too?

JY: Yeah, they used to show Japanese movie once a month.

AH: And who would be showing it?

JY: Oh, there used to be a traveling—some person used to travel from all these Japanese schools. They got Japanese schools all over California.

AH: And they would travel around?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did you look forward to the movies?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did the Issei come to the movies? The Nisei? Both?

JY: Yeah.

AH: It was a big event, huh?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And what were your favorite kind of movies?

JY: It's mostly samurai movies. (laughs)

AH: Did the kids like those?

JY: Yeah.

AH: The adults, too?

JY: Oh, yeah, the kids used to make swords with sticks and play around with each other.

AH: And did you ever go into town a lot? Did you ever go into San Pedro?

JY: No, my dad used to take us down to L.A. once in a while.

AH: To Little Tokyo?

JY: Yeah, to Little Tokyo, eat chop suey.

AH: Did you ever go down to Terminal Island?

JY: Yeah.

AH: You did? Did you know somebody over there? Why did you go there?

JY: Oh, we used to have a picnic over there.

AH: Was it a kenjinkai picnic?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, it was Hiroshima?

JY: Yes, Hiroshima picnic.

AH: And what did you think of Terminal Island? It's not there anymore, but what was it like?

JY: It was nice.

AH: It was?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And lots of places to go? Restaurants and things?

JY: No, it wasn't that. Mostly, we brought our own lunch and shared our lunches and had races.

AH: So, you liked the picnics over there?

JY: Yeah, tug of war and everything.

AH: And Hiroshima had lots and lots of people that were from Hiroshima, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: The picnics were big. Did they break-up the Hiroshima picnics into smaller units than the whole prefecture? Some of the prefectures were divided among regions within the prefecture. And here, Hiroshima had so many. Did all of them come together at one time, or was it a section of Hiroshima?

JY: No, they all come together.

AH: So, it would be all of the prefectures?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, it was huge then. Was your dad active in that stuff?

JY: No.

AH: So, he wasn't a politician or community leader?

JY: No.

AH: So, he wouldn't have been somebody they would have picked up right after Pearl Harbor?

JY: No.

AH: He kept a lower profile.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, so he just worked those horses and everybody else?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, he pretty much stayed with the nose to the grindstone, huh? And when did you start getting interested at school in sports? Because I know you went on to play football and stuff. When did you really start liking to go to school and stuff because that was a chance for you to get out and play baseball and football and track?

JY: I wanted to go out when I was in the ninth grade, but my dad couldn't afford it. I had to help him out in the farm.

AH: Oh, so you wanted to, but you couldn't?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, that was bad for you.

JY: He had to work hard for ten cents an hour, but that was not enough.

AH: Wow.

JY: And I did most of the horse work.

AH: You did?

JY: Yeah. I plowed and everything, and my dad does a lot of the planting. You push it and plant it by hand.

AH: Did you know sports by then? Could you play all of the sports, you just couldn't go out for them?

JY: Yeah, I couldn't go out for them.

AH: So, you probably could have made the teams?

JY: I don't know, but I wanted to get a start somewhere.

AH: And what were the sports that you liked?

JY: I liked football.

AH: And you liked that early on, huh?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And what did you like about football? The contact?

JY: Yeah, the contact.

AH: So, you like to hit?

JY: Yeah, like Judo.

AH: Did you learn Judo early on at the dojo? Did you learn other martial arts as well?

JY: No—oh yes, sumo.

AH: Oh, you learned sumo. And did you ever do that competitively?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, did that dojo have a team that they competed with other dojos?

JY: No, not sumo.

AH: Not sumo.

JY: But Judo we compete with everybody.

AH: And were you good? Was Harbor City a good place for Judo?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And you had a good sensei that was there? So, the people that you saw and the sensei was from Japan? And was it like a sensei that would travel around to different places just like the language teacher?

JY: He had had three dojos he taught.

AH: Like in San Pedro or something?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, what other people were working around there? You had the teacher, and you had the sensei. Anybody else?

JY: No, that's it. They had—what the hell? I forgot what church it was. Baptist or somebody used to come to the Japanese school and teach religion to us.

AH: Was the person Japanese?

JY: No.

AH: No it wasn't. It was a *hakujin*?

JY: Yeah. Once a month.

AH: Once a month. Okay, but it was Christian?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did a lot of people go to that?

JY: Yeah, there were quite a few going.

AH: Did your parents make you go to that?

JY: No.

AH: You went on your own?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did you like it?

JY: No, I just wanted to know different religions.

AH: And did you learn anything about Buddhism when you were at home from your parents?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, you got some instruction from that at home, and then this gave you Christian instruction. At school, you did finally get a chance to play on the football team at the high school, right? And was that your senior year?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And so you had to wait that long, huh?

JY: I didn't think about what my dad said. I want to go out if it's the last chance.

AH: Right. And so did you get a chance to do that then?

JY: I did, but I got kicked out of the team.

AH: Because of why?

JY: Because I missed practice.

AH: Oh, so you weren't able to go regularly to practice?

JY: Yeah.

AH: As much as you would have liked to.

JY: Well, I was trying to do just like the school. I mean, I missed during the week and just go for the test every Friday. So, during football, I figured I could miss practicing and go for the real football game every Friday.

AH: So, did you play other sports, too? Like baseball?

JY: No.

AH: Did you learn how to play baseball?

JY: Oh, yeah, I know how to play.

AH: But, you just didn't have the time to play?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And was it common for a Nisei kids in a place like Harbor City to know the Japanese sports and then also the American ones? Well, baseball is kind of both, Japanese and American, but the judo and the kendo and the sumo and things, people would do those but also know football, basketball and those kinds of things, too? Okay so, in that sense, you were bicultural. Most of the kids were. They would do both.

JY: Well, a lot of the Japanese in those days, they were good in track.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: Because they were small. Like, football they are too small, or basketball they are too short. So, a lot of them excelled in track.

AH: Were you fast?

JY: No.

AH: You weren't?

JY: No. (laughs)

AH: So, you were better for football, huh?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And what did you play in football, line?

[01:00:00]

JY: Yeah—guard.

AH: *Guard!* So, you had to be pretty strong and gutsy, then, to play guard.

JY: Nobody got through my side.

AH: Oh, really? So, you mixed it up out there?

JY: So, I played offense and defensive guard, and I played the whole game.

AH: And what high school were you at?

JY: Torrance High School.

AH: So, had your family moved or did you stay in the same place?

JY: Yeah, I just transferred.

AH: Oh, you transferred yourself? Harbor City have a high school?

JY: They call it Narboone.

AH: Oh, Narboone but you didn't go there.

JY: No. I was going to Narboone, but I transferred.

AH: Okay, why did you do that?

JY: Because Narboone don't have no mechanical class.

AH: Oh, I see. And you were able to go to a school out of your district?

JY: Well, I just did it.

AH: And did your other brothers do that, too?

JY: No, just me.

AH: So, you were the only one? They went to Narboone then?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And you transferred out. What year was it when you transferred?

JY: Geez, I don't remember.

AH: I mean, like your junior year? Did you go two years to—

JY: Oh, I think I went about—

AH: Torrance?

JY: Yeah, about a couple of years.

AH: You played football for Torrance, then, not for Narboone?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, and was there a difference in the school aside from what you were talking about, in terms of the classes? (phone rings) Oh, so were there other things about the school aside from the mechanical drawing and stuff like that? Were there other reasons for switching?

JY: No, just mechanics.

AH: Was one school way bigger than the other one? Was Torrance way bigger?

JY: No, Torrance I think was smaller.

AH: And they are a lot of Japanese students at both places, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Yeah.

JY: There are Japanese farmers all around there.

AH: Right, so Gardena, Torrance—that was still quite a few in that area, so it hasn't changed too much in that respect.

JY: Redondo.

AH: And, when you were on the football team, were there any other Nisei that were on the football team, too?

JY: Yeah, there was two more people. There were two running backs and myself.

AH: And did you guys all play first string.

JY: No, just one running back. He was first string.

AH: And you were a substitute?

JY: No, I was first string.

AH: Oh, you were first string.

JY: When I got kicked out, I still got my letter.

AH: Oh, you did?

JY: Because if you put eight quarters, you could get your letter.

AH: They weren't mad at you, weren't they? When you say kicked-off, it makes it sound like they got rid of you. Did they just tell you because you are missing so much we're going to have to drop you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And was that devastating to you? It was.

JY: Yeah, I wanted to play.

AH: Were you mad about it?

JY: Yeah, but it's too late now. You can't go back.

AH: No, but at the time, were you mad about it?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did you feel that you were being discriminated against?

JY: No.

AH: You didn't?

JY: It was—what do you call it?

AH: The rules?

JY: It wasn't right for the other players.

AB: And were other Japanese kids in the same circumstance where they were missing things because—

JY: No.

AB: Would you say your family, at that time, relative to other Japanese farming families were about the same levels of economics, poor, or better off than the average?

JY: Us?

AB: Yes.

JY: I think we were poor compared to other families.

AB: So, you worked more than most kids did?

JY: Yeah, because some of the families had tractors. They could afford to buy a tractor. My dad couldn't afford to buy a tractor.

AB: And there were a lot of other families like yours, weren't they?

JY: Yeah.

AB: So, that wasn't different so much.

JY: It's all farming. It's all luck. Like if you plant something and the price is high, you make money. A lot of farmers, they took trips to Japan.

AH: Right, the ones that made the money.

JY: Because my dad never hit it.

AH: So, what lesson did you learn from that? Even if there hadn't been camp, do you think you would have tried to be a farmer or would you have thought about moving into something else?

JY: No, I was thinking about going into mechanics.

AH: Okay, so you wanted to get out of farming?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay. Did you help around the farm in mechanical ways? You did.

AH: So, were you like the family mechanic?

JY: Yeah. I bought a car to go to school for \$5 at the junkyard.

AH: And fixed it all up?

JY: Yeah, fixed it. I used to go to school with it.

AH: Wow, so you learned to be a mechanic in that way, too.

JY: Yeah. Then, on the farm, we needed a pick-up to bring the vegetables home to the platform, so I cut my—it was a Dodge sedan, so I cut it in half and put a bed on the back, made a pick-up out of it. And we used to pick-up the vegetables from the hill and take it home.

AH: Wow.

JY: Until then, we used to have a sled to put vegetables on top of the sled and drag it home. With my pick-up, it's a lot easier.

AH: And when did you graduate from high school?

JY: Nineteen-forty.

AH: So, 1940, what did you have in the way of an option when you got out? And what were you going to do when you got out? Because as long as there's school, you have school, and you got the home you're working on? What did you do in the after June of 1940 once you had graduated from high school? What did you go and do?

JY: Well, I signed-up for mechanical school.

AH: Where?

JY: In Los Angeles city.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: Yeah, they had a state school, Frank Wiggins.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: It's free.

AH: Oh, free? Wow.

JY: But a long waiting list.

AH: So, how long did you have to wait?

JY: Geez, I don't know. Some people get in right away so I signed-up, and there's a private school, National School, but you have to pay so I just waited.

AH: So, you got into that. By 1941 did you get in? Did it take you a year?

JY: No, I was waiting, so I went to work.

AH: Where?

JY: I started driving a truck.

AH: So, you got out of your family house?

JY: No, no, I stayed there and went to work.

AH: So, did you help by giving some of the wages to your family?

JY: I used to make enough to pay for two Mexican workers and still I'd have money left.

AH: Oh, so you were doing pretty well when you were doing the truck driving?

JY: Yes, I was getting \$18 a week.

AH: And who did you work for as a truck driver? Was it for—in the market or was it—

JY: No, this was a fertilizer company.

AH: And was it owned by *hakujin*?

JY: No, Japanese.

AH: And where was it?

JY: In Gardena.

AH: Oh, so that was pretty close by?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, they paid pretty well?

JY: Yeah, \$18 a week.

AH: Wow. So, where did you go with your route? How far did you take your truck?

JY: I drove the fertilizer to all the farmers.

AH: I mean, like out to Orange County?

JY: All over.

AH: All over?

JY: Yeah, Redondo, Gardena.

AH: You must have liked that job, didn't you?

JY: No, I didn't like it.

AH: How come?

JY: It's a lot of work.

AH: It was a lot of work but—

JY: Yeah, fertilizer is heavy.

AH: So, you would had big sacks of fertilizer that weight a few hundred pounds and stuff?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And you would have to go to a place and then throw it down and stack it in the garage?

JY: Um-hm.

AH: It called stacking shit, right? Because this is fertilizer.

JY: And not only that, the farmer still had hay, and we had to deliver hay.

AH: Oh, really? But, you would go all around. You met people though, didn't you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: But, you got to know some people and go to places you probably didn't go to otherwise.

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, you went all the way out to like the Valley, and then you went out to Orange County. How far would you go north? Out of Los Angeles? Fifteen or twenty miles out that way?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And how long did you do that job?

JY: I think only half a year.

AH: And you just decided you didn't like it that much?

JY: No, I started driving truck for some other outfit.

AH: Oh, what kind of work was that? What did you deliver?

JY: Oh, I was hauling just straight celery. They were shipping celery to back east.

AH: Was the company out of Venice?

JY: No, no, this was independent broker.

AH: Oh, independent broker. And was it Japanese?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And how did you get these jobs?

JY: Well, you meet these different truck drivers on the route.

[01:10:00]

AH: And hear about?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay. So, did you travel far with that truck job?

JY: No, we were the celery—broker, he bought celery by the batches.

AH: And you would go to the grocery stores?

JY: No, he cut the celery, and we take it to the packing shed. From the packing shed, they ship it back east.

AH: Oh, I see, *you* would take the celery from the farms to the market, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then they got shipped out on the trains and stuff so it would go all over in refrigerated cars and stuff like that. And how long did you do that, another half a year? Or was that the job you had when camp came?

JY: No, when the camp came I was driving a truck for a Jewish man.

AH: And what was in-between the celery job and that job?

JY: No, from that I went—

AH: To work for the Jewish?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And where was that? Where was the Jewish man?

JY: I don't know where he was. All I know is I was driving an eighteen wheeler. (laughs)
From a _____ (inaudible), I jumped to an eighteen wheeler.

AH: So, it was huge for you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did you have a special license for that?

JY: Yeah, you have to have a special license.

AH: So, you had to get a special drivers license. So, you were a pretty good driver?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, you were mechanical, but you were also very handy at being able to do something like that. Because I know it's hard to drive those. Backing-up and everything, it's a bitch.

JY: Oh, sure. A lot of the time I had to get out of my truck and help somebody else back-up.

AH: Sure. And you're giving directions and stuff, "A little over this way and that way and stuff." So, you mentioned the fact that you were working for a Jewish guy. What kind of distinctions do you make when you talk about *hakujin*, dividing them up into different categories like that? Like Jews, would you say the same things about Italians or Polish? Or was it just Jews that you would make that kind of distinction about.

JY: No, only reason I say that is because he was proud that he was Jewish, and he used to talk about it. He used to admit he was a Jew. A lot of people don't say what ethnicity they are.

AH: He talked a lot about it. For you, he sort of advertised his Jewishness, so that's why you are saying that?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And if somebody advertised that they were Polish, you might say, "I work for a Polish guy."

JY: Yeah.

AH: "Or an Italian, a Swede, or whatever else it was."

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, and was he a good guy?

JY: Yeah, he was a nice guy until the war started.

AH: Really? What happened?

JY: He fired me.

AH: After Pearl Harbor?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Here we are on Pearl Harbor day, the day after?

JY: Sunday he sent word to me, don't come to work Monday.

AH: You mean Sunday of December seventh?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow, that day!

JY: He sent word to me, he said, Don't come to work Monday.

AH: My goodness.

JY: See, I'm on the farm—

AH: He means tomorrow? Don't come to work tomorrow. You're on the farm—I'm sorry, what were you saying?

JY: I lived on the farm, and then the guy who got me the job, he's got a telephone. See, we don't got no telephone. So, he came and told me.

AH: He said this is the word, Don't come into work tomorrow.

JY: The person who got me the job is the one that I told him off.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: See, because when I was about sixteen, when I was big enough, I got tired of my father pushing my mother around, the way he treated her. So, I got tired of it, so when I was big enough to stand up to him, I slapped him one.

AH: Wow, your dad?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, boy.

JY: He didn't like it so he had this person—see, he had the master lease.

AH: Oh, the guy that—

JY: Not our place. From other places. Well, he's from Hawaii, and he speaks English. He had a lot of white friends—

AH: Was he a Nisei?

JY: Yeah, Nisei.

AH: Oh, Nisei.

JY: Otherwise, he can't sub-lease.

AH: Oh, that's right.

JY: So, everybody gets _____ (inaudible).

AH: Even family problems.

JY: Yeah, he came to our house and tried to tell me you are supposed to respect your parents and all that bullshit. I told him, "Get the fuck out of here."

AH: Really?

JY: Yeah. (laughs) He got all thrown back. But after that, he was nice to me, kiss my ass, and got me the job driving the semi.

AH: And was your dad nicer to your mom after that?

JY: Yeah. No, because see, when I was getting \$18, \$20, this truck driving job I think paid me \$25 so I switched over to semi.

AH: Was your dad abusive to your mom physically as well as just hollering at her?

JY: It's mostly talk.

AH: There wasn't a lot of physical stuff?

JY: No. No because she got to cook, wash dishes, cook, and wash clothes, and everything. By the time she gets to bed, it is about twelve o'clock, and then in the morning she has to get up around five again.

AH: So, you didn't like for her to take on crap on top of that?

JY: And then, she has to make sandwiches for school and everything. And in the nighttime, they come back from the ranch [at the] same time. He sits on his ass and tells her to hurry-up and cook, and he doesn't help. I got tired of that.

AH: Did that end your good relationship with your dad?

JY: I didn't have a good relationship. Not only that, he'd say—we never had it good on the vegetable like the other farmers. When their crops come out, they are good prices. We'd always have cheap prices. My mother always tell him, "When the people that always hit it, when they plant something, plant the same thing at the same time."

AH: Right.

JY: And he used to tell her to shut-up. Well, you know Japanese custom, they say, (speaks Japanese phrase). That means, you're a woman so shut up.

AH: Oh, really. Where you closer to your mother?

JY: Yeah.

AH: A lot closer?

JY: Um-hm.

AH: And had any of your other brothers ever stood-up to your dad like that or not?

JY: No.

AH: So, your older brother wouldn't have—Charlie wouldn't have?

JY: No. No, they respected him, I guess.

AH: Johnny too?

JY: No. Otherwise he didn't work, too.

AH: Did you get along with your two brothers that were close to you in age?

JY: No, only one was my older brother.

AH: Okay, so you didn't fool around with Johnny, get mad at him and stuff.

JY: He was always getting in trouble. He used to ditch school and everything.

AH: Did your older brother try to discipline you?

JY: I guess so because I was always trying to fight with him but he talked me out of it.

AH: Wow.

JY: That's why my mother, just before deathbed, she always used to tell me she owes me a lot of money for all the work I did on the farm. I keep telling her, "I did it because I love you." I didn't do it because—

AH: You wanted to get paid.

JY: —it was my duty or anything.

AH: Did you have other relatives that were living in that area like uncles?

JY: No.

AH: So, your family was pretty much by itself?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, there was some friend from Hiroshima that lived that area, but that's about it.

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, you didn't have anybody else to see. Like on New Year's, what would you guys do? Because right now you go and see your siblings. How would you spend New Year's at that time?

JY: Oh, at the Japanese school, all the farmers got together.

AH: Okay, so you had a place to go to?

JY: Yeah. And everybody brought the food to Japanese school, share each other's food.

AH: Now, you told me a little bit about December 7, 1941, just when you were saying that the next thing you knew, you were getting a call saying that your boss had said don't bother coming in tomorrow. Now, was there any basis for him to be upset with you other than the Pearl Harbor thing? Was your relationship starting to deteriorate?

JY: No. I did my job. I never missed a day off. I mean, I never missed work.

[01:20:04]

AH: Boy, that was something though, to, all of a sudden, turn on you.

JY: I told him, "I'm just like you. I was born here."

AH: Did you go see him after you were told not to come to work?

JY: Yeah, because I had to go get my check.

AH: And so you had to have a conversation with him?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And how was he during that conversation?

JY: Oh, he was nice.

AH: He was? But what did he say? I mean, how did he justify firing you?

JY: No, I forgot what he said. I don't know if he was sorry, but it's the pressure.

AH: From the community?

JY: Yeah.

AH: What else did you do for a job because you didn't go to the camp for a few more months? What did you do to make a living after he got rid of you in early December?

JY: That's the reason I got in trouble, into jail. Because I tried to look for a job and couldn't get a job. The only job I could get is working for another Japanese.

AH: And did you take that?

JY: I start looking but there's no job out there, so I started hitchhiking because in Fresno, in December, it's pruning time.

AH: Oh, I see, you were going to go to Fresno?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, that's why you were hitchhiking. And where was that?

JY: In Highway 101.

AH: [Highway] 101 or 1.

JY: Highway 101.

AH: Okay. And to try to go out to Fresno.

JY: Yeah. Well, from Harbor City, I got to Hermosa Beach. You know where Hermosa Beach?

AH: Sure, sure.

JY: That's where I got picked-up.

AH: Oh, you got picked-up in Hermosa? Uh-huh. And who picked you up? The city police?

JY: Yeah, the city police.

AH: Of Hermosa Beach?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And what did they say?

JY: They just took me to jail, instead of—what the hell—what do you call it? Just checking you.

AH: Frisking you?

JY: Yeah, frisking you. They told me to take all my clothes off.

AH: At the jail you mean?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Not out there in the highway? No? Okay.

JY: There were five big cops, and I figure if I cooperate with the cops, the police, they will be easy on you.

AH: Otherwise, they beat you up.

JY: So, I took all my clothes off, and they started laughing at me—I'm right in the middle—making fun of me, and they say they killed one Japanese. They said, You're next. I said, "I'm just like, 'You guys, I was born here.'" He said, "Never mind." I didn't know a lot of Japanese Issei were picked-up.

AH: Oh, you didn't?

JY: No. You know, they were sent to Santa Fe.

AH: Right, right. You didn't know that?

JY: But, they said they killed one already. I don't know if they did or not, but that's what they told me.

AH: You could believe, right?

JY: Yeah. It just happened the chief of police walked in. I don't know how the hell—why he walked in two or three o'clock in the morning.

AH: That was lucky. That was really lucky.

JY: Yeah, he walked in, and he stopped it.

AH: And he stopped it because?

JY: He brought me into his office, and he apologized. He said his father went through the same thing in World War I. He said he is a second generation German.

AH: The policeman was second generation?

JY: Yeah. If it had been somebody else, I would have been a dead duck. That's where my problem started.

AH: Why don't we take a break right now. Okay. [recording paused] You said that's where your troubles began—that's where we left off.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And where did your troubles begin?

JY: Well, see, when I was in the city jail in Hermosa Beach, they had me five days in jail. Later I found out they can't hold you longer than seventy-two hours, unless they charge you with something.

AH: How come they didn't release you after that police chief came in?

JY: I don't know.

AH: They just kept you after he left? Wow.

JY: For five days. Because they had to charge you with something to hold you for more than seventy-two hours.

AH: Were they trying to charge you with breaking the curfew?

JY: I don't think the curfew was in effect then.

AH: Oh, really? This was really close to December seventh?

JY: Yeah, it was eighteenth.

AH: Oh, the eighteenth of December? Okay. So, they hadn't implemented that yet.

JY: But, the FBI got into the act though.

AH: And how did they get in?

JY: I don't know. The police must have called the FBI.

AH: And how did you know that? Later on did you know that?

JY: Later on.

AH: You didn't know it at the time?

JY: No, because the following year we had to go to Santa Anita Assembly Center.

AH: Right, but what happened during those five days?

JY: Nothing.

AH: You just rotted in jail there for five days?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then they came and let you out?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Nobody tried to mistreat you during that time?

JY: No.

AH: Okay, I'm sorry, you were telling me that you had to go to Santa Anita Assembly Center.

JY: Yeah, but over there they treated me good though.

AH: Uh-huh.

JY: I think they fed me twice a day or three times a day, but the food used to come from a restaurant.

AH: At the jail?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay.

JY: It's a small city so didn't have no—

AH: Hermosa Beach restaurant food you had.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Not Japanese, did you?

JY: No. No, because when I went to Santa Anita the following year, and then when they had that riot, they picked me up right away.

AH: Tell me about going to Santa Anita. You went with the entire family, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Were you in the stalls or were you in the—

JY: No, I was in the stall side.

AH: You *were* in the stall side?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And the whole family was in there?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did you guys stay there for about three or four months?

JY: No, I didn't stay too long. See, we were in April—somewhere in April. I only stayed about two, three months. That's all.

AH: You didn't stay as long as the rest of the family?

JY: No.

- AH: Why was that? What happened? Because of this picking you up at the time of the riot?
- JY: Yeah, because when they had the riot, they picked me up right away.
- AH: And what did they accuse you of then?
- JY: The FBI picked me up. They accused me of starting the riot.
- AH: Starting the whole thing?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Wow! And you got crossed questioned?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: What did you have to do with the riot?
- JY: No, they said there's a Korean guy that got beat-up. They said I threw a typewriter at his face, and I didn't even know there was Korean in there.
- AH: Okay, so you had nothing to do with this?
- JY: No.
- AH: Did you see any of the riot?
- JY: No.
- AH: You weren't even near the riot?
- JY: No. (laughs)
- AH: So, you think they picked you up because of your past record, the Hermosa Beach thing?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Wow. How long did they hold you?
- JY: About ten days.
- AH: Ten days in the Santa Anita jail?
- JY: Yeah. First they had me in a Santa Anita jail.

AH: And what was the jail like?

JY: Well, it was just a toilet. See, in Santa Anita under the grandstand, they had this restroom for men. They made that into a temporary jail. And they had me in there five days, and then they transferred me to Arcadia city jail.

AH: Were you the only one in the jail at the Santa Anita jail?

JY: No, they had some other.

AH: Okay, but you had a bed though? You had a cot, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then, they transferred you to Arcadia, which is the town that is very near to Santa Anita racetrack.

JY: Yeah, five days, and then they shipped me out to Tule Lake.

AH: Tule Lake from there?

JY: Yeah, they separated me from my family.

AH: Oh, I see. And this was before Tule Lake had been made into a segregation center because this was right at the beginning of things.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow. So, where did they put you when you got to Tule Lake?

JY: Well, just with—

AH: With the bachelors or what?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Do you remember where you were, what block?

JY: Yeah, I remember. Seventy-two.

AH: Oh, so you were way in back of the camp.

JY: They were still building it.

AH: Did you have a barrack that you shared with lots of people?

JY: Well, all bachelors.

AH: So, it would be like twenty-five or more than that?

JY: I don't know. About fifteen or twenty, I think.

AH: Were you the youngest one in there?

JY: No.

AH: Oh, there were younger ones?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow.

JY: No, see, when we were in Santa Anita, they said there were three gangs, and they want to break-up the gang.

AH: What were the gangs?

JY: They said there were a Hawaiian gang, and then two gangs from L.A. One of them, I remember they call it Exclusive Twenty. So, they wanted to break-up the gang; the gang was causing all the problems in the camp.

[01:30:09]

AH: And which gang did they think you were in?

JY: They said I belonged to the Hawaiian gang.

AH: The Hawaiian gang?

JY: Yeah. (laughs)

AH: You probably didn't know too many Hawaiians, did you?

JY: No, I throw them out from the farm. I don't know anything about gangs.

AH: Wow.

JY: So, they want to split up the gang, so, from each gang, they took about five or ten and—

AH: Transferred them?

JY: Transferred so many to Tule Lake; some went to Arizona; and I don't know where the other bunch went. They split up three ways. So the guys that fought against each other, some of them were in the same—

AH: Right in your barrack?

JY: Yeah. (laughs)

AH: In 72?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Really? Then how long did you stay in Tule Lake?

JY: Only a couple of months.

AH: And how did you get out?

JY: Oh, see, as soon as I got in there, they were asking for volunteers for sugar beets, so I figured, I'll help the war effort, volunteer for sugar beets.

AH: And they were happy to let you do that?

JY: Yeah, they didn't care about my record.

AH: Where did they take you for sugar beets? Did you do topping of sugar beets?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And where did they take you for that?

JY: Oh, they sent me to Montana.

AH: And how did you get there?

JY: By train.

AH: Under armed guard or not?

JY: No.

AH: So, you were there part of a pretty substantial work group?

JY: No, you choose a certain group. Like you're assigned to a certain farmer, and they figured one person could take of ten acres.

AH: So, you would go by yourself to a farmer?

JY: No, no. Like the farmers got twenty acres? They sent two persons.

AH: What was the size of your group?

JY: There was four of us, forty acres.

AH: Were any of those guys that were allegedly part of the gangs—

JY: Yeah, although, when I went, I think Hawaiians went. It was the Hawaiians.

AH: And where did they come from? From Santa Anita?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And so did you know them at all before?

JY: No.

AH: Okay, so you met them in Block 72?

JY: Yeah, they were all Merchant Marines because as soon as the boat landed in Los Angeles, they were pulled off the boat and put in camp.

AH: Why did you go out and top sugar beets? Did you want to make some more money?

JY: No, I just wanted to be free and get out of camp and just want to help the war effort.

AH: And where was it in Montana?

JY: Chinook, Montana.

AH: Where is that? Eastern, western, central?

JY: Oh, I think it's the middle of Montana.

AH: And what kind of farmer were you assigned to? He had enough for two people. That was it, right?

JY: Four.

AH: Four. And who were the other three? Two of them were Hawaiians?

JY: I forgot. It was two old people.

AH: Oh, really? Issei?

JY: Yeah, and there was only one other Hawaiian.

AH: Oh, I see. And then you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: How many acres would this guy have had about?

JY: Oh, he had about one hundred acres, but he only had forty acres of sugar beets. Like the other things he could take care of by himself.

AH: And what kind of facility did you have to stay in?

JY: He had a place where we could sleep and cook and everything.

AH: If you had to compare the facility with what you had at Santa Anita and what you had at Tule Lake, which one would be the better of the three?

JY: Oh, the camps would have been better.

AH: The Tule Lake camp?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then, what would have been the worst of the three?

JY: Well—

AH: Santa Anita or the place up here in Montana?

JY: Well, I'm not particular about where I sleep.

AH: So, it didn't matter to you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay.

JY: Because we had a house, we had a stove to do our cooking—

AH: Now, was this guy who hired you an older guy?

JY: No, he was middle aged.

AH: And was he nice to you?

JY: Oh, yeah, they needed help so—

AH: So, they were nice?

JY: They were nice. But, the thing is the townspeople weren't.

AH: Okay, in Chinook?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And how big a town was that? Just a tiny place?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Half Moon Bay size?

JY: Oh, way smaller. Gee, I'd say like five hundred or a thousand—

AH: And the name sounds—[recording paused]

JY: —of the Caucasians. When we were first went in, we went to a restaurant, and they don't serve us. We get the idea that we go there and sit, they don't wait on us, so we get the idea they don't want us.

AH: You are talking about you would go with? Those other three people that were with you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, you would go in with the Issei, too? I mean, the Issei couple would come along with you and this other Nisei?

JY: Yeah. They would go get a haircut and the same thing happened to us.

AH: Oh, really? So, they weren't serving you, and they weren't cutting your hair?

JY: Yeah. But eventually, the farmers got together and talked to the townspeople—

AH: Treat them right.

JY: Yeah.

AH: We need to work.

JY: Yeah. When I first got there, when I got off the train, and the train, according to the conductor, we were half an hour early, I think. So, I got off the train to get a burger and a milkshake because I wanted to eat a burger after staying in camp with lousy food. I went to town, walked into town looking for a place where they sell a burger, and a cop kicked me out of the street.

AH: Really?

JY: He had to cuss at me.

AH: Did he do it because he knew you were a Japanese or because he thought you were an Indian?

JY: No, I think he knew I was a Japanese. This is exactly what he told me, "Get the fuck out of here." I told him, "Well, I didn't do nothing." He said, "Never mind." He knew we were coming.

AH: Oh, I see.

JY: Yeah, because he said, "Go to the station. You wait there until the farmer picks you up." A policeman told me, "Go to the station until the farmer picks you up. I don't want you in this town."

AH: Wow.

JY: I said, "I come to help you people." He said, "Never mind."

AH: So, is that what you did then?

JY: I had no choice. It was either that or go to jail.

AH: Right. So, did your other three people that were there working for the same farmer go wait with you?

JY: No, they were already waiting in the train. I went by myself.

AH: Oh, okay, you just went out by yourself.

JY: Because just in case the farmers come, they would make them wait for me.

AH: Okay. You were just going to get the hamburger and the milkshake yourself?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay. You wanted something other than that food. And then, the next time you came to town, people treated you at least civilly?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And so you were able to get a haircut, travel around, or go get something to eat, and nobody hassled you. And you saw other Japanese there, too, in the town?

JY: Yeah, because they don't make sense because the policeman—later I found out that there were Japanese living there before the war.

AH: Oh, really? In that Chinook area?

JY: Not Chinook but other town. There's another town—I'd say twenty miles—a town named Havre; bigger town.

AH: So, they were farming in that area?

JY: Yeah. They said there were about six families living there.

AH: So, how long did that sugar beet job last for you?

JY: Oh, only about three months, three, four months.

AH: And then you came back to Tule Lake?

JY: No, I forgot. Something happened. When the sugar beet contract was over, I did my job, and everybody went back to camp. I couldn't go back to camp.

AH: Why?

JY: When you finish your contract, they have a regional director at certain towns where you get your pass so you could go back to camp. So, I went to my regional director to get a pass; he won't give me one.

AH: What did he say?

JY: Told me I'm a troublemaker. I told him, "I didn't make no trouble at all."

AH: So what was your alternative, not to be in camp?

JY: He said he had the record from the FBI; my record at Hermosa Beach. I told him, "I ain't got nothing to do with—"

AH: Right.

JY: "I didn't make no trouble. I did my job."

AH: So, what did he want you to do, just stay out indefinitely?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And continue working somewhere?

[01:40:00]

JY: Still wanted me to stay and work.

AH: Wow. So, what did you do?

JY: Well, I tried to go back. I get in the train. The FBI walked through the train right in the center aisle, and he asked you for a pass, a travel permit. I can't show none. He told me, "Get off." It don't make sense because later, I found out about the Japanese living there before the war—I don't know if they had passes or not. Never did ask them.

AH: So, what did you do? You never got to California then, did you? You never got back to Tule Lake?

JY: No.

AH: So, you headed where?

JY: No, I think I worked for a farmer.

AH: In Montana?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, so you got another job.

JY: I knocked at the doors, and a German American family gave me a job. He didn't need me, but he just wanted to be nice to me. I stayed there, room and board. He could have did the job, but I fed the cows and pigs. But, I didn't like charity, so I found me a job in the railroad then. So, I went to go work in the railroads.

AH: Still in Montana?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, and you got that job at the railroad on your own?

JY: I don't remember.

AH: I was just wondering. You didn't get anything to do with the WRA, did you? The War Relocation Authority.

JY: I think I got it from the employment office. I'm not sure.

AH: And so when you went out and worked for the railroads, what were you doing for them?

JY: Oh, I had to work on the jackhammer.

AH: Did you see any Nisei that were working on there?

JY: Yeah, there was a whole gang.

AH: Oh, it was? From camp then?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Which camp?

JY: I don't know.

AH: From Tule Lake or not?

JY: I think that was from Manzanar; that's where one of the brothers got killed.

AH: Oh, yeah, what you were saying we started the interview, maybe one of the people that started the Manzanar Riot—

JY: Yeah.

AH: Had been up there before the riot. The riot was the night of December 6, 1942, so this was probably—

JY: It happened December?

AH: Yeah.

JY: Yeah, I think that's when I was working the railroad then, in the wintertime. Yeah, there was a cover-up on that.

AH: Did you talk to people about that situation at Manzanar?

JY: No, because the brother was telling me there was a cover-up because he said he got shot in the back. What was it? Shot in the front or back?

AH: I think the back because the teargas went, so what happened was the people turned from the teargas and started to run and then the guns fired. So, later on, what the military police said was they shot when they were rushing him so it was in the front. But apparently, it was in the back.

JY: Yeah, that's what he was telling me, there was a cover-up on that.

AH: Yeah, I've never been able to nail that down. It's a very difficult thing to get information on.

JY: You said they killed him because he was going after them? When he turned around, and he tried to walk away from them—from the what do you call it? From the riot.

AH: That's so confusing. I got to find out about this guy's name and send it to you because I like to find out—that's interesting that he had a brother that was working on the railroad thing.

JY: I remember he had to go back to camp.

AH: Really? The brother did?

JY: Yeah, for the funeral.

AH: Okay. Wow.

JY: Yeah. If I see the list of the—

AH: Yeah, I'll give you the list. It will tell some information about him. It will give his age and maybe even family members. And maybe if you see the brother—

JY: It might come back.

AH: I'd really like to—as I've been telling you, I've been getting some inquiries from somebody who was an orderly at the hospital, and he had from this one person who was killed instantly in the riot was named James Ito. And then, there was another person who was killed was a Kibei bachelor, and he didn't have any family there. As a result, nobody was there for him in the hospital. And this orderly, he name is Paul Takagi. And Paul Takagi said—he was nineteen or twenty at the time—he said this young man was twice during the night said, "Please don't let me die and stuff." He's always felt so horrible about this, and so he wants to do something to try to make it right for him.

JY: I don't know how old was he? Sixteen or eighteen?

AH: I think he was twenty-one, this guy. The other guy that was killed was nineteen.

JY: Oh, yeah?

AH: And the second guy, it may have been either one because it's possible that James Ito's brother was working out on the railroad, too. I mean, I don't know, but I'll find out

- that stuff out and see what I can because it's kind of curious to me. Anyway, you worked up there. What kind of work did you do on the railroad?
- JY: No, I was working on tamping machine.
- AH: That was for the railroad wasn't it?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: But, what kind of machine did you say?
- JY: Tamping machine.
- AH: And what are you tamping, the tracks?
- JY: No, you put the railroad ties—
- AH: Yeah.
- JY: You got to tamp the road underneath it.
- AH: Oh, I see, okay. So you were on labor crew?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: And all the crew work were guys from the camp?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Okay, and most of them were from Manzanar?
- JY: Yeah. See, they call us section hand.
- AH: Section hand, yeah. What kind of pay would you get then?
- JY: Oh, fifty cents an hour.
- AH: And this would be a lot more than you were getting in camp?
- JY: Oh, yeah.
- AH: So, did you work for three months or more?
- JY: Geez, I don't remember.
- AH: But, it was it a long time or not very long?

JY: Not very long because, as soon as I got my pass, I went back to camp.

AH: Oh, you went back to Tule Lake?

JY: Oh, I didn't go. I got a special pass to go to Jerome because my family was in Jerome then.

AH: Oh, they left Tule Lake?

JY: No, no, from Santa Anita they went to—

AH: Oh, I see. So, you were the only one who was at Tule Lake when you went with the bachelors?

JY: Yeah.

AH: That's right. So, they had moved from Santa Anita to Jerome, and then you joined them in Jerome. And I remember talking to you a little bit about this one time, and you were having trouble remembering about the date that was. Not the exact month but was it like in the winter? Because we were talking about the riot in Manzanar occurred in December of '42. Would it have been in early '43, you think about in there? After Christmas and New Year's and stuff that you went down to Jerome?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay. Then did all of your family move to Jerome?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, when you joined them, they were living together, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And were you living with them?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, you did. And what kind of job did you get in Jerome?

JY: Geez, I worked in the lumber.

AH: Gathering lumber from the trees around there?

JY: Yeah, for firewood.

AH: Yeah, that was a popular job in Arkansas, wasn't it? Everybody had to get lumber there all the time, get wood for the fires. Pretty cold there, wasn't it?

JY: Yeah.

AH: When you got there, it's probably in January, February of '43 because it's still winter and needed some of that wood. And so you went gathering it, huh? Or to chop it?

JY: Geez, I don't remember. All I remember I was in a truck one time, a driver flipped us over.

AH: Oh, he did?

JY: Yeah. (laughs)

AH: Was it a Japanese driver?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And nobody was hurt badly?

JY: No.

AH: Ha. Did you get hurt a little bit?

JY: No. It just went down on the sides.

AH: Oh, I see, just folded down. So, he wasn't going to fast then?

JY: No.

AH: And then, how long did you stick around Jerome?

JY: I didn't stay very long because I went out to sugar beet again.

AH: And did you do this before you took the loyalty oath? Because the loyalty oath was in February of 1943, and we're pretty close to that period now. You are working over there in Montana, and then you move to Jerome, and did you take that yes-yes, no-no thing—

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then went out and did your sugar beeting?

JY: Yeah.

AH: What did you answer on twenty-seven?

JY: I said, yes-yes.

AH: You said, yes, yes. Okay, so you were safe to go out on leave?

JY: Yeah. But, the only thing is I made a notation on it.

AH: And what was your notation?

JY: I said, *Yes, if we are given the same rights as the Caucasian.*

AH: Oh, really?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Good. So, you indicated that. Okay, so they didn't treat that as though you were a troublemaker. They instead let you go out. And where did you go this time?

JY: I went to Glasgow in Montana.

AH: Where's that, now, compared to Chinook? Is it north of it or south of it?

JY: East, east.

AH: Okay, east. Was that a little town, too?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did you also stay with a farmer?

[01:50:00]

JY: Yeah.

AH: And were there other people with you, too?

JY: Yeah, there was just another person with me.

AH: Japanese?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, and Nisei or Issei?

JY: Yeah, Nisei.

- AH: How was your experience there? Did you again go into the town and rebuffed for a haircut?
- JY: No, because in that town there was a Japanese family owned a restaurant.
- AH: Oh, really?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: So, you went there to eat?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: And did they talk to you every much and tell you what the town was like and what to be careful about?
- JY: No. No, one of my friends that I knew working in the sugar beet, he went to another farm, but he stayed there. He married one of the daughters of the one that owned the restaurant.
- AH: Oh, he did? So, he became a local.
- JY: He's still there.
- AH: He's still there now! Wow! Have you seen him?
- JY: No.
- AH: You haven't gone back to Montana?
- JY: Next year I might go see him.
- AH: How incredible. So, he's in his eighties now.
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Gee, that's amazing.
- JY: He's a year or two years older than I am.
- AH: And you probably haven't seen him since 1943, have you?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Oh, my god, that's incredible. So, what kind of work were you doing there, mostly? Beets again?

JY: Yeah, sugar beets.

AH: So, this was still part of the—

JY: Yeah, you'd _____ (inaudible) the sugar beet, and you top the sugar beet. Now they got machines to do that.

AH: And again was a short three months kind of thing?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then you go back to camp again?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And where did you go this time?

JY: I went to Chicago.

AH: You went to Chicago. Okay, so what were you doing in Chicago, trying to find a job?

JY: No, I got a job. Signed-up in a hotel before I went out.

AH: And which hotel was it?

JY: Steven's Hotel in Chicago.

AH: Oh, Steven's, that's a famous hotel. What did you do there?

JY: I was supposed to be a busboy but labor was cheap, so I found a job at an employment office making war equipment. So, I switched jobs.

AH: You had gone from being a troublemaker, to be considered safe enough to be able to work in the defense industry, right? This is quite interesting. And so then, where did you go from there? Did you stay in Chicago just for a short while and then go back to Jerome?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, and your family is still all there?

JY: No, see, they weren't there, they already went—

AH: To Tule Lake?

JY: Tule Lake.

AH: Okay, that means, if they were already at Tule Lake, we're at least into late 1943 because it took sometimes five, six months from the time that they had the registration thing before they started to move the trains. You know, the people moving to Tule Lake, and moving the so called yes-yes out of Tule Lake and distributing them to the other nine camps. Okay, so when you got to Jerome, your family wasn't there. Now where did they put you to live?

JY: Geez, I don't remember. I think I stayed with my brother.

AH: So, he didn't go with the family then?

JY: No.

AH: Which brother are you talking about?

JY: Johnny.

AH: This is the guy that ended-up going to Ohio?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, the black sheep?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, you stayed with him, and then what happened? How long did you stick around in camp?

JY: Oh, I stuck around until I got picked up for draft evasion.

AH: Okay, so that would have been in 1944 because, in the early part of the year in January; then the president sort of restored the draft for the Nisei, and so you had to make a decision whether you were going to report for a physical or not. And you didn't report, is that what happened?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, and so you did get your notice and stuff? And so how did you protest this at all? Just not showing?

JY: Yeah, I just didn't show up for my physical.

AH: Okay, so you didn't get on the train or the bus or whatever?

JY: No.

AH: And so what happened, they found you out and pulled you out to see the director of the camp?

JY: Well, they sent me another notice, and the second notice, that's when they arrested me.

AH: Oh, because you ignored the both of them, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And so when they picked you up, where did they take you?

JY: Took me to Little Rock.

AH: And where in Little Rock? Jail?

JY: Yeah, city jail.

AH: So, they didn't even throw you in the can in the camp, right? They took you into Little Rock.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then, how long did you stay around there?

JY: A hundred and twenty days.

AH: And where did you go from there?

JY: Well, from there, I went to Texarcana.

AH: Okay, and so that Texarcana is a federal prison, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Is it a high security prison or not?

JY: It's a regular.

AH: And who were you thrown in with? Who was in the prison?

JY: There's all kinds of different convicts, murderers, and everything.

AH: Right, but weren't there also some other Japanese Americans there?

JY: Yeah, there were three of them from Rohwer, and they were in the same jail as I was when I was in Little Rock.

AH: So, that took care of all of the resisters from the Arkansas camp, the three from Rohwer and you, that's it?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Four resisters.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did they separate you from the Rohwer ones?

JY: No.

AH: So, you got to meet them?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And why did they resist? Do you have any idea? Same reasons as you?

JY: Yeah, I guess so.

AH: Did you get along with them?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, you guys were able to talk with L.A. guys?

JY: No, one LA, two of them farmers.

AH: Two of them from the Valley?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, so you were also at Valley at one time, too; Imperial Valley. But so, were they about your age?

JY: No, they younger.

AH: Younger? Like what age were you? Let's see, in '43—or '44 we are talking about now—you would have been—you were born in 1922, so you're only about twenty-one years old, and they are like eighteen or something?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, they're kids then, huh?

JY: Yeah, because right now one of them is seventy-seven. The other two passed away already.

AH: So, you're in touch with the seventy-seven year old?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, really? Where does he live?

JY: He lives in Monterey Park.

AH: Oh, really, he lives in the Los Angeles area?

JY: Oh, because I have him back-up my story; they don't want to come out.

AH: What's his name?

JY: Sam Shimizu.

AH: Sam Shimizu, yeah. And Martha Nakagawa has met him, right?

JY: Yeah, well, he don't speak-up.

AH: So, he won't say anything?

JY: The other two too, and they passed away already.

AH: They wouldn't have spoken-up either?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did you get in any trouble in Arkansas—excuse me, Texarcana—in the jail?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And how did you get in the trouble? What did you do?

JY: No, one guy called me Jap one day, another convict, so I automatically slapped him. I shouldn't have done that but it was automatic.

AH: You slapped your dad once, now you slap this guy, right?

JY: Yeah. (laughs)

AH: And was this guy white?

JY: Yeah, but he didn't do anything. But the next day when they let everybody out of the cell, they were waiting for me.

AH: How many guys?

JY: I don't know how many.

AH: Like lots?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Ten or something?

JY: Easy ten.

AH: Wow.

JY: Because as soon as I got out of the door, out of my jail cell, one big guy, heavy set big guy hit me right in the face. Lucky I didn't fall down. As soon as he hit me, everybody moved in.

AH: Not just Sam?

JY: Yeah. I don't know what happened, they finally gave-up. But, when they gave up, I only had my shorts left. They tore everything off trying to grab me. I don't know what saved me because when a gang jumps on, you ain't got a chance.

AH: Did your Judo help you at all?

JY: I guess so, or sumo. Cause in sumo, you learn how to push.

AH: And you were never unconscious?

JY: No.

AH: So, you stayed through this being pummeled by these ten guys or more?

JY: Yeah, I didn't fall down either. If I would have fallen down, they would have kicked me to death.

AH: And what did the prison officials do?

JY: He didn't do nothing—

[recording paused]

AH: And were you beat-up badly to the point they had to take you to the infirmary?

JY: No.

AH: Who stopped the fight?

JY: Nobody, they just gave up and walked away.

AH: They got tired of hitting you, right?

JY: Yeah, because I asked my friend from Rohwer, he said, "What happened?" He said, "Nothing, they just got tired and walked away."

AH: Broken ribs or anything?

JY: No.

AH: Nothing?

JY: Nothing.

AH: Let's listen to see if we're still picking this up. [recording paused] So then, what was the upshot of that whole thing? Did you get disciplined? Did officials treat you as you were the one who started the fight?

[02:00:02]

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, so what, they put you in the hole?

JY: Yeah, they put me in the hole for five days.

AH: Wow, what's the hole like, anyway? I always hear that expression putting something in the hole. You've been there, what is the whole like?

JY: Well, it's not easy.

AH: What does it look like? Is it physically a hole?

JY: It's a cell, but cell with a small peephole. And then, I think about ten o'clock at night, they throw in a mattress. In the morning, about six o'clock, they take it out.

AH: So, you don't have anything during the day to lie down on?

JY: No.

AH: Wow.

JY: That's all you got, no blankets or nothing. It's cold.

AH: How much room do you have? What would you say the dimensions of the hole are?

JY: Oh, shucks, I guess maybe six or eight foot wide and about this long.

AH: What's this long because I don't—

JY: From here to there.

AH: Yeah, but how far is that because we are on a tape recorder, here. You got to say what it is.

JY: Maybe about ten foot, twelve foot.

AH: Okay, six by twelve?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Is it smaller than most cells?

JY: No, it's a regular cell.

AH: Okay, so the only difference is that you can't see out of it?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, then they leave the beds in the regular cells during the day, right?

JY: Oh, in the regular cell—

AH: But not in the hole?

JY: Yeah, not in the hole.

AH: Okay, so that's the main two differences. You only have the people, and then you don't have your cot during the day.

JY: And not only that, they make you take all your clothes off.

AH: When? During the day?

JY: No, before you go in the cell, they make you take all your clothes off, and they make you put on a coverall because they don't want nobody to commit suicide.

AH: Oh, I see. Is the difference is that in the other one you get exercise time, and then in the hole you don't get exercise time?

JY: No.

AH: Is that right, in the regular one you would get exercise?

JY: Yeah, you could go outside the yard.

AH: But, when you're in the hole, that's it?

JY: Yeah.

AH: You're in there for the five days or whatever?

JY: Yeah, twenty-four hours a day.

AH: Wow.

JY: And not only that, the food. They only fed me once a day.

AH: When?

JY: In the hole.

AH: Yeah, but what time of the day?

JY: In the morning.

AH: What kind of stuff did you get?

JY: I only got three slices of bread and one big, round beets.

AH: That was it, huh?

JY: That was it.

AH: And something to drink, water?

JY: Well, yeah, you got the faucet. You know? Where you wash your face.

AH: Oh, you do have a faucet in the cell.

JY: Yeah. Oh, they have a toilet.

AH: Is there a light in there or not? I was just wondering, you can read or anything in the hole, can you?

JY: Well, they don't give you nothing to read.

AH: Okay, so if there is a light, there is nothing to use it for, right? So, at the end of it, tell me your body feels, and your mind feels after being in the hole for like five days like that?

JY: No, I just think about the good times I had.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, when you came out, you weren't going to show them any kind of emotion or anything?

JY: Yeah, because every morning, the prison psychiatrist used to come to check to see if you are okay because that's his job. See, you don't want none of them to commit suicide or get sick. Some people can't stand it. You got a small peephole, he opens the door, people looks at me and he wondered, see if I'm okay or not.

AH: And then shuts the hole?

JY: No, he used to make fun of me.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: Open the window, he tells me, "Come here." Go up to see what he wants, he say, "You still want to fight?" (laughs) Make fun of me.

AH: Now, you told me once—I guess when we were on the trip in Las Vegas—that the guys that beat you up, some of them told you later on—and this was after you got out of the hole, right? That they were just doing it because they were put up to it by the other guys, and they felt sorry about it. Even the guy that—the big guy that you talked about that first hit you—he said that he was sorry, and he was doing it because of the pressure of the other guys. Is that right?

JY: Yeah, they apologized. One guy was six foot, four. I was friends with him before this happened. He told me, he said he wanted to jump in and help me, but he said if he jumped in, he would have got killed.

AH: By them? Yeah. And then what about the guys from Rohwer? They watched this?

JY: Three of them.

AH: Yeah.

JY: They know what cell they stay in, so they had so many people watching each cell so they won't jump in.

AH: Oh, so they were kept out of the fight, too.

JY: They could not have done anything anyway.

AH: No, they might have been killed, too, right?

JY: Yeah, cause they don't know Judo or anything. And they weren't physically fit like I was.

AH: They are skinnier and stuff?

JY: Well, they are about same height as me, but they weren't—

AH: They weren't built-up like you?

JY: Yeah. Because I used to—I knew to take care of myself. In my cell every night, I used to do push-ups.

AH: Did that little thing, when those people apologized, did it win you some respect among the prisoners so they left you alone after that?

JY: Yeah, it did. They respected me after that.

AH: Wow, just because you could take it, right?

JY: Well, because when I was in the hole, I could hear the other people that's in the hole. I could hear one guy saying, "Please let me out. I'll do anything you say."

AH: And you never said anything?

JY: No.

AH: Okay, that added to your respect then, right? And then, did you stay at Texarcana at the federal prison very long?

JY: Two years.

AH: Wow, two years you were there? That's where you served almost all of your time then?

- JY: Well, I stayed in the city jail for 120 days, and the judge wouldn't give me credit.
- AH: In Little Rock, you mean?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: You got no credit for that.
- JY: And that was bad.
- AH: That was worse than Texarcana?
- JY: Oh, yeah.
- AH: Tell me about that. I'm sorry. I should have asked you about that.
- JY: Cause over there, only once a day they fed us one bowl of black-eyed peas.
- AH: Uh-huh.
- JY: And three slices of bread. That's it; stale bread. That's it. I asked my Rohwer friend, they said, No, no, they fed us stale doughnuts in the morning." But they gave us one bowl of black-eyed peas in the morning.
- AH: And who were you in jail with at both of those places? Was it mostly white guys, black or what?
- JY: No, no, in Jerome, it was—I mean, the city of Little Rock, only four of us in one cell, one big cell.
- AH: The three Rohwer guys and you?
- JY: That's it.
- AH: And then when you went to Texarcana?
- JY: Oh, it's all mixed.
- AH: Whites, blacks—
- JY: Yeah, Mexicans—
- AH: Indians, whatever.
- JY: Only one that was separated was Jehovah Witnesses.

AH: Oh, really? Because they were pacifists?

JY: I guess so because they had something like in a dormitory; there was about 250, 500.

AH: Wow, there was a lot of them. And so, you stayed there about 1944 to 1946?

JY: Yeah, until I went into the Army.

AH: Tell us on the tape because I've heard this before, but there was someone else in the jail who was pretty influential on you who had been a big shot before, right?

JY: Yes, the ex-governor of Louisiana, Governor Leche.

AH: And what was he in there for?

JY: Well, the government appropriates so much money for the college of Louisiana, and he was stealing some of that money, part of it.

AH: So, he was helping himself to those funds, huh?

JY: Yeah.

AH: How did you get to know him?

JY: Well, I guess he heard about the fight; I guess he started talking to me. And he's the one that got me into the Army.

AH: And why did he get you in the Army? And how did he get you into the Army?

JY: Well, my folks went into Japan, and I found that if you do federal time, you lose part of your rights. I didn't know that. I'm still a citizen, but I can't get a passport.

AH: Oh, okay, you had restricted rights then.

JY: Yeah, jury duty, you can't do that. And what else did he say? He said you can't get a passport, but main thing is I can't get passport. I can't visit brothers and sister and parents. So, he told me to volunteer in the Army. He told me who to write for, and I wrote to Washington D.C. And he's got all the—(laughs)

AH: Connections.

JY: Yeah. And he's influential.

AH: And it worked.

JY: Yeah, it worked.

AH: Did it take a long time or not?

[02:10:00]

JY: No, it didn't take long. They took me to Dallas.

AH: Right from Texarcana, they took you to Dallas?

JY: Yeah, for a physical. I passed the physical, and they let me go.

AH: And where did you go to get inducted and to go to basic training?

JY: Oh, I went to over here, Monterey.

AH: Oh, you came out to California?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow, and this was after the war, right?

JY: Yeah. I went to Monterey, and then they sent me to Fort Ord in Washington to get my basic training.

AH: You mean Fort Lewis, don't you?

JY: Yeah, yeah, Fort Lewis.

AH: Okay, so that's where you did your basic.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then, what happen from there? The war was over, but were you sent overseas to the occupation or anything?

JY: Yeah, they wanted me to volunteer for another three years, I think, and go to Japan but I turned it down.

AH: No, thanks. (laughs)

JY: Yeah, because I was tired of all of that.

AH: Right.

JY: Getting up in the morning, eat, line up for chow. Army was the same thing. Yeah.

AH: And did those three guys that came from Rohwer, did they stay at Texarcana the whole time that you did?

JY: Yeah. *No, no*, they got out before I did.

AH: They did. Considerably before you did or right about the same time?

JY: No, earlier.

AH: Much earlier though?

JY: Because they were convicted before—

AH: Oh, okay. Okay, so that was it. It wasn't because you were treated differently from them?

JY: And then, they got out on good times.

AH: And you met those three—and you didn't get to see them very much—you did in Little Rock—but you didn't see them too much in Texarcana, did you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, you did?

JY: We were in the same cell block.

AH: Oh, okay, so for the whole time. So, you became very good friends with them?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then after the war, did you maintain a friendship with them?

JY: Yeah, I tried to, but it seemed like they weren't so interested.

AH: None of them?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, and where were they from?

JY: Well, they are two of them from right here in Sacramento, farmers, and then one of them from L.A., the city.

AH: Okay.

JY: His father was a lawyer.

AH: And that's where they went back to those places?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, so the Sacramento area and then L.A.?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, you did not continue a friendship with them after the war? I mean, you tried to, but it didn't work, right?

JY: Yeah. They always make some kind of excuse. I told them, let's get together and have lunch somewhere. They didn't want to.

AH: And what do you think was happening? What did they do that, you think?

JY: I don't know. A lot of them, they want to forget what they went through or they feel ashamed of what they did.

AH: Were they married after the war, when you were asking about this?

JY: Pardon me?

AH: Were they married, so did their wives didn't want them to do it?

JY: I don't know. All three of them married.

AH: And so you never did do anything with them until recently?

JY: Well, I used to, but even right now he's kind of—

AH: The one in Monterey Park?

JY: Yeah, kind of brushes me off. Because he is the only one left to back-up my story.

AH: And he won't do it?

JY: I asked him about me getting beat-up. He said they just got tired and walked away. And same as Little Rock jail, I lost fifty pounds.

AH: Where is that?

JY: Huh?

AH: In the Little Rock jail?

JY: Yeah, city jail.

AH: Did they lose weight, too?

JY: I asked him, "Am I right? I lost fifty pounds." He said, "Yeah, we all lost weight."

AH: Right.

JY: Yeah.

AH: So they'll back you up on certain things? They backed you up in what they saw in the fight and the people they just walked away, and then they backed you up on this eating thing, right? But they won't back you up publicly, is that it?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, so privately they'll tell you that, but they won't speak-out about it.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, so none of them have ever come out and said anything, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did they ever go to resisters meetings?

JY: No.

AH: So they don't take any part in that?

JY: No.

AH: Have you gone to resisters things?

JY: Yeah, in the eighties and early nineties.

AH: And so you got to know Frank Emi¹ and all the Heart Mountain people?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And Yosh Kuromiya² and Mits Kowakami?³ Not Mits Kowakami, No, that's Yosh Kuromiya, but what is Mits's last name? Is it Kowakami?

¹ Frank Emi, 2331.1, 2331.2, & 3734, Center for Oral and Public History.

² Yosh Kuromiya, 5775, Center for Oral and Public History.

JY: I don't know.

AH: I think it is, it's Kowakami. There's a lot of resisters in Mountain View, San Jose area. And then, there is another group down in Los Angeles, and then you met the one from Sacramento? Kenji Taguma?

JY: No.

AH: You know Kenji is that journalist, Martha's friend, he works for the *Nichi Bei*? His father was a draft resister at Granada. But where did you meet him? At what kinds of events did you meet him?

JY: Oh, in L.A.

AH: Oh, in L.A.

JY: Frank Chin was there.

AH: Oh, okay, you mean when they did it at the Methodist Church? Did they have a reunion of the resisters?

JY: Yeah, and they had a lot of food.

AH: Yeah, I went to that. That was about 1980 something, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: I went to that one.

JY: It was in the late eighties. Yeah, see, I got tired of hearing that in the *Rafu Shimpo*. All these articles about the draft resisters were chickens and cowards for not going.

AH: You were probably reading the stuff that the horse was writing in there, right? _____
(inaudible).

JY: Yeah, I got tired of it. I got tired of that. To me, it takes more guts to resist.

AH: Have you spoken out against it publicly? I mean, I heard you speak very briefly about Cheyenne. But have you spoken out other places?

JY: Cheyenne?

AH: I mean, not Cheyenne, at Bismarck.

JY: No, I give a speech at the Manzanar.

³ Mits Koshiyama, 5782, Center for Oral and Public History.

AH: Oh, during the pilgrimage?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, did you really? You were on the program?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, good. Was that the first time you spoke out against it publicly? And you spoke again in Bismarck? That was your second time?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Good. And you've been interviewed by numerous people, right? Because I think I heard that Paul Tsuneishi—⁴

JY: Yeah.

AH: —and then Martha interviewed you. Also, I heard an interview that Barbara Takei did with you, too.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Do you ever go out into any schools or any kinds of programs like that?

JY: No.

AH: Your brother, when he spoke, Tad, at Bismarck, he made it very short. He said, "I'm not proud of it, but I'm not ashamed of it." What did you think about that statement?

JY: To me, everybody don't think the same.

AH: Yeah, so how would you differ from that? If you do differ, how would you change that? Would you say the part, "Not only am I not ashamed of it, I'm very proud of it." Would you say it that way?

JY: No.

AH: How would you say it?

JY: I'd say, "I had no choice because of the way I was treated."

AH: But, you felt you had no choice, that because who you are and what you are and stuff and what you believe, once you are treated that badly, you need to be able to register your opinion, right?

⁴ Joe Yamakido, 5777, Center for Oral and Public History.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Were you mad at the time, in Jerome? When you signed the loyalty oath because you signed the letter, yes-yes, but in Jerome when you decided to resist, were you mad?

JY: Yeah, because they wanted to put us in a separate unit. This is united. You're supposed to fight together.

AH: Were you mad all the time that you were at Little Rock jail and also at Texarcana?

JY: No, I just forgot about it, because otherwise, you can't take it.

AH: So, if you gave it too much thought, you would be mad, but you put it out of your mind?

JY: Yeah, it's hard to take.

AH: What about now? All these years later, here we are on the Pearl Harbor day, sixty-two years later, are you mad about it now?

JY: No, I forgot everything.

AH: You did.

JY: I figured, what use is there having a chip on your shoulder? Otherwise, you can't enjoy life.

AH: So, it is in your own self-interest not to be mad about it?

JY: Yeah, otherwise, I wouldn't be helping these Caucasian ladies.

[02:19:14]

AH: How do you think the resisters should be remembered in history? Because one of the things is, we've been working to try to get all the resisters papers put out at the Japanese American National Museum at some meeting with Frank Emi and Yosh Kuromiya not too long ago, and they still haven't put their papers there. And I think one of the things they are not happy with is that the museum, in their exhibit that they have, did not do very much with the resisters. So, they feel that if the museum doesn't want to sort of come up front and really talk about this in a way that recognizes that this is an act of good Americanism, of dissenters against oppression and mistreatment and everything else, then why should they put their papers there? There is some of that feeling. Is that part of your feeling, too, that maybe resisters haven't been given their place?

JY: The thing is they want to suppress what resisters did.

AH: The resisters that I've talked to seem to be not so mad at the Caucasian community about this. It seems that most of them, their anger is directed at the Japanese American community.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And not just the JACL, it's all of those people who won't back their story up or won't say, for instance, "You did the right thing." They feel ashamed, and want them to feel ashamed. Is that how you feel? You're helping these old Caucasian ladies around here, but they might have put you in camp. But, they didn't put you in prison, and there's a difference, right? Camp was a prison, too, but they didn't put you in Little Rock. They didn't put you in Texarcana. If anybody did, it would have been, you can say it was the government officials backed-up by other groups like the JACL who are responsible for what happen to you. So a lot of the big anger that the other resisters have is towards the JACL. Do you have anger towards the JACL?

JY: No.

AH: You don't? So, that wasn't something that—

JY: Yeah, because there is nothing you can do. A lot of these Japanese, they figured the resisters makes it bad for the rest of Japanese. They figured the Caucasian is going to think bad about us.

AH: So, when you are angry—and most of the time you're not—when you are angry, who do you direct your anger at? Usually, something happens to you, and you say, "I'm pissed off at that person because they are the ones that did something." Who were the ones, for instance, when you have to locate the blame for your mistreatment as an American, which is what it's all about, really. [recording paused] —blame yourself, or you could blame, for instance, society at large. You can blame fate and say *shikata ga nai*, or you can blame specific people or groups, et cetera. The JACL we talked about, or somebody that snitched on you or whatever else it is. But who do you blame?

JY: I figured, everybody don't think the same, so I figured might as well forget about it. Otherwise, you can't keep on living.

AH: So, you don't blame anybody?

JY: No.

AH: Okay, so have you just forgotten about it?

JY: Yeah—well, just like my brother, younger brother, he don't help us on the farm. I don't have no grudge against him. So, you just live with it. Otherwise, I think that's

- why I went through all the jails. Like in a hole, some people can't take it. To me, I figured there is always somebody went through worse than I did.
- AH: So, you're philosophical about it?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: If somebody said that—and I had sort of felt when I have listened to the tape that you did with Barbara Takei, and I was thinking to myself that a lot of times—and Martha has said this to you in front of me. She said when you were younger you had a chip on your shoulder. Do you think she's right or not that you had a chip on your shoulder when you were younger?
- JY: I don't know.
- AH: That doesn't seem right?
- JY: No. I got my teeth knocked out when I was sixteen.
- AH: By whom?
- JY: Some white boys.
- AH: And what for? For doing what?
- JY: Just for kicks.
- AH: Where did they do this?
- JY: Oh, in the town of Torrance. Next to the small town they have a festival once a year, and they just wanted to have a good time. They picked on us when I was sixteen. My brother and my buddy, three of us, were in town for the festival. Yeah, and I got my teeth knocked out. Yeah.
- AH: Are those false teeth now? Really?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: So, you lost them when you were sixteen?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Wow.
- JY: See, in those days the cars had rumble seats.

AH: Yeah, I remember those.

JY: I was sitting on the back. My brother and my buddy were sitting in the front. Three guys came and—I don't know—told something to my brother. My buddy said, "Pick on somebody your own size." See, my brother is two years younger than me. I was sitting in the back. Before I knew it, one of the guys hit, bang! Sitting down, he hit me in the mouth.

AH: Wow.

JY: So, I jumped out of the seat and threw one guy in the sidewalk and got an arm lock on him, and I told the other two guys, "If you come any closer," I told them, "You guys jump in, I'm going to break his fuckin arm." So, they stayed away. And then, the guys, I was breaking his arm, he said, he start kind of—

AH: Crying?

JY: Crying and he said I'll pay for it and all that. So, I got up, let him go, got his driver license, shown his address and everything. I found out he was twenty-one years old. Shit.

AH: He was twenty-one?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow.

JY: I was only sixteen.

AH: Boy.

JY: So, the next day I went to his apartment, he was gone.

AH: Oh, he bugged out.

JY: He took off. I reported it to the police, but the police never did contact me. So, I had to fix—

AH: So, you had to pay for that?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And did you get a dentist to fix them? And what kind of teeth did they put in there?

JY: No, I just pushed them back in, and it kept okay for a while. Then I had to get a partial, and eventually all my teeth went bad. Yeah, at the same time when I was in

school—I don't know how old I was. Seven or eight years old. I had a fight with a Caucasian kid. He told me something, and I got mad. I threw him, and he started crying. I felt sorry for him and cried right with him.

AH: You cried with him? (laughs)

JY: Yeah.

AH: How did being a resister to the draft change your life at all do you think? What was the impact? Each of our actions have consequences for us. We decide to get married to somebody, and later on you say it was the wrong somebody. Both you and I have gotten divorces, and so we know what it means to be married, perhaps, to the wrong person.

JY: Yeah, I always think about it, but, to me, I just accepted it's already gone, you can't go back. Because a lot of time I think, "Geez, even though I should have gone in the Army—" Because the people that went into the Army made life better for all the Japanese. They gave their life away. But to me, it's still—it didn't have to be that way. When you are born right here, you got the rights. You don't have to give your life or brownnose the white people. So, that's what gets me all the time.

AH: Do you feel at peace with the decision you made?

JY: Yeah.

AH: You do? Good. So, would you like to pour cement over it now and not talk about it anymore? Or would you like, as the years go by, if somebody asked you to speak at an event, you would go speak at it? Or do you feel mixed about it?

[02:30:17]

JY: I figured it should be told, otherwise, it will happen again to another nationality. Because United States got all different nationalities. What if the United States goes to war against Mexico or Korea? Yeah, because, during our time, the Chinese wore badge, "I'm a Chinese American," because the people don't know the difference between Korean, Chinese, Japanese.

AH: The other night I was watching a talk on television by former President Clinton, and President Clinton said, "If somebody who is a government official, tells you not to think about it and not to talk about it, then they're not your friend." Do you agree with that? I thought you would. It was a powerful statement. The business to be silent and not rock the boat and everything, it's not only Japanese Americans who tell you that. A lot of people who are in power—even people who aren't in power would say that kind of thing and stuff. It's a question you have to come to grips with. Is that good advice? Even though, if you follow it, it may get you ahead, et cetera, does it makes you feel good about who you are, and the way in which you're being a

human being and being an American. I mean, to be quiet when you see injustice or should you constantly bring it up? It's such a terrible dilemma. One makes you feel better about yourself, when the other one lets you get ahead easier because nobody is going to punish you for that. So, you join the Army and stuff and just forget about this kind of thing. Anyway, I guess with that I just want to ask you, are there things that you want to talk about that I haven't been asking you but things that you wanted to say?

JY: President Kennedy, "Ask not what you can do for your country"—or something. What was it?

AH: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

JY: But to me, I think your parents come first, instead of giving your country. I think your parents come before your country. That's the reason why my folks went to Japan. I don't want to stay here by myself. That's the reason I signed for repatriation, too, because my mother gave me birth, go through a lot of pain.

AH: We didn't cover that. When did you sign for repatriation?

JY: Somewhere around '44, I'm not sure.

AH: Oh, you did? After the draft thing? After you were imprisoned?

JY: I don't remember—before or after. My mother kept on telling me to come join them.

AH: Okay, but when you got that advice from the former governor—I mean, Louisiana. You got that advice, by that time, when you were getting into the Army, had you already signed papers for repatriation?

JY: Yeah, I already signed it.

AH: Okay, so that reversed it when you got into the Army?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, okay.

JY: It's a wonder they accepted me.

AH: It is. If you had already said you didn't want to be an American, and then they let you join the service.

JY: Because it's up to Governor Leche.

AH: (laughs)

JY: He's the one that pulled the strings.

AH: So, that undid what you had done before? So, you were taking back your repatriation?

JY: I'm sure Governor Leche fixed it up.

AH: Wow.

JY: I went to Dallas right away and got my physical.

AH: You met a person who had been in high places in a very low place, didn't you? You really did. (laughs) And he helped you.

JY: I met a guard from Alcatraz that was in Texarkana.

AH: And what was he like?

JY: Oh, he was a nice guy. His name was Stites. I still remember him.

AH: And what happen to him that he ended up in Texarkana.

JY: No, they sent him to Texarkana—gave him a transfer because he was afraid for his life.

AH: Oh, I see, he was still a guard, but he was now a guard a Texarkana instead of at Alcatraz?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, okay.

JY: But, when he was in Texarkana, he told me, "This place is a kindergarten." He said, "No fun over here." So, he went back to Alcatraz, and when he arrived, he got killed.

AH: He did?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Wow.

JY: There's a book about him.

AH: What's the last name?

JY: Stites.

AH: Stites. S-t-i—

JY: T-e-s-or Z. He was a nice guy, too. I don't know why they killed him.

AH: Did you continue any relationships with anybody else that you had met at Texarkana?

JY: No.

AH: You didn't? So, you don't know any of those people anymore?

JY: No.

AH: What happens when you just leave jail? You leave all that behind, huh?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, it wasn't just the guys from Rohwer that you didn't see very much. You didn't see anybody.

JY: I just saw one guy, but he died right before I got to see him.

AH: You were trying to see him though?

JY: No, no, I didn't. When they let us out in the yard, I used to walk around the fence to get exercise with them. The Jehovah Witness—and when I was in Crystal City, you looked at the local paper and I saw his name there—

AH: In Crystal City?

JY: In the obituary.

AH: Wow. Now, you didn't mention you being in Crystal City. When did you go there?

JY: Not Crystal City, Crystal City. Crescent City.

AH: Crescent City. Oh, Crescent City, not Crystal City. Crescent, after the war when you lived up in Oregon.

JY: Yeah, it was about fifty or sixty years later.

AH: Oh, okay.

JY: And he was living in the same town.

AH: No kidding?

JY: And after he passed away I found out he was living there.

AH: You saw the obituary?

JY: Yeah, so I went to the Jehovah Witness church and asked them, "Is this the same person?" I told them the age, how tall he was and everything.

AH: That was him?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, you guys used to walk around the yard and talk?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did you hear what the Jehovah Witness had to say about the war and stuff? Did he talk about that to you?

JY: Yeah. He said they don't believe in killing people.

AH: You didn't either though.

JY: Yeah.

AH: You didn't believe in killing dogs, you didn't believe in killing—

JY: Animals—

AH: Anything.

JY: That didn't solve the problem.

AH: No.

JY: Yeah, one time I heard another convict telling the Jehovah Witness, "What would you do if a Jap raped your wife?" He said, "I'd kill him." He said, "I'd do the same if a white man raped my wife." That's the answer. (laughs) Yeah.

AH: He was in love then, wasn't he?

JY: Yeah, but all those Jehovah Witness are nice people.

AH: Right. And there's lots of them at Texarkana, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Didn't you say there were 250 or more?

JY: Yeah. And they are not hypocrites like a lot of them. They go to church. I'm pretty sure churches, they don't teach you to kill people.

AH: Were you divided up at Texarkana into two different types of prisoners? Because at McNeil Island, where some of the resisters went, they divided up the resisters and some of the Jehovah Witnesses and things like this and they put them out in an honor farm sort of thing where they were working. Then the other prisoners that were in there for things like acts of violence, they were all kept in the big house, and they didn't have interaction with them as you might think. Did you guys get put in there with all of the people that not only like the governor, a white collar crime, where there were people in the for homicide and other crimes, were you mixed with them?

JY: Yeah, mixed with everybody.

AH: You were?

JY: Yeah, murderers and everything.

AH: Wow, and did you ever get any heat from any of them?

JY: No. No, after a fight there, they left me alone.

AH: Okay, and so that was it?

[02:40:00]

JY: Yeah.

AH: And so, after the fight, there was nothing more?

JY: Only thing is the guards got after me.

AH: And what did they get after you for? I mean, beyond putting you in the hole, they did some other things too?

JY: Because the guards, they must have gone after them for not stopping the fight, so they used to gig me all the time?

AH: What does that mean?

JY: Oh, they say I did this I did that, and take my privilege away.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did that last for a long time?

JY: Yeah. One week, two weeks, sometimes a month I can't go to the yard. I'd be locked up all the time. I can't go to the library and get a book out to read.

AH: Really? Did you learn any skills when you were in the penitentiary there?

JY: No, I worked in the carpentry shop. And then, they had me working in the hospital, but I asked for a transfer because I was getting pressured too much. Because I had a high IQ, the doctor had me working as his assistant. And then, I got all the—what do you call it? The records of all the convicts.

AH: Their medical records?

JY: Yes, so I know which one is gay.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: Yeah. And the other convicts used to pressure me to tell them which guy is gay.

AH: Was there a high percentage of them that were gay?

JY: No, not too many. I got tired of that pressure.

AH: Wow.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Because they wanted to have sex with them and stuff?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Oh, really?

JY: Oh, it's always going on, saying, "Leave my girl alone." It used to be fights, and you get cut-up with a razor blade because they have you a razor blade to shave.

AH: Would they pressure you about that, sexual things?

JY: No, they wanted to find out which guy was gay.

AH: I mean, they didn't put any pressure on you, did they?

JY: Yeah, to find out which one—

- AH: Yeah, but not for sex? I don't mean the information you had, but did you get pressure?
- JY: No, no.
- AH: Nobody tried to seduce you?
- JY: No, they just wanted information. And then I had to help perform operations. I can't stand blood.
- AH: This is a guy that didn't want to fool with chickens, and now you have humans.
- JY: Yeah, I almost fainted in the operating room.
- AH: Really?
- JY: Operating is nice and cool, and the sweat starts pouring out. You know, when they cut open the stomach for operation? You see all that fat.
- AH: When you left prison, where did you go first? Did you go to L.A.?
- JY: No, from prison I went to the Army.
- AH: But, you weren't in the Army very long, were you?
- JY: No.
- AH: How long total were you in there?
- JY: Six months.
- AH: Six months. Then when you came out, you didn't have G.I. Bill, did you?
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: Oh, you got G.I. Bill? Okay, did you ever use it?
- JY: Yeah, I bought a home.
- AH: You bought a home. You told me earlier you got married at twenty-eight.
- JY: Yeah.
- AH: So, you had probably about four, five years there between prison and between marriage, huh? And where did you meet your wife?

JY: In a wholesale market.

AH: Is that where you came and started working?

JY: Yeah, her father owned wholesales market. He rented a stall. He went back to where he was but in a small way.

AH: But, he had been big before the war?

JY: Yeah.

AH: You have a picture here showing your wife as a little girl, and she's with a number of other Japanese girls. But also, there is a Caucasian movie star by the name of Shirley Temple.

JY: Yeah, that was her birthday.

AH: It was a birthday party, huh. So your wife had been at one time very affluent?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Did she have manners that struck you as still affluent even though they lost their money? She did?

JY: Yeah, she went to Maryknoll School.

AH: She went to Catholic school.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And how did you happen to meet her? Through her father?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, he kind of set you up with her?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, he must have liked you?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And he liked the fact that you worked hard and things?

JY: Yeah, because she was going with a Mexican boxer.

AH: Oh, really? Wow, you took a chance. And so, did you have a long courtship or just a short one? And you got married pretty fast?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And how long were you married?

JY: Oh, about sixteen years.

AH: And had kids with her.

JY: Yeah.

AH: How many did you have with her?

JY: Five.

AH: Oh, so all of your kids. That's your only marriage, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And you were married for about sixteen years and have five kids. The pictures of your kids are all over here.

JY: The oldest is adopted.

AH: And where from?

JY: She was married to a Chinese, but he wouldn't give child support, so I adopted him.

AH: Oh, really? Wow. And you have a daughter, now, that lives here in Half Moon Bay.

JY: Yeah.

AH: That's your youngest.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then, your other three kids are in the general area, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And why don't you just give their names so that we have that.

JY: The oldest one, the one I adopted, lives in Fremont.

AH: Okay, and his name is?

JY: Steve.

AH: And then your next one is?

JY: Wayne.

AH: And Wayne lives where?

JY: He lives in Covina.

AH: Does what?

JY: He does—what do you call it? Lays marble.

AH: Okay, you mean flooring and stuff?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And then the next one is?

JY: Eileen, lives up north.

AH: Up north where?

JY: In Crescent City.

AH: And she's married?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And she has a family?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And what does she do for a living?

JY: Well, she works part-time at the school.

AH: And her husband—

JY: Works at the Pelican Bay Prison.

AH: Okay, and that's where you used to live, Crescent City.

JY: Yeah.

AH: Okay, and then, did you live with them or live just in the general area near there?

JY: No, I lived three miles away.

AH: Three miles away. And then, is the next one the daughter here in Half Moon Bay?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And her name is?

JY: Lauren.

AH: And for a job, what does she do?

JY: Works at a post office.

AH: Post office, and your kids are all involved with, for the most part, people of different nationalities, right? Either have them as their significant others as they use that term or else they are married to them, right? What do you do with your time? What's your life been like now—you're retired from where? Where was your retirement from?

JY: I worked for Vons grocery in a warehouse.

AH: That was it, you're worried because the pension could be in effect. Where did you work in Vons?

JY: At—what the hell is that city now?

AH: Culver City?

JY: No, it's near Pasadena. I forgot the name of the city.

AH: Real close to Pasadena? Glendale?

JY: No, south.

AH: South of Pasadena?

JY: Toward the racetrack.

AH: Oh, you mean near Arcadia—

JY: South of the racetrack.

AH: San Bernardino? South Pasadena?

JY: No.

AH: Altadena? Alhambra?

JY: Next to Alhambra. East of Alhambra.

AH: I don't know the geography of that area that well.

JY: Oh, El Monte.

AH: El Monte, okay. That's where you worked. Okay. And so you worked for how many years there?

JY: I don't know—

AH: Twenty or so.

JY: I quit once, and I went back again.

AH: And did you like that job?

JY: Yeah, I was the foreman.

AH: And so you made fairly good money?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And you had a really good benefit then?

JY: Yeah.

AH: So, when you see the strike right now, what are you thinking?

JY: Yeah, I'm thinking about my benefits. Yeah, because last year I didn't have to pay no insurance. Now, this year I have to pay \$40 a month.

AH: Wow.

JY: Yeah.

AH: And how long have you been retired?

JY: Oh, I retired early, sixty-two.

AH: When you were sixty-two years old.

JY: Yeah, I've been retired nineteen years.

AH: You were retired in the eighties then?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Early eighties. And then, when you got retired, most of your retirement years were spent up in Crescent City and now here. And what do you do with your time now? This is such a beautiful area, this Half Moon Bay. What do you do? I visited your garden, and you spent a lot of time there.

JY: Well, I go to the senior center once or twice a week and eat lunch there.

AH: Oh, you have friends there?

JY: Yeah, I talk to them, meet new friends.

AH: You have any hobbies that you pursue?

JY: No.

[02:50:00]

AH: I know you do a lot of handyman stuff for neighbors here and people who can't do it for themselves and you're mechanical and things. You have your garden, and you told me you take long walks around. You probably walk about eighteen miles a week, right?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And you see your daughter on occasion and travel around. And you've been going to conferences, lately, with Martha. I saw you at two different ones in these last few months. Your life is pretty busy.

JY: Oh, I used to travel all over. I got tired of it. Too many complaints.

AH: And do you like gambling?

JY: Yeah.

AH: And where do you go and gamble?

JY: Oh, I go to Indian casino.

AH: Oh, really? Where's that at?

JY: Cash Creek.

AH: Oh, is it far from here?

JY: About two hours.

AH: So, you go over there. And do you drive yourself?

JY: No, I go with my daughter.

AH: So, she takes you over?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Do you go on any tours with the bus anymore?

JY: No, I get car sick.

AH: Oh, you get car sick. Can you drive? Do you have a driver's license?

JY: Yeah.

AH: You do. I mean, I saw your car out there, but when you just said that about your daughter taking you over there, I was just wondering. You do the local driving yourself then?

JY: Yeah, I go to L.A. every year.

AH: And when you go to San Mateo, nearby here to shop, you're the one who drives? She doesn't take you in there, huh?

JY: No.

AH: And your health is pretty good? You have a few complaints lately because you were telling me about some small problems.

JY: My shoulder.

AH: But otherwise, you look great, and you seem to be in good health. And these are happy years for you?

JY: Except my shoulder, that's all.

AH: Right. But, I mean, you're working on the yard, you're walking out there, you're involved and engaged in things. Do you read at all?

JY: Yeah. (laughs) I can't keep up with all the reading.

AH: What kind of reading do you do these days?

JY: Oh, mostly health magazines and then read about all those resisters, the books. A lot of books about the resisters.

AH: And Martha told me you were reading Eric Muller's book, *Free to Die for Your Country*.

JY: Yeah.

AH: How are you coming on that?

JY: I'm almost finished.

AH: You're almost finished, and you're enjoying that book?

JY: Yeah.

AH: Yeah, good. Well, I've enjoyed this interview, and I want to thank you for your hospitality.

END OF INTERVIEW