

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Children's Village at Manzanar Oral History Project

An Oral History with SAM MASAMI TANAKA

Interviewed

By

Reiko Katabami

On August 6, 1993

OH 2331.2

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NARRATOR: SAM MASAMI TANAKA

INTERVIEWER: Reiko Katabami

DATE: August 6, 1993

LOCATION: Cerritos, California

PROJECT: Children's Village

RK: This is an interview with Sam Masami Tanaka by Reiko Katabami for the Japanese American Project of the Oral History program at California State University, Fullerton. The interview is being held in Cerritos on August 6, 1993 at approximately 10:15 a.m.

ST: Nine-fifteen.

RK: Sorry, 9:15 a.m. What is your birthday and birthplace?

ST: January 22, 1930 in Alameda, California.

RK: You are second generation?

ST: Yes.

RK: Your age right now?

ST: Sixty-three.

RK: Can I have your parents' backgrounds? What part of Japan—

ST: Both of them came from Fukuoka.

RK: Can you describe your father?

ST: Can I describe him?

RK: When did he come to the U.S.?

- ST: I really don't know when he came. I have very little background on my mother.
- RK: You told me that he was an illegal alien?
- ST: Yeah.
- RK: Can I ask you about your relationship with your siblings? You have brothers and sisters?
- ST: Yes, I have two brothers and one sister. And they all live in the Los Angeles area.
- RK: Last time you told me, your oldest sister went back to Japan?
- ST: Um-hm. Whether she's alive now, I don't know it. She's somebody I don't know.
- RK: How old are your siblings right now?
- ST: I have a brother is sixty-four; a brother sixty-five; and my sister would be sixty-seven.
- RK: Can you briefly describe about your father?
- ST: I really don't know much about my father. I think he came to U.S. about 1918, 1920; somewhere around there. He came in through Mexico because the quota was already filled, and he was an illegal alien.
- RK: Can I ask about your mother's background?
- ST: I really don't know my mother's background. I can't say nothing about her.
- RK: You told me your mother was sick and—
- ST: That's why—she went to the hospital when I was maybe three, and I've never known her so I don't know any background on her.
- RK: So, your father took care of you?
- ST: Yeah, he took care of us for a few years and then were sent to a county welfare home in Martinez, California.
- RK: You didn't go to foster family?
- ST: Not right away.
- RK: Oh, I see.

ST: Then the welfare people found a foster home for us, and we stayed there from when I was about four to about nine. Then we went to an orphanage in San Francisco.

RK: Can you describe briefly about the foster family?

ST: She had two daughters and a son, and she didn't have a husband. I don't know what happened to her husband. We lived on a farm about twenty miles from town.

RK: Was it a Japanese foster family?

ST: Yes.

RK: They didn't have children?

ST: They had two daughters and a son.

RK: How did they treat you?

ST: They treated us like we were one of their kids, very good relationship.

RK: Did your father visit you in those six years?

ST: Hm, I remember him visiting, maybe, twice. That's all.

RK: How was that? Do you remember anything about your father?

ST: Well, I remember they say he was a gardener. He was working in the Sacramento area, but I never did go visit him, so I don't really know.

RK: And then, you told me until nine years old, you stayed there?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: The reason is why?

ST: Well, the lady got sick with typhoid fever so we had to go find another place to live because she was unable to care for us, and that's when we went to the orphanage in San Francisco.

RK: Your father was living in what area of California?

ST: I don't really know.

RK: They're four siblings, including you, when you went to San Francisco?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Can I ask you background about Salvation Army? How many staff members were there?

ST: I don't remember how many but there was probably about between ten and fifteen members who were about forty, fifty kids. And it was a Salvation Army orphanage founded by a Japanese person.

RK: Do you know the name?

ST: I think his name was Kobayashi, but I'm not sure.

RK: So, Kobayashi is Mr. and Mrs. Kobayashi?

ST: Yeah, but I think it was just him that founded the home in 1930, '31, something like that.

RK: Okay, and then the children were divided into younger ones and the little ones—

ST: Well, they were divided but they were divided into age groups. Boys and girls were separated from each other as far as living quarters, but we all played together, ate together.

RK: Can you describe the daily routine at the Salvation Army?

ST: Well, as I remember, we'd wake up early, have breakfast together, go to school, come home. We had some kind of snack when we get home. If we were young, we took a rest for maybe an hour. If not, then the boys and girls all played by themselves or did their homework. We had dinner, I'd say around maybe by six o'clock, and did whatever chores you had to do in the evening.

[00:10:12]

RK: Regarding chores, were you paid for that labor?

ST: No, it wasn't anything that you got paid for. It was something you did because you need to do the house chores.

RK: Last time you told me you had a chance to work outside *San Francisco Evening Post*.

ST: Oh, yeah.

RK: Was it allowed just to walk outside?

ST: What was that again?

RK: The orphans were not allowed to walk outside?

ST: No, they were.

RK: Oh, really?

ST: Yeah, but we had to get permission to let them know what we were doing.

RK: So, some children walked outside?

ST: Yes.

RK: Regarding the staff members, would you describe the relationship between the staff members and children discipline-wise?

ST: Well, I was kind of young so I don't really remember too much. It was just like you would be in your own home. You were disciplined if you were bad, if you weren't, well, things were all right. We did get scolded, and we did get punished in one way or another.

RK: From my other informants, I've noticed some staff members were very strict, and it was mostly very, very strict treatment.

ST: To me there is always that because there is always somebody that is strict somebody that isn't. Just like your father would be strict but your mother wouldn't be or visa versa. It's natural.

RK: Oh, really?

ST: At least to me it's natural.

RK: Did you have an experience that you had blister?

ST: Did I have what?

RK: Blister?

ST: What's that?

RK: Was it a really very painful because staff members asked you to sit on the chair at dinnertime, but you already have a blister?

ST: No, no, no. Not that bad.

RK: Oh, really?

ST: (chuckles)

RK: So, you went to school, outside to a public school?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: Do you know the name of the school?

ST: No, I don't remember.

RK: Did you experience friendship in the school? I've noticed it's mixed school.

ST: Yeah. Um-hm, just like anybody else. But I don't remember names.

RK: Did you know any *hapa* kids, half Japanese kids, in the Salvation Army?

ST: Did I know any what?

RK: *Hapa* kids or half Japanese?

ST: Hm, I think there was, but I don't remember who. But, I think there was, yeah.

RK: Really? Boy or girl?

ST: Both.

RK: Both, okay. Do you remember how the *hapa* were treated?

ST: Well, they were treated just like everybody else.

RK: Same?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Did you suffer from racial prejudice during Salvation Army period?

ST: Not in the home.

RK: How about outside?

ST: After the war broke out, yeah. We had prejudice in school, but that's the only time.

RK: While you were in the Salvation Army, how did the adults outside treat you?

ST: They treated us all right, no problem.

RK: They didn't look down on you?



- ST: When you're a little boy, you don't look at it that way. (chuckles)
- RK: Do you have any relatives in the U.S.?
- ST: Other than my brothers and sister, no.
- RK: Your mother and father came—
- ST: Well, if I have relatives, I don't know.
- RK: So, your mother was staying in a hospital? Did you visit your mother?
- ST: I went to visit her one time in '56, '57, and the doctors and social workers advised me to leave the things the way they were. And so, I did.
- RK: At age twenty-six or something?
- ST: Yeah.
- RK: So, after the war?
- ST: Yeah. Well, this was after I had grown up.
- RK: Culturally, how much Japanese culture and how much American culture was present at the Salvation Army?
- ST: It was pretty much like an American home, really. They didn't practice a lot of Japanese customs because it was normally run by *hakujin* people. So, even though they were Japanese supervisors and workers, it wasn't really practiced as a Japanese oriented home.
- RK: Do you remember earlier period and there were Japanese occupying and later Caucasian staff members came?
- ST: When I was there, it was mixed.
- RK: Mixed? Half and half?
- ST: Well, I don't remember how many, but they were a mixed group.
- RK: Before Salvation Army, did you have difficulty language-wise? I mean your parents come from Japan and they used to speak Japanese?
- ST: No, I had no language barrier.
- RK: How about the foster family, did they speak Japanese?

- ST: Both. What little Japanese I know, I spoke, and I spoke English, too.
- RK: You went to foster family at three. Were you not exposed to English during those six—
- ST: No, I went to English school.
- RK: Oh, you went to English school?
- ST: Um-hm.
- RK: It's a public school? Grammar school?
- ST: Regular public school.
- RK: Did you have any difficulty?
- ST: No.
- RK: Will you describe your school? Was it located near Salvation Army?
- [00:20:00]
- ST: Yeah, it was only two blocks away. At Salvation Army we all spoke English, we didn't speak Japanese, at all, so there was no problem.
- RK: Will you describe the teachers? Were they Caucasian teachers?
- ST: I don't remember them.
- RK: Oh, really?
- ST: Unh-uh.
- RK: How about Japanese teachers?
- ST: No.
- RK: Okay. Did you mingle with other children from other races?
- ST: Yeah, at school we did when we played, but we really didn't have, too, much to do after we left school.
- RK: Did you take schoolmates to the Salvation Army orphanage?
- ST: No.

RK: Why?

ST: Well, to me, when you're an orphan, you kind of feel ashamed of bringing people to your home, place of living, but if you have a home, you don't feel that way.

RK: Were the children allowed to visit other homes?

ST: Yeah, they could go play somewhere else, but they always came home in the evening.

RK: After high school or the age of eighteen, you have to leave the Salvation Army?

ST: After the relocation, let's see, in '45 we were released from camp, and we were never in an orphanage after that, so there was a difference in, shall we say, our life.

RK: Do you remember those people who left Salvation Army at age eighteen or graduation of high school?

ST: I remember a few of them, yeah.

RK: Those people came back [because] if they had siblings?

ST: Oh, yeah, they came back because they had brothers or sisters and—well, you can say friends, too, so they came back to visit every now and then.

RK: Can you describe your siblings in those days?

ST: What do you mean can I describe them?

RK: No, did you see each other?

ST: Oh yeah, like I said, my—the boys were on one side, the girls were on the other, and any time I wanted to see my sister, it was no problem. And I always seen her at meals. And my brothers, well, they were on the same side I was, so it didn't matter, I could see them anytime.

RK: Do you think the children were very well behaved in that period at the Salvation Army?

ST: Oh, yeah.

RK: Really?

ST: Well, there's always—I shouldn't say bad boys, but there's always people that argue and fight but it's never really bad.

RK: Did you ever have any aspirations for your future?

ST: Not when I was young, no. When I started growing up, that's different.

RK: Did the staff members get to talk about discipline?

ST: Not in the Salvation Army. Like I said, I was, too, young so it really didn't make that much difference. They may have done that, I don't know.

RK: During Salvation Army period, did you see your father?

ST: No.

RK: Do you have any idea what he was doing?

ST: I didn't know where he was.

RK: So, two times with your foster family, and then since then, did you have a chance to see your father?

ST: Well, first time I'd seen time after that was in 1946.

RK: So, after the war?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: I see. Do you remember any adoption inspection at the Salvation Army?

ST: Not really. I don't remember anything like that.

RK: You finished grammar school during Salvation Army period?

ST: No, in the relocation camp, but I was in the Children's Village then.

RK: How long did you stay in Salvation Army? You went at the age of nine?

ST: Yeah.

RK: And you went to Manzanar in 1942?

ST: Yeah.

RK: So, at the age of twelve, you went to Manzanar?

ST: About three years.

RK: Or four years?

- ST: (chuckles) Maybe three. I don't know, somewhere around there.
- RK: You went to Salvation Army in 1939?
- ST: Yeah. I don't remember what month but around '39.
- RK: Do you have any complaints about Salvation Army?
- ST: No, not really.
- RK: Really? Do you have any vivid memory about the Salvation Army?
- ST: Any what kind of memory?
- RK: Vivid memory?
- ST: Just what we used to do and play but nothing out of the ordinary.
- RK: Do you remember children from the outside visiting the Salvation Army?
- ST: Yeah. Are you talking about the kids that came into the home?
- RK: Um-hm.
- ST: Yeah, you really don't know why or for what reason they came. All you know is that you had a few new ones all the time.
- RK: All the time?
- ST: Um-hm.
- RK: And then, did they assimilate?
- ST: Was there a similarity to what?
- RK: No, assimilating to the orphans in the Salvation Army? Did they have difficulties?
- ST: I guess some of them did. You know, I don't really know how they felt.
- RK: During grammar school, who was your friends, *hakujin* or—
- ST: Well, in school, most of the kids from the home. If they were my age, same class, that's about all I played. I really didn't play a lot with outside kids too much.

RK: I've noticed other informants felt at mealtime it's not a sufficient meal they were given. How about you? Do you have any specific memory? You were always hungry?

ST: It's hard to say that different homes had different ways. I guess, I would say no.

RK: Oh, really?

[00:30:00]

ST: Yeah. Well, when you're growing up you never have enough to eat.

RK: So, you had the chance to walk outside, will you describe briefly?

ST: Well, I had the chance to deliver newspaper so I did that only for about three months because the war broke out, and after the war broke out, well, we weren't allowed outside after certain hours so I had to give it up.

RK: Do you have any memory how much you earned?

ST: No, I forgot how much I earned. Maybe \$3 a week or something like that. The money I made was my own money.

RK: Did you experience any stealing? Because most Salvation Army children didn't have any allowance or pocket money, so most of the children had to steal, is that correct?

ST: Oh, I think everybody that, ah, wants something gets it one way or another, regardless if it's stealing, beg for it, or what. Yeah, I guess you can say that.

RK: Did children do some labor or chores?

ST: I don't know if they get any allowance. Like I said, I was young so I never got anything so I do not know.

RK: Oh, really? How did you know about Pearl Harbor attack?

ST: Well, I was coming home from the park one afternoon when I heard what was everybody shouting, and I found out when I got home that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor.

RK: After Pearl Harbor, did you experience any name-calling or Jap?

ST: Yeah, there was at school but only in school.

RK: Oh, really? So, other kids or other students? Oh, really?

ST: That happened maybe a week or two after they declared war and the things the people heard on the radio, but before that, no.

RK: Do you remember when you went to Manzanar, 1942?

ST: I think it was in May of 1942.

RK: Do you have any idea when the school stopped? You didn't go to school because of—

ST: We went to school until school ended in May.

RK: Oh, really? So, you can go outside on your own because of school?

ST: Yeah, well, we went to school on our own, we came home on our own, but the only thing is we had a curfew in the evening so we had to be in by a certain time.

RK: So, you stayed inside?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: So, will you describe how and when you went to Manzanar?

ST: Well, it was, like I said, around May of '42. They put us on a bus, we went to the ferry, took a ferry over to the Oakland train station, and we boarded a train. We went to Manzanar on a train. I guess we were one of the few people that didn't go to an assembly center prior.

RK: How do you spell the name of the place?

ST: You mean Oakland?

RK: (laughs) Assembly center.

ST: No, we didn't go to an assembly center.

RK: Okay.

ST: Most people went to an assembly center before they went to a camp. That's because, well, you figure, the Japanese in the area were all taken away and put into an area before the relocation centers were put up. Then from there they went, but we did not.

RK: So, there was no nametag numbering?

ST: No.

RK: But, those people that went to assembly center?

ST: I understand they did, yes.

RK: So, when you arrived in Manzanar, you didn't take a bus?

ST: No, from the train to the relocation center, they took us in a bus, but we had no nametags, no nothing. We went right to the Village.

RK: Do you have any memory of inside the train? All children sleeping?

ST: We left during the day, but when we got there, I remember at night we were sleeping. I remember the train stopping, and they unhooked us.

RK: Unhook?

ST: Yeah, unhooked the train—the car that we were in, and they left us wherever they were supposed to pick us up. And then, the next morning, when we woke up, well, the bus was there to take us to the camp.

RK: So, it took two almost days?

ST: Yeah.

RK: You left Salvation Army in the morning? Early morning?

ST: Yeah.

RK: And you arrived next morning?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Who went to Manzanar with you?

ST: Well, there was one Japanese couple.

RK: The Kobayashis?

ST: No, their name was Ichida.

RK: Oh, really?

ST: And they worked in the home in San Francisco. Now, I can't remember if any of the other *hakujin* staff members went, but I remember those two went because they were put in the camp also.



RK: Did they work in Children's Village?

ST: No.

RK: Oh, they went to other barrack?

ST: Well, they went to their own because they had two boys, so they went as a family.

RK: To another barrack?

ST: Right. But, they were not employed at the Village.

RK: So you have no memory of staff members, where did they go?

ST: Unh-uh.

RK: So, what did you bring with you?

ST: I really don't remember, just my clothes.

RK: So, you were given a bag or sack?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: Just the clothes and toys?

[00:40:00]

ST: Yeah.

RK: Did you regain the belongings you left behind?

ST: Not really, I didn't have much.

RK: You didn't care.

ST: No.

RK: So, tell me about the Children's Village. How many staff were there?

ST: I don't remember how many staff, but we had the supervisor which was Mr. and Mrs. Matsumoto<sup>1</sup>, but they looked over the whole Village. But where I lived was where the younger boys were from maybe six, seven, maybe six to twelve, thirteen, which was the grammar school age kids. And we had one supervisor, and I think there was maybe fifteen to twenty of us.

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<sup>1</sup> Lillian Matsumoto and Taeko Nagayama, O.H. 2492, Center for Oral and Public History.

RK: In one dormitory?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: So, you were in the younger section?

ST: Yes. And there was an older section where they were from junior high up to high school; maybe there was fifteen, twenty of them there, too. I don't remember.

RK: So, you experienced both sides, younger side and older side?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: How did you spend your free time in Children's Village period?

ST: Help clean the barracks, playing, going to school, doing your homework, whatever, but most of the time you played. (chuckles)

RK: So, back and forth, people making noise after Pearl Harbor? There was commotion?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Did you know what it means?

ST: No, not for a few days.

RK: Were you scared?

ST: No.

RK: So, you didn't have any concept of what was behind the commotion?

ST: No, not at that time.

RK: Did you know Executive Order? Did the staff members tell you?

ST: No.

RK: At the time of the evacuation, did you know the word evacuation?

ST: Yeah, well, we found out from other kids that they had to leave.

RK: Did the other kids get the information from maybe radio?

ST: Well, when I say other kids, outside of the home, and the kids we went to school with. A lot of them quite school before school was over because they had to leave. Like I said, we stayed in school until was almost over.

RK: How did you contact outside of the Salvation Army life? Through the radio or newspaper?

ST: They had radios and, well, I guess you read the headlines and you hear people shouting about the war this and that.

RK: Because I'm an outsider, I don't how. How was the general mood among the orphans inside the Salvation Army?

ST: I think it was normal as far as the people concern because there wasn't nothing, really, we could do, but I don't really know.

RK: How about brotherhood and sisterhood solidarity among children?

ST: No, I don't think so.

RK: Did you perceive staff member as father figure and mother figure?

ST: No.

RK: How was it?

ST: Well, I would say there was none.

RK: Just a big brother?

ST: No, not really big brother. It's just that—

RK: The person who had responsibility for children?

ST: Yeah, I guess you can say that because they were there, they looked after you like it would be their own brother and sister, but they weren't assigned to you as a big brother or whatever.

RK: So, when you arrived in Manzanar, what was your reaction?

ST: It was kind of disillusioned to see what kind of condition we were going to be living in, but you had to accept what you had.

[00:47:00; recording paused]

RK: So, we are talking about the period of moving to Manzanar from Salvation Army. Did you perceive that younger kids, for them it was like a picnic experience?

ST: No, I don't think it was like a picnic. It was something you were told to do and you did. That's the way you were kind of brought up.

- RK: During your time at the Salvation Army, did you have any experience with picnic?
- ST: I remember we went to summer camp. I guess, now and then we did have a picnic. I don't remember where we went, but we went to the park and things like that. That was probably only on Sunday or whatever.
- RK: During your time at the Salvation Army period, did you ever have the opportunity to go downtown to go to the movies?
- ST: Yeah, if you had money, or if you wanted, you went wherever you wanted to as long as you came home.
- RK: So, it's individual on your own?
- ST: Well, yeah, I guess you can say on your own. But, you didn't always go by yourself, you went with somebody else.
- RK: So, the Salvation Army chartered buses or something like that?
- ST: No. Well, we lived in the city, so it's not like you had to take a bus to go to the city. A lot of time we walked, a lot of time we take a streetcar.
- RK: Were you told you were going to Manzanar, to relocation center?
- ST: No, they didn't really know where we were going, but I know they told us we were going—
- RK: Somewhere.
- ST: Yeah, but I don't remember where.
- RK: So, the evacuation time was at twelve?
- ST: Um-hm, yes.
- RK: You were twelve. So, you saw the barbed wire, the towers, the military barracks?
- ST: Um-hm.
- RK: What was your reaction?
- ST: Well, I guess I would have to say this was like a prison, not like a camp because that's what you would relate that kind of thing to.
- RK: When did you realize Japanese people lost property?

- ST: Oh, I didn't find that out until, maybe, '46, '47 after I started growing up, learning some of the things that happened. But, if you don't have nothing, you don't lose nothing, so I didn't know about things like that.
- RK: Changing subject, there was a reunion in 1992, I've noticed a lot of people, especially Nisei people that said no-no reunion. Did you know that?
- ST: Well, a lot of people resented having to, shall we say, remember what they had to go through. But, that was all individuals that I felt that's the way they felt. But, when you're in an orphanage, and you don't really have a family other than your people that you live with, it's just like having a reunion with your brothers and sisters. And that's the way I felt. And there are a few, like I say, that resented having to be an orphanage or felt that was a part of the life that they didn't want to remember.
- RK: Especially Maryknoll people didn't attend. Did you know that?
- ST: They were quite a few.
- RK: Oh, really? Most of them didn't come.
- ST: No, I didn't say most. Quite a few didn't come but for one reason or another, you don't know what their reasons are. Like I say, some wrote back and said they didn't wish to come, but I think the ones that did come, enjoyed what they had as far as a reunion is concerned.
- RK: Did you know that some people rejected *Times* reporters so nobody could read about the—
- ST: Well, yeah, I heard about that. You know, that to me is an individual preference so you can't say why.
- RK: Do you know why it was named Children's Village?
- ST: Well, I don't really know why, but I can figure out—well, it was a Village of two barracks, and it was in a little area put off by itself. I guess they had to give it a name, so they gave it a name as Children's Village. Who came up with the name, I can't say. I don't remember.
- RK: When you arrived at Children's Village, did you see children there from Maryknoll and Shonien?
- ST: Um-hm.
- RK: Did they mingle with each other very smoothly?

ST: I think so because people had the same type of problem. It was not like, Well, who are you or what are you doing here? It was just something you accepted.

[00:55:40]

RK: What is the difference between Salvation Army period and Children's Village period daily routine-wise? Did you get allowance at the Children's Village?

ST: No. (laughs)

RK: How about clothing grant?

ST: They gave us clothes, yeah, but you didn't go buy your clothes.

RK: Can you buy anything?

ST: Well, if you had the money, yeah, you'd go buy what you want, but you really didn't have your own money as far as clothing allowance or anything like that to go buy. Most of the time, I would have to say you got either hand-me-downs or donations type clothes so it didn't matter.

RK: Changing subject, did you have any contact with Mr. and Mrs. Matsumoto? Or just Mrs. Matsumoto? Mr. Harry Matsumoto died.

ST: Yeah, well, at the reunion I did, but other than that, no.

RK: During Manzanar life, did you have any racial prejudice from people outside the Village?

ST: Well, you say prejudice, I don't think it was so much prejudice. I think it was more—just like you would say kids who would dislike each other because they came from a different area or didn't act the same way, but I don't think it is what you would call prejudice.

RK: So, you didn't feel uncomfortable when you talk or mingled with people?

ST: Unh-uh.

RK: Can you provide a picture of the Children's Village barrack?

ST: It was a little different from the regular barracks. You would have other people say we had three, four families living in one barrack, but ours was like a dormitory with showers and bathrooms right in the same building, whereas the other ones had to go, maybe, half-a-block away to go take a shower, to go to the bathroom. And then the washroom was like on one side block, and if you lived on the other side, well, it took you five, ten minutes just to walk to the washroom just to wash your clothes. We

- didn't have that problem because everything was right there in one building. I really don't remember who did our wash, but I remember the wash was being taken care of by staff members.
- RK: The older girls helped with laundry?
- ST: Could be, I don't remember.
- RK: Did you have any chores assigned?
- ST: Not really chores, just—well, you had chores as far as cleaning your dormitory and keeping your showers and bathrooms clean, but I don't remember anything else other than that.
- RK: During the Salvation Army, you had chores, right?
- ST: Right.
- RK: So, boys had to do the dishes—
- ST: No, we didn't do that. I was young, so I didn't have to do that. The older people did.
- RK: Oh, really? So other kids, boys, would have to clean the toilet?
- ST: Boys and girls—
- RK: Mop.
- ST: But, when you're young, you do what you're supposed to do or what you're told to do.
- RK: Did you visit the other barracks?
- ST: Yeah.
- RK: Did you have experience eating at other blocks dining tables?
- ST: Um-hm, it was similar to what we had.
- RK: So, you didn't think Children's Village food was best?
- ST: No, we didn't feel that it was any different.
- RK: Really?

- ST: Because I think everybody had the same type of food. Certain days they would eat certain things. Your food was basically the same. It was just some cooks would cook it a little different, that's all.
- RK: Clifton's [Cafeteria] cook.
- ST: Say if you had fish, well, maybe one would cook it one way, the other would cook it another way. It's still fish.
- RK: Some children from Children's Village were eating outside?
- ST: Not on a regular basis, no. But, they would get permission to go their friend's place, and they would go eat. But most of the time, each block had their own allotment of food, so you couldn't do it too often.
- RK: Did you perceive that the Children's Village facilities were better than the other barracks?
- ST: Yeah, I would say so.
- RK: And Children's Village would have more colorful?
- ST: Like I say, when you have a barrack with your restroom facilities, very thing right there in the building, it makes a big difference. You don't have to go half-a-block away to go to take a shower. Or getting up in the middle of the night you have to go to the restroom, where are you going to go?
- RK: So, you felt it was an advantage?
- ST: Oh, yeah.
- RK: I think that if you don't say you live in the Children's Village, nobody knows you're an orphan. In that case, how did other people treat you? Same?
- ST: No, I would say same.
- RK: How was the wind and dust experience?
- ST: (chuckles) There's nothing you could do when the wind blows, the dust flies, and all you had to do is do the best you can and clean up after it quits.
- RK: Were you hit by the small stones on the face?
- ST: Well, yeah, but it's really not—I guess you can say stone, but it's sand. But, when it gets that bad, then you didn't go out, or if you had to go, you covered your face the best you can.



RK: Did you were taken care of very carefully at Children's Village? At least did you feel safe?

ST: Oh, yeah, no problem.

RK: Comparing it to the Salvation Army, which was better for you experience wise?

ST: Well, I would have to say they were pretty equal.

RK: Oh, really?

ST: Because I could kind of go where I wanted to go. It's not like I was in a prison or anything like that.

[01:05:00]

RK: So, you experienced being hospitalized in Manzanar?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Will you tell me that?

ST: It's just like any other hospital, I guess.

RK: The doctors are Japanese?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Or Caucasian?

ST: I think there were some Caucasian doctors, but I remember Japanese doctors, too. Because I went a couple of times, one for my appendix—

RK: When the squirrel bit you?

ST: Oh, the squirrel, yeah. Another time I broke my arm. So, it was not like I had to go one hundred miles just to go to a doctor or to a hospital, but I guess they did take care of everybody that they could. Now, the seriously injured or sick, I don't know what happened to them.

RK: Was it mostly Japanese nurses?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Do you know if the Japanese doctors were subordinate to the Caucasian doctors?

ST: That I don't know. All I know is doctors were there, and they did what they did.

RK: So, for you, it was like an ordinary hospital?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Did you experience the health check during the Children's Village?

ST: Not really.

RK: Do you have any memory of getting a shot or something?

ST: No, I don't remember those things.

RK: Do you know about caseworkers or any counseling during Children's Village?

ST: Well, I guess you can call it that, but when you're young you don't really have that problem, so you talk to the older kids and you accept that.

RK: So, you didn't have any problem, so you didn't need someone to talk to?

ST: No.

RK: Do you know how the older kids were doing in the camp?

ST: They must have did alright, but I don't really know.

RK: (chuckles) Did you change psychologically from early period until you left Manzanar?

ST: Well, I probably did.

RK: How was that?

ST: I don't know, it's hard to say. When you start growing up, it's a little different. But you never know what you could have done, or what you would have done in different situations because it wasn't available. I would have to say, yeah, you change, but you don't really visualize or see what the changes are.

RK: Did you make any close friends while you were living in Children's Village?

ST: Oh, yeah. In fact, the two families that I could relate to really good are the Isozakis<sup>2 3</sup> and the Matsunos<sup>4 5</sup> because they both had the good size families and they were all, I would say, good people. As long as you have friends like that, you don't forget them.

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<sup>2</sup> Tamotsu Isozaki, O.H. 2332, Center for Oral and Public History.

<sup>3</sup> Takeshi Isozaki, O.H. 2337, Center for Oral and Public History.

RK: Do you know what happened to your father?

ST: No, I didn't know at the time, but later on I found out that he was sent to a concentration camp in New Mexico.

RK: Santa Fe?

ST: I don't know what area, but I know it was in New Mexico. And later when he was released, he was released and brought to Manzanar, and we didn't even know that he was in Manzanar until after the war was over.

RK: How did you know that? Were you told by somebody else?

ST: Yeah, well, actually the county that we were from before, I guess, they found out that he was in Manzanar because after the war, they located him, and we were sent to him to live with for a couple of years.

RK: Do you remember Issei men and women helping Children's Village doing with laundry, maintenance, gardening toward the end of the war?

ST: Unh-uh.

[01:12:11]

RK: Regarding the Issei, Nisei, and Kibei people, what was the relationship between each other?

ST: Well, I would have to say, from what I've seen, it was probably good, but I didn't see too much of it other than when I used to go by the different blocks. But, what they used to talk about, you don't know.

RK: How about the Manzanar riot, do you remember?

ST: I don't remember much about it, but I remember that they were maybe three or four people killed. One guy was sent back to Japan.

RK: And also, others were sent to other place?

ST: I don't know where they went. I don't really remember.

RK: Do you know why the riot happened?

ST: No.

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<sup>4</sup> Takatow Matsuno, O.H. 2339, Center for Oral and Public History.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Matsuno Miya, O.H. 2489, Center for Oral and Public History.

RK: So, you don't have any idea if, after the riot, the Kibei were trusted by the Issei and Nisei after the riot?

ST: Well, probably because of the way they rebelled or talked, but then, when you're twelve years old, you don't really relate to that type of things. What you read about history, later on, is what you remember. But ah, I don't think you really get the concept of what really happened.

RK: Can I ask about the Salvation Army reunion? It was held in 1984?

ST: Eighty-four, eighty-five, somewhere around there. I think it was '85, and it was held in San Francisco. I would have to say there was some fifty, sixty people with their wives, husbands, and children that came. I think part of the problem was they didn't know at that time where a lot of the people were. Now, after some forty-some odd years, it's kind of hard to track somebody because you really don't know where they went. And a lot of the kids that came, would know if the brother was sick or the sister was somewhere and they didn't want to come or couldn't come, whatever reason. I think the few that did come, came for the same reason, to find out what happened to John, Jim, Jane, Susan, or whoever, you know. And I think those are the people that cared about other people. And even to this day, I think even with the Village reunion, it was the same type of situation.

RK: For you, which was the most fruitful?

ST: The Salvation Army one was—

RK: Emotional?

ST: More emotional in the respect that it was my personal orphanage, and I knew the people longer. And they were like, I guess, more close than I was when I was in the Village because it was a little different. The situations are different, so it's hard, but I would have to say, the San Francisco one was more meaningful.

RK: How many people came, sixty people?

ST: Around there, fifty, sixty.

RK: So, almost sixty persons, percentage-wise?

ST: What do you mean?

RK: Well, sixty people, fifty people?

ST: No, no, no, that's all total, all together.

RK: People that were at Salvation Army before you arrived also?

ST: Well, see—

RK: So, we can't know how many people—

ST: Yeah, I don't know how many people went to the home between 1930 and '39. Well it would be '41, '42.

RK: So, those people you never knew?

ST: Well, I met people that I didn't know, and some of the people were almost maybe, I would say, probably twice my age.

RK: I see. How were Mr. and Mrs. Matsumoto perceived among the orphans?

ST: I would have to say they were received fairly well, or they understood what they had to do. To me, there's always people that don't like somebody, anyway. You don't really know who they are.

RK: Do you know if the Matsumotos had favorites?

ST: Yeah, I think they did, but it was generally with the younger kids, not with the older ones.

RK: Do you know there was a rumor that a girl was going to be adopted by—

ST: I heard something, but I don't even know if it came about.

[01:20:27]

RK: Do you remember the names of the staff members at Children's Village?

ST: I remember some, but I don't remember a lot of them. Even in our reunion last year, I think there was like maybe ten, fifteen of them that came.

RK: Do you remember any guest from the outside visiting the Children's Village?

ST: Do you mean to visit the Children's Village?

RK: Somebody like the social workers?

ST: They probably did, but I don't remember.

RK: After the Matsumotos, the Caucasian woman came to the Children's Village. Can you describe her?

ST: Can I describe her?

- RK: Was it different from the Matsumotos' treatment?
- ST: I don't think it even affected me at all, as far as a change, but, like I said, the older people probably noticed more than I did because I was still young. I remember her as being an elder woman, and what she did, I don't really know.
- RK: Oh, really?
- ST: Yeah.
- RK: Give me a brief description of Manzanar school. You went to grammar school?
- ST: No, I went to the sixth grade.
- RK: And then, you went to junior high school?
- ST: Then I went to junior high school, yeah. It's just like going to any other school, really, but the difference was most of the teachers were Caucasians. There were a few Japanese teachers, and whether they taught any better, I can't say yes or no. I think the Caucasian teachers had, what you would say, the run of the camp like they would have anywhere else. They could go in and out of the camp any time, and I guess, as long as they did their duty, they were all right.
- RK: I noticed they didn't assign many homework. How was it?
- ST: I can't tell you any different because I don't know what the outside school is like. It's hard to say there was a difference because I never went to junior high school outside. , you had to do homework, so you did homework.
- RK: Do you remember mathematic class?
- ST: Yeah.
- RK: Some teachers did not know mathematics, right? Did the children know more?
- ST: I can't say that because I don't really know.
- RK: How did teachers treat the students?
- ST: Well, I would have to say good and bad. It all depends on what the kids did.
- RK: Do you think that most kids are studying harder?
- ST: No, not really. I know I didn't.
- RK: Maybe you had another interest? Will you describe?

- ST: What do you mean another interest?
- RK: Kids learn in many ways, not only just the schooling.
- ST: No, I like to play, that's all.
- RK: You studied with students from other barracks. Did you have any conflict between Children's Village kids and them?
- ST: No, not conflicts.
- RK: But, some minor prejudice among the students are there?
- ST: I don't think you call it prejudice because you can't really say it's prejudice.
- RK: Yeah, I know but some, like she or he is living in orphanage?
- ST: No, not that kind.
- RK: Will you describe your bedroom? How is set up?
- ST: You mean the barrack?
- RK: The dormitory. I mean, around your bed.
- ST: Well, it really wouldn't be much. You had to take care of your own bed, make your bed (phone rings) when it was time—
- RK: We take break. [recording paused] Were teachers enthusiastic in their teaching?
- ST: Some were, some weren't and you didn't really care because you had to go to school anyway.
- RK: I was asking about around your bed.
- ST: As an individual, you did take care of your own bed, clean your area. You make your bed every morning after you woke up, and you had a little area where you had your personal things so you kept that clean as possible. And, if it was dirty, well, somebody would tell you, you have to clean it, so you clean it.
- RK: And also, you had a shelf on the top of your head side?
- ST: Well, yeah, that's where you put your personal things.
- RK: And you know when somebody got the new toy or something like that? There's no privacy?

ST: Yeah, well, some kids for their birthday or Christmas or whatever they got some toy that you like or something like that. What could you do? Nothing.

RK: And then, last time you told me that those that had toys and didn't share with the other children, so somebody could steal. (laughs)

ST: Oh, yeah. That's just like—say, your friend had something and he didn't want to share, well, you either take it away from him or whatever.

RK: So, it caused a lot of trouble?

ST: Not really.

RK: (laughs) Did you think that the siblings were closer to each other?

ST: Well, you say closer. Well, maybe they got to know each other better. There's always people that become closer friends than others, but it all depended on the individual.

RK: Do you know how the girls interacted with each other?

ST: No, I don't.

RK: Did the boys and girls play separate from each other?

ST: Basically, I mean there was enough boys that you played with. Every now and then, you played with girls but not, too, often.

RK: How about Salvation Army life?

ST: Same way.

RK: So, most of the time girls don't join the baseball, football game?

ST: Not unless you go to the park and picnic, then they would be mixed group. But, other than that, no.

RK: Do you remember the baby nursery in Children's Village?

ST: Yeah.

RK: How was it? Will you describe it?

ST: Well, I remember there was infant nursery.

RK: It was on the other side of the girl's dormitory?



ST: Yeah, but, like I said, it was separate. I don't even remember how many they had, but I know there was a few in there. And there was always, not necessarily nurses, but *otanas* or caretakers to help take care of the babies.

RK: So, twenty-four hours?

ST: Yeah, just like a hospital or nursery.

RK: How about the younger section of the boys and girls dormitory, also twenty four hours attendants were there?

ST: Well, you say twenty-four hours, but it was—

RK: How about the nighttime?

ST: Yeah, there was always somebody close by that if somebody had a problem, they would be there.

[01:32:52]

RK: Did you feel sad that you were an orphan?

ST: Not really. I guess I grew up not having parents, so it didn't make any difference. But, as you grow older, it makes you realize what you don't have and what you do have. I really don't know what they did because I didn't go there. I mean, I could see through the window. I guess they cared for them just like they would a nursery in a hospital.

RK: Did you experience, while you were staying in the younger section, smaller kids crying during the nighttime?

ST: No, not really cause, like I said, by the time the kids came into the area, they were already first grade. By then, you don't cry unless you have a problem.

RK: Did you have parties during Children's Village?

ST: Well, you say parties, but not really parties. If somebody had a birthday, maybe we would have cake and ice cream at the mess hall after dinner; sing happy birthday. Sometimes it's like maybe they didn't have enough sugar to make cake, so they make only for everybody that had a birthday in that one month. But, as far as party goes, no, you didn't have things to have a party with so you didn't have.

RK: But party like atmosphere you enjoyed?

ST: Well, yeah. You can't say—it's hard. You did with what you had. If you didn't have, you didn't bother. If somebody told you happy birthday, that's all.

RK: Tell me about the weekend movie night.

ST: Well, they would have movies periodically. I can't say how often.

RK: During the wintertime, no?

ST: They had them all year round. It was like outdoor theater. They would show sometime serials, sometimes it would be weekly, sometimes it would be every two weeks. I don't remember. You sat on the ground, on the sand, and they would have a big screen. And when the winds starts blowing, you stay or you go home, regardless what the weather was like. And, if it was raining, that's the only time they would stop because no umbrella, no shelter.

RK: Most people are drawn to the movie theater?

ST: Yeah, they would go because they had nothing else to do, but the older people wouldn't go. When I say older, I mean, like Issei, Kibei because a lot of them wouldn't understand English. And every now and then, they would have a Japanese movie but very seldom.

RK: You probably do not remember movie titles, but do you remember any actors?

ST: No, I don't remember what I see.

RK: Can I ask about the religious aspect of Children's Village life. Every Sunday, did you have to Sunday service?

ST: No, you didn't have to.

RK: I noticed they're three types of churches; Catholic, Protestant, and then Buddhist.

ST: You didn't have to go to church. Not like the Salvation Army, every Sunday we went to church. In camp, no. It was, if you wanted to go, you go, and you went to whatever church you wanted to go. There was nobody to tell you, you had to go to any certain church or any certain place.

RK: Did you experience the Buddhist church?

ST: No.

RK: How about Catholic Church?

ST: I went to the Catholic Church, maybe once or twice just to see what it's like. I went with friends, so he would tell me what I was supposed to do and things like that. But, I didn't get interested in it.

RK: So, you went to a Protestant Church?

ST: Yes.

RK: What about the abbreviated one? There was no ceremony? What was it like?

ST: What do you mean there was no ceremony?

RK: I mean, in ordinary Sunday service, if somebody get baptized—

ST: Well, like I said, in camp they did things a little different because they could only do with what they had, so a lot of the things they did, they improvised. They only did what they could do, even though the meaning was the same, so there is no such thing as we have to this, this way. You did with whatever you had and what means you had to do it with.

RK: How many churches in camp?

ST: I don't remember.

RK: Maybe ten?

ST: No, maybe four, five.

RK: Oh, really? Was it generally crowded in the Protestant church service?

ST: A lot of times, yeah.

RK: And then, adult people helping with the smaller kids?

ST: Yeah, because they had Sunday school, they had Bible class, things like that.

RK: Did you attend the Bible class?

ST: I used to now and then, but it was something, like I say, you didn't have to go, and if you wanted to go, you went. Generally, somebody would encourage you to go.

[01:41:30]

RK: Was there a place for people to socialize?

ST: In the church?

RK: Yeah.

ST: Yeah, that way people got to know people. It's not like out here you have coffee or tea after church and mingle. Over there, like I say, they would talk. That way they would get to know people better, but no actual coffee, donuts, or whatever.

RK: Did you know that the Episcopalian church was available once a month?

ST: No.

RK: Were the ministers *hakujin*?

ST: I can't remember.

RK: How about the Nisei people helping?

ST: Oh, yeah. It's like, ah—

RK: Sunday teachers?

ST: Oh, yeah. I mean, they were mostly Japanese—

RK: Speaking English.

ST: Yeah. I don't remember who the priest or the pastors were.

RK: Did you experience the Buddhist church once?

ST: No, I never went to a Buddhist service.

RK: Changing the subject, we talked about clothing grant.

ST: Like I said, I don't remember getting any money for clothing. Maybe I was, too, young.

RK: So, you don't remember if each person received \$3.75, if I remember correctly?

ST: No, I don't know.

RK: So, do you remember ever getting allowance or pocket money?

ST: No, not while I was there.

RK: Oh, really? So, you didn't have any pocket money?

ST: No.

RK: You didn't spend any money? (chuckles)

- ST: Well, I got money somehow, but I didn't get allowance.
- RK: How did you get money?
- ST: Sometimes from my brothers, my sister.
- RK: Do you remember if the clothes were labeled with names?
- ST: Hm.
- RK: Think about the laundry.
- ST: Probably did, but I don't remember.
- RK: How about in Salvation Army?
- ST: I think so, but I don't remember.
- RK: So, you were given donated clothes?
- ST: Most of the time, yeah. Or hand me down.
- RK: Which life did you enjoy more, Salvation Army life or Children's Village life?
- ST: Well, I would probably have to say more the Village life because I was growing up more, and there were more people.
- RK: Was it much exciting?
- ST: I don't know about exciting. (laughs) It depends on what you call exciting.
- RK: Did you experience boredom?
- ST: No, I always had something to do.
- RK: By the way, did you miss your mother and father during the Children's Village?
- ST: Did I miss them?
- RK: Um-hm.
- ST: No, because like I said earlier, I don't know my mother, I really didn't know my father, so to me I had no mother and father.
- RK: Did you have any medical exams at the Children's Village?

ST: I don't remember.

RK: You were sick with appendix?

ST: Yeah.

RK: I think I already asked about hospital, so I'll skip to other questions. You left Children's Village June of 1945. Who told you that you had to move?

ST: Well, that's when we knew that camp was closing, and the director—I shouldn't say the director, the supervisor told us where we were going and when we were leaving. So, if I'm not mistaken, they took us in a car to Mohave, and we took a train from there to go to Martinez.

RK: So, you were told the camp was closing?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: Even though it was still wartime?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Do you have an idea why?

ST: No.

RK: So, you went to Martinez?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: You went to another family?

ST: Yeah, I went to another foster family, which was Caucasian, and stayed there and went to school. And, I guess, December, January of '46, they located my father. They said, well, we're going to go live with our father.

RK: Before that you finished junior high school in Manzanar?

ST: No, seventh and eighth grade, I finished the eighth grade. When I came out of camp, the school I went to, the high school started from ninth grade. Some schools start from the tenth, but the one I went to started in ninth grade, so I went to high school from there.

RK: So, outside of camp, in Martinez?

ST: Um-hm.

[01:50:18]

RK: So, during the foster family, second foster family, how long did you stay? You told me just one year or something?

ST: No, only about six months, and then we went to live with our father. That was a little over a year, and then we came out to California.

RK: Your father also came to California?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Oh, the whole family?

ST: No, but then, see, we were still in the Village—okay, he was in Manzanar in another block, but we didn't know.

RK: But, he went to Minnesota?

ST: Yeah, he went to Minneapolis, and that's when the state found out where he was. So, they sent us to Minneapolis to live with him.

RK: So, you re-met your father in 1964?

ST: Forty-six.

RK: Sorry, '46. And then father was running business?

ST: He was working.

RK: Why did the whole family come to Los Angeles?

ST: Well, he wanted to come out here to open a business.

RK: At the time, you were sixteen?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: And so then, you started your high school?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Did your whole family live together, or you were on your own?

- ST: Well, in Minneapolis we lived together. Then we came out here I would have to say the family did not stay together, and we were more less living on our own because my father left us again.
- RK: When he left, who ran the business?
- ST: By then, he had already quit.
- RK: How did you manage yourself?
- ST: Well, I worked part-time here and there, and then my sister used to help me cause she was working. Then I found a schoolboy job, which I did household chores and went to school, and earned my way through school that way.
- RK: So, you had room and board? And then did chores?
- ST: Yeah.
- RK: So, you went to high school?
- ST: Um-hm.
- RK: So, tell me about the foster family, it was a Japanese family?
- ST: No, it was Caucasian. It was just a husband and wife, and I would wash dishes at night, clean windows, vacuum the rug, dust the furniture, and things like that.
- RK: Did you know how much you earned?
- ST: Oh, back then it was like \$5 a week, somewhere around there.
- RK: So, you spend like pocket money?
- ST: Yeah, plus transportation to school.
- RK: You took a train or something?
- ST: No, I just take bus.
- RK: So, it was in Martinez city? I'm sorry, in Los Angeles?
- ST: Yeah, this was here.
- RK: So, tell me about the school life.



ST: Well, it's just like any other. The only difference was that I had to basically been on my own. It's not that mother and father were sending me to school. I had to send myself to school, and whatever I did was on my own.

RK: So, you finished high school?

ST: Yeah.

RK: How long did you take to graduate?

ST: Three years.

RK: Did you have any conflict with the teachers or students?

ST: No. No more than normal. I think everybody has, shall we say, a little, but it's how individuals take it.

RK: Were you asked the loyalty question?

ST: No, I was, too, young.

RK: While you were in Children's Village, how did you get information about what was going on outside?

ST: Oh, we had a radio, and I remember we used to get a newspaper.

RK: *Manzanar Free Press?*

ST: Yeah. I don't know how or who paid for it or anything like that, but I know we used to get it.

RK: You used to read the Japanese section?

ST: No.

RK: The English section.

ST: I think it was only English, I don't know.

RK: I think the Japanese section was also available, but it was a small part.

ST: Yeah, it could be.

RK: So, did you listen to the radio?

ST: Yeah.

RK: I was wondering did they provide a good frequency in the desert?

ST: Not always, sometimes it was hard to get the different radio stations but enough to hear.

RK: After the war, did you know about the exclusion order that people had to move inland?

[01:58:38]

ST: Not then.

RK: Oh, really?

ST: See, a lot of things you learn, you learn after.

RK: So, you went to Martinez, first of all, then found out father and went to Minneapolis. You came back to Los Angeles?

ST: Yeah, we came back here in '47.

RK: And then, you graduated in '50?

ST: Forty-nine.

RK: So, after high school graduation, you got a job? Or you went to college?

ST: No, I started going to college in '49 and '50, and I couldn't get the kind of classes I wanted so I quit. I went to work, and then shortly after I was drafted into service.

RK: Army?

ST: Uh-huh. That was in '51.

RK: And were still doing the same things, room and board, during the college age?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: Same house?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: Did you find a college near the house, or did you have to commute?

ST: Well, the college was in Los Angeles. I just took a bus or—I can't remember when I bought my car. I think I bought my car in '49, so I used to drive.

RK: Was it expensive?

ST: Oh, yeah. I used to work and pay for it, little by little.

RK: So, you did not get the class you wanted, so you quit college?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: After that you had a job?

ST: Yeah. Then I went to work in a factory in downtown, and then a little bit after that I got drafted for the Korean War.

RK: So, you went to Korea?

ST: No.

RK: You went to—

ST: I went to Europe, Germany.

RK: Will you describe life in Germany?

ST: Well, you can't say what life is because it's—when I went there the war was over. The city was still—

RK: Oh, you get drafted when?

ST: Fifty-one. The war ended '45, but they were still recovering. It's sad when you see what people had to live in, but there's nothing you can do.

RK: What was your duty in Germany?

ST: I did a lot of different things.

RK: How long did you stay in Germany?

ST: One year. Before that, I was here in the States.

RK: Can you describe your year in Germany and your duties and where did you stay?

ST: I was in a town called Stuttgart, which is in the southern part of Germany. When I was in the service, I went there, worked as a clerk, mailroom clerk, and company clerk, what they call somebody that would do the correspondence, typing for the company. I did that until November of '53, and then I came home. I was discharged from the service in December of '53.

RK: So, you were not injured?

ST: No, I didn't go into combat. As I was saying, the German people were still recovering from World War II, so they had very little resources, or they made out with the very little resources they had. They were friendly people, as far as people were concerned. Politically, there were aspects that didn't concern you and me.

RK: What about the Army outfit?

ST: I was in the 7th Army headquarters in Stuttgart. What it was, it was a command post for the 7th Army at that time.

RK: After you were discharged from the Army, how did you support your life?

ST: Well, I started working at a service station attendant. Then I went to school, mechanic school, and learned some that way. Then I went to work as a mechanic, and then my brother and I opened a garage and service station back in '61. We worked together for almost twenty years. After that time, we disbanded our business because we lost our lease, and about a year, a year-and-a-half later, I went to work for the state as a mechanic. And started in '81 and worked until February of '93 when I retired.

RK: Did you get—usually when you get retired you have to work certain number of years retirement years, but because you went to the Army and you were interned in camp, so you get—

ST: No, I don't get that—what you call, service credit?

RK: Um-hm.

ST: No.

[02:07:27]

RK: I see. So, you worked as a civil servant?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: For eleven—

ST: Eleven-and-a-half years.

RK: How did you find your retired life?

ST: Oh, it's good, in knowing you don't have to go to work, and you kind of do what you want to do.

RK: Today is August sixth, which is the day of the Hiroshima bombing.

ST: Um-hm.

RK: So, how did you find out about the atomic bomb?

ST: Well, I knew that they dropped it. My feelings were why did they have to kill so many innocent people. But, war is war, you have to accept what they do. Those are some of the conscience having a war, so you kind of have to put it on the side and look at it differently.

RK: So, now family background, you got married to Japanese woman?

ST: Yeah.

RK: What is her name?

ST: My wife's name is Carol. I married her in December 1960, and I have four sons from the age of thirty-two to twenty-nine. And I've been married to the same woman all these years.

RK: She's what generation?

ST: She is a Sansei because her father was born in Hawaii.

RK: Did she have experience with camp life?

ST: She went to camp, yes.

RK: What camp?

ST: She went to Topaz, Utah.

RK: How long did she stay?

ST: She stayed the three years or a little better, I don't remember. She doesn't know when exactly she went to camp because she was younger.

RK: So, you met her and got married?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: I'm just curious because you lost your parents, you lost your mother so early and then you didn't feel fatherly love, when you became a father, you had a lot of difficulty how to be a father. Can you tell me about that?

ST: I don't think I had difficulty. I think it's something you do by instinct or you do what you feel is right and you make things like that work.

RK: So, the children are all grown up?

ST: They are all grown up. They have very good jobs. I'm proud of what they have become; not only because they're my sons, but because they had a chance to do what they want to do, not what I want them to do.

RK: Is your wife still working?

ST: No, she's retired. She was a nurse. She worked for University of Irvine as a nurse. She retired in November of '92.

RK: I guess you have a lot of chance to talk about your story to your children. How was that?

ST: What do you mean how was that? (laughs)

RK: Were they interested in your story?

ST: Yes and no.

RK: Really?

ST: I think I would have to say they don't realize what we had to go through in our life. Since they didn't learn it in history, it's really something that the need to know, but I think, maybe someday, as they grow older, they'll want to know.

RK: When you say they didn't learn in history class, in American history teaching, it's a little minor aspect they didn't deal with.

ST: Well, I would have to say they chose not to put it in the history as a *big mistake*. I think even now, if you talk to people from the east, the mid-east that are, say my age, they would not know what happened because if you keep something away from them, they'll never learn.

RK: So, your children also feel that it's covered?

ST: Oh, yeah. Because what little we do talk about it is what they read in the paper, it's only, shall we say, *part* of history. The only difference is, we are part of it. I don't know if they would really come out and ask about what really happened and how I feel because you may not feel that they want to know or even I want to tell them. Those are the kind of things you grow up with, you don't know.

[02:16:00]

RK: Did you have any difficulty when you adjusted to American society?

ST: Well, you say difficulty, I think everybody has a difficulty adjusting to different lifestyles, but your lifestyle is whatever you make it. And I think that's just like an individual having friends. He chooses his friends the same way he would choose how society treats him. It's not something that is given to you; it's just something you learn through life.

RK: So, you did not find being a Japanese American difficult after the war?

ST: Well, you have, but you learn to live with them. You learn to accept certain portions and certain portions you don't. And if you don't, you try and, shall we say, deviate from them or look the other way—

RK: Assimilate.

ST: Yeah. Or act like it never happened.

RK: So, Manzanar life for you is not a big part of your life?

ST: Well, it has to be a big part of your life, but how you take it is another aspect of your life. Some people want to talk about it, some people don't, and some people don't want to have any memories of it because it was good and bad times. Now, to me it all depended on how old you were, what your parents lost, what you had to go through, when relocation came, and what kinds of friends you have. So, it is difficult to understand some of the people. And I can understand some people don't want to remember a lot of the hardships that they had. The good time, everybody wants to remember.

RK: Which affected you most, Manzanar life or Salvation Army life, in shaping your identity?

ST: Well, like I said earlier, since I was a little younger when I was in the Salvation Army home that a lot of the experiences didn't really mean anything. But, as I grew older and lived in the Village, and things changed and I could remember more—

[02:20:00; recording paused]

RK: So, we are talking about how life helped shape your identity.

ST: Yeah. So, like I was saying, being that I had a little more experience and getting a little older, I think, I learned a lot more when I was in the Village. As far as my livelihood or my growing up years had become—it's not like when you're not a teenager. I think once you become a teenager, you start learning a lot faster and a lot more. There's a big difference.

RK: When you became a father, did you have a sense of loss because you lost your parents?

ST: No, you can't say a sense of loss. I think I would have to say I was kind of proud when I became a father and tried to give my sons what they needed in growing up, which I didn't have when I was growing up. But it's a little different because, like I said, I had people, brothers, sister, which were older than I was, so I had people I could talk to. Or when you're a child, you talk to your father or mother, but that's all you can talk to unless you meet other kids. But, I think that at that age, you don't really have that problem until you start growing up.

RK: Can I ask, back and forth, After the whole family came to Los Angeles, you made your life by yourself. How about your other siblings? I didn't ask about them.

ST: I think we all learned that we had to do things for ourselves. One of my other brothers did the same things I did, and the other ones found odd jobs here and there.

RK: How about your sister?

ST: She was going to school.

RK: What she learned?

ST: To become a nurse. So at that time, I think, she had a job and schooling at the place where she lived; so it was easier for her.

RK: So, she became a nurse?

ST: Um-hm.

RK: She worked as a nurse after that?

ST: No, she didn't. She had a car accident and was unable to continue her schooling.

RK: How old was she?

ST: Maybe twenty-two.

RK: So, she had to give up the career?

ST: Yeah. She really didn't have a career.

RK: And the other brothers were, more or less, like you?

ST: Yeah.



RK: Did they have any difficulty adjusting to the American society?

ST: Well, I think we all have difficulty. It's just to what degree of difficulty and how you cope with it. And I think that's, I wouldn't say part of growing up, but it's part of life. You can have everything and not have nothing. It's just like saying, Just because you have money doesn't mean you have everything you need.

RK: Are they alive?

ST: Yeah, everybody is alive. In fact, I only have one brother that is working, but everybody else is—

RK: Retired.

ST: Yes.

RK: So, you got Redress amount of \$20,000?

ST: Yes.

RK: How did you feel accepting it? How did you feel and did you also have comment from anyone about that?

ST: Well, I think, in that respect, the \$20,000 is not a reparation of what it cost you, or what you did. It's just a way of apologizing. And like I said earlier, when you're a kid, you don't really have anything and you really don't lose anything, but you really don't know what your life would have been without going to camp. And my thinking is, I really didn't lose a lot, but I know my parents lost. So, what they lost, I can't really say because I don't know, but I think in respect to other people that did lose a lot. I think the reparation is just a token of saying, I'm sorry but what can we do? And my way of looking at it is, I just hope it never happens again to somebody else, regardless what the situation is. And I think a lot of people feel, you know, it's not their problem.

RK: Okay, I'm going to take a break.

[02:15:57; recording paused]

ST: I think as far as the amount is, there is no set amount of money that you can put on a price of this. I feel wrong is wrong, and no matter what you do, you can't cure it.

RK: I didn't ask you, when your father was sent to New Mexico, did your father lose property?

ST: I imagine he did, but I don't know.

RK: Still nobody knows?

ST: I never asked him what he had or what he lost.

RK: What are your expectations for your children?

ST: I want my kids to be just what they are and what they want to be. I don't want them to be something they don't want to be; and I think that's any parent.

RK: Did you ever feel any anger that little orphans had to experience internment?

ST: Well, not really, not at that time, but I have resentment now because of the fact that when you take a portion out of somebody's life, and tell them you can't do this and do that, I think it's kind of sad.

RK: How did you find the 1992 Children's Village reunion?

ST: I thought everything went well in reunion friendship with the other kids that we lived with from anywhere from three to six years. But, being part of the committee that had the reunion, I felt that it made me feel good to be able to do the things that we did in bringing all these people together. If I had to do it again, I would be a part of it again. And I think there are a lot of people that, shall we say, enjoyed doing things or talking about the old times they had when they were growing up. Because when you stop and think fifty years ago, well, most were teenagers or young adults, and there are so many that are either dead or sick and not knowing what their feelings are or what other people really thought about because they weren't able to come in one way or another.

RK: Would you like to have another Salvation Army and Children's Village reunion?

ST: I think it would be nice, regardless how many people come. Even if it's only ten, because, like I said, it's people that care. And, when you get people that care about each other, I think that's the difference of having such things—even in your own family, if you had people move away, and you have a reunion, well, it's nice to have people come together and have their feelings felt all the way around.

RK: Do you still keep in contact with other Children Village members?

ST: Yes, when I see them, or every now and then I may call them.

RK: Like the Isozakis?

ST: Isozakis and the Matsunos, basically are who I am close to because they are available here.

RK: Have you visited Manzanar after the war?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Just one time?

ST: No, I've stopped there a few times for—not in memory or anything like that, but to show friends or my wife, this is where the camp was and its history.

RK: I guess when you are a child everything looks big. Was it small?

ST: No, like I said, I think as you grow up, you think differently, so you look at things a little differently. But, when you're young, you don't think about a lot of these things.

RK: So, you're a Christian right now?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Protestant?

ST: Yeah.

RK: Do you go to church?

ST: Sometimes. (chuckles)

RK: Is the Manzanar internment, do you feel it's still hurting you?

ST: Well—

RK: After the Redress redemption, somebody talked that you were lucky. Did you have a similar experience?

ST: Yeah, well, they aren't, too, many people that know about the, so-called, Redress. But it's a little different when you talk to them—I mean, I take it as something as a token, but, on the other hand, when I talk to them about different things and I ask them about, well, would you give up everything you have now and not get paid for it? And then go away and come back and try to start all over? It's hard, and you know, naturally, the thing is, no. When you're forced to, you have no choice, so it's difficult.

RK: So, you feel evacuation was wrong?

ST: Oh, yeah. Regardless, like I said, I didn't lose anything, but I know the millions of people that did.

RK: Like a cultural distraction?

- ST: Well, not even cultural, it's monetary, physical, mental, all these aspects that come into it. When you stop and think about things like that, it's really bad.
- RK: Do you associate with Caucasian or Japanese American people?
- ST: Both, I mean, I have friends both ways. More so on the Japanese side, but I still have American, Caucasian friends.
- RK: And also your children?
- ST: Oh, yeah.
- RK: What do you expect from the up and coming reunion in August 21, 1993?
- ST: I don't.
- RK: You don't?
- ST: Because I've never been to one, and I'm not going this time. There will probably be people there that I would know, but I'm not going to be in town.
- RK: Well, before we close, is there anything you can add?
- ST: Not really.
- RK: Do you think we covered?
- ST: I would like to say I think we covered quite a bit, of not only the Village and the Salvation Army, but as part a person that had gone through something that most people would say devastated their lives to a certain point and came out pretty well after the circumstances and the situations that I've gone through. But, on the other hand, I've always looked at regardless of what your problems are, there are always people that have bigger problems, have gone through worst times, and whether they come out of it or not, it's something else. I hope that this will help, not only you as a student of Japanese background that had no knowledge of what really went on, helps you in your life and your studies and the university.
- RK: Thank you. By the way, did you visit Japan?
- ST: No.
- RK: I see.
- ST: I'm one of these type of people that, I hate to say, I have no love lost in Japan, and I have no desire to go and try and find my kinfolds because that's just like trying to dig up a grave. I don't want my great-grandkids trying to do the same to me. Being the

type of person I've become, I think, through the years of experience, it has made me that way. Like I said, I have no desire. If I do visit, it would only be like going to see certain things that I would like to see.

RK: Well, thank you very much. I have to appreciate your cooperation this time, again. I thank you for both interviews so I can use this precious information for my studies. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW