

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Children's Village at Manzanar Oral History Project

An Oral History with DENNIS TOJO BAMBAUER

Interviewed

By

Reiko Katabami

On August 16, 1993

OH 2335

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: DENNIS TOJO BAMBAUER

INTERVIEWER: Reiko Katabami

DATE: August 16, 1993

LOCATION: Sacramento, California

PROJECT: Children's Village at Manzanar

RK: This is an interview with Mr. Dennis Tojo Bambauer by Reiko Katabami for the Japanese American Project of the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton. The interview is being held at a hotel Sacramento airport on August 16, 1993 at approximately 8:30 a.m. So, to start with you are Sansei? You are third generation?

DB: Yes.

RK: Can I ask your birthday and birthplace?

DB: Birthday, October 7, 1934, Los Angeles, California.

RK: So, you are right now age?

DB: Fifty-eight.

RK: Do you have any siblings?

DB: I have two adopted sisters. I have six half-brothers and sisters on my mother's side, Anna Tojo, and two half-brothers on my father's side, Faye Shirfi.

RK: Are they alive?

DB: Yes.

RK: If you don't mind giving me this information, are they married to Caucasian people?

DB: They are all married to Caucasian people.

RK: Can I ask their occupation, if you don't mind?

DB: I am teacher union representative.

RK: Uh, their occupation? Sibling or—okay, your career is teacher—

DB: Teacher representative, union representative.

RK: I see. Would you describe that?

DB: Yes, I represent teachers for the California Teachers Association in the area of bargaining and grievance representation.

RK: It's the whole California?

DB: Yes.

RK: How about your siblings?

DB: I have a sister who is in the insurance business. I have a sister who is a computer technician. I have a brother who is a computer technician. I have a sister who is a homemaker.

RK: I see. So, your parents get married to Caucasian partner. How about your mother?

DB: My mother married a Japanese American, and that's my half-brothers and half-sisters.

RK: And then father?

DB: My original father married a Caucasian.

RK: So, tell me about your relationship with your siblings. Do you see each other?

DB: I visit them as often as I can. We see each other every other year or so.

RK: Do they also have camp experience?

DB: Three of my half-brothers and sisters do.

RK: How about your father and father's parents?

DB: My mother had camp experience. My father did not.

RK: I see. How come?

DB: My father was Caucasian.

RK: I see. (laughs) Thank you. Where was your mother? What camp?

DB: Heart Mountain.

RK: In Utah?

DB: Utah or Idaho?

DB: Yes.

RK: Okay. So, you only have orphanage experience. How about the other siblings?

DB: No, I was the only one in the orphanage.

RK: I see. And you got married to a Caucasian woman?

DB: Yes.

RK: What is her name?

DB: Sherrill. S-h-e-r-r-i-l-l.

RK: Thank you. How did you know her?

DB: I met her in my work.

RK: So, she is also teacher?

DB: Yes.

RK: Do you also have a career of teaching?

DB: Yes, I started as a teacher and then came into this kind of work, representation.

RK: Oh, so right now your title is?

DB: Training and bargaining specialist for the California Teachers Association.

RK: Okay. If you don't mind, how old is she?

DB: Fifty-six.

RK: Okay. So, she is a Caucasian woman. So, you met her, in California?

DB: Yes.

RK: And she is originally from California?

DB: Yes.

RK: Do you have children?

DB: Yes, I have three children, two boys and a girl.

RK: I see. If you don't mind, can I have names?

DB: John, who is the oldest, Robert, and Denise.

RK: Right now are they teenagers or something?

DB: No, they are all married and have children.

RK: They are married to Caucasian people?

DB: Yes.

RK: I see. So, you have three children?

DB: Yes.

RK: Have they an interest in father's history?

DB: Two of them are, yes.

RK: So, can I ask your family background, back to Japan? First of all, what part of Japan? Your mother is the Tojo side?

DB: All right, my mother is—we have to start with my grandfather and grandmother, and all I know is they came from Japan, one of the islands. His name is Henry, and her name is Yaenho Tojo.

RK: Do you know what part of Japan?

DB: No, I don't.

RK: Okay. So, do they get married in Japan?

DB: No, my grandfather came to the United States, was here for several years, and then she came to California and was married in California.

RK: By the way, what is your grandfather's name?

DB: Henry Tojo.

RK: Oh, thank you. Around what year did he come? Do you have any idea?

DB: I think it was about 1904.

RK: So, how old was he then?

DB: He was like twenty.

RK: So, he came to California?

DB: Yes.

RK: And then, do you know any reason why he came to the U.S.?

DB: The land of opportunity.

RK: I see. So, what was he doing?

DB: When he came to the U.S. he went to Central California where he was a farmer.

RK: Do you have any episode about him?

DB: Episode? Or history?

RK: History—whatever you would like to talk about him.

DB: Well, he came to Central California and was a farmer here. At that time, he had six children, and shortly after he was in Central California for five or six years, they moved to Hollywood, California. My grandfather and grandmother were instrumental in establishing a church in Hollywood, Japanese church in Hollywood.

RK: On their own?

DB: Yes.

RK: So, they also have to do fundraising?

DB: Yes, they were very active in the church.

DK: So, they come, originally, from a Christian family in Japan?

DB: At least my mother did.

RK: I see. And then, they got married to each other—

DB: When she arrived from Japan, they went to the American Consulate's office that day, and the American Consulate married them.

RK: So, culturally, they are all Japanese culture?

DB: Yes.

RK: Regarding your grandmother, is she—well, both your grandparents are first generation, of course.

DB: Yes.

RK: Could you give me their information about where your grandmother was born?

DB: No, nor my grandfather.

RK: Do you have any idea around when she came to the U.S.?

DB: Why she came?

RK: Can I ask your grandmother's name?

DB: Yaeno Tojo.

RK: Oh, okay. Thank you. So, you don't know when she came to the U.S.?

DB: Oh, she came to the U.S. about 1912, I believe.

RK: At the age of?

RB: Eighteen, nineteen.

RK: And also, do you know the reason she came to the U.S.?

DB: To marry Henry.

RK: (laughs)

DB: The family arranged the marriage in Japan.

RK: So, she was sent to the U.S. for the purpose of marriage?

DB: Yes.

RK: I see. Who she was, do you have any idea? What type of person, who she was, do you have any idea?



DB: Well, she was a lovely person.

RK: Oh, really?

DB: No, I never met her.

RK: Before you were born she died?

DB: No, after I went to the orphanage I lost my family connections, and I did not find them until two years ago.

RK: Oh, so you mean both grandparents and your original parents?

DB: Both my grandparents were dead when I found my original family.

RK: Two years ago?

RB: Two years ago.

RK: Okay. And also you found out about your parents two years ago?

DB: Yes.

RK: Okay, I see. I'll ask you later. So, when did your parents get married?

DB: My grandparents got married around 1912.

RK: So, you were born 1934?

DB: Yes.

RK: Tell me about your relationship with your parents. So, you didn't know until two years ago, after you left—oh, I'm sorry. Right after you were born, you were sent to an orphanage?

DB: Yes, the Children's Home Society.

RK: Because?

DB: Because my mother could not keep me.

RK: And how about your father?

DB: The father could not keep me.

RK: Before our interview, in our conversation, you told me your parents actually didn't get married.

DB: That's true.

RK: Okay, that's why. How did you find your parents two years ago?

DB: Well, I was just lucky, and a friend of mine helped me locate my aunt who was visiting California and had the last name of Tojo. We were just very fortunate and lucky.

RK: So, your friends helped you?

DB: Yes.

RK: Not state?

DB: No, the state could not help me.

RK: I see. Would you specify more in detail how your friends—

DB: Well, I have some friends that are very active in the Japanese American Citizens League, and so I thought that maybe their friends might know somebody by the name of Tojo. It happens that my friends, who were helping me, live in Marysville, California, and my Auntie Frances, who married my uncle, came to Marysville. By luck my friends met her, and we then discovered the rest of my family.

RK: So, you were very lucky person.

DB: Very lucky. I started looking for the Tojo family in 1957, and it took me this many years to find them.

RK: So, your grandparents both died?

DB: Yes.

RK: And would you describe your parents?

DB: My mother was Nisei, and my father was Caucasian. They were not married when I was born. After I was born, I was put in Children's Home Society.

RK: So, both are living right now?

DB: My mother is still alive. My father passed away in February of 1993.

RK: Oh, so this year?

DB: Yes. I saw him just before he died.

RK: Died of what?

DB: He died of heart complications and old age.

RK: Did you have anything to talk about with your father? Did you feel fatherly love?

DB: No, I did not know him that well. I only knew him for two months.

RK: Before he died?

DB: Before he died. And he was in the hospital.

RK: Oh, I see. So, how about your mother? Mother got married to another person?

DB: Yes. My mother married a Japanese gentleman and had six children. So, I have six half-brothers and half-sisters on my mother's side of the family.

RK: What is your relationship with them? Oh, so you've been knowing your mother just how long?

DB: Two years.

RK: Okay, two years ago you met. Was it good?

DB: Yes, it's wonderful.

RK: Would you describe what kind of person or who your mother is?

DB: Hm. Turn it off.

[recording paused]

RK: So, your mother got married to Caucasian?

DB: No, she married Japanese.

RK: What generation?

DB: Second generation?

RK: Okay. Tell me about your mother's husband?

DB: My mother's husband passed away ten, twelve years ago, so I never knew him.

RK: I see. So, I'm going to ask about your own experience. So, you went to Children's Home Society?

DB: Yes.

RK: Would you describe about Children's Home Society? Oh, before that, you went to Children's Home Society at before age one?

DB: I believe so.

RK: Right after you were born?

DB: Yes.

RK: And stayed there until 19—

DB: Until I was moved to the Japanese Village, nineteen forty—when was the war?

RK: Children's Village or Shonien?

DB: Yes.

RK: So, you went to [Children's Home Society] 1941?

DB: Is that the start of the war?

RK: Yeah, 1941. The start of the war is December seventh, Pearl Harbor attack.

DB: I guess I went to Shonien right after the war started in 1941.

RK: I see. So, you were already in Shonien after Pearl Harbor attack happened?

DB: No, I wasn't there until after the attack.

RK: So, maybe January? It happened December.

DB: Yeah, I don't know.

RK: I see. Okay.

RK: Do you know who arranged that you go to Children's Home Society?

DB: I believe my mother did.

RK: And, at that time, your mother was on her own?

DB: No, she was living with her family and working part-time and going to school part-time.

RK: Could you tell me about Children's Home Society? Where was it located? Is it also right now in operation, the institution?

DB: Yes, but they don't have any orphanages. They just put children into families for adoption. They don't have any orphanages, to my knowledge. The orphanage that I was in was in Los Angeles on Adams Street.

RK: The Shonien?

DB: Children's Home Society.

RK: Oh, Children's Home Society is located in Los Angeles?

DB: When I was there.

RK: I see. So, you were born in Los Angeles area?

DB: Yes.

RK: Do you know who was in charge of Children's Home Society?

DB: No, I don't.

RK: Do you know the institutional philosophy of the Children's Home Society?

DB: I don't know.

RK: Do you have any idea how many orphans were there?

DB: Well, I was very young, but there were quite a few of us. Thirty, forty?

RK: Do you have any idea what was the age range?

DB: I remember just small children, five to six years being the oldest.

RK: Oh, really? Not teenagers?

DB: No, I don't remember any teenagers.

RK: And the racial backgrounds?

DB: Caucasian.

RK: Japanese American?

DB: I think I was the only Japanese American.

RK: And all other are Caucasian?

DB: Yes.

RK: I see. By the way, how many staff members were there?

DB: I don't know.

RK: Staff members are Caucasian.

DB: Yes.

RK: Do you have any idea how they treated students?

DB: Nicely.

RK: So, you felt comfortable?

DB: Yes.

RK: So, you stayed there, Children's Home Society, until you were six or something?

DB: Yes.

RK: During those six years, did you just always stay there?

DB: No. I was in some foster homes.

RK: Oh, tell me about that. When did you go?

DB: I don't remember. But, at one time, I was in a Japanese foster home, and I think it was out in the Santa Ana area.

RK: How long?

DB: I think about a year.

RK: So, before six years?

DB: Yes.

RK: Do you remember how they treated you?

DB: Oh, nice.

RK: So, you were treated like one of the children?

DB: Yes.

RK: Did they have children?

DB: No.

RK: What were they doing, your foster parents?

DB: I don't know what they did. I was too small.

RK: Maybe something happened to them, and then you came back to Children's Home Society?

DB: Yes.

RK: Did you go to nursery school?

DB: I don't remember.

RK: How did you mingle with other orphans?

DB: At the Children's Home Society? Okay.

RK: Did you play with them?

DB: Yes.

RK: I guess there was no racial conflict or physical or mental abuse there?

DB: No. I didn't know that I was Japanese. I thought I was Caucasian like all the other kids.

RK: I see. So, you don't remember the institution, the Children's Home Society was Christian organization?

DB: No, I don't remember.

RK: How about Christmastime?

DB: I don't remember.

- RK: Do you have any idea what was the daily routine?
- DB: Daily routine?
- RK: Any \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) is okay.
- DB: Get up, get dressed, and play.
- RK: Do you still have contact with the children that you met there?
- DB: No. I don't know anybody from there.
- RK: Okay. So, you told me it was a comfortable place for you as a child?
- DB: Yes.
- RK: So then, what was the reason for leaving Children's Home Society?
- DB: Well, the government said because I was Japanese, I had to go to a relocation center.
- RK: But before the relocation center, you went to the Shonien?
- DB: Oh, yeah, just before they moved me from Children's Home Society to Shonien and then from Shonien to Manzanar.
- RK: So, you were transferred to Shonien?
- DB: Yes. What I remember is being with Japanese American kids on a big, grassy area. We boarded two buses and went to Manzanar.
- RK: So, right after Pearl Harbor, don't know exactly when, you went to Shonien?
- DB: Yes.
- RK: You stayed at the Shonien just a short time?
- DB: Just a short time.
- RK: Maybe half-a-year or something?
- DB: Yeah.
- RK: Any memory of the time when you were moving to Shonien?
- DB: The only memory that I have is they came and told me they were going to take me somewhere else.



RK: Okay. How did you arrive [at the] Shonien?

DB: I think they took me in a car.

RK: Somebody accompanied?

DB: Yes.

RK: So, you brought with you all you had at Children's Home Society?

DB: Which was nothing!

RK: (laughs) Just the clothes.

DB: Just the clothes!

RK: Do you think you not mixing both Children's Home Society and the Shonien period?

DB: Could be, but I don't think so.

[recording paused]

RK: Do you have any memory of the day the Pearl Harbor attack happened?

DB: No.

RK: Did staff members from both institutions, Children's Home Society and the Shonien, help you \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)?

DB: No, I just remember being there. Help me do what now?

RK: Transition to—

DB: No, I don't remember them helping me.

RK: Okay. Do you still remember who were the staff members?

DB: No, I do not.

RK: You don't remember the face?

DB: No.

RK: Do you have any what were your feelings as a child?

DB: When I went from Children's Home Society to the Shonien?

RK: Right.

DB: Yeah. Because I had never been associated with any Japanese people, I thought everybody was like me. And then, when I got to Shonien, everybody was different than me.

RK: The Japanese children.

DB: Yes. They all had different faces than I had, and I found out that I wasn't the same as everybody.

RK: So, it was a shock?

DB: Yes, I had never been with Japanese children.

RK: Did you make friends there? How did you play with them?

DB: Well, eventually, you know, we—

RK: But, at first—

DB: I don't remember.

RK: I see. So, those were the first periods of difficulties when you went to Shonien?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Okay. What made Shonien different from Children's Home Society? Those orphans different faces, Japanese children?

DB: You know most of the memoires I have about Shonien are in Manzanar so you can't compare Shonien with Children's Home Society—

RK: You were so young.

DB: Well, not only that, but we were in camp, and being in camp is very different from being outside.

RK: So, you don't have any memory about staff differences?

DB: No, I don't.

RK: Okay, so during the Shonien period. Do you have any idea about [where] you went to school?

DB: I went to school there for a short time, I remember, but I don't remember very much.

RK: It's located about a half a mile distance?

DB: The school?

RK: Uh-huh. You walked?

DB: Yeah, we walked. It was too far away.

RK: So, it's a public school. Do you know the name of the school?

DB: No.

RK: So, you started first grade?

DB: In Children's Home Society, yeah.

RK: Oh, Children's Home Society, you went to grammar school?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Tell me about that.

DB: Well, I don't remember. I remember going to school in camp mostly.

RK: I see. Probably in Children's Society, you went to first grade. You didn't finish.

DB: Yes, kindergarten, maybe first grade.

RK: Do you remember in the Shonien period if the school was a mixed school?

DB: The Shonien school?

RK: Um-hm. White?

DB: No. Cause we were in camp so it couldn't have been mixed except for me.

RK: So, you can't describe any of the Shonien \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) of the school? How about are the teachers Caucasian?

DB: The teacher's Japanese in the school.

RK: Oh, really?

DB: I think so.

RK: Not in camp?

DB: In camp—

RK: In camp you also had Japanese teachers?

DB: I believe so.

RK: Do you think you generally enjoyed school life during the Shonien period?

DB: I don't remember.

RK: Did you notice any *hapa* kids, so-called half Japanese kids during the Shonien period?

DB: No, I was the only one that I can remember.

RK: Oh, I see. Tell me about how you were treated there in Shonien period?

DB: By staff?

RK: By staff or children.

DB: By staff I guess I was treaded just like every other kid. I think because I was half Caucasian I think the kids picked on me in Children's Village.

RK: Would you tell me how?

DB: Well, first of all, the name Tojo was not popular in camp. And being mixed, you know, half Caucasian, I was kind of different, and they used to tease me.

RK: About Tojo?

DB: About Tojo and not being full Japanese, being a half breed.

RK: So, you noticed about what Tojo means, then, gradually?

DB: Yeah, it was not good because he was—

RK: The name of Tojo, I see. And then you later noticed about Hideki Tojo?

DB: The war leader?

RK: Yes.

DB: Yeah.

RK: Maybe my question will be later.

DB: Okay.

RK: So, any friendship during the [Children's Village] period.

DB: A few and then after I left, a couple of people I got to know better.

RK: Still in contact?

DB: Occasionally.

RK: Do you know the name of those friends.

DB: The Matsunos family.

RK: Especially named—

DB: Tak [Takato] Matsuno.<sup>1</sup>

RK: Okay. Who else?

DB: I'm trying to think of his name, but I can't think of it.

RK: But at least a couple people. How did you manage your emotional management during the [Children's Village] period?

DB: I got mad, had temper tantrums.

RK: Did you fight back?

DB: Yes.

RK: But you were the only person—the others were your enemy. Did you feel that?

DB: Yeah.

RB: Did you have anybody to talk to about this?

DB: Not really.

RK: Because you thought it's not necessary?

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<sup>1</sup> Takato Matsuno, O.H. 2339, Center for Oral and Public History.

DB: No. Because they were different.

RK: How about staff members?

DB: One person that I talked to was John Nagayama, who was the dorm leader and older.

RK: Oh. He was not in the picture.

DB: No, I didn't find him.

RK: So, was it helpful?

DB: Yes.

RK: So, each time, if you have a problem, you went to him?

DB: Yes.

RK: During dormitory life, you were assigned to the smaller boys section?

DB: Yes.

RK: How was dormitory life, the bedroom? How did you mingle with other children?

DB: Well, we just had one big room with beds all around.

RK: How many?

DB: Fifteen maybe.

RK: Any memory of playing in a playroom or large yard, activity, Christmastime? Do you remember staff members playing with children? Also you went to a coliseum to see a firecracker?

DB: No, I don't remember that.

RK: Because you're just there six months or something.

DB: Probably.

RK: Do you remember staff members playing with children?

DB: Yes.

RK: Do you remember playing?

DB: Yeah. I remember throwing sushi.

RK: (laughs) Was it a party or something?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Who threw the sushi?

DB: We kids.

RK: To you?

DB: At me. We threw it at people.

RK: This might be difficult comparing the Children's Home Society, but Shonien was a less comfortable place?

DB: Yes, because of my difference in race.

RK: So, naturally, you don't know about Mr. Samoto, from Shonien? He was arrested by FBI right on the same day of the Pearl Harbor attack.

DB: No, I don't know anything about that.

RK: Do you know the staff members, maybe up to ten people, ten staff members taking care of children?

DB: Yeah, that's probably about right.

RK: Do you have memories having parties in the big playroom?

DB: No, I don't.

RK: Do you remember playing in the courtyard?

DB: No, I remember playing in a big, grassy area at Children's Village. Kick the can and games like that.

RK: With the staff members?

DB: No, just with kids mostly. And I remember the older boys had a basketball team. I remember watching them play. But, no, I don't remember the courtyard.

RK: Do you remember what age you went to Manzanar? Seven or six?

DB: Six or seven.

RK: Another informant told me [Children's Village] was a like a big Christian family. How about that?

DB: Well, it was a big loving family. I don't know about—well, I guess they were Christian, but I don't remember that. I just remember the older kids took care of the younger kids, and that was pretty good.

RK: Do you have any memory of mealtime?

DB: Yeah. (chuckles) At mealtime, I remember we got a lot of rice and brown gravy, a lot of it.

RK: Oh, really! So, you were not hungry.

DB: No, if we wanted more to eat, we always had more rice and brown gravy.

RK: So, happy meal time?

DB: Yeah!

RK: Do you remember if you said grace maybe? You were so young—

DB: I don't remember saying grace.

[recording paused]

RK: So, we were talking about the blackouts. What's that?

DB: Well, the blackouts were when the military police made everybody turn off their lights at night practicing in case the Japanese attacked us, I guess. I don't know. It was kind of scary. They'd make you turn off the lights, and you had to stay in the building, and then they would patrol around the orphanage and make sure that everybody did what they were told to do. It's kind of a way of intimidating people, I guess.

RK: From the staff members?

DB: No, from the military.

RK: Oh. Later they did at [Children's Village]?

DB: Yeah, military.

RK: So, after Pearl Harbor attack, you went to—

DB: How I went to Manzanar?



- RK: Yeah. How did you go?
- DB: In a big bus.
- RK: How many buses?
- DB: I don't remember. I was just in one of them.
- RK: How was it inside the bus? Did you sing or something?
- DB: We might have. I don't remember. It was hot. I remember it was hot!
- RK: Outside? Inside?
- DB: Outside.
- RK: When you arrive?
- DB: Yeah.
- RK: Would you say like excursion or picnic type of mood?
- DB: Well, we were told we were going on a little picnic. And then, we got in that bus, and we just kept going and going and going. And it was hot.
- RK: Do you remember when you arrived? What time you arrived?
- DB: I think it was in the afternoon.
- RK: Do you have any memories of the last days of [Children's Village]?
- DB: Yeah, I remember being told I was going to leave. Then I think I was sent down to the military police, and I think they took my picture. I remember them, I think, taking fingerprints so I could leave. I remember being very scared about leaving and kind of scared because of the police taking my picture and fingerprints.
- RK: Only you?
- DB: Only me.
- RK: Because?
- DB: Because I was leaving early.
- RK: Oh, you left early?

DB: Yes, I left there in the summer months.

RK: You went to Manzanar in the summer?

DB: I went to Manzanar with the whole group, but then I left Manzanar and went to Bishop.

RK: Oh, you are talking about after Manzanar?

DB: No, I'm talking about what happened to me just before I left Manzanar when they fingerprinted me and took my picture.

RK: Oh, I see. Do you remember many other Catholic Maryknoll orphans came to Shonien and then they went to Manzanar at the same time as the Shonien?

DB: No, I don't remember that.

RK: Of course, you don't know about Executive Order 9066.

DB: Well, I know about it now, but I didn't know about it then.

RK: You stayed in Manzanar until when, 1943?

DB: I think I left in June of 1943. I think I was there two years.

RK: No, just one year because you went to Manzanar from Shonien, I think, June 1942?

DB: I don't remember. Whenever I was there, I was there a short time.

RK: So, just one year?

DB: Maybe.

RK: Okay. After you arrived in Manzanar, what was your reaction as a child? Many people are there; many Japanese are there.

DB: My first reaction was the fences because, when we got there, the guards had to let us in, and there was barbed wire fences and there were towers. I remember that. So, I remember being scared when we first go there.

RK: Do you remember any memory about Shonien staff members who went to Manzanar with children.

DB: The only one I remember is John Nagayama.

RK: How about Shonien staff, like the Matsumotos?<sup>2</sup>

DB: Oh, I remember the Matsumotos, yeah.

RK: How about the other staff?

DB: No, I don't remember them.

RK: In terms of the name of Children's Village, do you have any idea why it was called Children's Village?

DB: Only because that's where all the kids were. That's the only reason I knew about.

RK: \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) called orphanage. Why isn't it called—

DB: No.

RK: Maybe partly because they are not actually orphans.

DB: Oh, maybe. I don't know.

RK: Do you think the reason why it was called Children's Village was to prevent racial prejudice.

DB: I don't know.

RK: Do you have any memory of a physical picture of Children's Village?

DB: Yeah, it was just big barracks.

RK: Three barracks.

DB: Yeah, two, three. Two barracks for the kids, one barrack for the mess hall, and the Matsumotos lived there, and an office and so forth. Yeah, three barracks.

RK: How about orchard, garden, pond?

DB: I remember the orchard, and I remember going to Bear Creek.

RK: What's that?

DB: There was a creek up there at the end of the camp, and we used to walk up there. The older kids would swim.

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<sup>2</sup> Lillian Matsumoto, O.H. 2492, Center for Oral and Public History.

RK: Do you have any memoires of visiting outside of Children's Village? I mean, other barracks?

DB: Yeah. I remember visiting Tak Matsuno's sister and some other members and friends of theirs.

RK: How did you perceive the other barracks?

DB: Oh, they were crowded, and there was no privacy. I remember that. No walls, just big rooms. I remember the sheets on the—

RK: Do you remember how those Japanese adults treated you?

DB: How the adults treated me?

RK: Um-hm.

DB: Oh, nice.

RK: Because they didn't know you were living in Children's Village?

DB: I don't know.

RK: Did you talk to them, to Japanese adults?

DB: No.

RK: So, you didn't feel any prejudice. They didn't look down on you?

RB: I don't think so. Now, we're talking about the adults?

RK: Um-hm.

DB: No, I don't think so.

RK: How did you feel yourself during Manzanar period?

DB: Well, I guess I felt all right. You know, under the circumstances, you adjust, right? So, we all adjusted pretty good.

RK: You told me you were parted from your parents right after you were born?

DB: Yes.

RK: So, you don't have any memory about the father at that time?

DB: That's correct.

RK: So, you didn't miss parents?

DB: No. I never had any parents to miss.

RK: Comparing to other barracks, there was no privacy, no partitions, how did you like Children's Village barracks?

DB: Well, I don't have anything to compare it to.

RK: But, the other barracks looked bad or something?

DB: Well, our barrack was just one big room with a heater in the middle.

RK: Was it warm enough?

DB: Yeah, I think so.

RK: Really?

DB: Well, I don't remember ever being cold.

RK: I see. How were you taken care of in Children's Village by staff members?

DB: Children's Village?

RK: Um-hm.

DB: Not really. I was too young.

RK: You don't remember?

DB: No.

RK: How about mealtime in Children's Village?

DB: I think it was just typical, but it was smaller so there were fewer children.

RK: With one hundred people or sixty to—

DB: Children's Village?

RK: Um-hm.

DB: I don't know. Maybe six or eight.

RK: Oh, just six or either?

DB: Yeah, that's all I remember.

RK: In your dormitory?

DB: In Children's Village, yeah.

RK: In your dormitory?

DB: Well, in Children's Village we had little rooms, as I recall.

RK: So, you shared with five, six people you were saying?

DB: I think in Children's Village I had my own little room. I don't think it was dormitories in Children's Village. I don't really remember.

RK: Oh, you have own room?

DB: Yeah.

RK: So, you didn't share?

DB: I don't think so.

RK: Because you were different?

DB: No, just because that's the way they did it.

RK: Other kids are sharing rooms?

DB: In Children's Village?

RK: Uh-huh.

DB: I don't think we had—I think we just had our separate room, little room. Shonien was the dormitory.

RK: And then also Children's Village?

DB: Children's Village was dormitory.

RK: So, we are mixing up—you were talking about in Children's Home Society is six—

DB: Yeah, in separate rooms.

RK: Then how about in Manzanar, Children's Village?

DB: In Manzanar, Children's Village, we had big dormitories.

RK: Regarding the hospital at Manzanar, do you remember?

DB: I just remember there was a hospital.

RK: Were you in hospital?

DB: I think maybe I went there once.

RK: Do you remember?

DB: I think just once.

RK: What happened?

DB: I can't remember. Maybe I got sick. But I think I was there once.

RK: Do you remember the facility? Doctor's lounge?

DB: No.

RK: So, \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) condition of the hospital, can you describe?

DB: No.

RK: Was it crowded?

DB: I can't remember.

RK: Regarding the physical checks or health checks in Children's Village during Manzanar period, do you remember?

DB: House check?

RK: Um-hm.

DB: By who?

RK: By doctor in the Children's Village.

DB: No, I don't remember that.

RK: You didn't get shots or something like that?

DB: No, I don't remember that.

RK: Do you remember there was a sick room in Shonien or Children's Village?

DB: I don't remember in Shonien. I don't in Children's Village.

RK: Do you remember if there was a baby nursery at Children's Village?

DB: Yes.

RK: Can you tell me about that?

DB: That was in another barrack, and that's where the older kids helped take care of the little kids. I can remember going in there and looking at the babies.

RK: How many babies are there?

DB: I don't remember.

RK: Both girls and boys?

DB: Yeah.

RK: In the baby crib?

DB: Some of them, yeah.

RK: Do you know nighttime [if] somebody accompanies?

DB: I don't know.

RK: When you visit, it was mainly daytime?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Maybe older girls are helping?

DB: Yes.

RK: Oh, orphans, older girls.

DB: Yes.

RK: Is there anything about [that] you want to talk [about]?

DB: No, not about that. I just remember going over and visiting.



RK: How did you feel about babies?

DB: Oh, I don't know.

RK: You didn't reflect back on your days in the Children's Home Society?

DB: No, I don't think so.

RK: Did you make friends during Children's Village period?

DB: Not really.

RK: How come?

DB: I don't know. Maybe I wasn't there long enough.

RK: Oh, yes, that's right, maybe one year. But, during one year, how about comparing Shonien period, did you also—

DB: I don't think it was that long. I don't know how long it was.

RK: But, in Shonien period you had difficulty? Other kids attacking you?

DB: Um—

RK: How about Children's Village?

DB: I don't remember Shonien. It was Children's Village that I remember.

RK: Oh, really?

DB: Yeah. I don't remember Shonien at all.

RK: Oh, because of six months.

DB: See, I don't know how long I was there.

RK: So, do you think your memory is mixing?

DB: No. All of my memories are about Children's Village.

RK: So, during the Children's Village period, you were attacked?

DB: Yeah.

RK: And they made your childhood difficult?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Can you tell me about it more extensively? All the time same kinds that attacked you—who were those kids?

DB: I don't remember. They gave me a nickname.

RK: What was the nickname?

DB: Gopher, because of my teeth.

RK: I can't understand. What's that?

DB: Gophers have big teeth.

RK: Gophers? I don't know.

DB: You know, gophers, the little animal that gets in your lawn?

RK: Uh-huh. In the seeds?

DB: Grass.

RK: In the grass? Okay.

DB: And they have big teeth, so because I had big teeth they called me—

RK: Like rabbits or something?

DB: No.

RK: I see. How did you like your nickname?

DB: I didn't like it.

RK: So, they used to call you that?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Gopher.

DB: Gopher, yeah. I didn't like it. Later I learned the reference to a gopher was an error.

RK: Can you tell me in detail how did they attack you?

DB: Oh, they just ridiculed me because my name was Tojo.

RK: Did they say what Tojo means or something?

DB: No. We just knew that Tojo was the Japanese general was it? And he was bad.

RK: He was their leader, actually. He was a lead student in military staff college or military academy in Japan, and then he became later the prime minister till the end of World War II. Then like secretary of the Army, he was appointed as minister. Japan wanted to go to war, so he played an active role of Japan's going to war.

DB: So, in America he was the enemy.

RK: Um-hm. And then, Japan saw England and America like savage, brutal countries. Do you know anything else about Tojo?

DB: Not a great deal.

RK: So, at this time, you didn't know what Tojo means?

DB: No. I just knew he was a general, and he was hated by Americans because he was leaving the Japanese in the war. He was not a nice person, so they used to tease me about my name.

RK: Do you have any idea about Kibei?

DB: No.

RK: Because you were so young?

DB: Yes.

RK: So, you don't know also about Manzanar riot?

DB: I remember the Manzanar riot. I don't remember why, but I remember the camp talking about it. It seems to me that I remember the police, military police, wouldn't let us—none of us could leave the Village during that time. I remember that, but I didn't know why.

RK: So, you didn't witness the riot?

DB: Right. We didn't know about the riot. We just knew that we couldn't leave the Village.

RK: At night?

DB: And daytime. Both day and night.

RK: Didn't it happen around evening?

DB: I don't remember.

RK: Psychologically, staff was great for you to transition to \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)—

DB: I don't remember that at all.

RK: You transferred from Children's Home Society to Shonien to Children's Village?

RB: Yes, but I don't remember anybody helping a lot. They just told us we were going to go, and then we went. When we went to Manzanar, they just told us we were going to go, and then we got there. That was it.

RK: So, it was businesslike?

DB: Yeah, no explanations that I remember. Just get on the bus and let's go.

RK: But, at \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) did you see female staff members like all the sisters like children?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Did you have counseling with the Matsumotos?

DB: Not that I remember.

RK: How about with the other staff members to discuss your case or anything like that?

DB: No.

RK: Do you think the orphans were relatively well-behaved at the Children's Village?

DB: Yes.

RK: They were not punished?

DB: I don't—yeah, we were punished. It wasn't cruelty, but we were disciplined.

RK: So, no physical, mental—

DB: I don't remember that.

RK: How about \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)—

DB: I don't understand.

RK: Oh, sorry. Babrary—

DB: Barbary? Barbarian?

RK: Like a nasty word? No?

DB: Just by the kids, not by the staff people.

RK: Were they strict or businesslike? I mean, staff members \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)—

DB: Pretty strict.

RK: Tell me about that.

DB: Well, I mean, you were expected to do it, and you were expected to do it quickly and their way.

RK: Did they explain why you were wrong?

DB: No, I don't think so. They just told you, you didn't do it right and do it better.

RK: They didn't give you guidelines why you were—

DB: I don't think so.

RK: During the Children's Village, did you listen to radio to contact outside?

DB: I don't think so. I don't remember any radio.

RK: How about listening \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)—

DB: No, I don't know anything about that.

RK: Of course, you didn't read newspaper.

DB: No, I didn't read the newspaper.

RK: So, you just confined inside?

RB: Yes. Just rumors.

RK: I know it's difficult you told me—do you think you can say similarity and differences between \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) orphanage to the Home Society and the Shonien and the Children's Village?

DB: No. No, I can't. I was just too young.

RK: Okay. Do you know how the Matsumotos were perceived among orphans. What was their reputation?

DB: I just remember them as being the directors.

RK: And then, they have subordinate people?

DB: The only person I had contact with was John Nagayama.

RK: Can you describe John Nagayama?

DB: Oh, he was a very nice person.

RK: How old was he then?

DB: I think he was probably eighteen.

RK: He was like a social worker?

DB: Yeah.

RK: And he was single?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Not only you, other kids also liked him?

DB: No. He was in charge of our part of the dormitory.

RK: Oh, I see. How about other kids in your dormitory liked him?

DB: No, other people like him in our dormitory.

RK: Only you liked him?

DB: Oh, no. How did the other kids like him? I think they got along with him.

RK: Did you feel the Matsumotos [were] a father, mother figure for you?

DB: Did I fear them?

RK: Um-hm.

DB: No. They were just over there, directors.

RK: The Matsumotos, did they mingle with children?

DB: I don't remember.

RK: You played with them?

DB: With Matsumotos?

RK: Um-hm.

DB: No, I don't think so.

RK: Did they give hugging or praising, caring?

DB: I don't remember them doing that.

RK: Really?

DB: Really.

RK: How about the other children?

DB: What?

RK: Other kids hugged?

DB: I don't know.

RK: Did you feel that you were protected during the Children's Village period?

DB: Yeah.

RK: How?

DB: Well, because we were all together, and we had the older people looking after us.

RK: So, mainly, which did you feel closer [to], staff members or older kids? When you have troubles, you feel like talking to older people?

DB: Um, gee, I don't know.

RK: There was no problem?

DB: Yeah. I think the only person I talked to is Nagayama.

RK: You didn't talk to him a lot?

DB: No, but he was in charge, so if you wanted to do something you had to check with him.

RK: After the war, do you know what happened to John Nagayama?

DB: Yeah, he became a minister of the church. He died a few years ago. He's dead now.

RK: He was a very religious person during the Children's Village?

DB: I don't remember that.

RK: Where did you go?

DB: Bishop.

RK: Oh, John Nagayama is the minister in Bishop?

DB: Oh, no, no. Where did he go?

RK: Uh-huh.

DB: Last I knew he was in California up in a little town called Fowler, but I lost track of him.

RK: You left the Children's Village one year later?

DB: Uh-huh.

RK: Do you don't remember any of the staff names?

DB: No.

RK: Except Matsumotos. Okay, \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) daily duties of the Children's Village are the same as the other orphanage?

DB: Yes. You get up, get dressed, make your bed, go to breakfast, and then whatever.

RK: Go to school.

DB: Go to school or play, ask permission before you went off the grounds. You just couldn't go walking away. You had to tell people you were going.

RK: In Children's Village also?

DB: Yeah, only in Children's Village. I don't remember



RK: Other two orphanages.

DB: Yeah.

RK: How about in Shonien?

DB: I don't remember anything about Shonien.

RK: Oh, okay. When you go outside out of Children's Village, if you are playing in the garden, you have to get permission?

DB: Get permission, yeah.

RK: You told me before you know this person in the 1944 Easter picture, Margaret \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)—

DB: \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)

RK: Um-hm.

DB: I just remember the name. I don't know anything about her. In some of the correspondence, I remember seeing her name, but that's all. I don't remember her at all.

RK: So, no personal contact?

DB: No personal contact.

RK: She was the head counselor of the welfare system at Manzanar.

DB: Oh, okay.

RK: In Children's Village dormitory, you shared with five children?

DB: Oh, no, not—

RK: Maybe altogether, in dormitory maybe fifteen or something?

DB: Where?

RK: In Children's Village.

DB: Yeah, maybe fifteen.

RK: Can you name any of those children?

DB: No.

RK: Did you mingle with them?

DB: Mingle with them?

RK: Yes, in the dormitory. No conversations?

DB: Well, nothing special that I can remember. Just you do what you do, and that's it.

RK: Did you tease each other? Right after the lights went off at bedtime, did you talk in the dark?

DB: Yeah, I remember that. Everybody would talk after they weren't supposed to. Yeah, I remember that.

RK: Were you punished by the staff members?

DB: I think we were hollered at. I don't know if we got punished.

RK: Do you remember older kids played with themselves, and then younger kids are separated from older kids?

DB: Yes.

RK: So, no contact?

DB: With the older kids?

RK: Um-hm.

DB: No, I didn't have any because I didn't have any brothers or sisters, older. Some of the kids, their brothers and sisters were older, so they had contact with them, but I didn't.

RK: Do you remember some older kids reading the stories at bedtime? Like ghost stories? Do you have any memories?

DB: Not really.

RK: What do you remember about the older kids?

DB: I just remember that they were there, and they had their own activities. I remember that some of the older boys got in fights. That's all I remember.

RK: Do you have any memory about having party at Children's Village?

DB: No.

RK: Do you remember igloos during wintertime?

DB: No.

RK: Alaskan snow houses?

DB: No.

RK: Did you see that?

DB: No.

RK: Do you remember there was a long line to buy an ice cream?

DB: No.

RK: You actually didn't have experience?

DB: No. Probably didn't have any money.

RK: I think you were given allowance.

DB: Don't remember.

RK: Maybe, of course, \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) institution you were not allowed—you don't have any memories of being given allowance?

DB: No.

RK: In Shonien?

DB: No.

RK: Okay. Do you have memory about the outdoor movie theater?

DB: No.

RK: You didn't see any movies?

DB: I don't remember seeing movies.

RK: Okay, I'm asking about the school life in Manzanar. So, you went to—

DB: Second grade, I think.

RK: Who were the teachers?

DB: I don't remember.

RK: *Hakujin?*

DB: Don't remember

RK: You told me Japanese teacher.

DB: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I remember a Japanese teacher, but that's all. I don't remember her name.

RK: Do you remember the subject. What subject did you like?

DB: No.

RK: English, math?

DB: No, it wasn't math. I don't remember anything like that in school.

RK: Can you describe—because I'm an outsider, I don't know, about school life?

DB: Well, all I can remember is just going to school, having desks, and that's all.

RK: Do you have a desk and a chair?

DB: I can't remember.

RK: Just only chair?

DB: I don't know. I just remember that we were in a classroom.

RK: How about the memory of the homework? Did you have to do homework?

DB: No, I don't remember that. I don't think so.

RK: Do you have any memory of classmates?

DB: No.

RK: Do you have any vivid memory of school life, anything?

DB: No, just going to school.

RK: The school life for you, it was just monotonous, like boring?

DB: Yes, you just went.

RK: \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) second grade is difficult to—

DB: Yes.

RK: Well, I'm asking about the Manzanar religious life, concerning the religious activities in Manzanar. Did you attend Sunday services?

DB: Not that I remember.

RK: How about before Manzanar?

DB: No.

RK: Did you have any activities?

DB: Not that I can remember.

RK: Even the Shonien was a Christian institution.

DB: I don't remember anything about the Shonien.

RK: So, you didn't have any. Okay. Not just only you, the other kids also?

DB: I don't remember anything about Sunday school.

RK: Okay. So, of attending, you don't have any memories?

DB: No.

RK: Do you know how many churches are there?

DB: No.

RK: How about a Buddhist church, a Catholic church?

DB: Don't know anything about that.

RK: So, you don't have any memory at all, pocket money?

DB: No.

RK: So, you don't know about clothing grant?

DB: No. In Children's Village?

RK: Um-hm. Monthly \$3.75.

DB: No. In Children's Village, all the clothes would be washed, and then you'd go get your clothes. And whoever got there first, or was the biggest, got the best, and the youngest and the littlest got what was left.

RK: You mean a clothing grant?

DB: No, just clothes that you wore.

RK: Oh, so like washed clothes?

DB: Yeah.

RK: At the laundry?

DB: Yeah.

RK: You picked up anything you liked?

DB: Yeah.

RK: You didn't have the names on the clothes?

DB: No.

RK: (laughs) How about the underwear? So, first come, first served?

DB: Yeah. That's what I remember because I always used to get the last leftover.

RK: And how did you feel?

DB: I didn't like it. I always got the bib overalls.

RK: What's that?

DB: Pants with suspenders.

RK: Uh-huh.

DB: Bib—let's see. Here's a bib. See?

RK: Oh, a type of \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)—

DB: Yeah.

RK: How do you spell that?

DB: B-i-b overalls. O-v-e-r-a-l-l-s. See? He has pants and shirt, so he got there first. I always got left with the—maybe because I was taller.

RK: Like, number eight person?

DB: Yeah. Overalls.

RK: You were taller?

DB: Yeah, I was always taller, bigger, taller.

RK: Because of being bigger, do you think you were also possibly teased? You were different also because you were tall?

DB: Because of being Caucasian, my father was tall.

RK: Okay, I understand. I was just wondering the older kids helped folding the clothes after laundry?

DB: Yes.

RK: And then, you'd pick up—

DB: Yeah. Then whoever got there first got the best choice.

RK: You rush in right after laundry?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Some other informant said it's like a family like place, family like atmosphere. Do you think Children's Village—[recording paused] We are talking about when you talked about your personal story and then your children's reaction. How was that?

DB: It was okay. They're interested in their background and want to know more about it.

RK: How old were they when you told \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)—

DB: From early childhood.

RK: They had a lot of questions?

DB: Yes.

RK: Especially interested in—

DB: Well, as they got older, they were interested in the camp. And they were interested in the family background, but we didn't know the family background.

RK: You mean your original family background?

DB: Yes. Now that we know what that is, they're very interested in that.

RK: The children, they all got married?

DB: Yes.

RK: To Caucasians?

DB: Yes.

RK: You have been thinking it's really important to tell your story?

DB: Yes.

RK: Not only to your family members, but also others?

DB: Yes.

RK: Did you talk to others?

DB: Yes.

RK: Like your wife and wife's family?

Db: Uh-huh. My fellow workers.

RK: Tell me about that. Are they also interested?

DB: Yes. They're more interested in the family background because it's unique, but we also talk [about] the social issues also.

RK: So, the condition of \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) family?

DB: Well, no, the treatment of the Japanese during the war and Japan bashing today, things like that.

RK: So, in a way, your unique situation, it has also opened up the conversation?

DB: Yes, it becomes the highway, the freeway. It starts out on one road, and then we branch out.



RK: And then, you felt better?

DB: Yes.

RK: For you, which affected your life more, the orphanage life experience or the Manzanar internment camp experience?

DB: Well, the camp experience, because, if I hadn't had the camp experience, I probably would never have known parts of the Japanese culture. Yeah, I would have never been exposed to the Japanese because I would have been always exposed only to the Caucasians, I'm sure. I guess you'd have to say that was a positive effect of camp for me.

RK: Positive?

DB: Yeah. It was still the worst thing that America ever did to a group of people.

RK: So, you feel being exposed to Japanese culture was a positive experience in your life?

DB: Yes. What little culture you could have in an orphanage.

RK: I'm just curious, since you didn't see your real father, who he was, and then you experienced a foster father but he was a doctor—and then I suppose you had a difficult time with your foster mother—when you became a father, did you have difficulty?

DB: I had difficulty with one son and no difficulty with the other two. My first wife and I were divorced when they were small children, so that could have been part of the reason also.

RK: So, right now is the second one?

DB: Yes.

RK: The reason of divorce—it's really personal, sorry, but the reason of the divorce has to do with something about your past experience?

DB: No, I don't think so.

RK: Another informant said that orphans are united with an idea of oneness, family life ties. Do you think so?

DB: Well, that could be true if I were involved more, but since I haven't been involved, probably not for me.

RK: I see. [recording paused] So, you received the \$20,000?

DB: Yes.

RK: What was your reaction? Just receiving—I mean, did you accept that government apology?

DB: I don't know that I accepted it. I don't know what you mean by accept. I mean, it was a course of action that they took, so you accept that. If you mean does it make me think what they did was correct, absolutely not. Can it replace for people what they lost and what America did to them? Absolutely not. It's a token.

RK: So, the \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) period was nothing like can be replaced?

DB: That's correct.

RK: Did you have anything in your life that you were prevented to pursue your goal because of the camp life?

DB: No.

RK: How about because of the orphanage experience?

DB: No.

RK: If any, what do you regret in your life?

DB: I regret not being able to be raised more in the Japanese culture, because I have decided to identify with the Japanese half of my family, and I missed that, the culture. It's very important. By me not having that culture or experience, my children can't have it either. So, what's going to happen in our family is we're going to lose it.

RK: You mean in your already now family? Your own family?

DB: My own family. They're not going to have that benefit, and that's sad to me.

RK: So, you gradually became aware of the Japanese \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) culture?

DB: Yes.

RK: In what way?

DB: Well, educationally, the love that—I can't really explain it, but we all need to be proud of our distinctness. Quite frankly, what the American camp experience did, for me at least, and I'm sure others, it took away their pride, and we had to rebuild that.

RK: What was your reaction that such little unthreatening children had to go to camp? They had to go to camp also, even the younger children?

DB: The whole camp thing is a blight on American history. It's terrible, absolutely terrible.

RK: By the way, have you attended any reunion?

DB: No.

RK: How come?

DB: Well, it comes at the right time, and I feel a little—I don't like reunions.

RK: Any kind of reunion?

DB: Right. I have never gone to a high school reunion. I've never gone to a college reunion.

RK: How come?

DB: I don't know why. Just one of those things.

RK: It's just \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) your past.

DB: Yeah. So, I just don't like reunions, and I don't know why.

RK: Maybe you think you have not so much attachment to the orphanage life, Manzanar experience?

DB: I don't know. I don't think it has anything to do with that.

RK: Another informant told every time she attend, like a funeral atmosphere is always \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible)—

DB: Yeah, maybe so. Reunions, everybody wants to talk about the past, remember the past. I don't really, so I never go. I feel bad about the camp reunion because it has more social significance. Maybe one of these days I'll go.

RK: How about upcoming reunion this week?

DB: No. One of my brother-in-laws, I may go visit them.

RK: Who have you been keeping in contact with since end of World War II?

DB: People I've been in contact with are the Matsuno family, and I can't—Tamo Isozaki.

RK: Everybody said, I have a contact with the Matsunos, Isuzakis.

DB: Then, when I found my family, Raymond Murioko, he wasn't in the—yes, he was in the orphanage. He is married to a cousin, and I didn't know that. In fact, they want me to go to a reunion this week, but I'm not signed up. Is it his weekend?

RK: This weekend. August twenty-first.

DB: Yeah. Probably so.

RK: Yesterday was the end of World War II.

DB: Oh.

RK: Okay, so you don't have a special racial prejudice after World War II?

DB: Oh, I think I do. Yeah, I think I'm prejudiced against America.

RK: But, in the working environment, when you started your career?

DB: Oh. No, I don't think so.

RK: College life, no?

DB: No.

RK: Right after the elementary school or high school period?

DB: Yeah. What is the question?

RK: Right after World War II, you had a racial prejudice, but soon after it disappeared?

DB: I think so.

RK: Do you have any special religion right now

DB: No.

RK: I think this question also is relative. What reminds you of camp life in present life?

DB: I don't know.

RK: So, Manzanar is a big part of your life or a minor part?

DB: Well, it's a major part in the way that I look at life, but it's a minor part in the human relations because I haven't been close to any of those people. So, that's a minor part, but as far as setting my life, that part was a major thing.

RK: Do you think if you are much older at the time of the Manzanar internment camp, would it have been better or worse?

DB: Oh, it would have to have been much worse.

RK: Have you visited Manzanar after you left?

DB: I visited it several times when I lived near Bishop, but since I moved away I haven't visited it.

RK: Is there anything different after World War II?

DB: Well, no. It's there that's all.

RK: Okay, now I'm asking, do you mostly associate with many American families or Japanese American?

DB: Well, American but now that I have found my original family, I am much more involved with them.

RK: So, the Japanese family?

DB: Um-hm.

RK: Your mother is still alive?

DB: Yes, I visited her this weekend.

RK: Oh, that's good. How is the relationship with her going?

DB: It's going good.

RK: Do you talk about your past experience?

DB: Mother doesn't like to talk about that, so we talk about the camp experience and things in very broad terms.

RK: Heart Mountain? Mother was also in—

DB: Heart Mountain, yes.

RK: Does she talk about that?

DB: Yes. And my aunts and uncles were there, so they talk about it.

RK: How about Children's Home Society, do you see any reunion?

DB: No.

RK: So, only Salvation Army had a reunion?

DB: I didn't know about the Salvation Army either.

RK: Did you ever want to visit Japan?

DB: Yes.

RK: You never visited Japan?

DB: I've never been there.

RK: Tell me about that.

DB: Why haven't I been there? Because of the expense, very high exchange rate.

RK: Right now it's getting—it's \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible) for me.

DB: Yes. And someday I'm going to go.

RK: Do you have any idea of your ancestors, Tojo family, in Japan?

DB: Well, there are at least two Tojo families in Japan. My grandmother and grandfather came from there, and they had several brothers and sisters. My aunt and uncle have visited them, so someday I'd like to go and find them.

RK: So, you are interested about the family roots?

DB: Um-hm.

RK: Why did you decide to go to college and to—you first of all learned physical education?

DB: Well, I was always active in athletics, so it was natural. But college, or an education, was important to my foster family. That was important to me, so I just did it. And then, I had scholarships, so I could do it.

RK: The educational expense was foster families—they paid for the—

DB: No.

RK: Oh, you were almost on your own during high school?

DB: Yes, they believed it was important but they didn't contribute. Education was important, but they didn't contribute.

RK: To the children. I see.

DB: Although they never said it, they probably believed that if you got it your own hard way, it was better.

RK: All the families different in their belief and what they do. I see.

DB: Yeah, and I don't happen to agree with them. One time we had five children we were paying for college for.

RK: All the family?

DB: Yeah.

RK: Okay. Last question. Do you speak Japanese?

DB: No.

RK: Do you think of anything before we close you'd like to talk about? Okay. Well, I appreciate your cooperation. I think I learned a lot. Thank you very much.

DB: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW