

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Children's Village at Manzanar Oral History Project

An Oral History with CLARA S. HAYASHI

Interviewed

By

Reiko Katabami

On July 12, 1993

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NARRATOR: CLARA S. HAYASHI
INTERVIEWER: Reiko Katabami
DATE: July 12, 1993
LOCATION: Redondo Beach, California
PROJECT: Children's Village at Manzanar

RK: This is an interview Mrs. Clara Hayashi by Reiko Katabami for the Japanese American Project for the Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton. The interview is being held in Redondo Beach, California, Monday July 12, 1993 at approximately 1:10 p.m. So, to begin with—I'm asking you a question now. First of all, can I ask your birthdate, then the birthplace?

CH: I was born March 17, 1924, in Livingston, California.

RK: So, you are right now—how old are you?

CH: Sixty-nine.

RK: Do you have any brother and sisters?

CH: No, not living.
Doug and Annie Sakamoto

RK: So, you are only daughter? Which generation are you?

CH: Second, Nisei.

RK: Can I ask your parental background about father and your mother?

CH: My father was from Hiroshima-ken. I don't know what year, but when he was young he left Hiroshima for Hawaii. He did carpentry work, and he did translation for the workers because many of them did not know how to read or write. So, he'd go from camp-to-camp reading the letters from Japan, and then he'd go back and write the answers for people. He was one of the leaders of the sugar cane strike around 1917, I think—1918—so he had to sneak out of Hawaii and came to California.

RK: Oh, I see. How about your mother?

CH: My mother was from the Saga-ken. When my father was ready to get married, he went to Japan to look for a wife. He met my mother and brought her over here, and they got married. Well, they got married in Japan, and then they came over here.

RK: Oh, I see. Do you know the reasons why they came to the U.S., to America?

CH: The reason why? Well, my father came because he had to get out of Hawaii, (chuckles) and he went to Hawaii because he didn't want to get drafted. He didn't believe in the wars, and he didn't want to go in the military.

RK: So, do you have any relatives in Hawaii?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: How about in California?

CH: No relatives in California.

RK: Right. Now how many children do you have?

CH: Five.

RK: Can I ask your children's names and age?

CH: Okay, well, the oldest is Paul Nathanael, and he's forty-three. Steven James, he's forty. Kim Allison—

RK: So, you have two boys?

CH: Uh-huh. Kim Allison will be thirty-seven, Monica Ann will be thirty-six, and Carla Jean will be thirty-three next month.

RK: Are they married?

CH: They're all married except Kim Allison.

RK: Are they married to Japanese American?

CH: Steven is married to a Korean, and the rest are married to Caucasians.

RK: So, no Japanese American?

CH: No Japanese American.

RK: Okay, to begin with, you were born in America. What part of America where you born in?

CH: I was born in Livingston, California. It's Central California.

RK: And then, you are only daughter?

CH: Well, I had a sister, but she died at infancy.

RK: She died?

CH: Oh, she was, I think, one.

RK: Oh, I see. Your mother and father and you lived in Livingston?

CH: Yeah.

RK: Could you tell me about what kind of a city—

CH: Livingston is a farming community with mostly vineyards—now they have peaches and grapes and almonds—and, of course, right now is known for Foster Farms chickens. It's known as a wine country.

RK: It is a Japanese community?

CH: Livingston was a Japanese, Christian community, colony.

RK: So, your family was a Christian family?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: Can you describe your parents? Mother?

CH: I don't know anything about my mother, really.

RK: So, your mother died when you're—

CH: When I was three, and she was in the hospital before that.

RK: Oh, so when she came to California, she was suffering what?

CH: Tuberculosis. Well, in those days if you had tuberculosis, you couldn't come to this country. If you had anything you couldn't come to this country, so she got it here. I think the life here is a lot more difficult.

RK: When your mother was in the hospital, did you visit her?

CH: I don't think so.

RK: Do you have any memory?

CH: I don't have any memory. I don't think they allowed children.

[00:07:34]

RK: Maybe your father?

CH: My father went every week.

RK: When did your mother die?

CH: Nineteen twenty-seven.

RK: Nineteen twenty-seven. So, you have no memory about your mom?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Your father took care of you.

CH: Um-hm.

RK: After your mother died, you still lived in Livingston?

CH: Yes. I was in what they call a sunshine school for a couple of years. Then when I got out, we moved to Los Angeles.

RK: So, at the age of—

CH: Six.

RK: Six, you went to Los Angeles?

CH: Uh-huh, six-and-a-half.

RK: You mean, at Los Angeles, you went to Shonien?

CH: Uh-huh. Yeah, my father had a job out there.

RK: In Livingston, what occupation?

CH: Carpenter.

RK: Why did he suddenly decide you should go to Shonien?

- CH: Well, I think he met Reverend Yamasaki, and he probably told him—
- RK: Yamasaki?
- CH: Yamasaki, Father Yamasaki. He urged him to come to Shonien in L.A.
- RK: Oh, I see. Still your father was doing the carpenter job?
- CH: Odds and ends.
- RK: Sorry?
- CH: Odds and ends, all kinds of work.
- RK: Oh, I see.
- CH: He worked at Shonien, so he did all kinds of works there.
- RK: So, he was kind of hired at the Shonien?
- CH: Um-hm.
- RK: So, father and daughter went to Shonien together. So, did you live together [as] father and daughter?
- CH: Later-on. He wasn't there too long, and then he went out and did gardening.
- RK: I see. In Shonien?
- CH: No, outside.
- RK: Well, first of all, how long did you stay in Shonien?
- CH: I stayed about six years.
- RK: At the age of four—did you say four you went to—six!
- CH: Six, six-and-a-half.
- RK: So, you went to twelve-and-a-half? You stayed there before World War II?
- CH: More than that—thirteen years.
- RK: Can you give me information about the Shonien? Who were the staff members there?

CH: Well, when I went there the founder of Shonien was Rokuichi Kusumoto. Let me see, I think the matron, what they call the matron, was Ms. Leach. Then they had a lot of younger people that worked with the children.

RK: Do you remember, roughly, how many Japanese?

CH: Roughly, forty, forty-two children, I think.

RK: How many staff?

CH: Oh, up to ten. Maybe more because they had a couple as cooks, then they had a maintenance man, and that's what my father was doing, the maintenance man. Then they had the women that took care of the children and did the laundry, whatever. The older girls helped with the laundry, and the boys helped with the yard work. Everybody had something to do.

RK: The facility is like a dormitory?

CH: Yeah, like a dormitory.

RK: So, boys dormitory and the girls dormitory is separate?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Will you describe the girls section of the dormitory?

CH: Oh, just a big room. Then later they acquired a house down the street, so the older girls had two in a room in a regular house that the girls kept clean. They did everything on their own.

RK: So, in one big room, how many girls were there?

CH: About ten, twelve.

RK: Ten beds.

CH: I don't know how many in the boys room. I never went in the boys' room. And then, they had the infants and then the little bit older. I think the boys were separated in two ages; each group.

RK: Oh, smaller ones—

CH: And the bigger ones.

RK: Smaller girls, also?

- CH: Yeah, the older girls went to the other house.
- RK: And infants are separated?
- CH: Uh-huh.
- RK: So, you were restricted to visit the boys' dormitory?
- CH: Yeah. We never even thought of going to the boys in those days. (laughs)
- RK: Outside of dormitory, you had chance to mingle with boys?
- CH: Uh-huh, because they had a big playroom; they had a lot of yard space, and a place to play baseball, football, whatever.
- RK: So, all Japanese orphans are there, do you think?
- CH: I think more less all Japanese. Or part Japanese. There was one—I don't know—I don't think he was Japanese.
- RK: Do you mean a *hapa*?
- CH: His name was Gene Thompson, so I don't know if he—he didn't look *hapa*. He looked more *hakujin* [Caucasian].
- RK: So, you don't remember any—
- CH: I remember there was a Korean boy.
- RK: Oh, really?
- CH: He went back to Korea.
- RK: Oh, I see. So, not all Japanese?
- CH: No.
- RK: We are going to take a short break. [00:14:30; recording paused] So, you told me, I forget the name, a minister asked your father to go to Shonien.
- CH: To come to Los Angeles. He suggested.
- RK: Just a suggestion. Who decided for you to go to orphanage?
- CH: My father did.

RK: Your father? Was it the state's decision or county decision?

CH: No, it was individual.

RK: Oh, I see. So, father decided to—

CH: It was a private institution.

RK: Okay, now I'm asking you when and where did your parents get married?

CH: I think it was about 1922 in Japan.

RK: And then, did you have any inconvenience in Shonien life?

CH: Not really.

RK: Can you give me a rough picture of Shonien daily routine? What time did you get up?

CH: We got up about six o'clock in the morning, made our beds, straightened-out our room, went to breakfast about seven.

RK: It's a big dining room?

CH: Uh-huh, big dining room. The girls had their table, the boys had their table, the youngsters had their table, and the adults had their table. We had different size tables, different shapes. We had a big room.

RK: So, after breakfast, did you go to school?

CH: Yeah, then we got ready and went school.

RK: Do you know the name of the school?

CH: Micheltorena Street School.

RK: Was it far away from Shonien?

CH: No. Of course, the blocks in that area—it was in the Silver Lake area—were long, so, when you count blocks, it was about three blocks long. But, when you count the distance, it was maybe half a mile.

RK: The public school, was mixed school?

CH: Uh-huh

- RK: You studied with Caucasian student?
- CH: Yes.
- RK: So, whites and Japanese kids and then who else was there? Blacks?
- CH: There was no blacks in that area. There may have been a few Mexicans. I don't know. But the predominate was the whites, the Japanese, and the Jews. (chuckles) They were kind of new—they were migrating to the West Coast, and so at that time it was kind of new, you know?
- RK: Did you experience any prejudice in school?
- CH: No, we got along good.
- RK: Oh, really. You have a memory of a friendship in school?
- CH: Yeah, like everybody has their little groups, and we were all included in groups in our class. We were never left out of anything. I think there's more discrimination now than there were in those days as far as children were concerned.
- RK: I see. The teachers, most of them, *hakujin* teachers?
- CH: All of them.
- RK: All of them? No Japanese?
- CH: No.
- RK: Do you have memory that you were invited to your friend's home?
- CH: Well, we weren't allowed but sometime we'd sneak. (chuckles)
- RK: Did you feel a sense of kind of, because you were an orphan and lived in an orphanage, so a little bit of—do you have any sense of shame or something like that?
- CH: No. Some of them do have, I think, because, when we had our reunion, they didn't want it in the newspaper. I think somebody was going to invite a *Times* reporter, and he says, "No, no reporters." You know last year's reunion? That's why you didn't read about it because they are people that were ashamed. I think those of us down here—we are more free. Like we went to public school and everything, I think we were more free. But maybe the people that came from the Catholic home, Maryknoll Catholic Home, they only went to the Catholic school. Their freedom was less than our freedom. And I don't know how they did it in San Francisco.
- RK: Salvation Army?

CH: Yeah. I don't know how they did it there. I think it's just different the way the homes were run.

RK: As far as Shonien is concerned, from your point of view, the children, the orphans mostly did not feel a sense of shame?

CH: No, I don't think so.

RK: So, they lived a carefree student life. Concerning the disciplinary teaching from the staff, could you describe how, if you didn't behave well, how the orphans were treated?

CH: Some got spanked; some sat in the corner. They still do that. (laughs) But, it was not so much—like fighting and stuff, which every kid does so there really is not that much of a discipline problem. After growing up, I don't think anybody got in trouble with the law. Everybody turned out good.

RK: In Shonien, orphans are in and out frequently?

CH: Yes, some of them are there because the mother's giving and the father can take care of the children, so they are in there for a short while. Or the mother was sick, or the father was sick, so they're in and out. But, of course, that lost both parents, they are in there until they get to certain age and they usually get a job as a domestic job. The girls get domestic jobs. I don't know what the boys do, but the girls get domestic jobs.

RK: Do you have any friendship there? Do you have close friends?

CH: I don't see them because we are so scattered, you know? When I was in Hawaii, there was a couple of girls that were in Shonien that was in Hawaii. Two. So, I used to visit with them.

RK: Oh, really? So, you met one girl from Hawaii?

CH: There were two of them. One is still there. One is back here. What is her name here? Let me see, I don't know if she's in this picture. I know her sister.

RK: We're going to take a break. [00:23:45; recording paused] So, I was asking you your friend's name. Do you remember?

CH: There's Fugi and Taeko.¹ This is Taeko and her sister Fugi.

RK: You mean, Taeko Nagayama?

CH: Uh-huh.

¹ Taeko Nagayama, O.H. 2492, Center for Oral and Public History.

RK: Okay, so her sister was your close friend?

CH: Uh-huh. And then, there's—

RK: Another girl?

CH: Well, I know all these, but I did not keep track of them because they went back east. There was one Sumako Nagayama? We were almost neighbors in Los Angeles, so we used to see each other. Oh, Sumako Tanaka! She doesn't use her married name.

RK: So, those girls come from Shonien and then you close friends?

CH: Yeah. I think she was from San Francisco.

RK: Sumako Tanaka?

CH: Un-huh. But she was from Shonien. Nakako? Yeah, Nakako.

RK: Nakako?

CH: Nakko Nadine Kodani. She lives in San Francisco now.

RK: So, do you still have contact with them?

CH: Not really. I used to with the Matsumotos.²

RK: Some student in our project is doing interviews with Matsumoto.

CH: Up in Richmond?

RK: I think so. (chuckles) Well, what type of person was your father?

CH: He was really religious; he was the lay leader at the church. Do you know what that is?

RK: What's that?

CH: Lay leader? He was like an assistant minister. When the minister was gone, he'd do the service and teach Bible classes and stuff. He didn't finish school because he got upset with his father, but he was very learned because he read a lot and most people thought he was a college graduate. When he asked his father what he is going to be when he finishes high school in Japan, his father says, "You're going to go work in the shipyards." My aunt told me the next day he went to school, took all his books, came home and never went back to school. He said, "Well, I'm going to work as a carpenter. I don't need an education."

² Lillian Matsumoto, O.H. 2492, Center for Oral and Public History.

- RK: Well, you told me he died when? Didn't I ask you?
- CH: He died, I think, just before the war [in] '41.
- RK: So, you and your father was in Shonien until '41?
- CH: No, he had an apartment house in—
- RK: He bought?
- CH: Yeah, he bought an apartment house. He had a hotel and then an apartment house, and we lived in the apartment house.
- RK: Do you [know] when he bought hotel and apartment?
- CH: He bought the hotel first, and then, when he paid for that, then he bought an apartment house.
- RK: Uh-huh. But, he was working at the Shonien?
- CH: No, he left the Shonien—he didn't work at the Shonien very long. I guess until I got settled.
- RK: Oh, I see. But, you never joined—
- CH: Yeah, I joined—remember twelve and a half, thirteen years old?
- RK: Well, I'm confused.
- CH: I stayed there—
- RK: You went to Shonien?
- CH: When I was six-and-a-half.
- RK: And your father was also?
- CH: Yeah, he went, and he stayed there a short time. Then I stayed there about six years, and then I stayed with him for about four years—when he died.
- RK: Okay, so you went to Manzanar at the age of—
- CH: Seventeen, eighteen, I guess it was. Nineteen forty-two.
- RK: Forty-two.

CH: Yeah, eighteen.

RK: Well, back and forth, in Shonien I think I read an article, and it says about the adaptation?

CH: Adoption, uh-huh.

RK: Adoption and then also inspection. Do you have any memories of those?

CH: By inspections, what do they mean? We used to go show our fingernails before we went to school, had to have clean fingernails and clean ears. *And clean shoes.*

RK: A couple comes to the Shonien—

CH: Oh, I didn't have to because I wasn't up for adoption. But, if somebody wanted to adopt somebody, then they could only do the ones that are up for adoption, and they would take them to the living room and talk to them.

RK: So, all orphans knows who went to the living room?

CH: Yeah, they know who's up for adoption.

RK: So, it's not done secretly?

CH: No.

RK: And they know when the adoption day, orphans wearing nice clothes?

CH: Yeah, uh-huh. Well, we were always clean. We didn't have always the latest style but we always had decent clothes.

RK: Well, you were given clothes, like a uniform?

CH: No, regular clothes.

RK: Different clothes?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: So, clothes given from the staff members?

CH: Yeah. I think some were made, some were given, like donations. But, to play, we usually had coveralls.

RK: Do the clothes have names? I was just wondering.

CH: I don't think so. You usually know what was your clothes.

RK: When it comes through wrongly, especially—(laughs)

CH: Dresses like that—well, geez, underwear I don't remember. We wore underwear! (laughs) I don't remember if we had names in it or not.

RK: How about, you ate in a dining room?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: And group wise there were many tables? Did you say grace before meals?

CH: Yeah.

RK: Some staff member gave talk before that meal or something like that?

CH: No, we just said grace.

RK: And then, meals were enough food?

CH: Yeah, we had enough to eat.

RK: When you go to school, were you given lunchbox?

CH: Yeah. Or bags.

RK: And, when you come back from school, what did you do?

CH: We usually had a little snack, and then we played. And then, if somebody had laundry duty, then they had to bring in the laundry and fold the clothes.

RK: So, the laundry, it was some older kids helping?

CH: Uh-huh. And, of course, all the kids mended the clothes. If they're torn, you'd have to sew them.

RK: Mainly girls?

CH: Uh-huh. So, girls were pretty well occupied, you know?

RK: Boys mainly played baseball, or something like that?

CH: Yeah. Both girls and boys played baseball.

RK: They played together?

CH: Sometimes.

RK: But separately sometimes?

CH: Sometimes.

[00:34:00]

RK: What did you do?

CH: They had a big yard so there was plenty of room to play, and if the girls wanted to play, we could play. The girls usually found something else to do.

RK: Did you go outside of Shonien until you come back a certain time before dinner?

CH: We used stay within the grounds.

RK: Oh, really? After school?

CH: Yeah.

RK: Do you have a special time to come back?

CH: We went home after school, changed our clothes, and played. The neighborhood was kind of scattered, hills and stuff, so you didn't really see much kids playing in the streets or anything, in that area.

RK: You mean, a dangerous place?

CH: No. People stayed in their yards I think.

RK: Shonien was a Christian organization?

CH: Yeah.

RK: Did you go, on Sundays, to church?

CH: When you got older you went to church.

RK: The church was located inside?

CH: Little Tokyo.

RK: *Little Tokyo!*

CH: Uh-huh. Union Church.

RK: Do you know the denomination?

CH: I think it's non-denominational.

RK: So, the kids, when they get older—around how old?

CH: Teenage.

RK: So, the kids were age-wise, from infant to teenager. Do many people attend Sunday service?

CH: Well, everybody did, yeah.

RK: Do you have any memory?

CH: It depends on what church and people, you know. Sometime you got sort of a Baptist-type, but I know there was a lot of—are you Christian? Or Buddhist?

RK: Nothing.

CH: Nothing? Shame on you! (laughs) A lot of memorizing of the Bible and stuff. It was sort of like a game. How many you can memorize, how many verses you could remember. The boys favorite verse was, "Jesus wept." Don't have much to learn. (laughs) It was a more toward Baptist congregational-type.

RK: The ministers were—

CH: It was like Sunday school teachers would come—teachers would come from different churches.

RK: But, those teachers were Caucasian?

CH: No, Japanese.

RK: But, did they speak English?

CH: Um-hm. Nisei usually do.

RK: After Sunday School, did you have a lunch when you get back to the orphanage?

CH: Well, if you were older you went to church, yeah, and you came back for lunch.

RK: And then, after that?

CH: You did what you wanted to do. Usually read the funny papers. (laughs)

RK: Do you have any memory? What did you do?

CH: Not really. I know sometimes we listened to the radio. Sometimes we played, do whatever we wanted to, and I remember I used to like to tumble.

RK: What's tumble?

CH: You know, like gymnastics? Go over? Cartwheels and things like that. I used to play baseball. They had swings. I was just learning how to crochet and knit. I tried to do that.

RK: Did some of the orphans, did they have work? Part-time jobs or something?

CH: Well, when you were there you didn't, but a lot of them went out in what they called schoolgirls, which is domestic, you go in the house. I'd go to school and help serve dinner at night and take care of the baby, whatever, you know.

RK: During their stay there?

CH: No, after. When they get older.

RK: You mean at eighteen?

CH: Eighteen, sometimes younger, too.

RK: Really? After finishing high school, at the age of eighteen, eighteen something, they have to leave the orphanage.

CH: At that time I don't think it was mandatory, not like here where they throw them out in the street. I think it's cruel the way—I feel they should do away with foster care—it's not working—and go back to the orphanage system because they are plenty of unemployed teachers, and there's plenty of unemployed social workers. Whereas, you have people that know how to do it now. Not just mean old ladies. (chuckles)

RK: So, that staff member treated the orphans very nicely?

CH: To me, it was a large Christian family. There is a minimum of bad behavior, a minimum of fights, you know. Got along pretty good, but, when you get that many people, you can't expect everybody to get along. But, I thought, when you compare it to a lot of families, it was better.

RK: So, the staff member sometimes played with the children?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Really?

CH: Uh-huh. Especially with the little ones.

RK: Do you have any memory of how they took care of infants?

CH: They had their room, and then they'd come out. We'd play with them, or the staff member would play with them. And they had a big lawn area, grass area, where you could roll down on the grass and play.

RK: Do you remember how many infants?

CH: It varied.

RK: But, mostly more than ten or something?

CH: I think there was less than that for the real infants, but when you get to the toddlers then maybe.

RK: During the nighttime some attendants, in the infants' room, some slept there? If something happened?

CH: I don't know if they slept there. Yeah, I think there was always somebody really close by.

RK: How did you perceive the older orphans, like the girls? Did they take care of younger children?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: When you have some trouble when you were staying at the orphanage, did you have somebody to talk to?

CH: There's always somebody to talk to.

RK: Did you talk staff members?

CH: Uh-huh. Sometime they'd tell us stories about—if they were really young, they'd tell us about dates and stuff.

RK: Did you have any romance?

CH: Not really, more like brothers. In fact, there's one I'm always missing. I haven't seen him since before the war, so probably 1940 I haven't seen him. Our minister, Reverend Yamasaki—but this is the son of Reverend Yamasaki—he says, “Oh, Mits was here. Did you see him?” Or somebody else would tell me, “He was just here.” I always arrived like five minutes late. “Oh, where is he?” “He just left.” He used to

live in Gardena. By the time I found out he was in Gardena, I called his shop, discontinued number. He's gone. I'm always missing him.

[00:43:30]

RK: The Reverend Yamasaki, that's his son?

CH: No, he knows him because he worked at the Shonien at one time, too. So, he says, "Did you see Mits?" Somebody just a couple months ago, says, "Did you see?" I said, "No, where is he?" "Oh, he's talking to Father John." I go to Father John, "Where's Mits" "Oh, he just left." (laughs) This has been going on for I don't know how many years. And then, of course, he didn't go to Manzanar so he's not at any of the reunions.

RK: Comparing the Manzanar Children's Village, do you think you were cared at Shonien better than Children's Village? Of course, it's difficult—

CH: At the Manzanar, there were no boundaries really. It was camp. You're supposed to stay within a place, like we were quarantined. Oh, we went out and mingled with the other people, so you could mingle more and stuff. I don't think so. Some people thought it was strict, but I didn't think so. But, I guess as far as I'm concerned, I guess I wouldn't think it strict unless they locked me in cage or something.

RK: (laughs) Do you have special significant memory of Shonien life?

CH: They used to have big Christmas program and things. Oh, there's one. Every Fourth of July somebody used to send the bus up, take us to the beach, and one year we went to Orange County, I guess. We stopped by a farm to take a bath because we always went to the Coliseum—they used to have fireworks at the Coliseum. We stopped at this farmhouse, and they had the Japanese bath. And the people went in there first, they never had Japanese bath before, but I remember when I was small, you know, taking Japanese bath. We'd come running out, they'd say, They're trying to cook us for dinner! (laughs) They're all red, you know. They're trying to cook us for dinner! (laughs) Things like that because different experiences. We didn't go there every year, but I remember that one incident. And then, from the beach, we went to the restaurant, Sankolo, Japanese style, and had Chinese dinner. Then we went to the Coliseum and watched the fireworks.

RK: Every July fourth?

CH: Every July fourth, uh-huh.

RK: And you told me Christmastime?

CH: Christmastime people use to come. We'd make a big program, a big tree.

RK: Did you have parties?

CH: Uh-huh, they had parties.

RK: Well, sounds good.

CH: Yeah, I thought it was, you know? When I look back at it, I have no complaints, and I thought we were treated better than what you see families treated now. Like I said, it was just a good Christian upbringing. They taught you what was right and what's wrong.

RK: Now I'm going to ask you about your father. Did your father want to go back to Japan after your mother died?

CH: I don't think so.

RK: So, he never visit Japan?

CH: Well, the only time was when he went to get married.

RK: So, your father has no contact in Japan?

CH: I think he used to write to, probably, his family, but I don't know who because my aunt, his sister, she was the youngest. My father was the next youngest, you know, and he passed away already. So, she was the only living person of her generation. I know he was writing to Japan, but I don't know who he was writing to, unless it was to my mother's parents. Only thing I know is that she had a brother, and he had two daughters. That's all I know about my mother. I have a very common last name, Nakamura.

RK: In the capital, it's very common.

CH: Very common, especially in Kyushu, right? (laughs) Every other person is a Nakamura.

RK: Have you visited Japan?

CH: No. You asked that.

RK: I just wondering, you stayed with father for four years. In that time, father was taking care of hotel business?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: And who took care of you?

CH: He did.

RK: Like a mother and stuff?

CH: Oh, he had a lady that used to help the hotel. She had daughters that were older than me.

RK: So, you didn't have any inconvenience in those days as a daughter?

CH: No.

RK: But, I think that you missed the mother figure.

CH: No, not really.

RK: Really? Father was like replaceable as both father figure and mother figure?

CH: Well, I think that—like, when I went to church, everybody kind of did things for me. They wouldn't let me peel oranges. If they saw me cutting stuff, they'd take the knife away, and they'd do it. So, I didn't have to do anything. And they tried talking to me in English. (chuckles)

RK: Did you study Japanese?

CH: I studied, but I didn't do very well.

RK: Tell me, when did you study it?

CH: When I was living with my father, he sent me to Japanese school, but I never went to class. I played volleyball. And then, he found out that I wasn't going to class, so he says, why is he paying tuition for me to go learn Japanese if I'm not going to learn it?

RK: Was it the Saturday Japanese Language School?

CH: After school.

RK: And the teachers were Japanese?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: Do you remember how many kids are studying Japanese?

CH: It was a lot. I don't know how many.

RK: A lot! So, right now, you speak a little bit Japanese?

CH: Very little. Oh, I had problems because, when I was very young on the farm—I think the Mexican ladies used to take care of us a lot, the mothers, so I spoke Spanish and Japanese. And then, when I grew up, they tell you, This is America, speak English, speak English, so you forget the languages that you learn. Now I get the two languages mixed-up. So, when I was at El Camino taking Japanese, I was putting Spanish words in it. By the end of the class, it got where most of the students—or a lot of them took Spanish with me at El Camino, so they were all mixing the Spanish and Japanese. And the poor teacher, he did not know what was going on, but he understood because in Japan he had a Portuguese friend. And the Portuguese man told him, “If your children are going to be bilingual, you have to train them so that you speak one language inside the house and one language outside the house so they don’t get them mixed-up.” And maybe he was referring to me. (laughs) I was quite young when I started mixing my—I think that I was speaking Japanese and I’d be speaking Spanish. So now, I just don’t speak anything.

RK: Except English. (laughs)

CH: You go down to Mexico, and they speak English, too. (laughs)

RK: While you were staying at Shonien, you went to school. Can you tell me the story about the teachers in public school?

CH: They’re all very nice. Let me see, the first two teachers I don’t remember too well. The one I had in the third grade, she was very nice. She used to go to Hawaii all the time so she used to talk a lot about Hawaii and teach us things about Hawaii. And the next teacher, my fourth grade teacher, all I remember was really hard. We are learning our multiplications and division and stuff; maybe that’s why it seemed hard. And then, the next teacher, the fifth grade—I had her fifth and sixth grade—she was also the music teacher. She also went to Hawaii a lot—her sister was a librarian in Hawaii—so she used to talk a lot about that. And, of course, being the music teacher, when we had quite time or something, she’d play classical music so we always had music in our classrooms. It was really nice, you know?

RK: So, you had no segregation from the teachers?

CH: No, we were all treated alike.

RK: So, you can say it’s a happy school life?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Were you given a so-called allowance, pocket money?

CH: Yeah.

RK: How much?

- CH: It wasn't very much, but we used to pool it like—I remember Safeway store used to have five cents candy, three for a dime. So, we'd pool our pennies together and get three, five-cent bars and stuff like that. I don't think we ate much candy in those days anyway.
- RK: According to the age-wise, the amount is different. If you get older, you get more?
- CH: When you were really young, you didn't get any. You didn't need it because you didn't pass any stores.
- RK: Did you have any privacy at the Shonien?
- CH: Yeah, I think people respected your privacy if you wanted to be alone.
- RK: Really? But, you were in a big room, ten beds. How did you—
- CH: Well, you go there by yourself when nobody is there or hide in the bathroom. You could always find someplace where you could be alone.
- RK: So, you only experienced Shonien orphanage, not the other orphanages, except the Manzanar Children's Village?
- CH: Um-hm.
- RK: From your point of view, how much percentage at Shonien was culturally Japanese part and most America—
- CH: You mean the teaching? The way they did things?
- RK: Yes.
- CH: I think mostly American the way. It was mostly Nisei, the way they did things
- RK: Did you have any aspirations when you were staying at Shonien?
- CH: I don't remember. You mean, when I grown-up I'm going to be?
- RK: Um-hm.
- CH: I don't think so. My father used to say I wanted to be a nurse. I says, "No, I don't want to be a nurse. It's the last thing I want to be." So, when I told him I didn't want to be a nurse, he was very disappointed.
- RK: Your father was assigned another room or he was living—
- CH: Yeah, I think he had a little cottage, like a one-room cottage.

RK: And he shared with other members?

CH: No, he was by himself.

RK: Oh, I see. So, you went to Manzanar, when you were—

CH: Eighteen.

RK: Well, you told me back and forth Shonien. Could you give me the age at which when you went first and came back again?

CH: First, I was six-and-a-half when I went in with my father. I was twelve and a half, thirteen when I went to the Shonien with my father, and then I was about twelve-and-a-half or thirteen when I came out. My father died so I was seventeen when I went back because they didn't know what to do with me. They didn't want to send me to my aunt's because she was Buddhist. And my cousin was Christian, but he had his own problems. He had just gotten married. They didn't know what to do with me, so they just sent me back to Shonien because, at that age, they didn't want me living by myself in Los Angeles.

RK: So, you got an aunt?

CH: She was in Hawaii.

RK: Yes, in Hawaii.

[01:00:00]

RK: When you were staying at the Shonien, when did you find out about the Pearl Harbor attack?

CH: We went to church, and when we came home they were kind of whispering.

RK: They were kind of what?

CH: The *otonas* were kind of whispering about. It was over the radio.

RK: So, you knew through the radio, through the *otona*'s conversation?

CH: Yes.

RK: On the same day, December seventh? It was Sunday?

CH: Yes. That night they took Mr. Kusumoto. The FBI came. They were banging on the door at midnight. They scared us because they made so much noise.

- RK: Oh, I see. After the Pearl Harbor attack, did you experience any prejudice or segregation?
- CH: Not really. We went to school. The students treated us just the same. And then, when they started evacuation and the newspaper says, All the Japs are gone, we couldn't go to school anymore. So, we had to stay within the area.
- RK: Mainly Shonien?
- CH: Uh-huh, because we might get shot at.
- RK: Do you have any memory about the curfew?
- CH: Yeah, I remember, you know.
- RK: You didn't go anywhere?
- CH: We didn't go anywhere. We didn't go outside of our boundary, not even to the sidewalk, because we were supposed to be unseen.
- RK: So, you notice this back at Shonien? How did you know that?
- CH: The newspaper. They had no place to put us, so we had to stay until they made a place for us, and that was in June. We were at the Shonien for about two or three months after everybody else was gone.
- RK: So, you left Manzanar in June next year?
- CH: June, uh-huh.
- RK: During your stay at Shonien, were students—oh, well, I already asked maybe—allowed to work part-time jobs?
- CH: No. No, we didn't do part time jobs.
- RK: When you arrived in Manzanar, you were the first in Children's Village? How about the Maryknoll orphans? Do you remember?
- CH: I am just wondering if they came with us. I think they closed and sent their children to us. Like we had people from Terminal Island—you know people in Terminal Island? San Pedro. They had to leave first, but they moved to L.A. and then a lot of them were fisherman so they took the parent, the fathers. So, we had the Matsuno³⁴ family. They came to Shonien from San Pedro because the father was taken also. So, more people coming in—

³ Takatow Matsuno, O.H. 2339, Center for Oral and Public History

⁴ Mary Matsuno Miya, O.H. 2489, Center for Oral and Public History

RK: To Shonien?

CH: To Shonien and others were leaving because the parents came to take them with them for evacuation.

RK: So, as soon as possible everybody evacuated?

CH: So, it was changeover. (chuckles)

RK: So, how did you go to Manzanar?

CH: Bus.

RK: From Shonien?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: How many buses?

CH: One, two buses I think.

RK: Only bus? Or train? All the way to Manzanar?

CH: No, bus. You know where Manzanar is?

RK: Yeah, I visit it.

CH: All the way bus.

RK: And who went with you? I mean the staff member? Of course Kusumoto—

CH: Kusumoto—

RK: I think deported.

CH: Yeah, he was deported. The Matsumotos, and ah—

RK: At that time the Matsumotos got married?

CH: Yeah, they were married already. They married—when did they marry?

RK: Before the war?

CH: Before the war, yeah. My cousin used to always write, *When is Lillian and Harry going to get married?* (laughs) Every time. (laughs) When he graduated from UCLA, *When is he going to graduate?* (laughs)

RK: Your cousin used to say?

CH: Yeah. Well my cousin was out here. He also worked there for a little bit. My father made him.

RK: Also Japanese staff?

CH: Staff?

RK: Also went there?

CH: They were all—

RK: Do you know the names of—

CH: At that time it was all Japanese. I think the only time they had *hakujins* was when I first went there. There was Deguchi—

RK: Maseo Deguchi?

CH: Maseo. And Takamune?

RK: Takamune?

CH: Takamune. I think. Ruth.

RK: I heard about Takamune. This one? (points to a lady in the picture)

CH: What is that? Thirty-four? Matsuno, no.

RK: I think she's not there.

CH: *Right here.*

RK: Oh, really?

CH: Yeah, Lee. Ruth Lee.

RK: She got married to a Korean.

CH: I guess afterwards. Are you sure? Not Vietnamese? Or Chinese? Wait, Vietnamese is Li (pronounced Lee), right? Li?

RK: Um-hm. So, you remember the Matsumotos? Who entered Manzanar?

CH: The Matsumotos and I think Takamune and I think Kaneko, Alice Kaneko. Is she in here?

RK: Alice Kaneko. Oh, yes, I understand. But, she's not here. She stayed at Manzanar, at Children's Village. I know she was a staff member.

CH: And then, of course, Taeko.

RK: Taeko?

CH: Yeah, she was one of the kids and then she stayed there and elevated her.

RK: Taeko Nagayama?

CH: Kajiwara Nagayama. She married one of the guys there.

RK: They were from Shonien staff?

CH: Yeah, I think those are the ones that went from Shonien. And then, of course, the Salvation Army brought their staff.

RK: Do you remember Maryknoll children already there when you arrived?

CH: I think the Maryknoll children went with the Shonien.

RK: At the same time?

CH: I think so.

RK: In June?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Do you remember after you, the Salvation Army orphans?

CH: Uh-huh. Because we're the ones that kind of set up everything.

RK: When you first saw the Manzanar landscape, what was your impression?

CH: (laughs) Yeah, what kind of place? You know, desert.

RK: Surprised?

CH: Surprised, yeah, but we were right next to a pear orchard so that was nice. They had a lot of trees.

RK: Before moving to Manzanar, were you told you were told you were going to Manzanar or relocation center?

CH: Yeah, we knew.

RK: *Oh, really?* Staff member told you?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: But, you actually didn't know what relocation center?

CH: No, we knew. Yeah, we knew.

RK: Did you have any discrepancy when you arrived at Manzanar?

CH: No, it was better than the people that went to Santa Anita. You heard about that one, huh? In the barn? (chuckles) Yeah, cause we'd get feedback from other people.

RK: So, Manzanar was a desert?

CH: It was a desert, yeah.

RK: How was the climate?

CH: It gets very hot in the summer and very cold in the winter. If you'd get caught in the windstorm, you'd have to get down and cover yourself because the sand hurts you. It just pierces you.

[01:10:00]

RK: It's nothing like a picnic when you ride on the bus to go to Manzanar?

CH: I think you kind of take it like that, but after a while the picnic gets stale. (laughs) The Shonien was lucky that the cook that they had was the [one from] Clifton's Cafeteria.

RK: You mean the Children's Village?

CH: I mean the Children's Village, yeah, the Children's Village.

RK: Clifton's?

CH: Cafeteria.

RK: Special cook?

CH: Special cook.

RK: It's downtown, the restaurant?

CH: Yeah.

RK: Oh, I see.

CH: That cook was our cook.

RK: You used to like the food?

CH: Yeah, his food was different from—the other people had amateur cooks and stuff.

RK: So, you visited other barracks?

CH: After I left.

RK: So, you knew the differences?

CH: Only one thing I didn't like was the horsemeat.

RK: Did you eat horsemeat?

CH: I didn't eat it.

RK: Oh. They served horsemeat?

CH: They had it once.

RK: But, everybody knew it was horsemeat?

CH: They knew it after I hollered, "Horsemeat!"

RK: Oh, after you ate, you knew.

CH: I cut my meat. I looked at it. It wasn't meat. And, you know, you kind of hear about things, so I said, "Horsemeat." All the forks went down. (laughs) I wasn't going to eat horsemeat.

RK: Oh, my gosh. But, nobody tells you—

CH: No. They said it was cutlets. They didn't say what kind of cutlets. It was horse cutlets.

RK: Do you remember everybody also didn't eat it?

CH: I think after I said it, most of them didn't, but the little ones, they don't understand. They ate it.

RK: How about cat meat? Dog meat? (chuckles)

CH: Yeah. But then I left the Village and went to the YWCA—

RK: Oh, you went to the YWCA after Children's Village?

CH: Uh-huh. They had one barrack for single women.

RK: Oh, really?

CH: Our cook was from Little Tokyo, and they made *shochu* out of rice and sugar.

RK: You mean the *shochu* as in drinking sake?

CH: Yeah, our block and the next block. When our food was bad, we'd go to the next block. When their food is bad, they come to our block. Sometimes we meet halfway, and then we don't know what to do. My friend lived on the next block.

RK: But, you can choose where to eat?

CH: No, not really.

RK: So, at the YWCA, you didn't like your food?

CH: So, we'd just sneak over to the next block.

RK: But somebody check?

CH: They don't check.

RK: Oh, really? So you can eat other food?

CH: Yeah, you could go and visit friends and eat.

RK: Did you do that while you were staying in Children's Village?

CH: At Children's Village, you ate there. They had the best food anyway.

RK: You didn't have to go to other barracks and try other food.

RH: Yeah.

RK: When you were on the bus, did Lillian Matsumoto encourage singing or—

- CH: I think whenever we did ride and stuff, we always did sing. I can't understand kids now. They don't sing. Whenever we got in cars and stuff, if it's long trip, we'd start singing.
- RK: So, it was like a happy mood?
- CH: Yeah.
- RK: And then the bus, the window was open, and so you can see the scenery outside?
- CH: Yeah.
- RK: So, you never took train line?
- CH: Not to camp. After, but not before.
- RK: After when?
- CH: When I left Manzanar.
- RK: Oh, I see. You took—
- CH: A train. Well, we had to go by car to the train station.
- RK: When you leave Shonien, what did you bring with you?
- CH: Your clothes, whatever you can carry.
- RK: You were given a bag or something?
- CH: Yeah, I think so.
- RK: And then you packed everything, what you have?
- CH: Yes.
- RK: Did you leave something?
- CH: I left something in storage. Before I went to Hawaii, I went to get my stuff, and they said, Well, it's way in the inside there. We can't get it out. Reverend Yamasaki went with me to get my things.
- RK: He didn't tell on you?
- CH: What?

RK: Sorry?

CH: Reverend Yamasaki went with me to get my things out of storage.

RK: Lillian Matsumoto, not Yamasaki?

CH: No, Yamsaki.

RK: Lillian Yamasaki—

CH: Was still in camp.

RK: Okay, but she married to Matsumoto?

CH: Yeah, Lillian, her name Eta, and she married Matsumoto.

RK: So ,different Lillian Yamasaki—

CH: No, I said, “Reverend Yamasaki.”

RK: Oh, reverend! I see!

CH: Father John, he went with me to get my things because he knew the people. It was in storage at Shonien.

RK: Was it? When?

CH: After the war, 1946, yeah.

RK: Shonien was still there?

CH: The buildings were still there.

RK: Who took Shonien after you left?

CH: I don't know. I think they had a committee or something to decide what to do with it. But, I went, and they said they couldn't get to my things. Then, when I came back from Hawaii, they said that it's too late. They burned it all up. And there were important books that the church wanted. My father had like two bookcases and about three shelves with Bible study, all the books of the Bible, study books.

RK: Oh, your father's books were also there?

CH: They were all stored there and my mother's things. Well, everything. And my father's tools.

RK: After he died, you kept your father's legacy?

CH: Um-hm. They were all stored there, and everything was gone. I had kept a few pictures. I was able to take a few pictures and stuff.

RK: So, the other Shonien orphans, their stuff was also burned?

CH: Uh-huh. Most of them didn't have things because it was with their family. But, see, my father died, so I had all of his things and everything.

RK: Let's see, were you scared when you found out about the Pearl Harbor attack?

CH: Uh, no, I wasn't scared, but I was really—I think you have mixed emotions.

RK: It's different from—

CH: Well, luckily—I found out afterwards, after I went to Hawaii, that it just missed my cousin's house by one block. Because it wasn't in Pearl Harbor—it was in the Honolulu side—the first bombs didn't hit the harbor, it hit the residential area, and it was like one block from my cousin's house. But, before that, they bombed Maui before Pearl Harbor. A week, I don't know, a month before. And my other cousin lived over there.

RK: In Maui?

CH: Yeah, in Kahului where the ships were, where the boats were.

RK: Do you have any stories from your cousin?

CH: No, they just talked about, "They bombed." I guess they kind of took it for excitement more than—because it didn't get to the land, just bombing the harbor. My cousin didn't live very far from the harbor.

[01:20:00]

RK: Do you recall any Chinese people? Did you know any of the Chinese people?

CH: At the Shonien?

RK: At the Shonien. I've notice they are protecting themselves. We are Chinese, we are not the Japanese. Do you have any memory?

CH: No, I don't have memory.

RK: You didn't know any Chinese?

CH: Yeah, that was after, I think, we were evacuated. A lot of them said they were—

RK: Did you talk to any of your friends in Shonien about Pearl Harbor?

CH: No, we never talked about the war.

RK: Mostly, did they know about the seriousness of—

CH: I used to like to listen to people talk, so I usually listened to the older people. You learn a lot that way, you know? Like my husband says, “How come you know so much?” I says, “Because I like to listen to people talk.”

RK: So, you have no name-calling like Jap or something on the street? You didn’t go outside, so you didn’t know.

CH: Yeah.

RK: Okay. Kind of protected by Shonien.

CH: Yeah, we were really protected.

RK: In your school life, while you were staying at Shonien, did you have friends from other race?

CH: Yeah. The irony of it was they didn’t call us Japs, but the Jews, they didn’t like where I went to school. It was odd. In fact, I learned from a *hakujin* man—one day he was talking to me—boy, he sat in front of me! He went around with the Nisei boys, and he was talking to me. He kept on talking about the *Kuichi*. *Kuichi*, do you know what it is?

RK: I don’t know. What’s that?

CH: That’s what I said, “What’s that?” He says, “*Ku* is nine, and *ichi* is ten [one], that makes you *jū!* So, they always used to say, “*Kuichi*.” Because the school I went to had a lot of Jewish people. Of course, they were all movie people.

RK: So, the only prejudice, racial prejudice—

CH: That I felt—

RK: —you experienced was that way?

CH: Uh-huh. And this was in Hollywood.

RK: Did you know Executive Order 9066?

CH: I've got the book.

RK: February 1942?

CH: That's the evacuation order that Roosevelt—did you see the book?

RK: Yes. Well, at that time did you know?

CH: Well, I heard it, but we didn't pay attention to the number. I think my son-in-law's brother borrowed the nine—because he was doing a project at El Camino [College].

RK: So, you don't have any feelings when you heard about the Executive Order?

CH: Yeah. I felt it was wrong because, like you said, we were citizens. But, in those times, Japanese, Nisei or whatever, it was bow down. That's how we were pictured, always obeying.

RK: Did you have a feeling of solidarity at the Shonien?

CH: I think we did, yeah.

RK: So, brother and sisterhood?

CH: Yeah.

RK: If something happened, they took care of each other?

CH: Um-hm, yes.

RK: So, you didn't feel any ashamed feeling?

CH: No, I didn't.

RK: Can you tell if they were like father or mother figures, the staff members at Shonien?

CH: I don't know. They were—what would you call it? More like, I think, teacher figures. Responsible. But, I think a lot of the way I felt was because of what I learned from my father. He was very liberal. He really didn't have the Japanese way of thinking because he would remind me, "You're American. You got to stick up for your rights." He doesn't say bow down and say yes, *hai, hai, hai*. He says, "You're American, you stick up for your rights. I'm Japanese, so I have to follow a different authority."

RK: So, your father had a lot of American friends?

CH: I don't think so.

RK: Many, in those days, Japanese?

CH: Yeah, he knew people all over California, and I guess Arizona because I bumped into people, "Oh, my father knew your father," from places we've never been.

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

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Did you see gunman, military, barbed wire? What was your reaction at that time?

CH: I knew they were there for a purpose. In fact, I knew a lot of them. I used to talk to them, you know?

RK: How long did you stay at the Children's Village?

CH: Let me see, went there in June, I think I left in March so nine months.

RK: Oh really, you were eighteen?

CH: Yeah.

RK: And then, you went to another barrack?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: How many people live in one barrack?

CH: That one, about half a dozen, I think. We all had our own room.

RK: About half what?

CH: About half a dozen—about six, eight. Oh, it has to be more than that.

RK: All single woman?

CH: Yeah. Must be ten.

RK: It was called YWCA?

CH: It was called YWCA.

RK: Was it better than the other barracks?

CH: No.

RK: Was it worse?

CH: No, it's just like any other. You have your little room, and you have your army cot with a straw mattress like everybody else, nothing special. And then, it was up to you to furnish it.

RK: Did you have any privacy?

CH: Yeah.

RK: Oh, really? But, it's open space?

CH: No, each one is closed space.

RK: Partition.

CH: Yeah, partition. More like cubicles. (chuckles)

RK: Oh, I see. I think later on you noticed other of internees lost a lot of property, mainly from Japan. What's your reaction when you notice about that?

CH: Well, I didn't agree. Especially, like the rice—the guy that did the rice, his thing was like over a million dollars, in those days. What he got was like not even one cent to the dollar for his property, his rice mill, and all that. And he's the one—he was a pioneer grower of rice in the Sacramento Valley. A lot of them had it taken care of, you know, had somebody take custody, but some of them took advantage. They just took power of attorney and took the property and kept the money.

RK: But, you also lost a lot of important stuff.

CH: Yeah, I lost a lot of personal stuff. And then, of course, I lost income because the hotel was leased, out and when I went to claim my loss, they said, Well, that's the same thing if you worked. I said, "No, it isn't. I had a contract. I was supposed to get x amount of dollars a month." And I did not get that; I only got half that.

RK: Oh, really?

CH: Uh-huh. So, that is a loss of—I think I was supposed to get \$60 a month, and I got \$30 a month. I said, "If I were working—it's a contract, and a contract is a contract." But, the government, they interpret things funny, you know? So, they gave me \$25 for my loss, loss of income. Then the person left the place in bad condition. He stole toilets and stuff to make his own place out in the desert.

RK: Concerning the last years reunion, did you attend that?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: Will you tell me how from May 22-24, how did you spend that time?

CH: Mostly reminiscing and talking.

RK: Did you stay in a hotel?

CH: No, we commuted.

RK: So, each day you drove there?

CH: Yeah, my husband drove. If it were me, I'd stay.

RK: Who did you talk to?

CH: The Matsunos, the Isozakis.⁵⁶ Sue, I didn't see her too much there.

RK: How about the Sausage—

CH: Sausage?

RK: Sammy Tanaka?⁷

CH: I said, "Hello," I think and stuff.

RK: He gave me [your] address and telephone number. (chuckles)

CH: Yeah, Sausage and those—the old gangs sort of speak. And then, some of them came later. And, of course, those that were there at night, I didn't see them.

RK: Around what time did you drive to the hotel? Rosemead?

CH: Well, I think the first day they—we didn't go to the hotel directly, we went to the museum because they were going to go to the museum. So, we felt, Why go to the hotel and come back?

RK: So, you directly went to the museum?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: What Museum? At the Japanese American—

CH: Uh-huh.

⁵ Tamotsu Isozaki, O.H. 2332, Center for Oral and Public History.

⁶ Takeshi Isozaki, O.H. 2337, Center for Oral and Public History.

⁷ Sam Tanaka, O.H. 2333, Center for Oral and Public History.

RK: Oh, I see, on the—

CH: Central.

RK: Central. And then, you spend after that?

CH: And then, I think we went to the hotel.

RK: And you talked, talked, talked?

CH: Uh-huh, looked at pictures.

RK: Was it helpful?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Was it a big change? People changing?

CH: Some of them looked the same. Like some of them, like the Matsunos girls, I see them every once in a while. They come to our church sometimes for the bazaar. The neighborhood got bad so my son is afraid to stay.

[01:33:30; recording paused]

RK: Okay, three o' clock in the afternoon. So, we are talking about the last year reunion. Is there anything you would like to comment?

CH: What I was going to say was I volunteered my husband as a photographer, and he was upset about that. Then I told him, "Oh, they got a photographer; you don't have to take it." But, when we got there, someone handed him the video camera, and he had so much fun. He never did video before, so he took a lot of the video.

RK: They showed them?

CH: Uh-huh. They showed them later.

RK: Do you know that some people were against reunion? Did you know that?

CH: No, I didn't.

RK: Did you know, also, that some Catholic Maryknoll people did not show up? Did you know that?

CH: I really didn't miss them. (laughs) I knew that they didn't want any newspaper coverage because some people did not want it advertised.

RK: About the reunion?

CH: Uh-huh. I think that they were in Children's Village.

RK: Do you remember when you arrived in Manzanar? In the morning or in the nighttime?

CH: I think it was late afternoon.

RK: And the Children's Village was a three-part section? Boys barracks—

CH: Girls [barracks] and kitchen.

RK: And infants? Would you describe those?

CH: Uh, let me see. I don't know if the infants were on the other side or not, but I know the—

RK: I think the infants were on the other side of the girl's section.

CH: Girls, yes. The infants—I really didn't pay much attention to any other barracks except our area and the kitchen area and laundry. At first we had to wash by hands, and the water is so soft, you couldn't get the soap out of the diapers. (laughs) We rinsed and rinsed and rinsed.

RK: You mean the older orphans were helping with the laundry?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: But some person was in charge of the laundry?

CH: Yeah, there was somebody in charge. But, the equipment didn't arrive yet, so we were just washing diapers.

RK: Which reminds me, in Shonien period, did you perceive some brother and sisters separated there, and then did you see those brothers and sister have a chance to see each other frequently?

CH: I think it depends upon whether the parents brought them or not when they came to visit. Like, my father visited me all the time, like once a week. Some parents didn't. My father would take me Christmas shopping and Easter—you know? And I'd go to church, his church and stuff like that.

RK: So, you were lucky?

CH: Yeah. So, I went out a lot.

RK: How about in Children's Village, other informants said that it's very difficult for boys to visit the girl's dormitory because it's restricted so they didn't see each other much.

CH: Well, you see each other every day. It's just that you didn't go in each other's—it's just like when you're at home, you don't want your brother in your bedroom! And people who had brothers and sisters outside, they were always over to visit the younger ones. The older ones would come visit.

RK: In the girl's section, would you describe how many orphans are in one room?

CH: Huh, how many were there?

RK: Each one has a bed?

CH: Yeah, each one has a bed. We'd make our own little dresser with crates. Maybe twelve? I don't know.

RK: And there was an older girl's section and a younger girl's section divided into two?

CH: Let me see. This was more or less the teenage section. Then I guess the younger ones were with the babies, I guess.

RK: In terms of the name of Children's Village, do you have any idea why it was not called an orphanage?

CH: Originally, for Mr. Kusomuto's time, he did not want it called orphanage.

RK: Oh, really? Everybody knows that? It's shared knowledge?

CH: I think so. That's why he called it Shonien.

RK: So, he named Shonien?

CH: Uh-huh. That was what, children's garden?

RK: Yes, Children's Village. *Oh, you mean Shonien?* Sorry, I'm mixed-up. Not the children's garden. I'm asking—okay, how about children's garden? Mr. Kusomuto named it because he wanted—

CH: Yeah. Well, in English they say Japanese children's home, but in Japanese, they called it Shonien because he did not want it called an orphanage. I think that carried it onto the Children's Village.

RK: Mr. Kusomuto's idea was to carry it on—you think so?

CH: Yeah, I think so.

RK: So, you mean it's not Kusomuto who named because he was deported to Japan.

CH: Yeah. I don't know who named it.

RK: You think the Matsumotos knows—

CH: It could be. It could be.

RK: Have you contacted the Matsumotos after the war?

CH: I used to correspond at while Christmastime, and, when I was in San Francisco, I visited her. They were in Berkeley at that time. But lately, send Christmas cards, nothing. So, I was wondering what happened to them. I assumed that Harry died because I didn't hear from her.

RK: In terms of facility, was it poorly constructed barrack?

CH: Yeah, it's a regular Army barrack where they put a bunch of boards together and the holes in the floor and on the side, and they covered that up—being that people complained—they put linoleum on the floor, and they put tarpaper on the walls on the outside. I think they did put plasterboards inside because the wind would blow and all the dust would be inside the house.

RK: Did you have fan in the summertime?

CH: Oh, fan. I don't think so. I think you had to have your individual—you had stoves though.

RK: Was it warm enough?

CH: Yeah.

RK: You think so? On the walls, pictures are there?

CH: It's up to the individual.

RK: So, you frequently visit the barracks when you have free time?

CH: No, I don't think I was really interested.

RK: Oh, really?

CH: Because the family barracks, you're allotted so much room, and if you have a big family, you have no room to move.

RK: You mean, you have no room to visit them?

CH: And so, we usually met outside instead of going into people barracks.

RK: So, you had some friends there?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Did you perceive any prejudice from the Japanese community? I mean, at the barracks, did families look down on you?

CH: No. Maybe some of the Issei did, but it didn't bother us because we didn't communicate with the Issei. The Niseis, I think, treated us like anybody else.

[01:44:00]

RK: Are facility-wise, the barracks the same as the Children's Village?

CH: No. The Children's Village is better.

RK: Were you were invited by somebody there to visit?

CH: A couple barracks away I used to go visit a family all the time, until I found out the brother liked me, and I didn't like him. (laughs) But, yeah, I had certain friends that I'd visit but not too many.

RK: When you first saw Manzanar, there are many Japanese there, and then in Shonien, a little bit restricted, confined space. Were you excited or any feeling of memories?

CH: I don't know, it was kind of a strange, like going into a strange land.

RK: Surrounded by the mountain.

CH: Yeah, sand and mountain. It so happened that across the street from Shonien was a classmate of mine from grammar school.

RK: You found out?

CH: Yeah, she lived right across. We just renewed acquaintance. And then, another one I found was somewhere else. She was married and pregnant. She was seventeen years old, married and pregnant. What's her name? Aiko [Herzig-Yoshinaga]. She had a lot to do with the reparation. She's the one that found the letter that proved that the government had no reason to put us—yeah, I found her in camp, so I'd visit her.

RK: So, she was married at that time?

CH: She was married and—

RK: Did they have a birth facility or hospital?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Baby was born in the hospital?

CH: Yeah. Well, we were right near the hospital. Across the street from us was the hospital workers, and this childhood friend of mine, her older sister was a doctor. So, that's why we lived close together.

RK: So, the baby was—

CH: The pregnant woman!

RK: Was not _____ (inaudible)? Were you hospitalized?

CH: In Manzanar?

RK: Um-hm.

CH: No.

RK: So, you don't have any injured experience?

CH: No.

RK: Oh, I see. So, you don't know the inside of the hospital? You didn't see?

CH: I don't remember if I went in there or not.

RK: Long time ago. (laughs)

CH: I had a friend that worked there, and so she used to tell me about it.

RK: Oh, really? She was a nurse?

CH: No, nurse's aide. Of course, I knew doctors. They don't like to talk about their work.

(laughs)

RK: You think they were many patients there?

CH: Yeah, I think.

RK: Mainly older people?

CH: Uh-huh. Because where I used to visit this other friend, the next block down, it was people with problems, diabetics and stuff live on that. That's why they were near the hospital, but most of the people lived way on the other side of us.

RK: So, you had terrible wind and dust experience?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: Were you out when the wind blow the dust?

CH: Yeah, it hit you. You have to cover your face and cover your legs and everything because it hurts. I got caught—we had what you call a windbreak, so if there's a fire, there's space in between. And I got caught in the middle of one of those. It goes this way, and it goes this way. I got caught in the middle of a *real* open space once. I was trying to cover myself.

RK: It's like eyes over _____ (inaudible). How about generally, were you taken care of? Okay, in Children's Village, the hospitality was good? Better than Shonien experience?

CH: I think it's comparable because it's the same people, more less the same people.

RK: And the Matsumoto's were _____ (inaudible)?

CH: Yeah.

RK: How they were same, they treated you—

CH: I think so.

RK: So, you were generally satisfied food-wise, facility-wise—

CH: At the Children's Village?

RK: Uh-huh.

CH: Yes, when your compare it with the others, yes. They had a good cook. When I went to the YWCA, our cook got fish. They didn't clean the fish. It's frozen. They don't clean the fish. They just take the frozen fish and throw it in the oven, and then take it out and put it on top of your rice. Then they put your Jello on top of the fish. You can't eat that. They're feeding you fertilizer in the first place.

RK: Do you have many complaints about food?

CH: Yeah, but it didn't do any good.

RK: But, later it was amended?

CH: I don't know because I didn't wait that long. I said, "I have to get out of here."

RK: Okay, you told me the hospitals are crowded all the time?

CH: The hospitals?

RK: Sorry, _____ (inaudible). Do you perceive that the doctors are Japanese?

CH: They had—it's interesting. When the war started, Dr. Goto, James Goto, was the main physician at the County General Hospital [Los Angeles]. But, when we went to Manzanar, the *hakujin* doctor that was under him was the main doctor at the Manzanar because they don't want a Japanese on top. And from what I understand, he treated Dr. Goto very badly. From what I understand.

RK: How did you know that? Because you—

CH: I knew Dr. Goto. And after the war, my husband went to see Dr. Goto. Like I said, I knew people in the hospital, so you hear gossip.

RK: So, mainly Caucasian doctors there?

CH: Well, they had a lot of Japanese doctors and nurses, but then they had to have Caucasian on top of [Japanese doctors].

RK: Hierarchy. So, the Issei patients don't speak Japanese either?

CH: Unh-uh.

RK: Was it a nice hospital?

CH: I guess so. I'm sure the doctors would see to it that it was nice.

RK: Regarding the health check at Children's Village, do you have any memories?

CH: You know, I really don't remember any health checks. They probably had them, but I don't remember.

RK: Maybe every one year.

CH: Probably. I don't remember them. I remember getting weighed.

RK: How come?

CH: Because I was losing weight.

RK: You were losing weight?

CH: They couldn't understand. *No! I wasn't losing. I was gaining weight.* I wasn't eating. I didn't have any appetite, but I was gaining weight. And I played harder than anybody else.

RK: Did you go see the doctor?

CH: Couldn't figure it out.

RK: It was nothing?

CH: It was just the metabolism, I guess, the altitude.

RK: Psychologically, what was the general mood? What feelings did you have?

CH: Well, I know—talking to all the young people, the Issei used to tell us, “You people take this like a picnic, but it isn't a picnic.” We just carried on as usual. The only thing is that it's all Japanese. There's nobody else. But we played, we went to school, we did whatever.

RK: So, any serious complaints?

CH: No, not so much, not in the young people.

RK: And then, you find enjoyment?

CH: You made the best of what you had, you know.

RK: Did you make any close friends there?

CH: The Matsunos from CV, and Sue Tanaka.

RK: Oh, you mean in Children's Village?

CH: In Children's Village. And then, Sue Kunitomi [Embrey]⁸, we used to see each other and everything but it got to where, when I was working, it was kind of hard.

RK: Sue Kunitomi was not in Children's Village?

CH: No, outside. She was right across the street from the YWCA, and she was my boss when I was working.

RK: At that time, was she with family?

⁸ Sue Embrey, O.H. 1366, 2285, 2426, and, 5780, Center for Oral and Public History.

CH: She was with her family.

RK: Okay, so you lost your father before the war?

CH: Um-hm. I kind of feel that that was best for him.

RK: How come?

CH: Well, the way he was—and even if he wasn't a citizen, he was very patriotic—I think Pearl Harbor would have killed him, if he'd had not died. That his country and his adopted country—you know?

[01:56:34]

RK: Do you have memory of the Children's Village, the Issei men and women working there?

CH: Working there?

RK: Working there, like gardening or laundry?

CH: Gee, I thought we did the laundry.

RK: Oh, really?

CH: Maybe later on. I know we hung the clothes up because, in the wintertime, they'd freeze as fast as you can get them up. And when, you took them down they were stiff like cardboard.

RK: In wintertime?

CH: Yes. I remember hanging clothes and bringing them down. But actual washing, I don't remember who did it.

RK: How about [when] the dust blows? The clothes would be easily dirty.

CH: I don't know what they did. Shook them off.

RK: So, you don't have any memory about the Issei men working there?

CH: No.

RK: Because Issei men just speak Japanese, and then children just speaking English.

CH: Can I turn this off

[recording paused]

RK: Okay, I was asking you about the relationship between Kibei, Nisei, and the Issei people, how did they interact?

CH: I don't think the Kibeis got along too well with the rest because, to us, they were troublemakers.

RK: Will you describe them?

CH: Well, they did that riot and stuff.

RK: Riot frequently happened?

CH: One big one. People got killed, yeah.

RK: Do you have any memory?

CH: I did not go to it; I didn't stay. But, I heard about it and about a young boy that got killed. Always stayed in, in the evening time and studied. That one time he goes out of the barracks he gets killed by the riot. Because what they did was the Kibei would push the other people to the front. So, when the guards start shooting, they're in back of the curious people, and the innocent people got shot. I think after that most Niseis just didn't trust them, and Isseis, they kind of just kept to themselves, did their thing.

RK: So, you felt the commotion after the Manzanar—

CH: No, we were way on the other side, so we were over a mile away. (chuckles)
Actually, opposite corner, just about.

RK: Wow, terrible.

CH: Yeah. Scary. I think they learned because they did use the weapons. I think that if they did not use the weapons, they probably would try it again.

RK: Okay. Regarding the counseling and the casework, do you have any memory about counseling? Were you counseled by the staff member?

CH: No.

RK: So, when you had something terrible [occur], who did you talk to?

CH: Oh, you could go to one of the staff members.

RK: Did you feel free to go there?

- CH: Yeah. It was like going to a big sister or something.
- RK: Would it happen frequently?
- CH: No.
- RK: So, were the orphans well behaved?
- CH: Yeah. I think everyone was well behaved.
- RK: So, the Maryknoll orphans and the Salvation Army orphans and the—
- CH: We got along, uh-huh.
- RK: So, you mostly mingled with each other?
- CH: We got along, and the Shonien girls would kind of have their eyes on the Salvation Army boys and stuff like that. I think one couple did get married.
- RK: Did you know of any romance?
- CH: That was about the only one. You know, some girls are more attractive to the opposite sex than the others.
- RK: How about you?
- CH: Couldn't be bothered with guys. (laughs)
- RK: When the orphans did not behave, how did the staff members treat them?
- CH: I think they talk to them and punish them, maybe sit quietly somewhere.
- RK: Was it strict?
- CH: I don't think it was that strict. Some might think so, but I didn't think it was that strict.
- RK: Did you have any abuse? Mental abuse, physical abuse?
- CH: I got spanked once. That's because I gave somebody a bloody nose. She threw a chair at me, (laughs) I punched her on the nose, and I got spanked. It wasn't that hard.
- RK: Can you give me the similarities and differences between the Shonien and the Children's Village?

CH: I think the difference is that in Shonien you're isolated. Children's Village, being that it was in camp and no fences, no walls, you can mingle with other people. Since it's the same people running both, mostly it was run the same way.

RK: Mostly, the staff came from the Shonien?

CH: Los Angeles, the Shonien, uh-huh. I think it was only one couple from Salvation Army. The officers, the captain, and his wife.

[02:05:00]

RK: How about Maryknoll? Nobody came?

CH: Nobody. They had Maryknoll—they had a Catholic church, Maryknoll sisters. They didn't even come visit the kids.

RK: Well, the Salvation Army reunion was held in 1984. Did you have reunion among Shonien orphans?

CH: No.

RK: How was the Matsumotos perceived by the orphans?

CH: I really don't know how they were perceived.

RK: Was it business-like?

CH: Yeah, it was business-like. Authoritative.

RK: Huh?

CH: Authoritarian. I know them—that she was just out of college. I knew her husband, longer. So, the way I see them—and then, of course, my cousin knew them—the way I saw them was different from others.

RK: From your point of view?

CH: From my point of view? They had a job to do, and they did it the best they could, you know.

RK: They had subordinate staff mostly in charge of children?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: So, the staff relatively caring people?

CH: Yeah. Those that went to Children's Village, they were there for many years. I think they were there before the Matsumotos. One, I think, was there and then left and came back. So, they knew what to do and whatever.

RK: I think that especially most children lost their parents so mother figure, father figure, they should have been like a role model. Did you see—

CH: I don't think Harry was much of a father figure.

RK: Business like?

CH: Big brother. His wife was more educated, more intelligent. She came from a better family. Could be that I knew much of the background of Harry (chuckles) to have the same kind of respect.

RK: So, they didn't mingle with children a lot?

CH: Not as much as the others.

RK: Did they hug anybody?

CH: I don't think I ever saw the Matsumotos hug anybody.

RK: So, they didn't give disciplinary talk or something like that?

CH: Yeah, I think they did more the discipline.

RK: They did?

CH: Yeah, Harry and Lillian.

RK: When, at the time of—mealtime?

CH: No, when it happens, which is better than most families. Right?

RK: Do you have any guest from the outside to the Children's Village?

CH: Ah.

RK: Like government people or like a social worker?

CH: Well, Lillian is a social worker. You mean—no, I don't think so.

RK: There was nothing?

- CH: I don't remember. Yeah, because she was highly educated. I think she got commended by the emperor of Japan or something or other. She's a special person really.
- RK: Will you give me the picture of the daily routine at the Children's Village?
- CH: I think it's all the same as Shonien. You get up, you fix your bed, and get ready for breakfast. We didn't have to wash dishes, though, at the Children's Village.
- RK: You have to do at Shonien?
- CH: Shonien we had to do dishes because we only had one couple. (phone rings)
- RK: We're going to take break. [recording paused] So, you were talking about the daily routine was the same as Shonien. Do you have any differences from the Shonien?
- CH: I think there was probably less chores than Shonien because a lot of it is taken care of by other people.
- RK: In Shonien, less chores?
- CH: No, less chores at the [Children's] Village.
- RK: What did you do at Shonien?
- CH: Well, we had to help with dishes, and we helped set the table and stuff like that and help with the laundry, mend clothes.
- RK: So, very busy after school?
- CH: Or Saturday—Saturday was busy. There's a lot of things that the girls—like I said, the older girls had their separate house, and we kept that up, cleaned it. When I took care of it, I put flowers in the rooms and stuff like that.
- RK: So, when you come to Children's Village, you had more freedom?
- CH: Yeah.
- RK: Do you know this person?
- CH: No, she wasn't there when I was there.
- RK: Okay, so you went to high school, while you were at Manzanar?
- CH: Yes.
- RK: Would you give me a brief description of school? Who was the teacher?

CH: They had teachers from the Los Angeles School District because Manzanar was part of Los Angeles, technically. So, they had L.A. schoolteachers.

RK: Caucasians teachers?

CH: Caucasian teacher, uh-huh. A lot of them were—well, like one was just out of college and wasn't really that good at it. She was more like a friend than a teacher. (laughs) She was a sewing teacher. At that time, all Japanese girls learned how to sew by their parents, so the students knew more than the teacher, (laughs) as far as sewing is concerned. She came from a rich family, so she could tell you about color and stuff. We could tell her about sewing. But then, you had certain courses you had to graduate, so we had regular courses.

RK: Did you have any other classes, teachers?

CH: There was one teacher nobody liked.

RK: Who was it?

CH: Her name was Miss Stump, and they used to call her everything else. She was all right. But, I don't know; I never had her for a class. She was my study hall teacher, and people didn't study in study hall. They just played and stuff, and she had no control of the class. I found out, though, when I was there, I used to kind of struggle in school. I didn't get as good grades as other *nihonjin* because I never studied. I never studied. I later found out that I was smarter than most of the *nihonjin*—they used to get As in school—because I studied less in Manzanar. It was easy for me. I didn't have to study.

[02:15:00]

RK: Nobody cared?

CH: I got good grades, but I didn't have to study. It was just easy for me, whereas a lot of them found it hard.

RK: About how many students were in one classroom?

CH: About twenty maybe. I think it depends upon what class though.

RK: Twenty is more individual attention?

CH: Well, we didn't have all the facilities so it was more like lecture. The teacher would talk.

RK: So, ability wise, the teachers were good?

CH: I think most of them were.

RK: How about the enthusiasm?

CH: I don't know. I think it was kind of like me. Our class was something else. We told them when we wanted to graduate. They said, No, you can't. You have to wait till June. We said, "We don't want to wait until June. We've prepared our own graduation. We ordered our own cap and gowns." (laughs) We told them, "We're not going to wait till June. We're through with school. Why wait to graduate?" So, like I said, our class was something else.

RK: So, there was a conflict between teachers and students?

CH: Well, not the teacher, just whoever was in charge.

RK: Like an instructor?

CH: They wanted to make just one—like they do now—one graduation. But, in those days, they used to have graduation twice a year, and we were what they called winter graduate. But, they wanted us to wait till summer, so they wanted us to wait like one semester after we're through with school to graduate. And we didn't want to.

RK: So, you graduated in winter?

CH: Yeah, we graduated. Well, we didn't graduate in February, when we finished, but we graduated in March because we planned our own graduation. The teachers chose the valedictorian, but we more or less planned what we were going to do and stuff. Luckily, at that time, the great photographer Ansel Adams was taking pictures in Manzanar, so we had him take our graduation pictures.

RK: Do you have that picture?

CH: No, I don't think I have it.

RK: Missing?

CH: Yeah. I have to go through my things—my daughter went through everything, took what she wanted. And then, of course, I moved around so much.

RK: How about facility-wise in high school, did you feel any complaint? Textbook and material?

CH: I guess we had textbooks. We had like folding chairs to sit on, no desk. So, like I said, lecture type classes.

RK: Did you have a lot of discussion?

CH: Yeah.

RK: What class teacher was your favorite teacher?

CH: I think the sewing teacher. (laughs)

RK: Do you know her name?

CH: I think it was Mrs. Gross.

RK: Gross?

CH: No, probably Miss because she was just out of college.

RK: Did you worry about the educational system?

CH: No, I didn't worry.

RK: So, you graduated in '44?

CH: In '43. Like we had to wait, there was no school, so everybody was more or less put behind in school. So, the thing was to get out of school, to get your diploma. (chuckles) I don't even know if they gave me a diploma or not. I don't remember. I don't have one.

RK: Teachers have any prejudice or discrimination towards you?

CH: No, I think all these teachers volunteered.

RK: Oh, volunteered? Did they live outside of camp?

CH: They had the area for them to live.

RK: In camp?

CH: Outside.

RK: They have their own home?

CH: Yeah, I don't know if they lived in town or what.

[02:30:36]

RK: So, you didn't have any privacy in your room in Children's Village?

CH: No.

RK: Did you have any inconvenience?

CH: Not really.

RK: Oh, really? Everybody understand?

CH: Yeah.

RK: How many people were in your room?

CH: I don't know. There could have been about twelve maybe.

RK: Twelve. Can you give me names, if you have?

CH: I can't give you all of them. There was Sumako Tanaka, there was Mary Matsuno, Hatsui Kodani, Nakako Kodani, oh, what's their name? I can't think of her name, from San Francisco. Mary and Jane Honda.

RK: Did you see the siblings were close to each other?

CH: Yeah, they kind of hung around together.

RK: Did they defend each other when some problem happened?

CH: Um-hm, yeah.

RK: So, generally, you felt in Children's Village that you were safe, you were protected?

CH: Yeah.

RK: Did you have serious—

CH: Problems? No.

RK: How about the baby nursery, did have any memories?

CH: At the Children's Village?

RK: Um-hm.

CH: I don't think I went into the baby nursery.

RK: So, you don't know anything about that?

CH: No.

RK: Do you have any memories about parties?

CH: At the Village? I kind of have one.

RK: What's that?

CH: I don't know if it was graduation or what.

RK: How about New Year's or Christmastime?

CH: At the Village, Christmas or New Year's? You know, I don't remember them. They probably had something but I just—you know?

RK: There was a movie attraction in the camp? Did you go see?

CH: Yeah. It was outdoors, and you'd take your blanket and lie down and watch the movie. We also had concerts—records—but they'd have concerts, and you'd watch the shooting stars. You'd be looking at the movie, and, all of a sudden, everybody would go, "Oooooh!" What happened?" (laughs) Because the stars would distract us.

RK: About how many people joined the movies?

CH: I guess whoever wanted. It was just open to anybody that wanted.

RK: So, a lot of people?

CH: Yeah.

RK: Especially on the weekends?

CH: I guess, just whenever they got films. I don't know. I don't think there was any certain day.

RK: Do you have any specific movie title?

CH: No.

RK: Mostly many adults there or children in the movies?

CH: Probably young people.

RK: Around what time?

CH: After dark, it had to be after dark, so whenever it gets dark.

RK: Nine o'clock, eight o'clock.

CH: If it's summertime, it's late. Wintertime, it's earlier.

RK: And if the wind blows, it's really terrible?

CH: I don't think the wind blows at night. I'm not sure.

RK: When was your curfew at the Children's Village? Did you have to come back at a certain time?

CH: You had to be there for dinnertime. Then I don't think people wondered away much after that.

RK: Religion wise, in the camp, there are Buddhist church and Christian church?

CH: And Catholic church.

RK: So, mainly three types of churches?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: Did you attend the Christian church?

CH: Then Episcopal—Episcopal would come up once a month to give communion. I went to those.

RK: How about the other orphans?

CH: I think they had it at their area. I think they had church at their area.

RK: So, mostly on Sunday morning, children orphans went there?

CH: Yeah, I think they had church in their area.

RK: Do you have any memory about the people that went the Buddhist church?

CH: No.

RK: So, you mainly attended the Episcopal?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: How was it?

CH: It was kind of abbreviated church.

RK: Oh, really? What does abbreviated mean?

CH: Short.

RK: Oh, I see. Short Sunday services. How long did it last?

CH: Usually if you go to a regular church they have sermon and everything, and I don't think they had the sermon. If they did, it was very brief.

RK: Ministers are Caucasian?

CH: Yeah. Because our minister, like Yamasakis, they were in different—they were in Arizona.

RK: Do you remember any—no Japanese minister or priest there?

CH: Yeah, they had the Buddhist priest. They had Japanese ministers.

RK: I'm wondering, many Buddhist or person who was regarded as anti-American was taken by the FBI.

CH: Yeah, not only those that were anti-American, but those that had connections with Japan or they been to Japan recently or stuff like that. Like Mr. Kusamoto, he wasn't anti-American or anything, but I think he had a lot of connections in Japan because of his philanthropic ways. He is the least dangerous person, and they took him. So, he went there and died.

RK: In Manzanar, they were some Japanese ministers?

CH: Yeah, there was some there, but I think it was more like the Buddhist ones that were taken because the ties with Japan.

RK: So, you don't have any memory about the Buddhist churches?

CH: No, not in camp. No.

RK: Concerning the clothes grants, do you remember? You were given the clothes?

CH: I know I made most of my clothes, I think.

RK: You made yourself?

CH: Yeah.

RK: You sewed. (chuckles)

CH: I sewed, and I don't know if they were given to us or what. Probably.

[02:40:00]

RK: During the Children's Village period, did you miss your mother and father frequently?

CH: Not really. I was pretty independent.

RK: How about the kids, crying or something?

CH: I think maybe the smaller ones, probably, but the older ones took it in stride.

RK: How about the older ones taking care of the younger ones? Do you have any memories?

CH: Yeah, we kind of looked after the ones.

RK: How about the medical in Children's Village?

CH: I don't remember. You asked that.

RK: Okay, this is kind of over.

CH: Come to think of it, when we first went there, everybody had shots.

RK: Only just one time?

CH: That was the only one time I remember; everybody had to have shots. Just like when you go to a foreign country, you have to take shots.

RK: How about the teeth or eyes?

CH: They had a dentist there, yeah. I never got my eyes checked. I went to the dentist.

RK: So, you lived at YWCA? When did you leave camp?

CH: September '43.

RK: And where did you go?

CH: I went to Freeport, Illinois. You asked that. You wrote that down.

RK: Okay, did you work? What did you do?

CH: I did domestic, live-in domestic.

RK: So, the relocation center assigned you to go to another orphanage?

CH: They had an employment office. You'd go, and you'd choose where you want to go, what job you want to take.

RK: So, you had some choice?

CH: Yeah.

RK: And you picked Illinois?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Did you live with American family? Caucasian family?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: How was that?

CH: It was all right. It was more less predominately German community. They were taking people from the camp because I think it was my boss, at a town meeting, that says, "Remember during World War I how we were treated, how the Germans were treated, so we should try to make things a little bit easier for the Japanese people." So, they started advertising in our camp, and people went. They treated us well. In fact, in that time, we could do no wrong.

RK: Was it a German family? German American?

CH: Yeah, German but I think it was way back. He was a lawyer; the one I worked for was a lawyer.

RK: So, what did you do? What did you help?

CH: I did the cooking and the cleaning, took care of the kids when I had—but that family, they were a little bit older.

RK: Do you remember how much you got?

CH: Ten dollars a week and room and board.

RK: Did you think it was little money?

CH: Little but, in those days, you were doing good if you made \$1 an hour. And had to find a place to live and eat on \$1 an hour.

RK: So, you got room and board?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: So, you had no discrimination?

CH: Not in that town; we were like kings.

RK: When you left Children's Village, what was your feeling?

CH: I think excitement.

RK: Excitement to go outside?

CH: Uh-huh. But little bit, what do you call it, of scared because you are going to be on your own. Nobody is going to be there.

RK: And you also missed the Children's Village like brothers and sisters?

CH: No, once you got out, you assimilate. There were other Niseis in that town, so we'd get together twice a week.

RK: You mean in Illinois?

CH: Illinois.

RK: Oh, I see. Okay, so you left Manzanar at the age of—

CH: Nineteen.

RK: After Manzanar, did feel any prejudice?

CH: No.

RK: Because of German community?

CH: No, that community was really nice. They treated us really nice.

RK: So, you're lucky.

CH: In fact, no problem in Chicago because Chicago shopping, you know? No problems.

RK: Were you asked the loyalty question?

CH: Yeah.

RK: How was that?

CH: It was kind of ridiculous, I thought, because there was only one answer you could answer. The women were asked, "If you were able, would you join the WAAC," which was Women's Auxiliary Army [Corps], or something like that. And, if you said, "I would, but I have children—" so if I didn't have children—that meant no, and that meant you're disloyal. So, only thing you could answer was, "Yes." (phone rings)

[02:47:26]

RK: We going to have a break. [recording paused] We're talking about the loyalty question. Do you have any other reaction? Do you have any other things about loyalty?

CH: I just thought it was stupid.

RK: Most of the other _____ (inaudible)?

CH: There's a lot of them. Like I said, if someone says, "If I didn't have children," or something. different things—if you had a *but*, "*Yes, but*," that's no. It had to be a, yes!

RK: Were you scared?

CH: No, we're the ones that processed those things, too. It was supposed to be confidential, but some of the people telling, "So and so said, no. So and so said, this, and so and so said, that." But I think the men, they took with them.

RK: Did you know anyone who volunteered in the Army?

CH: Nobody got taken, but I had a friend who volunteered after she was out.

RK: Okay, while you were staying at Children's Village, how did you get information about what was going on outside?

CH: The newspaper.

RK: Did you read?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: Mostly regular newspaper?

CH: Regular newspaper and then they had camp newspaper, *Manzanar Free Press*.

RK: How about the smaller kids, don't read?

- CH: No, they just—in seventh heaven, I guess. They just, you know—
- RK: And the Children’s Village provided those papers?
- CH: Well, you could pick it up, but not everybody read.
- RK: Do you know Exclusion Order that Japanese were excluded in the West Coast?
- CH: West Coast and half of Arizona, yeah.
- RK: So, Japanese no more in the West Coast.
- CH: Uh-huh.
- RK: You don’t have any idea about the infants in Children’s Village?
- CH: No, I really don’t. Of course, I didn’t take care of them.
- RK: What is the most vivid or significant memory of Children’s Village or camp life in general?
- CH: Hm.
- RK: Exciting?
- CH: It wasn’t exciting.
- RK: Serious?
- CH: Yeah, pretty serious.
- RK: What you could not stand about various things there?
- CH: Getting up. (laughs) Getting up. Getting on with my life, you know? Because when I was there, I said college was out.
- RK: Did you go to college?
- CH: No.
- RK: After Manzanar graduation?
- CH: In fact, I was kind of offered a scholarship, and I turned it down because I said, “Where will I live? What will I do for money,” because I had nobody to support me or anything. When the schools closed, I had no place to go, so I turned down the college.

RK: So, you got room and board. How long did you do that?

CH: I worked with three different families. I did it about three years.

RK: First you moved to Illinois? And then you went to—

CH: I stayed in Illinois. I went to Chicago, and then I went back to Freeport to another family.

RK: How was the Chicago experience? Why did you go to Chicago?

CH: Why did I go to Chicago? I think a friend said, “Why don’t you come to Chicago?” So, I went I think to go to a bigger city.

RK: Was it also a Caucasian family?

CH: Yeah, it was a Caucasian family. The man was German. He was like assistant professor, math professor, at the University of Chicago. His wife was a society lady that didn’t know anything. She was Phi Theta Kappa from her school, but she didn’t know anything.

RK: So, they were also treating you—

CH: Yeah, they treat me okay, but they had two children. When she said, “I’m pregnant,” that was it. I wasn’t about to stay and diaper three kids.

RK: So, you went back to previous place?

CH: No, I went to same town—

RK: Different family?

CH: Different family.

RK: And then this time also German American family?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: So, there was no difficulty?

CH: No.

RK: So, you were getting room and board all together in Chicago. How many years did you spend?

CH: Three.

RK: Three years. So, almost twenty-one at that time?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: And after that you went to—

CH: I went to Hawaii.

RK: To see your relatives?

CH: To stay with my relatives. At that time you have to have special permit from the War Authority to get to Hawaii. Since I had no relatives in this country, in the States, and I had in Hawaii, then I went over on a troop ship with dependents, Army dependents, and people that work for the military. I went on the same ship with them and Hawaiians that got stranded in the States.

RK: You went to live with your relatives?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: How long?

CH: I stayed there four years.

RK: How did you manage your—

CH: I worked. In the end, I took care of my aunt because she had a stroke, so I took care of her. And then, I had to come back because the people that were running the hotel—

RK: Your father's hotel?

CH: Yeah. They were going to just walk-out and leave it, so I had to come back and take-over the business.

RK: Okay. So, while you were in Hawaii, somebody was running—

CH: Uh-huh, yeah.

RK: Still your father's hotel is there?

CH: No, not any more.

RK: How did you find out about Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb was thrown down?

CH: Newspaper and radio.

RK: How did you find out?

CH: Well, I think over the news on the radio.

RK: How did you feel about that?

CH: I was amazed. And then later, I found—when I had my son—my roommate was married to a Caucasian soldier. She was Japanese. Her husband was supposed to drop the bomb, and he refused to do it. And they were going to court-martial him. You know court-martial?

RK: Um-hm.

CH: But, his buddies went to the commanding officer and told him that he's married to a Japanese, and he'd be dropping bombs on her relatives. That's why he refuses. So, they said, Okay, and had someone else drop the bombs. And they were not supposed to drop the bomb on Hiroshima.

RK: It was Tokyo.

CH: They said, If you miss your target, you do not drop the bomb. You take it out to the ocean. They missed the target and dropped the bomb anyway.

RK: Wasn't it Tokyo it was supposed to be dropped?

CH: No, I think it was supposed to be Nagasaki, the Naval base.

RK: Oh, I see. But Nagasaki was later bombed.

CH: But, if they missed, they were supposed to take it out to the ocean and drop it.

RK: So, you don't have any idea about your Hiroshima family? Were they affected by [the] bomb?

CH: I guess not, because my aunt didn't say anything. She never mentioned it.

RK: Maybe nothing happened.

CH: Yeah. It wasn't in their area.

RK: So, you are retired right now?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: When did you retire?

CH: Eighty-seven.

RK: Can I ask, what were you doing?

CH: I was working at USC at the dental school. I was taking care of all of the records the students did in the dental clinic.

RK: Oh, I see. So, you are right now enjoying—

CH: Yeah.

RK: By the way, when did you get married?

CH: Nineteen fifty-three.

RK: Fifty-three. And your husband is Japanese American?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Can I ask you, how did you meet him?

CH: I had a lot of friends. I know a lot of people from Hawaii, and they were going to school with him. So, they used to bring him over, and I didn't like him. He was real quite. He used to sit in the corner.

RK: So, your children are already gone?

CH: Um-hm. That was my son that just called. I've got to pick up his daughter from school.

RK: Did you talk about your story to your children?

CH: I think bits and pieces.

[03:00:00]

RK: Do you know [if] they [are] interested?

CH: Oh, yeah. In fact, I think that it's my son that got the book, *The Executive Order*.

RK: They you feel it important talking to them about your story?

CH: I kind of think so because there's a lady that I volunteer with, we're talking, she thought the evacuation was aliens. I says, "No, they were American citizens that they

put in the concentration camps.” She says, “Were you in?” I says, “Yes, I was in,” and I said, “Where are you from?” “Oh, I was raised in L.A.” I said, “What school did you go to?” And she said, “Roosevelt High School.” And I said, “Oh, I went to Poly High School. You were our competitor. Your school had a lot of Russians.” She says, “Yeah, I’m Russian.” I said, “You don’t know what happened? Because they also had a lot of Japanese at Roosevelt High School.” And she thought that we were all aliens? All her schoolmates were aliens? I says, “No, they took citizens.” “Oh, I didn’t know that.”

RK: Yeah, nobody knows maybe. It’s hard, those involved. Inside knows but—

CH: Lots of us—most of them that I know, like if they are born around here, they know that we were citizens because they know that the schoolmates were taken and stuff like that. In fact, from that lady’s school, there’s one Mexican boy that went to camp with his friends. He got permission from his mother and stuff, so I think he lived with one of the families. But anyway, he was the only non—and one Chinese lady, but she got out quick. She was an orphan. She was raised by the Buddhist priest so they put her in camp. She was married and had a Chinese husband. We thought that was silly. But, this just happened last Thursday, this conversation with this lady.

RK: Oh, really? Your husband comes from Hawaii?

CH: No, San Francisco.

RK: So, how was his experience during World War II?

CH: He was in Arkansas. He was in a different camp.

RK: He went to another camp.

CH: Uh-huh. But ironically, a lot of my junior high school mates was in his camp, so I think I know more people that was in his camp than he did.

RK: How did you adjust, after World War II, to the society in America?

CH: Well, I went to Hawaii right away so it was—you know?

RK: It’s much easier.

CH: Yeah.

RK: Oh, I see.

CH: Because when we went out as domestic, we were kind of in a small town. We were protected because they saw to it that nobody did anything to us, the townspeople, you know?

RK: At orphanage Los Angeles Shonien or Children's Village, nobody especially take care of you, so do you accept—do you think orphanage good for those who lost parents or were separated from—

CH: I think if it was run like a Shonien or Children's Village, it is where you have nice people running it. More [or] less run on the Christian theory or even Buddhist theory, but have some religious background to it. I don't know about the fundamentalist nowadays, they are kind of—but it needs some type of religious background, I think, to have some idealism to fall back on. Because what I understand, Buddhist teaching is not very different from Christ's teachings.

RK: Religion is the same.

CH: Yeah.

RK: Do you think that the experience in the past affected you as woman or your identity?

CH: I think what affected me more was my father. I think if it wasn't for him, I would be more—

RK: Different.

CH: Yeah. Introverted, because I was quite a bit introverted.

RK: So, you didn't have mother's memories so—

CH: My father telling me to stick-up for my rights and stuff, I think that has more to do with it because a lot of the times where I would stand-back, I would hear him telling me to stand-up for my rights.

RK: Still, he is living in your mind.

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: Is camp experience a big part still in your life? Or minor?

CH: No, I think it was minor.

RK: Do you feel like the same thing will happen again in the future?

CH: The way the white race is, I think they are going to have to teach people, here, that this United States was occupied by Asians first, then the Hispanics before the white race came. Because I read a letter to the editor about, Who do these people think they are? They come to this country—they are talking about Irvine's Japanese American culture program. The school had problems, right?

RK: Problems. Yes, the history department.

CH: And the Chicano program at UCLA, right after the sit-in, he said, *Who do they think they are? These Hispanics and these Japanese American? They come over to this country and take our land, whatever, and then they want to learn about their culture, so they want us to put it in the schools. Why don't they stay in their own country?* That letter upset me. They have to start teaching American history like it is, that the first occupants were the Asians and then the Hispanics, and the last people, here, are the whites. I think the blacks were here before the whites. So, they should get off the horse and respect the other people.

[03:08:37]

RK: That's right.

CH: If it wasn't for the Chinese, where would the railroad be? If it wasn't for Carver, no peanuts! (laughs)

RK: So, you have many brothers and sisters—they are spread all over America.

CH: You mean friends?

RK: Uh-huh. You have still sense of family, family like feeling?

CH: I think so.

RK: So, unification is kind of a shared idea?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: What was your reaction about the Reparation and Redress?

CH: Well, I've been reading about them working on it because I get the *Tozai Times*, and they keep you up on it. From before that, Sue Kunitomi worked on reparations, so I've been reading about it for many years, but I didn't think it would ever happen.

RK: And then it happened.

CH: I don't care what they say about Reagan, I think he's a good man. If I'm not mistaken, I kind of have a feeling that he might have visited us in Manzanar because I remember somebody that kind of looked like him—this was like fifty years ago—coming to our camp. It was a movie star, a young movie actor. A few of them used to come because they used to film the old cowboy movies in that area. I kind of think maybe it was him that visited our camp one time to see how it was and stuff.

- RK: Cowboys, type of American had a history of the frontier and cowboy story was a popular story. _____ (inaudible) I don't know about man's nature is about conquering something, when it comes to racial contact, have to conquer other races.
- CH: Yeah, cowboys are like samurai.
- RK: Cowboys are like my partner, more _____ (inaudible).
- CH: My father used to always say, "You can't cry. Daughter of a samurai, you can't cry. You're not allowed to cry." I wonder, did he really come from a samurai family, or was he just saying that? (laughs) We can prove it or disprove it.
- RK: Were you given Redress redemption?
- CH: Um-hm. It's in my kitchen.
- RK: Sorry?
- CH: That's what I spent it on, my kitchen.
- RK: Oh, really? (laughs)
- CH: Look at it there. We haven't paid the last payment. It hasn't been finished to my son's liking.
- RK: Do you think you accepted the government's apology?
- CH: Well, I think they made an apology, but I don't think it was enough. I don't think monetarily, but I think that they should be more in saying what really happened and teach it. Today—this morning, early—they had Clinton in Hawaii reading the Hawaiian Japanese soldiers. First time I ever heard it, I've known about it. He was thanking them and saying that if it wasn't for the Nisei the United States would have never beat Japan. Because it was the Nisei soldiers that cracked the codes. It was the Nisei soldiers that did this. It was the Nisei soldiers, you know?
- RK: The 442nd.
- CH: No, 442nd was in Europe.
- RK: Ah, in Germany.
- CH: These were the—what did they call them? MIS? Yeah, the interpreters, Military Intelligence [Service]. Yeah, Military Intelligence. You hear about this admiral cracking and this *hakujin* cracking. *No*, it's all done by Nisei. They're the ones. And Clinton says, "This has never been said before because been it's been—" what do you

- call it? Top secret? But now that the Cold War is over, it can come out, and he was thanking the Japanese American in Hawaii for their part in the war.
- RK: Great.
- CH: That's the first time it's been—
- RK: He's highly aware of that.
- CH: I think maybe they told him about it.
- RK: But other than just giving money back, talking is much more important.
- CH: Yeah. Yeah, I think that what is more important is doing something, letting people know that. Because the black people think that they were getting the money because we were in concentration camps, not that they are paying us for the illegal act that was committed. So, blacks think that because they were slaves, they should get it. But, it was their forefathers that were slaves, not them. My father didn't get it.
- RK: That's right. It's too late.
- CH: Yup. (speaks to someone outside the room) Did your father get reparation? And Butch didn't either, huh? Because they died before—his brother didn't get it because he died before Reagan signed the thing. In fact, his mother didn't either.
- RK: Okay. Since you stopped your education after high school, even though you voluntarily rejected a scholarship, did you pay attention to your children to get a higher education?
- CH: Um-hm. Only one son didn't. He went to junior college, and he kept taking courses he wanted to, so he didn't graduate. My youngest daughter finally got her degree last year. That was because the school kept—
- [03:17:00; recording paused]
- RK: [We were talking about] your children's—
- CH: Only one doesn't have a degree, he works for Epson in San Jose. He has a very good job. His brother is vice president of Mizuho Bank. My daughter is a lawyer. One's an x-ray technologist. She has a degree in computer science but can't get a job. And the youngest one, she had a hard time graduating because she had babies and stuff, and the school kept on canceling her course. She tried to get one course for about two years, so she finally told them, "Give me my course or give me my diploma."
- RK: What university?

CH: UC Davis. So, they gave her, her diploma.

RK: Classes are closed?

CH: Well, she was a home economics major, and they cancelled home economics. That's the only school that teaches home economics. You can take dieticians or nutritionist. Home economics, as a whole, that was the only place you could get it. And they were known globally for their teachings, and they discontinued it cause they got a new president that wanted the school to be an engineering instead of agriculture. That's why I wish the California system would quit getting presidents from back east. Take them from California where they know what each school is supposed to be. They're ruining the education system every time they bring somebody from back east. That's my feeling.

RK: Oh, I see. You have a _____ (inaudible) idea about education because of your—
[interview jumps ahead]

CH: —if I had, I could have taken a different course in my work.

RK: Because World War [II] affected your life.

CH: Um-hm.

RK: Your children married Japanese American or—

CH: My children? You asked that three times.

RK: Um-hm.

CH: Yes. Only one married Korean.

RK: Yes, yes, in the tape. I see. Thank you. Did you think about the orphans, even at such a little age, small age that were taken to Manzanar, that orphans, *twice*, had a hard experience, comparing the ordinary Japanese interment people?

CH: I don't think so because I think ordinary families, you know, they didn't break-up the family, but the attitude of their parents changed. The Isseis were very bitter about everything. I would think that would affect the children.

RK: The Nisei.

CH: Yeah, the Nisei, because they see how their parent's suffered, whereas we didn't see that.

RK: I see, it was a different experience. You have still contact with Children's Village members?

CH: Um-hm.

RK: Do you have a bad memory about Children's Village life?

CH: No, I don't. Have you come across some?

RK: Um-hm.

CH: Bad memories?

RK: Um-hm. Do you?

CH: I don't have any.

RK: What makes you forget about the war? What reminds you about the war?

CH: I think you always know it was there. It's the past, and you can't live in the past. You have to live in the present and the future. And I think if you dwell on the past, it makes it—you're more bitter. That's probably those people are dwelling in the past, and the more they think about it, the more bitter the memories become. Because if you hurt your fingers and you keep thinking about it, it hurts more and more and more all the time. Even though it's healing, it hurts more, and I think it's the same with memories. You keep thinking about the past, and it makes you more bitter.

RK: So, religious activities wasn't replaceable as therapeutic?

CH: I think so, yeah.

RK: By the way, do you attend Sunday service?

CH: Not regularly anymore cause we go into Los Angeles.

RK: Los Angeles church?

CH: Uh-huh. It's the only Japanese Episcopal Church.

RK: Oh, I see. You told me.

CH: Uh-huh

[03:23:38]

RK: Have you visited Manzanar after the war?

CH: Yeah, I haven't gone with the group, but when we're coming back from Mammoth or something, we drive by and go in. We went in once.

RK: Nothing there?

CH: [If] you asked me where is where what and what, and I'm trying to figure out. So, this is the gate, so this must be—that's the cemetery, so the hospital was over there. Where is the pear orchard? Where's the apple orchard? Then the creek where we used to go swimming. But, it looks so small with nothing there.

RK: And, when you were much younger, it was much bigger?

CH: Uh-huh. And when you have to walk it.

RK: Sorry to go back. Did you happen to cut classes when you were in Manzanar?

CH: I don't think so because everybody would know, and besides, going to classes was one way to occupy your time.

RK: Did you take a history class in Manzanar?

CH: History? No, I had civics, I think.

RK: I was just wondering how World War II was taught in that class. Did you think that Japan would win? Or America would win the war?

CH: I don't know. I don't think I put much thought into who was winning.

RK: None of your business. (chuckles)

CH: No, but that time, the atomic bomb, I was really upset with that.

RK: Upcoming reunion, are you going to attend?

CH: Next month?

RK: Next month. I noticed some don't want to because they feel maybe—I should not say. How about you, you feel that you belong to Children's Village?

CH: Uh-huh.

RK: You have both experiences.

CH: The thing is, this up and coming reunion, they say it's the last all-Manzanar reunion. Our graduating class and the two after us started having reunions way back—I forgot what year it was—and the Matsunos went there. That's when I started getting to see

- the Matsunos more. Oh, I think I arrived late, they saw me, and they called me. No, I was in contact with them before. Anyways, we always went to our class reunion, '43 and '44, I think. One year, I invited Sue Kunitomi.
- RK: You were invited?
- CH: I invited as my guest. And she enjoyed it so much, seeing people and stuff like that, so she organized the all-Manzanar reunion. That's how it started. And then, of course, we had the CV reunion. Well, you know, your past is your past, and you don't stay away from a funeral because of bad memories. Even like the Buddhist, after so many years, you have this service. Like his family, they combined, I don't know how many—the last time we got together. But it seems like whenever we're together it's for funerals, you know?
- RK: So, racial prejudice or discrimination was much more harder after World War II?
- CH: I think *now!* *Ima!*
- RK: No?
- CH: Now! Right now, I think it's worse. I think, to me, I think it's worse now than it has ever been my life. It was pretty bad after World War II when the people were coming back. But see, I didn't come back to California. I went to Hawaii, so I missed that bad part.
- RK: Oh, I see.
- CH: But, right now, you know, I think it's bad. Somebody came up to me and said, "Geez, you speak English. Wow. How long have you been in this country?" I looked at them and says, "I was born here. I'm a native Californian."
- RK: Do you have many American friends? American family?
- CH: Um-hm.
- RK: But, mainly Japanese American friends?
- CH: Like in this town, you don't see—there're Japanese American living here, but I have not met one.
- RK: So, naturally, you have American friends?
- CH: The only family I met, I don't think they are here anymore. I think they passed away, but there was one family that lived in the next town. But Japanese, it's is the only one I knew.

RK: By the way, did you know any *hapa* kids at Children's Village?

CH: Yeah.

RK: How about Shonien?

CH: Shonien, I'm not too familiar if they were or not. But yeah, there was in Children's Village. The one that really stood-out was—I felt sorry for him because they used to tease him. He had blond hair, blue eyed; but his last name was Tojo.⁹

RK: Oh, my gosh.

CH: (chuckles) *My gosh, is right.* He got adopted right away, you know.

RK: So, he was treated different from others?

CH: He was teased a lot because he looked different, blond hair and blue-eyed, and, if he said anything, they say, What you talking about, Tojo? You know? Stuff like that. Because everybody knew who Tojo was. So, when he was adopted, I felt happy for him. Some of the people keep in touch with him. He couldn't make it to the reunion last year.

RK: Do you know any children who went to the Children's Village from outside when they lost their parents while you were staying [there]?

CH: While I was there, if new ones came in?

RK: Um-hm.

CH: I don't remember. I don't think they came in.

RK: I think all the time, people are in and out.

CH: Yeah, because there are a lot of faces I don't know there.

RK: Yeah, that's right.

CH: So they must have.

RK: So, since you are so independent, you don't feel much about the wrongness in Children's Village or in camp life?

CH: Like I said, it was pretty much a picnic.

RK: You didn't have any feeling of insecurity in camp life?

⁹ Dennis Tojo Bambauer, O.H. 2335, Center for Oral and Public History

CH: Unh-uh.

RK: How did you perceive the military in the camp?

CH: They didn't bother me. In fact, I got to know some of them and used to talk to them. You weren't supposed to but got to be friends with some of them.

RK: Generally, was Children's Village life or Manzanar life happy life or unhappy life for you?

CH: It wasn't excruciatingly happy, and it wasn't unhappy. It was sort of—

RK: Middle.

CH: Middle, yeah.

[03:33:51]

RK: I appreciate you. Is there anything that you would like to mention before we finish?

CH: I think that about covers it. It was an experience that I don't care to go through again, but I guess you just have to take it as part of life. Especially in this country. (laughs)

RK: What time, right now? Almost five o'clock. So we started from one o'clock

CH: Around 1:10.

RK: So, that was almost four hours. Thank you very much for such a long time. I appreciate it.

END OF INTERVIEW