

NARRATOR: SHIM HIRAOKA

INTERVIEWER: IZUMI TANAGUICH

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SH: This is Shim Hiraoka. I was born May 16, 1915 in Fowler, California. Now my parents both came from Fukuoka, Japan. My father arrived in California about 1904. He landed in San Francisco and from there he moved from San Francisco to San Leandro and then came down the interior part of the valley to Fowler, California. My mother came to the United States in 1911 and by that time my father was in Fowler, California and he was leasing a farm on a share crop basis. And after a year or two he did find twenty acres that he bought; this was open land next to a German family by the name of Winters. Now Alex Winters had a twenty acre piece but his was all developed. My father planted muscat vines, all twenty that he had.

Now while he was working the twenty acres and planting it all by himself he was share cropping this twenty-acre piece, twenty, thirty acre piece in Fowler, California. He would spend his daytime working on the twenty acres or thirty acres that he was leasing and during the early hours or on weekends or at night he would walk over to the twenty acres that he bought and single-handedly, he planted it out. Now you can imagine rows that went maybe two hundred to three hundred feet and, of course, I don't think in those days you could find a string long enough to reach from one end to another so it was haphazard way toward planting and you can imagine he'd start at one end and stretch this string as far as it would go and then as he finished he'd take the string and extend it along clear to the other end. So the rows were pretty much crooked because it started out crooked. But the crookedness was similar in every context that you could look and see.

But after 1912 of course he moved onto the piece of property but I have to tell you that he bought it after the Alien Land Act. He started working on it before the land act came into being in 1913. So when he actually completed the purchase it was after the land act which made him seek the services of a lawyer and he came into Fresno and sought out (inaudible) Neilson who was born and raised in the (inaudible) area and who knew Japanese. And I think at that time Leonard Neilson was about the only one of lawyers that was willing to help the Japanese in one way or another to acquire land. And this was not in violation of the statute because the statute didn't say that a citizen could not own land. So my brother I think was about a year old when the purchase was made so that it was put in his name as a minor. Now the fact that he was a minor caused my father to create a guardianship in the Superior Court of Fresno County. And annually, of course, he had to report to the court as to what expenses he had and what income he had and for years of course as the vines grew there were no such thing as a profit but about the fifth or sixth year I think a small crop would come in and of course he had to declare that.

The worst part he used to tell me was whenever he needed money of course he just couldn't go to the bank and make a loan like other people could. He had to go to the court house, petition the court as to how much money he needed and the court would either approve or disapprove his petition. Well this is the way I think the Isseis had to go through to acquire property after 1913. Now there were a few people in certain areas that were able to buy before 1913 but they were few and far between.

Now 1914 or 1915 he moved onto this property that he purchased, built a house and it wasn't the type of house you could say he had to obtain the services of a designer

or an architect. Of course all they did was go to a lumber yard and get lumber and from there on in they'd pound the nails whenever they had time, put on a roof whenever they had time and it took him two or three years before he completed this house. Of course in those day the conveniences were not there. There was no heating. The heating was all by a wood stove that primarily was used as a cooking facility. Now this was the only heating in it that I experienced growing up until oh I suppose I was four or five years old anyway. Water, there was no such thing as running water. It was a hand pump outside and you can imagine in winter how cold that would get. That water was icy cold. The water table was only about ten or twenty feet. Then there was no such thing as inside plumbing so like everyone else in those days there was an out house and there was no bathroom inside the house. There was what the Japanese would call an ofuro which is a square type of equipment that was build out of redwood and the heating was done by wood. And of course that meant that someone in the family had to acquire enough wood to last all winter. And summer too because that is the only fire that you could have.

We grew up under these conditions even while we were going to school. There was no such things as electric lights, only kerosene lamps. Now the kerosene lamps were kind of hard on the eyes of children when they had to study. I remember all the studying I did was under a kerosene lamp but you tried to do as much studying as you could while you were in school so that you wouldn't have to abide by these drastic conditions that was home.

Now I was number three in the family and I have an older brother by the name of Harry who took over the family passage on the farm and he is still living in Fowler, California. I had a sister who died while she was, I think about four or five years old. I

don't remember her at all. And then there had been five—wait a minute, oh there were nine in the family, seven survived. I have two sisters in Chicago who are married and who left the camp to go to Chicago with their husbands. And I have a younger, the youngest brother is in Seattle, retired now as one of the two Nisei PhD's in the United States in French. He was married to a Japanese woman for a while who was also a PhD so it is a couple that maintains this what would you say, the monopoly of being PhD's in French. I have another brother, two brothers that died, Ross died about four years ago.

And we all went to the Prairie grammar school which is two miles out from where we lived. And to get to this school we would walk the avenues of neighbors instead of going around on the road because the road was the highway and the country roads always took a longer stretch to get to school so we'd cut through these vineyards and one of the, I would say, the richest man in the area lived only forty acres away from us. And in the old days people knew Henry Harry Welch, a retired lawyer that owned a hundred and sixty acres on the corner of Leonard and McCall Avenues and of course he owned some properties in Sanger and some properties in Coalinga.

And as I got to know him growing up he told me about all kinds of things. I think I learned more from this man than from any one other individual in my lifetime. Now this was as a child growing up. And the reason I got to know him very well was as we'd go by his house in the early days he was still married his wife had been a school teacher and Mrs. Welch would know when the report cards came out and she would be standing in front of her driveway and single out, would single out each one of us and ask us if she could see our report card. And somehow she grabbed mine and she said, all right now you stand over here and then she went through all the others and my brother and I were

invited into the home. Now the home was huge. It was what I thought at that time a mansion. Mr. Welsh had two acres around this house. I think the two types of fruit trees of each type of fruit that you could name and find in the county. I don't care what kind of tree it was and that was the first time I ever saw a persimmon tree. Can you imagine a haku-jin man having a persimmon tree? I don't think he ever ate it but it was just there. Pomegranate you named it he had it and he introduced me into eating grapefruit and the way he'd do is he'd say young man there is a gunny sack over there you go and get it and go down this row and about the seventh tree, you'll see some yellow fruit you pick about half a sack and you cart it home.

Well, you didn't argue with Mr. Welsh. You did what he said so I picked a half a sack and then I found out I couldn't lift it. So what did I do, I dragged it and I think I did this all the way from his place to wherever I went to get home and after I got home, of course this gunny sack was kind of filled with dirt too, dragging it on the ground. I showed it to my mother and I told her Mr. Welsh told me to bring this home. And she looked at me and she said "Do you know what those things are?" in Japanese and I said he said it's grapefruit. Well we don't eat grapefruit, they are sour. And you know that made me wonder about it but she wasn't about to take any one of those fruit and cut it up for the family and I ended up eating the whole half a sack and I felt this was something I had to do because Mr. Welsh told me to take it home. And of course I ended up being the only one in the family eating grapefruit thereafter. So I enjoy it and I still have one tree in my backyard and I've had one every time I moved. But Mr. Welsh, having been a retired lawyer, would take me for a ride on Saturdays to Sanger (inaudible) and on the way he would discuss things about (inaudible) and there were things I knew nothing

about, it was totally foreign to me but I remember coming to an intersection, in those days there were no stop signs, but he came to a full stop, and noticed he looked to his right and then looked to his left and then he stuck his neck out to see if anything else was coming and then he put his car in gear and proceeded. And I remember one time I said, Mr. Welsh, I could see there was nothing coming, why did you have to stop? Oh, he says, I guess you don't know that Oliver Wendell Holmes, the Justice of the Supreme Court, has decided in the ruling case that you should stop, look and listen before you proceed. And you know I thought it was a wonderful idea but then the first railroad that I came to I noticed it said, "Stop, look and listen." So I remembered going back to Mr. Welsh and said "Did Justice Holmes say anything about a railroad in other words to stop, look and listen rule? He said well actually that is where the ruling came from the railroad accident. Well I said, "What does that have to do with the street corner?" Well, don't you think it is better that you stop, look and listen to avoid an accident?

Well, I guess so but he was one that instilled in me that there was such a thing as law and I remember he was telling me that he had to pay county property taxes and I said well, why do you have to pay taxes? Well, because I own land. So, well then I thought my father owned land, he must be paying taxes. And I said, well does my father pay taxes? Well I guess so, everybody gets a bill. So then he told me that paying this bill for axes, you will find a little item about schools and he said I am paying partially for your education. I said why should you have to pay things to me and it was the duty of my father to give me an education. And he said no that comes with the property and everyone that owns property must pay taxes. So then I made a (inaudible) search of my father's records and by gosh I found one of those old tax receipts and there it was. And

then I got the idea that it was unfair to make Mr. Welsh pay taxes because he didn't even have any children. Here was a man that owned, I don't know twenty times more property than the ordinary farmer, and here he's paying twenty times more than anyone else who has five, six, seven children but that's the way things are.

And he also taught me about eviction. One Saturday we proceeded to his ranch in Sanger and he was kind of perturbed about something. He didn't converse much that morning. We got to his place, got out of his car went to the house and knocked on the door and there appeared a woman and all you could hear him say is "I want to see George." So the wife went out and got George and George came to the door and "George, come on outside." And I later found out that George was his foreman on that particular farm. He said, "George I don't know how long you've been doing this to me but I found out that you have been padding my labor bill." And he took out a piece of paper and said, "See this thing," it was a Mexican name. "There is no such person living around here." I've investigated every one of these names and I've found about four or five that you've been cheating on. And I suppose in those days I think labor was about a dollar a day maybe or something like that. But if he could put four or five names on every day, that is four or five dollars which is a lot more that even a foreman makes on his salary. And you could imagine how many months this George had been doing this type of thing.

So all I heard was I'm giving you and this was in the morning, I'm giving you until five o'clock to leave this place. I want you and your whole family and everything you've got out of this property by five o'clock. And I thought, gee here is George with three or four kids, where would he go. You know rental property and houses were not

that abundant in those days. You are lucky if you had a house to live in but by gosh, he had George out of there.

IT: What year was that?

SH: Oh this was must have been twenty-five or twenty-six or some place in there and you can imagine the whole idea that if you don't get out, I'm going to file charges against you and he didn't have to say that. He didn't have to but George was out of there. Now another thing I learned from Mr. Welsh was he had property in Coalinga and he was a good friend of Wiley M. Giffen, who was then the state senator. Wiley Giffen is the father or Russell Giffen and apparently the two would challenge each other to things and Wiley Giffen found out that Coalinga was oil country. So now tell me Mr. Welsh, he went out and got a drill and started to drill and Mr. Welsh found that out and so every day he would drive to Coalinga to see how Wiley was going as far as the oil business. Eventually Wiley (inaudible) and at that time of course he lost a lot of money and I guess he was a little in deeper than he wanted to be and here is the next state senator who filed bankruptcy.

Now Mr. Welsh found out that there was oil under his property so he thought he would show Wiley and (inaudible) how to find oil. So he went to drill and I remember him telling me that he got down to something like thirteen thousand feet which was then the World's Record so far as depth of oil is concerned and he was kind of gloating about that and (inaudible) but at least he told me that I did not go bankrupt because I had enough money to cover all my expenses. But this was all before the Depression.

But this man introduced me to quite a few things that I would have never gotten in a Japanese community. And his wife being a school teacher introduced my brother and

me into whole things to eat and she was one of these persons that was somewhat of a nutritionist and always told us that your mind can only accept good food and you must eat the right food and all these kinds of things. But she was a wonderful cook and she would introduce us to baked apples and certain baked goodies that our mothers didn't know anything about and we were able to somehow find our way into her kitchen and she would tell us about the University of California and you boys should study hard and try to get (inaudible) and of course we didn't know what a University was about. Yet later on I think I was in the fourth grade when she died and I felt an attachment for her and then I felt, gee, I had to go to her funeral and the unusual part of the whole thing was the funeral took place at the house. So it was no big deal for me to make any effort to get there because it was on my way to school so rather than go to school that day, I went to the house. Mr. Welsh let me in the house and I was the only youngster there and I attended the funeral and it was unusual in that there were no ministers or preachers. Mr. Welsh conducted the whole affair by himself. He had friends there that knew him and Mrs. Welsh and eventually my father came in and he saw me there and of course he didn't say a word to me and he didn't even sit next to me. And when it was all over, of course I went on to school and I was told that I had to bring a note because I had only attended partially that day. So, I told my father about it and my father couldn't write English well enough to fill out what happened to me so I wrote it out and he signed it and I took this note to school and the teachers couldn't believe that I went to a funeral and why would I want to go to somebody's funeral. So here it was I had to explain to them that I have known them for a long time and they were good to me and all this kind of stuff.

But after her death I think I used to go over and see him every once in a while and one time I remember our school this is getting close to 1927 there was a lack of money and usually we had a softball team and a basketball team but the principal said we couldn't have a team that year because there wasn't any money, money for ball and bats and of course no family had any balls and bats it was just a costly item that you didn't have. So then we asked the principal how we could raise enough money to get a ball and bat. And he said, "Well you can go out and sell magazines." And I thought what kinds of magazines because even in our own family we had no magazines. And then I asked the other kids, did you have magazines in your home? Do you know anybody that reads magazines? No. So then one day as I walked by Mr. Welsh's house I thought I could check if he had magazines. So I went into the house and he told me where the magazines were and I said, "Mr. Welsh, do you need anymore magazines?" Well, he said some of those are about to run out. If you can figure out extending the subscription for me. Well, I didn't know how to go about looking at a magazine to find out when it is expiring or terminating or anything else. So I thought there is Saturday Evening Post, Country Gentleman, Harvard Monthly, you name it, he had it. And of all those magazines I figured he wouldn't know either when his subscriptions were terminating. So I thought well, maybe I'll have to come back next year and so I'll start from the left and go right and sign him up for three magazines every year. So that is what I did. All I had to do was sell him three subscriptions for one year each and we were able to get a ball and bat. But I didn't know that I was supposed to collect the money. So at the school I gave Mr. Guard, he is the principal, I gave him the subscriptions signed by Mr. Welsh and he said, "Did you get the money?" No you didn't tell me to get the money. We need the money.

So here I am back at Mr. Welsh's home and I told him I had to have the money. "Well come on in young man." And he took me into his study and a beautiful desk he had and took out his quill pen, not an ordinary fountain pen, a quill pen. He took out a big pad and sheet of paper and he started scribbling like we do in penmanship. You know always with the up and down and I watched him and thought holy mackerel. That is what we do every day in penmanship. So I said, Mr. Welsh I thought we were only supposed to do that in school. You are still doing that, why? Well young man when you start writing your hands are cold and you are not prepared so what you do is you go through these exercises. Now he started to write his check and it was similar to John Hancock's signature on the Constitution. He gave the check back and gave it to Mr. Guard and the first thing he said was, I think it amounted to about three dollars or something and he said, "Now this is what I call penmanship." My response to Mr. Guard was, "well Mr. Guard I think if all you had to do was write checks, you could probably sign your name like that, too." But I got a guffaw out of him. He never forgot that incident for some reason.

Mr. Guard came to see me once a year until he died. He made a special trip to the office to just come over and talk to me. But every time he came, he would bring up this one incident of penmanship with Mr. Welsh. And the balls and bats we were able to get that year but this is how we were able to have pretty good ball team. And our seventh or eighth grade, we beat just about every country school around. And (inaudible), Highlander, wherever we went Bethel, Sanger, we beat them and because of that Mr. Guard told the team to be at school on a Saturday morning and he'd come down and pick us up and take us to Fresno and show us a good time and go to show and eat a hamburger

and so I don't know how nine guys could get in a Model T Ford but we did and proceeded to Fresno and the first thing he took us to was down on Eight Street near where the underpass that goes to West Fresno I guess it is was it a place called Crown Plunge and it was a public swimming pool and we had to pay to get in. And I looked at that Crown Plunge and I thought I bet you they won't let me in. And I didn't disclose this thing to anybody else but I just felt they aren't going to let me in. So I was the last of the nine guys in line and here was this receptionist there and cash taker and he was counting everybody in until he got to me and he said, "Stop." Then he went to Mr. Guard and I wasn't able to listen and Mr. Guard was angered by it and I remember Mr. Guard saying, now wait a minute, why white? And it was on a QT basis but I couldn't hear but I knew what they were talking about. So then the last I heard with Mr. Guard was if we all can't swim here then none of us are going to be swimming and we left the place. And I kind of felt bad all day and I wished for some reason that I hadn't come along that day. I ruined the day for eight other guys who hoped to swim. To me, I explained that it didn't make any difference. I'll sit down and watch the guys because I can go swimming anytime because, why next to the forty acres was the Fowler Switch canal. And this was a place where it was about six feet deep, the canal was about six feet deep and twenty feet, twenty-five feet across and by the time you got across, that water was so cold you wouldn't come back in. You stayed cool for the rest of the day.

But that is where I learned how to swim and to me, I thought it was a lot cleaner than a public swimming pool anyway. And yet I was denied the swimming and that was I think the first time I felt discrimination. But after the rest of the day I forget what we did. We went to a show. He took us to a show, Wilson Theater and we went and got our

hamburgers and then we proceeded home. But there was one time in my life I wish I hadn't gone, you know.

IT: (inaudible)

SH: Now I graduated from Prairie grammar school in 1928 in seven years, I skipped the third grade and proceeded on to high school. But what I'd like to do is go back and tell you about growing up during my grammar school days. Of course we all had chores in the family. Everyone had to contribute I don't care how old you were, you had to do something. And mine was always having enough wood for my mother to cook with during the winter and the summer and all that and enough wood for the bath and that was how I learned a cord of wood was six by six by four or whatever and each year I had to have at least two and a half or three cords of wood and we usually do this during the summer and wherever there was any shade of any kind. But it was all physical work. I don't care what you had to do, it was physical. And I think that detracted me from wanting to be a farmer more than anything else. I used to find that I loved the chore that I had and as I grew older in high school I had to see that the vines were softened and that meant carrying twenty pounds on your back and pumping this sulfur machine with your hand and it was always where the ground had been worked up and your shoes would go down to your ankles in soft dirt and all this in hundred and twenty degrees and you couldn't do it when it was overcast or whatever it was. But that was one of my chores.

And it was interesting that when I got into law school, Standard Oil opened up a news program and it had to do with farm news in San Francisco and they scheduled at six o'clock in the morning and fifteen minutes I think it was. Well I thought gee whiz I know a little bit about farming maybe I ought to apply. I applied but of course like

everything else in those days, you've got an acknowledgement. I was never interviewed. But a fellow in my law class got the job and of course in those days I think a person announcing fifteen minutes of news over the radio made more money than a law clerk in San Francisco. And the reason I knew this fellow got that job was that on Saturday at the law library he came over and asked me where I was born and I told him in the San Joaquin Valley, and do you know anything about grapes? I said I was just about born under a grapevine and there is nothing about a grape vine that I can't tell you about. So then he said let me show you this and he showed me a letter written by a woman in Stockton and it said, Dear Mr. Pizzini, I have three vines in my backyard and I know I'm supposed to sulfur but I don't know when and how and how much. And he asked me if I knew anything and I said, surely I do. Well he said, "Now wait a minute, you do? How do you know?" So I said it's experience. So I said what does this have to do with whatever we were talking about and he says I got a job with Standard Oil announcing farm news. You've got the job? Yes I did. And well I had applied and I wasn't even acknowledged and how long have you been out on the farm? He said he never was. He was born in San Francisco and lived in San Francisco. I said our country's in trouble and he said why and I said because guys like you become experts. Well anyway, he wanted to know if I would give him the answer and for a moment I was embittered and I told him no I think what you should do is go out and search for your answer. And he told me he scoured around and talked to the county agricultural commissioner and the University of California Extension of Agriculture and all kinds of books (inaudible) and he couldn't find the answer. And I said well that stands to reason and he said why, if you know it must be in a book some place. Oh no, no. You are going to find that in the (inaudible)

that there is a general rule that you have to sulfur and then there are exceptions. And I said you can go and sulfur and the wind blows and you have to go and sulfur again just like if it rains or whatever. Well, I'll be darned. So anyway this is something that came out of a sulfur experience that I had which was a chore of mine.

Be that as it may I went to Selma High School and one of the things I wanted to learn about was the politics in school. No Japanese had any kind of office. The only places you were able to compete in was academics so far as the honor roll was concerned, you could get your name up there and in sports. There is no discrimination there so you took part in whatever you could but I wanted to get into student politics. But it seemed like if you were an Armenian, nobody would nominate you, if you were a Mexican nobody would nominate you, the same with being an orientalm, nobody would nominate you. So finally, I just made up my mind, I'm going to throw my name in and see what happens. Of course I found out. I got two votes the first time around and so, but that did not deter me. Junior year it would be Junior Class President and usually it led to the Student Body President, see. I thought I'd take the chance and the reason was I would like to be something over the student body but as it was, I couldn't get enough votes to get any place or something like that. And I think they elected (inaudible) was the social factor that there is such a thing as Junior-Senior Prom and probably that you are the chairman of it and I think discouraged a lot of people but that didn't deter me and finally my Junior year I did run for vice-president of the student body. And I don't know why or how or anything else but I got elected. I was the first Japanese to be on the student body office.

But that lead me into Rotary and the reason was, the student body president was the quarterback on the football team and when he played in high school and he proceeded to get his leg broken and of course he was hospitalized and as vice-president, I attended rotary in his place and can you imagine during the Depression or right before the Depression where you could go to a hotel. Well on every Wednesday at lunchtime and participate in one of those meetings the Rotarians had you know and I thought, holy mackerel nobody told me that something like this was part of being a student body president but apparently it was. And for four weeks I was able to attend rotary and it was during that period that there was a Chinese doctor in Fresno that came down to Selma Rotary and gave a talk on the Manchurian incident and of course, he dehumanized the Japan Army and that was the first time I heard the rape of Nanking and I was wondering how this fellow practicing in Fresno knew so much about the war. Of course, we all knew what propaganda was at that time and I thought, well he did a pretty good job. And then the Dr. (inaudible), a member of the rotary club, came to me and said Shim, we can't have a controversial matter left undone. In other words we have to have both sides; we have the Chinese side now we need the Japanese side. So he said, you are going to speak for that portion of this controversy. So then I said, I don't know anybody that can get up there and tell you people anything. So you search and find out and get somebody. So I proceeded to search and search and I asked every Issei and I asked them I needed somebody to talk about the Manchurian incident and they all clammed up and I got no place fast. And I asked the Nisei and they didn't know anymore than I did except what you read in the Fresno Bee or something like that.

So here time was pressing and the only thing I could think about is coming into Fresno and going to the Japanese Association and they wouldn't encourage me in any way or discourage me, they just didn't want to talk about it. And then I remember Reverend Imai out of Dinuba came to school and he started asking me what kind of (inaudible) and I said I am trying to find somebody to talk about (inaudible) and he said you have got to be very careful. And these kinds of (inaudible) didn't do much good because I still couldn't find anybody that would speak.

One night I just opened a book and I found out how to get propaganda and gosh you've got to go to the source and the only source I knew was the Council General in San Francisco. So I wrote him a letter and the next thing you know in no time flat I get a huge pile of papers. And in a week or so I'm supposed to digest this whole thing because I couldn't get anyone else. I had to do it on my own. So I looked through the whole thing and I thought well this is what propaganda is all about. Just like this Chinese doctor he must have got his thing from China and everything is supporting what they were and I took it from the worst stand point and I explained to the Rotarians what I did and I couldn't find anybody so I wrote to the council general and this the propaganda what is (inaudible) and put on a thirty minute talk and you know many Rotarians come up and said that was a pretty good job you did. I said, well I'll tell you I found out what propaganda is and I guess what we heard from this doctor was the same thing. But anyway it was my (inaudible) from that experience.

But I got out of high school and was on a couple of basketball championship teams and Selma was a small school about five hundred and we had to play schools like Fresno High, Roosevelt, and Fresno Tech in those days and then we won the football B

class championship and we went to the valley and played Bakersfield and lost there, in 1932 and then graduated in 1932 and didn't know what to do except going to school.

Like I said I didn't want to be a farmer. And I thought of Fresno State but at that time it was just a teacher's college and I knew that I'd never get a job as a teacher so I had to go some place else.

Then I sought out information about UCLA and for twenty-four dollars a semester, you could go. So the thing you do is have a few months supply of money to supply yourself with food and a roof over your head and I thought I could get away with it. But when I was a junior, I was interested in Stanford and of course how do you get to Stanford from here in those days. The only way was through the California Scholarship Federation and in those days, there was a conference at Stanford. So I worked out a deal with the teachers to raise enough money so the four of us students could go to Stanford but (inaudible) and student loans and when I thought about what it would cost and even in those days it was in the thousands, well we are never going to get there. But it introduced me to artichokes because artichokes (inaudible) and the fellow that was with me was also a farmer's son (inaudible). So I said Phil, what is this thing and he said I don't know I was going to ask you. And so well that is a beautiful (inaudible) but how do you eat the thing? Artichoke; never saw one in my life and neither did he. So we asked two girls and they hadn't seen one either. So then the only thing was to wait until Mrs. (inaudible), our advisor, started in on it and of course when she got her artichokes she was thrilled to death. And she says now I love this because I get eat mayonnaise and how do you eat mayonnaise with this thing, you know? So we watched her and actually we took one bite and one leaf off and it didn't satisfy us so we passed our to Mrs. (inaudible)

and she had three or four of them that day, but that was also an experience but it got down to UCLA and I think a couple years before they changed the campus because I was there in Westwood.

But to get there I had to catch a bus out of Selma, Greyhound bus and the only way I could get to UCLA was I had to find some money some place and 1932 was the worst year of the Depression and the valley especially. There wasn't one packing house in operation. Nobody came out to buy or seek the fruit so the only thing we could do was grab a car and 1930 I think it was a Ford ton and a half truck and put an extra radiator on the front of it, welded it on and proceed by picking and packaging and then taking them on to Los Angeles. My brother and I—I guess he was—I just turned seventeen and he was then twenty and got into Los Angeles and of course we didn't know which market to go to. We went to Seventh Street backed in there and put our supplies out and "What do you got?" We got peaches. Oh fifteen cents a box. That is all that box was fifteen cents for one box and times two and that is only something like forty dollars you know. And I said, No you've got to do more than that and no, no, no that is all we can give you. Then commission was something like I don't know if it was fifteen percent then yet but you had to pay commission. And then of course you had to buy boxes and even second hand lug boxes were a nickel. So my brother and I roped and loaded and dumped it there and right away you had better think this thing out. So I said to him let's open the back and go over to Beverly Hills and we went over to Beverly Hills and backed into one of the biggest stores there and went up to see the manager and I said, "Hey, I've got some peaches here, do you want to buy some?" He said, "What do you have and I told him and he said I'll take the whole thing." What will you pay? He said twenty-five cents a box.

I guess that is more than the wholesaler and no commission. He had a big pile of boxes on the side and we asked if we could take those boxes and he said sure you can have all you want. So here we'd bring back five hundred boxes every time we'd go and that's like another twenty-five dollars you got in your pocket.

Well this is what we had to do and we ran out of energy and on Thursday after four trips we were both so sleepy because it took us something like fourteen hours to get over the ridge route into Los Angeles and eight hours to get back. So we stopped over in Tulare and went to sleep and figured we could make it back after a thirty minute nap or so and we fell asleep and we didn't get up until nine o'clock at night. Of course it was too late to make a trip and coming into the yard we saw the fog and in those days in California, you couldn't even telephone home. We got back and the first thing my father said is you got another two hundred and fifty boxes out there and I said well when we get up early in the morning and we'll talk about it and we went to sleep. (inaudible) and got up at five o'clock and he said, "What are you going to do with it?" You can't take it to LA because the market won't be open on the weekend. So, the only thing we could do is enlist everyone in the family and cut them and dry them and so that's what we did. I never knew what happened to the dried fruit until years after and something provoked me to ask my father about it and he said he got seven cents a pound that year for dried fruit. Well it was just nobody figured they could get any money out of dried fruits and so nobody cut any dried fruit but at seven cents a pound and when we figured that out from the standpoint of, it took seven pounds of green fruit to make one pound of dried. And usually Alberta peaches in those days were going for about fifteen dollars a ton, you pick them, haul them, and bag them, seems like at seven cents a pound for dry that is hundred

forty dollars a ton and you take a hundred forty dollars by seven and that is like twenty dollars a ton (Inaudible) so my father must have been pretty happy with dried. In fact he should have gone out and bought everybody's fruit that year and dried them. He would have got rich, I suppose.

But after it got to be, but of course I knew nothing about the workings of the University and nobody explained to me what to do or anything else and I had a difficult time my first year. Being a Japanese student and there was no help and living in Los Angeles in those days and if you were an outsider nobody even catered to you. But I stayed there for three years and then went up to the University of California and that was at the suggestion of the dean who told me that I would have a better chance to get a job if I went up to Cal and graduated from Cal. At Cal I took my courses and got my interview with the dean there and of course when my father asked me why I didn't take my librarianship and I told him I didn't want to be a librarian. And he asked me why I didn't take astronomy. I thought oh boy here we come. And I said dean I guess you don't see what is important I'm a Japanese boy, I've never had the luxury to look up at the sky. I had my eyes to the ground to see which way I was going. So what good would astronomy have done for me? And I knew that he wouldn't certify me in any (Inaudible) so I walked out of there. And that was the year when I think four other Japanese students came up to me and they said they were going to Japan and they wanted me to go with them. But each one of them had to have twelve years of Japanese training. I never did one year because of Mr. Welsh.

One day we were going to Japanese school with an orange pail and all and he was standing in front of his driveway, "Boys, where are you going today?" We told him

Japanese school. Now you just wait right there I'm going to give you a ride. So I thought oh boy we're going to get a ride into town and we don't have to walk today. Two miles and instead of going to town he went back to our home and we took our father and really lectured him and I thought we had a champion on our side and he said you are living in America, you don't need Japanese and they go to school five days a week and they are supposed to learn English and all that stuff. First mistake my father ever made was asking us what we wanted to do. Of course kids being kids we said we didn't want to go to Japanese school. After all we had a champion there that was telling him that this is America. That stopped our Japanese school training. And because of that, of course, I couldn't go to Japan and these other four went. But you know that I (inaudible) in Japanese and it was good for me because there was a Kiyoo Nagao who was a ball player at Cal and he played professional ball but he had to give up his citizenship and drafted by the Army and went into Manchuria and he was lost and missing for something like ten years. Johnny Inaga Hummel, fellow that graduated from Cal, English major, went back to Japan and he was killed in a China town and the other two I don't know what happened to them. But 1962 I was able to talk to Kiyoo Nagao and he said that was the worst thing they did was going to Japan. And the idea was just to make a living you had to go and change your citizenship and fight in the Army and so I said well, in a sense we had to do that too you know. The country that wasn't too much supportive of us and got us in the Army and we were able to work our way out and all that but he said at least you changed conditions here but we never changed a thing.

So this was in essence what happened and when I graduated from Cal in 1936 there was a person with a PhD in poli sci and I always wondered what happened to him

and I found out in sixty-two I guess it was when I went to Japan and I saw him working at the Tokyo fisheries and I went over and talked to him and I told him you wouldn't know me but I know you because I remember you being pointed out as being the doctor of philosophy. And I always wondered if maybe I should do that too and he said don't do that since the University of California didn't certify, wouldn't certify his degree so he wasn't able to get the job and he went to Japan and (inaudible) and started in the fish center and he had to give up his citizenship and he was in Japan and by that time of course, but the unfortunate part of my not being able to get to Japan or even going (inaudible) left me where I am. And I suppose I should be grateful and all that but college was not that interesting to me except for the fact that I did learn about life and it left me with a degree that I couldn't use and I came back and I cleaned peaches and I thought about what I should do. Then I made up my mind well what else can a Poly Sci major do except maybe go into law and that's what I did. After a couple of years I started thinking things out and here again I made a mistake because the Japanese don't need lawyers. They don't go into jails. They pop them out of businesses. They don't need a lawyer to worry about partnerships or corporations or anything like that but I stuck my neck out so far that I felt well there is nothing else I can do I have to keep on going. I pushed off (inaudible) a job which was actually my last year. This was in 1940 and I had a selective service 1B, and that was because of my eyesight. And this buddy I studied with had gotten his 1A and he wanted to stay out of the Army for some time so he mentioned to me about going to community college and found out that the FBI, they had a deal if you go to school for six months they pay you one hundred and fifty dollars a month. That is a lot more than the Army was paying at that time twenty-one dollars I

think a month. So we both went over to there and of course they asked this friend of mine what his selective service status was and he said 1A and they said well we can't (Inaudible) so they didn't take him and then he looks at me says how about you? I said I am 1B and he said, you stay right there. He went back and out came a fellow with a coat and tie on and he said I'd like to talk to you in the back here. So I went back in his office and found out he was Nathaniel J. Piper, Regional Director of the FBI. And he said what grade I was in and I told him and he said we could use guys like you. How about applying? I don't know, you mean you are going to give me a job? He said yeah, that is what I'm telling you. Well what (inaudible)? And he said because you are an attorney and I said well there is a lot of people that are attorneys.

So then why of course my past starts to catch up with me and I thought oh this is the first time I've been offered a job like this. There's got to be more to it than that. So I just told him now wait now. I came with my buddy to find out so I'd like to go back and use the time to think about it and I thought and I thought and I thought and the result was always the same. I could (inaudible) and Japanese community around it you know whatever information about people I suppose and I knew there was a war coming. From the first time a man mentioned that there would be a war in my lifetime was when I was a sophomore at UCLA and I wanted to take upper division ROTC and I made my applications and the major said I don't know where to put you. So I said well wait a minute, you took the corporal under me why can't I go in? Well you have to go into the reserves. (inaudible) so do you think people will take your orders? So I said well in the army I thought the superior person gave the orders and whoever is below had to abide by them. Well no, it isn't that simple. So then he kept telling me to come back and come

back, he hadn't made up his mind by that time. By that time the school year was over and I was left out.

But I remember telling him, look if there is nothing else you can do, would you please write me a letter, write a letter for me and say to whom it may concern and say I applied and you denied me and if there is a war and I said there is going to be a war in my lifetime. Well, let this guy stay out, he says he isn't going to do that. If you can't do this and you can't do that and I said to me it looks like it's all because I'm Japanese. So that's what it turned out to be. But in a sense it opened up UCLA to Japanese upper division ROTC students and by the time I got into the 442nd, we ended up with two officers from UCLA. Mo Yanimura and a fellow by the name of Tanahashi. Tanahashi was the first one, he was a first lieutenant and Mo Yanimura was second lieutenant and you know they were both killed in the 442nd. I came out alive and of course in the 442nd if you were an officer, you were out in front. And this is the reason those guys got killed. But in a sense even this kind of acts works in your favor it looks like to me. But that (inaudible) and were alive I think I'd have gone back and thank him, and not given me the training that I need to become an officer.

But after school was out I went to law school and got my degree in 1941 and that was just before we were told we would have to go to camp. And, however, one of the worst things that happened to me was these farmers come out and wanted to lease their farms to some other people and I had a terrible time figuring the thing out because usually when you have an agreement made people stay here and they can observe what is being done and (inaudible) but here was a situation where the landlord was an absentee type of person. He's in camp and he can't come out to see how the arrangement was.

The problems like when do we get back were one of the terms of the lease. Well, how can you write this thing so that it would be legal and where these people could come back and take over whenever they wanted? But eventually we found the answers and I read my leases and I remember my leases and alien land act leases and (inaudible) and he wrote a report telling me he never saw a farm lease written in I think it was just three pages and concise down to the point where the landlord had no problems whatsoever in enforcing in terms of the lease.

But that being that camp life, of course, to me was a communistic form of living which I detested. The only good thing that happened to me was that I met my wife there and we got married. But I had already signed up for the Army before we got married and I wanted to try to stay out of the situation like that because you could get killed and all that. We thought we'd find our happiness which was possible in those days and the time that we had and so we were married. But the 442nd was really somewhat of a bitter place for me because I was one of the last ones to join the outfit and it was like in camp we were one of the last ones that left California from Sanger for Gila River and by that time, of course, all the jobs were taken and what do you do. In the Army, got to Hattiesburg, Mississippi and of course they sent you to weapons school for six weeks. I passed everything there and in another six weeks I had to go back, in fact I was ordered and I quietly went back and the third success of six weeks was ordered again and I didn't understand that because I passed everything possible. In fact the second time around, the sergeant saw me come and he said, "Hiraoka, what are you doing here?" And I told him, "I don't know, they just told me to come back." He said, "Fine you can take over the school and I'll go down to the PX and go get drunk."

So after this stint of the two success (inaudible) school terms I asked to see the colonel and of course the captain he said just go back and be a good boy and all that stuff and I wanted to see the colonel and of course you don't get to see the colonel. So then I wrote a letter to Washington to the Pentagon and I wished I had kept a copy of that letter because I think it's the best letter I've ever wrote in my life about my whole background. And it came back of course and not having gone through channels and of course they called me in and wanted to court martial me. So then, of course my defense was I was in (inaudible) school and never had (inaudible) and I didn't know what channels were, actually I did know but I made out like I didn't know. They explained to me that my letter should have gone on to the captain, who would approve it and then to the colonel who would approve it and I said no, I don't think that any of you would have ever approved a letter like that. So I had to take my chances; of course, they wanted to court martial so I said fine, I said (Inaudible) captain, you know all I need is your testimony that you wouldn't let me go see the colonel.

So then I waited and waited and nothing ever happened but when I became first sergeant of the company I found out that they put me in a status where I had company (inaudible) which meant if you left the company area you know, you are violating your (inaudible) or whatever. I didn't (inaudible) and they never told me that but I found that out overseas and when I saw that I made sure that the company had nobody on it's list with (inaudible) and I cleared the records so we had a pretty good law-abiding company and no company (inaudible) and no (inaudible).

And after the stint was over I came back and I wanted to—I wanted to go to Tule Lake because all the time I was overseas, I knew there was a lawsuit involved and

because if you were under twenty-one, it was voidable, whatever you did was voidable. And these people who were renouncing and going back to Japan would be able to get out of those deals and I thought if I could get down there. So my wife was working in Philadelphia with the papers there and I went to immigration and naturalization service office to see if I could get a job through there and then transfer to San Francisco some place. Of course it was so close to Christmas, they don't need it. Now they weren't employing anybody so I was limited with what I had and we had to leave Philadelphia and Chiyo's family was in Chicago and we went to Chicago, but the weather at that time in the winter wasn't something I was seeking and it seemed to me that in (Inaudible) the people there was to find rooming houses and businesses like that. I went to see a lawyer and talk to him about it and he was involved in leasing places, subletting it to Japanese, in other words, making money as a landlord, leaser landlord.

IT: I have to change the tape here.

SH: What happened in camp that was of interest to me, one of the first, of course, was the fact that it was this communistic type of living that I detested; yet, you know there was nothing else that you could do except hope that eventually there would be some escape routes out of camp. And I remember when I first got into camp, the first day that I was there, the security head came over and introduced himself and asked me if I were so and so. And I had to admit that I was and he said can I talk to you? And I said sure. He told me that he had reports that I was there to raise a lot of hell. And I could not definitely understand where he got all this information but he said it's a reliable report. He wouldn't tell me what it was and where he got this information but I told him look, I just got here and I don't like the place and I'd like for you to help me get the heck out of here.

This would be my first wish. But he gave me a warning and said don't you try anything here and all this. And I said, well why should I bother you now. So like I said if you'll help me get out of here, I'll be very grateful.

Eventually, of course I had to find something to do and the farming operation was opening up and that was the only thing that was left. And I remember I got my brother and a couple of his farmer friends and we took over a hundred and sixty acres and we each became a forty acre farmer. Of course, that produced nineteen dollars a month. And what I wanted to do was find out how to raise lettuce of all things. And the reason was that (inaudible) Guadelupe were the lettuce growers and these seeds were in our camp. Well my job was to find out three good Isseis that I could depend up on and make them the farmers and what I wanted to do was limit them to the amount of work they had to do because I knew that the Issei did not go into camp with the idea of working. And they weren't going to be working and I did find three and I asked them if they would cooperate with me and run this farm and I told them I wanted one to be the planter, one the irrigator, and one to finish off the harvesting and so forth. And I told them that what I would do was put them on a half-day basis and still get them nineteen dollars a month. Now this was contrary to all the rules and regulations you know. Yet, I was able to pull it off and this was the only way that they would work. That they would work a half a day and take their shower and then rest the rest of the day and I thought they were entitled to it, because after all, they were what you would call experts in that business. So they would have to have some kind of advantages. Eventually the project, agricultural project director found out about it and he approached me with it and said what I was doing was all wrong. Well, I said "well if it is," I said "I quit and these guys are going to quit with

me because after all, you can't find people like this and you go outside and you can't find people so you have to go along and give them the best terms that suits them. And so as long as the crop is being made what is the difference."

Well, it turned out that we got a good crop of lettuce and as they were heading, I didn't know what to do with it because Japanese eat only a limited amount of lettuce. And you can't put those on railroad cars without ice and send them to other camps. Turnips and carrots maybe you could, but not lettuce. So I went to the project director and asked him if he wanted to pay me wholesale market and maybe we could work out a deal here, you know and create a fund for some of these people that leave the camp and start a fund and that whole kind of business and he thought it was a good idea. In fact, he thought the way the farm project was going; maybe the whole camp could become independent.

So he went to see and he came back and called me in and reported to me that he tried to make a deal with those fellows out there in Phoenix and they wouldn't think of it. They said the Japs would probably put strychnine on them and you know poison the lettuce and put that out to us so they wouldn't go out there and participate in any kind of deal like that. So we lost just about the whole crop outside of what the camp people would eat but I never saw lettuce or turnips or carrots that came out like they did in Gila. Eventually I gave that up because the project law office was opened and in came (inaudible) James Hendrix Terry from New York and James Hendrix Terry was not an ordinary lawyer. He was a descendant of a family that had been in law for two generations before. In fact his father represented six or seven of the major railroads in the eastern part of the United States and when he went to court and I suppose these are all

Federal court procedures, he went in striped pants and morning coat and this kind of thing that you don't see today anymore. But James Hendrix Terry had a physical ailment and every winter he would catch pneumonia so he made up his mind to go out to Arizona and look for a job with the war relocation authority and he became the project director, legal director in Gila. And one of his first jobs was to entice me into working with him. And I told him no, no I didn't come in here to practice law and I said I don't know if you have any folks or anything to go on and I said you know guessing and things will only get us into a lot of trouble. And at that time there were some physical beatings where certain Japanese who took certain jobs relating to, well whatever it was, and telling the camp people what was going to happen and according to the Army director, camp directors that ended up in a beating because the war relocation authority didn't provide whatever the director said they would and this is the only way that the campees had to get even with whatever went on in camp.

So I begged off and he said well what I can do is cut you off on the farm group and all that, and it's the same kinds of threats I've always had. So I said okay, I'll come to work for you and I didn't know Terry too well before that except that he was the project lawyer. Well, the first day I went to go to work I hung up my hat and sat down and I saw a pile of papers on the desk. And I thought holy mackerel if I have to deal with OPA and regulations involved in that. And what I did was got up and got my hat and walked out and didn't come back for the rest of the day. Of course I was told I was supposed to make out a report as to what procedures I was supposed to take regarding all these papers and turn them in and I didn't do that either.

The next morning he was waiting at the door for me and when I got there he said, “Where is my report?” Well I said, “I haven’t got any but I want to ask you, what does a lawyer make in New York City?” That is where he came from. And seriously he looked at me and said, “Seven hundred and fifty dollars a month.” And I never heard of salaries like that but of course, he’s from New York. And what I heard in San Francisco after I got out and well my senior year I looked around to see if I could find a job here and the best job you could find was about a hundred and fifty dollars you know. So I said, “Seven hundred and fifty dollars?” Well that gave me just enough time to walk into this office, sit down, get up and walk out for nineteen dollars a month. And of course he laughed about that and said look, I need help. So he said I need help and of course I caved in and said I guess I had better help him.

It was an office with no law books. We were still interpreting California Law. One of the cases I remember was that of a Long Beach fisherman who had—he was a Nisei and he bought this boat for something like twenty-five thousand dollars and he had netting, nets worth something like ten thousand dollars which was paid for. He had a contract with one of those Long Beach canneries and it seemed that the cannery provided him with the mortgage and lent him the money to buy the boat and of course, any fish that he caught, he had to give to the cannery; in other words, it was one of these captive kind of situations. Well, he had painted his boat before he left Long Beach to come into camp. And this I think was in February or something like that and he paid four thousand dollars to the cannery for this paint job and the cannery was to, I guess, lease the boat out for him to some other person and use the rent to make the payment of the mortgage. And that went along for a year and about a year later he gets another letter from the

cannery saying that the first paint job wasn't very good so he has to repaint the job. And he didn't have four thousand dollars so he wanted to know what to do. I said you are a Nisei, how did you get into this kind of situation? Well, he said I'm not the only one. There is a lot of Long Beach, San Pedro fisherman that had this company lend them the money. Even are Issei. Oh, no, no we had Isseis' names as the owner but it was our boat. We kept all the money so I said do you know a lot of them? He said oh yeah. I know all of them, even down to San Diego. I know all those guys, too, and I can name you the boat and everything else. So I said okay let me think this thing out. And I thought it out and I thought I had the federal government whipped on this kind of, you know, and the law was that Isseis were prohibited from owning boats on the basis of a ten thousand dollar fine and ten years in jail or both. So I told him you know there is a fine for this thing and he said I know but I don't have ten thousand dollars, see. And then he said, jail, we're in jail now. So I said okay, you gave me an idea.

So I knew I could not write a letter through the project so what I did was the day that James Hendrix Terry left the office for a whole day, I wrote my own letter on WRA Camp stationary and I sent it out to the proper office in Long Beach it was. I think it was the customs and lo and behold in about a week, all hell broke loose. Because a telephone call came into the camp and James Hendrix Terry took the call and he didn't know a thing about this. And he found out that I was the guy that signed my name to the letter and all that so he came in and he gave me a talking to that I'll never forget in front of everybody. So then it's your case and you did this so you sleep with it and you get this office out without any kind of damage. And so all I could say was okay, okay. I didn't

name any names so who are they going to go after. When they come to me, I'm going to tell them I made a mistake. I didn't know what I was talking about.

Eventually two fellows showed up, young fellows, and they wanted to talk to me so I said, wait a minute now. If it's this case, I said, we are not going to talk about it. What do you mean? Well, I said I mentioned that there was a Nisei here and they said, Yeah, that is what we are looking for. I said, "Well there is a ten thousand dollar fine or ten years in jail or both and I said I can't do it. That's why I never mentioned any names. I wanted to see what you fellows would do." Look, what are you looking for? I said in unity, then maybe we will talk. In unity, we're not going to put this guy in jail. I'll tell you what we'll do. All the names he gives us, the names of the boat and we'll go and get them and confiscate them and sell them. And whatever the proceeds are, we'll give this guy of yours ten percent. So, I thought gee whiz if they are all twenty-five thousand boats you know and that is twenty-five hundred dollars this guy could get so I said, "Okay, I'll tell you what. You guys stay here and I'll go and talk to the fellow." So I went over and looked him up and he said oh I could be a rich man. So I said, "Do you want to do it then?" "Oh sure"

So I made the arrangements the next morning and these guys come in and asked him all the questions and in between had him write out all the names of the boats and where they are located and so forth and what the government was wanting to do is go after this cannery and who was actually violating the law by lending the money and so forth, permitting the Isseis to own all these boats. I never knew whatever happened because after that I volunteered in the Army and was gone.

But in 1966 or so sixty-six, I went down to Tucson and looked up the old project legal director and I asked him about it and of course he didn't remember so I still don't know. I have no records of this guy's name or anything. I always wondered what happened to him because he always said you know it's the first law office I went to and there was no books. And I said yeah, we're taking all kinds of chances you know, (inaudible) everything. He said, I'll tell you if I get my money I'll buy whatever law books you guys need. And I don't know if that ever occurred or happened. But that was one of the bigger type of cases in Gila. But there was a murder that I was involved in but mostly in choosing an attorney to defend this guy.

But one thing about James Hendrix Terry is he told me that I should come to Arizona after the war and it would be the fastest growing state in the union. And I always wondered how he would know this. And I found out from James Hendrix Terry that he was a member of the society of four hundred families in the east and when I went to his barracks, I saw this book and it was a pretty thick book (inaudible) book and it looked like some university book and just had the number "400" on it, and the only thing I could do was associate it with that society. And I asked him if he was a member of that and he laughed about it and said it wasn't my doing, it was my father's doing. But it had the four hundred elite families and each page was given to a family you know and everything in there that you need to know about this particular family. But with acquaintances he had they would know because it would be the ones that would invite their friends down for the winter in Arizona and once you get out of New York in the winter and go down to Arizona I would think of course they are thinking I have to buy a house here and come down every winter.

And that's what started Scottsdale and all these places I suppose. I don't know. But in sixty-six he was still there and he was practicing but I never did go to Arizona because I told him I was born and raised around Fresno and I said it's hot enough and can almost compare to Arizona but at least in Fresno you don't have rattle snakes crawling up your front door you know and this kind of thing. So I said no I don't think I want to come to Arizona.

But that was about it in camp and I did have this little incident where I volunteered and the next morning I had four fellows coming toward me while I was going to the mess hall and it seemed like all the people were going one way to the mess hall to eat breakfast. But here were four fellows coming toward, coming the other way. And they seemed to have a gaze on me so the first thing I thought about is oh boy, I guess they are going to ask me about volunteering and sure enough at that time there was a little dissension in camp about the fact that the Army was coming in and all that. And so here they wanted to file a suit and cornered me and what I mentioned is he was block manager and mentioned about the fact that I volunteered and he wanted to know if that was true and I said I did. The question was why? And I said why would you fellows be I interested because after all this is the body that is going to get shot at not you guys. But their response was the question that don't you know you are a second class citizen. And I said so that's what's bothering you guys. So I said I'll tell you what. If you tell me whether you guys were going to Japan or were thinking about it. They said they were thinking about it and I said I can't go because I didn't have any Japanese School training and I said look if you are thinking of going, don't do it. Do it when the war is over. And of course the guys wanted to know why and I said look, Japan has been in a war ever

since Manchuria, and here we just got in and we are rationing. What do you think Japan is doing? I said if you go back there you are going to go and look up some relatives and have a bowl of rice and that's it. Now with you people are approaching them, do you think they are going to be happy sharing that bowl of rice with you guys? I don't think so. And I said the sad part of it is I don't think Japan can ever win this war with us. It is going to be tanks, airplanes, submarines like I've always said and so eventually I'm hoping that if we win, the country will look at us a little different. That is why I'm going in. And if they don't of course I'm going to have a big problem and find some place else to go to. And so I'm going to leave it on that basis.

And you know, I looked for these four guys and have never found them and I would like to know whatever happened to them. I suppose I'm pretty well assured they all went to Japan and they figured, I don't know. But after the war was over, I did get presidential unit citation in Italy and on our last push there. It seemed that every time there were a bunch of guys going home with points or whatever, it seemed like a shell would come in and it wasn't one of these small cannon shells, it was one of these railroad artillery shells and we couldn't figure out where that shell was coming. And one day we almost got killed in Carrera and that bothered me that it was a wonder that the American soldiers couldn't find out where it was coming from. But once we were up on the hill, I thought I would spend my time looking out that way with binoculars and see where it was coming from. And sure enough, there is this place called Esperia (??) and a big body of water, a lake and at the other end is a hill and here is a hill of white blind and (inaudible) couldn't see the hill and yet as I watched it I noticed a door opening and a dark spot would show on the hill and then a gun would come out and shoot and the fire power you

would see and then back it goes. It goes down into the door and it's totally white again. Then there is another door and that would open up and two shells would come in every time and I thought that is where that thing is coming from.

So we had a good time trying to get the artillery people in range and their shells wouldn't reach so we had to call on the Air Corps and go over there and we watched a demolition that you wouldn't believe you know. There was a hill there but after they were all through there was nothing left of that hill. And because of that, of course the unit got a citation and I was able to participate and also got a Bronze Star out of the army but I didn't have a very happy time in the Army. I was sort of a sixth wheel in a four wheeled vehicle, it seemed like and about all I could do was find what each individual of any rank did and see how difficult his job was. But before I went home and turned into, I substituted for the mess sergeant and I didn't even know how to cook. And I had to set up an officer's mess and that was when I had no cooks or extra cooks or anything else and the only thing I could do was go to the closest German compound and get the best cooks they had and bakers and got them into do the cooking for the officers. Of course we had a pretty good deal there because we had a baker from Germany that he was taught how to bake in France and if you wanted French pastries, he would have them for you.

And I learned how to be the supply sergeant and I knew what the first sergeant had to do back when I became one and I told the captain so long as you tell me where you are if the colonel wants to see you, I'll run this outfit for you. And I was able to get along very well with the officers and they let me do just about whatever I wanted to do and in fact they told me I could use (inaudible). So the only time I got to see my captain was in case the colonel came in.

But I left with a bunch as the last group that went into Hattiesburg, Mississippi. And I came back and took my discharge in Philadelphia. And then eventually I came back because my family was having a difficult time in getting a tractor. And the way my brother put it was, only veterans were permitted to buy tractors but he didn't tell me how many veterans had already filed applications for tractors, and when I came down, I found out I was about fifty something on the list and they were only getting about four or five a month and so that didn't do me too well. But I had one of the buddies who was discharged at the same time in Lovelock, Nevada and I called him and asked him if he saw any tractors being sold. And he said he just went to Winnemucca and he saw they were unloading a car of four tractors and that's what (inaudible) and I told him hey can you go back and tell them to hold the tractors here and I'll show up tomorrow morning and make a deal with them. So he did that for me and we went to Winnemucca and of course very few people knew about bills of lading, well I had that in law school so I knew I didn't have to have any money. The big problem was to have the title. If you have a title on the railroad car and it bangs up, well that's your problem you know.

So these are all put on bills of lading where this distributor in Winnemucca had them insured to Fowler and that's how my brother got his tractor and we share the other three where we wanted to. (inaudible) conversation about anything and his position was he was an older brother and you do this and that's about it. But he—when I look back and it was always my position to say well if you go to school well I guess I'll have to stay home. If you don't go to school of course then you have to stay home and I have to get out because forty acres isn't enough for the two of us. And that's what left us in our position where I had to take off in 1932, the first year of the Depression. He operated the

farm and it's a funny thing how nature gets itself involved in—in the husbandry side of agriculture.

He had a tree and off of this tree, there is a spore and I think he had at least two of three of those instances and a spore means it's a fruit that is totally different than the tree itself. And he found this spore that produced every year with very sweet type of peaches but after three or four years of testing, he found out that they weren't—they weren't marketable. In other words if you waited until it got to a certain color, the thing would go to pieces in no time flat. It was a wonderful eating peach but it was a backyard peach. Now I don't know what happened to the other two but he had another one that I suppose he made a few bucks on. And that is my range of the nursery, you make the trees and they sell them for you. And then because of that I got to know this fellow that protected the nectarines out at the (inaudible) and from him I found out how to approach the patent for them and the new fruit.

And one day a Nisei came to see me from Lindsay and he had been in Utah during the war years and he said he perfected a pear that would do well in the market and he wanted to patent it. So I told him tell you what, if you go along with me where we are not pressed for time, I'd do it in a very reasonable way and let's see what we can do. So, we did it and of course we didn't quite get it patented because we applied for I forget what the words they used, but you find out if there is anything else that has been patented before that is somewhat like it and they deny your patent. And it seemed like way back in the 1860's or something, a Chinese had tried to patent the same type of fruit, a pear and he called it an Asian pear. And no matter how you looked at the flowers, the fruit, the leaves whatever the sign of the tree you know it was similar in every aspect. So of

course this fellow wasn't given a patent but he did give me a tree and I still have it in the back yard. That is one of the first trees I guess in this area but it turned out it was like this twentieth century Asian pear that you find in markets today.

What's interesting is for me and I have a few was that one of the first worker's compensation cases here in Fresno. And it happened the Wasaka family in Reedley and this Mrs. Wasaka, like most Issei women after the war, labored in the fields and I guess she was leaning or doing something on the ladder where the ladder collapsed and she fell and broke her back. She was disabled forever and since that time and at that time farmers had an out a little with worker's compensation and it wasn't mandatory that you carried that insurance. If you didn't make a certain amount of money I think it was three thousand dollars a year or something like that, you could avoid taking out insurance and then you were put into this position of arguing that it was her fault, negligence and that's it. So here, this woman was hurt and unable to move and the only thing I could do is file a workman's compensation case and I was hoping that this guy made more than three thousand dollars.

I filed the petition and who appears for the defendant but Ray Carter. And Ray Carter at that time was known as the top trial lawyer in this area and of course I didn't know that. And I came in to see him and of course in those days it was a little bit different. The old timers never gave a youngster any help at all. What they did is they told you, you had to go through all the motions and grit your teeth once in a while and then you will find out what to do and all this. So he says young man, you haven't got a Chinaman's chance, not with me. So I said, oh I filed a petition what am I going to do? I can't back out now so I guess I'll have to see you at the hearing. We had a hearing and of

course they had to introduce the income tax returns because the idea was this three thousand dollar limit. Of course the original income tax return showed that he had a little over three thousand dollars. But of course with Ray Carter they changed this return and modified it to the point to where it was less than three thousand. So they tried to increase that and all I knew was how to object to the thing and I asked the referee if I could question this guy and he permitted me. And of course I knew how the farmers went around and giving their records to the income tax preparers in those times you know and you just put it on a sheet of paper and said, here this is what I made. This is all the expenses and usually it was always in round figures anyway.

So I stressed the fact that of course they had the tax preparer there. I went through the motions and this guy approached and how this fellow prepared the taxes and all that and that is the way he did it. And you had no reason to ask him if this was right or wrong or whether it substantiated or anything and what he did I had no case anyway. But their excuse was they forgot a couple items on the expense side and this made the difference. Well the referee sided with me and held them accountable. Well, the problem was how much and the guy wasn't a big farmer and he just bought his place about three years before that and so he didn't have a lot of money and he had a big mortgage. And it was one of those I guess cases where you look at it and wonder is there anything like justice that comes out of something like this. Here is a woman that is bed ridden for the rest of her life and there is not enough money to even pay her rent even if you took the land and everything else there wouldn't be much of anything. So, after the judgment was rendered Ray Carter came to see me and he says I'm going to appeal. And I said, oh that is how you threaten guys, you know. You want me to back off well it's

going to cost your man some money. And this kind of thing and I knew nothing about appeals and this was one of my first cases but it got me to the point where I got a judgment. So I said well Mr. Carter you know how to do these things and maybe I'll get some knowledge out of this and you do what you are forced to do and then I'll find out what I'm supposed to do.

Of course he did appeal and finally we sat down and he made the best offer he could and we had to take it. But one of the situations where I wish he would have been insured and Mrs. Wasaka would have been in a better position. But I've been up against the best and I got to be friends with him in the end. And one thing I've always found out was that there were judges and judges. And the one thing I found out is that most of the judges wore a ring like this (inaudible). And I always wonder why, I go to Tulare County and I see this ring and I got to this place and I see this ring and finally I find out the fact that they are Masons so I found out about Masons and I found out well I need some help you know to equalize things and I thought maybe I should try and become a Mason. The only thing they ask is that you believe in a God and what does that mean. In fact, in the end I even had to judicate the fact that a fellow being a Buddhist could believe in God because there are how many Gods in this world is a God and I was permitted to join.

But I became a Mason and found out that in Fresno County if you were Chinese, Armenian, Japanese or whatever, they won't let you join here. It was like the old exchange club you know. So they said, you had to go some place else and join there and of course then they would let you in down here. No, I said I don't see why I have to go over like these Chinese and go all the way up to San Francisco to join the Chinese Mason's club and then get transferred and I said no, I live here and if I can't get in here, I

don't want to join. So then somebody told me to go to Selma. My brother became a Mason in Selma. And I said no, I don't live there, I don't see why I have to go to Selma. So then, it so happened that I talked to one of the judges and he said do you really want to be one and I said yeah. So then he got me to apply to the Ponderosa Lodge and there were four judges that became what you call supporters or whatever on my application and that's the reason I got in because that is one of the ways because these people that judge these things or determine these things wouldn't want to go you know against four judges.

But I became a Mason and I don't know if it's helped me in my practice but I do like used to let the judges see the fact that I did have a ring and they'd always want to know how I joined and all this. But I was asked to join the Exchange Club and I found out they had a charter that was against Orientals. And most of these clubs, Sunnyside Country Club and whatever, and they were all against Orientals and you couldn't join. And I did wait around until Rotary started on the west side and joined the Rotary Club and became president of the club and I (inaudible) oh I guess, ten or twelve years ago.

But other than that raising the kids and got them all through college and got three grandkids. The older one is getting out of Michigan this April. We have to go to his graduation and all of what I've been through is something that and I look for different things in life and always thought about people. Now as much as I've been discriminated against and I guess the reason I know about discrimination is I stuck my neck out. And when you were told you were a Jap and you were this and whatever. That never embittered me because one time when I was coming home from UCLA. I wanted to come home from UCLA during Christmas vacation. I had to go to west LA and down to Beverly, no it was West Hollywood then which is the closest station and I get there and I

reach for my wallet and I changed my trousers and I forgot to change it and put my wallet in the pants I was wearing. And here I didn't have enough money to get back to West LA. So the only thing I could do was go up to this fellow that was selling tickets and he was all by himself no one else in the place and I told him my problem and he looked at me and said, "What are you doing here anyway?" I said I'm going to UCLA and he knew about when the semesters were over and I said, Mr. Cordone that I was right and I was telling him I wanted to go and see my family and come back and take my exams. And he said, "Okay, tell you what. I'll pay for your ticket, but when you come back you stop here okay?" So I knew what he was telling me and I was grateful because I didn't have to go back. But he bought me a ticket. And it wasn't much over a dollar and a quarter I suppose but it you start to figure out a dollar and a quarter in those days was a dollar and a quarter and here is a guy I never knew who saw my plight and bought me a ticket. (inaudible) well when I got back in two weeks, I went up to the window and he looks at me and says to me where do you want to go? I said, I'm returning, you don't remember me? And then he thought and he said, for crying out loud I never thought you'd ever show up. And I said you lent me money knowing, figuring that I wouldn't show? Yeah, so I paid him back and I said look, you know, I wouldn't have been able to get back home. I'd have to walk all the way to West LA just to get my wallet.

I've run into situations like that so you know, it just takes one guy to bring back your faith in mankind. And I've seen the other side of it too. I came home with a black fellow who had sergeant's rating and we were in the same little bunks on this carrier. And for four mornings I didn't see him go down to the shower. I saw him go to the mess hall and eat his breakfast and come back and he was always in his bunk. So I asked him,

hey, Gutso, he said yeah, you got a towel? He said yeah, then why in the hell don't you go and take a shower, you are starting to smell. And his answer was I can't. What do you mean you can't, I see you walking down to the mess. And that's, you know, the farthest room down the hall. So I said maybe I thought you didn't have any soap or something and he said, no, no. That was when out of every pocket come bills, rolls of bills and when I asked him how he got it, I was expecting him to tell me that he gambled and all that. He told me the truth. He was with quartermasters driving a truck and these were trucks with rations in it and he made, he prearranged with battalions that he would side-swipe a hill and leave the truck there with the keys in it and after, he sold the trucks for five thousand dollars each. He had about twenty-five thousand dollars on him and you know the only thing that irritated me and made me so mad. I got so mad that I told him if I had my M-1, I think I'd shoot him right there and he wanted to know why. I said five thousand dollars a truck, it cost more than that but I said what I'm mad at are the rations that you sold. Those are rations we were supposed to get and we were short ended two or three times wondering where our rations were.

Well, instances like that also happened and of course it's nothing unusual or extraordinary but you know it's just that fate does things to you.

IT: Now (inaudible)?

SH: Now I practiced law since, I guess I think it was January 1946 and that I looked around for an office and before that I tried to get a job with one of the state and federal and county offices, of course they took my name and number and all that but I never did hear anything from them. So I always felt that this idea of discrimination still exists but after I got back, I remember taking time to make an effort to let the county supervisor know that

we were back but it had to be either, we had to take part in some politics before we could do that. It was the same group of people that were running the county that were there in 1942 and 1943 when we had to leave for camp. Only one person I think out of Clovis felt a little ashamed of the fact that we were evacuated and he was still on the board but he was the only one. But in due time, I joined the American Legion and they made an effort to get the citizenship for our parents and of course, we made a move with the idea that if we could get just the parents of veterans citizenship then the rest of the Japanese would be able to fall into line and get it because of the protection clause. At that time I think there were about seventy-five percent of the Japanese families that had somebody in the service.

But what happened was it got through local and regional and the state bodies and then went to Miami and I think where the national convention was held. And we were told not to show up at any of those conventions because there may be people that disliked our appearance and so forth. So they would handle it on their own. So when it came to Miami of all people that showed up to object to the passage of a resolution by the American Legion was Mike Masoka and I knew Mike pretty well in the army. I used to see him all the time and in fact we used to argue about a lot of things. Mike showed up in Miami and he said the JACL was supporting a bill for the naturalization of all Japanese and of course the legion couldn't do that because it was a veteran's organization. And yet when they decided what to do, they felt that if there was any group it was to include all of them and that would include the Vet's parents too and they backed off and it became a total JACL problem. It took a couple of years after that I think before any kind of resolution was made into law in Washington D.C. What I was thinking where there is

an easy way of doing it where there is no cost to anybody and the Legion happened to be one of the first enemies that we had and history I think is (Inaudible) and with the records being against Japanese in Washington D.C. but we've broken down that feeling by joining the local American Legion and doing what we had to and they spread out to these other organizations and even the VFW which would not permit any Japanese to join any existing organizations and would segregate the groups and now realize what they had done was wrong, too.

But I spent quite a bit of time and got involved in a restricted kind of case where even on the southwest side there was an area where a Japanese family bought a house and in the deed was a restriction against Japanese living in that area. Of course I was very fortunate that there was a case, I think out of Minnesota about that time, which was to be heard by the Supreme Court of the United States so I was able to convince the court that why should we spend our money to proceed with this thing when they are going to decide the whole thing anyway. Eventually, the restrictive covenants was thrown out and these people were able to go live in that house, I also got involved with the Peruvian Japanese about which I knew nothing about and at that time I think there were very people that knew anything about the Peruvian problem. And I was called by Wayne Collins, a San Francisco attorney, to go down to Los Angeles for him and all he told me was there were twenty some odd people that were ordered to return to Japan and you see what you can do for them. I wasn't told they were Peruvian or anything else. I went down there and he told me it was going to be a one-day deal. So I went and when I got down there, they told me they were going to question every one of them and this is a case of twenty some odd people so they could only handle about three or four a day. And this meant that I

was going to be down there in Los Angeles for a whole week which meant I had to stay in a hotel and eat three meals a day on my own and I said, no, no, no I can't afford that. And what I said is, I would like to continue this thing because when I heard about them being from Peru, I couldn't figure out how they got here. So I said, I'm going to need time and of course there was one elderly gentleman that explained everything to me. And we thought we had a pretty bad situation being sent to camp and all but I thought these people were really brave so I told them I'd do the best I could and what I could do beyond that of course I said I have come out of the Army to practice law and I can't even bankroll anything like this.

But I told the Immigration Service that I was going to file a lawsuit for the paupers which would cost me nothing and it did give me a gateway to ask for some money to get to Washington D. C. to find out how these people got here and I think I'd find the State Department in cahoots with the Peruvian government and to wrap up what these people said they were in the United States for future exchange prisoners. And I just mentioned that and the next thing you know they ordered their stay in Los Angeles and their order was they could stay. But that didn't solve the problem but that was as far I as I could go. But I knew about the Peruvian situation before a lot of other people did and I just wondered what happened to them and I don't know if I felt that they would come into this redress proposition but I felt there was more the government could have done to right them of all the damages that they were entitled to. But in a way the United States was a co-conspirator in the whole thing but you've got to blame the Peruvians for something like that. And then at Rotary International meetings I would look up

Peruvians, especially foreigners, to find out whatever I could from them but those people kind of look down on Japanese too, especially in those days.

But in 1993 I was in court one day and here the court clerk was telling me what papers I had to have filed and all that and when it came to that when the clerk court has to tell me then I quit because you don't have to be in going to school and graduate and get your certificate and have some lowly clerk tell you how to run your business. So in 1993 when December 31st came around I just folded up tent and let the world go on it's way.

And I've enjoyed retirement because nobody tells me I have to do anything. All my life it seems I was always on a schedule and always had to do things and here now nobody tells me what to do.

IT: Okay, that's true.

SH: The town the size of Del Rey, usually the listener will say where is it located? And about all one can say today is that Del Rey is a little town that is east of Fresno about twelve miles away. At one time, Del Rey was a booming town. Presently, I doubt if there is any Japanese families living there but in speaking about Del Rey we have to go back in time until after WWI. (tape goes blank and restarts again at this point) came in and they had three packing houses that bought and shipped fresh fruit. I don't remember any raisin packing houses at that time put presently I think there is one operating in Del Rey. But after WWI, the Japanese in the area saw their land values skyrocket so most of them either expanded and in expanding they gave up the idea of ever returning to Japan. Now they had before WWI, three different I would say areas of businesses that the Japanese conducted in the area. The farmers either owned their land or they were tenants or you found a few foreman of the larger ranches. And then there were those that lived in town

usually running some kind of a business and then there were very few laborers as I can remember. The laboring class of people were the Mexicans at that time. And after WWI because of the blooming prices, the Japanese expanded in Del Rey and by the twenties, they built a new section of buildings that ran a half block north and south and a half block east and west in the Japanese section. (inaudible) and it had its boardwalk and its shabby looking stores. But basically it was later determined that most of the area was used for gambling purposes.

Now in the eastern section was the white part of town. Now in the white part of town of course that was where it first developed. They had a hotel and they had an ice cream parlor and of course the bank, the blacksmith where the farmers used to congregate every spring to get their farm shears and disc blades sharpened. And then they had a hardware store, of course the grocery store, the library and the pharmacy and as I always remembered, there was doctor (inaudible) the dentist, and a doctor Pasley who was the MD in the area. Del Rey had a library at that time and it was a place where it seemed that most of the needs of a family living in the outskirts could go and be sufficiently satisfied with whatever they had to get what they needed.

Now it came to the point where the things (inaudible) and then of course what happened before the Depression is that Chinatown burned. Chinatown burned and at that time there were rumors that it was set on fire by people because there was some allegation of gambling going on in the area conducted by the Chinese and I think it was sort of confirmed after the fire when all these shacks burned down and we saw nothing but tunnels that were built underneath these buildings and it always seemed when the

sheriffs raided the area why the Chinese had a place to disappear through a tunnel and get along on the other side of town.

But going into Del Rey at that time, well dad would see the sheriff's car parked in the Chinatown district and he always wondered why there always had to be a sheriff because Del Rey had a constable and they also had a justice of the peace but it seemed that the gambling didn't affect most people, it affected these fly by night operators that came in or maybe some of the laboring classes that were there during the harvest season but the usual residents had very little to do with the gambling section. But when the Japanese built this half block north and south and east and west buildings they built in the middle of it, a hotel. Now it was amazing that in a little town like Del Rey, the Japanese had their own hotel. It was operated by a Japanese family by the name of Muira. And they also had a chop suey house run by a family of Urashimas and at one end was a barber shop and then the Takiyama pool hall and in between was a Chinese, as I remember, herb store and that place fascinated me because all they had was a few jars sitting out in front you know and you never saw anybody going in to buy anything from those jars. It looked like tea leaves but one day I just out of curiosity wanted to see what was back in the building and I went in, the door was open. And I ran into a room where they were gambling. Of course they showed me the way out in no time flat and I never had to go back in because I knew what they were doing back there after that.

But there was also I remember a general merchandise store that carried just about anything you needed and that included groceries and then I think they extended out toward the family (inaudible) a small grocery store plus an ice cream parlor. The Sakai store was on the west side of town and the west side was the Japanese section. And

beyond that was the garage run by a fellow by the name of Harold Sasahara. Now Mr. Sasahara sold his place out before WWII and went down to Los Angeles and as I understand, he created a business that extended a whole block in Los Angeles and just repairing and remodeling automobiles. And of course he had to evacuate Los Angeles like we had to evacuate the Del Rey area and he went back east some place in Ohio some place and as I understand he lived until last year.

Now my family came into the Del Rey area around 1910 and my father worked around the Fowler area, first as a laborer and then he took a lease on a place and he eventually found a twenty acre that he planted out on his own. And he expanded to forty acres by the time the boom period was on in Del Rey. Now he bought the twenty acres in 1913 of the passage of the Alien Land Act so he had to purchase it in the name of my older brother who was about a year or two years old and set up a guardianship according to law and for twenty years or so he had to appear in superior court and accounting annually to what kind of profits you made or how much the losses were for the period. And on top of that at times he needed money and he couldn't just go to the bank and borrow money, you had to go to the court and ask permission to borrow the money so it was an expensive sort of way to own a piece of property on which to try and make a living.

But this farm was located about two miles on the west of Del Rey and it was the closest town where you could do business. Selma was six or seven miles away and Fowler was five miles away and Sanger was beyond Del Rey so we had no reason to go to Sanger. Everything was done just about in Del Rey except when we needed special items then of course you came into Fresno. But most of your daily living requirements

could be purchased or serviced in Del Rey. Now my father was one of those that helped build this whole block of buildings in the Japanese section. He and two other people, a fellow by the name of Mono (inaudible), the three being farmers, and I think they put up about forty thousand dollars each and this was in 1923 or 1924 or some place in there. And mortgaged the rest of it and I don't know exactly how much the whole building cost.

But they erected these buildings and in no time they were leased. In fact, things were so good for a while I noticed my father went to his daily farm market and spent most of this time in town. But after the fire broke out of course the town slowly disappeared and eventually all three of them took an awful licking. In fact what happened was that I think they had to turn their interest back to whomever loaned them the money but they were able to get out of there with just the losses they had in there. They didn't lose their farms or anything like that but they took a financial beating.

Now after the boom period of course the town slowly diminished and people and the Japanese even left for places like Los Angeles and what it ended up was the Aisakai store was still there, the garage was still there, the Fugimotos were still there and I think the barber shop and that was about all, four or five Japanese businesses. Two events happened just before evacuation in Del Rey. One was three, no young fellows with their families from San Fernando moved into the Sanger area and the three boys were fascinated with the Fugimoto girls I think who operated the ice cream parlor so they were there eating their ice cream or drinking their soda or whatever but they saw a Caucasian fellow and this fellow was a pretty big fellow and came up to them and said "Hey there is a curfew in town, you guys better get out of here." And these boys had already searched to find out if there was and they were told there was no such thing. And they said, "No

we heard there was no curfew.” Well this fellow insisted and he didn’t identify himself, he merely told them that they had just better get out of town. So what happens is the guy pulls a gun and the three boys said okay we had better go. But before leaving they talked Japanese among themselves and they had a Judo background so they thought this guy being a dangerous fellow, they might as well take his gun away. So they managed to get up to him and they did take his gun away. And they beat up the person and later it turned out he was a constable. And he never identified himself. Well as these boys were going home, they threw the gun out in the vineyard and about a mile later they thought that is not the thing to do, we had better go pick up that gun and turn it in. So they thought well the closest town being Sanger they went over to Sanger Police Station but by that time there was an all points bulletin out for them and they were immediately arrested and taken to jail and pleaded guilty there to assaulting an officer and they stayed in jail until evacuation in August. And as I remember this happened around May or June of 1941, no 1942.

Now the second incident was out of this proceeding, the constable of course was beaten up and there was talk about a vigilante group being formed to go out and burn down all the Japanese homes and this I heard when I was at the bank one day and I asked the cashier is that true what these people are talking about? Well he wouldn’t say yes or no in fact I think he looked at me as just being Japanese and no account and what would be his reason for telling me if there was. So then when I heard this conversation being carried on, I just told the manager hey if this is going to begin I guess what I have to do is go get my family’s permission and draw all the money out and go some place else.

But anyhow it turned out the Issei group raised some money and they had a person Issei who knew the constable to take him, you know, this envelope with some money in it and I understand that about that time it was about five hundred dollars. And when this Issei went over to sympathize with the constable, of course he handed him the envelope but all he heard from the constable was "You God damn Japs. I hope they kick you out of here." This fellow that took the money thought he might be able to sooth things by letting him take over his properties. He gave him a power of attorney and I don't know where he went to get this advice that he should do something like this but he gave him a power of attorney and as I remember a real late model car I think a 1940 or 1941 and even the car was held in possession by this constable during the war. And when I heard this power of attorney was given, I went over to see him and told him what he had done and legally what could happen and I said, "I don't think you are going to have anything left whenever you get back here." And whenever the camp disbanded he came back and the first thing he went over to see the constable and there was no car; there was no furniture, no nothing and he asked him if he could have the keys to the car and he said what car. It was his explanation is that somebody stole it and that was it. And this individual went back to camp.

I guess he hadn't made up his mind whether to leave camp or not and I don't know if this killed him or not, but that's where he died, in camp. Now like I said, presently I don't think there are any Japanese living in Del Rey but at one time it was to me a sort of secure place because it was a segregated area and everyone knew there were Chinese, there were Mexicans there and everybody tolerated everyone else. And there were never any expressions of antagonism or hate or anything like that. It was just that

everyone knew where they were supposed to be and what they were supposed to do their things. Of course I remember the white people in business would stop you every once in a while and ask why don't you come do business with me? And this is just how it was and once they opened up their own street, well every once in a while you'd go there and this is how we dealt with the hardware and everything else, the bank and even your doctor and dentist and whatever other services that existed.

Now like I mentioned there was very little to do in other cities because Del Rey provided all the services that you needed. My family I remember all the grocery store, grocery buying, hardware buying and blacksmithing all that was done in Del Rey, rarely did we go to Selma and rarely did we go to Fowler. As I remember you didn't do any business in Sanger. Fresno was the only other place but in those days when you could only go thirty miles an hour, it took a long time to get to Fresno so if you went that far it better be necessary and you needed something really badly. But Del Rey today I think was just home for basically the Mexican people and as I remember after the war there were more people on welfare there than people that were working. But it was sort of a fascinating place, I think, for a kid because we had a Japanese hall and it sat on about an acre and we had a Japanese school there with a home for the teacher and then they had a teacher there and paid on an annual basis and the Japanese built the only tennis courts in the area.

But after the war, I understand the hall was sold. It housed all the Japanese social programs and it showed the Japanese pictures and of course I don't know if I mentioned, there was a theatre in Del Rey, there was and I used to go there to see the Tarzan pictures and in fact Judge (inaudible) who owned the theater would let me go up there and change

the film for him and he would invite me to run the projector and of course I got in there for free and that's how I'd get to see the Tarzan pictures. But social programs were held in the Japanese Hall for the Japanese and it housed both the Congregational Church and the Buddhist Church and eventually of course there were some differences that arose between the two churches because they both wanted to meet in the morning and there was no way you could do that. So it became a matter of vote and of course there were more Buddhists so they got the morning deal and the Christians had the afternoon deal. But the afternoon became a problem because the Congregational Church in Fresno had a church in Fresno where they conducted services every Sunday so they couldn't get out during the morning period and then it was Madera that had a situation just like in Del Rey. So Madera took one Sunday afternoon and Del Rey had to take the other Sunday afternoon and it became sort of a like I told my father about the only church you go every other Sunday and on an afternoon. And for a young fellow Sunday morning you got up and you can't do anything Sunday morning because you have to go to church Sunday afternoon. And if you got your clothes dirty of course there is going to be some difficulty. Well so here you lose all of Sunday morning and then Sunday afternoon you go to your church and by the time you get back, its three o'clock and you lost the afternoon. Finally, I made an arrangement with my father I think, I joined the American church and the only one I could find was the Methodist Church and so that's where I enrolled and went there because most of the kids and parents that I knew were Methodist kids.

But I stuck my nose into the Baptist Church and the Catholic Church just to see what was going on and maybe determined where I should go. But I ended up with the

rest of the fellows that I knew. But that is about all I remember and recollect about Del Rey.

IT: (inaudible) you could share (inaudible)?

SH: Well after the war of course we moved into Fresno so we stayed members of the Congregational Church here. Yeah, we had to start it all over again and then of course we got George Yaki to become the minister and of course now it's the Methodist and United Japanese Church here in Clovis and I'm still a member here.

IT: Did you have community activities at the hall in Del Rey and what kind of activities did you have?

SH: Well about the only activities was of course you had your Japanese language school and that was all day Saturday and on Sunday you had your church services. During the week most of the time it was unoccupied, they showed Japanese shows and films from Japan. And then whenever oh there is something of interest to the Japanese community if there is a meeting or whatever it was and it affected the community, of course, that is where they met.

IT: Was there a Japanese restaurant?

SH: No, I don't remember any, the only restaurant that was operated by a Japanese was the chop suey house. Because in those days you know people just didn't go to restaurants. You know it was either too expensive or something you didn't do. You ate at home mostly.

IT: What did they have a chapel for wedding and so on?

SH: I don't remember any. In fact any weddings would have to be among Nisei and we were all a little too young for those kinds of things. But I left home in 1932 and I was away

every year until 1941 so during those years well all I can remember about Del Rey is I'd come back during the summer and of course while you are here you drive into Del Rey for certain things and that's how you keep up with whatever is going on.

IT: Now can you identify some of the people around here now that used to be here?

SH: Yes, now the farming group that was the most important for the Japanese, the families were Fugihara and in Del Rey, he stood out and the son still operates the farm that he purchased. Now the Fugihara family were the first Japanese I think that drove their truck and their produce into Los Angeles and that was the old ridge route and took something like fourteen hours to go in and eight or nine hours to get back but they had an older son who was able to drive at that time so he was the one that did all the driving. The father, of course, managed the farm and the son drove and that is how they got rid of their produce and of course in those days if you could truck them into Los Angeles, the returns were a lot greater than if you just sold them to a packing house in the local area. And then, there was Hatayamas and they started out with twenty acres before WWI and by the time I think it was after they returned from camp, they increased that to something like sixty or eighty acres. The Nakatanis were there and in the Del Rey area with forty acres and I remember Mr. Nakatani was one of those that bought his farm when prices were at the highest after WWI so when the Depression hit, of course he was there with a big mortgage but in those days there weren't enough farmers that were willing to take over for him so he was able to get his mortgage reduced to about half because of the Depression and of course that helped him out and the family was able to stay on the farm.

And then there was Roy Imoto where his, I think, his nephew still lives there and he bought sixty acres after WWII then of course my father had eighty acres before WWII

and of course this would include Mr. Mano in Sanger he had forty acres there and the Ishimotos lived out on Bethel Avenue and they had forty acres there. And then there was this fringe of Sanger people: the Ogawas, the Okajimas, they were all owners of farms and they used to come into Del Rey for their businesses. Now there were several tenants as I remember they leased but these were leases on farms where the farmers were, I think, living back east someplace. So they had a pretty good deal here and then we had a couple of foremen, one was at the American vineyard, one of the biggest vineyards around. And then George Sato was a foreman for a family and there weren't too many of those.

IT: Now were there citrus farms?

SH: In Del Rey area, no.

IT: No?

SH: Basically, they were all grapes until I think right after the Depression, people started to plant peaches and plums and then there was a big growth in the tree fruit plantings. But no oranges. The oranges were all around Sanger and that area. They had them in their back yards but I think the reason was is there were no packing houses that handled oranges and about the only ones were way out in Lindsay or some place like that and it was kind of difficult to get the stuff moved over to that area.

IT: Do you recall when the county road became paved?

SH: Gee, so long as I remember you know growing up as a kid because we'd go up Lincoln Avenue and McCall Avenue was paved and Del Rey Avenue was paved. American Avenue was all paved yeah. And then our grammar school was a mile outside of town, it was west of town and for us it was about a mile or so to get there too you know.

IT: Is this the thirties or in the twenties?

SH: In the twenties.

IT: In the twenties?

SH: Yeah, grammar school and then of course the building got too old and it became a fire trap so they built the school in town after that. I don't remember what it was.

IT: What about electricity?

SH: Well in the homes there was no such thing until I think late twenties.

IT: Late twenties?

SH: Uh-huh, late twenties just like the telephone because what you had to do as a farmer, was you had to pay for the line from the place where it ended, you see to wherever you wanted at your place and that may have taken three telephone poles you had to pay for that and all the service connected to it.

IT: In other words you had electricity before REA (Rural Electricity Administration??)?

SH: Well, let's see. Electricity came in, I'd say the late twenties. Telephones, as I remember, didn't come in until the early thirties. And I remember 1932, we still didn't have telephones.

IT: When did the refrigerator come in?

SH: Well, let's see when I was a kid, we used to have we made a box and we wrapped it up with gunny sacks and all they did was turn the water faucet on and then later on we had what we used to call the ice man that used to come in and brought you a box of ice and it was after I'd say around about thirty-five or thirty-six area when it came and so it was really sort of a recent kind of innovation you know so far as all these special things that people have that take for granted today.

IT: Actually the expectations was pretty early there.

SH: Well, I don't know what early or late means but it seemed to me that I think I was still in—in first or second year of high school before electricity came to our farm. We used to study by lamps, you know, kerosene lamps. And I don't know whether that had any affect on me, Japanese students having to wear glasses all the time but it seemed like we were all had to be equipped with glasses (inaudible).

IT: Was there an association or something Japanese association in Del Rey?

SH: They had a community group but as I remember I don't know of any time after I grew up where I could understand things and they never had a meeting because the hall was all paid for, it was just a matter of annually somebody being delegated to go out in the country and collect a dollar here and a dollar there and pay the taxes or whatever. But other than that no I never used it and hear of any emergency kind of meetings by an association but there was always a place I guess you could go to, usually it was the Sakai store where you left your word that something was going to happen you know.

IT: Do you think thirty-one or thirty-two to go to school?

SH: Thirty-two; that was when the Depression really hit in that area.

IT: And you went out to?

SH: UCLA because I couldn't see I could do whatever I wanted with what Fresno State provided, at that time it was a teacher's college and I knew I'd never get a job as a teacher and I didn't care to be a teacher anyway, so I thought well one thing to do is take a chance and go down south and hope you can find some kind of a part time job to sustain yourself and that is what I did.

IT: Well that's about it.

SH: That's about it. Yeah. And of course, after WWII and I think I've been in Del Rey only on one occasion and there was nothing there anymore.

IT: That is sad. Has anybody come back after camp to (inaudible)

SH: Only I think the Sakai store operated for a while until they moved their business into Fresno.

IT: But I they were the last of the Japanese that was in Del Rey. Okay, thank you.

SH: Okay.