

Densho Digital Repository  
Naoko Wake Collection of Oral Histories of US Survivors of the Atomic Bombs Collection  
Title: Junji Sarashina Interview  
Narrator: Junji Sarashina  
Interviewer: Naoko Wake  
Location: San Jose, California  
Date: June 6, 2012  
Densho ID: ddr-densho-1021-5-11

**<Begin Segment 11>**

NW: Now, you were saying then that your father was in Hawai'i, was he then, was that where he was after the war started? Was he in Hawai'i during the war?

JS: Yeah, yeah.

NW: I know that there are, it's not a mass relocation of Japanese Americans, like what happened on the West Coast during the war, I know that there are a few people, especially leadership type of Japanese people who were placed in relocation camps. What happened to your father during the war?

JS: [chuckle]. When that bomb was dropped, Pearl Harbor, it was Sunday. So they had a Japanese Buddhist Church Sunday School, or service going on. So, this is all, we've got to forget the service, we've got to stop it. The FBI was there in the church. And they says, "You Revered Sarashina, you come with me." They were going to take him away. Reason, he was the minister, teacher in high school, who went to China, he was in Manchuria, he was in Thailand, India, and why did he go back and forth between . . .

NW: Japan and America.

JS: Yeah.

NW: Looks suspicious for FBI.

JS: That's right. So he was arrested. You know, the list was already reading books [?], already made. He was going to be picked up.

NW: They acted very quickly then.

JS: Yeah. Because the list was already made. United States knew exactly what was happening, and what was going to happen. They were going to be bombed by . . .

NW: What irony we say it's a surprise attack, right? If they knew it in advance?

JS: Well, we are not going to say anything you want. I belong to both sides. I am a United States citizen and went to Korean War, too. If you are going to say that you are a winner, oh, you are fine. If you are a winner, then you can say "We're the winner!" You can say anything you want. This flag is red, right, whatever you want to say. You can say that because you are the winner. But in any, in my father's case, he said, alright, you can take me, but let me take the young kids

home. So, he took these kids home, and they drove, and they followed him all the way around. [laugh]. They thought that my father was going to run away to Japan or something. So, took all the kids home, and went back to this place where he was living, next to the church, and okay, pick up whatever they want, handful of things. And then, from that time on, he was in the camps in the, in the Sand Island, you know, all that area, and he was sent to the mainland, over here. And he traveled to all the relocation camps. Almost, like every six months.

NW: He was moved.

JS: Uh-huh. Reason is this. Person like my father is an organizer. They don't want anybody to organize, event or activity . . .

NW: Or revolt, as they were afraid of.

JS: Uh-huh. So before they got to know everybody in a camp, simplest thing is move him around. So they don't have that many acquaintance. At the National Museum over here, they have names of all the persons in the camp. My father's name is not there.

NW: Well, why not?

JS: They could not catch up with the record.

NW: Ah. There was no record for him because he just moved too frequently around.

JS: There was only one record in Hawai'i, that's when they had that Shinji Sarashina, as a reverend moved to the United States.

NW: Did he go to Tule Lake Camp, as well?

JS: Yes he did.

NW: That's where most of the people who were considered to be risk factors were sent to.

JS: That's right, that's right. He was sent there, too.

NW: But he also moved away from there.

JS: Oh yeah. Like, six months.

NW: But you probably did not know anything about it while it's happening because you're in Japan, right?

JS: More than that. He used to write a letter through Red Cross, and maybe about eight months later we get the letter, since, well, I beg you pardon, I don't know how long, but anyway, we used to get a letter. And, but the tail end of the war, Hiroshima was bombed, that's all they knew. So he didn't, he said, what happened to my wife? What happened to Junji? What happened to Tetsuko? You know, he was worried about us. He didn't know, we had no way of communicating with him, you know. So.

NW: Right, right. And you did not know what's happening to your father, either.

JS: No, no, no. Just ... so,

NW: There's no way to communicate. Yeah.

JS: So, immediately, he said, okay, I am going to come back to Japan. From, from ... so he picked up his gear, whatever he had and went back to Japan.

NW: What year was it? Was it possible?

JS: 1945, I think it was about, wasn't '45. Either '46 or '47. '46, yeah. If it was 45, forget it, because A-bomb was there, so, I remember that year distinctively, so.

NW: I'm not really sure, when was the first ship that America sent out to Japan after the war? The other way ... yeah.

JS: I don't know. '47 maybe.

NW: '47, okay.

**<End Segment 11> - Copyright © 2012 Densho and Naoko Wake. All Rights Reserved.**