

[Begin Alice Uyeda - CD 1]

Interviewer:

Okay; it's February 22, 2004. My name is Raymond Shibata and I will be interviewing Alice Uyeda today as part of the South Bay Oral History Project. The audio equipment recording this interview is being monitored by Diane Tanaka, and the interview is being cataloged by Al Muratsuchi . All copyrights, titles, and any other rights arising from this interview, whether in its entirety, part, or derivative form, or whether an audio, written, or any other format shall belong to the South Bay Chapter of the Japanese American Citizen League. Copying of this interview recording whether in its entirety or part is strictly prohibited without a written authorization from the South Bay Chapter of the Japanese-American Citizen League.

Interviewer:

Let's begin the interview. Alice, could you start with where were you born?

Uyeda:

Okay; I was born in a little town called Baldwin Park which in the San Gabriel Valley area about 20 miles east of Los Angeles.

Interviewer:

And when were you born?

Uyeda:

And I was born February 19, 1920.

Interviewer:

And where did you grow up?

Uyeda:

In that area; just a small vicinity just close by. Went to Baldwin Park Elementary School and then I went to Covina High School, and primarily went my childhood up to age, maybe 18, was in that area.

0H01M52S

Interviewer:

Okay; let's talk about your parents. What were your parents' names?

Uyeda:

My father's name was Buhei Ito; my mother's name was Sawaye and her maiden name was Matsuura.

Interviewer

Do you know when they came from Japan?

Uyeda:

My father came first. I don't know the exact year; I should have had that ready. But, then my mother was a picture bride, so he sent his picture back to Japan and she agreed to marry him and then she came over later.

Interviewer:

So when they first came over from Japan, they settled in Baldwin Park?

Uyeda:

Well the first---well, his first stop was in Hawaii, that's my father, and then he came to San Francisco. And that's where my mother joined him---in San Francisco.

Interviewer:

Do you know what their port of entry was?

Uyeda:

It was San Francisco.

Interviewer:

And, again, what was your father's occupation?

Uyeda:

Well, at that time then he worked for the railroads. They were laying railroad ties.

Interviewer:

And then your mother?

Uyeda:

I guess she was just a housewife or

Interviewer:

And in Baldwin Park where you were born, what were your parents ?

Uyeda:

Okay; my father did farming and it was called truck farming. It wasn't farming of any one particular item; there were several different items.

Interviewer:

Such as?

Uyeda:

Such as satoimo . . . but I can remember satoimo and spinach and then, later on, he grew berries, vine berries like boysenberries, raspberries, and that type. That was in my high school years that he had that. And that was in Baldwin Park.

Interviewer:

What about your siblings? Do you have . . . ?

OH03M57S

Uyeda:

I have a sister older; she was born in 1914. My brother was in 1916, but, unfortunately, he is deceased, but my sister, she will be 90 in June and she's still doing quite well.

Interviewer:

What are there names?

Uyeda:

My sister's name is Tatsuko Nakagawa . My brother's name is Naboru Ito .

Interviewer:

When---well after . . . did you move from Baldwin Park?

Uyeda:

My folks were there in Baldwin Park, but they did move from place to place within Baldwin Park. Just what they did was lease property to farm and then when that lease was up, then they had to move to another location. So they were---they stayed in Baldwin Park, but my brother and my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, had a fruit stand in Glendale, so I went to work for them.

Interviewer:

While you were either in Baldwin Park or in the Covina area, did you go to Japanese School?

Uyeda:

Yes, they had . . . my parents were involved with other parents to try to organize some Japanese School with---it was with some minister---some church---to organize a Japanese School so that we could learn a little Japanese so we could communicate a little better with our parents. But that school was only like on Saturdays and at that time, us as kids, we were not serious about learning Japanese. So, like every Saturday we would go, but it was more like just going to eat our bento , our lunch. So, unfortunately, I sort of regret that we didn't take it seriously and learn more.

Interviewer:

Did you speak Japanese at home or . . . ?

OH06M01S

Uyeda:

Well, we needed to speak Japanese, because our folks didn't know English. So what little Japanese that we do have retained is only what we have learned through conversation. And---because at Japanese School we really didn't learn too much, except I did learn a little writing and that, where I could maybe take a dictionary out and try to write a letter.

Interviewer:

What about the relationship with your neighborhood friends?

Uyeda:

Well, my relationship as I can remember as a child, it was very, very nice. The Hakujuin people were very nice to us. We had---I really did not know what discrimination was. They were very, very good to us.

Interviewer:

Do you still have contact with any of your friends . . . ?

Uyeda:

Yes, my high school---there was two Caucasian girls that I kept in touch with. I still keep in touch with them. I had been keeping in touch with both of them up to this last Christmas, but I didn't hear from one of them, so I don't know . . . hoping that she's okay. But, one lives up in Yucca Valley, and one lived in---the one I didn't hear from-is in Ontario. And I'm hoping someday I can go out there and research and see if she's okay.

Interviewer:

What did you---as a---as you're growing up, what type of thing did you do daily?

Uyeda:

For fun? [Laughs]

Interviewer:

For fun, chores . . . ?

Uyeda:

Well, after . . . I know that as a child I had good times. We played hop-scotch; we played jacks; we played with whatever we had. We played Hide and Seek, simple things; not like these computer games [Laughs] you know like that. And, socially, I don't remember . . . as I got older, I don't---I went to Epworth League, a Christian---a young social group.

Interviewer:

What was your relationship with your parents as they were working and you were growing up?

Uyeda:

Yes, it was a---it wasn't a real close---because they were busy and we went to school, but then we did have to come home after school and come home and help on the farm. I can remember one of the things that I used to do is---they used to grow this **satoimo** and these potatoes were, you know you had to dig them up, and they were just full of roots and we had to peel every bit of those roots off, and they would send them out to the market. And then I remember picking berries, so But, it was just---as far as our relationship, it was just, I guess, nothing. Well, it was a good relationship.

0H09M21S

Interviewer:

Okay; after you graduated from high school, what did you do?

Uyeda:

It was after I graduated high school that my brother had the fruit stand, and so . . . but in the interim, though, I had a Hakujin couple---friends that had no children, and they ran an egg ranch and they needed some help from time to time, sort of to help candle the eggs and get them ready for market. So,

you'd candle them and weigh them and that. So I helped this elderly couple for a while before I actually went to help my brother.

Interviewer:

This is during your high school years?

Uyeda:

Yes, uh-hm; or in between . . . after high school and maybe it was a year or so before I went to help my brother.

Interviewer:

Were you involved, or your parents involved in any of the Japanese community organizations, or . . . ?

Uyeda:

Well, I think at that time they had like a Japanese organization. I can't remember now what they called them. But I know that he was very--my father was involved with the Olympics one time when they came, and he was---I think he was quite involved.

Interviewer:

Do you know the Kenjinkai or the Ken ?

Uyeda:

Kenjinkai ; my parents came from Hiroshima, so they were active in the Kenjinkai .

Interviewer:

The Hiroshima Kenjinkai .

Uyeda:

Hiroshima Kenjinkai , yeah, uh-hm. And then, of course they were church Zenshuji church members, so I know we'd---I don't know if it was every Sunday, or every week, or how often, but then we would drive from Baldwin Park into Los Angeles to go to the church. But then, I myself, and my sister, we were guided by a Caucasian couple who didn't have children, and they took us--- lot of us young ladies, young girls---we were just really young. Well, it started with sister's group . . . she took them under her wing and then they sort of introduced us into the Christian; so we went to the Methodist Church. They would take us to the Methodist Church. So . . . although my parents would take us to the Buddhist Church with them, we did not learn any of the

Buddhist religion . . . it was just that we sort of tagged along.

Interviewer:

So, are you still with the Christian Church to this day?

Uyeda:

Well, I'm not involved with any Christian Church. Unfortunately; I don't go to any church, but I try to live a Christian life and keep busy trying to help people, and . . . well, I guess I really should go to church, but seems like different involvements just keep me pretty occupied.

0H12M45S

Interviewer:

Okay; just prior to December 7th and after high school . . . because December 7th places you at 21 years old, what were you doing during that time span, just before the War?

Uyeda:

Okay; well, I was working for my brother in Glendale. And then my husband-to-be, he lived in Los Angeles, and so he used to come to Glendale and then we would date. And this particular night, he---we double-dated with another couple and went to a dance. And it was on the way home on the radio is when we heard about the

Interviewer:

So, you heard it on the radio after the dance?

Uyeda:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And what was your reaction?

Uyeda:

Well, we were really shocked and really didn't you know---didn't know what was going to happen and . . . bewildered.

Interviewer:

So, could you start from what---then what happened?

Uyeda:

Well, then, of course, there was nothing that we could actually do, but in the meantime, my brother and my husband-to-be got together and figured out a way---because, I guess there was this Executive Order---it was after the order---that either people leave on their own by a certain time, or have to be gathered up and going to a concentration But, my husband---my brother and my husband-to-be got together without my knowing it, went to Utah and made arrangements with the farmers to house, or to give contracts, or sharecroppers for . . . there were seven families and they were the families . . . so that none of our relatives, none of our kinfolks, none of our . . . that we would be separated. So, like my brother's wife's family, my sister's husband's brothers and families, and so none of us . . . and then my husband's family . . . so none of us seven families we were separated.

Interviewer:

Right

Uyeda:

So we were all . . . and so we went in a caravan and that was on March 30th, I think it was that we went in a caravan---seven cars and three truckloads, and we started out from Baldwin Park and went on. And we had no idea where we were going; and but

0H15M50S

Interviewer:

So you brother and your future husband went to Utah before, made arrangements . . . was this with a Hakujin farmer?

Uyeda:

It was Hakujin farmers; well it was because

Interviewer:

What part of Utah?

Uyeda:

Northern Utah; that was because my husband was born and raised in Utah and he had come over to California in 1936, I believe. They were always farmers in Utah and did quite well in Northern Utah, and then they went down to Provo, down further south, and bought some property. And, unfortunately, as they were buying the property, they had a terrible drought where they couldn't water their crops; they couldn't---no water for their animals

and that, so they, unfortunately, lost that property. So, in the meantime, my husband, Kenny, had an uncle that was here in El Monte doing farming, so he encouraged him to come and move to El Monte. So, by that time, I guess Kenny was---he more-or-less took care of things. He sent the family all over to El Monte to get settled on a farm in El Monte. He stayed back and took care of things, and then he came. And that was in 1936 or 1937.

And so here now they're farming in El Monte, and then when they got there, then they were flooded out. There was too much water. So then they lost whatever they were trying. So then, from there they moved to Los Angeles, and then Kenny got involved in the produce market and I think he was doing . . . he liked mechanics so he was helping in a garage and different He actually, by that time, his father had more-or-less given up and given Kenny the reins. So Kenny had a lot of responsibility, because he had three sisters and a younger brother, and then the mother.

Interviewer:

Alice, let's take a break right now . . .

Uyeda:

Okay.

OH18M28S

[Break]

Interviewer:

Okay; Alice, let's start back when you were in Utah when Kenny and your brother moved the whole family, and you caravanned to Utah, so could you know the city you settled in and what were you doing?

Uyeda:

Well, when we first got there it took us two days to get there; and when we got there, they had this three bedroom house that all six families---they each got one bedroom each, and then had one central kitchen where we all ate together. But it was all of us, although my Kenny, he stayed in another place with some other people named Holgren, who were sort of responsible for getting this for us. So we all lived together in this one house for oh maybe only about six months. Then each family was sent out to separate farms and then they had houses for them. And

then they would share-crop with the farmers of each individual farmer, and that's---and it was sugar beets.

Interviewer:

Okay; so they basically, being share croppers---they were given some kind of pay?

Uyeda:

Yeah; pay plus the housing.

Interviewer:

The housing was all paid for.

Uyeda:

Uh-hm; but my . . . we didn't want to get into that.

Interviewer:

The city this was in?

Uyeda:

The city was Tremont, Utah. It was called---in the Bear River County, and which is almost---way north almost to the Idaho border.

Interviewer:

Idaho border, okay; so now that you're in Utah and you're settled in . . . a little bit more about Kenny and yourself?

Uyeda:

Okay; then, of course, we were---I was living with my folks and Kenny at that time, he operated a garage. He had a garage called Garland Garage, and I guess it was obvious that we were going to get married, because he did take me up there with him. **[Laughs]** So, it was March 20th that we were married in a Methodist Church.

Interviewer:

What year was that?

Uyeda:

That was 1943---March of 1943. And we had a regular church wedding, and my sister-in-law sewed my gown. That was my brother's wife, and then Kenny's two sisters were like my bridesmaid and then at that time let's see; I guess we didn't have any flower girls or anything. But there was a family there in Tremont and their name was Tanaka, and they had nine---eight

girls and one boy. And anyway, that family was so nice that they put on the reception for us. They had the reception party. We had the wedding in the church, but then this Tanaka family, they gave us a nice reception, because they had quite a large house with a big family.

Interviewer:

Was this a Buddhist church?

Uyeda:

No, this was a Methodist Church. So, that's---that was in 1943.

Interviewer:

And once you were married, did you have your own place---you and Kenny, or did you stay with the family?

Uyeda:

Yes, we stayed with the family. They were on actually a farm. Well, no, after we got married, then I think we had a separate little---moved into a little duplex---little house. And I guess at that time, oh, then yeah so; after we got married . . . oh even before I got married instead of working on the farm, I was helping a lady. She had a little store and like a hamburger-stand right across from the high school. And the students would come over for lunch, and she would make the hamburgers. And she was great in making pies; so.

0H23M15S

Interviewer:

Hold it, take a break.

[Break]

Interviewer:

Okay; Alice, let's continue. Now we got you married and living in a duplex.

Uyeda:

And I was working for this . . . their name was Hansen, and I worked for this little establishment, they called it The Pie Dump, because the lady, Mrs. Hansen, made the best pies. And the school kids would come over for lunch, and they'd have their hamburgers and pie, and they would call me. They would . . . there was a long counter, and they would all come at once wanting to be helped---to be served. So they would call me---

they'd call me, "Blondie, Blondie," and they'd try to get service, you know. So anyway

Interviewer:

They had a name for you calling Blondie?

Uyeda:

The Blondie. [Laughs]

Interviewer:

You know why?

Uyeda:

[Laughs] Because I was the opposite of being blond, I guess. But, it was fun. I just wished I had learned how she made those pies, because they were really, really good pies. So that's what I did; I worked for them, and then it was---after . . . I was working and then we got married, and then we moved into this duplex.

Interviewer:

Okay; and when did you have your first child?

Uyeda:

And then---and then Doug was born November 16th of the same year. Now before he was born, I guess I had quit working for the Hansens and was helping the family with harvesting tomatoes. And I was picking tomatoes and carrying the boxes and that right up to the time that Doug was born. I mean I didn't expect him to be born for another month. And so this one night I was---we had dinner; Kenny and I had had dinner, and he had to go out, because what he was doing was repairing trucks for the farmers. And somebody broke down, and so he went out to tow them in, and so my brother-in-law, Ike, and I were home together after Kenny left.

And while Kenny was gone, I started getting these terrible pains and had no idea. In those days, we were not taught anything about childbirth or, you know these classes, or anything. And anyway, the pain kept being quite severe, so we had a place, small, but it was like I could go circular, and so the harder the pains got, the faster I would walk, and I would try to comfort myself. Well, then finally when Kenny came home, then he felt that we should call the doctor. And so, when we called the doctor, he had no idea that the baby was going to come so soon. As a matter of fact, I wasn't even prepared, because the

next day was when my sister-in-law and I were going to go shopping to get things for Doug. And even---we knew that I was going to have the child at home, and so, but we were not prepared with anything, but we made out.

And so the doctor came, and the doctor's wife was a nurse. So she---they helped to deliver so sure enough he came---he was born right away, and then, of course, we were not prepared for anything---no crib, no blanket, no nothing; so what we had to do is pull out one of our dresser drawers and make that into a little bassinet, and that's where Doug---and then we tried to keep him warm, but he was more like---he was very small. We don't know exactly how much he weighed, but I know that my mother was very concerned because he was almost purple---he was very small. So he was---so then the doctor had us put an electric light over him to keep him warm, and that's---and so he survived that.

0H27M50S

Interviewer:

Okay; so a little bit more from this point on toward when the war ended. Where were you? Were you basically just being a housewife, a mother?

Uyeda:

Yes, at that point I was pretty much a housewife, although during that time, too, we tried to do something to bring in a little income, because it you know it was rough. So, somehow, I don't know exactly how it got started, but I had a little gadget that you knitted. In those days, the war days, the women could not buy hosiery, or . . . either they were too expensive, or they weren't available, or whatever. So, I learned how to take a pair of hose and take this little gadget and re-knit the runs. You know, the hosiery would run? So, I would re-knit those hose, and I made a few cents to help support the . . . so, that was one of things that I did.

And then in 1945 when the war ended, then Kenny was instrumental in getting all of the families . . . because he had a truck. He got the families---took several trips back to California to bring the same families back. And we were the last---our own family was the last to come back and that was in 1947, because he started bringing them back in 1946, I think.

0H29M43S

Interviewer:

How was the atmosphere, the neighbors and people you worked for--their feelings about the war and about the Japanese--did you feel any . . . ?

Uyeda:

We personally didn't feel any discrimination, because all we were doing was working, and we were not involved with any groups or anything. But, there was--not our own group family, but my--Kenny's uncle, because they were living a little further away; Kenny's uncle went grocery shopping and when he went . . . it was a neighbor's little store, some sailors came in there and made some remarks and called him a Jap and whatever. So, when they--his uncle went home, the soldiers went and followed him home, and they gave him a really . . . they frightened Kenny's mother, you know because the uncle went on back and so they were looking for the uncle. But then the mother came to the door and said, "No, he's not here," anyway, and then she just hollered real loud for Mr. Holgren, who lived in the house next door. And so, she frightened them away. But that was about the only experience that we had. Personally, I had no encounters of any ill feelings.

Interviewer:

When the war ended like you indicated, and Kenny got together with the other families, that was a joint agreement to all move back to California?

Uyeda:

Uh-hm, yeah; he helped them haul and they--I don't know exactly how they decided where to move to, but somehow they all settled. He got them back to their destination and settled.

Interviewer:

And where did you and Kenny settle?

Uyeda:

So, when Kenny and I . . . we left in January in the cold, and we had like a 1937 or 1938, I think it was a Buick, and myself--I drove that little--like a roadster I guess it was. I drove it and Doug sat in the middle and then the mother-in-law--the three of us in that car. Kenny had the truck with our furnishings. He drove and then the brother--younger brother and my father-in-law in the truck. So, we . . . it was a cold

winter day and there was no heater in the car or anything; but we came---drove along and we made out.

Interviewer:

What month was that?

OH33M05S

Uyeda:

I think it was in January. So then I went on ahead and Kenny was following. And it was cold. **[Laughs]** But it was---we drove along and then when we dropped down to St. George, it got warm and it was just like another world. It was like a different world. So, anyway, we drove along and then at one point I was still ahead of Kenny and the truck; here I am in the roadster, and I got my foot on the pedal, but it seemed like I wasn't moving. So I looked back, and it was an incline and was like that. And so that's why the car wasn't---felt like it wasn't moving. So, anyway, I figured, "Okay; now it's going to be like this." So I went up to the top of the hill; then when I got to the top of the hill, I went down enough for the momentum to bring me up the next hill. So then I did that continually; so I got way ahead of Kenny. They were in the truck way behind.

So, then I thought, "Well, I'd better stop and wait for them." So that was the worst thing I could have done is stop the engine. It blew up because the engine was so hot. It blew up. **[Claps]** So, then from that point on, then Kenny had to tow us into Los Angeles. So, then when we got to Los Angeles, we just lived on Wall Street---we lived in a hotel.

Interviewer:

This is downtown Los Angeles?

Uyeda:

Downtown by the produce market, because that's where Kenny was going to work---was going to get a job.

Interviewer:

He got a job in downtown . . . ?

Uyeda:

Down in produce . . . so, we lived in this---the folks had one bedroom downstairs and then Kenny, Doug and I had one bedroom upstairs. And so we---and then I got a job to work in a necktie factory which was two blocks away from there, because that was

the garment industry---close to the garment industry, and so it was a company called Holly Voque. So, I went to work, but then the folks would be home and they would baby-sit Doug. But they were in this one-bedroom apartment and they were gong stir-crazy because they're used to being farmers, and being out in the open. And so then, Kenny felt he had to do something, so he looked in the newspaper---I guess it was the Rafu Shimpo I think that they're still over there, and there was an ad saying, "Five acre nursery for lease," and that's how we settled here.

Interviewer:

In Torrance.

Uyeda:

In this particular spot.

Interviewer:

Okay; where we are today?

Uyeda:

Where we are today and I have a picture here. So, anyway that's---and so that was---so we lived in the hotel for six months; so in July, moved here---July of '47. So then, we've been here ever since.

Interviewer:

But the ad said it was for lease.

0H36M30S

Uyeda:

Yeah; and so we were just leasing. We were just paying rent, which was very difficult to do, too, because actually, we had nothing when we came. [Laughs] So, anyway, we've come a long ways.

Interviewer:

And, again, knowing the future of your husband, how did he get into the politics, the city politics?

Uyeda:

Okay; because this is 1947 and so we---in the meantime he was--- he got the nursery so that the folks would have something to do; so they were planting celery plants and wholesale little plants, and they farmed a little something in the back. Only thing I can remember is green beans or something. And then, Kenny would

have to go out and do something else. So and he would try---and he was trying many different things. He even went up to Washington and cut Christmas trees, and whatever he could do to--to try to make a living. So then eventually, he got into the nursery. But how he actually got into the politics end Well, in 1956 I know that he---they chartered a Lions Club and he got involved in that, and it was also in 1956 that he got involved in the city. There's a link there, I don't know exactly how it led into that.

Interviewer:

Because he had a nursery?

Uyeda:

Um, possibly because it wasn't until 1958 that this five acre property was sold to a builder, and I know at that time he was already involved in the city because he was able to help the developer.

Interviewer:

And what was his---what position did he have with the City of Torrance?

Uyeda:

He was the Planning Commissioner, and he became a planning commissioner because there was an opening, or somebody passed away or resigned, A. J. Beasley. So that opening came available, although when I was going through some of his things, there was some controversy about whether they would actually---I guess the Council needs to vote on the appointment. And, at one point, he wasn't going to be appointed, but somebody voted for him, so then he became eligible to be---to serve; and that was, I think in 1956 or '58. But anyway, he served 28 years with perfect attendance, because he really liked it.

0H39M52S

Interviewer:

Twenty-eight years as a city . . . ?

Uyeda:

Twenty-eight years as a city planner---Planning Commissioner.

Interviewer:

Is that a---was that appointed?

Uyeda:

Appointed.

Interviewer:

Appointed each time or had to be elected?

Uyeda:

No, it's appointed; no, it's not elected, and he always felt that he wanted to be only in the planning department---the Planning Commission is only a recommending body, and that's what he wanted to be. He felt that's---he never wanted to go on to be on Council, or that, he just wanted to be Planning Commissioner. And he was repeatedly appointed, but then it got to a point where they said they could only serve for so many terms, and so that's why he was no longer Planning Commissioner. But it was 20 years when he---28 years of perfect attendance. And there was one set of minutes that I happened to get hold of several years later, because he kept telling me that he was so proud of having this perfect attendance, so---because that's the first and third Wednesday of every month. So then, I saw these minutes and on there it said when they took role call, Kenny Uyeda was absent, and I thought, no, it wasn't perfect. Then later down on the line, it said that he came in late. **[Laughs]** So he did have his perfect attendance.

Interviewer:

How was your life changed being---when Kenny was in the Planning Commission?

Uyeda:

Well, of course, I was home and because we had always lived with his parents. And the reason why I even married him, because my parents always stressed to be oyakoko you know, take care of your parents. So when I saw that Kenny showed that he was very loyal to his parents, and even when his brother was 17 years younger than he, I saw him carrying him and taking care of him and taking care of the family, that's what impressed me, too. So, I felt that you know marrying him, you know that's why I married him was because I respected him for that.

So, my role was to also take care of his parents. So I did do that. Although while Kenny was doing this planning commission and also running---trying to run the nursery and that, I got involved in---I don't know how I did---at that time they used to call it Community Chest, Red Cross---I always helped with the fund raising. Since Community Chest turned into United Way and

that. But I helped in pretty much in the Torrance area---helped with the fund raising; and so.

OH43M10S

Interviewer:

Let's stop here, Alice.

Uyeda:

Okay.

Interviewer:

It's a good time for a break.

[Break]

Interviewer:

You leased the property?

Uyeda:

Uh-hm.

Interviewer:

We're going to talk about that, because what we want to talk about is your neighbors' reaction and post-war reaction, perhaps, and some of the kind of facilities---services like doctors, dentists, things like---you had to go to Japanese, or was Hakujuin available---you know, some of the issues about the post-war. I think this is the '50s, right? Is that when you moved here?

Uyeda:

Yeah; 1947.

Interviewer:

Okay; the '40s. Then it is important then to try to get a flavor of what the Torrance neighborhood was like.

Uyeda:

Actually

Interviewer:

Now a lot of times, families ended up socializing strictly with the Japanese community, right; because . . . ?

Uyeda:

No, we didn't really get involved, although Kenny got involved with JCI, but I don't know when he---when that came about, but at the very beginning because he was involved with the Lions Club, and that was more of a Hakuujins.

Interviewer:

Do you know when he got into the Lions Club?

Uyeda:

The Lions---that was also in 1956, they chartered.

Interviewer:

So, again, there's that . . . 1947 when you first moved here to . . .

Uyeda:

To 1956.

Interviewer:

. . . then because you mention that---because Kenny became a commissioner in 1956, I think.

Uyeda:

In 1956, yes.

OH44M50S

Interviewer:

Okay, so; we're going to pull you back. Okay; let's start---ready? Okay; Alice, let's pull back a little bit and spend a little more time when you first arrived here in Torrance; when you and Kenny leased the property; okay. So what was it like---the house where you lived?

Uyeda:

It was in this little---it was a one-bedroom shack. And we had the parents move into that shack, setup their bed, and it had a little kitchen room, and that's about it---just one bedroom and a kitchen. And so, Kenny and I had to setup our bed out in the spring-house. We laid down a piece of linoleum, and then put our bed on top of this, you know. So, every morning we could not sleep late, because there comes the sun to wake us up. But then, shortly after Kenny went to Sears Roebuck and got a pre-fabricated house and built us a little room, so that we would have our own bedroom.

Interviewer:

And, again, this is in the same area where we are today, and the nursery . . . ?

Uyeda:

Yes, this was in this same location, and, of course, he made the one-bedroom house---bedroom for us and the folks were---it was just right next to it. And then, also, the folks had built a little lean-to and made a Japanese bath where you have to build a fire underneath to heat the water. And then, we had an outhouse. It was just a cesspool, and that was just a few feet away from where the house was.

Interviewer:

What was your daily routine? You just worked on that . . . you had a nursery so you were leasing?

Uyeda:

No, at that time, because going back, you know and when we were living in the apartment, I had gotten a job with the Holly Vogue Necktie Company?

Interviewer:

Yes.

Uyeda:

So then I was taking a bus to go

Interviewer:

So you kept your job?

Uyeda:

I kept my job with the necktie company; and so I kept it until just a few months before Dessie was born, and that was in 1953.

Interviewer:

Oh, I see.

0H47M35S

Uyeda:

So, but I did come home, and my mother-in-law would take care of the nursery and that. . . but when I came home, I would help, too. I would prepare the dinner, you know. But Kenny would take me to the bus stop which is on Gardena Boulevard. and Normandie . . . no, maybe it was Vermont. Vermont, and then he

would come and pick me up. I would take the bus to downtown. But then that was for---don't know just how long, but then eventually, I got a car and I was driving to the necktie.

Interviewer:

What about the co-workers at the . . . again, a little flavor of the post war; how was the attitude?

Uyeda:

It was---it was fine because

Interviewer:

Were you---were many Japanese other people---were Japanese working at the necktie factory with you?

Uyeda:

There was a few Japanese---other Japanese people working, but we worked for a Jewish---it was a Jewish, Mr. Goldman and Jewish people, and actually I didn't feel any . . . well then there was a Hakujin co-worker that was very, very close to me. And as a matter of fact when I was going to leave because I was pregnant with Deci , the whole place gave me a wonderful shower. It was really, really nice. But I, myself, did not feel any discrimination.

Interviewer:

What about your doctors, dentists, were they all . . . ?

Uyeda:

They were all---they were not Japanese doctors---all Hakujins or one of them was . . . well at the time when we were still in this kind of a situation, I can't ever remember having to go to a doctor. Well, the doctor that we had deliver---the same doctor that delivered Doug in Utah, Doctor Kowabe, he was our same doctor for Deci .

Interviewer:

He moved to L.A.?

Uyeda:

He moved---he moved back to L.A.; yeah. So, we were in touch with him. But, other than that, I can't remember of having---or the folks having to go to the doctor, or anything like that.

Interviewer:

So what made you quit the necktie, and what did you do after you decided to . . . was that because of having Deci ?

OH50M17S

Uyeda:

Yes, I had---I had to---yes, I quit because I was going to--- Dessie was going to be born. And then after she was born, the same Dr. Kowabe, because he knew us---we were close friends even in Utah---when Deci was born, she, too, was pre-mature, she was under five pounds. So . . . but she was born in the hospital--- in Belvedere Hospital in Los Angeles. So, with her, too, the doctor would say, "You have to take it easy," you know; but I was still running around and picking up. When I retired from Holly Vogue and waiting for Deci to be born, I was helping Kenny in the nursery going around to different nurseries and getting plants. I guess we had the wholesale nursery then. We were just growing; we were sort of open to the public.

Interviewer:

What was the name of the nursery?

Uyeda:

Kenny's Nursery; yeah Kenny's Nursery. So then, I was running around helping him, and then there again, I started having these sharp pains, so Kenny called the doctor and doctor says, "Well, she's got to take it easy; she's got to get off her feet." So, I stayed off my feet, and that evening, they had to rush me to the hospital and Dessie was born. And so, this same doctor; he lived in Los Angeles, but he would not let me come home here. He took me into his own home for a whole month, Deci and I, and took care of us. I was fine; I felt fine, but he wanted to make sure that I wouldn't come back to the nursery and Deci needed all the attention because she was sort of like premature. She, too, he had a lamp over her, too.

But they wouldn't release her from the hospital until she reached five pounds, and I can't remember just how many days that was, but then it was after that that he kept us at his home. And the wife, she wouldn't even let me help with the dishes. She wouldn't let me do anything. She just was so good to me.

OH52M45S

Interviewer:

You were staying at the doctor's...

Uyeda:

Doctor's home; uh-hm with Deci . So we were there a whole month before we came back and then after we came back, then I was helping Kenny in the nursery; yeah.

Interviewer:

Deci was born on what day?

Uyeda:

She was born on September 18, 1953, ten years after Doug, and that's why . . . we weren't even prepared with a name for Deci , because she, too, came so early. So and then I thought, "Well, maybe I'll work it around 10; decade, decimal point, you know." So that's why her name is Deci . **[Laughs]**

Interviewer:

That's interesting.

Uyeda:

So people would---so then she would always tell people, too, that her name stands for ten, and they say, "Oh, are you the tenth child?" **[Laughs]** It was ten years apart.

Interviewer:

Okay; so now you have two children and now you're spending more time here at the home, and I think it's about the same time . . . what was Kenny and your, you know your basic daily life like?

Uyeda:

Well it was just helping him in the nursery, and at those times I was . . . because the mother-in-law would be working in the nursery, I would be---I would help with fixing lunch and fixing dinner and taking care of Deci . And Doug was going to elementary school at that time. But, basically, it was helping in the nursery.

OH54M54S

Interviewer:

Were you involved in any of the Japanese organizations in the area?

Uyeda:

Not until---well, started in 1956, after Kenny got involved, too. Not in the Japanese; no, there was no Japanese organization that . . . I didn't get involved with JCI until a few years later. There's a little blank there.

Interviewer:

Okay; so what you're leading up to, again, Kenny being appointed Planning Commissioner, right? So, I think where we---or what the question I asked was . . . now your life is changed a little bit? Did you get more involved in civic affairs or what did you---how did your life change?

Uyeda:

While he was the Planning Commissioner . . . I don't know just what year I got involved in and how I got involved in the---on the Red Cross Board and doing fund raising for the Community Chest, which is now United Way. I would help in that---in that way. And then, because I did that, because I organized getting people in different areas and mapped out different areas and had different sections and that. Then, I got involved with JCI. They, too, needed to contact different people, so I did the same thing for them. I went through the---I guess I went through the phone book and broke down the different areas, the names and turned it over to them. But I didn't actually do any soliciting. But I think Kenny was involved in that part. There's something a little vague there.

Interviewer:

Did you---did you develop any other hobbies or other interests during this period?

Uyeda:

Well, I don't know just what---just when and . . . but I've been done many different things in bits and pieces, but I think it was in later years. I collected---one of my hobbies was to collect pianos, and even during the time . . . well, I think we have to go back a little bit as to---we were on this five acres, but then when the developer came in a bought the five acres, and then how he sub-divided the area; and then Kenny and I were able to purchase this part of the five acres, which is now Oh, because when the developer came in, he put a road right through the middle of this five acres, and that's what became 185th Street. And so, one part of the front on the south side of 185th Street, 100 feet of it we were able to purchase. And then on the north side of 185th Street, we purchased 270 feet by 60 feet, right here. And then Kenny built a retail nursery

building up in the front and then we had the builder build 26 homes on this property and our house was the 26th one to be built. So, he started across the street, one, two, three, and while---during the time he was building them, we moved and lived in a house up front which belonged to the owner before it was sold to the developer. There was a stucco home. So, when we moved---the developer was going to develop this and the owner moved away, so we were able to move into his house while the builder built all these houses, and then the sixth one---the 26th one was ours.

But in the meantime I would see all the construction going on and when our house was built and I got all kinds of ideas, because Kenny told me---he showed me the plans of how our house was going to be---a four bedroom house. And it was going to look like this, and if you want to go see one, it's over in Carson. So I went over and it was like a little Cracker Jack box and I says, "No way, if we're going to be building anyway . . ." I says, "We got to blow out three more feet here and three more feet here and two feet here and change the closets around." And so, that I did on paper, and I thought it was very simple. All you did is do this? Well, they had to send the whole plans back to the architect to be re-drawn and that's how this house is now.

Interviewer:

So you custom-built your house.

1H00M38S

Uyeda:

Pretty much; so at what point are we now?

Interviewer:

Oh, well one of the things you said you had a unique story about how you collect pianos.

Uyeda:

Oh, okay; so then he---after we acquired this property and he built---the owner built the building that we used for retail nursery, and then our house was . . . and so when we were doing retail business, in the meantime, I was instead of tending to business, or nursery business or plants, my interest was more in antiques and pianos. So I would find a piano for sale, and then I would get them moved and they were in the nursery---in the

back end of the nursery I had at one time four and five pianos.
And that big one there is one of them that

Interviewer:

Did you play the piano?

Uyeda:

I always liked to play and I tried to play, but I was never---it was---and I'm still trying, but it's not like when you're young and you get your good piano teacher and learn the basics right from the beginning. Well, it was not like that; it was just a hodge-podge type of thing. So, but I always liked piano. So even before we could afford a piano, I would sit at a table and pretend I was playing a piano.

Interviewer:

I see; so do you still have a lot of pianos?

Uyeda:

Well, yes; **[Laughs]** I have over a period of years, I think I've handled, bought and fixed and sold, maybe about 25 pianos. But now, presently in the house, I have three pianos, and one pump organ, and one keyboard---that's all.

Interviewer:

Wow, okay; so a little bit more about maybe your children as they were growing and how . . . you know their interaction with you.

Uyeda:

Well, um

Interviewer:

Well, okay, let's see; how about the---how about both Doug and Dessie's going to school---any specific stories you might have about .them ?

Uyeda:

Well, I know that one thing we had always been told; for the children's sake, don't move around; keep them in one school rather than moving around. Well in Doug's case, it so happened that we stayed in one place, but because of the development of the city, they changed the schools. So Doug would start one school, and then he had to go to another school because the district was divided differently. And, too, I guess at that time I think they---he must have gone to school on the bus; and

unfortunately because we were on the nursery---had the nursery and . . . it was always a hard go for us, and so, Doug would have to come home and he would have to baby-sit Dessie, because I would have to be helping on the---in the nursery. As far as . . . now unlike . . . unfortunately with Doug, we really didn't weren't able to---not like take him for any sports because he did not get involved in sports. I think he . . . not even Boy Scouts.

Interviewer:

What---at what point, well and one question, I guess; what about your parents, Kenny's parents? How long were they still here living with you? Did they---were they baby-sitting for instance Doug and . . . ?

Uyeda:

Yes, pretty much; yes, they were---they were baby-sitting. I guess when Kenny started getting involved, then he would have to go to different functions and then I would go with him. So, of course, the folks would..

1H05M23S

Interviewer:

They were always living here with you?

Uyeda:

They were always living with us.

Interviewer:

At what time did they pass away?

Uyeda:

My mother-in-law passed away first, and that was in 1972. Then she had leukemia, and by that time, she was getting active---she was learning flower arrangement from Mrs. . . . at that time her name was Kawagoe. And then Doug was involved in the Akatsuki Band with Mr.Kodama . And so then, Mr. Kodama was single; Mrs. Kawagoe was single; and so between my mother-in-law, father-in-law and Mr. and Mrs.Uge , we got those two together. That's how they became married. You didn't know that?

Interviewer:

Well how about that. No, I know Mr. and Mrs.Kodama .

Uyeda:

So my mother-in-law was very interested in flower arrangement, but there was one day that she, all of a sudden, her personality---she was a very knowledgeable person, she loved to talk. She was a very fun type of lady---knowledgeable lady. And she used to talk a lot, but one day all of a sudden, she clammed up; she didn't say anything. So, we thought, well maybe, wonder if we said something to hurt her feelings, or what. But it turned out that she was ill. We thought maybe if she goes to flower arrangement that would perk her up. But, it didn't make any difference. When we took her to the doctor, her blood count was low, and that she had leukemia. So, it was shortly after that---that she passed away---yeah; in '72. And then, they were very helpful at the nursery, and the father-in-law no matter old he was, he was dragging the hose and was doing all the watering up until the---until he was aged 90---93; and then at 95 he passed away.

Interviewer:

I see; you mentioned about Kenny, your husband, and when he finally---I guess he retired from the City Planner.

Uyeda:

The Planning Commission.

Interviewer:

The Planning Commission, excuse me. What did you and Kenny do at that point?

1H08M23S

Uyeda:

Well, we still had the nursery, and then---oh then there came a point where we had the retail nursery . . . oh one, I guess, going back, I guess I did do a few things; because I've been on the Election Board since 1957, and I've been serving ever since. But, anyway, he had the building and in 19---what year was it? Bruce Kaji . . . oh, we had put that property over there up for sale, because we had the retail nursery. We put it up for sale, because we were trying to make ends meet in all different kinds of ways. But anyway, he put that up for sale and Bruce Kaji came and said if we would lease that building to him for two years, he would buy that property and build his own bank on it. And so that's how that building is up there---because they rented that building from us for two years. So, in the meantime, Kenny got into more the landscape business. So, then he was

landscaping and so he got involved with Garrett Research and he landscaped a lot in Palos Verdes.

1H10M13S

Interviewer:

Let's take another break here.

[Break]

[End Alice Uyeda CD 1; Begin CD 2]

Interviewer:

Okay, Alice; let's take a---I'm going to step back again---we'll step back again, and I'm I want to get back with you and Kenny. I'm also going to take you back in time again, and we're going back to Kenny's involvement prior to being a county planning commissioner. And I want to take you back again as to the business here, the type of business with the nursery, and what did he get involved in with the nursery? You mentioned the Chamber of Commerce .can you elaborate some more ?

Uyeda:

Yes, I guess because we had a business, the Chamber probably came and probably wanted him to be a member, and when we became a member, he got involved in them having their annual banquets. And so at the banquets he would go and help to decorate their stage, so that it would be a nice atmosphere for the banquet. And he did that for many, many years. And so, from there, from his association with the people, and somehow the people involved there were the other city people, or officials, or commissioners or whatever. And from there, is probably how he got involved in being appointed as a Planning Commissioner.

Interviewer:

And what are some of Kenny's maybe unique contributions to the city? You mentioned some programs he developed for the city.

Uyeda:

Well, I know that one of his main objectives or goals, or what he felt was important was to have a balanced city, and that would be a third residential, a third industrial, and a third commercial, and that's how he felt was balanced. And then also, his vision was, once he was at the Planning Commission for many, many years, of which he was very proud for having served for 28

consecutive years with perfect attendance. He was very proud of that.

But one of his visions was to have a Japanese garden within the Civic Center there. But, unfortunately, it was just as he was going to plan to get together the nursery people and the plans drawn up to build this nursery---this Japanese garden; he had a sudden stroke, and that was Katie Geisert who was the mayor at that time, she remembered Kenny's vision, and therefore, Epson had carried the ball and built the garden, but Katie made sure it was remembered that it was Kenny's vision to have this garden. So there was a dedication ceremony for him in 1994.

OH03M44S

Interviewer:

Oh, I see---wow; going back again, while Kenny was involved with the Chamber of Commerce and also with the city planning commission, what was the---again this is---again post-War, what were some of the attitudes . . . did Kenny bring back any issues or stories of members on the commission, members in the Chamber, or even just some of his involvement with the business?

Uyeda:

I never heard him mention anything about any negativity, or discrimination. It was always---he might have felt something in time, but he never did mention or . . . he wanted to be above any feelings, and then so he never brought any stories back to me.

Interviewer:

What do you think your viewpoint---your thoughts are to be continually appointed and re-appointed to the Planning Commission---what was Kenny---what was in Kenny that you thought---what you would think---would the city continue to reappoint him? What was unique about him?

Uyeda:

Well, I don't know why the people did appoint him, but I know that he was very proud of being on the Planning Commission. He was proud of his---he was very interested in the work, and he just felt like he wanted to benefit the city. And he was just---he was just proud of being the recommending board---recommending for the Council, and he just liked that process.

Interviewer:

Getting back to your family life, let's get back to your family life. There are just a few questions that I'd like you to spend some time with---is with again with Dessie and Doug and you and Kenny; what was it like back in those days---I guess we're talking about in the 50s; right, and with the business, too and in the instance of the schools and the business itself? Did Doug or Dessie every have any problems with their schools, facing any problems?

OH06M46S

Uyeda:

Well, I really didn't hear of anything. There were no direct problems or like Doug might have mentioned right at the very beginning when we first came here, he might have felt something, but I really didn't know about any incidents.

Interviewer:

What about your---what about some close friends that you first established with when you first moved to Torrance? Are you still---do you still have close ties with them? What---who are some of the friends that you had here?

Uyeda:

Well, friends were---like the connections I had with like the Community Chest and the Red Cross, or because of Kenny's involvement, all of his friends became my friends, too. And

Interviewer:

Are you still in contact with them today? Or are they . . . ?

Uyeda:

The ones that are left, yes; but unfortunately a lot of them have now passed on. But now, in recent years, I've become more involved with Gardena. So, I don't know if that interferes with this?

Interviewer:

No go ahead; continue.

Uyeda:

Because I'm closer---it's easier for me to drive to Gardena. And then I've gotten involved with the Nakaoka Center and I do a lot in Gardena. And then I've gotten involved in the Adult

Education Programs, especially the music programs. So I spend a lot of time on that.

OH08M43S

Interviewer:

Could you elaborate a little bit more on some of the current activities that you're involved with?

I know you're very busy. You related to me you're involved in a lot. What are some of them?

Uyeda:

Well, my involvement is going back, starting from Tuesday. I'm involved in---I do go to a Levy School for Piano session, and then in the afternoon I go to Gardena to help a teacher in the Adult Education Program who has a ukulele class, and now it has turned into a recorder class. And so, I don't play the ukulele or I don't play the recorder, but I have learned to put music on the computer and print them out. And so, I make up sets of music and help the teacher in that way. And that's on Tuesday. And then on Thursday, I help deliver Meals on Wheels in Gardena.

Interviewer:

How did you get involved in Meals on Wheels?

Uyeda:

Meals on Wheels---okay; we have choral group that meets on Fridays at the Nakaoka Center and this I've been involved with since 1997 with the same teacher that I'm involved with on Tuesdays. His name is Jim Stump. And we got involved in a choral group. We thought---we wanted to start a choral group. We initially started with seven people in 1997, and now on my roster, I have 60 people. But, although every Friday---we meet every Friday from---it's from 9:30 until 12:00. Although the same people are not always there, but we have on the average of 40 people, and we practice. He---Jim Stump plays the piano, and then we sing songs. I don't sing songs, I furnish the music. I do it on the computer and write out the music. And then it's from there that the Nakaoka Center, because we're there every week, they asked if there was anyone that could help to---help with the Meals on Wheels. And that's how I got involved, and I think I've been doing it for about three years now.

So, it's a very rewarding . . . it only takes an hour, hour and a half or two hours at the most. But going out and delivering

to these people that are not able to get out to get their meals, it's very, very rewarding.

Interviewer:

Is there any other activity that we've missed? Seems like you are a very busy person.

Uyeda:

I've been on the Election Board since 1957, which I really enjoy. And there are many years that I---I don't know just when I became inspector, but they had me on the position of inspector which is very challenging, because I---when I first went there, the process we had to look up people's names in this roster. And so I made alphabetical tabs on my own, and then later on, the County sends out these nice tabs, alphabetical tabs, and I thought, "Hmm; that's a nice idea."

Interviewer:

This is for the City of Torrance?

Uyeda:

It's the County and the City; so, every election, I've worked on every election, city and county. But the last year or so, it so happened I had a little injury and couldn't serve; but I'm back on track again. I'll be---I'll be working on March 2nd, but it will not be as an inspector, because this person I'm working for---I can't remember, Agnes LeResche . . . was there a Planning Commissioner . . . Al, would you know back, his name was . . . well, anyway, his widow, she has---she works at the Levy school. And so she---I saw her at a---accidentally or coincidentally, she was at a funeral in Gardena, and saw me, and she said, "O, are you working on the election board?" And I said, "No, they haven't called me this time." She said, "Well, would you like to work for me?" I said, "Oh, sure." So I'm going to be working in south Torrance on March 2nd; so I'll be back on track.

0H13M55S

Interviewer:

Okay.

Uyeda:

But, I enjoy that, and then I help . . . because Kenny was a charter member of Torrance---the North Torrance Lions---even after he passed away, I do help with the North Torrance Lions.

Although I am not a member, they have made me a Den Mother, and I just help them in every way that I can. And so any of their fundraisers---and one of the fundraisers that we had was because I collected pachinko machines for so many years, and I had about 30 machines. And so, I wanted to put them to use; so one year, someone from the Sister City said, "Well gee, we'd like to have some machines for the children to play at the festival." So I said, "Gee, do you think I could make use of my pachinko machines?" So I set those up at the Lions Club . . . actually it was for them to be . . . it's their booth, but it was my machines, but then it was the Lions Club that was doing the thing. And so for many years, we had that as a fund raiser at the Bunka Sai every year.

But, one year they had to tell us, because it's a form of gambling---although we didn't have it as---we just had it like an arcade where they can buy so many balls for \$1 and then play with those balls until they run out. One year they said that we could no longer have it--do that anymore. And that was simply because some Korean people wanted to set up a pachinko parlor in Torrance and so, of course, they could not allow us to have that and then turn them down. That was understandable. So for 2-3 years, my pachinko machines had to be idle---just stored in my shed. So I thought, well JCI maybe at their carnivals they could use pachinko machines. So I approached Mr.Hiroto, the Director, and he said, "No, I don't think so." So I let that go for one year.

Then the next year, I said, "I've got to let---get those---I've got to put them to use." So I went to Mr.Hiroto, and I said, "Wimp, would you mind if I go to the Gardena Police and ask them if it's okay?" And he said, "Go ahead." So I went to the Gardena Police and, luckily when I went to the Police Department, the receptionist or the secretary happened to be somebody that I knew from some other---and she got me through to the Police Chief and he okayed it. So, since then, JCI has been able to use my pachinko machines for their annual carnival. So that was another one of my hobbies was collecting pachinko machines.

OH17M17S

Interviewer:

Wow, very interesting; for the record, I don't think it was really recorded. What time---when did Kenny pass away?

Uyeda:

He passed away January 11, 1986. And he was very active, and he was a very positive person. Health wise, he went to the doctor and the doctor says perfect health. And he was, but he did--- he worked very hard making plans and he was doing a landscaping for Garrett over here and making plans. He would work all night long without sleep. And he did that quite a bit, and then he'd have to do his usual other work, too. But right up to ten minutes before the stroke hit him, he was---he was fine. But then this one day, it was in November . . . so he was right here and he called me, and he wanted me to call the doctor. And so, he knew then that something was critically wrong, so by the time paramedics came and took him to the hospital, he was in a coma. And he was in a coma for eight weeks, and then he passed away very peacefully. For his sake, being a very active person, I'm glad that he didn't know what hit him. He went very peacefully; so. But he left me such a wonderful legacy.

Interviewer:

How old was he when he passed away?

Uyeda:

He was only 67. But he left me a legacy, being involved with all these people, and all these people liked him, and so even after he passed away---or even when he was in the hospital, all these people, even the city people came, and visited him at the hospital. And then even after he passed away they were all so good to me. And so I just you know I feel very blessed, and now I realize---now that I'm doing a lot of things, I realize why he did all he did, because he enjoyed them. And that's how I feel now, because I do all these things.

Interviewer:

Perhaps that answers the question I asked about as to how can Kenny continue to be reappointed year after year is because of his interest.

Uyeda:

Because he really---he really liked it, and I guess the people liked him; so yeah.

Interviewer:

It's the same with you right now with all your involvements. It sounds like you're giving back.

Uyeda:

Well, I feel that it's what his legacy---that has taught me. And then I still feel like because no matter what I do, it seems to all turn out okay. So I feel like he must be helping me--- there helping me. So I feel very fortunate.

0H20M41S

Interviewer:

A good general question, Alice; since the time you moved here from Utah, back to L.A., back in Torrance to where we are today, what changes do you see in people, the area, the attitudes?

Uyeda:

Well the changes---the area, of course, has changed tremendously.

Interviewer:

The growth?

Uyeda:

The growth is very . . . people, it's . . . well, I think in my case, I'm surrounded with many more people, and many, many more activities and things.

Interviewer:

What about people's attitudes? What about this relationship from . . . ?

Uyeda:

Well, all I can say is everybody is just very loving and caring and I guess you know as far as I'm concerned, people are wonderful.

Interviewer:

How about the children?

Uyeda:

And they're wonderful, too. I feel very blessed.

0H22M06S

Interviewer:

Well that's very good. Let's cut right here.

[Break]

Interviewer:

Okay, Alice; this one final question . . . do you feel that it's important that your experience or the experiences of the Nisei are recorded and passed onto the future generations? What are your feelings about that, basically what we're doing today--- recording the experience of yourself and other Nisei?

Uyeda:

Yes, I think it's important. I feel it is important and I feel like I want to share my experiences so that the future generation will know what all we have done or what we have gone through. So, I do feel it's important and it's a wonderful thing that you people are doing, too, to try to preserve some of the history.

Interviewer:

How about your grandchildren, have they talked to you? Have you related any of the stories like we've gone through now?

Uyeda:

Well, I have bits and pieces and they're very interested and would like to know more. They would like to have me put it down, but I just haven't gotten around to it. But I know they all are interested and want to know. And I know that as years go by that they will want to know more even in our case . . . there are missing links that we would like to know what our parents have done. And it comes up all the time, different things do; I wished we had known more about what parents did, and I think that will be the same thing for the future generations to come in our case.

Interviewer:

Okay; to close, is there anything else you would like to add to what you have related so far?

0H24M37S

Uyeda:

Well, all I can say is that I think that I'm very blessed and I feel that as long as we do what we'd like to do and try to help others and promote whatever cause we want to, we should go ahead and think positively about everything and go forward and try to make the best of whatever the situation.

Interviewer:

Well, I want to thank you on behalf of the South Bay JCL. We appreciate your taking your time today to give us your oral history because I think this can be very valuable. And again, you indicated that your grandchildren---or you wanted to record this; and you just have recorded it. So thank you.

[Background Request to Read Statement]

Interviewer:

For the record, it's Sunday, February 22, 2004. This is a continuation and the second CD of the interview with Alice Uyeda on the same date being conducted by Ray Shibata for the South Bay Oral History Project. The audio and catalog persons remain the same.

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[End Alice Uyeda CD 2]