

South Bay History Project Interview:  
July 26, 2003

Ted Hasegawa  
File No. 1 and File No. 2

[Begin Ted Hasegawa CD 1]

**Interviewer:**

It is 1:30 on Saturday, July 26, 2003. My name is Diane Tanaka and I will be interviewing Ted Hasegawa today as part of the South Bay Oral History Project. The audio equipment recording this interview is being monitored by Ernest Tsujimoto and Scott Fujita and the interview is being cataloged by Dale Sato. All copyrights, title, and any other rights arising out of this interview whether it---whether in its entirety, part, or derivative form, and whether an audio, written, or any other format shall belong to the South Bay Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. Copying of this interview recording whether in its entirety or a part is strictly prohibited without a written authorization from the South Bay Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. This is the first CD of the interview of Ted Hasegawa being recorded on this time---or on this date. Okay; we're ready for the interview.

Thank you, Ted, so much for being here today. I first wanted to give some---we're going to go over your background information before World War II. Where and when were you born?

**Hasegawa:**

I was born in Sacramento, California January 16, 1921.

**Interviewer:**

And where did you grow up?

**Hasegawa:**

Well, I grew up a few years in Sacramento, I think [*Laughter*] because I was just born there, so. . . and then, my folks decided to get out of Northern California and come down to the Los Angeles area because they had a friend in the Los Angeles area. And I spent another two, two and a half years there. And then the folks decided that I should be shipped to Japan to study more Japanese and culture of Japan. So at about five years old, they shipped me to Wakayama Japan.

**Interviewer:**

Is that where your family was from?

**Hasegawa:**

Yes; my family comes from Japan---Wakayama-shi, which is the capitol of Wakayama.

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**Interviewer:**

Before we go on, what are your parents' names?

**Hasegawa:**

My father was Shonosuke Hasegawa and my mother was **Tokuye Komura** Hasegawa.

**Interviewer:**

And I should ask, now where---when did they immigrate to America?

**Hasegawa:**

I think it was about four or five years before I was born. I think it was about that time. My father actually landed in Hawaii, and he spent some time in a pineapple field and he just did like that kind of work. So he hopped a ship. [**Laughs**] Since his brother was already in the Sacramento area, he hopped a ship and came to San Francisco to meet his brother there and live in Northern California.

**Interviewer:**

What did he do when he arrived?

**Hasegawa:**

I think he was working in the orchard mostly you know. I don't know what really he did, but I think he worked on the farm.

[**Laughs**]

**Interviewer:**

Now was he married?

**Hasegawa:**

No; he was still single at the time and . . . because when he immigrated he was about 19 years old---between 18 and 19. And since [**Laughs**] he was---all this work was new to him and he just did like pineapple work. So he joined his brother in the orchard field, yeah.

**Interviewer:**

What was his brother's name; do you remember?

**Hasegawa:**

Gee, it's quite some time---his brother's . . . I can't recall. I have a record probably at home, but . . .

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**Interviewer:**

That's okay. Now, do you know when he---what year he first arrived in Hawaii?

**Hasegawa:**

I think---let's see, that's three years---18; so probably he arrived there about 1918---1917-1918.

**0H05M25S**

**Interviewer:**

And then around---then a little while later he moved to Sacramento and . . . how long was---when did he move to Sacramento---what year?

**Hasegawa:**

I---he probably lived there probably a couple two, three years and that was about. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Okay; now how did your parents meet?

**Hasegawa:**

It was a picture bride. Yeah; he sent his picture to Japan and the family got together and said, "Oh, this is the gal we'll send over there," you know.

**Interviewer:**

Oh okay.

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; my mother came from a pretty big family---I think four brothers and three sisters, Komura family and they were old family, you know---farming family.

**Interviewer:**

Did---do you recall, did she ever talk about you know enjoying or talking about---did she want to come to America? Do you . . . ?

**Hasegawa:**

I don't know the way. [*Laughs*]. The trouble is you know when you're marrying to a farm worker, the life is not that easy, and

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I imagine that she was not too happy . . . the old days.  
[Laughs]

**Interviewer:**

Okay; and now do you have any brothers or sisters?

**Hasegawa:**

I only have one sister, but she's one year younger than I am---just two of us.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; when you were sent to Japan were you sent alone?

**Hasegawa:**

No; my sister came a little bit later. I went first and she came about a year later.

**0H07M25S**

**Interviewer:**

Now who did you live with?

**Hasegawa:**

I lived with Komura family---my mother's side. So Komura family had a lot of kids so it was easy to get along with, you know the rest of them so. . . .

**Interviewer:**

Now how did you adapt? Did you speak English before you left?

**Hasegawa:**

[Laughs] Nothing.

**Interviewer:**

Oh you didn't; when you left for Japan you spoke zero English?

**Hasegawa:**

I was five years old so consequently it---you know no Japanese?

**Interviewer:**

No Japanese?

**Hasegawa:**

No; I mean I couldn't speak Japanese that much, yeah.

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**Interviewer:**

Okay; what did you speak before you left; do you remember?

**Hasegawa:**

It was what?

**Interviewer:**

What language did you speak before you left?

**Hasegawa:**

Well five years old only you know very little English, too, but kind of rough time in Japan [*Laughs*] trying to get---learn that Japanese language at five years old.

**Interviewer:**

What grade were you put in when you went?

**Hasegawa:**

Well I don't think I started school yet; yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; now were you upset at your parents for leaving---having to move to Japan?

**Hasegawa:**

Well . . . [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Do you remember?

**Hasegawa:**

How what?

**Interviewer:**

How did you feel when you. . .

**Hasegawa:**

Left Japan?

**Interviewer:**

Or, going to Japan?

**Hasegawa:**

Oh, going to Japan? Five years old, you didn't have much choice you know. [*Laughs*] So, but the lady that took us there was a

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real friendly lady that was a family friend---not a relative,  
just a friend took us.

**Interviewer:**

Now, how did the other family members treat you?

**Hasegawa:**

Oh, it was nice because the kids were small, but a lot of same age, you know five, six, seven, eight. The oldest, I think, was about 15 years---probably 10 years older than I was, yeah. But, it was nice trying to get along with them you know because I couldn't speak too much English and I didn't hardly speak Japanese; but I learned awful fast, you know. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Did they ever treat you like an outsider?

**Hasegawa:**

No; I was treated real nice, yeah. My uncle and aunt was real nice to us, and of course they were real nice people---took care of five or six you know, so it was easy for them, I think.

**0H10M23S**

**Interviewer:**

Okay; so you're six . . . how long were you living in Japan?

**Hasegawa:**

About six years---six to seven years.

**Interviewer:**

So when---by the time you left, how old were you?

**Hasegawa:**

I left when I was around five and came back about 11.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; and when you came back . . . let's see, no, going back. Did your family, your parents ever visit you while you were in Japan?

**Hasegawa:**

No, no---no visit. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

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Did you miss them?

**Hasegawa:**

That was pretty rough time you know those days, and probably \$100 trip or \$200 trip was pretty expensive.

**Interviewer:**

Now how did you get to Japan?

**Hasegawa:**

On a boat.

**Interviewer:**

How long was the boat ride?

**Hasegawa:**

Well probably about a week, 10 days at least, I think. **[Laughs]**

**Interviewer:**

Did you ever miss your family---your parents when you were in Japan? Did you feel any---like you missed them?

**Hasegawa:**

Well, five to 11 you're---you know you got cousins and aunt and uncle that treated you pretty nice, you forget about the folks **[Laughs]** It's too young to think about the folks in those days, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; now when you came back, what was it like?

**Hasegawa:**

Pretty lonely because I was with a lot of my cousins you know and we got a long real well. So when you come back, just two of us, it was pretty lonely. So I was ready to go back---next day if they would've paid my way, I would have been gone. **[Laughs]**

**Interviewer:**

Oh.

**Hasegawa:**

That's the reason they called me back that you're just not going to be remembering your parents. You know you come back and you say, "Well, I'm back," you know. Usually, they forget about

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your parents when you're in---so far away, and they don't visit you, you know, regularly or something you know.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; now do you know why your parents didn't just move back to Japan?

**Hasegawa:**

Well, I think they hear so much---so many stories about people---young people that goes back and don't come back until they're 20, 22, 25 years old. They---when they come back they don't know their parents.

**Interviewer:**

Why were---why did your parents---did your parents want to go back to Japan or they were going to stay?

**0H13M26S**

**Hasegawa:**

No; I don't think that my folks were---in fact my dad has never gone back to Japan. My mom has gone back, I think once or twice. This is---we're talking about before the war.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; so when you came back, did you speak---how did you get along with your language abilities?

**Hasegawa:**

[Laughs] Well, at home it was no problem, you know. But, trying to get out in society, you no speak English you know; so it was not easy outside.

**Interviewer:**

Where were you living at this time?

**Hasegawa:**

When I came back, my folks worked for Aoki Farm, which occupied---the company occupied the old Torrance Airport area. They were you might say vegetable farmers, yeah mostly. And, they worked for them. They had a house on the property---at the airport property.

**Interviewer:**

Your parents owned the house?

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**Hasegawa:**

Pardon?

**Interviewer:**

Did your parents own the house?

**Hasegawa:**

No, no; it was owned Aoki Farm, yeah. There were a few houses at the farm that they would---the workers would occupy a few houses, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Did you have---was it a private house or were there other families that lived within the house?

**Hasegawa:**

No; just a private house; yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Now where did you go to school?

**0H15M20S**

**Hasegawa:**

Well, I started out at Walteria School---Elementary School. I started off in kindergarten when I was 11 years old, and the chairs they had---I could just barely occupy the chair. I couldn't [**Laughs**] . . . it was little tiny chairs you know for five years old or six years old. And, I stayed in kindergarten for about six months then they decided, "Well he knows what the cow, what the dog, and so forth and so on, you know. They hold up the pictures and say, "That is a dog," you know. That lasted about six months in kindergarten; then I went to first grade. That lasted another six months and then they put me to second, third for the six month, eight month, year, and they finally put me in the fifth grade and I stayed there for about a year, year and a half.

**Interviewer:**

Do you remember how old you were when you were in fifth grade?

**Hasegawa:**

I think I was about 12, 13 years old, but I was still behind.

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**Interviewer:**

Did you have any friends?

**Hasegawa:**

Not really. **[Laughs]** It was rough going, you know, to try to comprehend the English language and . . . but as far as math was concerned, it was---I was doing you know fifth, sixth grade math or better because Japan math they move pretty fast---math subjects. So---and then lunch time, we had people doing gardening work, you know, cutting weeds around the school campus. And, I joined that and they said if you joined that, do the volunteer work, they'd give you free lunch. So I thought, "Oh, I'll have a free lunch." **[Laughs]** So I did that for about six, eight months.

**Interviewer:**

Can you go back and describe when you lived at Aoki Farms? Your house---what was your house like?

0H17M45S

**Hasegawa:**

It was a pretty nice house for an old constructed house, you know. It had---I think we had outside toilets, you know---outhouse, and bath was an old ofuroba, which is usually made of redwood, you know round redwood fire, you know logs and stuff. But it was rough going because we tried to help cook---folks working, so two of us do the cooking, light the furo, stuff like that, you know. But it wasn't that enjoyable. **[Laughs]** It wasn't that easy---rough going for 11, 12 years old.

**Interviewer:**

Now how---what did your mother do as an occupation?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Did she work?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah.

**Interviewer:**

What did she do?

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**Hasegawa:**

She would probably work in the packing area, you know.

**Interviewer:**

On the farm?

**Hasegawa:**

The men work out and packing and probably inside work; but they both worked.

**Interviewer:**

Did you---when you came back, did you get along with your parents?

**Hasegawa:**

Sort of I might say. [*Laughs*] It was hard; it's pretty hard, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Did you go to church?

**Hasegawa:**

Very, very seldom; Sunday was a lot of time work because they work Sunday for market Monday delivery to the markets, you know. So usually Saturday was their Sunday. Sunday was a workday for field workers. That's how it was in the field, you know.

Sunday, we worked. Saturday, we had a day off, and we had maybe the folks decide to take us into L.A. We had an old car---jump in an old car and head out to L.A.

**Interviewer:**

What would you do in L.A.?

**0H20M31S**

**Hasegawa:**

First I'd---we'd go to the restaurant, you know, and that's how I learned my favorite dish [*Laughs*]---hamburgers. But that was---you know, we looked for that. You know maybe once a month we'd go into L.A.

**Interviewer:**

What did you eat on a regular basis?

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**Hasegawa:**

What do I what?

**Interviewer:**

What did you---what was your regular meals?

**Hasegawa:**

Regular meal usually . . . .

**Interviewer:**

At home?

**Hasegawa:**

Well the farmer---we'd have green beans, celery, a vegetable cooked with . . . I remember a lot of times they'd buy these bacon squares, you know. They were probably five to ten cents a piece. Go to the grocery store and buy two, three of those and that will last a couple of weeks. You know, they'd cut up that, cook the vegetables, and it was you might say okazu type. You know, no steaks and no, you know, pork chops or anything like that. It was mostly farm vegetable with a little bit of bacon. Once in a while, you'd get maybe a pork chop, you know, cut up and cooked. So okazu type---the old farm standby. That's what we had most of the time---99 nine-tenths time that's what we had. **[Laughs]**

**Interviewer:**

Now what did you eat? You said that you used to work for your lunch?

**Hasegawa:**

Lunch we'd try to---they'd try to say, "Let's have a sandwich or something," you know. Some would buy bologna sliced, that type of, you know. Once in a while we were lucky; we'd get a little ham, you know for sandwiches. **[Laughs]**

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; now after school, you know you talked about going to school, then what did you do when you got home?

**Hasegawa:**

Mostly studies. **[Laughs]** I tried to study so that to get a little ahead, you know; but just two of us so it wasn't that easy to study.

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**Interviewer:**

Now when you got---after Walteria School, where did you go next?

**Hasegawa:**

After Walteria School, we went to Torrance Grammar School---Fern Avenue Grammar School in Torrance. After they quit the Aoki Farm, they decided to farm little ground about probably at that time about two, three acres---tomato and strawberries on the corner of Sepulveda and Torrance Boulevard. That would be on the southwest corner, which would be where the bank is right now---the big bank and that GNC---that store right on the southwest corner.

**Interviewer:**

Oh, is that Torrance Boulevard or . . .?

**Hasegawa:**

No, Sepulveda and Hawthorne--- Sepulveda and Hawthorne, yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Hawthorne?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; that's where they farm the tomatoes and strawberries there.

**Interviewer:**

Now did they own this land?

**Hasegawa:**

No; it's a leased ground. Back in the old, old days, Nisei could not lease properties. So they found out that this Hawaiian, Bob Ueda lived in Lomita would lease the ground for you and you'd pay Bob Ueda so much a year or so much every six months. So he leased a lot of properties in this area because he'd say, "Well sons too young couldn't lease properties." So he was the lessor---sort of like a middle man.

**Interviewer:**

When you said Hawaiian?

**Hasegawa:**

He was an islander. That's why they call him---he's from Hawaii---Hawaiian.

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**Interviewer:**

So he was actually Nisei?

**Hasegawa:**

I think he was a Nisei; I'm not positive, but he was a younger fellow, you know, and he leased a lot of properties in the Torrance area and Lomita, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Now, where did you live?

**0H25M32S**

**Hasegawa:**

Same area right there, Sepulveda and Hawthorne. I had a little house and a barn.

**Interviewer:**

Did they have to build their own home?

**Hasegawa:**

No; it was there---usually it was there. We had a neighbor that also leased the ground and the house was on the property.

**Interviewer:**

During this time, did you associate with any non-Japanese people?

**Hasegawa:**

That's what?

**Interviewer:**

You know during that time, did your family or yourself---did you associate with Caucasians?

**Hasegawa:**

Not too many because they---Nisei parents very seldom associated with white Americans.

**Interviewer:**

What about you?

**Hasegawa:**

It was mostly Japanese.

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**Interviewer:**

Did you speak English to your Japanese friends or Japanese?

**Hasegawa:**

We'd try to speak English; yeah. But, my neighbor was also from Japan and he came probably about the same time, but he was a little bit older---about four or five years older. So we got along pretty good. He was just right next door. They had strawberries and . . . .

**Interviewer:**

Okay; now what grade were you in at Torrance Grammar School?

**Hasegawa:**

I was sixth grade, I think.

**Interviewer:**

Do you know how old you were?

**Hasegawa:**

I was---let's see I was there so I was probably about 15, 14---14, 15 because I was probably two years late.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; and do you ever recall having---did you have Caucasian friends then?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; we played a lot of soccer at the time in the old, you know back in those times. We played a lot of soccer and we got to know quite a few guys that . . . .

**0H28M00S**

**Interviewer:**

How did they treat you?

**Hasegawa:**

Pretty good actually---pretty good.

**Interviewer:**

Did they---they never made fun of you or . . . ?

**Hasegawa:**

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No, no; we had---in fact, we had I think quite a few Japanese going to Fern Avenue because there were a lot of farmers in the Torrance area---lot of strawberry farmers. In Torrance, strawberry was well known at the market, you know, a lot of Torrance berries---strawberries.

**Interviewer:**

Were the other farmers Japanese families or Caucasian families?

**Hasegawa:**

There were---well, there was a lot of Caucasian families in Torrance, but they were concentrated in the old Torrance area, you know---that's the downtown Torrance area right around there most of them.

**Interviewer:**

And you lived on the outside?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; we were out---outside, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Did you ever travel into old Torrance?

**Hasegawa:**

No; not too much. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Do you think that if you did, did they treat your---did the inner-Torrance---downtown Torrance people, did they treat you any differently?

**Hasegawa:**

No; I don't think so---not you know---not like right after the war.

**Interviewer:**

Okay.

**Hasegawa:**

Or war time.

**Interviewer:**

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Where did you go to get your---if you had---where did you for your---where was your doctor located? Did you have a doctor or a dentist?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; we used to go to a doctor in San Pedro, Terminal Island doctor. Of course, very seldom we went to the doctor, but that's---I started going to the doctor when I was in junior high or starting high school. I had a bleeding problem. I had ulcerative colitis and the doctor, San Pedro, diagnosed it. And, then I went to Doctor Tashiro in Gardena, and he said, "There's nothing that you can do. Just watch your diet," you know. That was all.

**Interviewer:**

Do you remember the doctor's name in San Pedro? Was he Caucasian or Japanese?

**Hasegawa:**

Oh; I can't recall that doctor.

**Interviewer:**

So was he Caucasian?

**Hasegawa:**

No; Japanese doctor. And Doctor Tashiro was in Gardena, and most of the people around this area went to Doctor Tashiro.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; let's see, what about then---what high school did you go to?

**Hasegawa:**

I went to Redondo High School, but I went two years. Well, in fact I was going to---this was seventh grade or---no; yeah, seventh grader started at Torrance High. So after getting out of Fern Avenue we went to Torrance High School. That was seventh grade. And, when I went to Torrance High School, there was a Japanese market at Torrance and Hawthorne in the east side and a Japanese store on the west side.

And, one day after I was in Torrance High School, they said, "I want to see you in the office." I got a directive said---my teacher says, "You have to report to the office this morning." I thought, "What now?" And, I went to the office, and they said,

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"Which side of Hawthorne Boulevard do you live on the east side or the west side?" And at that time I lived on the west side, which was about--the house was on the west side about a block south of--block north of Torrance Boulevard. And they said, "I'm sorry, but you're out of district." I said, "What district are we?" He said, "You do not have a district there; that's a county territory." That--residents on the west side has got to go to Redondo.

So, I thought, "Gee, how did they find out that I was on the . . ." and then I found out that this gal was going to Torrance High from the same side of the street [**Laughs**] said, "How about so and so; he's goes to Torrance High, too." I said, "That's how they found out see." So, I went to Torrance---I mean, Hawthorne--[**Laughs**] Redondo Central--it's a middle school---7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. So, I went to the middle school before; then I went to Redondo Union.

**Interviewer:**

You know, during this time, how was your English?

**0H33M51S**

**Hasegawa:**

Getting better [**Laughs**]---getting better; yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Did you have an accent?

**Hasegawa:**

Huh?

**Interviewer:**

Did you have an accent?

**Hasegawa:**

No; I was doing pretty good; yeah, I was doing pretty good for an old Kibei, you might say; you know [**Laughs**] because in those days, if you're Kibei you had a hell of an accent and you know you. . . .

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; so when you were in, I guess, junior high did you play any sports then?

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**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; I used to play basketball---mostly basketball and soccer at a league for middle school.

**Interviewer:**

What kind. . . were the other kids in the league Japanese, too?

**Hasegawa:**

Not too many--very few Japanese.

**Interviewer:**

Okay.

**Hasegawa:**

Until I went to Redondo, and then found out that there were quite a few Japanese.

**Interviewer:**

Oh, at Redondo?

**Hasegawa:**

Because Redondo District covered old Perry section--Perry, they used to call it Perry section. It was 182<sup>nd</sup> and Madrona right now in that area. Where North High is located, there were quite a few Japanese there, and they were going to Redondo High School. Now, they went to other school in the other area, and--and they were going to Redondo, and kids from Palos Verdes came to Redondo. People from Hermosa [Beach], Manhattan [Beach] came to Redondo High School because that was only high school there.

**Interviewer:**

It must have been a---it was a pretty big school then, huh?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; pretty good---pretty good sized school.

**Interviewer:**

Um, you know you mentioned that North--the North Torrance area was---there were lots of Japanese, what---why were they in that area?

**Hasegawa:** I don't know why that sector was a Redondo District. County territory actually consisted of Torrance Boulevard on the south and 182<sup>nd</sup> on the north, and Hawthorne Boulevard west of

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that consisted of County territory. It was County government; it wasn't Torrance.

**0H36M47S**

**Interviewer:**

And what---were there farms? What was there?

**Hasegawa:**

All farm territory--all farmers.

**Interviewer:** Okay; now in high school at---I guess at Redondo, what was your high school experience like?

**Hasegawa:**

High school was little more fun, you know; but I was sick most of the time. So, I had a rough time at times, but we had a Japanese Club at Redondo--quite a few members. I think there must have been 30-40 members in the Japanese Club; yeah. Of course, we didn't have too many activities in the old days, you know---no money either [*Laughs*] So we didn't have too much activities.

**Interviewer:**

Did you have a part-time job?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; I worked Saturday and Sunday. My---no school, so I work--- I got a job Saturday and Sunday out in the farm. And my junior year, I had a job in San Pedro at the fruit stand washing you know and cleaning vegetables and stuff.

**Interviewer:**

How much money did you make?

**Hasegawa:**

I think it probably paid us about 20 cents an hour if you're lucky.

**Interviewer:**

Was that good money?

**Hasegawa:**

[*Laughs*]

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**Interviewer:**

Was that a lot of money then?

**Hasegawa:**

It was---it was pretty good money in those days; you know.

**Interviewer:**

What would you do with your money?

**Hasegawa:**

Saved it---kept saving it and saving it. Folks said, "Oh, well save it;" you know. "Put it away." But, once in a while we used to go into town and have my favorite, which is go to the drugstore and go to the fountain and say, "I want a Cherry Coke," you know or a big Cherry Coke or so forth or ice cream. [Laughs] That was a treat.

**Interviewer:**

When you said, "Going into town," where was town?

**Hasegawa:**

Redondo usually.

**Interviewer:**

Hmm.

**Hasegawa:**

You got to walk.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; and just ask again; now in high school, did you---were people pretty nice to you?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; Redondo was pretty nice---pretty nice.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; did you have like dances or did you go to the prom? Did you have those things back then?

**Hasegawa:**

[Gesture]

**Interviewer:**

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No; did you have a girlfriend?

**Hasegawa:**

I had a couple of girlfriends [*Laughs*]---two sisters.

**Interviewer:**

What? [*Laughs*] In high school?

**Hasegawa:**

They lived up in Palos Verdes, you know and no car; so what do you do?

**Interviewer:**

[*Laughs*]

**Hasegawa:**

You can't do much without a car, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Well, how'd you meet them?

**Hasegawa:**

School.

**Interviewer:**

Oh that's right. Okay; let's see, when did you graduate high school?

**Hasegawa:**

I graduated in 1941 at 20 years old.

**0H40M30S**

**Interviewer:**

Do---oh; what month, June?

**Hasegawa:**

June; yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; now what did you do---what were your plans?

**Hasegawa:**

Well, I liked automotive work. So, right after June I put an application in to Frank **Wiggins?** Trade School, which was L.A.'s

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trade school at the time. Now it's Los Angeles Trade Tech, I think. And, I studied automotive. I started course in automotive.

**Interviewer:**

Who paid for your school?

**Hasegawa:**

That was free---Los Angeles; yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Oh.

**Hasegawa:**

Los Angeles, I think---Frank **Wiggins?** Trade School was one of L.A.'s school district schools.

**Interviewer:**

How did you get there?

**Hasegawa:**

I got a car. [**Laughs**] What happened is my---my father's cousin in Orange County had an accident. He was cranking a Model T truck, and the truck started and knocked him down or something and it was---he had an accident. And, he needed somebody to help at the farm. So, junior year I think I went over there to help and they bought me a car. So, I thought, "Oh boy, I have a car now;" you know. [**Laughs**] And then, I had to go to Huntington Beach School for about a semester and until he got better that he can manage, you know. And he said, "Take the car; you can go home now;" you know. So, it was an old Ford that they gave me. But, it was fun driving around. [**Laughs**]

**Interviewer:**

Hmm; did you have a driver's license?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:**

You did; how did you get---is it the same way that they do it now?

**Hasegawa:**

No, I think it's a little bit different; yeah.

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**Interviewer:**

Hmm; oh did you have any friends---do you recall any of the names of the friends that you had in high school growing up---and friends that you can remember the names?

**0H43M08S**

**Hasegawa:**

Japanese friends?

**Interviewer:**

Or whomever; uh-hm.

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; I had quite a few actually friends. And, one of them is I don't know---Yonezawa George Yonezawa, my classmate. And, Dorothy Yonezawa was my sister's classmate; you know. And, quite a few---Bill Hashimoto of that flower shop over there on Prairie and 182<sup>nd</sup>---Hashimoto's, Satos. Ted Sato was the same classmate, but I---he went back to Japan at senior---when he was a senior year---when he was a senior, and I heard he had to join the Japan Army during the World War II. [*Laughs*] But, they came back okay; so there was quite a few---Rick Matsui he was a football player. We played football when I used to run track and play for the Junior B Football. So, I had a good time in high school anyhow. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; and that---during this time, how was your relationship with your parents as you grew older?

**Hasegawa:**

Pretty good---pretty good; they were pretty strict, so you know.

**Interviewer:**

Did they ever learn English?

**Hasegawa:**

Huh?

**Interviewer:**

Did they speak English then?

**Hasegawa:**

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Did . . .?

**Interviewer:**

Did they speak English?

**Hasegawa:**

Very little---[*Laughs*] mostly Japanese. They figure, "I know how to Japanese," where it would be easier for them. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; do you remember any of the words that---any phrases that they always used?

**Hasegawa:**

Usually it's the same old phrase like all Japanese use, "gambare" to or "doshita no ka," you know---what happened. You've got to hang in there, and you have to. . .you know, "gambatte," study hard or you know. So it was mostly old phrases that they used---that they still use, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah.

**Hasegawa:**

The folks---old folks still uses. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

[*Coughing*] Can we take a break?

[*Break*]

**Interviewer:**

Okay; so Ted, can you tell me a little bit about some of the---the discrimination or the racial maybe prejudice that was experienced before the war, you know at like the pools or anything?

**0H46M30S**

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; I remember that Redondo Plunge---that was one of the largest salt water plunges in the area---in fact, I think in California. Salt water plunge---a very rare plunge, and I think what I heard was that there was an incident about some Oriental creating a problem or something and they said that they would

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not let any Orientals in. But, I don't know about the Chinese because all I know is all the Japanese friends, you know. But, nobody tried to get in because they knew that when you go up to buy tickets, "Sorry." You know they won't sell you tickets anyhow; so. But, I think if you were on the water polo team or swimming team, I think that they would let you in if you're say a Redondo student---Redondo High student. But, you had to be a student enrolled in plunge activities; you know.

**Interviewer:**

Hmm.

**Hasegawa:**

But, I imagine there were few incidents you know that discriminated against Japanese.

**Interviewer:**

Now you said, "The Chinese;" were there many Chinese people in the area before?

**Hasegawa:**

I don't know; I haven't heard you know, because there were no Chinese---what do you call it---in Redondo or Redondo area. But, I remember that there was one colored family living in Redondo, and he was a very popular student at Redondo Union, you know. He could tap dance and he can, you know; he was quite a character and everybody liked the guy.

0H48M42S

**Interviewer:**

Hmm; now aside from Japanese and Caucasians or white people, were there any other races---any other minorities?

**Hasegawa:**

In?

**Interviewer:**

In the area?

**Hasegawa:**

In the area; I've never heard of Chinese in the area period, you know.

**Interviewer:**

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What about Latino?

**Hasegawa:**

Lot of Latinos; of course, the Torrance area had a lot of Latinos. They had an area that consisted of many families over there. We used to call them El Pueblo over there just next to Mobil and west--east of Crenshaw, right next door to Mobil Refinery--east of Crenshaw. That was Latino territory.

**Interviewer:**

Do you know the cross-street Crenshaw and. . .?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; well it would be north of Torrance Boulevard between--- Torrance Boulevard . . . there's an industrial complex there and right next door, north of it. So that was a Latino territory, and a lot of Latinos came to Torrance.

**0H50M02S**

**Interviewer:**

We're going to move it up; so you were going to the Trade Tech--L.A. Trade Tech in December---or in 1941. What were you doing on December 7, 1941?

**Hasegawa:**

December 7<sup>th</sup>, I was just getting ready---sister and I was getting ready for lunch and I think it must have been around 11 o'clock or a little before; we always put the radio on, you know. We had a short-wave radio, you know [*Laughs*]. We usually---we'd walk in the house for lunch, we'd turn the radio on for news, and [*Loud Clap*] BOOM! There it was---every station, "Pearl Harbor Attack!" You know and I thought what happened, you know because we never knew what happened, you know---why.

And then I thought, "Gosh, so I got to go to school after---after lunch classes, you know I had afternoon classes. So, I thought, "Oh heck, I'll go to school." And after finding out after Pearl Harbor that they're restricting all Japanese to I think five or seven miles radius of your house, you know. And I thought, "What am I going to do? I'm driving into Los Angeles, you know every day." I thought, "Well, if they catch me, they're going to catch me." I kept driving in. [*Laughs*] I kept driving in.

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**Interviewer:**

Uh-hm; did anyone stop you?

**Hasegawa:**

No, I never got stopped.

**Interviewer:**

How did you feel when you heard the news that Pearl Harbor was attacked?

**Hasegawa:**

I thought, "Now what," you know. "What are we going to do," and we didn't think that there would be any action taken by the government, you know---I thought; but that was changed, you know after 9066-Declaration. But, I thought, "Well maybe nothing will happen," you know; "We'd just go to war." And of course, Roosevelt declared war and I thought, "Anything can happen now," you know---and sure enough. . . .

0H52M43S

**Interviewer:**

Did you---you know because you lived in Japan. . . ?

**Hasegawa:**

Huh?

**Interviewer:**

You know you lived in Japan for six years, and you lived---obviously, you're American---did you feel conflicted? I mean, how---what were you feel---thinking?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; that was a. . . I used to read quite of Japan books, you know. And one of the books I read was published in Japan. That was the title of the book was, "Warewa Moshi Tategawa?." That means, "If We Go To War." I guess it means, if we go to battle, you know. I read that book, and by golly that book said how they are going to you know go to war. They're going to go into China. They're going to go into Southeast Asia---maybe, you know the Philippines. You know that book said all these possibilities, you know. And it didn't say, "Pearl Harbor," actually you know. I didn't read that part. It was not in the book, but it said Southeast Asia, going into China, Korea---take Korea and then into China and Southeast Asia, you know. So, I thought, "By

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golly, it's---it is coming true," you know except for attacking. But, that was last minute probably by the Navy and Army, Air Force, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Did you---did you feel that you were American or did you feel a little closeness to Japan at that time?

**Hasegawa:**

Well, I felt that I'm more American now than ever before.

[Laughs] You know I was not going to take sides, you know. But, I better stay with this side since we're all here you know.

[Laughs] So. . . .

0H55M10S

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; now during this---excuse me---during this time, where were you living? Where was your family living?

**Hasegawa:**

We were living in Hawthorne Boulevard, just north of Torrance Boulevard, on a small farm. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, I remember that FBI and Department of Defense said, "Terminal Island evacuate in 48 hours." That order came in, and I thought, "Gee." I had my father's cousin there, and then FBI picked them up the next day. He got picked up; most of the fishermen that knew the southern California waters---all picked up by FBI, and they were stranded with all the ladies with little kids. And then, my father's cousin's wife said, "We need help. We need help---somebody to move our kids and our belongings." So, I said---at that time I was working part-time with a market over here on San Pedro. So, I asked the owner if I could borrow his truck. And he said, "nani suru no ka?" you know. He said, "What are you going to do with it?" I said, "I have to move my father's cousin and friends to El Monte." He said, "El Monte," "Doko e?" He didn't know where El Monte was. [Laughs] So, I said, "Los Angeles no chikai tokoro de," you know it's close to L.A. He says, "Uh, you going to help them; okay." You know so I borrowed the truck, and went over there and oh boy. Everybody had stuff thrown out---out of the house---couches, refrigerators, stoves, brand new stuff---thrown out of the house.

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They said---I said, "There's no use taking these items. Number one, I can't load it by myself and I can't get the ladies to help load up." So I said, "Get your clothing together; get the kids' stuff together;" and they still had almost a truckload. It was two families---or three families---I moved them. They had rented a place in El Monte---a house so they can have some roof over their heads. And I said, "Boy, that's a long ways to drive." No freeway in the old days; I got to go through all these towns and to El Monte from Terminal Island. And, by the time I moved them all over there, before that there were trucks all over the place. They found out that they were evacuating Terminal Island, and the guys were over there buying brand new refrigerators for \$3, \$2, you know something that cost \$50, \$100---they were buying for \$2---\$5. They were loading up the trucks, you know. I said, "What they doing," you know? They said, "**?yasuku shimau bai?.**" They said they sold it cheap to get rid of it, to get the money.

And, I finally got those people over to El Monte. By the time I come home to the market---store, this guy was nervous and shaking, "What happened," you know. It was Midnight, you know. I said, "I just finally made it over there; just got home." He thought I was lost or something, you know. That was the worst night I have ever seen in my life---evacuation 48 hours of Terminal Island---all the fishermen's wives and kids. Because, the majority of the fishermen were picked up by the FBI and they shipped them to Crystal City. Where is that---Louisiana or . . . ?

**1H00M03S**

**Interviewer:**

Or New Mexico? Oh wait; Crystal City?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; Crystal City somewhere.

**Interviewer:**

Texas---oh yeah; Texas---that sounds like in Texas.

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; they shipped them all over there and they ended up with kids and wives. Boy . . . after that I thought, "Oh boy; here we go," you know.

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**Interviewer:**

Yeah; what was your---what were you thinking?

**Hasegawa:**

I thought I hope they don't say everybody go, you know on the west coast.

**Interviewer:**

Did you think then . . . how . . . did you think that it was unfair?

**Hasegawa:**

I thought that was pretty, pretty crummy, you know. But, of course, the Sansei think they're dealing with enemy aliens, you know. Of course, there are a lot of aliens, you know. The young ones were citizens, but the older ones were aliens, you know. So, what can you do? And after studying the history of the United States, the government of the United States, and when we say, "Of all these Constitution, the Preamble, the Declaration of Independence," . . . in fact, I still remember the Declaration of Independence right here. [**Gesture**] And this was over 50 years ago. I'll recite some of those to you.

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and a pursuit of Happiness. To secure these rights, the Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just power from the consent of the governed, and when any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, laying its foundation on such a principle. . . as to them. . . seem."* Part of it. [**Laughs**]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah.

**Hasegawa:**

But I remember it was, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Wow, yeah; you have a good memory. [**Laughs**]

**Hasegawa:**

[**Laughs**]

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**Interviewer:**

You do.

**Hasegawa:**

They said to memorize your Constitution---you know Declaration of Independence. Memorize your Preamble, you know. I said, "Oh boy." [Laughs]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah.

1H02M50S

**Hasegawa:**

But it was a struggle. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; now I mean what---what did your family say?

**Hasegawa:**

Huh?

**Interviewer:**

What was your family---your parents thinking?

**Hasegawa:**

Oh, they thought, "This is it; what are we going to do now," you know. They felt lost because you don't have too much money. You only have a few dollars in the bank, and then whatever bank you had, if you had money in the Union Bank, Tokyo Gingko, [Swish], the government had it, you know. So, poor people had lots of money in the bank, there's no chance of doing anything with it, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Really?

**Hasegawa:**

At that time, the FBI had the---had you by the neck. You didn't have much chance.

**Interviewer:**

Hmm.

**Hasegawa:**

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It was rough going.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; did your auntie and your aunt and cousin---or your cousins, did they say anything to you when you were moving them? What were they thinking?

**1H04M56S**

**Hasegawa:**

Oh, I don't know. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

You don't remember?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; boy. . . .

**Interviewer:**

Hmm; can you just talk a little bit about what the---the climate or the---of the time right after Pearl Harbor? Before Pearl Harbor you said there was little or no racial discrimination. After the Pearl Harbor attack, how did you feel or what did you see?

**Hasegawa:**

Well, I think it was mostly like in L.A. area---downtown L.A. area, if you're a Japanese---had a rough time---businessmen, you know people who had businesses.

**Interviewer:**

What about in Torrance?

**Hasegawa:**

Torrance, they weren't too many Japanese in business, except the grocery stores, you know the little grocery stores that we had. But, they were doing okay; you know. Those two markets were doing okay after the war---I mean, right after Pearl Harbor. You know so they did okay. People had to eat and they had a lot of Latino customers, you know.

**Interviewer:**

What about your friends; did they treat you differently---any of your . . . ?

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**1H05M28S**

**Hasegawa:**

No; they were about the same---no, you know harsh discrimination or anything.

**Interviewer:**

Really?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah.

**Interviewer:**

What about when you were going to school?

**Hasegawa:**

Huh?

**Interviewer:**

What about when you were going to L.A. Trade---the trade school?

**Hasegawa:**

No, not much there.

**Interviewer:**

Really?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah; people---of course, I was a young kid still, you know.

[Laughs]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah.

**Hasegawa:**

Most of them just out of high school anyway. So, they didn't really you know yell at you and say, "Hey Jap," or anything like that. They figured there might be a battle when you start that, you know. [Laughs] So, younger kids---so; they didn't do very much.

**Interviewer:**

So you didn't feel any different?

**Hasegawa:**

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No, we didn't feel any different; yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; and then let's see; you mentioned Executive Order 9066. Can you explain what happened then when you saw the posting of the Executive Order?

**1H06M45S**

**Hasegawa:**

After that 9066; then we started to scramble to see what we're going to do with what we have. We had a car. Of course, then we found out later that we could have taken it into Santa Anita, you know. But, we had stove, ice---refrigerators, and personal stuff---we could have you know taken with us---but, we found out little bit later that we could take whatever the car will hold. [Laughs] We had a car---sedan, you know; so we put most of the personal belongings in the car and took it into Santa Anita. But, the big stuff was mostly---called up our Hakujin friends down the line and said, "Do you want these things," you know. "Come and get them."

**Interviewer:**

So you had to get rid of many things?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Did you have any pets?

**Hasegawa:**

Huh?

**Interviewer:**

Did you have any pets?

**Hasegawa:**

No; we didn't have any pets.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; when you were packing your things, what were you thinking then? How were you feeling when you were packing up?

**Hasegawa:**

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I was young so it wasn't you know that much of a big shock. I thought, "Well we're going into camp," you know. And, of course, inside you thought, "This is a bum break," you know--as something they'd pull on a U.S. citizen. After high school, you study all these things--all the freedom you're supposed to enjoy and all that, you know. So, if you think about those things then [**Swish**] you know.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; how about your parents?

**Hasegawa:**

Typical Isseis at that time; "shigata ga nai ne," you know, "What can we do. There isn't much that we can do," you know. So, they had to go along with it, you know.

**1H08M57S**

**Interviewer:**

Did your sister say anything to you?

**Hasegawa:**

No; so we said, "Uh-oh, we're going to Santa Anita," you know. That reminded me of the horses, and by golly we were in the horse stables. [**Laughs**]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; so where did you stay when you went---what happened to you when you got to Santa Anita?

**Hasegawa:**

When we got to Santa Anita; the first thing we do, "What is this?" Horse stables, you know; and if you talked to loud, the horse stable had a what you call a partition, and then the top was open---you know the roof and a partition. You can hear what the next door neighbor is saying, or. . . . [**Laughs**]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah.

**Hasegawa:**

So we had to be careful. You have to you know . . . they said, "Not too loud," because the FBI might be listening or something. [**Laughs**]

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**Interviewer:**

Wow.

**Hasegawa:**

But we played baseball. I coached a girls' league baseball team. I had some good players; yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Can you describe what---what did you sleep on?

**Hasegawa:**

Well, we slept on hay mattress---stuffed mattress [*Laughs*] bag with hay, and. . . the first night. The next morning I woke up and my bed was like this [*Gesture*] of fresh asphalt---soft, fresh, you know; so I was on the bed like sunken one side and we were sleeping like that, you know---what happened, you know? [*Gesture*] [*Laughs*] Then we find out, "Oh, we better get some of those pieces of wood to put under those legs," you know.  
[*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Can you talk---how long were you at Santa Anita? How long were you at Santa Anita?

**Hasegawa:**

I think a couple years; I think.

**Interviewer:**

Oh.

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah.

**Interviewer:**

So then what did---how was your eating arrangements?

**Hasegawa:**

Oh, I got a job as a timekeeper and registrar of aliens---Issei people---because I could speak Japanese. And they said, "We need some of you guys," so I said, "Oh, I'll volunteer." That was about \$12 a month or something. Register they'd say, and one thing nice, we had a red mess hall at the stadium, you know. And we had a yellow mess hall out there, a red mess hall, and we had a blue mess hall. We had pass for all four mess halls. So, if we're hungry, we go to the red mess hall, eat there, and say,

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"Oh, let's run over to the red one," you know. "They have something better maybe." So we'd just go over there and eat two meals, you know at lunch---two lunches. [**Laughs**] So, we were having a good time. We were just a youngster, you know.

**Interviewer:**

So you felt fine being at the---you had no problems?

**Hasegawa:**

No problems.

**Interviewer:**

You were happy?

**Hasegawa:**

Yeah, yeah; sort of. We were timekeepers also---timekeeping the maintenance crew, the trash crew, and other crew---the stadium cleaning crew. So sometimes, we worked late, and we can go to the stadium and eat late dinner, you know---again. [**Laughs**] So we had a good time---the younger guys, you know. You know we had to walk all over---a lot of walking.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; we're going to change---we're going to stop for a moment.

**Hasegawa:**

Okay.

1H13M16S

[End Ted Hasegawa CD 1; Begin CD 2]

**Interviewer:**

It is 3:05 on July 26, 2003. This is a continuation and the second CD of the interview of Ted Hasegawa on the same date, being conducted by me, Diana Tanaka, for the South Bay Oral History Project. The audio and catalog persons remain the same. All copyrights, title and any other rights arising out of this interview, whether in its entirety, part, or derivative form, and whether in audio, written, or any other format, shall belong to the South Bay Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens 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 Citizens League.

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Let's continue the interview.

Okay; so life at Santa Anita was fine?

**Haswegawa:**

Yeah; fine. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Now how old were you?

**Haswegawa:**

Let's see; I was about 21---about 21 years.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; how did your family---your parents feel?

**Haswegawa:**

Well, like I say, they---they just felt that, "Well, these things happen," you know. "shigata ga nai" situation. So they just gave up, I guess, you know---that they're not going to battle anything. They just have to live with this problem.

**Interviewer:**

Did you and your family continue---did you eat meals together?

**Haswegawa:**

Yeah uh-huh; except I was roaming around because I was a timekeeper. So, they usually---they---the horse stable area had their mess hall---blue mess hall. They went to there every day, and I went from one to another or I could pick any mess hall, you know.

**Interviewer:**

What did you eat?

**0H02M20S**

**Haswegawa:**

Well, [*Laughs*] that's a good question. We had a lot of vegetables and beans, you know---cooked beans, and not much meat, you know unless they cook it with vegetables or something, because of course, the meat shortage, you know---ration so forth. So, they didn't give us anything that was an expensive meal or food. [*Laughs*]

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**Interviewer:**

Yeah; now how did you wash---bathe?

**Haswegawa:**

We had a wash place we can go to wash---wash tub and shower, you know for men. But, it's a wide open shower---no privacy.

[Laughs]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; no privacy.

**Haswegawa:**

I imagine the ladies had theirs probably partitioned, you know. The men [Claps] didn't have no privacy. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; did you---after you were at Santa Anita for two years, where did you go next?

**Haswegawa:**

From there we went to Rohwer, Arkansas. That trip on a train was a train---window blinds pulled down. Nobody is to open that blind or raise the blind---MP walking back and forth through our train, you know---make sure that nobody looks out. It took us about a week or so to go from California to Arkansas. And, many times we were sidetracked, and we would wonder, "How come we stayed one hour sidetrack," you know. The war effort; they were shipping tanks and ammunitions and whatever---you know war effort. So, all the freight had priorities; passengers [swish] out of sight. It could be hours, you know we might sit sidetracked.

**Interviewer:**

Do you know why they had---made you keep the blinds down?

**0H04M50S**

**Haswegawa:**

So we don't look out and take down how many freight cars went by with this or that, you know. They were afraid we're going to start taking information down. So the MP says, "Do not raise the blinds. Keep it down." It took us about a week to get there.

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**Interviewer:**

And, can you describe what it looked like when you got there?

**Haswegawa:**

Oh, boy; [Laughs] it was hot. Arkansas heat, boy; it was a hot summer day, you know. And, everybody thought, "Oh, we're going to have to put up with this," you know. But somebody said, "Wait till winter comes, you know; we'll have a cool one." [Laughs] Yeah; we---first winter---snow, sleet, rain, and we were wondering why our block was sitting up and there were trenches, about four or five foot trenches all around with a little bridge, you know to come into our barracks. We found out that winter; they were full of water and it was going down, you know downhill---down the other end. Snow, freezing cold, and rain---really the first year was rough, you know. We had hardly no coal. At first they give us coal. So, we thought, "Oh, we're going to have a warm you know winter." But, they didn't give us very much. So day time we're dressed warm---go skiing or something, you know. [Laughs] And the first year, finally they issued one of those Navy pea coats, you know the nice blue pea coats. And, we tried to keep warm. [Laughs] But, I was lucky because the first year I got---I had a job in a kitchen where we had a fire oven going---a stove going, you know. I was a storekeeper---kept track of all the inventory, all the supplies that come in---milk for the kids, and it was mostly gallon can of dehydrated milk, a lot of beans, and a lot of canned goods, you know. So we kept track of those. When we'd get too much when they pull inspection or something, so we climb up on the attic and hide those supplies, you know so we'd only have five cans or whatever---twenty cans are up there, you know. So, that was a good job the first year.

**Interviewer:**

How much did you make?

**Haswegawa:**

Huh?

**Interviewer:**

How much did you make?

**Haswegawa:**

I think we were paid about \$19 a month, I think.

0H08M23S

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**Interviewer:**

What else did you do when you were at the camp?

**Haswegawa:**

Well, the second year we found out that we were not going to get a supply of coal. We were going to have to go to chop wood. There was a forest right around the camp, you know---right around the area on the west end of it. So, they said, "All young guys report as a lumberjack." And I thought, "Oh boy." So, we had to volunteer to be a lumberjack. Some of the middle aged guys, too, you know were lumberjacks. The problem is that we'd like to chop it down, but we don't want to saw it---you know saw the logs, you know the big logs like that. **[Laughs]** Then finally, the middle aged guys got mad and they said, "That's it; you guys are going to have to saw logs," you know. So we were sawing the logs. The first year was rough. It got bad because we were chopping them down right and left. **[Laughs]** Logs all over the place---well tree down, you know. And they got mad. But the second year, they provided us with big power saw, you know---big wheels like this **[Gesture]** with a motor, you know---engine. So, we were able to cut them down in certain length and load it on the truck and then get over there and saw it you know. That was a little easier. **[Laughs]**

**Interviewer:**

Now, you mentioned that you met---did you---during this time, did you meet any women?

**Haswegawa:**

I---a friend of mine was active in **Hawthorne-Wide (Hawthorne Y?) Juniors**. The Hawthorne Group had a group of guys in the club---**Hawthorne-Wide (Hawthorne Y?) Juniors**. They said, "Oh, come and join our group," you know. So I said, "What do you guys do?" They said, "Oh we hold dances. You can meet new girls, you know, find new girlfriends, you know and all that." I said, "Well okay." So I joined the **Hawthorne-Wide (Hawthorne Y?) Juniors**. And they'd hold dances and they'd only invite certain girls, you know. I said, "How come you guys are so particular you want this gal or you want that?" "Oh, we've got to have this gal," you know. I said, "Oh boy." And there used to be a lot of guys that crushed---they'd let them come to the dance, you know---no ticket; see. So they---we used to keep two guys at the door, all black belt Judo guys, you know. They said, "Hey, you can't come in," you know. **[Laughs]** They were very selective, you know of

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who gets in---only friends, and you know. So, they had a good time; so I was lucky---one of the members. [*Laughs*] We met all the you know popular ladies and had a good time. [*Laughs*] [*Claps*] That's what we'd spent---you know our spare time or evenings, you know.

**0H12M06S**

**Interviewer:**

Were your living conditions better than at Santa Anita? What was the difference?

**Haswegawa:**

Yeah; we had a room like this---four of us, you know. And, we built a little partition with a little, you know . . . dad and I slept here and mom and my sister slept there, you know.

**Interviewer:**

Did your relationship with your family change at all during this time?

**Haswegawa:**

No not much; we had pretty good. . . .

**Interviewer:**

Okay; now you mentioned---were you---did you serve in the military? Did you serve in the military?

**Haswegawa:**

Yeah; I was one of those you might say 30-day veteran. [*Laughs*] I had trouble with my ulcerative colitis in high school, and I was going to Dr. Tashiro for long time, and I had a nice letter. I took it to my physical and presented that letter and this guy looked at it and said, "Hmm; how is it now?" I said, "Not very good." "You look okay to me." "Okay." And, I was in Chicago at the time and I had to come back for a physical. So I went to physical.

**Interviewer:**

All right; how did you get in Chicago?

**Haswegawa:**

I had one of those pass outside work, you know. So I was working in Chicago. A friend of mine was there, and he said, "Oh, they need a mechanic. Come on out, you know." I worked with him in

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camp, and he went out to work for Chevrolet. And I said, "Oh okay;" so I went to work for Chevrolet. And my folks sent me a letter. "Greetings, you've got to go to the physical. So, certain day, you better come home by then and they'll take you up to Little Rock, Arkansas." I said, "Okay." So I had to go back to camp and there must have been 16-18 of us in the back of the truck. They took us to Little Rock for a physical. And I think 90 percent of the guys passed. I was talking to a friend of mine and he said---I said, "George, what are you going to do? We pass the physical; we got to go." He said, "Oh, nothing will pass the physical." I said, "Why?" "I'll tell you after we go through the physical." On the way home he was telling me that he took about a quart of shoyu the night before. My blood pressure is going to be up to 200 something. "You're kidding?" "You watch and see." He says, "They won't take me," you know. Sure enough, they didn't take him. He was a little on the heavy side, you know---high blood pressure---230 or something. I said, "Well, they took me. Now I've got to wait for greetings, you know, that you report for duty." And, what do you know? I got my greeting---I went back to Chicago again, and they told me, "You have to report for active duty." And I said, "You're kidding?" So I had to come back to camp again, and went to Little Rock.

I remember, we---first morning, we got to Little Rock Camp, and this PFC said, "Okay;" he had a list of guys' names, you know. He says, "Matsu something?," you know KP; Hasegawa, Ted, you're on KP, you know. I said, "Where is this guy," you know. I told them, I said, "That guy and here's me," KP you know. Okay; I was a KP in the kitchen---first thing the next morning. So, I thought, "Boy, this isn't going to last long." Sure enough; a third day---a fourth day, we were on a train headed for Florida---Starke, Camp Blanding. There was quite a few guys from Rohwer went into Blanding.

I remember we had to change stations at Atlanta, Georgia for Florida. And we had a duffle bag full of our stuff---helmets, you know, and everybody stopped and said, "What's going on around here," you know. It was all oriental people---about 16 of us, you know. They were all stopped and they were looking at us, you know. Welcome to the station. They thought, "Gee, we're being invaded," you know. **[Laughs]** And then somebody said, "No, we're just going to camp right now, you know reporting for duty." Somebody said, "Oh yeah; oh." That was the first time they had seen oriental period---Georgia. Nobody, you know have never seen oriental person. So, we made it to Camp Blanding.

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But, that was a hot, hot place. And, we'd be out there on the parade ground and here comes a big cloud come by and, "Oh shade," you know. And then the Sergeant said, "Okay; let's head for the barn over there, you know and we'll let you guys rest in the shade," you know. It was a rough training. It was IRTC training. It was the Infantry Replacement [Training] Center.

And, I put in for MIS, but before I can get that far, I couldn't keep going, you know. I had passed so much blood that I was getting anemic and after about a week or so, I reported to sick call and said, "I can't keep going," you know. "I might pass out, out there on the playground," you know. They said, "What's wrong with you?" I said, "I have what they call ulcerative colitis---bleeding. Sometimes, it's pretty bad and I'm getting anemic." Huh; this Corporal said, "Well we'll see if you're lying to me," you know. I said, "I'm not going to lie to you. There's no use in me lying to you," you know. He said, "I'll fix that for you." So he gives me a paper cup---about that much---he fills it with castor oil. I told him, "What is that?" He says, "Castor oil." I said, "I can't take that," you know. "I won't be able to tolerate it," you know. "I'll pass out for sure." He said, "Take it," you know. I said, "I don't know if I should obey your order or what, but I don't think I can make it," you know. He said, "Take it." So I said, "Okay." I took it, and that night about 9 o'clock, I headed for the restroom---latrine. And I thought, "Oh boy;" just like water [**gushing water sound**], you know. And I thought, "Boy," and I thought, "Boy, I better get some rest." So I started headed back. "No, I'm not going to make it." So, I went back to the latrine and I thought, "Man, I got to get some rest." You know, "Tomorrow morning, I've got to be ready to go." I started back again; "No, I can't make it," or if I made it, I'll never be able to come back, you know. So, I sat at the latrine all night until the next morning---sick call. I thought, "Boy, I better try to make it back over there, and tell them that I sat at the latrine for all night long, and can't make it. I can't make it today either."

And he says, "Well, I'll tell you what; I'm going to send you to Base Hospital and see if you're lying to me," you know. I said, "I'm not lying to you." He said, "Report back here 1100; we're going to take you to the Base Hospital." So I said, "Okay."

I went to the Base Hospital. The next morning this Captain said, "Okay; we're going to check you out and see how bad you are." I ended up---in the Base Hospital the next morning, he examined

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me, and he said, "I don't know; you're in pretty bad shape." I said, "I told the doctor that." "Well we're going to start treatment on you." I said, "All right, sir." So the next day, I'm getting a sulfur pill about the size of your thumb---about four of those. Every four hours, I would get those sulfur pills---drinking sulfur pills and I had intravenous feeding. And about a week later he said, "You're not making much improvement. I think we're going to have to let you go," you know. So I said, "Thank you, sir; I'm ready to go home," you know.

So I thought, "Boy; I don't know. I can't make it here," you know. I might as well go home. So they let me---released me and I made it home. And that was my military [*Laughs*]---military time spent.

0H23M55S

**Interviewer:**

Now, where did you go home?

**Haswegawa:**

Back to Camp.

**Interviewer:**

What---when was this?

**Haswegawa:**

Oh, back in 1945---6---5 or 6; yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Okay; so then. . . .

**Haswegawa:**

And I thought, "Boy." And then, after about a month, my bleeding started to stop. And the guys said, "Hey, what happened to you?" I said, "I just couldn't make it in the Army," and I had my Army uniform and everything. He said, "Want to do me a favor?" I said, "What's that?" He said, "Go to a PX over there and wear your uniform, and go to the PX and buy me some cigarettes," you know. Those were what---\$1 something a carton, you know Army PX---real cheap. So they used to give me \$2, \$3; "Go get some cigarettes for me," you know. That's when I started smoking. I used to go there every other day all dressed up in uniform, you know and walk over there and walk right out the gate. They didn't say, "Hey, wait a minute," you know. I said, "I'm going

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to the PX." He thought I was a visiting Army---what do you call it see---personnel. [**Laughs**] So, I was buying cigarettes for these guys, and I thought, "Oh boy." And a lot of guys found out and says, "Hey, when you going again," you know. [**Laughs**] That was my Army career.

**Interviewer:**

So where were you when---or what did you do when the war ended?

**Haswegawa:**

I was in Chicago at---working for Chevrolet. And I thought, "[**Swish**] Now, maybe we can go back." But after the war ended, I---the war time, my sister got married and she married a fellow from a camp north of Lodi, who had a vineyard---about 20 acres or 25 acres of vineyard. So, they were in New Jersey working for a company---farm company---and they decided to go back because somebody was taking care---a friend was taking care of their vineyard all this time. So I said, "Oh, that's good; you guys are going back." I said, "That's farm country so you don't have too many people discriminating," you know, and they weren't really chummy with the Hakujin landlords either. So, and there were quite a few vineyard owners right around her area there, you know owned by Japanese. So I said, "Well, if you guys get settled, why let me know," you know. After a few years, why she said, "Do you want to come out and stay in our old house?" They built a new house. "If you want to stay in the old house," so I come on out, you know. So I spent about a year or a little more with them over there. I worked at the vineyards, worked in the orchard, truck---driving trucks, and maintained---tried to maintain trucks. Hard work, but [**Laughs**] . . . it was really rough out there. And then I decided to come down to Torrance because I visited Torrance and I talked to this fellow that I knew before the war, you know. And he said, "Why don't you come on down, you know?" But I said, "There's hardly no jobs available for Japanese, you know. It's hard to get jobs---any kind of a job." They said, "Oh, you're Japanese, huh?" They don't pay much attention to you, you know. They give you a job you know---any kind of a job.

So I thought, "Oh boy," and I had two kids at that time. And I thought, "Boy, it'll be rough going." It was rough going.

[**Laughs**] And then we had the third one, you know. And then we had the fourth one, and then we had the fifth one, and we had the sixth one---five girls and one boy, and I thought, "Wow, to try to support them, feed them." [**Laughs**]

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**0H29M16S**

**Interviewer:**

When did you get married?

**Haswegawa:**

I got married back in 1947; I think it was in Chicago.

**Interviewer:**

Now what---who is your wife?

**Haswegawa:**

My wife is from Stockton---Lodi-Stockton area.

**Interviewer:**

And her name is?

**Haswegawa:**

Huh?

**Interviewer:**

What is her name?

**Haswegawa:**

Dorothy Eshima from Lodi; yeah. She went to school at Lodi and high school in Lodi.

**Interviewer:**

Now going back---now, you mentioned earlier before that you owned property in Torrance. When did you buy this property?

**Haswegawa:**

1940---about 1948-49.

**Interviewer:**

And what---when you moved down here, what did you do?

**Haswegawa:**

There was---there was no job so I tried to open a shop, you know---tried to specialize in Chevrolets because I spent six years in Chicago. So, when I bought that property, there was a--half was the garage, double garage, and half was the living quarters, you know. So, we bought the property and at that time, it was . . . in fact, this property was owned by this friend of

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mine, Hakujin, and he said, "You can have it for \$2,000;" you know. So I said, "Sold; I'll buy it," you know. Then, but I had to borrow some money from my sister and I told her---I said, "I have a brand new pick-up that's worth about \$800-\$900. So I'm going to sell the pick-up. That will pay for the down payment." And I still got the property.

**Interviewer:**

Where is it?

**Haswegawa:**

On Hawthorne, north of Torrance Boulevard---right across from Nissan---Torrance Nissan. That's a long time to own that old piece of property. **[Laughs]**

0H31M45S

**Interviewer:**

What is it now?

**Haswegawa:**

Huh?

**Interviewer:**

What is it; what's there now?

**Haswegawa:**

It's---front is Ideal Glass and the rear shop is automotive.

**Interviewer:**

Who rents it?

**Haswegawa:**

Chinese---I mean a Korean owns the back. The front is owned by Hakujin. And---but he's been there 35 years, at the same place.

**Interviewer:**

Wow.

**Haswegawa:**

I think he's there because **[Laughs]** rent is reasonable. **[Laughs]** My kids keep yelling at me, "You've got cheap rent for these guys," you know. "You've got to jack it up." "No, they pay like a slot machine on the 30<sup>th</sup>. On the 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, they have a check for me at the house. It's no problem." They pay for the

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insurance. Of course, I pay for insurance, too, you know. But, they've been so good that I still have the property out there. I will pass it onto the kids, I guess. [**Laughs**]

**Interviewer:**

When you came back to Torrance, can you describe was the---were there major changes in what you saw?

**Haswegawa:**

No; only major changes that were made, I think, they were moving west of the old Torrance. In other words, Torrance Garden---Torrance Boulevard where the City Hall is, those---both sides Torrance Garden was pretty well, you know under way. They had---that was only residential area, and right across from City Hall, all that was started back in 19---probably in the '50s---early '50s.

**Interviewer:**

And how did they treat you being Japanese?

**Haswegawa:**

Not bad at all, I think.

**Interviewer:**

When you came back?

**Haswegawa:**

Yeah, yeah; not bad except there was no jobs, you know. Of course, Torrance was a small city at that time---probably what---30 or 40,000---maybe 30; I don't know.

**Interviewer:**

So no discrimination?

**Haswegawa:**

Yeah.

**Interviewer:**

No; hmm.

**Haswegawa:**

But the jobs weren't there, you know---Torrance.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; can you name---what are your children's names?

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**Haswegawa:**

My oldest one is Peggy. The next one is Kerrie. Peggy is single yet. She's the oldest and she's single. She likes her single life, I guess. Peggy, Kerrie, Steve, April, Carol, and Dee---Dee is the only one that lives out of state. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia. She's with the Fed Ex.

**Interviewer:**

Do you have any grandkids?

0H35M00S

**Haswegawa:**

Yeah; I have six grandsons---five grandsons and one granddaughter---right opposite.

**Interviewer:**

[Laughs] Well good.

**Haswegawa:**

And, she's a hapa; so. And, I have what they call an international house. Kerrie, number two, is married to a Nigerian. The next one, married to **Haines**. The next one is married to **Tarness?**. The next one is married to Moore. So it's an international house. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah.

**Haswegawa:**

Well and I have two boys from Nigerian, from Haines, two boys from Haines, and a boy and a girl from **Tarnesses?**.

**Interviewer:**

I wanted to ask you; do you ever talk to your children about your experiences---you know the Nisei---your Nisei experiences?

**Haswegawa:**

Yeah, yeah; some of things I have, I just got---I was up north at my sisters, and she had a complete ancestral---what do you call them?

**Interviewer:**

Tree---family tree?

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**Haswegawa:**

Tree yeah; all listed on the Komura family, mother's side. It goes back to probably early 1800 and Hasegawa family goes back about that far, too.

**Interviewer:**

Wow.

**Haswegawa:**

Yeah; couple pages of it. I just got a reprint made when I was up north. She said she sent it to me, but I don't know where it's at. [*Laughs*]. So I said, "I'll get some copies."

**0H37M01S**

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, and one last question; you know you talked about---can you tell me why you believe it's important to talk about these experiences? Why do you think that it's important?

**Haswegawa:**

I think they should know what, you know what the parents went through and the problems they had and so forth, you know. Of course, that's one ancestor; that's all. [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Or, well you mentioned---I'm just reading, you know your questionnaire. You talked about why it's important for Nisei---what the Nisei story. Can you tell me why you think the Nisei story is important?

**Haswegawa:**

Well, I think the Sansei and Yonsei, I think they should know what some of the hardships, some of the problems, they really you know had and how they went about solving some of these problems, you know. It isn't---probably everyone has a different way of trying to solve some of the problems, you know; but how it---you did it, you know is more important than what somebody else's parents had, you know. And, there are many ways that they solved their problems. My problems, I try to solve the way I think that's, you know beneficial, not just for myself but for the kids and the upcoming, you know Sansei, Yonsei. But, I think a lot of Niseis; you know went through a lot of hardships and hard decisions that they had to make.

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**Interviewer:**

Yeah okay; anything else you want to talk about?

**Haswegawa:**

I think we covered most of it, huh? [*Laughs*]

**Interviewer:**

Yeah; I think so. Well, thank you very much, Ted. You did a wonderful job.

**Haswegawa:**

I think everybody has a story, you know whether it's a short story or a long story. You know everybody has a story---some of the problems they encountered. I think Niseis---a lot of Niseis had, you know a lot of other problems---worse problems than many of us, you know that they had to solve those problems by themselves, you know.

0H39M57S

**Interviewer:**

Yeah okay.

[End Ted Hasegawa CD 2]