

[Beginning of Interview]

Interviewer:

It is 9:50 on Friday, January 23, 2004. My name is Jeanne Tsujimoto, and I will be interviewing Fujiko Ishikawa as part of the South Bay Oral History Project. The audio equipment recording this interview is being monitored by Ernie Tsujimoto, and the interviewed is being cataloged by Richard Kawasaki. 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. This is the first CD of the interview of Fujiko Ishikawa being recorded on this date. We will now begin the interview.

Fuzzy, to begin, perhaps you can tell us where you were born, when you were born, and a little bit about your early years.

OH01M28S

Ishikawa:

I was born in San Pedro and there was a mid-wife in attendance in the home, you know, in those days. And I was born in November 18, 1912.

Interviewer:

And what were your parents' names?

Ishikawa:

My father's name was Genshu Watanabe my mother's name was Tomoye Watanabe.

Interviewer:

And could you tell me a little bit about their immigration to America, when they came, what cities they were born in?

Ishikawa:

My father was born in Okayama, and he came here because his uncle who had preceded him here wanted him to come and settle in America. So he came; and they were running a small restaurant in Oxnard. And it apparently seemed quite successful, so his uncle told him that, "You should get a bride." So, the uncle went back to Japan, and he scoured the community or whatever it was in Japan they called it. And when my mother heard about it, she

said, oh, she'd like to come to America. And so, then he says he looked into her background and it met with his specifications, I guess you might call it. And, so then he asked her to go and spend a month in his home in Japan. That's Okayama, also. And so, she did and she passed his inspection. And so, she came home and got ready to come to America. So, you might say, they were sort of picture-bride. And she got her things ready, and came across the Pacific. And, my father met her in San Francisco, and they were married there by a Presbyterian minister, which kind of surprised me. And, then they came down south and started truck farming in San Pedro.

Interviewer:

Now what year was this that your parents were married, do you recall?

OH04M11S

Ishikawa:

Yeah, 19--January of 1912. They didn't waste any time; I was born in November [Laughs].

Interviewer:

So, you were the eldest in your family?

Ishikawa:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And how many siblings do you have?

Ishikawa:

I have six---I did have six, but all but one is---are gone now.

Interviewer:

And can you tell me their names, and . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Yeah, the oldest is Hide Watanabe, and he used to be a boxer--- what do you call them---Golden Gloves boxer. And the next one was Hiroshi; they used to call him "Horse." And the third one was Saburo, and we called him "Frank." And then the next one was a girl. It was Harue. And next one is Kiyoko in Fresno--- she lives in Fresno now. And the youngest was Shizuye Watanabe.

Interviewer:

And you've mentioned that, other than your sister, Kiyoko, and yourself, the other five siblings have passed away.

Ishikawa:

Have passed away.

Interviewer:

And you mentioned that when your parents first came here, they entered in, or your mother entered in San Francisco?

Ishikawa:

Yeah.

Interviewer: And had your father come in through the port of San Francisco as well?

Ishikawa:

No, he came in down south, but I wasn't too clear on that---down south here somewhere, maybe through Mexico, I really don't know.

Interviewer:

Oh, even in Mexico, a possibility; well, that's interesting. And, you said that your father was doing truck farming, but was your mother helping him, or was she otherwise occupied?

Ishikawa:

No, she helped him.

OH06M04S

Interviewer:

She helped him in his business. So, you grew up pretty much in the San Pedro/Harbor City/Lomita area?

Ishikawa:

Lomita/Torrance area.

Interviewer:

And, did you go through---get all of your formal schooling, your elementary, middle school, high school in that area?

Ishikawa:

In Lomita, through the Los Angeles School District.

Interviewer:

And what schools did you attend?

Ishikawa:

Lomita Grammar School, and Narbonne junior high and high school was combined.

Interviewer:

And you graduated from Narbonne high school?

Ishikawa:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And did you go on to school after high school?

Ishikawa:

Yes, I went to---I forgot whether I went to Long Beach or UCLA first, and then that's where I met Hank---UCLA.

Interviewer:

At UCLA; and what year was this?

Ishikawa:

Oh, gosh, it was way back in the early '30s, I think, because we were married in '35.

Interviewer:

And did you finish schooling at UCLA?

Ishikawa:

No, I didn't, I---see, for two or three years, and then we got married.

Interviewer:

I see, I see; and then, this is during---you were going to school then, probably during the Depression Era?

Ishikawa:

Very much, yeah; it was.

Interviewer:

So, was it an anomaly for a girl to be attending college during these years?

0H07M34S

Ishikawa:

I think so; my mother---no, my father---one of them was against it and the other said, "Let her do what she wants to do."

Interviewer:

How about your other siblings; were they also able to go on to college?

Ishikawa:

Well, they were much younger than me.

Interviewer:

No, but as they grew up; did they have the opportunity?

Ishikawa:

If they wanted to, they could have; yes.

Interviewer:

They did.

Ishikawa:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Good; did you speak mainly English, or probably Japanese at home?

Ishikawa:

Mixture.

Interviewer:

Mixture of both---so, your parents did learn English because of the necessity of their business?

Ishikawa:

A little bit; yeah, I think they knew enough to get by. And, we knew enough Japanese to get by. So, we compromised.

Interviewer:

But to your friends and to your siblings, did you speak mainly English as you grew up?

Ishikawa:

English, that's right.

Interviewer:

How about Japanese school? Did you attend Japanese school?

Ishikawa:

Yes, we did attend Japanese school, but we rebelled. And the reason for that, I think is during that time we had discrimination, you know against the Japanese. And so, at that

time, being young and not knowing any better, anything that had to do with Japan or Japanese, we were against. And I can remember about one of my brothers insulted a Japanese teacher and he chased after him, half-way across a field [Laughs]. I mean, that's what the sentiment was. So, we didn't want anything Japanese.

Interviewer:

I understand; yeah. Were your parents ever able to buy a home; were they able to own a home?

Ishikawa:

Yes, they were.

Interviewer:

Good. And this was in?

Ishikawa:

Lomita.

Interviewer:

Lomita; well, you had mentioned that---at one point, I remember you had mentioned the city of Oxnard. Now, was that when your . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Well, that was before my---they were married. My father's uncle had started a small restaurant, and he wanted my father to go and help him. And, it was kind of successful. He said, "You better get a wife," and that's when all that started.

Interviewer:

I see; but once your parents were married, then they moved down to the South Bay area?

Ishikawa:

Yes.

Interviewer:

And then all of you and your siblings were born in the South Bay.

0H09M52S

Ishikawa:

Yes, all of---seven of us.

Interviewer:

Now, can you tell me what---a little bit about what Harbor City/Lomita/San Pedro area was like as you were growing up and going to school?

Ishikawa:

Well, there weren't many homes then, and homes were far apart. And I can remember going to school. And I'd walk about two miles to school and back, and I thought nothing of it, except I---when I had to walk across a field, and I see a cow and they said, "Don't wear red." That's all I remember.

Interviewer:

So most of the area---was it used for farming?

Ishikawa:

A lot of it was; and a lot of it was empty lots.

Interviewer:

Empty lots; and when you walked to school or walked into town, were the roads paved or unpaved?

Ishikawa:

I---let's see; it was paved, but not well.

Interviewer:

And would you say that there were mainly Caucasians living in the area; were there other Japanese families doing farming--truck farming like your . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Yeah, a few other Japanese, but lot of them were---I don't know what the Caucasians were doing, but they were, you know day workers, I guess.

Interviewer:

But you had mostly Caucasians in your classrooms?

Ishikawa:

Yes, uh-hm.

Interviewer:

Were your parents able to interact at all, on a non-professional basis with the Caucasians? Did your family socialize with only other Japanese families, or were you able to interact?

Ishikawa:

Socialized with Japanese families; yes.

Interviewer:

How about you and your siblings in school? Did you have Caucasian friends that you would do things with?

0H11M43S

Ishikawa:

Oh, yes; because there weren't too many Orientals living near us at that time.

Interviewer:

So, what was your social life like, moving up, not so much elementary school, maybe more like middle and high school? Did you participate in school activities?

Ishikawa:

Yeah, sports activities.

Interviewer:

Sports; tell me a little bit about some sports.

Ishikawa:

Well, we used--after-school sports activities. I stayed for that, and that's about it. And then, we'd walk home; and I remember I used to walk home with one of my friends, and when we got to her house---she was here and school was there and I was there---and stand there for hours talking to her [Laughs]. She was a Caucasian friend.

Interviewer:

Sounds like today; good. Now, you mentioned that you had a brother that was an amateur boxer with the Golden Gloves. That's kind of interesting; could you tell us a little bit more about him?

Ishikawa:

I don't know...well, all I know is I made [Laughs] the shorts for him, and---because I never attended any of his boxing events.

Interviewer:

Were your parents ever able to see him box?

Ishikawa:

No, he just took off on his own, and he made his contacts himself.

Interviewer:

Was---about how old was he at this time?

Ishikawa:

He was in high school about six, 17 or 18 or somewhere around there.

Interviewer:

So he was driving?

Ishikawa:

He was driving, yeah.

Interviewer:

Did he box mainly here in the city, say, Los Angeles, or. . . ?

Ishikawa:

I don't remember. All I remember is in the South Bay area.

Interviewer:

What about your other siblings; what kind of work did they end up doing as adults?

Ishikawa:

End up doing; one was an agronomist with the University of Colorado, and the other one was a jeweler---jewelry design.

Interviewer:

And the girls married, and generally, stayed home with their husbands?

Ishikawa:

I think so, but they went out and did clerical work, too, I think.

Interviewer:

Okay; you said you met Hank at UCLA?

Ishikawa:

Uh-hm.

Interviewer:

And you were married in 1935?

Ishikawa:

That's correct.

Interviewer:

And, what did Hank do for a living?

OH14M04S

Ishikawa:

When I met him he was still a student. After graduation, he got a job---he had a Saturday food stand job, which everybody had in those days. But he got a job at an importing/exporting firm---Pacific Trading Company; I think that's what they called it. And he was in the office, and he said that he had to tolerate these domineering Japanese, you know. They were nothing like they are today. They were the boss and you don't talk back to them---that type of person.

Interviewer:

And he worked in downtown Los Angeles?

Ishikawa:

Uh-hm on; I forgot---First Street or somewhere.

Interviewer:

And were you living downtown around this time?

Ishikawa:

We lived in down---near---beyond Belmont High School.

Interviewer:

So that was more downtown.

Ishikawa:

Belmont was in---we lived there.

Interviewer:

And was the area around Belmont High School a lot different than the South Bay Area?

Ishikawa:

Oh yes; oh much different.

Interviewer:

It was a city area more?

Ishikawa:

It was city; yeah.

Interviewer:

More urban; this was country down here. Now, we're getting up close to the war years. You said you married in 1935. And, so did you have any children before December 7th?

Ishikawa:

Yeah, we didn't have children until about four or five years after we were married, but I had Dick, and he was an infant then, I guess.

Interviewer:

And born in what year?

Ishikawa:

1940.

Interviewer:

Oh, right before Pearl Harbor?

Ishikawa:

Just before, yeah.

0H15M55S

Interviewer:

Just in general, going back to your family as you were growing up; what did your parents, as immigrants---fairly new immigrants here, what did they impart to you children as far as what they wanted you to do, ideas they wanted to leave you with, and what kind of goals did they want you to set for yourselves?

Ishikawa:

You know, I don't remember. All I know is, "Just be good," [Laughs]. And besides, my mother and dad were so busy raising all us seven and doing farm work; we just didn't have time to do much communicating.

Interviewer:

Of course, from what I understand, most the Issei men didn't speak to their children a lot. It was mainly up to the mother to do that sort of thing.

Ishikawa:

No they did not---mother; yeah.

Interviewer: Would you say that you grew up in a home that was a fairly loving home, that the siblings pretty much got along, and . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Oh yeah; I think so. We had to---seven of us [Laughs].

Interviewer:

How old were your parents when they passed away? Did they live a long time?

Ishikawa:

Let's see, my father---no, he passed away quite young--71. But my mother was 90 when she passed away.

Interviewer:

Oh, you do have longevity in your life. And, generally speaking, were they in fairly good health?

Ishikawa:

Yes, until my father went to--you know he was interned at Jerome, and his health couldn't take that hot, humid weather, and he developed asthma. And, ever since then, he'd come up with asthma.

Interviewer:

Good; okay now, I think we're going to go on to experiences about World War II. So, of course on December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor happened, but, perhaps maybe we'll take a short break before we get into this because this will take a few more minutes to go through.

0H18M29S

Ishikawa: Okay; thank you.

Interviewer:

All right; thanks.

[BREAK]

Interviewer:

Fuzzy, I'd like to back up a little bit, and before we get into World War II, perhaps you can tell me a little bit about what UCLA was like, and what your experiences were about the time that you and Hank were attending in the '30s.

Ishikawa:

I can't---it was all right; that's all I can remember.

Interviewer:

But

Ishikawa:

They had a Japanese men's club they called the Bruins Club, and I remember yearly they would sponsor a big social event to them. It was a dance, Bruin dance, and they'd have it different places. And I remember Hank talking about at that time going to Joan Crawford's house. She was popular at that time. And they used to have dances at, I can't remember, but some of those more well-known social halls at that time. But, it's so long ago; I don't remember what they were.

Interviewer:

Well, you were telling us earlier during a break about the layout of the campus, and could you repeat that, and tell us what buildings were there?

Ishikawa:

Well, the buildings that I remember are Royce Hall and, I guess it was the Administrative Building that had the library in it. And there were one or two other buildings where we have---Science Hall or something, but like I say, I don't remember.

Interviewer:

But, there were a number of Japanese students---enough to have a Bruin Club and you said a Japanese Club?

Ishikawa:

No, just a Bruin Club.

Interviewer:

Just for the males only?

Ishikawa:

And then they had the Japanese Chi Alpha Delta, that's a sorority.

Interviewer:

I'm familiar with that. That started---actually my sister in the '60s was a member of Chi Alpha Delta.

Ishikawa:

This was in, whatever year that was, in the '30s, I guess---Chi Alpha Delta.

Interviewer:

What year did you finish high school and go to UCLA?

Ishikawa:

In the '30s.

Interviewer:

Early '30s?

OH21M00S

Ishikawa:

I finished high school in '31. I think I did, and I think it was around '33 or so---no, before '33, because Hank graduated from UCLA in '33.

Interviewer:

So, you must have started around 1929 or 1930---UCLA?

Ishikawa:

No, I didn't graduate high school until '31, so it was '32.

Interviewer:

Thirty-two or so---interesting; and the Chi Alpha Delta sorority was there for the girls? That's very interesting.

Ishikawa:

Yeah; and the Bruin Club for the boys.

Interviewer:

Interesting...did you---was Hank your first serious boyfriend?

Ishikawa:

I guess---I don't remember **[Laughs]**---so long ago.

Interviewer:

I just find it interesting, because I've only known Hank as an adult, and, of course, you know, he passed away just a few years ago. And so, we only know him---it's interesting to

Ishikawa:

As an older man **[Laughter]**.

Interviewer:

Interesting to think back when you were only in your teens, you know. Okay; is there anything else you'd like to tell us about those years before I move on?

Ishikawa:

You mean the college years?

Interviewer:

Well, just in general---pre-war years.

Ishikawa:

Well, pre-war years, we were all going to Narbonne High School. My brother was quite an athlete---a boxer, and he set up a record---the hurdle. I don't know how many yards or feet or whatever, and that stood there for over 30 years or so, when along come his son and broke it.

Interviewer:

Oh, that is interesting.

Ishikawa:

Yeah, it is interesting. That record stood all those years.

Interviewer:

He must have been very proud of his son?

Ishikawa: I guess so, to break his record. He's now--what is he--an optometrist.

0H23M06S

Interviewer:

That's wonderful---wonderful. We'll move on now to World War II and the years following Pearl Harbor. We can begin by asking if you remember where you were, what you were doing, and tell me a little bit about the effects that the Pearl Harbor bombing had on your family.

Ishikawa:

We were living in Los Angeles on the west side; that's where all the Japanese were congregating. And I was home---and that was Sunday, wasn't it? And we were just getting ready to go out and see my parents who lived in Lomita. And on---we had the radio on in the car, and it's the first time we heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor. And oh, I felt like crawling under the car or something; I felt terrible. And then after that, one day Dick was just an infant, and he and I had taken the street car to go downtown to Bullocks to shop. We were on our way home. And you know how little boys are kind of restless and everything. He was kicking the seat. This one woman turned around, "Keep that child of yours quiet. You Japs are no good, anyway," is what she told us.

I felt like standing right there and arguing, but I thought, "No, I'm not getting anywhere by arguing with a woman---ignorant woman like that." So I didn't say anything. But, I had incidents like that.

Interviewer:

And how about once, you know you got home? You said you were on the way to visit your parents. Was there any change in the way your neighbors treated you or former Caucasian friends---either you and Hank or your parents?

Ishikawa:

Well, let's see, we lived in a Japanese community. On one side was Caucasian---no; a Japanese family, and on the other side was a colored family. And she was---well she was a piano teacher, so she had people who were educated come to her house, and they were nice people. That's all I remember.

Interviewer:

So you didn't have any adverse reactions from your immediate neighbors or . . . ?

Ishikawa:

No.

Interviewer:

How was it when you went out into the community to do your regular chores, your marketing, post office or whatever to Caucasian strangers? Did they treat you differently just in the immediate time following Pearl Harbor?

Ishikawa:

You know, I don't remember; but it was in, mainly, a Japanese community, so, you know I didn't run into too many Caucasians.

Interviewer:

Did you and Hank feel that there would be some changes in your life after this?

Ishikawa:

Oh, yeah; they told us the evacuation was coming up, and naturally, he was working for an importing/exporting firm. They immediately closed it. But he, being in the office, they had him going in everyday to contact these government people to see that nothing---no hanky, panky was going on.

Interviewer:

But the business, itself, was pretty much closed, so?

Ishikawa:

Yeah, it was closed; the government I think took over.

Interviewer:

Oh, so then . . . ?

Ishikawa:

But he did have to go in to oversee the place.

Interviewer:

But that meant that, then, the other employees---or a lot of employees were laid off?

Ishikawa:

Laid off; yeah.

Interviewer:

And this was, how soon after Pearl Harbor?

Ishikawa:

Let's see, the Pearl Harbor was December. I think right after the first of the year when they were talking about evacuation and certain areas or communities would be going first.

Interviewer:

So there was an economic hardship for many families.

Ishikawa:

I really don't know.

Interviewer:

Sounds as though it might have been with lay-offs in the company and companies being closed?

Ishikawa:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

I didn't think about that aspect of it.

Ishikawa:

We didn't think about those things. You know when you're younger, you don't think about

Interviewer:

You don't; now tell me a little bit about after the Executive Order 9066 was executed, was there curfew until---curfew or how did it affect your lives until the evacuation process actually began?

0H27M52S

Ishikawa:

Well, I don't know about the others, but I stuck closely to home. I didn't want to go out and have any more confrontations like I had on the street car.

Interviewer:

Did you---what did you do when you heard about the evacuation?

Ishikawa: _____ in the Japanese papers. We followed orders, that's all. We started packing things to take and things to store.

Interviewer:

Well, the things that you had to leave behind--did you own a home at this--did you and Hank own a home or were you renting?

Ishikawa:

We were renting at that time.

Interviewer:

So, what happened to your belongings? Did you leave them there or---tell me a little bit?

Ishikawa:

We packed them; you know, I don't remember that. We packed them ready for storage. And I do remember these vultures I call them--these Jewish businessmen. I think they wanted to buy things from us for nothing. That's all I remember about that.

Interviewer: Things like your car or . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Yes, we sold that for practically nothing.

Interviewer:

Now, once you received your orders to evacuate, can you tell me a little bit about the process--how you got to---which camp did you go to? You were in Jerome, did you say?

Ishikawa:

No, we were at Amache first---no, no---Santa Anita. We stayed there for six months or so. And being that Hank worked in the office, we were one of the few that left late---in other words, until the camp was all cleaned up. And then we went to Jerome---not Jerome---Amache. By that time, the Amish Camp was pretty set and going; and they assigned us a barrack. And we stayed there until we were ready to leave again. And we didn't stay in there very long. We stayed in there about six months.

Interviewer:

And what did you do after that?

Ishikawa:

Oh, we had friends in Ohio, Cincinnati. And they said they'd watch for us. And so we packed up our belongings and made applications to go to Cincinnati, and that's what we did.

Interviewer:

Can you describe a little bit of your life in Santa Anita and in the few months that you were in Amish? Can you tell us first about Santa Anita? What was life like for most of the residents there?

Ishikawa:

Well, we were young and dumb, and the happenings of war and everything didn't even affect us. However, I had two brothers in the service. They were in the 442nd, and that's about all; we just looked forward to letters from them. And that's about it. And life went on as usual.

Interviewer:

I understand, but tell me physically, what were your conditions like? Were you living in one of the horse stalls?

Ishikawa:

No, my parents were, but we had a barrack, and we had one of the small size barrack, because we only had one child. And---see, we were still warm then, so we didn't---how did we warm I think pot-belly stoves---we warmed our unit

OH31M37

Interviewer:

And your meals?

Ishikawa:

We went to the mess hall.

Interviewer:

And bathroom facilities?

Ishikawa:

Well, they had a barrack set aside for bathroom and laundry room, and that's where we did it.

Interviewer:

How about privacy in the bathroom area?

Ishikawa:

Not too private.

0H31M57S

Interviewer:

Open showers pretty much---or communal showers?

Ishikawa:

No, it wasn't communal. You know, I don't remember. It was not too private, but not communal, either.

Interviewer:

And you had laundry facilities, or each family had a laundry room or so?

Ishikawa:

No, this mess hall---not mess hall---that one room, one building that was set aside for a toilet---I mean toilet, restroom and laundry room---I think that was it. That's where we went to do our laundry.

Interviewer:

That sounds similar to what it might have been like in Amache. Was Amache larger, but set up very similarly?

Ishikawa:

Uh-hm.

Interviewer:

Barrack situation or mess halls?

Ishikawa:

You were too young to remember, weren't you?

Interviewer:

I remember a little; I was four when we went into Amache, but eight when I came back to California. So, from photographs and just some slight memories, I kind of remember a mess hall---a little bit about the bathroom facilities---nothing about the laundry. I do remember my mother

Ishikawa:

A laundry room was all.

Interviewer:

And, I do remember some cooking. Our family was able to do some cooking in our barrack.

Ishikawa:

If we got the ingredients.

Interviewer:

If you were able to get the ingredients only, but most meals were in the mess hall.

Ishikawa:

Oh, yes.

Interviewer:

While you were in camp, I know you had a small child, but you were only in camp for a short while, so

0H33M42S

Ishikawa: Six months.

Interviewer:

So, during those months, you and Hank and the baby---while you and Hank were unemployed, he did not . . . ?

Ishikawa:

He was working for the Administrative Office.

Interviewer:

Oh, in Amache.

Ishikawa:

He worked most places.

Interviewer:

And then, you said you applied and you went to Cincinnati, so you were in . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Yes, that's where our friends wanted us to go.

Interviewer:

So your parents were able to go to Cincinnati as well?

Ishikawa:

No, we're not---although we were all in Santa Anita at the first camp, they had, because of their location---I mean where they lived, they were sent to Jerome, Arkansas. And where we lived, we lived in LA, and we had to go to Amache.

Interviewer:

What about the rest of your family, your siblings? Where were they?

Ishikawa:

Well, two of them were in the service; so that left my three sisters and my one brother, and they went to Jerome with the family. They went as a unit.

Interviewer:

You and Hank were the only ones married of your family?

Ishikawa:

Uh-hum.

Interviewer:

And, what about Hank's family during this time?

Ishikawa:

Hank's family---let's see, now where was it? He had a father and one son, because the other son was on the Gripsholm on his way home. And when he got home---did he join or did he go to University in Nebraska? So . . . just his one brother and his father lived together in a small barrack.

Interviewer:

I see. Now, you were in Cincinnati until the end of the war?

Ishikawa:

Yeah, we were in Cincinnati until about '49, I think,

0H35:47S

Interviewer:

And then?

Ishikawa:

Then we came out to California. My mother and dad had a home which they had put in the care of a real estate agent. They rented to some Okies, and oh, my gosh, they stole things that my mother had stored under the---in the basement, and they drank beer like crazy. And they [redacted] into the empty lot, which is next to our house. And, when we came back from Cincinnati to California, we stayed with them until we found a house, and then we moved to Inglewood. And, we stayed there until we found a house here---this house.

Interviewer:

Now the home that your parents came back to, did they remain in that home until they passed away?

Ishikawa:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

They were able to clean everything up?

Ishikawa: They had to---oh, gosh, what a mess they left; yes.

Interviewer:

Were any of the belongings left? Did your mother and father . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Well, some of the belongings, but some of the more pricey, you know pricey ones they took.

Interviewer:

Furniture and all?

Ishikawa:

No, it was more or less silverware and things like that.

Interviewer:

Now, Dick was an infant when you went into camp, but how did he fare during the war years?

Ishikawa:

It didn't seem to bother him.

Interviewer:

He was too young?

Ishikawa:

Too young, and then when we were in Cincinnati, he started school and we lived in the Jewish community. No, he did well.

Interviewer:

Now in Cincinnati, can you discuss what your life was like there? Did you experience any discrimination, prejudice?

Ishikawa:

Oh, no, no; I think it's mainly because of the community and the American Friends---what's that, the Quaker group. They extended their hands to us, and we used to go to the---they had a home there. I mean a Quaker home, or something, and that seemed to be our meeting place, and we gathered there. And we used to have a good time.

OH38M11S

Interviewer:

Would you say, in discussing with your other friends or people that you might have met that possibly, you know went out of camp like you did and moved into the mid-West or the East Coast, in general, would you---do you feel that aside from possibly the prejudice on the West Coast that you had experienced on the street car that day?

Ishikawa:

No.

Interviewer:

Would you say that the people from the mid-West and East Coast .
. .

Ishikawa:

Very friendly.

Interviewer:

. . . were more friendly? There were not as prejudiced?

Ishikawa:

Well, in Cincinnati, there are a lot of Jewish people; also, a lot of German people.

Interviewer:

So they were sympathetic.

Ishikawa:

You know, sympathetic. No, I didn't experience any bad feelings.

Interviewer:

Now is there anything else that you'd like to share with us regarding the war years---no matter how small or how simple.

Ishikawa:

Cincinnati---quite a few Japanese re-located to Cincinnati. I don't know what connection they had, but they moved out to Cincinnati. So we had a sort of a nucleus; you know we'd get together for social life and things.

Interviewer:

And you were able to get your Japanese foods and markets? How did you manage that?

Ishikawa:

Oh, we did the best we can. That's all I can remember.

Interviewer:

But you were able to cook Japanese meals, get the ingredients...

Ishikawa:

Occasionally, yeah some things, but not too much; well, being young, you know we weren't too crazy about all Japanese food, anyway.

Interviewer:

What was the food like the few months that you were in the Assembly Center and in camp?

Ishikawa:

Oh, it's typical, you know mess hall food.

Interviewer:

American food?

Ishikawa:

Yeah.

Interviewer: No Japanese food.

Ishikawa:

No, I don't remember that. They may have once in a while made something Japanese.

Interviewer:

Well, during the six months that you were in Amache, what months were they; do you remember?

Ishikawa:

Let's see; we went in---I think we left around---we left Santa Anita on January or February---no---until; no a little later---about February, March. And then we went to Cincinnati---no, Amache. I guess we didn't stay there six months. I don't remember; but I do remember that when we got to Amache, we used to have these awful dust storms. After the dust storms, the dust would be about quarter inch thick. That's all I remember about life in Amache.

Interviewer:

Do you remember going through a winter, where, being from California you wouldn't be used to the changing seasons.

OH41M24S

Ishikawa:

No, we didn't have that stuff. I don't remember snow or---no, I don't.

Interviewer:

Of course, Cincinnati though, too, living there for several years.

Ishikawa:

Oh, yeah. It's cold there.

Interviewer:

It was a big adjustment from the weather that you...

Ishikawa:

Oh, yeah; hot and humid in the summer; cold and icy in the winter. And then we didn't have a car in those days, but we happened to be in the city so we relied on buses and trains---no buses.

Interviewer:

Okay; I think we've pretty much covered the war years, and your experience in Santa Anita, and Amache, and Cincinnati. But is there anything else that I might not have covered that you would like to mention?

Ishikawa:

Well, we were real happy when, what's that--- VE Day; and then the Japanese surrendered. We were all in Cincinnati and everybody went out into the street and celebrated. Like I say, we were in a Jewish community, and they were very friendly.

Interviewer:

I'm sure, your family---all the Japanese-Americans were happy when that happened.

Ishikawa:

But we still stayed in Ohio until '48---no not '48, '49 or '50---'50, I think we

Interviewer:

Before you moved back to California? Shall we take another short break before we move on just for a short while?

Ishikawa:

Okay.

Interviewer:

And, then we'll cover the post-War re-settlement years, just a little bit.

Ishikawa:

Okay.

[Break]

OH43M12S

Interviewer:

All right, Fuzzy, now we're going to discuss the post-War or re-settlement years.

Ishikawa:

Yes.

Interviewer:

You mentioned that you and your family returned to the South Bay Area in about 1950.

Ishikawa:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Did your parents also come back?

Ishikawa:

My parents came---yes; but they came back earlier. And then those---like the two boys that were in the service---what did they do? One went on to college on his GI Bill or whatever it was; the other one liked Cincinnati, and he met a girl from there. And they were married, and he became a jeweler because he was always good with his hands.

Interviewer:

So, do you still have a family in Cincinnati then?

Ishikawa:

Yes, but their spouses are gone. One of them---my sister and her husband are both gone, but I have a sister-in-law still living there.

Interviewer:

And nieces and nephews?

Ishikawa:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And, tell me, where, again, you and Hank settled after you came back here to Southern California, and what kind of work Hank did.

Ishikawa:

Yes, we settled in---we stayed with my mother for a while until we found housing. And we settled in Inglewood. And then in the meantime, Hank got a job---where'd he go---oh, in the produce business, because of his knowledge of bookkeeping. And there he was until he retired.

Interviewer:

And you had a daughter that was born after the war.

Ishikawa: Cincinnati.

Interviewer:

Oh, she was born, Peggy was born in Cincinnati.

Ishikawa: Y

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And what year was this?

0H45M07S

Ishikawa:

What year---I think '48, because she was learning to walk when we drove across the country. In fact, we always say, she took her first step in Cincinnati---not Cincinnati---Grand Canyon

[Laughs].

Interviewer:

Now, when you and Hank settled in Inglewood, with the children after the War in 1950, did you experience---you or he experience either in business or in your personal life any discrimination?

Ishikawa:

No, we didn't, because the people were very friendly. However, this is an interesting note. The real estate man who sold us the house, told us that, "I'm gonna say you are Okinawans," as if that would make any difference. He just didn't want any potential, you know.

Interviewer:

Somehow, Okinawan was not . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Not Japanese.

Interviewer:

In other words, the word Japanese was still a little sensitive and . . . ?

Ishikawa:

It could have been.

Interviewer:

A little sensitive?

Ishikawa:

But he was being on the safe side, and he said we were Okinawans. But the neighbors---they accepted us. They were very friendly. We have---I think the kids had a real good time growing up there, because they were so friendly. The whole block knew each other, and we'd have block parties in the summertime, because every week, you know when the summer vacation, the mothers would get

together and we'd plan activities for the kids. And they really enjoyed that.

Interviewer:

And it sounds as though your children didn't suffer any discrimination, or . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Yes, my son did when we first came---when we stayed with my mother for two-three months. Dick came in from school one day and he says, "I don't want to go to school, anymore." I think he was in the 3rd or 4th grade, and I asked him why. He says, "It's not pleasant for me to go." And I says, "What happened?" He says, "Oh, there's some kids." And that's all he had to tell me. So I contacted the principal that was in, I don't know whether you're familiar with Eshelman Grammar School, down in Lomita? And the principal, I don't know he did something. He must have talked to the kids. After that, he had no trouble. But at that time when he said, "I don't want to go to school, anymore." They were giving him a bad time.

Interviewer:

I see. Were you---Hank was employed, but were you working at this time?

0H47M51S

Ishikawa:

No, I just stayed home with the kids.

Interviewer:

Were you able to get active in any community organizations during this time?

Ishikawa:

Yes, PTA and I went to---I enrolled in a lot of adult education classes. And everyone in the classes were very friendly with me. So, I mean it was just normal to me.

Interviewer:

Well, you were gone from the Southern California area from roughly 1942 through 1950.

Ishikawa:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Did you notice during those eight years any changes in the community?

Ishikawa:

Well, the reason I didn't know any changes is because I had small children, and I didn't go out in the community. I just sort of stuck to the family and close friends and that's it.

Interviewer:

Well, I'm just thinking generally in terms of how the--course you didn't go back to the exact same community, but the South Bay Area, Inglewood, Harbor City area---did you notice that there were fewer farms, there were . . . ?

Ishikawa:

Yes.

Interviewer:

That's what I meant, fewer farms, so it had become a little bit more urbanized possibly?

Ishikawa:

Yes, I think so.

Interviewer: Were stores, say, more stores, easier to get Japanese products? Maybe you didn't have to go all the way into town---you know things of that nature?

Ishikawa:

I used to come to Gardena on the bus to get Japanese food.

Interviewer:

Oh, so by then there was quite a Japanese population.

Ishikawa:

Yeah, I think so.

Interviewer:

In the city of Gardena---I grew up in Gardena, and in the '50s when I was in junior and senior high school, I always thought it was still pretty rural, but. . . .

Ishikawa:

Yeah, it was rural, but, I don't know...

0H49M44S

Interviewer:

And---but I do remember my mother not having to go all the way into downtown for . . .

Ishikawa:

No, we never did.

Interviewer: . . . the Japanese foods as much as she had.

Ishikawa:

I came to Gardena, mostly.

Interviewer:

How were your feelings toward the Americans, or I shouldn't say that---Caucasians---just in general, maybe not your personal, only your personal, but just your friends, your husband, your families---Japanese-American communities' feelings toward the Caucasians---just in general about the evacuations?

Ishikawa:

I had no feelings; I just---they accepted us, and we accepted them. I guess, in other words, I tried to stay within my community so I didn't experience any ill feelings.

Interviewer:

Well, within your community of family and friends, were there feelings by any members of your family or the people with whom you associated about anger about the evacuation process?

Ishikawa:

No, I haven't---no; I didn't notice any. I guess I was too dumb to notice [Laughs].

Interviewer:

No, I wouldn't say that. Like you say, you were so busy with, you know, with raising the children, and just getting settled back into community again.

Ishikawa:

Yeah, that's right.

Interviewer:

Now, your children have since married, and

Ishikawa:

Yeah, both of them are.

0H51M15S

Interviewer:

And you have grandchildren?

Ishikawa:

Great grandchildren.

Interviewer:

How many children?

Ishikawa:

I have two children, boy and a girl, six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren---one was just born the other day.

Interviewer:

And are you active in community groups now?

Ishikawa:

No, I just---Sister City, I've been, you know pulling back---and Garden Club.

Interviewer:

Having known you for many years, I know that you have always been very, very active, and still remain very active in the Sister City group.

Ishikawa:

Oh, I keep my fingers in there, but I don't do a lot, because you can't do it as you get older, you know.

Interviewer:

And you still go to your garden club activities quite regularly, don't you?

Ishikawa: Yeah, once a month.

Interviewer:

And I know that you have many friends and you socialize sometimes even more than those of us that are 20 years younger.

Ishikawa:

I don't socialize, but when they have different activities I try to attend; yes.

0H52M24S

Interviewer:

What do you enjoy doing for hobbies, now?

Ishikawa:

Well, I recently re-registered my Ikebana class, which I enjoy.

Interviewer:

And you're able to see your remaining sister

Ishikawa:

Oh, yeah, every so often she comes down or I go up, and we call each other all the time.

Interviewer:

And I know you like to go to the movies?

Ishikawa:

Oh, yeah, whenever my granddaughter comes along and takes me.

Interviewer:

And, are your grandchildren--your grandchildren are older now, and are your grandchildren and--interested in learning about the Japanese-American experience during World War II?

0H53M15S

Ishikawa:

I think they are; they ask questions, and when I mention certain incidents that happened to us during the war, "Oh, what happened? Tell me more about it." And so my---what are they---Sansei; yeah, they seem to be interested.

Interviewer:

And your grandchildren---or your son, I believe, is married to a Caucasian girl?

Ishikawa:

Well, she's from England.

Interviewer:

And your grandchildren---so their children are half-Japanese and half-English.

Ishikawa:

Yeah, and their children are one-fourth Japanese.

Interviewer:

I see.

Ishikawa:

So they don't look too much Japanese. I got some pictures over there. They don't look very oriental.

Interviewer:

Do you think, though, that, especially your grandchildren that are half-Japanese are still interested in their Japanese heritage?

Ishikawa:

Well, they don't have much contact. But when they do---are confronted, yes; they do ask questions.

Interviewer:

And, I know that you have traveled, you know extensively, both you and Hank when he was with you, and even since Hank has been gone---I'm particularly interested in the travels that you made, I believe with your sister and with your granddaughter on-in visiting some of the camps.

Ishikawa:

Yeah, in this country.

Interviewer:

So, can you tell us a little bit about those trips---where you went and what you felt when you visited the camps?

Ishikawa:

Well, it did bring us back memories of our---enforced, I guess you'd say---you know living, I guess. But, other than that, when we do go back to our---the camps we were in, the people are very friendly. And so, I don't have any feelings of animosity. However, my dad---we couldn't convince him that Japan lost the war after VE Day; he kept believing that Japan won the war.

Interviewer:

That's interesting. How old was he at this time?

Ishikawa:

He was in his late sixties, I guess.

Interviewer:

That is interesting.

0H55M42S

Ishikawa:

It's interesting. And, we say, "What makes you think that Japan is still---you know, won the war?" I don't know, he just felt it, I guess. But it was funny. We used to get into arguments, sometimes, telling him that Japan lost the war.

Interviewer:

Do you think there were other Issei that felt this way?

Ishikawa:

There might have been, but I know my dad was.

Interviewer:

That is interesting. Getting back to the bus trips to visit the camp sites---former camp sites, the other members of the tour, just generally what were their feelings? Can you give me an idea what their feelings were?

Ishikawa:

Well, they didn't say much, but, see, each camp that we went, there was a handful from this camp, handful from **Amache**, and so forth---I don't know, they didn't say much, they were just interested in taking pictures and taking pictures of the monument and things. However, in the last camp---no, not the last---one of the last camps we visited was Tulle Lake, and there they had--
-what's that---suspicious Japanese people interned there in Tule Lake? Have you heard of that?

Interviewer:

No, I've heard of Crystal City, but

Ishikawa:

Crystal City, and there was another one in New Mexico, but this one in Tule Lake

Interviewer:

Which was located where?

Ishikawa:

Near Reading, California---way up north. And, I understand, that the Japanese were not accepted too---with open arms, I guess--- there because even after they left, you know, they had a place, I mean, Caucasian farmers could have gone there, but I don't know, they were sort of aloof. The people were aloof in that community, and that's in California, northern California.

Interviewer:

I'm wondering if, perhaps the Caucasians were more suspicious of those that were interned there because, like you say, the so-called more suspicious people were interned there, and also, just in general, that the people in California were more aware of the evacuation?

Ishikawa:

I guess so, but Manzanar---when I visited Manzanar two years ago, there was one---she worked for the Forestry or something, U.S. Forestry---and she was very interested in the camps. And she wanted to get all the information she could of all the camps, mainly because she---mainly in Manzanar. I guess she was making a study, or writing a book, or something. And she showed great interest.

Interviewer:

Just briefly, really backtracking, you had two brothers that served in the war in the 442, you said.

Ishikawa:

Oh, no, I tell you what. One was in 442 and the other one was in the forerunner of the CIA. They used to call it OSS, Office of Strategic---yeah. And I had a brother-in-law in 442, too. So we had a close association with people in the service.

Interviewer:

And all three of these men, your two brothers and this other fellow survived?

0H59M37S

Ishikawa:

Survived the war; yeah. But they're not living now.

Interviewer:

No, but they did survive the war experiences. Did they have some interesting stories to tell you about their war experiences?

Ishikawa:

I can hear my brother talking about he made chocolate love in Italy. You give them chocolate and you got these women [**Laughs**].

Interviewer:

So, one brother served in Italy?

Ishikawa:

Yeah, in the 442nd; they were in Italy and France.

Interviewer:

And then, the other brother that was with the OSS remained here in the states?

Ishikawa:

Yes, but, yeah, he had to do a lot of undercover work which he couldn't tell us.

Interviewer:

That's interesting. He was doing undercover---he was a Japanese-American whose family was interned, and yet he was doing undercover work for the federal government?

Ishikawa:

Yeah, he had one. . . this he told us. One of the jobs he had, he and his companions, is to stay in one hotel room in New York City, have a telescope pointed in that direction that was watched 24 hours a day to see who goes in and out. Things like that he did. And then, he said he took his training in Catalina Island. They took a bunch of boys and dumped them there. You have to find yourself. I mean you have to find food and fend for yourself. That was like living in the South Pacific, I think, and things like that; but, he had a very interesting experience.

Interviewer:

Now, just to wrap up, can you think of anything that I might not have covered that you might have mentioned. Sometimes the stories that you can think of that your family talked about or just remembrances that you might have prove to be the most interesting. So, if I haven't covered anything, please feel free to add.

Ishikawa:

Yeah, but I can't seem to find anything to talk about. I think I covered just about everything.

Interviewer:

Okay; well it was very nice, thank you very much for being with us today, and letting us interview you.

1H02M06S

Ishikawa:

Well, my life wasn't very exciting [Laughs].

Interviewer:

Well, that's what all of our interviewees say, but it turns out that some of these little anecdotes that you don't think are interesting, prove to us very interesting---those of us of a different generation. So, thanks again.

Ishikawa:

Oh, well, that's ok.

Interviewer:

Can you think of anything else?

[End of Interview]