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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Japanese American Oral History Project

An Oral History with LILLIE Y. McCABE

Interviewed

By

Jeffrey B. Yamada

On October 19, 1987

OH 1949

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Japanese American Project

INTERVIEWEE: LILLIE Y. McCABE

INTERVIEWER: Jeffrey B. Yamada

SUBJECT: Japanese American Evacuation

DATE: October 19, 1987

JY: This is an interview of Lillie McCabe for the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton. We are in her home in Los Angeles, California. It is the nineteenth of October, 1987. My name is Jeff Yamada and I am her grandson. I wanted to start off with a question about your childhood. Where were you born and what was it like where you grew up?

LM: I grew up on a farm. My father had an orchard and a seed farm. He had two places, an orchard on one, and the seed farm in another place. I had a wonderful childhood. I had my own saddle horse and I began riding when I was three years old. I went to a rural country school in a little town called Hollister. I had to walk two miles to get to school. When I grew older I had a buggy, and I used to pile all the neighbors' children onto the little buggy, and I'd take them to school. The boys at school would harness and unharness the horse for me, and it would be out in the pasture until I was ready to come home.

I came to Los Angeles in 1928 and married Mr. Ernest Yamada on June 30 of that year. He was in the produce business and had three

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stores. Then the crash came and we lost almost everything. Then we started over again. He worked for an importing company and he used to travel from the Los Angeles area south, and also north to Oxnard and Santa Barbara. He used to be a jobber for a big importing company. He worked for several years there before WWII. The import business was nothing and we lost everything. He also worked for Warner Brothers as a photographer/technician and he was there for a while after the war.

We were forced to evacuate to Santa Anita racetrack where we lived in a little tarpaper barrack. We took our two little children. My husband was allowed to stay out of the camp because he had served in the United States Army, but they told me that my two children and I had to stay in the camp, so he also came into the camp. In a few months we were moved to Colorado to a place called Amache. There was nothing there; it was a wild, wild desert with the wind blowing. Everybody's face was just full of dust. The only thing you could see were their eyes. We came on a rickety train with no air conditioning. All the shades were pulled down so no one could see us. They moved us like that. We were very, very exhausted and when we arrived, why the soldiers were there with bayonets to meet us.

JY: About what time of year did you go?

LM: This was about September, 1942, I think. When we arrived in Amache, the welcome truck came--it was like a sheep truck--and they loaded us all on. First the baggage, then people standing, and then we went to camp. Well, there was nothing there, just bare barracks, no beds--nothing. There were a pile of straw and a canvas bag, and they told us, "Now everybody make your own mattress." So we all scrambled and made our mattresses with the straw. Some of the people who were handy used the lumber that was lying around and made little beds. We weren't able to do that so we slept on the floor with our straw mattresses. In a few days an army truck came with army cots. They gave each family an army blanket and an army quilt, and a pea jacket for

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each person to keep us warm.

There was nothing; it was dusty, and the only thing we had in the middle of the room was a great big pot-bellied stove. The coal truck came from someplace outside and they dumped the coal by the side of the building. We all had to scramble to get that coal before everybody else got it or we'd freeze. We brought that in, and we carried the water in and put it on top of the stove to warm our tea.

There was a mess hall. There was a huge plankboard seat with just a raw wood table. The cook wasn't very good. The first meal I had was chopped baloney with mung beans and carrots. That was our first dinner; I'll never forget it. I got sick for three days and I didn't eat. After that the food got a little better. They cooked rice and they boiled canned tomatoes and put it on the rice and gave it to us. In the morning we usually had dried, salted cod. It wasn't desalted. We also had a piece of bread and cereal. We also had coffee. But the coffee was not coffee--it didn't taste like coffee--but they called it coffee. We were grateful to have that. When we had our breakfast, half of the time our mouths were gritty from the sand because of the wind. The wind came up very often because it was the desert with nothing on it but little bushes.

Once one of my little boys wanted to go to the outhouse. Well, someone was making a great big ruckus and one of the mothers was yelling. We all ran out to see what was happening at the outhouse, and here was a great, big rattkesnake curled up inside of that outhouse. Well, we had nothing; we weren't allowed to carry anything. Then the men came out, and one of them was very smart and he found a two-by-four that was lying around after they built the barracks. They took the stick and killed the rattlesnake so my little boy could go to the outhouse.

After we were kind of settled down, we found some little pieces of lumber lying around. Those who were very clever made little chairs or little tables or little nightstands and things like that.

JY: How big was your room?

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LM: It was about twenty by twelve feet in one section of the barrack, and was partitioned with rough wood.

JY: You had a family of three?

LM: Yes, three. There were four of us, but my husband was out in Boulder, Colorado teaching for the United States Army Intelligence, G-2. So it was just the three of us. There was a shower built near the toilets, just like a horse stall shower. In the cold of September we had to walk about a quarter of a block to go to that shower and back. Our children were too young. I couldn't take them, so I had to boil water on top of the pot-bellied stove and bathe them, and then throw the water out. I had to carry the water in to warm it, and then after they bathed I had to throw the water out.

The children were sick most of the time because of the food. I did my very best with the money I had brought with me from California. A peddler came to sell chickens and various vegetables and things, and I bought them until my money was exhausted.

JY: You have mentioned the Black Market in our previous discussions, was that the peddler?

LM: Yes, that's the peddler from outside the camp. They just charged anything they wanted to charge, but I had to save my children's health so I paid anything they asked for. It was very hard on us, because my husband wasn't home. I don't know how long I stayed, perhaps two years or two and a half years, I really don't know. We had a rather rough time.

The laundry was, oh I guess, five or six laundry tubs in one room. All the women had to take their turn at washing. It was a good thing that we had sandy soil because sometimes the water would run all over but sink into the sand quickly. But we had a very hard time with the

plumbing. When we washed the clothes in the washroom we had to take turns hanging the clothes on a metal wire. In the winter time the wind would whip the sheets and cut them right in half just like a knife. Because, you see, the moisture freezes the sheet and then the wind flips it around and it just cuts it right in half. That was the kind of life we had in camp.

They finally built a hospital. It was about a half mile down from where our barrack was. Once my older son stepped on a nail so they gave him a tetanus shot and he just curled up and almost died. So they had to take him back to the doctor and give him another shot to revive him, since he was allergic to tetanus. We saved him that way; that was Ernest.

The children didn't mind the camp too much because they didn't know very much. They just wanted to get out of the fence, because they were fenced in and the guard was on the tower with a gun. Being little children they wanted to crawl out, and I said the desert was dangerous and full of rattlesnakes. We also had land turtles crawling all over. One day the boys brought home land turtles and hid them under a box. We had just one electric light bulb hanging in our room, and that night the boys wanted a drink of water. I got up and tried to get the water for them and stumbled on this box, and found something crawling all over me. I made a great big yelp, and there were six little land turtles crawling all over. I said, "What are you doing?!" and the boys said, "Oh, they were just playing around, so we thought it would be fun to keep them as pets." I told them, "Not in this little place." They had to let them go.

The children suffered, because they were sick most of the time. If they weren't sick, then they were happy, because they didn't know very much about what was going on.

JY: Moving back a bit, how did you meet your husband?

LM: His father had an orchard about eight miles away from us, and our

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parents knew each other. I didn't know Ernest at all. I was going to school in Hollister and he was already in Berkeley. He was ten years older than I was. I think he came to visit dad and mother with his father and mother when he was about twenty years old. I was just ten years old. I was playing on the merry-go-round and among the May flowers and with other children, so I didn't pay any attention to him. It was more or less the old style. The parents liked each other and that's how I got married. We came back to his folk's farm and he worked as a jobber sending produce to the East.

He was in Berkeley and I was in Hollister. I just saw him a few times, I didn't get to know him very well. He was a very quiet man, very intelligent and well learned. I was very rambunctious yet; I'd rather go away and ride a horse than see my fiance. One time he drove up in his car, I said "Hello", got on my saddle horse and took off. I wasn't very nice. I was just that type. He was thirty and I was twenty years old, and that's quite a bit of difference when you're young. I'm sure it was hard for him to teach me and to adjust to everything. I was supposed to finish school and I wanted to finish it; but, dad and mother thought it was nice for the older girls to marry first. So it was sort of an arranged marriage. He was a very nice man, and I learned to like him. He was a very gentle person.

When I came to Los Angeles in 1928 he had three produce stores and his brother-in-law, John, was helping him. Then the stock market crash came and it went to two stores, then to one, then the last was gone. Then he had to go to work, that's how he started to work for people.

JY: John Fukushima?

LM: John Fukushima, yes, the late John Fukushima.

JY: Right after the war started didn't the FBI come around to all the Japanese-Americans' houses?

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LM: Yes, well I didn't know anything about the war starting. I was at home when a friend called from back East. My friend said, "We're at war with Japan. Lillie, stay in the house and keep your children in the house." I said, "I can't believe it." "Everything will be all right," he said, "we're coming back. We're trying to help you." They were my American friends. I couldn't believe it. I just didn't believe it. After a while, sure enough, over the radio it said that Pearl Harbor was bombed.

We were just living naturally every day. Then a rumor started that they were going to put all the Japanese-Americans in camps. Well, I didn't believe that because I was an American citizen. There was no foreigner living with us and my husband served in the Army, so I didn't think anything of the rumors.

One day I was coming home with the groceries and two great big men--they were about six foot-two--followed me. I wasn't afraid, but I thought, "Why are they following me?" When I went up the porch they came up the porch. Then one of them flipped up this identification card and said, "I'm FBI." I said, "What is it that you want?" He said, "Do you have a shortwave?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Do you have a gun?" I said, "Yes, do you want to come in?" So they came in. He said, "You know, your having that means I have to arrest you." I said, "You can't arrest me. I'm an American citizen. My husband served in the Army. I've never known any other country but this. You can't do this to me." He said, "Well, you'll have to go in because you didn't serve the country." I said, "If you give me a gun now, I'll go and serve our country and die for the country." He sat down and thought about it and said, "I came to confiscate your gun, but if you're an American citizen, I guess I can't do that." He was very rude, but he went without taking anything.

The next day I went downtown to the FBI main office. The secretary asked me who I'd like to see, and I told her I'd like to see the head FBI officer. She said "The head officer?" I said, "Yes, I want to see the head officer. I don't want to see any other person." While I was saying that a gentleman came out and said, "Is there anything I could

help you with?" I said to him, "Yes, two men came yesterday to intimidate me. They were both about six-two and wore hats and trenchcoats. They asked me a lot of questions, and I want to know why they are doing that to me because I am an American." The FBI head man apologized and said, "They are just rookies and just graduated school. Please excuse them. I'm sure you're as good an American as I am." They didn't confiscate the guns or anything, but he wasn't sure what I should do about them. They had taken all of the foreigners' guns to a warehouse in Hollywood someplace. He told me that the only one who would know what to do was the United States Marshal.

I then went to the courthouse to see Mr. Clark, the United States Marshal at that time, and I told him what happened. He said, "I am so sorry that they intimidated you. You're a good American, and I'll prove that to you." So he showed me all kinds of things and said, "I would trust you with my life as an American." I said, "What should I do with the guns and things? I can give the radio away, but the guns I can't because they belong to my sons and husband." He said to bring them over and the Deputy Marshal Dan would keep them for me, and he did keep them for me.

After the war was over I came out of camp and lived in Denver with my brother-in-law's family. I wanted to know where the family sword and guns were because some of them were very valuable. Then I went to the United States Marshal in Los Angeles, and Deputy Marshal Dan said my things were there. He wrapped them up in canvas and said, "Are you going back to Denver?" I said, "Yes. I don't have a home here now. It's gone." He then said, "If anything happens on the plane or anyone says anything to you, call right back and I'll see to it." Nothing happened. I carried three great big guns--I don't know what the calibers were--and two 22's that the children used to shoot, and I had a Japanese sword with a gold handle that was all wrapped up. I went on the plane and no one said anything.

I was never ostracized by people very much. The only reason I had to go to the camp was that my sister was ill in the hospital with

pneumonia. It was at a crisis, whether she was going to live or whether she was going to die. I had to stay. They had given us time to leave California, within about three days. If we stayed we were to be put into camps. When a person is dying you just can't leave, so I had to stay back. That's how I got into the camp.

I also had a very bad case of pneumonia when I was in Amache. None of us was very strong, especially myself. My husband wasn't home, and they took me to the barrack hospital. They took me in one of those rickety army covered trucks. The doctor came and looked at me and said, "Oh, she has a hundred-and-six temperature, too late, too late." I heard him say that, but I was delirious; I thought I was on an airplane. I guess they thought I was going to die. They kept on asking me, "Now Mrs. Yamada, what do you want to do with your children? Where is your husband? Mrs. Yamada!" And it went on like this, you know. "Do you have anything to tell us, please tell us something. What do you have on your mind?" And do you know what I told them? I said, "I am a United States citizen, and before I die, take my bed and take it outside the fence before I die. I am not going to die in this camp. Take me outside of the fence and let me die there because I am an American." That's all I said.

When I came to, I was over the crisis. The two doctors, two nurses and the neighbors were all crying and wiping their eyes. Of course the hospital was a makeshift thing; there was hardly any medication and no oxygen. So they had this great big sheet covering me, and they were boiling water. I said, "What happened," and the nurse said, "Oh, you're all right, you're all right." Then I started to get better. I think I was in there, I don't know how many days or weeks. My neighbors took care of the children. The children were going wild with hardly any decent food. Then, when I went to check out of the hospital, one of the doctors said, "My, you're American." I said, "What did I do?" "You didn't do anything, you said something." "Well, what did I say?" He said, "You said, 'I am American,'"—they asked me, "What are your last wishes?"—"and my wish is for you to take me out of this camp and let me die on the other side

of the wire fence. Because I am an American and I don't want to die here.' That's why, when you woke up, everybody was crying." I was very happy about it, but I didn't know I said such a thing. But I guess I had in my mind that I wasn't going to die there; this was not the place. It's my country and I'm not going to die in a concentration camp.

That was the kind of life there. There wasn't much reading matter, there weren't any newspapers. I don't know whether I should tell you about this newspaper that came out, that wrote about the luxury we were living in. I don't whether I should mention the paper, the Denver...Post.

JY: Yes, the Denver Post.

LM: They said that we were living in luxury, with ham and eggs or bacon and eggs in the morning, and that we had plenty of coffee, while on the outside they're rationed. So two women--two investigators from Colorado--came one day. There were a lot of Japanese-speaking people as well as American-Japanese. One of the women came to me and said, "I'm an investigator from Denver, Colorado. Can you tell me something about your life in the camp?" I said, "Certainly, what would you like to know?" She said, "Well, you folks are living in luxury while we're rationed and we can't even get eggs and bacon, we can't even get meat!" I said, "I've never seen meat." So she said, "May I come in?" When she came in she said, "Where's your furniture?" I told her we didn't have any. "Where do you sit?" I said, "The camp gave us an army cot, we all sit on the cot. This is a chair, would you like to sit down?" She sat down and said, "Is this all you have? Why this isn't even a floor, it's just brick on sand." I said, "Yes, that's what I live in." "Don't you have a rug or something?" I said, "No, we live that way. Sometimes some kind of small animal will make a hole and crawl through." She said, "Where's your bed?" I showed her the corner where we used to sleep on the straw on the floor until the army gave us cots. "How do you bathe your children?" she asked. I said, "There is a public bath, but my

children are too small. I boil the water over the stove and I bathe them here." She said, "They told me you eat bacon and eggs." I told them I would be very happy to meet them for breakfast the next day.

So the two women and I went to breakfast. And they saw this salty cod and coffee made out of chickory, a ration of a teaspoon of sugar, and some mush plomped into a dish. She looked at me and she said, "You're kidding." I said "No, this is the truth, this is our camp life. What they give us we eat." She said, "Wait 'til I get back to that Denver Post! It isn't even living here. You're living in a hovel!" So they went back and told this Denver Post columnist, and these women asked the him, "Why did you say such lies?" "Well," he said, "I have to make hay while the sun shines. Just to make money, I have nothing against Japanese." So their story was written, too. I was very grateful that they came.

We were grateful that we had religious people, like Reverend Nicholson, Father Swift, Father Lavery, and various others. Our children's Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Clark, used to send religious articles to the children, which made it very nice. I had beautiful American friends while I was in camp in Santa Anita. I guess I'm going back and forth in my story.

The food was very poor, so poor that we were sick. Two American ladies would bring me food twice a week at Santa Anita. The guard told one, "You can't come in here, this is a concentration camp." When she said, "She's an American." He said, "Regardless, you can't come in." Then she went home. Two days later she came back with a basket and a beautiful white linen cloth. I was on one side of the barbed-wire fence and she was on the other side. She had linen on both sides and we passed food through the wire fence from side to side. We had a grand picnic! The guard said, "You can't do that!" She said, "Why can't I do that? This is my food, and I'm giving it to my friends." So they couldn't do anything. One lady came with a great big birthday cake for one of the children, so do you know what the soldier did? He took his bayonet and stuck the cake right in the middle. I said, "Why did you do that?" He

said, "Something might be hidden in there." That's how they treated some people. But I wasn't intimidated, I was very fortunate.

One doctor--a Japanese-American dentist--used to give free his time to the Navy men in San Pedro every time the ships came in. He became so distraught that he just lost his mind. He went around that Santa Anita camp fence, I don't know how many miles. He just went around all day until he was like tanned leather. He came to me one day and said, "May I have a date with you, lady? I'll take you out to a very nice place." I said, "Why Doctor, are you all right?" He said, "Oh sure, I'm fine. I'll take you out to dinner." Then I thought, "Oh my gracious, he's lost his mind." He kept on saying, "I am an American, I am a doctor and I had taken care of my boys all these years. Now, why do I have to be in this camp?" I said, "Don't get too caught up in this situation because you'll get sick." But he really got sick, he lost his mind.

Then we all moved and were separated to Heart Mountain, Wyoming; Manzanar, California; Crystal Lake; Gila, Arizona; and Amache, Colorado. So I don't know what happened to him. It was a very, very sad, sad case because he was a Navy man. We had incidents like that.

Just before I was released from the camp I got a very nice letter from the United States, from Washington, saying that, "You are a very honorable, upright American. You may go out." Well, when I went out, in a few days everyone was let out.

JY: What were your friends' names, the ladies who brought the food?

LM: Mrs. Lillian Clark, and Mrs. Lela Cardozo...

JY: Of the Cardozo card company?

LM: Yes, that's the card company, Ralph Cardozo. Also Reverend Nicholson, Reverend Kleinfelter of the Grace Methodist Church, and they were very nice. I had very lovely friends, American friends. If it

weren't for them I would have lost my mind, also. They were very, very good to us.

JY: Did you have any contact with the administration at any of the camps?

LM: I didn't, my husband did, because he went to the meetings at Santa Anita. The administration called one day and said, "Mr. Yamada, you cannot have that Oldsmobile." When we went into the camp--into Santa Anita--we drove our car. There they confiscated the little camera my husband had, and they confiscated the little hatchets the children had because they said they were dangerous. Well, the administration called one day and said, "Mr. Yamada, you cannot have that Oldsmobile. You can't leave that car parked there, we need the space." Well, you know, they didn't need the space, the camp administrators wanted to buy the car. So one of them said, "We'll give you \$175 or you'll have to take that car and put it someplace else." "But," he said, "you can't go out now." So how could Ernest go out and take the car? He said, "I'll give you \$175." We sold it for \$175. This officer rode every single day in our car to watch the barracks. It really, really hurt me, because we were just stripped out of everything except two suitcases.

We couldn't take anything. We left everything. Of the things that were left, Reverend Kleinfelter stored some of the things at the Grace Church. Nothing was taken, it was just intact. But the things we left in my sister's cellar were all gone. We didn't know they were all gone. After the war, they told us that we could have those things shipped. So the government directed the Mayflower Shipping Company to ship them. All we had were a broken, old ironing board, a wicker basket for laundry, a wastepaper basket, and a cabinet. Everything was stolen, nothing was left. It wasn't even worth shipping them. When we came back to see--their cellar is about eight inches thick--the thieves had chiseled it up and gotten in. Our lawyer, Mr. Morane, had been watching the place, but he wasn't there all the time. He made his rounds, but

when he came by the things were all taken. We lost everything.

The only things we had with Reverend Kleinfelter were new tires, but we didn't have a car so they weren't any use. Then, for love or money we couldn't buy cars after the war. Cars that were selling for a hundred dollars were about a thousand dollars, and a thousand dollar car was about five thousand dollars. You couldn't buy a car. On top of that gas was rationed, food was rationed. We had a very hard time after we got out, because we didn't have any money. Fortunately much of my family had been able to get out before the evacuation order came, so they were living very nicely in a big home. So we all went there to live with them.

JY: Where was that?

LM: In Denver, Colorado. My mother and father had rented a house that had; upstairs, bedrooms and a living room; on the first floor bedrooms and a living room; downstairs living room and a bedroom. So they had a place to stay during the war.

My brother, Kenneth, was doing very top secret work for the United States in Denver; my husband was teaching Japanese in Boulder, Colorado to the G-2; while I was in the camp. When I got out of the camp, my brother would never tell me where he worked. He never said anything.

But, while the family lived in Denver, our friends from Hollister, San Francisco and San Jose would call and say, "Mrs. Sugioka, we're in the neighborhood. May we come and see you?" They were our neighbor boys who were in the Navy and in the Army. They'd say, "Well we're just near you, in Wyoming." They came, they stayed. Some came from Arizona, just all over. The boys were going across the country, and they had a few days leave, so they stayed with the family. So it was as if the United States Army and Navy were guests of the family.

But in the meantime I was in that camp, that miserable camp, because I was delayed getting out of California. It wasn't very fair. My

husband was out teaching the secret intelligence men and he didn't tell us anything. My brother was doing very top secret work. After he graduated medical school he was a Navy doctor, Kenneth. Then my older brother, who was an electrical engineer and owned his own company in Hollister when he was forced to leave California, started to help people who were displaced. He took care of them day and night, visiting the camps. Whatever money he had, he spent for the things they wanted, such as note paper and pens.

There were some Italian and German soldiers in a concentration camp in Colorado who had been captured or something. How they came to the United States I don't know. But if they wanted something like notepaper, or pencils, bare necessities like toothpaste or something they didn't have, my brother used to buy them and give them to the men.

So, finally, my brother said, "I'm not interested in making money. I'm going to save people." He went to seminary school, and it took him years to become a minister. He finally became a minister and a world missionary. He had his little HAM radio station, and he would connect from the United States to India, to China, to Europe, to South America, just go around all the HAMs. So when he went around the world as a missionary, he had friends all over the world. He stopped at all these HAM stations, and it was very interesting. That's how he spent his life. Then he met this lovely Caucasian girl who had been a missionary in Japan for eight years teaching English. She was working for the Methodist Church helping displaced Japanese just as my brother was for the Diciples of Christ Church in Grenada.

JY: Didn't Uncle Jim help with the JAACL also, just before the war?

LM: Yes, he was one of the first national officers of the Japanese American Citizens League. My sister was the secretaty for the local chapter in San Benito County.

JY: How was it coming back to LA?

LM: Well, I came back first on account of my health, which was bad. I stayed with my friend, Mrs. Lela Cardozo. At that time my husband had a photography shop in Denver. That's how he made his living. He took care of the two boys, and then came to California with them. There wasn't any place to live, because they were ostracizing the Japanese. They didn't want them to come back. It made it very, very hard. So we couldn't find a place.

We stayed with the family of Dr. Nakaya who's wife, a Caucasian, was put into camp because her husband was Japanese. She was angry because she was of Irish descent. So my husband and the two children landed in Mrs. Nakaya's house, and I landed in another home, so we were separated. We hunted high and low for a home, and finally, Mrs. Cardozo had an idea to build a little house for herself and to rent to us. We lived in the little house that was as big as a train car. It had a little bathroom, and one bedroom, and the boys had to sleep in the living room-kitchen-dining room. That's how we lived for, oh, about five years. Then the children started to go to school, Edwin going to grammar school and Ernest going to Emerson Junior High. Then they went to University High School, and Edwin finished at UCLA.

JY: Did the kids have any problems coming back to school?

LM: Well, the first thing the teacher did was call Edwin. He said, "Yamada, get up, stand up. What's your father doing? Oriental, regular isn't he?" My son replied, "I beg your pardon, sir?" "You're regular, aren't you? Your father's regular isn't he?" the teacher asked. "What do you mean, sir?" "Oh, a regular gardener." Edwin said, "I beg your pardon, he's been teaching the United States Army Intelligence." The teacher then said, "Oh, I beg your pardon!" So it was like that at first. It was very rough for him. Children are very proud, you know; they're Americans and they will not be intimidated.

When they were building the house, this little house for us, Mrs.

Cardozo said, "Our nice Japanese friend is coming." You know what the neighbors did? They tore up all the cement foundation. I heard the news over the radio in Colorado. They said in California people who are very good to the refugees from the camps were building a house for them. But the neighbors hated it and called them Japs and tore it up. He said the Catholic priest came and sent them all away. So they redid the foundation and built it for us; it took a year or two to build it.

To make a long story short, we lived in this little house, but we had this big front yard. I planted a lot of flowers. I love dahlias and they grew like wild there, and I had a few vegetables there, too, right near the street. No one was very friendly; I didn't know a soul around there. They all looked at me kind of, very funny. I didn't say anything. If I saw them I said, "How do you do?" One day this lady came along and I was picking zucchini, I think. I said, "Would you like some? I have so many, I don't know what to do with them." "Oh," she said, "I'd love to have it." She picked it up and said, "Thank you very much. You know, you'll have to forgive me. I've done an awful wrong to you. We were one of them who tore your foundation down. Would you ever forgive me?" I said, "There's nothing to forgive; no one was hurt. Let's be friends and don't do things like that." After that they couldn't do enough for us. Her husband was working for Douglass aircraft, so they were very prejudiced, very prejudiced. But after that, she was so nice. We went to their son's wedding, and they came over for Edwin and Georgene's wedding. I made great friends, but at first, why, it was rather distant relationships. They didn't call me names. A lot of people were called 'Japs' and things like that. They knew better, I guess, because they never did that to me. But the looks would tell you that they wanted to keep their distance, so I kept my distance. I was just natural, the same way I am now, I never changed. If I had something that somebody could use, I gave it to them. Then everybody started to come over and became very, very friendly. I don't even to this day know their names, but they were friendly. They were great friends; that's the way it went.

JY: When you were talking about the marshal, you said he showed you a bunch of things.

LM: Coded information which I don't know whether I should tell you or not. Up on the eighteenth floor where the secret codes were coming in, he said, "You are American as well as I am. I'll show you the secret code. I'll show you because you're an American. See where it's coming in?" and he showed it to me. Of course it didn't mean anything to me, because I don't know what the secret code is anyway. But he said, "Just to prove that I trust you as an American, I'll trust you with my life." That was Mr. Clark, I forgot his first name. He's gone now, dead about ten years. He was the United States Marshal. I was very fortunate in that way.

I proved myself American, I didn't know anything but America. I wasn't raised in Japan. Our nearest relationships with Japanese were with grandpa Yamada and that was about eight miles away. In Hollister we had a few sharecropper Japanese about four or five miles away, but my mother didn't associate with them. The only people we knew when I was little were English, Irish, and Scottish. Then the Germans came in later, then the Italians, then the Slavonians. Different nationalities started coming into the valley, some of whom were Russian. We had a nice group of people. I was most impressed with the English, because I grew up with the English. My taste in pictures, furniture, dishes, is influenced by English styles to this day. So I didn't like oriental things very much because I didn't know anything about them. When I graduated and was twenty or twenty-one, I started to understand, "Oh yes, well, maybe Japanese art has something." All my influences were English and Irish, because they were my friends. I didn't even know that I was of Japanese descent, myself. When we were little we did not encounter prejudice. Each farmer owned his land, and they owned acres and acres. Nobody came in, except some migrant workers who came in to pick the prunes and the fruit for us. One told me that I was Japanese, and I got so mad when I found out that I was Japanese. That's how it was. This is

why, I'm sorry, but I don't have too much of a Japanese background. My mother was very strict; she taught us Japanese, high Japanese, very high class and did not allow us to associate with other Japanese children. When I visited Japan--when I was very young--I tried to speak Japanese. I couldn't speak very well, but I said a few words. There was an exchange professor from the university in Seattle, Washington whom I met in the camp. When I went to Japan I saw him and he said, "Oh, you come from a very high family, don't you?" I asked him why he said that, and he said, "Your language is a dead giveaway. Who taught you?" I said, "My mother, but I'm sorry I can't speak very much." He said, "Well, you're all right."

That's about all I can think of. Of course there were a lot of sad incidents about moving the people out. I remember one incident, a neighbor called at eleven o'clock at night. She said the FBI had taken her husband away--he was a gardener--to a San Pedro jail. She was crying because he didn't come home. She had a little girl. When she asked where they took him, they told her to San Pedro. He was all wet from gardening, so she said, "I want to give him a nice change of clothes." I drove the car, and we went to the prison. Some big flashlight flashed on my face, "What is your business? Tell me what is your business." I said, "I came to see Mr. Ohara." He said, "You can't go any farther than this." I said, "His wife is just frantic. He's all wet, and he has dirty clothes, and I brought him some clothes." So the guard opened the gate and very politely told me, "Yes, ma'am, I will deliver it for you. Thank you." When Mr. Ohara came out years later, he said he never saw the clothes in his life. I went to the United States Marshal's office, and the courthouse. I went to the jail, I went all over because I wasn't afraid, I was an American, and anyway the guard said, "What is your business?" you know, and everybody'd just cringe, with the great big flashlight from the tower. I said, "Here is his wife, and the child is crying. It's my neighbor." So he was very polite. But the prisoner never saw anything. In fact he got water poured on his head. They poured water on his head to intimidate him to speak up. He didn't do anything,

he was just a gardener, but he was born in Japan.

Naoye, my daughter-in-law, had a Japanese born father who was a schoolteacher. They took him and put him in a special camp away from his wife and children because they thought he was connected with the Japanese government. You know your grandfather was connected with shipping, but he was an American citizen and they couldn't take him. On top of that he was cleared to teach the intelligence school.

JY: What did he do in the First World War?

LM: He was going to school, but he enlisted. He was nineteen or twenty years old and going to Berkeley. That's why, when I became a widow, I didn't get the veteran's pension, because the government said he was twenty-one days short of full enlistment. He was in the Army, but not long enough.

JY: Did they count the time when he was teaching?

LM: No, this was when he was nineteen or twenty years old. So, when he died, after the Second World War, I asked for the widow's pension for WWI and they said I can't have it because I was twenty-one days short. So I really had a very bad time.

JY: You went to Santa Anita. You were there during the riot, weren't you?

LM: Yes

JY: Can you tell me a what you remember from that?

LM: Well, I was in the barracks and my husband wasn't home. The two children were lost in the riot, and I was frantic. I don't know what started the riot, perhaps from the food. They didn't give them decent

food. Some of these Army or Navy personnel or whoever brought the food, did not bring the allocations but were selling it on the side. They found that out, I understand, while we were hungry. So they had a riot; I don't know much about it. The soldiers came with a truck and bayonets and everything. The Japanese people were throwing their cups and dishes at these soldiers, and the soldiers were trying to stop them. I think the riot came from the lack of food. You see the attendants were selling sugar while we were just given a teaspoon. I'm sure the United States government gave us more than that. We understand they were selling it. I had a very hard time, for my sons, Ernest and Edwin, were lost. There was one woman with her baby, who was so hysterical and so riled up, she did not know the baby's arm was off its socket. She was just dragging the baby, and she didn't even know. Mob psychology is the most scary thing in your life. I had never seen a riot in my life until then. Well, I tried to go in to find my children because they were little teeny things. It finally got settled, and around four-thirty, five o'clock in the afternoon the two little tykes came home. "What were you doing? I've been looking for you." I said. "Oh, we were way on the other side. It was a lot of fun. A soldier caught a woman by the arm, and the other one threw a cup at him, and the other one threw a dish at him. It was a lot of fun, mother." I said, "Oh my gracious, if you would have gotten in that crowd you would have been crushed to death." They were on the side I understand, so they didn't get hurt, but a lot of them did get hurt. It was very scary. Everybody's face was pale, I don't care whether it was a soldier or civilian, it didn't make any difference. It settled, but I think the food rationing improved. They had to have food, but they didn't have enough.

I think there were about ten thousand people in there, in Santa Anita. Some of them were living in horse stalls, you know, with the smell of manure. We were fortunate; at least we were in a barrack. The wind whistled through the tarpaper. At least it had a floor to it. It wasn't like Amache camp. Amache camp had just brick, dirt and brick. Can you imagine a cold country in wintertime? At least Santa Anita had a

wooden floor, even if it had cracks in it this big. But it was California, so it was warm.

All in all, why, it was a good experience for me to learn to be tolerant of people, and have compassion for people, and try to understand people, instead of getting all riled up about things. I think I learned a lot from being in the camp, because there were many, many sad things. There was a father who was a doctor who was so broken hearted, he died of a heart attack. There was no place to bury him. So they buried him in the camp. One of the ministers or somebody gave the sermon. It was very sad. A little baby died and they had a service there, way up on the hill, with just a wooden cross that somebody painted white. That kind of thing was very sad. I tried not to look at the sad side, but tried to be cheerful, and tried to help others cheer up; instead of being morose about things I tried to uplift them. If there were books, or papers or anything, I tried to read. I would say, "Let's go for a walk." Of course, there isn't anything to see, but anyway I'd at least get it off their mind, because there were a lot of people who became mentally ill from thinking about the imprisonment. It wouldn't do any good, you see, to sit and think about it. I did my very best to help them as much as I could.

It was sad, because some children were uncontrolled. The parents were very jealous if other children did better than theirs did in school. When people are confined to a place like that, they get nervous and they get cliquish. So I didn't associate with anyone unless they needed help, then I'd go and help. But I never joined any kind of woman's club. I stayed away, because all they did was gossip. There wasn't anything very nice to talk about anyway, because we were sad, so I just stayed away. If they needed help, I certainly went and helped them. That's the way I lived my life there.

JY: Did you meet any of the administrators when you were at Amache camp, say, John Rademaker?

LM: No, my husband met them, but I didn't. This is why I don't have the history. You see, we moved and I lost the papers. He had everything written, but it's gone now. I moved years after his death and I tried to find the papers, but because I was sick I didn't find them and I don't know where they went. He had written about his life.

Just before the evacuation, the importing business failed because the boats weren't coming in from Japan. Well, we had to live, so my husband went gardening with someone. He had never gardened in his life. He was gardening for Mr. Nick Harris, the famous detective. Mr. Harris said, "What are you doing?" Ernest said, "I have to eat." Mr. Harris said, "I'll give you the best reference." So he had this reference from detective Nick Harris, but still worked for three more weeks until we were moved. One day Edwin came home from Emerson school. He didn't know his father was working as a gardener, and he saw his father pushing a lawn mower in a garden near his school. "Mother, what is my father doing? Did he lower himself from the importing business to a gardener?" I said, "We have to eat." I thought Edwin would have fits, he almost died. He did that for about three weeks before we were evacuated, and also for a few weeks when we first came back from the camp.

JY: You also mentioned how the coal trucks used to come in and dump the coal at Amache.

LM: Yes, and we all had to go with a coal bucket and get it ourselves. If we didn't go quick enough we would have just the little pieces, and they wouldn't hold for the night. Of course, my husband was teaching at Boulder, Colorado, and the children were seven or eight years old, they couldn't help me. I had to carry that coal in and pile it in the corner in the room so we could burn it. You can't adjust that potbellied stove. If you put a big piece in, it just lights up like a lantern. Then when it dies down it's cold and you freeze to death. So I'd have to get up in the middle of the night and try to put coal in little by little. Sometimes, I

couldn't break the big chunks. All I could do was lift it up and dump it in there. Then it'd get so hot. Outside it was snowing and we're just roasting inside. But, you see, I didn't have a husband to take care of me, he was away working for the government.

JY: I'm sure for the older people, too.

LM: Oh, yes they had a very, very difficult time, especially the people who were ill. A lot of them died. I think what caused Ernest's death was that he was broken-hearted. After he did everything he loved, he lost everything. When he lowered himself to become a gardener to make a living, it was too much for him. I think he worked about three weeks, but that was just too much for him. He just couldn't take it, it broke his heart. He wasn't a strong man. All he knew how to do was push pencils.

JY: He had a degree from Berkeley?

LM: Yes.

JY: What kind of degree?

LM: A commercial degree, a B.S., you see, they didn't give good jobs to Japanese at the time when he graduated. I know a man from San Francisco who graduated as a civil engineer, but he couldn't find a job. His father had a laundry, so he had to work in a laundry. The other brother, also a college graduate, got so disgusted he became a minister and a very good minister. Life was like that.

JY: Before they told you where you were going, did they tell you about the weather or how to prepare for the weather?

LM: Nothing, they said, "You are to get out of here by a certain day," it was posted on all of the telephone poles, "get out at a certain time. If

you're not, we'll put you in a camp." They sure did. The big truck came and loaded people up, and the bags. Reverend Nicholson and another minister helped. We put our things in the truck, but we took our car. We had a big Oldsmobile 8, a big black car, and we went in the car. Of course, we went in style to the Santa Anita Assembly Center, so they took the car away from us. There was no preparation at all. They had to close up the racetrack.

During the move, we encountered many unscupulous persons. There's always somebody who wants something for nothing. If you had things worth one hundred dollars, they'd give you maybe ten dollars, fifteen dollars. One girl became angry at the ridiculuos offers. She had very lovely dishes, costing about one hundred-and-fifty dollars. At that time one hundred-and-fifty dollars is worth a thousand now. This dealer came and said, "I'll give you five dollars for them." Right in front of his face she took all the dishes and banged them against the wall of her house. She said, "I'd rather break them than give them to you for that. You are a very low man." He just about died. That's how they were. The refrigerator that they bought for one hundred-and-fifty dollars they sold for five dollars, because they had to have some pocket money. A lot of people didn't have very much money. They just lived in suspense. My father, who had a farm, sublet it to these European people. All they sent was two hundred-and-fifty dollars and they said, "Mr. Sugioka, your crop was very bad this year." What are you going to do? At least he had land when he came back. A lot of people didn't have land. But he sold it, because he didn't want to go back to Hollister. He came to Los Angeles.

JY: How did he own land? He was a non-citizen.

LM: My brother Jim was of age. When he was young we had a guardian who was an American citizen, Mr. K. Tsukamoto, the one who was the civil engineer for the government. He was the guardian to Jim, so when Jim became twenty-one years of age he put the property in Jim's name. Court records show Mr. K. Tsukamoto as a guardian to James Sugioka.

That's how the land was bought. You see, no Oriental could own the land, so they had a very, very hard time. After Jim was twenty-one we had both farms in his name.

JY: Is there anything you'd like to finish up with?

LM: I could say I had a very hard time when I came back to Los Angeles. I had to pick up work here and there. I had two little children. I worked for Art Originals of California. They made artwork on wearing apparel. I was a second manager there for about seven years. The owner was a very wealthy man, and he didn't want to work any more so he closed the shop. So I went to Bullocks and I was a cashier at Bullocks in the main cashier's office for seventeen years before I retired.

I still have many freinds, but many of my friends are gone now that I'm old. I miss them very much. Most of them were a few years older than I, some of them were ten years older. Well, most of them are gone-- Reverend Kleinfelter, Reverend Nichol Nicholson, Mrs. Nicholson, Father Lavery, Father Swift--they're all gone, except one priest who's retired up north now. He's near eighty or over eighty. One Sister, my godmother's daughter, is a nun here in Monrovia; I love her very much. They're about the two old connections I have. Then there is a group of ladies of Irish descent in West Los Angeles. Most of our dear friends, I have a lot of new friends, but most of the old friends of forty or fifty years are gone. Mrs. Clark, the Sunday school teacher, and all of those people are gone now. But, I'm very grateful to live in the United States and to be an American citizen. I traveled in Europe and I came back, and I think the United States is the best country in the world.

JY: I know you mentioned Reverend Nicholson and some of the other Caucasian people who were helpful to you while you were in camp. What could you tell me about these people?

LM: Just when the war started, a gentleman and a lady came to the door.

He said, "I am Reverend Nicholson and this is my wife, Mrs. Nicholson. May I come in and visit with you?" I said certainly, I'd be very happy. He said, "Do you know anything about Japanese history, or have you been in Japan?" I said, "No". He said, "I will give you a little brief on how the Japanese live." He had lived in Japan, and taught the Japanese English and religion. He said the people were very poor. He came back to California to get a goat, which he brought that back with him so the Japanese children could have milk. He kept on buying goats, whenever he had enough money, and so he was named "Uncle Goat". He was loved by everyone. He took care of some old people, there.

Then he came back to the United States. He had a son, Herbert, and a daughter, Virginia. When the war started, Virginia—who was a nurse and had helped the Japanese in many many ways. After the war at an old people's home, Keiro Home--and Reverend and Mrs. Nicholson came every week to see those people who were sick in the hospital or in a home. They talked to them and consoled them in Japanese. Unfortunately, Mrs. Nicholson had a stroke and she couldn't walk. So Mr. Nicholson in his old age put Mrs. Nicholson in a wheelchair and wheeled her to the hospital to see everyone. She was a very pleasant lady, who would wave at everyone and smile. She couldn't talk very much. But he was very faithful, and had taken care of so many Isseis who could not speak English. They spoke Japanese fluently, and made the Isseis very happy and very comfortable. They were very comforting to them. Another friend was Sister Mary Esther, a Catholic nun. They, together, used to go around and see these old people, and the sick, and the shut-ins. They were very helpful to us. When the war broke out he came to the camps. After the war he came to see all those people, I don't know how many years.

I remember about two years, when Mrs. Nicholson was very sick and bed ridden so she couldn't come, but Reverend Herbert Nicholson used to come alone. But he was getting tired and he wasn't able to come as often as he used to. He had to watch out for his health, and his daughter, Virginia used to come and help with the nursing at Keiro. Unfortunately, they both passed on. They lived in Pasadena, and Sister Mary Esther and I

used to visit them when Mrs. Nicholson was ill. They were a lovely family and they did so much for the Isseis, especially. We were grateful for that.

The Catholic father, Father Lavery, served more to the north, in the northern camps. I think also in Manzanar and around there. Father John Swift came to Amache many times to teach us and to encourage us to fight to keep happy, and not to be discouraged. He used to teach us prayers and give us encouragement.

Father Lavery in the meantime went to Washington DC to see if he could release all the Japanese from the camps. That was almost impossible. He attended the meetings and he went to the administrator in charge of the camps, but they said he was too busy to see him that day. He went the next day and they said he was too busy, and the next day they said he was too busy. They told him if he kept coming that they would have to jail him for bothering people. Father Lavery said, "It's all right, if I have to be arrested, I'll be arrested. But I didn't do anything to be arrested." Finally, after I think the third or fourth day, they let him in. The officer said they never knew the Japanese were suffering that much. What they'd heard from the outside, and what they'd read from the people on the west coast who put the Japanese in the camp, was absolutely different from Father Lavery's account. The officer was very sorry, but he said now that they're in, he couldn't get them out. He promised to do his very best to get them out. I'm sorry, but I don't recall this person's name. So, Father Lavery stayed there three or four days, and they said they understood the Japanese are not enemies at all. That we were just Americans, like any Europeans, Italians, or Germans, and to rest assured, they'd do the best they could. But they couldn't do anything, we were already in the camp. The Father came and told us that we had assurance from the governor that we were not criminals. That made us very happy, because we had been made to feel like criminals.

JY: The governor of Colorado?

LM: Governor Carr of Colorado had stated that the Japanese were

Americans and should be allowed in any state. Father Hugh Lavery also talked to Governor Carr after he returned from Washington DC. Then he came over to talk to us in Amache camp. So we were grateful for that. There were many ministers, but I forgot their names. One was Reverend Fosdick, another was Dr. Smith, a Methodist minister from Berkeley. I forgot his first name, it was so many years ago. There were many Caucasian ministers and missionaries that consoled us. They tried to help us with education, because we didn't have any school. A lot of people donated books and encouraged us, too. We didn't have any teachers, so the little camp girls who had probably graduated high school were teaching grade school. Gradually, some educated people started to teach. For some years after that, I think, a few Caucasian teachers came in to teach, and they were very helpful. They encouraged the children very much.

After a while, the government said that if we wanted to go back East to study or to do anything, they'd give us a release. They'd have to look into our history, of course. After they were cleared, a lot of the young people went back East. Some of them went to Chicago University and graduated, some of them went to New York, and some of them went to the Midwest like Iowa University, Nebraska University.

They graduated, and when they came back to California they had very fine positions. But at first it was very hard for them to get the positions, because Californians didn't want them back. They worked very, very hard to prove that we were able and capable. So we proved ourselves.

During the war they recruited the boys in the camps to fight for the country. Some of the young ones said, "We are in the camps, how can we go and fight for the country when we're thrown in the camps as enemies? If we are Americans, we shouldn't be in the camps." So a few of them balked, but the majority of the boys said, "Yes, I'll go out and fight for the country." In my block, which was called 8-K and was way up in the hills, there were two boys named Saito. They lost their mother, and the father came with two boys, nineteen and twenty years old. One said to me, "You know, I am going to fight for the United States, and I'm going to win and come back. Goodbye now, I'll see you later." That boy never came

back; he died in Italy in Anzio. Another boy went, he just got his thumb shot and came back, he was a gunner. There were thirty-six young Japanese boys that went from our precinct, and only one came back, that's all. The surviving boy was all upset. After years went by he did get settled, but he had lost all of his buddies. That was the sad part of our block.

Our daily lives just went on, trying to do the best we could. Women were trying to teach the young girls how to sew or crochet. The men folks were trying to teach the children, if they weren't in school, crafts or about desert plants and animals. Well, we did the best we could.

I think I was in there for two years, but most of the people were in there for two and three years. Some of them were allowed to come back home, but they didn't have a place to come back to. California didn't want them, and their homes were sold. After the war, many came back to California and the housing shortage was extreme. There wasn't any room for us, so a lot of people suffered a lot and were discouraged and went back East. Some of them taught, some became professors, some became doctors, some became attorneys. So there are a lot of Japanese-Americans who graduated from eastern universities.

JY: You said you met Reverend Nicholson before the war or after the war?

LM: Before the war started I didn't know who he was, but he became a good friend. He kind of prepared us for the camp, made us understand Japanese culture. When we went to the camp, that's when we saw Japanese, because had not associated with other Japanese before. Maybe we might go to a little Japanese picnic or a gathering with thirty or forty people, but at camp there were thousands, and all in barracks. There were many kinds of people, people who were poor and had a lot of children, people who were educated, a college professor who was in there because he was Japanese, born in Japan. The conglomeration was very hard to adjust to. One day my son Edwin asked me, "When are we going back to America? I don't like Japan."

Revernd Nicholson told us about Japanese culture and custom. He said, "There's nothing to get nervous about because you're American. We are more Japanese than you are. You don't know anything about Japan, you don't even know Japanese history. You just be calm and don't worry." There were other ministers, I can't think of their names right now, but they came to see us off. They were very helpful; some of them even brought sandwiches for the youngsters because they were hungry.

When we left Los Angeles, we were sent to the racetracks at Santa Anita camp or Tanforan, that's near San Francisco. All the buses were waiting, and they didn't have any time to feed the children or anything. These ministers, such as Dr. Knudsen, and good Christian people handed out milk for the children, and sandwiches. We owe a lot to our Caucasian friends. If it weren't for my Caucasian friends, I don't think I would be living. They were just wonderful. The only people I think were bad were the war hysteria people, those warmongers.

On December 7, 1941, I woke up, it was Sunday morning, I got a call from New York from my employers. "Lillie, be calm." I said, what happened? He said, "Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. You might be ostracized, because you're oriental. You're American, but you're oriental, so stay in the house. We're coming right back." They were very fine people; they came back. They fought for us, but it was no use because everybody was getting moved. They started to get a petition, but I said, "Don't do that. Not just for me, only if it is for everyone." He said, "No, I want to get you out." I said, "Don't do it. It's just more trouble for the government than anything else, don't do it. If they're going, I'll go too." So they dropped that. But that's how some people loved us. And we loved them. It was a great, great experience in my life. It was sad, it was bitter, sometimes happy, sometimes very gratifying. In other words, I think I understand more about human life than I ever would have otherwise. We saw this very, very sad side. Then getting out and being free again, and being an American was good. Is there any other question you'd like to ask?

JY: Who were the people from New York?

LM: They were famous dancers, Veloz and Yolanda. I was working for them as a nurse, because they had a baby insured for \$100,000. They had hired a nurse, but she couldn't shoot a gun, and since I was able to handle a gun, they hired me for protection.

JY: It sounds like an interesting job.

LM: Yes, well I didn't shoot anyone! But intruders tried to come in the door. At that time a \$100,000 baby was worth \$1,000,000 if they kidnapped it. That's why they called me from New York and said, "Be calm, don't go out."

Before the war, there weren't very many jobs for the Niseis, second generations. That's the way it went before the war; there were so many prejudiced people. Some people had it very, very hard. We were very grateful that our father had a big piece of land. He always told us, if anybody didn't like us, just tell them to stay out of the gate. We just don't have to deal with them. We never had any trouble. I had a very wonderful childhood. Our neighbors were all Caucasians, either English, Irish or Scottish. Later all the Southern European people started to come, like the Slavonians and the Italians, Spanish and the Portugese. But when we were little we didn't have those people.

JY: When we were talking earlier, you also mentioned Togo Tanaka.

LM: I never met him before in my life, you know. He was a newspaper man, a Nisei boy. I think I told you about it, didn't I? When I went down to the courthouse the U.S. Marshal said, "If all the Japanese-Americans were like you and Togo Tanaka, we could have avoided evacuation. You wouldn't have to go in the camp, if all of you had strength like you and Togo Tanaka, we would have fought for you." But the Japanese are a very quiet people. They obeyed what the government told them, and they just packed up and went. They never argued, they never said anything. He said, "You

and Togo Tanaka are the only ones who've come and told us how they felt." United States Marshall Clark said that.

JY: Is there anything else you can think of?

LM: After the war we came back to California, and we couldn't find a place to live. There wasn't a place to live in Los Angeles. So I went to my friends' place, by myself, because I couldn't stand the cold in Denver. That's where we went after Amache. My father and mother had a very large home there. They had three levels, upstairs, first floor and downstairs. They were huge rooms. I stayed with them for a while, but the weather was so bad I could not stay. One year I had pneumonia twice. I told you I almost died in the camp, then after I came out I had another case. I decided to come back to California, so I had to leave my husband and two boys. But there was only room for myself at my friend's house. The children wanted to come back. My husband had a photo studio then, but there wasn't a place in the world to come back to.

We had a very, very trying time. Sometimes people would have no place to go, and we'd let them stay in our little house in Los Angeles. Sometimes it was like rolled tacos or something, people rolled in blankets in the living room and the kitchen and in the dining room. But they had no place to go, because there was no place for them. The hotels were full. We had a hard time getting settled, but we did get settled. Ernie and Edwin went to junior high, and then University High School. Then Edwin went to UCLA and Ernie went to Santa Monica College. That's the way it went. We had a struggle, but we made it.

But we lost everything we had. We had nothing. We just had to start it all over again. Mr. Yamada was working for Warner Brothers; he was very good at retouching and he was quite an artist. It was a hobby. He made good money. But you see, when the relatives come from anyplace, the studios replaced workers with their relatives, so he was out. So he went to work for the Veterans Hospital in Sawtelle, where he was a nurse. Then he had his first heart attack--they didn't know it was a heart attack.

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They said he was overworked--they put him in bed for two or three days then released him. He had another heart attack five years afterward, but he was never well after he had the first heart attack. The doctor never found out it was a heart attack. He had two surgeries before he died, and he had a very hard life. He was very, very disappointed because he lost everything. I think that killed him more than anything. Being a man, he didn't want to say anything. He was a man who never did say much, and I think it hurt him very much inside. He was never well after that. I think he was sick for about eight years. He stayed at home and did some retouching, but that was all he could do.

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