

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Japanese American Oral History Project

An Oral History with SUMIYE TAKENO

Interviewed

By

Arthur A. Hansen

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CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: SUMI TAKENO

INTERVIEWER: Arthur Hansen

DATE: November 9-10, 2001

LOCATION: Denver, Colorado

PROJECT: Japanese American Oral History Project

AH: This is an interview with Mrs. Sumi Takeno, and the interview is being done by Arthur Hansen. The interview is for the Japanese American Project of the Oral History Program at California State University at Fullerton. The interview is being held at 1663 Steel Street in Denver, Colorado, which is the home of the interviewee. The interview is being started at approximately twenty-five to eleven A.M., and the interview today is going to focus principally upon the resettlement experience of Japanese Americans in the Denver area. Can I call you Sumi?

ST: Oh, yes, please.

AH: Okay. Sumi, why don't we start the interview today by you telling a little bit about your personal and family background.

ST: Okay. Do you want to know from birth?

AH: Sure. Right from the beginning.

ST: I was born November 17, 1922, in Florin, California. I went through grade school in Florin. We attended churches, Japanese school, whatever, through our Methodist Church. I finished eighth grade in Florin Grammar School, then I went to Elk Grove Union High School and finished there. Then my father wanted me to go to sewing school, so I went to Los Angeles where my sister and her family lived. Then the war started December 7, 1941. So I didn't quite finish the school, but I was almost, so she gave out the diploma. Then my sister and her family, her husband and three children, moved with me back to Florin to stay with my parents.

From there, we moved [microphone interference] in 1942. The war started in '41. At first, we were told that it would be just an assembly center, and then it started to be a permanent center, so we were fortunate. The thing of it that was very interesting was, I was working as a nurse's aide at Manzanar Hospital, and people were not very receptive or close to me, and I wondered why but I never asked. Then one X ray technician came up to me and said, "Sumi, you're just like us." I said, "Of course. What did you expect?"

"Well, we heard that you came from a hillbilly country, illiterate, non-socializing." (chuckles) So I said, "No, we were just like probably you, raised in a community, had everything, schools, churches, recreation." So she said, "I'm sorry that we felt that way." Then I asked my husband many years later. He said, "Yeah, I went to see what you looked like." (both laugh) Because he said they were uneducated people, and we didn't want uneducated people in the – of course, I didn't go to college, but –

The camp life, to me, it was very nice. It was different, of course, but we did make a lot of friends, and we tried to make the best of it. We were paid sixteen dollars a month to work, so we worked. I worked as a nurse's aide. Then I worked as a dietician for a while. Then I went back again to hospital and worked in the clinic. That was in about January of 1943. My brother-in-law was saying, "Sumi, maybe you should think about getting married." What I really wanted to do was join the WACS or leave the camp to go to nursing school. My father said, "No, I want you to get married." Then my brother said no to the WACS because, "We're thinking of finding someone for you."

I think about January I was working in the clinic, and I went out to get something for the clinic. Somebody was sitting there, but it didn't bother me. Then that evening, my brother-in-law said, "Did you see someone there?" I said, "No, I was too busy." Of course, I didn't know. He said, "Well, Roy was there to see you." I said, "The sneaking person. I should be able to go see what he looks like, too, before I say yes." I think several nights later, he was speaking at a Town Hall meeting, so I said, "Can I come?" to my brother-in-law. He was a block manager. So I went. Then after I came back, my brother said, "Did you know he's bald?" And I said, "Sure. I think it looks very becoming on him. That doesn't bother me." "Oh, okay." So things progressed, and about a month later, we had a very simple engagement party.

In the meantime, he was working on this job for Denver, so we had to hurry to think about getting married. My father said, "Wouldn't you like to just get engaged and go later to Denver and get married there?" I said, "No. Since all of you seem to be satisfied with him, and I think I am too – I don't know him at all, but I'm trusting my – what they call the go-between, *baishakunin*, and my brother-in-law. So he said okay. So my sister sent for material for the wedding gown and the veil to Sears Roebuck, and she had a seamstress – I think her name was Mrs. _____ – make the wedding gown pretty fast. Then we were married on May the 16th and left about three days later.

AH: You've given me a lot to think about. Let me backtrack and ask you some questions. I've heard quite a bit about the Florin community because they've had a huge oral history project that they have done. You've probably seen some of these. Were you a participant in that project?

ST: No, no. I just saw them. Then my brothers and sisters contributed their photos, and whatever.

AH: Well, they've done this in conjunction with the Sacramento State University.

ST: That's right. Do you know Virginia White?

AH: I don't.

ST: Curator.

AH: I don't know her. I met a couple of people that were connected with Sacramento State, Wayne Maeda, who was the faculty person that was working with the historical group from the community, and talked to him a little bit. I've seen a lot of their books, and they're quite attractive and quite important, I think. I know that Florin was one of the communities at Manzanar that was somewhat different in several senses. One, it was from the Sacramento Valley rather than Los Angeles County.

ST: That's right.

AH: So it was a pocket of people. The other groups of Bainbridge Islanders were the first group that came in when they started as a reception or an assembly center. But the Florin community, they wrote some documents about the Florin community, so I always was curious about it. I found these oral histories, and it was interesting. Why don't you tell me a little bit about the special nature – I traveled all through that valley a couple years ago, along the delta area, and went through all of the different communities that were there. But things have changed so much. I mean, some of the ones, like Walnut Grove, still seem to be rural communities.

ST: Walnut Grove is a little distant from us.

AH: Right. And Cortland and those are, yes.

ST: We used to call that – my father used to call it (Japanese term). But you wanted to know about –

AH: A little bit about Florin, the nature of the population. Were most of the people there from a particular prefecture in Japan? Like in the Terminal Island area, a lot of the people were from Wakayama and they were fisher folk. What about the Florin community?

ST: I think Florin community consisted a lot of Hiroshima. There were others, too, I'm not familiar with. I guess we never really talked about it. Now, Florin is very sad because it is part of Sacramento. I has just –

AH: Merged into it.

ST: So the mail is all Sacramento, and it does make you a little sad to go back there and to see that it's not – it still says "Florin," but the mail is not Florin.

AH: How much of a separation was there between the Florin community and Sacramento proper when you were growing up?

ST: The distance is only about ten miles.

AH: But now that's all filled in.

ST: But there is a vast difference because Sacramento had their own organizations and churches and all that. Now, the grammar school that I attended, I think, became a senior citizens place. Senior citizens recreation, or something like that. But it's still there. The grade school was not demolished. But the high school, Elk Grove Union High School, is in Elk Grove. And they have *really* flourished. Elk Grove is a real big city now. And Florin is just mostly residences and probably a few stores. But it's not Florin anymore, it's Sacramento.

AH: I know that one of the famous people that went to Elk Grove High School was the poet Toyo Kawakami.

ST: I don't think I know him. Toyo?

AH: It's a woman. Toyo.

ST: Where did she live?

AH: She lived, I think, right in the Elk Grove area there.

ST: Oh, she did? Yes, I knew of a Kawakami but not very well.

AH: That's her married name. I'm trying to think of what – her maiden name was different from that, and I can't think of that right off the bat. She was somebody that became quite famous. They've had a couple of books about her now, and she was out there in the country. She was a country poet at that time.

ST: I would have to know her maiden name to recognize –

AH: I'll provide that for you in a little while. I can't think of it right now. She married Iwao Kawakami. He was a journalist in the San Francisco area, and he had published some of her poems. Then she went to Berkeley and they became involved with one another. Then she married him and their marriage did not last. She later worked years as a librarian at Ohio State University, but then she has since been rediscovered and become quite prominent as a famous poet.

The Florin community, what kinds of farming were most of the people involved in there?

- ST: Well, for instance, we had grapes and strawberries. Most of them were grapes and strawberries. Then on the side, they may have – like we had persimmons, we sold persimmons, raspberries. We had an acre or two of raspberries. No vegetables. Those were the main items, and strawberries and grapes. Now, I understand, there's hardly anything.
- AH: Were most of the people there Buddhists or Christians, in that area?
- ST: I think probably there were more Buddhists at that time, but the Methodist Church was flourishing too.
- AH: Were you in a Methodist church?
- ST: Yes, I grew up in a Methodist church. Then when I was in camp, I helped with whatever I could. In Denver I'm still Methodist.
- AH: Was there, before the war, a JACL chapter in Florin?
- ST: Yes. I'd like to say something about that. I wanted to join JACL badly because I thought it was a great organization, but I was only eighteen, and at that time you had to be twenty-one.
- AH: Oh, really?
- ST: Yes. But then Mary Tsukamoto, after I came back from Los Angeles and we were waiting for the evacuation, she said, "Would you come and help me type and put out the newsletter?" I said, "Sure, I'd be glad to." So that's what I did. I helped her put out the newsletter.
- AH: So you were aware of what was going on.
- ST: Yes. See, the anti-JACLers said that the JACLers were always collaborating with the government, but that isn't true because I never saw a single article, nor could I remember any of that kind of notice from there.
- AH: How was the JACL looked at in Florin?
- ST: It was a very good organization, and we had a fairly large membership. I can't remember how many we had because I was not a member, but my oldest brother was a member, I think. And I think it was just a fledgling JACL then yet in 1941, '42.
- AH: Would the membership of the JACL within Florin have distinguished itself from the general community in any sense, or do you think it was representative of the entire community?

- ST: Uh, I can't really say. But I'd like to say that they were more prominent than just an organization, because people like Mary Tsukamoto and her husband, they were active.
- AH: How do you spell that last name?
- ST: T-s-u-k-a-m-o-t-o. She was a schoolteacher and she had all kinds of dedication to school, and things like that.
- AH: So she was in that community.
- ST: Mm-hmm. She inspired me a lot, too.
- AH: Was she older than you by about ten years?
- ST: Probably not quite that old. She died a few years ago.
- AH: But a little bit older than you.
- ST: Yeah. She was maybe at least five, six years older.
- AH: So she could be a role model of sorts.
- ST: Yes. I admired her.
- AH: Was there anybody else in the Florin community that was in the JACL that later achieved some sort of prominence, either at Manzanar or after camp in public life?
- ST: You know, I really can't say.
- AH: When you came to Manzanar – when you were talking about it a little while ago, you were mentioning the fact that they kind of thought you were a little different. I'm taking this to mean a couple of things. Number one, they were checking you out because the population at Manzanar was more urban than most camps, so they were looking at you as a rural community person.
- ST: Rural people. That's right.
- AH: There's also another thing. I have read, and maybe you've heard this and maybe not, but one of the suspicions – and this would have particularly involved you later on when you got involved in an arranged marriage – was that I had read some things that they had always felt that there was a large group of *eta* class people from Japan who had settled in Florin, so they thought of them as being the outcast people. So they were checking people to make sure that they were not. Is that a possibility?
- ST: You mean in Japanese they call it *eta*?

- AH: *Eta*, the ones that were involved in the leather and the tanning and the butchery.
- ST: Yes. I felt as though that was very cruel and unfair to my friends, for instance, because they were not any different from my brothers or anybody else.
- AH: But that might have carried over when people were checking you out a little bit.
- ST: Could be.
- AH: Because it sounds like the rumors which were so paramount in camp –
- ST: But see, that's only in Japan. Because once they come to the U.S., they're just like any other neighbors.
- AH: But didn't some – like the go-betweens, when they arranged marriages, check that sort of stuff out.
- ST: Absolutely.
- AH: Okay. So that could still carry you a little bit. Even though there's nothing to it here, somebody might –
- ST: When I went to see my father one time, I said to my father, "Did you read about this _____," I think. I can't remember his last name. I remembered his first name. He's a judge now, and you told me he's one of those." He said, "Yeah, I did." But he said, "You have to admire him." And he said, "I'm proud of him." So he was changing a little bit, but I guess they could never forget it.
- AH: So in Manzanar, they could have been looking at you as the possibility of being a country bumpkin or even an *eta*. But then you had to undergo the scrutiny of a go-between going through and checking out all of your background.
- ST: Yes, that's right.
- AH: So by the time Roy that would have come over to the hospital to see you, all of those things would have been clear.
- ST: Yes, probably so.
- AH: So at that point, he said this is okay.
- ST: Yes.
- AH: How widespread was the go-between practice, first of all, in Florin when you were there and then later on in camp? I know that that continued in the United States. It wasn't just

relegated to Japan or to Hawaii but on the Mainland, too. But Florin was less urbanized than, say, Los Angeles, what they used to say, more "Japanized." So some of those practices prevailed. Was it pretty strong?

ST: Yes, it was quite strong. My older sister was *baishakunin*.

AH: She was one or she went through one?

ST: She went through *baishakunin*, and their marriage lasted until his death. So I somehow believe in arranged marriage.

AH: I think people are starting to – given the divorce rates on the open market (chuckles), people are starting to realize that there's something to looking into these things.

ST: Uh-huh. And I think you tend to try harder. We were married fifty-three years, and I think that's a pretty good record.

AH: And your sister probably was married that long too.

ST: No, because he died when he was fifty-nine with cancer. So that was very unfortunate. He was a very nice brother-in-law, a very nice man.

AH: The Florin people, what were the blocks for Florin at Manzanar?

ST: East of the railroad, and I think certain roads divided.

AH: In the Sacramento area.

ST: In Florin. So we were people between the railroad and the east, but not far east because those people went to Jerome, farther east. So I think they cut off at a certain highway, probably Elk Grove Road, or something. So there weren't too many. We had about – not a whole block, but almost a whole block of Florin people.

AH: And what was the block at Manzanar?

ST: Thirty.

AH: So most of the people in that block were from Florin.

ST: Yes, were from Florin.

AH: Did you know anybody else in that block that used a go-between at camp to get married? Or were you unique in that regard?

ST: No, I don't know. It may have happened after I left, because I left in '44 and the camp didn't close till '46. As far as I was there, I don't think I knew that they were *baishakunin* marriage.

AH: So you might have been the only one. You knew there were some people that were living in that block that had gone through a go-between before the war but not necessarily in Manzanar, right?

ST: Mm-hmm.

AH: Your sister, was she in Manzanar?

ST: No. My older sister was but she was already married then and then had three children.

AH: And she lived in Block 30?

ST: Yes. We all lived together. Then my oldest sister was married to someone that lived on the west side of the track, so she had to go. And my father was very, very sad and unhappy to think that something couldn't have been arranged. But it came so suddenly that we didn't have time to think about those things.

AH: You said your dad was a block manager?

ST: No, my brother-in-law was. But when they talk about all these riots, like no-no boys and things like that, when the questionnaire came, I asked my father, "What are you going to do?" And he said, "Of course, I'm staying here." He said, "You people will not be happy in Japan." And he said, "I don't wish to be anywhere else but with my children," so he said, "I'm not going to say no-no, I'm going to say yes-yes on that question." (chuckles) So he said, "Don't worry about it."

AH: You had to answer the questionnaire too, because you were over eighteen.

ST: Yes. I was already nineteen then. But at Manzanar, I heard from one of my friends who was a nurse's aide, she said, "Did you know that some of the people, those Kibeis, think that Japan troop is coming to Manzanar and they want to be ready for them?" And I said, "How can they be so sure?" Well, anyway, that's what their hope, I guess. When I read this later, I thought, I guess I can't blame them for feeling that way because they were so strongly indoctrinated with Japan, you know, Yamato _____ and all that.

AH: I guess if you're a victim of propaganda, you think it's education. Other people can call it propaganda, but you're there and you believe these things. It's drilled into you.

ST: But I didn't believe it.

AH: But you didn't have that background.

ST: No. (chuckles)

AH: You weren't a Kibei. You didn't go there.

ST: Not many Kibei. I think maybe even some of the Isseis felt that way too.

AH: Did you have a large Kibei population from Florin?

ST: Uh, there were some but not large. See, there were eleven children and my parents. Then my father invited his younger brothers from Japan to come and work to earn some money and then go back home. One brother made it, but the other brother contracted TB and he died.

AH: Oh, he died here?

ST: Mm-hmm. He died in Florin. Then his wife and the little baby – they had two boys. One was about already six, seven years – five or six. Then the baby and the mother left to go back to Japan, and she left the older one with my father. In about 1920 or so, she took the whole family to Japan for a visit.

AH: Who was the whole family then?

ST: My two oldest sister, my two brothers, and then the fifth one was born in Japan.

AH: Oh, really? Your mom was pregnant when they went back for the visit.

ST: (chuckles) And I don't think my father knew it.

AH: Are you the only one that was born here in the United States?

ST: Oh, no, no. We were all born here in the United States. None of us except my –

AH: I mean, are you the only one that was born in the United States after that trip back to Japan?

ST: No, then I have five more.

AH: Okay. They're younger than you.

ST: Yes, uh-huh.

AH: So you're from a very large farm family.

ST: Yeah, eleven children.

AH: Wow! That's amazing.

ST: So after several years later, he heard the rumors that the two boys were not taken care of too well by their grandparents because they're old, and all that. So he said, "I'm going to call them." So he did. So there were fifteen of us at one time.

AH: Gee whiz! Was that uncommon to have a large family like that in Florin?

ST: No, I don't think so. There were other families who had – but I guess you have to say uncommon, because most of them had maybe six or –

AH: Especially when you had fifteen.

ST: Yeah, especially when there's fifteen. At dinnertime, he said, "I don't want you to say anything unless it's something that you want from the table. I don't want all this messy talk." So that's what we used to do for a while.

AH: Were there a lot of Yobi-Yoses in Florin?

ST: I think there was. I cannot name them or I don't know who they are, but I used to hear about it.

AH: There was the younger Issei that you were talking about, and then the Kibei were kind of like a commingled population of sorts.

ST: Yes, uh-huh.

AH: So we have large farm families that are not uncommon, although maybe not quite as large as yours.

ST: Yes, that's right.

AH: I read some reports, actually, about the Gila Camp, where there were a lot of people from the Valley, both from San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys, who came to Gila. This fellow named Charles Kikuchi was working as a social worker down at the Gila Camp, and he would go through the two camps there, the Butte Camp and the Canal Camp. The Canal Camp had a lot of rural people and the Butte Camp had a more urban population, and he said, "You know, when I would walk through the rural part, it was like –" And he was brought up in an orphanage so he wasn't around Japanese people very much, so for him it was very shocking to all of a sudden be in a population of eighteen thousand – being a social worker. He said, "I'm walking along there, and it was so countrified, and so many of the people, even the Nisei, were speaking Japanese very well. Then the women were breast feeding their children openly as I was walking by." And he said, "I was turning colors." Does that strike you as something that might present an accurate picture?

- ST: Yes. It was embarrassing for me too to see that. But I think later on they were more discreet.
- AH: Now, here in our society, they do it all the time, right.
- ST: Well, I don't know. I think they're very discreet about that.
- AH: I don't mean the Japanese so much, I mean just the general society now. When they had the women's movement, they would say, "If my child has to be breast fed, I can just do it right here." I remember going to my sister-in-law's house and my sister-in-law was right there, takes her blouse – this is the kind of thing, because it was my brother's second wife, so she was younger. And all of a sudden, she represented a different attitude. So you turning away –
- ST: It is embarrassing, isn't it?
- AH: Yes. But I think what Kikuchi was trying to talk about was the people, it's more natural, it's a more countrified sort of thing, but again, it's a more rural Japanese village kind of situation as opposed to what you would find in San Francisco, where he had lived.
- ST: Yes. They were more bashful, I think. Or at least, well mannered, I guess. I see a lot of women, even now, they cover themselves when they're breast feeding.
- AH: Tell me a little bit about working at the hospital, because I'm interested in that. I'm not sure if you were – because it's an anonymous list of people that Gwenn Jensen interviewed, but Gwenn is someone I'm going to have dinner with in a couple of nights. I was on her doctoral committee at the University of Colorado. She was doing it on the health effects. She's from a family in Los Angeles, and her father was a minister and the parishioners were Japanese Americans, so she knew a lot about that when she did her dissertation. So Lane Hirabiashi and I were both on her committee. She has a lot of interviews. She was talking about the different health care and the problems with health care. She talked to a lot of people. I'm not asking you if you were one of the people interviewed, but asking my own questions. I did do an interview with Frank Schuman. He was the administrator at the hospital. And I tried to do an interview with Dr. Bota, but Dr. Bota did not want to be interviewed.
- ST: Dr. Bota?
- AH: Yes. He never responded to my correspondence. I heard him testify at the redress hearings in Los Angeles, but I did not talk to him personally, although I've read a lot about him because he was quite outspoken.
- ST: Actually, my brother and his wife both worked in the hospital, and that's where they met. So they were married. In Japanese, even though they find each other, they still place a *baishakunin* because it's better.

AH: Just to reinforce when they do that, right?

ST: Because it's a Japanese custom.

AH: But when you worked in the hospital, tell me a little bit about your perception of things there in terms of – I know you said you enjoyed it. You even wanted to become a nurse. But when you first started working there, you didn't have a medical background yourself.

ST: No, I didn't. But I was always interested in nursing, even when I was little. And someday, I said, I'd like to be a nurse. (chuckles) But it didn't work out that way.

AH: My mother had the same experience. She didn't become a nurse until much later in life, but she always wanted to be a nurse.

ST: Well, so in camp, I thought the hospital was, in my estimation, fairly well run, and the employees were serious. I think they cared about people, patients. And the staff were – the heads were – we didn't associate with them that much, but apparently, the hospital was running fairly smoothly. We didn't seem to – at least, I didn't notice anything that was something that I would worry about.

AH: When I interviewed Dr. Kikuchi, the dentist, at the camp, he said when he first got there – he got there pretty early, and he said that the equipment wasn't there yet, so he was working with pretty primitive kinds of equipment, so it took a long time. I was wondering, by the time you got to the hospital, had they built the new hospital yet?

ST: No. I worked in the old hospital first. Then the new hospital came along about maybe six months, a year later, which is much nicer.

AH: Did you see the transformation of the hospital in terms of just the supplies and the equipment?

ST: Unless you work – for instance, I worked as a nurse's aide, so you do help the nurses, for instance, wrapping up the bandages. Then they have to have an autoclave. Of course, it looked like a real nice autoclave in the new hospital. I mean, I wouldn't know the difference, but I can see the – then it seems to me everything was clean. At the time, I thought it was up to date.

AH: Was the morale among the nurses good, did you think?

ST: Oh, yeah.

AH: Because you can observe that whether you're trained as a –

ST: And they were very nice and very thoughtful. I thought they were very conscientious nurses.

AH: One of the things that a lot of people have commented on is the tension between the fact of the Japanese doctors as opposed to the Caucasian doctors, and this didn't only exist in the hospital but throughout the camp, that when it was in the early stages of the assembly center, a lot of the people that were in charge of things were Japanese Americans. Then later they started bringing in full-fledged WRA staff. This was true in the hospital, so all of a sudden, Dr. Bota had less authority, and this created some tension.

ST: Yet, though, he was a big shot.

AH: He was a big shot.

ST: Yes, he was. Everybody knew he was up there.

AH: Would you pick up any of that tension at your level, or was that way beyond what you would see?

ST: Oh, we used to hear the rumors, but no, I never really experienced it.

AH: What about tensions between nurses, between Caucasians and between Japanese?

ST: There were hardly any Caucasians. They were all Japanese Americans, the nurses. I don't know of a single one. The hospital administrator was Caucasian. I think it was Dr. Little, or something.

AH: Right, he was. He was the head of it. And that was one of the sources of tension, I think, between Bota and little.

ST: So then I guess your question is right. I didn't because I'm too low.

AH: There were some nurses, the head nurses were Caucasians, weren't they? Or were they Japanese?

ST: They were all Japanese that I remember.

AH: So among the nursing staff, it was pretty much the evacuee group.

ST: At least that's what *I* thought.

AH: Did anybody of that group influence you to the extent that you thought, gee, I want to sort of go on, have another role model like you had back in Florin? Was there somebody that –

ST: Yes. There was Miss _____. She was very kind to me. Of course, there was Miss Yamaguchi, but Miss _____ was –

AH: Was she certified as a registered nurse?

ST: I'm sure she was.

AH: What did you understand the chances –

ST: And another one is Eta(?), Miss Eta, she was elegant nurse.

AH: And did you get the sense that that was a possible career, profession, and yet, being of Japanese ancestry, you could have access to?

ST: Well, when one of the doctors from Manzanar left to relocate, he and his family went to Lincoln, Nebraska. And when he left, he said, "If there's any nursing school that will be responsible for you and I think it's a good nursing school, I will let you know." And he did.

AH: Which one did he tell you about?

ST: I think it must have been the Adventist Nursing School. So that's why I asked my father, I'd like to go to nursing school because Dr. _____ had said he and his wife would take care of me.

AH: Probably write you a letter of recommendation too.

ST: Uh-huh.

AH: And if you got a nursing degree, did you, at that stage, as you looked out at the future, think that you would be working at a comprehensive hospital where they would serve people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, or were you thinking you would be working at a Japanese hospital, which they had in San Jose or L.A.?

ST: I thought I would be working at any hospital.

AH: Okay. So it was really a good possibility, something you wanted to do, but it also involved mainstreaming too. So it was a good thing to look forward to.

ST: Yes, it was.

AH: And that didn't come about, of course.

ST: Nothing materialized from it, but I didn't care.

AH: But you got married. Something did materialize.

ST: And then I was satisfied with my marriage, so –

- AH: The things that you've said about your husband is, first of all, he came to check you out. Then you checked him out. And you were alerted to take into effect that he was prematurely bald, and that didn't bother you. At the time that you were meeting, he was a big shot in the camp. I mean, in the sense that he had a high profile position.
- ST: Well, yeah, I guess he was. I didn't really let that bother me. No, I think it did bother me, because I told my father and my brother-in-law, "I don't have a college education. I don't think he'll be happy with me." So then I guess they must have put it up to Roy, and he didn't mind it.
- AH: Was that unusual for Nisei women, even bright Nisei women, at that time, not to have a college education?
- ST: No. A lot of them did not have college education in those days. Even the men did not. But the men who did have college education, they married, probably most of them, through school. But still, some of them like me –
- AH: And Roy had gone to USC, right?
- ST: Yes, he had finished. Then he worked for a master's in public administration in 1955, I think.
- AH: Oh, after the war.
- ST: Yeah, in Denver.
- AH: But he started out at USC. By the time you met him at Manzanar, he had a college degree.
- ST: Mm-hmm.
- AH: And he had work experience.
- ST: Yeah. Because we were almost ten years apart.
- AH: He was in his mid-thirties and you were in your mid-twenties, right?
- ST: No, no. He was thirty and I was twenty-one and a half. (laughs)
- AH: So you were both fairly young, but he was ten years your senior.
- ST: Well, of course, some of his friends were teasing him and said, "Oh, Roy, you're a cradle snatcher."
- AH: Why do you suppose he didn't get married earlier?

ST: I wondered that too. I said, "Honey, you had a lot of well-to-do families, you knew all of them. What happened?" He said, "Well, they made me nervous." You know, wealthy, educated women, and all that.

AH: He was shy, though, too, wasn't he?

ST: Yeah. Oh, if he was supposed to do something, he'd do it, but I think he was more of a shy person.

AH: What about his family? What was his background?

ST: His father originally wanted to be a farmer. He went to agricultural college, but I don't think he finished.

AH: In Japan.

ST: Mm-hmm. But his mother was wealthy. She was something in selling boats, fishing boats.

AH: She was an entrepreneur, right?

AH: You were telling me about your mother-in-law's background.

ST: My mother-in-law is from a Methodist family. Her grandfather advocated Christianity, particularly Methodist. He was in prison for one year, house arrest. So he was not in the prison, as a matter of fact. It was just a house arrest. And the grandmother was pregnant with my mother-in-law. So when she was born, the grandpa said, "We need more love in this world," so he named her Ai, which means love in Japanese.

Anyway, then my father-in-law was a Kendo teacher. So when he came here, he brought his sword that was given to him by some famous swordsman. He taught Kendo here too, as well as Japanese school.

AH: Where was "here"?

ST: In Fresno.

AH: Is that where Roy was born?

ST: Yes. Actually, they were living in Madera, but the hospital is in Fresno.

AH: What was the size of Roy's family?

ST: There were only three boys, and they adopted a girl, sister. So they were four children.

AH: Where is Roy in that group?

ST: Roy is the oldest. Then Ken, the next one, lived in Salt Lake City.

AH: Is he gone now?

ST: Yes, he's gone now. Then George, the youngest one, is a physician and he lives in Englewood.

AH: Right here in this area.

ST: Yes. He's the only relative I have here.

AH: And he's a physician?

ST: Uh-huh.

AH: That's where _____ lives, in Englewood, so she lives near him, I guess.

ST: He's retired now. He's been retired since 1986.

AH: Was he a doctor in camp?

ST: Yes, in Idaho. Minidoka.

AH: That's interesting.

ST: Then he went to Chicago to get his M.D. Then he came to Denver to practice.

AH: So he's been accessible – has he been your family doctor?

ST: Well, I worked for him for forty years.

AH: Oh, no kidding! So you stayed in medical stuff.

ST: I stayed with – when I was in Manzanar, I learned quite a bit too, and of course, he taught me a lot of things.

AH: I didn't realize that. So you stayed with it for a long time. That was long-lasting, wasn't it?

ST: Well, that's true. I didn't get away from nursing.

AH: There was a student of mine that was wanting to do a master's thesis on how camp prepared people for lifelong jobs and what correspondence there was between the camp work experience they had and then what they went into. But yours is kind of a test case.

ST: Yes. In a way, I guess I was fortunate. I did what I wanted to do. Actually, I wanted to be a flight attendant so we could go take trips. (chuckles)

AH: Of course, now you take trips into buildings.

ST: But in those days, they didn't take older people. You had to be a certain height, certain weight.

AH: That's right. You had to be five-five, or something, didn't you?

ST: Yeah. I was just too short.

AH: They've liberalized it now. Now they don't have those things.

ST: Oh, yeah. Now just anybody can join.

AH: And they don't have to quit when they're twenty-five either. The two that we had were probably in their fifties when we came out here, and they were very good. Now they have to learn how to do martial arts to be able to fend off the terrorists.

ST: That's right. But coming back to my in-laws, they were both schoolteachers, and then my father-in-law was also a Kendo teacher. That's one of the gifts he received. And that one.

AH: This right here?

ST: Mm-hmm. He receives gifts. Then that flower pot –

AH: So these can be fifty years old. More than fifty – seventy-five.

ST: It could be seventy-five, yeah.

AH: On both sides of the family, then, there's Christianity, right?

ST: Yes.

AH: And in addition to that, how would you say your families lined up in terms of economic class? Did you marry across class lines, or were both of your families similar in terms of their class background?

ST: I felt that we were in the lower level. My father was just a farmer. But he was a man with a lot of common sense.

AH: So when a go-between checks that stuff out, they're looking for not just absolute matches on things, they're looking for standing in the community and morality and reputation for upstanding business practices, and everything else.

ST: I think they do to a certain extent. To me, the most important thing is if that person is good and honest and sincere.

AH: Did you feel intimidated when you first got into the marriage by both the education background of family members and class backgrounds?

ST: Yes, we did. So finally, my husband said, "Honey, you may not have education, college education, but you have really good instinct and common sense. Use it."

AH: Then when you came to Denver, did your in-laws – were your in-laws at Manzanar?

ST: No. They evacuated to Salt Lake City to be with their second son.

AH: Okay, so they were voluntary evacuees.

ST: Yes.

AH: So they weren't in Denver.

ST: No. Then they joined us in – let's see – when my daughter was about five years old.

AH: They came here then?

ST: They came to live with us. So at one time there were his parents, George, and the three of us, and we all stayed the big rented house.

AH: Speculating on the basis of general knowledge about the relationships between daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws within Japanese and Japanese American culture, might it have been a good thing for you to have gotten married and then left camp and then had five years to develop your marriage before they came from Salt Lake City?

ST: I think that helped. However, before I left, my father said, "You're not my daughter anymore. You're a Takeno daughter." And he said, "You belong to them, so you do whatever you're supposed to do." And that has been instilled in us as we were growing up.

AH: So you're changing families almost and family allegiances and fidelities.

ST: Mm-hmm, yes. So of course, my intention is to try my best. They lived with us for maybe, altogether, probably about five or six years.

AH: Then they both passed away?

ST: No. See, George was not married yet, the physician. He married in something like – he'll be celebrating fifty pretty soon, so it must be in the sixties or fifties. So that when he was married, because he's a physician and my father-in-law had heart problems, he said he would prefer to stay with his children. That was okay with me.

AH: So your sister-in-law did not have that choice.

ST: No, she didn't have a choice. And she was an RN. So that's where they met.

AH: Medicine is big in your family then, isn't it?

ST: Yes. My son-in-law is a physician, so is my granddaughter and her husband.

AH: So it's a medical culture. Are there any other press people in the family, or Roy's the only one?

ST: He's the only one.

AH: That's interesting. How did he happen to gravitate towards newspaper work, as you understand it? What did he tell you? Why did he emphasize that? Especially college trained, there were a number of people that did go like to the University of Missouri and got training as journalists. Howard Imazeki(?) was one of the ones, I know, that did that. How did Roy happen to choose journalism? What was his role model?

ST: He said, "Because I like to write." He didn't take into consideration, like in a newspaper, you start from the bottom. You go out and report accidents and murders, and things like that. He said, "I didn't like it."

AH: So he didn't like that part of it.

ST: He said, "I wanted to write." So in 1962 this friend wanted to start a newspaper, *Rocky Jihō*. I don't know if you've heard of it.

AH: Yes.

ST: So he asked Roy if he would do a part-time. He said, "I can't pay you much, but –" Roy said, "Well, you pay me whatever you can." So he was editor for thirty-five years.

AH: No kidding! Did he have another job too?

ST: Oh, yeah. He had a full-time job. He worked for city and state.

AH: This was a weekly, wasn't it?

ST: A weekly, uh-huh. Therefore, I became involved to help him.

AH: On the newspaper.

ST: Uh-huh. By calling people, get information. It was kind of fun for me.

AH: How much before his death did he leave the newspaper?

ST: He didn't.

AH: Right up to his death?

ST: Right up to death.

AH: So up until '97 then, he was involved.

ST: September 23 he was still – before I left him that morning – I had another appointment, so I said, "I'm going now, but it's kind of cold today so maybe you should stay home." He said, "No, I'm coming to get you." He doesn't drive. He gave up the car. He said, "We'll just have dinner and come home." So I was waiting for him and he didn't show up. That's when he had his massive heart attack.

AH: And he had some before that? Small ones before that?

ST: Yes. He's been ill since – he had the first one in 1973.

AH: So that was a long time, over twenty-four years.

ST: So cardiologist really kept him going, because they didn't want to do any bypass. The surgeon said, "No, I don't want to take his case. His arteries are too weak." He said, "I don't want to take the chance." So I said, "What are you going to do medically?" He said, "Nothing." He lived for twenty-five years.

AH: That's amazing.

ST: Yeah, it is.

AH: So it helped having somebody who was involved in nursing, and then his brother being a doctor.

ST: I think my nursing, working in the nursing, even though I was not a registered nurse, I think it helped me a lot.

AH: You knew the procedures and things.

ST: Yes. I know what to do.

AH: And diet stuff and everything, too.

ST: And there were times when I had to take him to the emergency.

AH: He lived twenty-five years knowing that it's precarious, right?

ST: Yes.

AH: So you were always alert.

ST: Yes. Then our daughter was married and stayed in Europe, in Brussels. We tried to make the trip every other year or every third year. And that's what we did.

AH: How many kids do you have now?

ST: Just one.

AH: Oh, just her. I see.

ST: No, that's my granddaughter. (chuckles) That's my granddaughter and my great-grandson.

AH: Where's your daughter? Not in that picture at all?

ST: Yeah, she's in there. This is a better picture of her.

AH: Oh, this is her over here, right?

ST: Yeah.

AH: Great. She grew up in Denver then.

ST: Yes. She was born and raised in Denver.

AH: Did she go to college here too?

ST: Yes. She went to Nebraska Wesleyan.

AH: I know Nebraska Wesleyan. In fact, we almost hired somebody from Nebraska Wesleyan just last year.

ST: She didn't want to go away from Denver, but her father said, "Karen, I think it would be good for you."

AH: It's a nice school too. It's a Methodist school.

ST: Yes, it is. That's another reason why I wanted her in there, because I knew that they would be more careful. I have to tell you one incident. My husband used to work evenings, and nine o'clock he used to call me. So I picked up the phone and, "Hi, Honey." Nothing answered. I said, "Honey?" He said, "This is Dr. Rogers from Nebraska Wesleyan." (laughs)

AH: (laughs) And you're calling him Honey.

ST: And he laughed and said, "That's the first time I've ever been called Honey other than my wife. (laughs)

AH: That sounds great. Sometimes I just answer it. If I see the phone ring at a certain time in my office, I'll just pick it up and say the same thing, "Hi, Honey." Then you can be embarrassed. Somebody else is calling you. Sometimes it's a male and you say, "Hi, Honey." (laughs)

ST: Yeah. And then to be Dr. Rogers, of all persons. So I just blubbered around, and he said, "I just want you to let you know –" This was the first year my daughter was in Nebraska Wesleyan. So he said, "I just wanted to let you know that she's doing fine."

AH: Boy, isn't that nice, to get a call from this college?

ST: That just so floored me. Every time we went back to take her and pick her up, Dr. Rogers would say – he'd have a smirky smile on his face (chuckles) and always brought up that conversation. But it was very nice. I'm glad she went there.

AH: Our vacation last summer, incidentally, was in Nebraska. I had done an article on Ben Kuroki, from Nebraska. I was looking at different places connected with him. But then, also, we have some friends that are at the University of Nebraska, and they had put that statue there for the students that had gone there in the resettlement program during World War II. And I collected all this stuff, and I've got a really large file on the Japanese in Nebraska. And now the Japanese American National Museum is doing a big thing. All of a sudden. It was sort of kind of a marginal topic, but not it's important.

ST: Yeah, that's right. They do have a lot of Japanese settlers there.

AH: It's real interesting. And they would be receiving the papers out of Denver. I know they would take the paper –

ST: In Omaha we have several friends. Of course some of them have died.

AH: Well, you would. And probably Lincoln you had some friends too.

ST: Yeah. Because Roy worked for JACL for five years.

AH: In what area? In Salt Lake City?

ST: No. At first it was called Tri-State Regional Representatives. Then Roy started to go to Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Montana, and Wyoming.

AH: He was traveling a lot, wasn't he?

ST: So then he told Matsado(?), the executive director, "Do you think we could change it to Mountain Plains District?" He said, "Yeah, go ahead." (chuckles) So that's how we were called Mountain Plains District Council now. Anyway, what was I saying?

AH: Let me stop it for a second and we'll have our coffee.

ST: Okay, fine.

AH: Well, we've had our coffee and it was good. We had fruit and cheese and some pastry, and it was great. What I'd like to do now is to read you a report that was prepared by Toshio Yatsushiro, who was a young social scientist who originally is from Hawaii, had worked at the Poston Camp during World War II, and then after the war, went to Cornell University and got his Ph.D. in anthropology, and then finished his career as an anthropologist on the faculty out at the University of Hawaii. But right after the war, because he had had this training, the War Relocation Authority hired him and a number of other young Nisei social scientists in the making to go out and to see how resettlement was playing out in different communities around the United States. And one of the big resettlement areas was Denver.

So Toshio Yatsushiro came in August of 1946 and stayed a few months and interviewed people who were in the Japanese American community of Denver, both in Denver proper and then in the outlying areas from Denver in the agricultural regions. This report was made available through the WRA records, and recently this material was discovered by Professor Lane Hirabayashi, an anthropologist at the University of Colorado. Lane gave me a copy of this and I was real fascinated with it, reading it through, and I did find a small section – he visited all the newspapermen in the area, and one of those was your husband, Roy Takeno. I'm going to read onto the record this short report and you can listen to it for the first time and then we can ask some questions about it. This is what it said.

August 30, 1946. Interview with Roy Takeno, Nisei newspaper reporter.
A luncheon interview was arranged with Mr. Roy Takeno, who is one of the two Nisei employees on the *Denver Post* staff. The other Nisei is Bill Hosokawa, *Pacific Citizen* columnist also. Roy joined the *Denver Post* as a reporter just a few months ago when the *Post* editorial staff was revamped and Mr. Palmer White, former editor of the *Oregonian* and a liberal, became publisher and editor. Prior to this change, the *Post* was

probably the most rabid anti-Japanese newspaper in the country. It is believed that there is much data in the WRA files on the *Post*; therefore, this report shall not go into this topic. It should be stated that the *Denver Post* is now a very liberal paper. The employment of two Nisei by the *Post* has literally shocked many people familiar with the *Post's* reputation.

Background on Roy.

Roy is a Nisei of about thirty-four years or so. He is slightly bald and gives one an impression he is much older. He was formerly on the staff of the *Rafu Shimpō* in Los Angeles, this prior to the evacuation. Over two years ago, he came to Denver and became the English editor of the *Rocky Shimpō*. About two months ago, he joined the staff of the *Denver Post*. He loves his newspaper work and throughout the war, though he had other better paying jobs offered him, he decided to associate himself with some newspaper. He has an air of aloofness about him, but when one gets to know him, he is very friendly. He admitted that he hasn't been very close to the Japanese population here in Denver and, therefore, was very reluctant to make any generalizations on the situation, probably for fear that his remarks may be used by the study. Because of this attitude on Roy's part, it was difficult to get anything useful from this interview.

Objections to Denver.

When questioned about some of the major problems facing the Japanese, especially evacuees in Denver, Roy listed the weather as the first. He said many of the California farmers who are farming here complain because they have only a few months during the summer in which to farm, whereas in California, they could farm all year around. The winter is severe here, and many people haven't become accustomed to it. He felt that California's weather was better than Denver, but he also felt that these farmers weren't making an effort to adjust their farming methods to the conditions here. He thought the farmers "ought to learn to play along with the weather instead of trying to fight it."

Another problem he listed was housing. He stated people were having difficulty in finding suitable housing. There are restrictive covenants to cope with and one just had to purchase a house in order to live in one.

General Comment.

There are other subjects covered in the interview, but because Roy was very cautious and reluctant about talking about them, they will not be included in this report.

Now, this is a short report. How does it strike you? As something that is an accurate portrayal of the situation?

ST: Yeah.

AH: Could you comment on that a little bit, what parts of it struck you as particularly telling?

ST: He always has been cautious. But I think he was pretty forthright, though.

AH: In a sense, it sounds like he covered other things with his forthrightness, but then his cautiousness translated as, maybe this isn't for general consumption. Those aren't incompatible, really.

ST: That applies to what happened in the Manzanar riot, too. He just didn't want to talk about it, simply because – I said, "Why?" He said, "I'm afraid for you and my family."

AH: Do you think he had a lot of information about the Manzanar riot that he did not talk about?

ST: I think so.

AH: And he was privy to that information because he had witnessed things?

ST: Mm-hmm.

AH: Before the riot or the riot itself?

ST: Probably both.

AH: Did you have any perspective on the riot? Did you get a chance – you were in Block 30. did you know anything about what was developing?

ST: No. I think I mentioned earlier that we didn't know anything about it until I went to the hospital the next morning.

AH: So you weren't at the hospital the night when Fred Tayama was hidden under the bed.

ST: No, it was my day off.

AH: So it passed you by like it did a lot of people in the camp.

ST: That's right, it did. You know, that far, I guess you don't even hear the noise.

AH: Right. So you weren't enmeshed in the politics of the camp. You weren't married to Roy at that time, so you wouldn't even have been privy to the gossip from the *Manzanar Free Press*.

ST: That's right. I had some friends in our block who were working at the *Free Press*, but I never talked to them.

AH: So Roy didn't even talk about those things to you.

ST: No.

AH: So he guarded you from that and said, "You don't want to know. These guys play rough. So it's just as well that we just keep a lid on it."

ST: Mm-hmm.

AH: To get started on this particular document, do you remember when Roy got approached about working on the *Denver Post*? Because that must have been quite an event. Here's the major newspaper in the town.

ST: No. I think he went to apply. I mean, he had to go to apply. He was happy but he – then I could sense it. He didn't like the idea of running after police and the ambulance.

AH: And that was the job that he got.

ST: Yes. He said, "That's the way we have to start, and work yourself up."

AH: How long did he stay with the *Post*?

ST: I don't think he stayed more than a year, if that long.

AH: So it was a short time.

ST: Mm-hmm, it was a short time.

AH: Was it an increase in your economic situation? Did the *Post* salary help you as a couple at that time?

ST: I didn't pay too much attention. We were quite frugal then, because when you come out of camp with almost nothing. I wasn't a spendthrift.

AH: And this was two years after you'd been here when he got this position.

ST: Yeah, that's right, after the *Rocky Shampo*.

AH: Then it mentions Bill Hosokawa, who was at the *Denver Post*, and he had been, it said, at the *Denver Post* a little bit before Roy. Did they know each other at all before that?

ST: No, not before that, but we knew *of* him. I remember, we invited him to dinner at our place one night, and that was the extent of it.

AH: And it was his wife, and then he had a –

ST: No. He was here alone.

AH: Oh, I see. He just visited?

ST: Uh-huh. He hasn't brought his wife yet.

AH: Alice was – and she just died last year, or two years ago.

ST: Yes, that's right.

AH: But once they got on the *Denver Post*, was there more social contact between Roy and you and the Hosokawas?

ST: No, not really. Well, we became friends but not to the extent of going to each other's home, or anything.

AH: What was your social circle at that early period?

ST: Mostly church friends, and then of course, JACL.

AH: Then Bill did get involved a little bit in JACL?

ST: Yes. Not that much.

AH: Because he was busy at the newspaper, probably.

ST: Yes. And then he was busy developing his own career. I remember JACL had a recognition dinner for him for being _____, and we stay at the _____. I remember well because I was hostess chairperson. It was a very nice affair, a large attendance.

AH: When are you talking about when you say that? When was that, about?

ST: I can't remember when he was recognized, but it was several years afterward.

AH: I mean, it was quite awhile back, though, in the fifties, or something, right?

ST: Probably, yes.

- AH: Because he's been recognized so many times afterwards. (laughs)
- ST: (laughs) There's nothing for him to get recognized for anymore.
- AH: But he was really developing what turned out to be a very prestigious career with the *Denver Post*.
- ST: Yes, that's right. He was busy with that, so – probably I shouldn't say it – but he really wasn't active in the local affairs.
- AH: And Roy started getting active in the local affairs.
- ST: He had to because he was working with the *Rocky Shimp*.
- AH: But then after he left – well, even while he was working for the *Rocky Shimp* –
- ST: And of course, with the JACL. You have to get close with the community, because he was going out to raise funds for the anti-discrimination fund. He had to go and talk to the community to increase the membership.
- AH: When he first came here, was his sole job at the *Rocky Shimp*?
- ST: *Rocky Shimp*, that's just his job.
- AH: Period.
- ST: And he was not involved in JACL. He used to go to those events, but simply because he was in the newspaper.
- AH: Was he in JACL before the war?
- ST: Yes.
- AH: In which area? Los Angeles?
- ST: Los Angeles. He lived in Redondo Beach, but I think he was a member of the Los Angeles one.
- AH: Then in camp, he was pretty preoccupied with other things.
- ST: Well, there's no JACL in camp anyway.
- AH: Right. But they had a Manzanar Citizens Federation, which was pretty much comprised of JACL people.

- ST: I don't know whether he was a member.
- AH: I don't remember seeing him. If he was involved, it was sort of in the background more than in the foreground.
- ST: I think so.
- AH: Then when he came here, when he first got here, was there an active JACL chapter?
- ST: Yes. It started in 1938. But they became a national member one year later, in '39.
- AH: What was the name of that chapter? That's not the Mile High Chapter, is it?
- ST: It was Denver Chapter.
- AH: They started like in 1943, a year before you got here. They had a regional office of JACL that Joe Grant Masaoka was involved in.
- ST: He was there first and then Min took over.
- AH: And then Roy took over for Min?
- ST: He took over for about four to five years.
- AH: What was the relationship between the Denver Chapter and the district office? What I'm picking up a little bit is that there was some tension between those in the sense that the local chapter was largely prewar Colorado people, and they weren't necessarily the same people that were involved. Like Min comes from Oregon, and then Joe Grant Masaoka comes from Salt Lake City, really, and Los Angeles. Then Roy is from outside the area too. Is that fair to say that there were some differences – I don't mean in the sense of animosities, but differences in their concerns and things?
- ST: I didn't feel that way.
- AH: You didn't see it. Okay. And Roy participated in both, actually, equally. Did your friendship patterns go to those people too? You knew Min pretty well.
- ST: Yes. I knew him. And his wife is still living.
- AH: Tru, right? So she's still alive. So you knew them socially at an early stage.
- ST: Not very well, because Tru used to keep herself at home a lot because she had growing children.
- AH: But Min was very active in the JACL chapter, right?

ST: Yes. He was out all the time. (chuckles)

AH: One of the things that I picked up in this report was, there were some reports based upon JACL meetings, and it seemed that Bill Hosokawa and Min Yasui, although friendly as people, had different philosophies towards integration and towards the JACL that Bill had felt that, according to Yatsushiro and going through these reports, that Bill felt that it was not a good idea to have too many ethnic organizations because that retarded the assimilation thing, and he thought you had to make it more as an individual within the culture; whereas, Min took the position, well, we're not ready for that yet. These are people that need to be able to have their business contacts and everything else.

ST: Yes. We need to get started all over again. And I think Bill is right on that. He did not participate too much.

AH: And Roy's position would have been closer to Min's, as far as the idea –

ST: Yes, because of the work, and then having taken over Min's job.

AH: JACL job, right. Okay. So would it be fair to say that Roy's personal connections with Min would have been more than with Bill?

ST: I would think so.

AH: So you saw Min more, probably, right?

ST: Yes, because I was also a member. And I used to be active and I guess I still am.

AH: You're still –

ST: Yes, I'm still –

AH: And which chapter are you in now?

ST: This is called Mile High Chapter.

AH: And that's the one that Bill's in, right? Isn't Bill Hosokawa in the Mile High?

ST: Oh, yes. There's only one chapter in Denver.

AH: Now, it says the business about Palmer White and everything. Of course, I know about that. The *Denver Post* was notorious, and then all of a sudden, they had two Nisei, and a few years later, Larry Tajiri becomes the drama critic. In '52, I think, is when he came. Did you know him before he came to live in Denver?

ST: Larry?

AH: Yeah, Larry.

ST: No. I heard of him but Roy knew him. So we used to invite him to dinners and things like that.

AH: Before he moved here, or do you mean after he moved here?

ST: After he had been here.

AH: Did he become a close personal friend during the time that –

ST: With Roy?

AH: Yes.

ST: Yeah, quite close.

AH: And he was a stalwart. And then he died fairly young. He died like in '65, or something.

ST: That's right. Larry, just looking at him, was like a stern person, but he was really nice person. But Bill was a little hard to get close to.

AH: He was more aloof in terms of his manner. Larry's more visceral, I guess.

ST: Just by appearance, you'd think, oh, gee, maybe he doesn't want to talk to me, but he was really nice.

AH: I was also reading in the paper he was a fabulous bowler too.

ST: I didn't know that.

AH: Yeah, he was always on these bowling teams, and then he did a lot with –

ST: Oh, like the national convention?

AH: Yeah. And then Larry did a lot, of course, because he was a drama critic –

ST: Incidentally, do you know where his wife is?

AH: I saw her speak. I think she lives in northern California. Rea, right? She lives, I think, around the Bay Area. But she came down because there was a book that was written – I don't know if you've seen it – by David Yu, he's a Korean American. The book is about the Nisei coming of age, and two of the chapters are on Tajiri and Omura as the representatives of two different positions with respect to the newspaper. When they had

the book signing, I went to it at UCLA, and she was one of the speakers. She gave a great talk. She looked fabulous. She gave a very interesting talk.

ST: I guess she just gave up Denver friends. Nobody knew where she is.

AH: Well, that's where she was. An interesting thing too is that before the war, that was one of the ruptures in the relationship between Tajiri and Omura is that Omura was working as the editor of one of the vernaculars up in San Francisco, and the publisher said, "You will share this job with her." So he wasn't too happy with that. He really liked Larry so much; he didn't care for her too much. Then when they got married, that created something of a tension. He continued to be a friend of Larry's, but he never became a close friend of hers. But she came and she spoke very well, very generously, very nicely.

ST: She was thin. Is she still thin?

AH: Still thin, yeah. She's still thin. She's well preserved like you are.

ST: (giggles) Oh, thank you.

AH: And probably, she was a little bit younger than her husband, too.

ST: I always thought Rea must be about the same age or – she must be older.

AH: Older than Larry?

ST: Yeah, because Larry probably is a little younger than Roy.

AH: Well, he's been dead for thirty-six years.

ST: Well, if you say Larry was older than I think he is, then Rea can't be that much younger.

AH: No, she's not much younger. I'd say she's probably older than you by about five years, five or six year.

ST: That would make her eighty-four or five.

AH: Yeah, that's probably about what she is.

ST: But you say she look great. That's wonderful.

AH: Yes, and she was very spry, came up, walked up to the – there was no cane, no anything. Her mind was very alive.

ST: I was very good friends with her, but somehow when she left Denver, she –

AH: Just cut that off, huh?

ST: Completely – not just myself, but others too.

AH: The Denver population.

ST: Mm-hmm. There's something about Denver that she didn't probably want to remember. So for many years, now and then, we would try to find her but never succeeded.

AH: I have an address for her at home.

ST: Maybe she –

AH: Just as well?

ST: Yeah, maybe she'd prefer not to be – if she wants to get in touch with us –

AH: She would.

ST: Yeah.

AH: She knows where you are.

ST: Yes, that's right.

AH: And I'm sure she's read – did she not send you anything when Roy passed?

ST: No.

AH: Okay. Well, see, there's a perfect opportunity. One of the first things, I must admit, that I read in the *Pacific Citizen*, is the obituaries because I'm doing all this history and I've done interviews with all these people, so I'm concerned about them. And I see when they're going. So I saw right away – when Roy passed away, I got in touch right away with Eileen Komura in Hawaii and told her about that because I had already heard the story.

ST: I heard from quite a few people that I hadn't heard in years when Roy passed away.

AH: It takes, sometimes, an event to really realize what is being lost.

ST: Including all the letters and cards, of course. I think I answered about four hundred and fifty.

AH: Wow!

- ST: It was quite a job. But I was very grateful.
- AH: I was going to say, it's the sort of job, though, that, in some ways, makes you realize how much the person that you were involved with is thought of. Then at the same time, it's a transitional thing. You take on the *business* of death as well as the personal grief of it.
- ST: That's right. It took me a long time to finish answering all those, because they would come maybe over the year.
- AH: And I'll bet some of the people you heard from, you didn't even know they were still alive or where they were.
- ST: That's right.
- AH: That newspaper, *Pacific Citizen*, goes out there to lots of people. Even *Rafu Shimpō* goes out to a lot of people, and they carry things.
- ST: The newspaper publisher here sent it all to *Rafu Shimpō* and *Kashu Mainichi* other newspapers.
- AH: It will appear in all of those. Sometimes it takes a little while, and then they'll put a big – it might have a small thing at first in the PC. Then later on they'll run a –
- ST: I was surprised, they even had pictures.
- AH: It says here that Roy is a Nisei of about thirty-four years or so. Now, this is in 1946. How old would he have been? I want to see how accurate this is.
- ST: In 1946? In 1944 he was thirty.
- AH: So he was thirty-two here.
- ST: Yeah, he would have been thirty-two.
- AH: It says he's slightly bald. Is that right, or was he by that time almost completely bald?
- ST: No, no. If you look at the picture, he never lost completely –
- AH: He always had the sides.
- ST: He had the sides, and he had a little bit on the top.
- AH: So he was just thinning, actually.
- ST: That's right.

- AH: And the pictures even in the Ansel Adams book, it looks short, it looks trim.
- ST: The sides are always the same. It's just the top that became a little bit less.
- AH: But he had a nice shaped head. Some people can't take baldness because their head is funny shaped. But he had a good shaped head, so it was nice. A lot of the basketball players, they shave their heads now.
- ST: I don't know why they do that, Dr. Hansen. I think they look terrible.
- AH: But some people think they look great, they think they look like sex symbols.
- ST: I don't know how you could get romantic. (laughs)
- AH: Yeah, I know. (laughs) Then it says he was formerly on the staff of the *Rafu Shimpo*, which we decided was wrong. He was really on the *Kashu Mainichi*.
- ST: Yeah, the *California Daily News*.
- AH: Then over two years ago, he came to Denver, and that's right because he would have come about – when you got married, what was the month in Manzanar?
- ST: May.
- AH: So he came shortly after that, maybe June?
- ST: No, he came here end of – we came here end of May.
- AH: So the same month you got married, you came?
- ST: Oh, yes. Because we stopped in Salt Lake to see his parents.
- AH: Okay. His parents were living in Salt Lake. I just came from Salt Lake. Of course, that's one of the other big resettlement communities, Salt Lake and Denver. I was looking at the microfilm for the *Utah Nippo* because that was another vernacular paper that continued to publish during the war, and also, the Beeson Building is no longer there where the JACL was.
- ST: Oh, really?
- AH: That's been wiped out a number of years ago. Did you stop in to see – well, on that occasion, did he stop in, if you didn't, to see Larry Tajiri or –
- ST: Well, Larry was gone already.

AH: No, no. Larry didn't come here until '52.

ST: Oh, before that, you mean in Salt Lake?

AH: In Salt Lake.

ST: Oh, yeah, Roy used to talk to him.

AH: So when you came through on your honeymoon, he might have even stopped in to see.

ST: No, I don't think he did at the time. We didn't have that kind of time, and we had to spend time with his parents.

AH: So you stopped in at Salt Lake. Did you notice anything about where they were living, and was there a Japanese community –

AH: So he was thirty-two years old at this time. You went by way of Salt Lake, you stopped in to see his brother and his parents, and you didn't stay there too long.

ST: No. He was thirty years old when he –

AH: Oh, when he first came. He was thirty-two at the time of this interview.

ST: When the Yatushiro –

AH: But he was thirty then, and you were twenty-one? Twenty?

ST: That's right, twenty-one and a half. (chuckles)

AH: Okay.

ST: Not quite twenty-two.

AH: And was this just en route? You just stayed there briefly in Salt Lake City?

ST: Yes. We just took the train.

AH: Okay. Now, tell me about coming to Denver. Had Roy been here before on his own to visit the *Rocky Shimpō* office, or anything?

ST: Yes, he did. He came to see what the place is about.

AH: Just to get the lay of the land.

ST: Mm-hmm.

- AH: What did he tell you about the situation that you guys were getting yourselves into? What was his new job?
- ST: He didn't want to say. The only thing he said was, "I'm going to the newspaper, *Rocky Shimpo*, because they have problems because they're too pro-Japan." That's all he said.
- AH: Did he know about the other problems, or mention anything about the problems with Omura and supporting the draft resisters?
- ST: Not at that time. But he said Jim Omura was quite a problem to him.
- AH: Okay. But there were two controversies when he took over this paper, because the Japanese section had the problems with the pro-Japan information, and then the problems with Omura and his support against the JACL of the people who were in the Fair Play Committee, the draft resisters at Heart Mountain. So he was walking into a real powder keg.
- ST: Yeah, but he didn't talk about it, though.
- AH: Was he worried about the job when he took it?
- ST: No, because he thought it was just a temporary job anyway.
- AH: Okay. But it ended up to be for two years. It was a two-year job, right?
- ST: Yes.
- AH: But he didn't know that even.
- ST: No, he didn't. Well, as soon as the war ended, he was ready to leave.
- AH: When I found out that he was the person that they brought, I thought that he was the perfect person. I didn't know this. I only knew him in connection with the Manzanar stuff, and then I knew that he worked for the *Denver Post*, but I didn't know about the *Rocky Shimpo*. Then I realized, when there's controversy and the waters are roiling, he is the sort of person that actually –
- ST: Now I know why he had problems with what you're telling me. Because Roy never elaborated.
- AH: But when he got here, he discovered that he had problems.
- ST: Mm-hmm. And even later on, he told me – I asked him about Jim Omura because I knew he was English editor previously. And he said, "I don't want to talk about him."

AH: I know both you and your husband, at one point before Omura died, went to hear him speak at some kind of presentation at the University of Colorado.

ST: Roy may have.

AH: But you weren't there.

ST: I never did. I was raising our little daughter, and I behaved like a Japan wife.

AH: No. I mean in recent years.

ST: Oh, in recent years.

AH: In 1993 or '92, there was a group in Denver and it was called the Making Waves Committee. And they sponsored Omura on a number of different talks.

ST: They were advocates.

AH: Advocates. The word I got was that when Jimmy Omura spoke, the front row was made up mostly of JACL, and two of the prominently seated people in the front row were you and Roy. Do you remember that at all?

ST: No, I don't remember it.

AH: Okay. Because that's just what I have in my notes, and I think I might have gotten it from some associate of Carolyn.

ST: You know, I can't remember everything.

AH: I know. I just wondered if you remembered seeing him. I was just trying to get how he struck you now. This was a year before he died and he was speaking about this, and I was just wondering if that was a curiosity and you went to see, Who is this person?

ST: What year was that?

AH: Like 1993, about eight years ago. It was probably one of the last public appearances that he had ever made.

ST: No. I don't know if Roy went either.

AH: Well, it didn't sound to me quite like it was realistic that the two of you would have even gone.

ST: No.

AH: So it's probably a false –

ST: No, I think it is.

AH: You would remember. I know you would.

ST: I would, because he is a controversial person.

AH: I know you would remember, so I'm glad that you told me that. That makes that information – buy anyway, you came in. What was your first housing situation in Denver?

ST: Housing? Well, sort of poor, wasn't it? We had to just rent anywhere that we could find.

AH: Where was it? Where did you rent?

ST: We stayed at the hotel for about a couple of weeks.

AH: Where was the hotel?

ST: Duff Hotel.

AH: And where is it?

ST: On Larimer Street.

AH: Around near which block? Near 20th Street?

ST: I think maybe it must have been 18th or 19th, something like that.

AH: What did that area strike you as when you first got there? By 1944 it was almost the height of – there were like five thousand people living in that area.

ST: It was a rundown area.

AH: Were you frightened a little bit to be there?

ST: A little.

AH: And it was close to where blacks and Hispanics –

ST: No. It was mostly Japanese.

AH: In that area where you lived was Japanese.

ST: Uh-huh.

AH: Then a lot of hotels?

ST: There were several hotels. There was one nicer hotel, which they called Silver Dollar, but I think it was a little bit too expensive for us at the time.

AH: He probably wasn't getting paid a heck of a lot for working at the newspaper.

ST: Oh, no. We just didn't know Denver, so we just picked a hotel that was sort of okay. (chuckles)

AH: Do you remember where his office was for the *Rocky Shimpo*? Was it far from where you lived?

ST: No.

AH: Or could he just walk down the street to go to work?

ST: Where was his office? You know, I hardly went to his office because he didn't want me to.

AH: So you stayed away from that.

ST: Mm-hmm. I think I went maybe once or twice.

AH: Did he seem content at that point with that job, or did he think this was a mistake?

ST: Well, yes, I think he was. But he knew that it was temporary. Then of course, he was having problems with the owner, as well as employees.

AH: Did you meet people on that newspaper?

ST: We befriended one couple. He was the Japanese section editor.

AH: Do you remember his name?

ST: Nomora.

AH: Was he one of the people that was getting into hot water over the things that he was allowing?

ST: My husband didn't say so, but I guessed that it must have been him.

- AH: It's kind of difficult to say sometimes because sometimes what the censors thought was pro-Japan was just things about Japanese culture. It might not be seditious.
- ST: Well, see, the war was still going on then too. I think that's why my husband didn't want to say. Because we were starting to get friendly with them.
- AH: Was he a young Issei, Nomora?
- ST: I wonder if he were a young Issei or Kibei.
- AH: But he was closer to Roy's age. He wasn't like twenty years older than Roy, was he?
- ST: No, he was a little older, but that's right, not that much.
- AH: Enough so that they could, if not pal around, have a social relationship.
- ST: Well, we did become friends. We did become friends.
- AH: Did you get to know the Toda(?) family at all, the publishers?
- ST: Yes, because I did go there a few times, but I never really stayed long because my husband didn't want me to.
- AH: Who was Roy reporting to on the newspaper?
- ST: Mostly, the daughter, _____(?) Toda.
- AH: What was she like, and how old was she about?
- ST: At that time she wasn't married yet. She must have been in her twenties. All I remember of her, she was heavy.
- AH: She didn't know much about newspaper work, though, did she?
- ST: I don't think so. But the parents were running, the father was running the paper.
- AH: Did the father then come back out of the Department of Justice camp by the time Roy was –
- ST: Oh, you know, maybe he was not there.
- AH: Okay. So it might have been just the mother and –
- ST: The mother, uh-huh. And he said, "I got along well with _____."

AH: Roy did.

ST: Mm-hmm.

AH: Did he get along well with the mother?

ST: Well, I guess so, to a certain extent. He never complained about, but he was just very cautious.

AH: What would you think the chemistry would be like? Because when Omura was the editor, he was fiercely anti-JACL, and he's publishing anti-JACL stuff in there. Within a couple of months, Roy comes in there and Roy's not anti-JACL, by any means.

ST: No.

AH: Yet he had a different set of conditions because they were watching that paper, much more – when Omura was the editor, they watched it because of the pro-Japan stuff from the Japanese side, but by the time that Omura gets bounced out, Roy comes in there, they're looking at the paper –

ST: I don't know what the impression was, because I didn't know hardly anybody at the time. But nobody seemed to make any derogatory comments.

AH: Reading the paper during the period when Roy took over, it's a very cautious paper at that point.

ST: Oh, yeah.

AH: There was nothing – he hardly even put his name on things. It was like it was written anonymously, like a report.

ST: Yeah, that's how Roy is.

AH: So he didn't have any problems, clearly, with the property custodian because he continued working on it for two years. So where were his problems coming from? From the publisher's wife?

ST: No, the Japanese –

AH: Omura?

ST: I don't know whether – because he never mentioned it.

AH: But that side of the paper.

- ST: But I could see the relationship had strained for a while.
- AH: So it was tough. Did he know enough Japanese to be able read the Japanese side of the paper?
- ST: Not all of it. Not all of it. Especially when it's in Kanji.
- AH: But he probably had much better insight to what was going on on the Japanese side than Omura did, because Omura just didn't know Japanese at all.
- ST: Oh, is that right?
- AH: Oh, he didn't know a bit of it. I mean, he could once in awhile say – but even when I was interviewing him – no, he didn't know it.
- ST: I thought somebody said he was a Kibei.
- AH: Oh, no. He had no Kibei – Kibeis for him were people that he worried about. He was really concerned about pro-Japan stuff. Pro-Communist, pro-Japan, he didn't like things like that. He ended up – he was a strong Republican. He voted for Ronald Reagan twice for –
- ST: You mean Omura?
- AH: Omura, yeah. Everybody thinks he must have been a leftist.
- ST: That's quite a switch, isn't it?
- AH: He was a strong conservative. He was probably one of the most conservative – it's just that he was anti-JACL. That was one of the strong things. But he wasn't a liberal or a leftist, and he wasn't a Kibei. He wasn't any of those kinds of things. Didn't know Japanese, or anything. But he had complete charge of that newspaper when he got the job. He was the representative. They might have changed it a little bit by the time Roy came in there, but one of the reasons – the government would write letters complaining about his editorials in favor of the draft resisters, but Omura answered the letters, because he was in charge not only of running the paper but also of the public relations of the paper, because the girl was so young. _____ was too young. She didn't know much about the newspaper business, so he answered all of those letters. And he'd say these things are going fine. One hand was doing this and the other hand was doing that. So it was a little bit different. Then by the time Roy came in, the government had stepped in and really started scrutinizing that paper. I think, after Roy came in, that the paper was not – not only from him but even the publisher – was not anti-JACL anymore.
- ST: I don't think so. It couldn't.

AH: No. And they were getting news releases from the *Pacific Citizen* and doing things that were –

ST: Excuse me for interrupting. Is that why some of the, at the time, young people didn't want to join? Because of the past anti-JACL _____?

AH: I think the attitude in Denver before the war was not particularly pro-JACL either, because they saw it as sort of a West Coast group to a large degree, and they saw it as more intellectuals and they were more tied to farming and things like this. One of the reasons Omura came here, I think, to Denver was because he wanted to start an alternative to the JACL. So he looked into the Salt Lake City thing, and he could see that was going to be –

ST: Why was he so anti-JACL?

AH: Going way back into the early 1930s, he thought that – he worked on the same paper for a while with Saburo Kido – he thought that the JACL was not realistically concerned with the problems that were coming from Japan, and he felt that there was an animosity from Japan, and he thought that the JACL was too much involved in social activities and not seriously enough involved in political and economic situations. So he saw them as frivolous and holding parties, and he thought that they were snobs, and I think he thought that they tried to manipulate the community in their own interests, as opposed to democratically reaching out to understand what the community was like.

And he was doing this from San Francisco. It's mostly his reading of the situation. He lived in L.A. for a while. Ken Matsumoto and other JACLers and Larry introduced him to all the JACL people. And for a while he was fairly close to the JACL people in Los Angeles. He went up to San Francisco, and in 1934 he was supposed to cover the San Francisco conference up in San Francisco. The newspaper sent him out to welcome Jimmy Sakimoto to the city, and Sakimoto said to him, "Why in heaven's name did they send you?" Then, I guess, at the 1934 convention, they named him as one of the Public Enemies Number One of the JACL, this whippersnapper newspaper person. After that, it just became sort of entrenched, and it continued on until he died in 1994.

There were individual JACLers that he got along with very well, even in this area. The letters show that he had contact with local JACL things. But mostly, the leadership of the JACL. I would say that Min Yasui, Bill Hosokawa, Saburo Kido, these, I think, were the triumvirate that he was mostly opposed to. You probably remember when they were trying to put the statue up of Min Yasui that Omura protested it in the *Denver Post*. Then Min's daughter Holly wrote a rejoinder to it. He didn't talk about your husband because Roy stayed out of that kind of thing. He never even commented upon what he did with the *Rocky Shimpō*, anything. But his thing would have been, they picked somebody who was favorable to the JACL and they put him in, and this person didn't make any waves. And that's what he would have said. But these other people, actually, he saw as making waves. He sees Min Yasui as a person who was a dissenter, and then all of a sudden he

completely turned the other – JACL didn't support his test case, but then he joined forces with the JACL, and then he became really against other people who resisted things, like the draft resisters.

I think probably Min Yasui was the person that he disdained the most. I think probably second would have been Saburo Kido. Oh, well, the first was Mike Masaoka. Mike Masaoka, number one. Then it goes for the two, three, and four. So I missed the big one. Mike Masaoka was his main enemy. And it's interesting, because when he was the editor of the *Current Life* in San Francisco, when Mike Masaoka was a comer from Salt Lake City, they had the Nisei of the Year Award. I think Franklin Chino in Chicago sponsored this award, and they picked Mike Masaoka as the Nisei of the Year in 1940, and Omura wrote an editorial: "This is a wonderful choice," and why he was a such a refreshing alternative to the JACL old guard. Because he saw him as a fresh voice coming in to rejuvenate and to reform the JACL, so he liked Masaoka.

But then, at the time that Masaoka got the JACL to cooperate with the government in San Francisco in 1940 and he went to several meetings with Masaoka, at that point Masaoka turned to him at one point and said, "We're going to get you." Then they both testified at the Tolan Committee hearings, and Masaoka testified of the community of the JACL and the Japanese American community supporting the evacuation, and Omura was the only one at that thing that said, not only this is a bad idea, but he said the JACL is leading our ethnic community down the wrong path. And at that point, things were completely separate. Then he goes off to Denver and he becomes the editor of the *Rocky Shimpō*.

ST: He came back again and became the editor again?

AH: No.

ST: Oh, this was before.

AH: This is the first time he came. Then he stayed in Denver for the rest of his life. He came in 1942, and the only time he ever left was his first marriage went under.

ST: Oh, so he was at *Rocky Shimpō* only for about a year then.

AH: He was there for four months the first time, in '44, and then six months in 1947 when he came back to the *Rocky Shimpō*.

ST: So he really wasn't working too long when Roy came.

AH: No. When Roy came, Roy was replacing him. So that was the end of that.

ST: Nobody knew about it, even the people that are in Denver now. They don't know why Roy came. They just thought he came.

AH: He came because the government wanted Omura out, and they made sure that –

ST: Then it makes me think, Should I say these things now after fifty years? (chuckles) But nobody seemed to know why Roy came here, the true reason. So when I tell them now, they don't seem to – they just look at me as though, Are you okay?

AH: I think that it was a fairly low-key thing at that time because the original idea was that what the government wanted to do was to have, throughout the United States, almost all of the newspapers, what they wanted to do was to not have anything that would aid and comfort the enemy.

ST: Well, that's wartime.

AH: That's right.

ST: Isn't that understandable?

AH: Yes. But that's why, when he's coming here, they were trying to keep – they didn't know about Omura, so when he got hired, like I say, he was in charge of the newspaper, so they were complaining the whole time that he was there. But he was the one that was answering the complaints, and he's writing it under the name of the publisher. So they get it from the publisher. And finally they came to the publisher and said, "You've got to get rid of this person." He never was fired. He resigned under duress. He resigned in April, like April 20th. Maybe April 19th was his last day.

And after that, he got apprehended and he got put into jail. So when Roy is coming, he's not even in Denver at that point, he's in jail. Then he stayed in jail for a while until he could get up the bail money to get out to help his lawyers on the defense of his trial, because he was tried for conspiracy with the leaders of the Fair Play Committee from Wyoming. They all got convicted, and he got exonerated because of freedom of the press, essentially. He never advocated – he didn't even know the people who were on the Fair Play Committee – that he was the editor of this newspaper. They were in Heart Mountain Camp, and they corresponded, and he provided publicity for their news releases. And it was the only newspaper that was.

Then for forty years after the trial, he never spoke to anybody that had been involved with the Fair Play Committee either. He just retreated unto himself. Just did his whole thing. Then he came out in the last ten years and wrote this memoir, and that's what I'm working on right now, trying to get done.

Okay. Well, there's a couple of things that were listed in here that Roy commented on, and one of the things was the housing. We've already talked a little bit about that, but I want to go a little bit further. Your experience was that you ended up in a hotel, and it wasn't a particularly great hotel at first, right?

ST: When we first came, because we didn't know anything about Denver. We did find a place to stay, so we moved to 27th and Curtis.

AH: Where is 27th and Curtis? How far from Larimer street, about?

ST: Well, Larimer is about 20th. Seven block north.

AH: And then which direction?

ST: And then east.

AH: What was that district like at the time? Who was living there?

ST: Oh, it was just full of Japanese.

AH: So it was sort of like, in this case, yellow flight. You're leaving the inner city.

ST: And they were largely evacuees.

AH: Oh, they were? They weren't mostly original Denver people.

ST: There were some, but there were a lot of evacuees too.

AH: Was it a secondary sort of Japanese community then, or did it just have residences without stores?

ST: It's mostly residence. Most of them were renting, though, apartments.

AH: Were there any grocery stores or restaurants?

ST: Yes. There was a grocery store only about a block away.

AH: Was it a Japanese grocery store?

ST: No. The Japanese grocery store was still in the Japanese –

AH: So you would shop in the Larimer area?

ST: At 20th and Larimer.

AH: Was this the _____ grocery store?

ST: Yes. It was run by Italian, I think.

AH: That was a little nicer area?

- ST: Yes. Well, that's what I thought at the time.
- AH: You were probably happy. Did you buy a house there?
- ST: No. Then we moved to 28th and Stout Street. It wasn't much more improvement, but at least, we needed a bigger place because his younger brother George was coming.
- AH: Were there also Japanese people living there, in the Stout area?
- ST: Uh, no. I really don't know. I don't think so. I don't know whether it was Spanish or –
- AH: So when it says here that he – one of the things that it said was that he admitted that he hasn't been very close to the Japanese population here in Denver. Was part of that that he was not living close to them at that point, in 1946 when Yatsushiro was talking to him? By then, had you moved out?
- ST: I don't think that comment is really correct, because he was with the JACL then. He *was* close to the community.
- AH: Okay. Then Yatsushiro is wrong, is what you're saying.
- ST: I think so.
- AH: That's what I want to find out.
- ST: Maybe Roy just didn't say anything. Maybe that's why. Maybe he just went on assumption.
- AH: So his reticence was translated as meaning one thing when it may not have been the case.
- ST: Mm-hmm.
- AH: Now, when Roy and you were living in the second place that you had where there were still a lot of Japanese people, you said you didn't buy the house there.
- ST: No.
- AH: And the reason you didn't buy the house was either because you didn't have enough money to, or number two, like Roy was mentioning in this interview in 1946, there was a problem with restrictive covenants. Not only couldn't you buy because of money, but you couldn't because you weren't able to buy property at that time. Is it both of those things?
- ST: No, I think it's mostly economy at the time. Then of course, somebody had to take care of the parents too. Then George was just starting, so we just said, "Let's all go to one

house and live together until we can afford to buy a house later on." Well, then, that solved it by his marriage.

AH: How long do you think that you lived at the second place?

ST: You mean the second house?

AH: Well, first was the hotel, the second was the house.

ST: Oh, the first was hotel, and then the second one, I'm sorry, was another apartment. Then from there we moved to the –

AH: To the Stout area, right?

ST: No, no. Did I say Stout? Yeah, Stout. That's right.

AH: Did you buy a house there when you moved there?

ST: No, we just rented it. The environment wasn't very nice.

AH: Was it poor whites that were there mostly?

ST: Hispanic mixture.

AH: Of Hispanics and whites?

ST: Uh-huh, and blacks.

AH: And not very many Japanese at that time?

ST: Yes, there were some Japanese.

AH: So it was really an integrated neighborhood.

ST: Sort of a mixed –

AH: How long was it before you purchased a house?

ST: We finally purchased a house – well, actually, we purchased a house on this first house that we had. We bought it together, his brother and Roy.

AH: Where was that one located?

ST: Two-six-six-two 18th Street, which is on the north side near – do you know where Olinger?

AH: Yes, I do.

ST: It's sort of across – there's a little Hershon baseball park.

AH: I know exactly where that is. I bought a couple of maps, so I was looking at them. Did you move there after the Stout –

ST: Yes.

AH: Tell me about that neighborhood. What was it like?

ST: It was fair. It was sort of isolated. There weren't too many homes because there was a ballpark there. And there were some homes.

AH: Were there ethnic minorities living there?

ST: Yes, there were,

AH: Of all sorts?

ST: Yes. Mixed.

AH: Did you have your child yet?

ST: Yes. She was already about six years old.

AH: So you were bringing up a kid. She probably started school in that area.

ST: Mm-hmm. So the grandmother, since she was there, she used to rock her back and forth.

AH: And you had no problem buying the house at that time.

ST: No.

AH: What year would that have been, about, would you guess? If she was six, she was born when?

ST: If she were six – we came here in '44, so it would be about 1951.

AH: And at that point, was it fairly easy, throughout the town, by 1951 for somebody of Japanese ancestry to buy property?

ST: Except certain area. Before we bought this 4708 Wyandotte house after the 18th Street house, we wanted to buy in the Chaffey(?) Park area, which is farther north. Those were new homes coming up. But then, no Japanese allowed.

AH: Okay. So probably knowing Roy's personality, he didn't push it at that time, did he?

ST: No. He said, "We'll forget it."

AH: Then when did that situation change in Denver?

ST: It seems to me it changed maybe a few years later.

AH: So still in the fifties sometime, late fifties or early sixties?

ST: We bought that house in '51?

AH: And did it change in part because of – I know that Min Yasui, not only in terms of the JACL but in terms of the fair play committees and things that were made up of people from different groups, started to get involved more in civil rights activities and mobilizing support for breaking down these restrictive covenants. Do you remember going to meetings where this was an issue?

ST: No, I didn't. I guess I behaved more like Japan wife those days. I stayed home mostly with our daughter, and Roy would go to the meetings. Of course, at that time, he was already with the JACL, so he has to go to those meetings.

AH: So he would have been part of trying to make a change for a more democratic –

ST: As I said, he never discussed it with me.

AH: Okay. But it was happening, probably.

ST: Mm-hmm. It probably was.

AH: What was the first house that you lived in where you felt, this is my house of choice, this is the neighborhood I want to live in, not because this is what I *can* live in but – where did you really feel –

ST: Forty-seven-oh-eight Wyandotte.

AH: Where is that?

ST: That's in north Denver. But our ideal home was when we moved to southeast Denver.

AH: How long was that – after your daughter grew up or when she was still growing up?

ST: She was already in college.

AH: And that was an area that you wanted to live in?

ST: She was already in college. In fact, she already finished it. Yeah, she finished it. Then she decided to go to France to study – well, first she joined the Experiment in International Living, that college. She joined that and then went as an exchange student to Fez, Morocco. Then some of her friends said they're going to end up the trip in Paris. So she said, "Gee, Mom, can I stay there for about one semester?" And she did. But then she met a medical student, and that was it.

AH: Got married?

ST: Yep. He seems like a nice guy. He's a Vietnamese.

AH: So that was an expensive year for you, wasn't it?

ST: She was going to school and you were buying a new house.

AH: Yes, it was, but somehow we made it. That's why I had to work, too. Then after that, after she was married, she decided – she wanted to come to U.S. He's a medical student. Roy said, "If he's gone that far, he better stay there and finish it. Because it will be hard for him because his English is not proficient."

AH: One of the things we talked about yesterday was the location of the *Rocky Shimpo*, and neither of us could think of it at the time. It has, actually, a fairly interesting address, because the war breaks out in 1941, and the address for the *Rocky Shimpo* office was 1941 Larimer Street. That would have put it pretty much right in the heart of Japan Town and, probably, that is close to where Sakura Square is right now.

ST: It's only about half a block.

AH: Then the *Colorado Times* is listed in this –

ST: No, it was 1941. It was right in the center, right across from the Sakura Square where the apartment is.

AH: I took a photo of it. It's hard to see but it's right across the street, yeah, a little ways down the block but right in the middle.

ST: You know where the Granada would be?

AH: Mm-hmm.

ST: It was probably practically across from that.

AH: Then the *Colorado Times* was on the next street over, which was also one of the main streets, wasn't it, in Japan Town? You didn't call it Japan-town, but the Nihonjin Town or Japanese Town. And 2017 Lawrence Street. How many blocks, aside from Larimer,

had Japanese businesses? There was Larimer and then Lawrence. Were there any other streets, Arapahoe or any of the other streets –

ST: Yes. There were some stores here and there, way up to maybe about Fremont, close to downtown. They were very sparse there. It was mostly Larimer, Lawrence, and some on Arapahoe.

AH: Then on about from the 18th block to the 22nd block, was that pretty much it?

ST: Twenty-second or 23rd, where the jog-way comes through.

AH: What was on the other side of each of those places?

ST: There was still stores. A tax store was on 27th and Larimer Street, so there were some stores around his area. But there weren't too many Japanese stores, they were more Spanish. And there were some hotels.

AH: What was in the section of Larimer Street where now Larimer Square is and they have it all fixed up with shops and stores and restaurants?

ST: Between 19th and 18th?

AH: Uh-huh.

ST: That would be a cleaning store, a cleaning shop, a laundry shop. There was a restaurant, Manchu Grill _____. And across the street was the old Ikubono(?). Then on the east side, besides the cleaning shop, there were – what would you call that? Ice cream and ice cones. That was so popular.

AH: What was the name of that?

ST: That was more like in the middle.

AH: You don't know the name of that, though?

ST: (pauses) Now that you ask me, it went out like a light.

AH: It'll come back. But that's where you used to go for ice cream, right?

ST: More of ice cone.

AH: With the chopped ice? Okay.

ST: Yes. That was really popular.

- AH: What about the Manchu Grill? Because I read a lot about that in the period.
- ST: It was right on the corner of 20th.
- AH: Who ran that?
- ST: George Furuta and his brother – actually, George was the proprietor. I can't think of his brother's name.
- AH: Was it a popular restaurant?
- ST: *Very.*
- AH: What kind of restaurant? Was it regular stuff or better stuff or –
- ST: No. It was average. And he served some Chinese food. But there was not much Japanese food.
- AH: Was the other stuff like hamburgers, or could you get a dinner there too?
- ST: Oh, yes. I think there was no breakfast, mostly lunch and dinner.
- AH: Was it used for business meetings of groups?
- ST: Yes, and then JACL used to meet there, because he was active in JACL.
- AH: Furuta was.
- ST: Yes.
- AH: We were talking about this off tape, and I want to get it on tape. The JACL office, about this time, around 1946, was located where in Japanese Town?
- ST: It seems to me it was on Lawrence. I didn't go there often. My husband just didn't want me to come around and socialize, and all that. I just was there a few times.
- AH: I have an E&C Building. What is that?
- ST: In 16th Street?
- AH: Well, it doesn't give the address. It just says "E&C Building." How many stories were in that building?
- ST: That was a high-rise building, six, seven, eight stories. He had an office in there, his business.

AH: The law office.

ST: Yes, law office. So if you have Min Yasui's law office number, it would be the same place.

AH: So if I look under the lawyers, I can get that. But he's listed as having another thing. It lists him as the "general service bureau," and it says, "Minoru Yasui, former attorney from Oregon. Income tax service, bookkeeping, and insurance." He was located there on, it says, "E&C Building – 615." So it was on the sixth floor. And it says, "17th and Curtis Street." Where is that in relationship to Larimer and Lawrence?

ST: Coming east, Larimer, Lawrence, Arapahoe, Curtis.

AH: So it's right next to Arapaho.

ST: Uh-huh.

AH: So it's a little on the outskirts of the Japanese Town, right?

ST: Yes, it would be. This would be right in downtown. When we say right in downtown, we mean Denver downtown.

AH: Not in Japanese Town downtown.

ST: No. We don't call that Japanese Town.

AH: Was the JACL located there for a long time?

ST: Well, only when Min was doing his business. Then in 1946, he decided that he wanted to go back to his own business. He wanted to stay with his own business and not be bothered with JACL.

AH: So he'd just do the law.

ST: So then, he asked Roy if he were interested.

AH: What I'm sometimes confused about when I'm thinking about this is, there was the Denver Chapter of the JACL, which evolved, I guess, into the Mile High Chapter of the JACL. Then there is the regional office, the district office of the JACL. Did they have their offices in the same building, or in the same space?

ST: Okay. I'm a little more clear now that you said it that way. The chapter never had an office. So Min's office was actually a regional office. When Min left to do his practice, naturally Roy couldn't stay there. Then he rented the one – I'm sure it was around 19th or 20th and Lawrence.

AH: So there was a new district office as well as a new district officer.

ST: Yes.

AH: And Roy took that over in '46?

ST: In about '46.

AH: I see. Then how long did he do that?

ST: About five years.

AH: What was the nature of that job, exactly? What did he have to do for that?

ST: Like in California they have a specific Southwest District, Northwest District.

AH: I know they have the Central Valley District.

ST: Fresno Valley District. I don't know what they call it there. But those are regional offices. Primarily, they're to take care of the chapter duties. Not really take over the chapter duties –

AH: But administer that district.

ST: Administer whatever is necessary.

AH: Or coordinate it. Is it a paid position?

ST: Oh, definitely.

AH: Was it the main source of your income at that time, or was the newspaper work the main source of your income?

ST: No, because he left the newspaper.

AH: He left the *Denver Post* to take that job then.

ST: Yes.

AH: So the only work he was doing at that time was the district –

ST: He was the Tri-District JACL representative. And I told you yesterday, he expanded so much that he finally changed to Mountain Plains District.

AH: Then he would have to take periodic trips to the offices of the chapters and even present things at their meetings?

ST: Yes, that's right. And encourage them or start another new chapter wherever possible.

AH: And it was one of the fastest growing districts in the United States at that time.

ST: It was.

AH: It was really incredible. I think the two big growth areas were Chicago and then in this district. Did you go with him on any of the trips?

ST: No. He always kept business separate, so I never accompanied him. But as I said, whenever he came back, "Honey, I want you to write a thank you note, send them a box of candy, or something."

AH: So you had responsibilities, but it was after he got back.

ST: Yeah, after he comes back. And that's how I got to know all the people that he met.

AH: When they have district conferences, which they would have, just like they have the biennial. Were those every two years? The off year of the national one?

ST: Alternate years, uh-huh.

AH: And some of those were huge. I saw one, I think, was in Park City, Utah. Had a great big one. Did he have the major responsibility for –

ST: I wouldn't say major responsibility, but his office did help. A lot of the administrative, letter writing, things like that.

AH: And the major responsibility would have been with the host chapter in the city where it was?

ST: Yes. So they coordinated.

AH: In 1946, two years after you came to live in Denver, they had the JAACL biennial conference in Denver. I read a bit about that, and it was a very splashy affair in the sense that it was the first time they had had one, really, since Portland in 1940. I mean, they had some, but this was the first one where people could freely attend it. They chose Denver. Then the next one was Salt Lake City, and the one after that was Chicago. They were all resettlement areas. Did you go to the '46 one?

ST: To Denver?

AH: In Denver.

ST: I didn't attend everything because my daughter was only a year old, or so. But I did go to Salt Lake City once and I went to Chicago.

AH: Oh, so you went to the '48 and the '50 one?

ST: Mm-hmm. He wanted me to come. For something like that, he wanted me to be there.

AH: Was he involved a lot in the '46 meeting?

ST: Oh, yes. Wait a minute, no. Not '46. Because he was still working with the *Rocky Shimpo*.

AH: Okay. So he started to have varied responsibility in '48. Now, is Utah in the – that's in his district, isn't it?

ST: No. Utah is not in our district. Our district stops at New Mexico, New Mexico and Texas.

AH: And Nebraska's in it too?

ST: Mountain Plains?

AH: Yeah.

ST: New Mexico, Texas, Wyoming, Nebraska, Montana; and other places, North Dakota, South Dakota, they don't have many[?] Japanese.

AH: You were in the Denver Chapter, weren't you?

ST: Yes.

AH: Some of the things that confuse me, the early period they just called it Denver JACL. Then later it became the Mile High Chapter of the JACL. Why was that?

ST: That was only changed because it wasn't only Denver people who joined. The metropolitan people in our area, like Englewood, Littleton, that's not Denver Chapter. So to include those people – like even we have, in Colorado Springs, and we have a couple in southern Colorado.

AH: And they're still in the Mile High one?

ST: Yes.

AH: But Fort Lupton had their own chapter.

ST: Yes, they had their own chapter.

AH: What other chapters were there around here, aside from –

ST: There was one for Arkansas Valley. That kept going on quite strongly. But then about maybe seven, ten years ago, it started to decrease. They just kept it going just so they could keep their insurances. So Arkansas Valley and Mile High Chapter, Fort Lupton – then for Mountain Plains, we would include Texas and Albuquerque, New Mexico, then Omaha, Nebraska. But others, like Montana, had at one time that Roy started, but after several years, the interest diminished.

AH: So he started some chapters then.

ST: Yes, he started the new ones. New Mexico too, he started. But it's still going on.

AH: Was he paid any bonuses if he started a new chapter?

ST: Oh, no, nothing like that. That's just part of his job.

AH: Okay. I know some newspaper editors – because my father-in-law was a newspaper editor in Southern California, and one of the arrangements he had with the publisher is, as he added subscriptions and things like that, his salary went up. But it was in a growth area, and the salary went up so fast that the publisher wanted to renege on the arrangement.

ST: You know, Dr. Hansen, JACL was so poor in those days, they barely paid his salary. I think his salary was only about a hundred and fifty.

AH: So you were having a tough time for a while there.

ST: Well, amazingly, we saved money on that.

AH: You were starting a family too then.

ST: Mm-hmm, and I started a family. But I guess we were all frugal at the time, and since I was raised on the farm, I didn't expect a lot of things.

AH: You lived fairly simply then where you were here.

ST: Yes, mm-hmm. Of course, we didn't have a car, we didn't have a home.

AH: Oh, you didn't have a car then?

ST: No.

AH: When did you get your first car? This is interesting.

ST: I think my daughter was in her teens.

AH: By the time you got your first car? And she was born in what year?

ST: Nineteen forty-five.

AH: Gee, it was in the mid-fifties, or later, in the late fifties.

ST: It seems to me it was about 1950s, or something.

AH: Who drove in your family?

ST: Just my husband.

AH: So you didn't drive anyway. How did he get around?

ST: Bus.

AH: Where you were living for a while, he would just walk to the office, right?

ST: Mm-hmm.

AH: Then when you kept moving out, he'd have to –

ST: Up until 1958 or so, we lived right in downtown, so he just took the tram.

AH: When I was talking this morning to Tak, it sounds like most of his friends that he made were not local Denver Japanese because he wasn't brought up that much within the community, never went to Japanese language school.

ST: Oh, he didn't?

AH: No, he never went. He had a choice, and his father said, "I want you to learn English and not Japanese." So he didn't have that background. He could understand his parents when they were speaking Japanese, so he, like a lot of Nisei, knew some. He was a little self-conscious about it later that he didn't know very much, because it was unusual, he said, for his generation to know so little, for somebody born in 1914. But because they lived outside of the Japanese community and a lot of the things he did were outside of the Japanese community, he didn't feel as connected, I think. But then, when he was mentioning a lot of his associates growing up, he was mentioning Yasui and Hosokawa, their wives, and people that he knew, it sounded as though a lot of his socialization within

the Japanese American community was through the JACL. He said they'd have poker parties on such-and-such a night.

ST: And the JACL used to sponsor bridge parties, socials, potlucks, things like that.

AH: But most of his friends were from the evacuee-resettler group rather than from the locals, at least the way he made it sound. I was wondering, was the case with you two, or did you make a lot of friends within the local Denver Japanese American community?

ST: Well, whoever our neighbors were, we became friends. Some of them were locals. But many of them were evacuees because the places where we lived around 27th and Curtis and 28th and Stout, they were mostly evacuees.

AH: Did you ever meet a person in Denver – I think you mentioned one yesterday – did you meet other people that were from Florin that lived in Denver?

ST: Yes. There were some in the neighborhood.

AH: Ones that you knew from back home?

ST: Mm-hmm.

AH: And also Manzanar people did you meet here too?

ST: Yes.

AH: So you had friends from a number of different contacts.

ST: Oh, yes. I know evacuation was a very terrible thing; however, I always feel that it opened the world to us. That's how I take it.

AH: In some ways, too, that Japanese American community became a national rather than just a local community.

ST: That's right. If you were back home in Florin, you would be a Florinite and not know any better.

AH: By the time you got here in 1944, was there still some tension between the prewar Colorado, Denver, Japanese and then the newcomers? Not that you experienced it particularly, but –

ST: Not that I experienced, but I've heard others say, "Gosh, these people from California come here –" For instance, this man was saying – they had a small home, but we had to open the home to the relatives. And he said, "Now they don't even know we're alive."

(chuckles) I said, "Well, that's not very nice, is it? They should remember you forever." They tell as though they were being encroached. Too many Japanese, I guess.

AH: Did they feel a little threatened by that?

ST: Yes.

AH: In the sense of they had established a relationship and got along with –

ST: Yeah. They were in a niche, and they didn't want to be interfered.

AH: Did most of the business people that were down in the Japan Town area, were they mostly evacuees that owned these businesses, like the Manchu Grill? Were those people that came from the Coast, usually, or were they locals who –

ST: I think both. Like Todas, they're native. And there is an elderly couple who run a cleaning shop and a laundry shop, and I think they're native. But I think you're right, probably more evacuees.

AH: Then some of the evacuees left after the war, so the place changed.

ST: However, most of them returned to California after about five to ten years.

AH: Did the nature of the place change a lot? Could you tell significantly that it shrank?

ST: Oh, it shrank. A lot of the shops were deserted, so it became a very sort of scary place to go anymore.

AH: Like a Skid Row sort of place?

ST: Mm-hmm. Because then all the –

AH: Blacks moved in and stuff?

ST: What do you call those people, they hang out?

AH: Homeless people? Oh, you mean like hobos and vagrants.

ST: Yeah, hobos and homeless and vagrancy.

AH: So it was a different place then. It wasn't vibrant anymore.

ST: No. The atmosphere was not there anymore.

AH: Then did it go down markedly?

ST: Yes.

AH: By the fifties, it was already starting to –

ST: No. Let's see. When did they rebuild that place? By that time, it was quite bad.

AH: Well, Sakura Square came up in '71, or something like that. So it was really going downhill from, probably, 1950 or even earlier?

ST: No. Maybe a little later than that. We used to enjoy going down to Japanese Town.

AH: But there was a point when you stopped doing it.

ST: Yes. Then we finally stopped because there was nothing to go to.

AH: Was there a large yellow flight, so to speak, of suburbanization coming out, of people who used to live in that area? Like they had the white flight. Now they have black flight. Was there a yellow flight?

ST: You mean relocating to the outskirts?

AH: Suburbanization.

ST: Yes. It slowly started. That's what we did. That was in 1952.

AH: If you were to look behind the surface of the thing, were there specific – like in Los Angeles, when people left Little Tokyo, they went to Monterey Park, they went to Gardena, and they developed secondary communities that, on the surface, you wouldn't be able to tell that there's quite a few, necessarily, people of the same background. But if you look at the census tracks, you see that there's quite a bit. Were there special areas in the Denver periphery here where Japanese people tended to settle, as opposed to other places, popular suburban areas?

ST: Uh, yes, I think that's partly true. It isn't all true. Because by that time, I think many of them started to feel that it's better to not congregate in the same area. So that is why now, for instance, our Buddhist temple, Simpson, they're really scattered. However, a lot of them moved towards Arvada, the western part, and Lakewood, Englewood, Littleton. But they don't try to live next door.

AH: No, I know. They're in the general neighborhood but not –

ST: Yes. General neighborhood, but they want to be discreet about it.

AH: Have they built institutions in those places, churches that are largely Japanese congregations, or did they come back sometimes to Denver for that.

- ST: Most of them who stayed with the Simpson like me, even though I'm far away, even though I don't go to the church anymore because I don't care to bother people for transportation, that is still my church. But on the other hand, some have joined a neighborhood, and they're happy with it.
- AH: A lot of the Sansei and Yonsei are so out-married that –
- ST: That's another thing that came in, intermarriages. That changed the situation too.
- AH: Did you see any intermarriage in the Nisei generation in Denver?
- ST: There were some but not very many.
- AH: Mostly with the Sansei generation did that start in this area?
- ST: Sansei generation is noticeably – you mean intermarriages?
- AH: Intermarriage, yeah.
- ST: So far, they retain maybe half, half or more, in their marriages.
- AH: Did they stop using go-betweens by the Nisei generation?
- ST: Sansei, Yonsei would not even consider it.
- AH: So that stopped. Your generation was the last, probably.
- ST: However, though, I think there is still some of that going on.
- AH: Do they actually pay a person to do some of the background stuff?
- ST: You mean for the *baishakunin* go-between?
- AH: Yes.
- ST: I think they're supposed to give them some kind of money. I don't know what my father did.
- AH: Does that occupation still exist, the go-between?
- ST: I think it does.
- AH: So there might be somebody you could go to if you were looking –

ST: Well, look at all the singles organizations now. That's their business. But they say they're very technical about it with the technology. They try to match them. It's the same way.

AH: Looking at the *Colorado Times* and the *Rocky Shimpo*, there seems to be a lot of articles that they were concerned about the Nisei youth that were down in Japanese Town, that they would be hanging out on the corners and the way they dressed, and they were in a gang sort of way. Did that strike you as the case? At dances and stuff, getting into fights and things?

ST: I don't remember any of that.

AH: So you don't remember having a juvenile delinquency problem in Denver among the Japanese youth? I mean among themselves, not –

ST: It was very, very few, if any.

AH: So you think the newspapers might be exaggerating in the sense that it was more than had been the case in prewar Denver, because you have more kids. But it wasn't a problem. It wasn't a social problem.

ST: As far as I thought, I thought there never was a problem.

AH: So you felt free. You could walk around at night any time you wanted?

ST: Well, as I said, we used to walk downtown along Larimer many nights. Never thought much about it until everybody started leaving.

AH: Then it became a little bit like a ghost town.

ST: Because you don't know them.

AH: Then did redevelopment really change that area a lot as far as the character of the place?

ST: I think it has, just because it's new. People tend to be more proud where they live.

AH: Would you go back into that town where you stopped going there? Would you start going back again?

ST: You mean any time of the day?

AH: Yes.

ST: Except night.

- AH: Oh, you'd still stay out of there at night.
- ST: Yeah, I wouldn't care to go by myself.
- AH: In the last, say, since 1970 and the redevelopment, when would you and Roy go into Japanese Town?
- ST: Oh, when we were together, we didn't mind to go any time.
- AH: But for what occasions is what I'm asking. Why would you go there? To do what?
- ST: Well, for instance, to shop.
- AH: And you would go to what stores?
- ST: You mean the Japanese Town?
- AH: Yeah.
- ST: Well, for instance, to buy Japanese items.
- AH: Would you go to that Pacific Mercantile?
- ST: Mm-hmm. And to Granada. And then we would go to restaurants, go to the Japanese restaurants.
- AH: Did you still go to meetings there, or did the meetings move out?
- ST: And then the Buddhist temple has a meeting there. Now with the Simpson way out in Aravada, a lot of the community events take place at Buddhist temple.
- AH: Where would the JACLers hold their meetings in the later years?
- ST: Uh, I think it was at churches for a while.
- AH: So the Manchu Grill thing was an early thing, and then –
- ST: So when Manchu Grill left, we really felt the void, because they used to meet there a lot. Right now we're using the 1200 Federal. There's a city building now. But before that, I think we used to meet at Buddhist temple, at least, like conventions, we need a bigger place.
- AH: The JACL was one of the centers of your life, I'm sure, because of the fact of Roy's job, but even beyond that you were involved in it.

- ST: Mm-hmm. I stayed with it.
- AH: What made that the center of your life? What did the JACL do in the way of providing a core experience for you that you enjoyed?
- ST: Well, I just felt that the JACL was an organization that I should belong because it's for us. I was proud of the organization.
- AH: What kinds of things did they do in a place like Denver? What were the activities?
- ST: (chuckles) You said earlier that people thought that all we had was fun.
- AH: Well, this is what Omura said. He said that largely there was social –
- ST: That isn't true. Look what we did legislatively in Washington, D.C., with Mike Masaoka. We wouldn't be here like this if it weren't for that. Look at all the laws they passed for the benefit of the Japanese and Japanese Americans. I thought it was a great thing to do.
- AH: That's kind of a national thing. You're talking about citizenship for the Issei, and you're talking about the Evacuation Claims Act.
- ST: Miscegenation law and the discrimination law and –
- AH: What did you do locally? Because I know of some of the things that Min Yasui was involved in. Was the JACL very actively involved in civil rights, minority group relations?
- ST: No. JACL was not too active in civil rights then yet.
- AH: Was that mostly Min through the Human Relations Council?
- ST: Yeah, I think so.
- AH: More than the JACL. What was the JACL's local mission as opposed to the national one?
- ST: I think up until the time of redress, partly redress, and then they were still trying to pass different laws to help the Japanese Americans and the Japanese. I think that more or less stopped when the redress went through, so then it became a civil rights organization, as you know. I guess I have to say, the Japanese are not – they're sort of bashful about civil rights.
- AH: It's kind of funny. In Orange County, where I live, it sort of split the JACL chapters. One chapter went more to civil rights, so that's one of the reasons that the SELANOCO Chapter got developed as an Orange County Chapter, starting to be involved in the

marches in Washington and things, and then the SELANOCO Chapter said, well, this isn't what we're supposed to be doing. We're not supposed to be –

ST: But that's the way we feel a little bit. But we want to do things more discreetly. I would never march.

AH: So you weren't in demonstrations.

ST: I don't want the demonstration.

AH: Min moved more in that direction, didn't he? Where he was more involved with interethnic things, with Hispanics, blacks, interracial councils, and things like that?

ST: Well, because it became necessary. We needed his support.

AH: Was he ever considered, though, too advanced in his activism for the rest of the JACL chapter? Was he seen as too much of a crusader?

ST: Well, they used to call him Mr. JACL.

AH: So he was able to combine the two. He was able to do the civil rights activities but also stay within the – I know that there was a division at one point between the philosophy of Bill Hosokawa and the philosophy of Min Yasui to a redress. Originally, Hosokawa – and I don't know about the Mile High Chapter, maybe the whole chapter, and this is something you can help me on – was not in favor of redress. They felt that they didn't want to put their hand out, they didn't want to accept money, thought it was dirty.

ST: It was not dirty. They were just embarrassed.

AH: Embarrassed to do it.

ST: Mm-hmm.

AH: That's sort of a little dirty. It's sort of like you're taking charity in some ways, and you don't need that, especially families who had made it through hard times and were starting to make it on their own. I know there was a big division, not just in Denver but nationally, among the JACL, and redress wasn't a real popular issue.

ST: You're right. There was almost real friction, which was almost breaking the JACL.

AH: Did you have a crisis within Denver over that issue of redress?

ST: I don't think we had that much of a great problem. I think eventually people saw to it that, well, this has to be something right to do because of what we went through. Twenty-thousand is small money, actually, but it certainly helped a lot of people.

- AH: You and Roy, what was your attitude towards redress?
- ST: At first, I thought I didn't want to. And I think Roy did too. But then, as we talk about it, we thought, why not?
- AH: Would that be fair to say that that was a general kind of feeling to that? There were a lot of people that felt that way and then gradually they accepted?
- ST: Yes.
- AH: So at first, when Min Yasui was more supportive of it, he didn't have as much local support as he did later when he took over as head of the –
- ST: There wasn't much enthusiasm. I think they were just overwhelmed that such a thing would be proposed and that it could even be considered.
- AH: Was there ever a period where you didn't feel comfortable in the Mile High Chapter of JACL, where they were saying – like today, when I was talking to Tak, today's JACL, he would not even feel comfortable going to a meeting. To him, that's in another world, almost a zoo, the way he would put it. But was there ever a period when you were active in, not so much now – are you still active in the organization? Okay. Then I can ask you even up through now. Have you ever felt where this is not a comfortable place for you to be, not just because of age differences but because of issues differences?
- ST: Yes. I had that feeling for a while, especially when they went deeply into homo and same sex marriages, and then resisters.
- AH: When was that period? When did that come about? From the middle seventies, or when was it?
- ST: It seems to me – I didn't really become active until about 1987, and it was – no. It's recent.
- AH: You weren't active until '87?
- ST: No. I was off and on. I was off and on. In fact, I was even district secretary one year. But then there was a lull. My daughter was growing up, and she needed more of my attention. And because I worked every day, I felt as though I should give up my time to her at night and weekends. But I became more active 1987, about that time. I think it's only about five years ago when all this same sex marriage and thing came up.
- AH: So this is a rather recent thing then.
- ST: It is. At that time, I thought, gee, I don't know if I belong to this organization because I can't support it.

AH: Did you stop going as regularly?

ST: No. I was an officer, so I just went.

AH: Oh, you just kept going.

ST: I just kept going.

AH: But only a part of yourself was enthusiastic about what was happening.

ST: Uh-huh. But I felt that I owe it to the organization as long as I'm an officer.

AH: Are there still Nisei that are active in the Mile High Chapter?

ST: Very few. Tom Masumora(?) is gone, and you never see Tak any more. There is George Masunaga and his wife, and there's _____. Very few. Mostly it's Sansei.

AH: I'm not speaking of this in a denigrative way when I talk about the social thing, but probably, too, the social connection was important to a community that was coming out of the camp years and starting in a new place, right?

ST: It was. It was necessary. It was necessary. And they didn't have any other organization to go to then. Do you know we had about four to five hundred members about that time?

AH: You really filled a void here, didn't you? They didn't have the infrastructure of a lot of organizations like they did on the Coast, so the JACL was one of the only, right?

ST: Yes, it was. Then that soon died off. Then they became active in their own professional organizations. They joined churches or any other group of their interest.

AH: What's the window where the JACL was the most dynamic in Denver? The period from about – it was started a little bit before the war, wasn't it? They started it –

ST: In 1938.

AH: Then it really started its growth period at the end of the war, would you say? Like about '45?

ST: Yes, I would think so.

AH: So when you first came in '44, did you join the JACL right away?

ST: No, not right away. Well, then in the end of '46 or beginning of '47, my husband was a member, naturally. So I said to my husband, "I think I want to join too." He said, "No,

we'll do it alternately, because we can go together anyway." So that's what we did. Alternate years I would be a member, and that's the time when I was _____.

AH: For a place that was out of the large urban areas – I mean, Denver is a pretty good-sized town, but it's not Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York – you have a lot of movers and shakers in the national organization, so you had the experience of not being a full metropolitan center but, yet, having the person who was the editor of the *Pacific Citizen* and then probably the leading historian within the community, and journalist. Then you had the civil rights activist in Min Yasui, and then your husband was here, so you had quite a few – are there other people I'm missing? Who else was in Denver that had a connection with national developments?

ST: Many of them who were very active early on, they all left, they're all in California now. But right now – the person – I don't know if you know the Horiuchis(?).

AH: Oh, yeah, the Horiuchis, sure.

ST: They have stayed with the organization

AH: Which Horiuchi group is this? Is this the one that had the legislator that was in the –

ST: No. That's _____ Horiuchi. He's a native of Colorado.

AH: The daughter's name is Lynne Horiuchi.

ST: She's the daughter of Bob and _____.

AH: And they're still here, aren't they?

ST: They're still here. And they have been active. Not very, but Bob used to be an officer, but not anymore.

AH: I met Bob's wife, and I know his daughter Lynne pretty well. She does a lot of history stuff.

ST: Her brother's the one in music?

AH: Yeah, her brother's in music. She was working for the California Department of Transportation, but then she did a book dealing with the family photographs. She's now getting a doctorate in architectural history, and she's studying Japanese American architectural forms and stuff. She's very bright. She's very good.

ST: Yeah. Both of them are. Let's see. Where were we?

AH: We were just talking about that window of when the JAACL was strongest in Denver.

ST: Actually, I think, for one, when they first came out of the camps, they became a very strong and large organization. And we had a lot of devoted members who helped a lot, served a lot. Then it sort of died down. Then when redress came up, I guess that's when things perked up again.

AH: So it did slump for a while there during the period when people were raising their families and getting started in their businesses?

ST: Yes.

AH: When you first were growing as a group –

AH: – did JAACL help on –

ST: No, we didn't even bother with them.

AH: You just did it on your own?

ST: Uh-huh, because we felt that it wasn't that important. And the place that we found away from that, it was only a few blocks away from the dividing line, a few blocks away, and it was just as nice, or maybe nicer. We were happy.

AH: One of the big problems when Omura took over the *Rocky Shimpō* for the second time in 1947, which would have been after you had been here for three years and after Roy had served his term, that was a very stormy six months of his editorship. He and the Kiaharas – and the Kiahara wouldn't speak out so much himself but through Min Yasui because Min was working as a columnist.

ST: He was writing for the *Colorado Times*, wasn't he?

AH: Yes. He was writing for the *Colorado Times* and he wrote this column. Then Togo Tanaka was writing a column from Chicago that he would send in. So they were both columnists. And there were real stormy sessions going on. But they had a radio broadcast, and the topic was discrimination in Denver. They were going to have blacks, Chicanos, and they essentially were going to have Japanese, but they didn't even say Asians, they said Japanese. And Kiahara and Omura were supposed to be on the same program, but they went down to the radio station and they talked about things, and they couldn't agree enough to even appear, so they had to have, for the Japanese, two separate programs.

ST: When was this?

AH: This was '47. So Kiahara spoke one time and Omura spoke the next time. The thing that Omura was upset about was, Kiahara said, "There is no discrimination in Denver against Japanese Americans." So Omura put these banner headlines: "Publisher Says No

Discrimination." Then he got all of these studies that were coming out showing discrimination in housing and everything else. That was essentially the basic thing. It seemed that this was sort of a difference in style, that Kiahara was recognizing, maybe, that there is discrimination but doesn't want to talk a lot about it.

ST: Then you have to remember that they're two different generations. Omura is the second generation; whereas, Kiahara is Issei. Their thinking is completely opposite. So you have to say that there was not much you could do about it. That's the way Kiahara feels, that's the way Jim Omura feels, and he's a Nisei.

AH: So they had to have two programs, one for the Issei and one for the Nisei. I would have guessed, just my guess is – and you answer this in terms of the historical reality that you know. My guess would have been that your husband Roy would have been able to get along with Mr. Kiahara.

ST: Oh, perfectly. I want to tell you about my husband. He got along better with the Isseis and the Japan Japanese than the Niseis.

AH: So their style was more like his.

ST: I think it was the way he was raised, you know, his parents. When he talked about USC, he had more friends from Japan, students at USC. He had Nisei friends too, but to me, he remembered more about the Japanese _____.

AH: Was there a friendship, then, between Mr. Kiahara and your husband?

ST: I would think so. I never felt that there was any animosity between them.

AH: Did you do anything socially with them?

ST: No. We used to see them at events, and we would naturally agree, but that was the extent of it.

AH: Your husband was involved with the *Rocky Shimpō* at a time when their sales were still pretty good, subscriptions and things. But within five years after he was gone, so was the paper gone. Whereas, the *Colorado Times* just soared in terms of its subscriptions, and it just completely became *the* paper.

ST: I wonder why that happened.

AH: I guess that's what I was going to ask you, what had happened on that.

ST: Because once Roy left there, we didn't concern ourselves to be a popular newspaper. It was up to them. But I don't know. Is it because they liked what they read in the *Rocky Shimpō* less, or did they like what was written in the *Colorado Times* more?

AH: It seemed to me – this is my analysis of it. I think that the *Colorado Times* aligned themselves more with the direction of where the Nisei in Denver were going. It became, actually, more of a JACL paper, to be honest with you.

ST: Because of Min, I guess.

AH: Well, Min and Togo both with their columns. One of the things that the *Colorado Times* did during World War II, which is why Omura stopped writing for them, was that they became subsidized by the Office of War Information and they were given a subsidy by the government.

ST: You mean the –

AH: The *Colorado Times*, not the *Rocky Shimpō*. The *Colorado Times*. So they started to censor his articles, and he was wondering what was going on. It turns out that they were subsidized by the government, so they had a government control on what they could say.

ST: Oh, I didn't know what.

AH: Well, this is something that – I checked on it in the records, it's true. And it wasn't the only newspaper that had a government subsidy, but it was the only one in Denver that did. But then when Omura came back to the *Rocky Shimpō* in 1947, it was kind of ironic because the Todas had liked when he was the editor in '44 because he built up the subscription a lot, especially with the evacuees that came into the town. But the situation changed dramatically from 1944 to '47, and by '47, the Todas had sort of decided that this was a mistake that they had hired Omura originally back in '44.

ST: By that time, I don't think they were suspicious of Jim Omura.

AH: But they hired him back a second time because –

ST: I mean the public.

AH: But the reason they hired him was, because after your husband left, in the year between '46 and '47, they started to lose a lot of subscriptions. So your husband's already working for the JACL, Omura's still in town, and the only other person they could remember when the subscriptions were up was him. So it was really sort of an odd couple again because they had had differences. I haven't been able to get all these differences out. That's why I'd like to talk to Mrs. Toda, because something happened. But then they decided, out of desperation to try to keep their paper going, that they would get him. Of course, then, they gave him carte blanche. The only reason he would agree to be editor is if they would allow him total editorial freedom. Well, then, he had such an extreme position that it didn't add to their subscription base, it cut into it further. So by the time he got out in '47, they had been discredited to a large degree as a paper, and the *Colorado Times* just

had the whole field to themselves. I guess the reason that they finally ended their paper was – did Mr. Kiahara die?

ST: He decided to retire and go back to Japan. He went back to Japan.

AH: And that paper just ended, right?

ST: Mm-hmm.

AH: Then that new paper that came that Roy became the editor of, that started up right after that, or did it overlap a little bit?

ST: No. I don't think it overlapped. I think – no. You're right. The *Colorado Times* was still going on, because it's only about ten years since he left, ten or fifteen.

AH: So Roy was starting that paper at about the same time.

ST: He started in '62, April '62.

AH: Was the *Colorado Times* then cut down to a weekly, or was it still coming out three times a week?

ST: I really don't know, because we never took the *Colorado Times*.

AH: Oh, you never subscribed to the *Colorado Times*. That's interesting.

ST: Well, because we were getting *Rocky Shimpō*. I guess we were too busy to really bother. Then when Roy started to work for *Rocky Jiho*, he thought it was going to be temporary. He didn't think that they would be able to continue. But somehow, they were able to.

AH: Do you have any memory at all of this editorial war between the *Colorado Times* and the *Rocky Shimpō* in 1947?

ST: No.

AH: Did you pick up overtones of the fact that this guy is sort of bizarre and controversial? Because the JACL hated him.

ST: You mean Omura?

AH: Yeah.

ST: Well, I never heard anything good about him. Yet, I thought, gee, he can't be that bad. But I never met him. It was always going with the hearsay. And of course, my husband didn't say anything. He said, "Honey, you don't have to know. Just forget it."

AH: Did you know a woman named Sue Noma?

ST: I've heard of the name.

AH: She wasn't involved in JACL when you were involved then, was she?

ST: No. I don't think I ever met her.

AH: She was one of the people in the earlier period, during the war, who was very opposed to him, to Omura.

ST: Where is she now?

AH: I'm not sure where she is now. I don't even know if she's even alive. She probably would be eight-five, eighty-eight right now.

ST: Was she married?

AH: I don't know anything about her, actually. I just remember that she was a person that he felt was really out to get him during the period around '43. See, Omura felt that Denver represented a place where he could come and start an alternative organization to the JACL. And Salt Lake City was tied up with the JACL because *Pacific Citizen* went there, the JACL headquarters went there, so that wasn't the place to be. Denver was in the free zone, it had a population of people that were welcomed by Governor Carr. So this would be a place that he would be able to have a newspaper outlet, but he'd also be able to build an alternative organization.

ST: He wanted to be some kind of advocate.

AH: I think he did, and I think he saw that he would be a sort of a leader among the Nisei with a different vision than the JACL's. Then what happened, he wasn't here for too long and Joe Grant Masaoka got run out of Manzanar because there was all the anti-JACL stuff and they beat up Tayama and they ran out Togo Tanaka and all of the JACL group that was there from Los Angeles. Joe Grant Masaoka then came to Denver, and he started that tri-district regional office. He was the one that got it. Then he would bring in people that come here to speak. So all of a sudden, Omura saw that the handwriting was on the wall. And it was. It was on the wall because he never got it back again. For a while, he was writing for the *Colorado Times*, he was writing for the *Rocky Shimpō*, and he thought that Denver was going to be the center of the new Nisei America, and it wasn't.

ST: I read where he left Denver because he can't find a job here. I felt sorry for him, but the way he was behaving, I don't think – I imagined he wanted another newspaper work, but who would hire him, so controversial?

AH: After he left the *Rocky Shimpō* in 1947, I think he knew that there was no chance. The only chance he would ever have was the *Rocky Mountain* – I mean, you could go into the mainstream newspapers, but that was a different ballgame, where Hosokawa was –

ST: You mean the *Denver Post*?

AH: Yeah, well, *Denver Post* and the *Rocky Mountain News*, those were the two alternatives. Now they're one paper.

ST: I don't think he would have ever made it.

AH: But that way, if he was going to go on in journalism, that was his choices.

ST: And yet, I read an article where he actually blamed the Japanese community for his not finding a job.

AH: He actually felt that they hounded him, that JACLers beat up – his situation was that when he got out of the *Rocky Shimpō* in April of 1944, then what he had to do, he got arrested and then he was going to have this trial. He needed to raise money, so he started a committee that would raise money for him in the Denver community, and nobody in the Denver community gave anything to him, except for a guy named Masamunji(?) was the only person that really befriended.

ST: George?

AH: George Masamunji was the only person that really befriended him. Then George Masamunji tried to raise some money for him and he got beat up in this alley. Then he had another person that worked on the *Rocky Shimpō* staff. It was a guy that was crippled a bit, and he got beat up in the thing. People wouldn't give money, and he blamed it on the JACL for doing that. But then, when he tried to get jobs after he got exonerated in the court case in Cheyenne in late October of 1944, and when he tried to get jobs in Denver, he would get a job, but then the Nisei that were working there would go and talk to the boss, and the next day he would be fired.

ST: Do you think people did that?

AH: That's what he said.

ST: You know, Dr. Hansen, I've heard those rumors, and I don't think it's true. I really don't. When you're pushed in a corner, you have to say something.

AH: So what do you think happened? Do you think it was his own obnoxiousness that cost him his jobs?

ST: Well, people just didn't believe him or like him anymore. That's how I would feel. Nor trust him. You know, Japanese are not that sinister, most of them, especially Nisei. They were really a laid back group of people. Unless they had something personally against Omura.

AH: He felt the JACL had a lot against him.

ST: I doubt it. I think if JACL did, he would know about it. Did you ask Tak about that?

AH: He didn't say that much about it. He didn't seem to be that involved with Omura.

ST: He probably didn't know about him just as I don't know too much about him. And my husband wouldn't say anything to me anyway.

AH: Your husband would have known more –

ST: Yes, he would have.

AH: – than others because of working at the *Rocky Shimpō*. That's for sure. And then also being in a position of – and whether he would have said something about it is another matter, but he would have known.

ST: Roy was the kind of person that really didn't gossip. Somebody else told me the other day, so I thought back on it and I said, "Gee, that is really true." He never really tried to take a person down or anything. Good things he would say. But if they were having problems or something and gossiping isn't helping, he's not going to say it. That's the way he's been all his life.

AH: Well, he was never one of the people that Omura said negative things about. He wasn't an enemy of his. The enemies were Joe Grant Masaoka, Min Yasui, and Saburo Kido was a big enemy of his, and Bill Hosokawa. Those are the people – and the ironic thing is he ends up spending his whole life in Denver, and those people are all in Denver too. So it's like he never has really much of a life in Denver, except –

ST: You have to feel sorry for the person, you really do. I don't like to see anything like that happen to anybody. But I think he – he had to compromise too, Jim Omura.

AH: Would it have been possible for a person who was very opposed to the JACL to have been Japanese and had a successful life in Denver?

ST: Oh, sure. But the JACL isn't everything. The JACL isn't the organization of who goes out and pounds people on their heads just because they don't agree with them.

AH: So the JACL didn't control Denver.

ST: Oh, of course not.

AH: I mean Japanese Denver, is what I'm talking about. I'm not talking about Denver Denver. Okay. So it's possible to be – you just write off that organization, you could still make it socially, economically.

ST: Of course. We have a lot of people who are not interested in JACL, but they're making a perfectly good living. And we're not going to attack them or anything. Dr. Hansen, you're not giving JACL much credit.

AH: Well, what I'm trying to get at – I'm asking you a question. I'm not really drawing a conclusion on it. Because the position that he's making is, as you rightly stated a little while ago, that he was unable to get employment, that he was hounded out of all the jobs that he got by the JACL. He would even take the further argument outside of Denver and say in Japanese America, the JACL controlled Japanese America. Like during the war, the JACL were the outsiders, they were the reviled ones, they were the hated ones, they were the ones that were beat up. After the war, it was payback time, and they were in the saddle, and they controlled, for instance, the community developments. They had a stranglehold on certain key things. They had influence with people outside the Japanese American community. They had good relations with the government in Washington through lobbying activities of Masaoka. They had –

ST: Is that the only way to do it?

AH: Well, yeah. But what he's saying is that if you were on their team, it worked well; if you weren't on their team, it didn't work well.

ST: At this point, I would say Omura was –

AH: Paranoid?

ST: Paranoid.

AH: Okay. Well, that's what I'm asking, actually.

ST: I didn't know him at all. I think I may have met him once, but I don't know him. But from what you tell me, I think he was paranoid. Because I think he felt all alone and he didn't know where to turn to. And that's why I say I do feel sorry for him. I felt sorry for him. But because I don't know him at all, I didn't intend to do anything. I didn't hear about all his troubles until I start to read in the paper, or people started telling me after he went to California.

AH: I guess it was in the New Year's edition of 2000 at the beginning of the new millennium, depending on how you count – some say 2001 and other people say 2000 – the *Pacific Citizen*, the JACL paper, had a special section of the newspaper and it had influential

Japanese Americans of the previous century. They didn't say the most influential, but they picked representatives from all these different areas. *Pacific Citizen* picked James Omura as the influential journalist. And there were a lot of people that were really upset. Fred Hirotsuna(?) of Fresno. Do you know who he is?

ST: Yes.

AH: He is an old guard JACL from way back.

ST: That's right. I respect him a lot.

AH: He came out and he said, "This is ridiculous. If anybody should have gotten it, it should have been either Larry Tajiri or Bill Hosokawa." That was who he said. And he said even Harry Honda is a likely chance, and it said, "What did Omura ever do except accuse the JACL of being against the resisters?" he said, and "Why would he deserve the most influential –"

ST: This is another thing, Dr. Hansen. Why are the resisters saying that we should apologize, JACL? We didn't coerce them to say don't serve in the service. That was their own choice. So why are they blaming the JACL and expect us to apologize to them?

AH: I think the resisters feel, for example, that –

ST: I think it came from Omura.

AH: Well, Omura doesn't think it came from him. He didn't know the resisters before the draft resistance. He was in Denver, they were in Heart Mountain.

ST: No, but even before his death he was supporting them.

AH: He supported, actually, their position when he was the editor of the *Rocky Shimpō*. That's originally what got him into trouble, and he was tried for conspiracy to frustrate the operation of the Selective Service Act. But the reason that the draft resisters are so anti-JACL is because the JACL, both in terms of the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, which they felt was largely a JACL controlled newspaper, and the *Pacific Citizen* –

ST: *Wyoming Sentinel*?

AH: The camp newspaper that Bill Hosokawa had been the editor for.

ST: You mean the –

AH: *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, which is where the resisters were, at Heart Mountain. They felt that that newspaper – and Bill Hosokawa was no longer the editor of the newspaper at the time that this came along. There were other people that were involved in it, but they

were all pretty strong JACL people. They felt that they really took after them, called them draft dodgers, draft evaders. And the *Pacific Citizen* took after them too, and they felt that they besmirched their reputation. They were so opposed to them resisting the draft that they were willing to railroad them, if necessary, to prison, that they were happy that they were gone.

ST: I don't think so. I don't think the JACL would push that far. They can't.

AH: Well, that's what they feel. They feel –

ST: They can't. What kind of power does JACL have?

AH: Well, they said they said that he thought that JACL had a lot of power during World War II, and the power that they had –

ST: JACL, during World War II, had nothing. The JACL was not working then.

AH: Well, there was still a JACL office.

ST: There was a JACL, but it was dormant.

AH: There was still a *Pacific Citizen*.

ST: It was sort of dormant in Salt Lake City. They just moved the headquarters to Salt Lake City because they had to move it somewhere.

AH: But what a lot of people think is that the JACL represented the Japanese American community in the eyes of white America and in the eyes of the government and in the eyes of the American Civil Liberties Union, and they have respectability. If it wasn't the organization as an organization, it was prominent individuals connected with the organization. They were the voice of Japanese America, and they felt that the influence that they exercised – and it wasn't power, it was influence, not power, they didn't have any power – but the influence that they exercised was counter to the interests of people like Omura and groups like the resisters. That's their argument. So that's why they're opposed to the JACL and why they're asking the JACL for an apology. And the debate is that the JACL comes back – some groups in the JACL have actually apologized, some chapters, some districts.

ST: Well, you know why they do that? Because they're related, or they're part of the family, or maybe they're friends.

AH: Or they've been taken over by younger people who have different issues and they want to move on.

- ST: And then they have the children who have become active in JACL, and they're the ones that are advocating this.
- AH: And the way it was split, I think, is probably – how did the Denver Chapter vote on it?
- ST: Our chapter said, "We will accept what they did during the war because that's what they believed they wanted to do. That's fine. But not apology from JACL." That was all to it. I hope they know the difference.
- AH: I think they do know the difference. I'm not even so sure, for instance, that the dynamics of what's going on in the United States hasn't been degenerating to the point that we're asking for apologies for everything that happened in history. After awhile –
- ST: It's redundant, isn't it?
- AH: It is. That's not something that I'm necessarily so supportive of. In fact, to get so hung up on it – why magnify the power of the JACL to such an extent that their apology would mean anything? My position on this thing, I'm saying why they feel that the JACL should apologize. Usually, when you're asking for an apology from someone it's because you think that they wronged you. So they think the JACL wronged them.
- ST: Just like the way Jim Omura has – like being paranoid. I think that's how they are too. Because when we were in camp, none of them said they're drafting us against our rights. They're saying, "I'm not going. I'm going to drink a pint of shoyu for my physical examination so my blood pressure will go sky high."
- AH: But that's different from being a draft resister, because that's –
- ST: No.
- AH: Because that's when you're trying to get out of the draft.
- ST: They were. They were.
- AH: But the resisters were people who said, "I won't even go to my physical exam." And these people are people that go to the physical exam so that they can fail it.
- ST: Isn't that the same thing?
- AH: Not the same, because one has to do with trickery, and the other one has to do with taking a political position and saying, "I'm against this until I get a partial restoration of my rights."
- ST: Did they say that?

AH: That's what they said.

ST: Because we didn't hear any of that in camp.

AH: But that's what a draft resister is. And there weren't any draft resisters at Manzanar Camp. The draft resisters, the main draft resisters –

ST: They were really –

AH: People who got out of the draft. But they're not draft resisters. The draft resisters – there was about two hundred and fifty draft resisters. The only organized draft resistance movement was at Heart Mountain. The largest number of draft resisters were from Poston.

ST: So we said, "That's okay. If that's what you believed at that time, we'll accept you."

AH: But the thing is, they said that the JACL didn't behave that way. The JACL said, "You are making it tough on all of us. This isn't the time for you to be resisting because you're making us look like what we are, or un-American, and we're slackers, and we're not willing to pay the ultimate price of shedding our blood for this country."

ST: Well, I guess that's partly true.

AH: But that was the difference. So that's what they're asking for the apology. And they would say to the JACL, "We don't have to prove our loyalty as U.S. citizens. You don't have to prove your loyalty. That's not something that's necessary. You don't have to die for your country, and besides, our country has not treated us like citizens. They've stripped us of our rights, they've put us into camp behind barbed wire, and if they want to recognize our citizenship, close these things down and tell people it's time to go back to the Coast. It's fine. Then we're happy to serve." Because all of the draft resisters, practically, on the loyalty oaths were not no-nos, they were yes-yeses. But they were against the draft under the conditions that prevailed at that particular time.

ST: Okay. That's fine. But I think that if there was a mass of draft resisters and they did not help in the war, I don't think we would be in the situation we are now. I think we would be in a very sad situation. America is not going to believe in us. They won't think that we're loyal to the U.S.

AH: And those are the two different positions that are represented: your position, which is the position largely of the JACL –

ST: Even my father felt that way.

AH: Right. But that's the thing that caused all of the flap.

- ST: Why doesn't the small group of people demand just because they decided on their own that they didn't want to go because our rights were taken away? That's fine. We said we accept it. So why don't they let it go at that and not blame JACL for it. I think they're going beyond their jurisdiction to blame JACL.
- AH: I think that's the point of debate, right?
- ST: That's how a lot of Mile High Chapter members feel too, not all of them, naturally, but most of them do feel that way, I think. Like the board.
- AH: But then you've had people that have been connected there that have been very supportive of –
- ST: Now, you work very closely with Carolyn, and she's one of them.
- AH: And Marge Taniwaki(?).
- ST: Marge Taniwaki, she's an advocate for everything. She's my friend, I like her. I've known her for a long time, but I don't care for her convictions.
- AH: But what that says is that the JACL has differences too, within as well as without.
- ST: But I don't go and blame Margaret [sic] for doing anything, or Carolyn to do anything, if they want to do on their own. I'm not going to try to stop them. As a person and as a JACLER. If they want to do it, that's their business.
- AH: Well, the people who are on the outside of JACL, and like a lot of outsiders do, is see the organization as all one. Whereas, people who are on the inside know the differences that exist within the organization, that there's a latitude within the organization that some people feel some way, some people feel another way, sometimes it's based –
- ST: That's true, so we all do. So why are they pressing it? I mean, if that's the way most of us feel, leave them alone.
- AH: I'm going to bring this to a close because it's twenty to four and I was supposed to be there at three-thirty.

END OF INTERVIEW