

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Japanese American Oral History Project

An Oral History with DR. ROSALIE HANKEY WAX

Interviewed

By

Arthur A. Hansen

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

NARRATOR: DR. ROSALIE HANKEY WAX

INTERVIEWER: Arthur A. Hansen

DATE: April 12, 1990

LOCATION: Home of Dr. Rosalie Wax

PROJECT: Japanese American

AH: This is an interview with Dr. Rosalie Hankey Wax by Arthur A. Hansen for the Japanese American Project of the Oral History Program at California State University at Fullerton. The interview with Professor Wax is being conducted at her home. The date is April 12, 1990 and the time is approximately 10:30 a.m. By way of introduction let me simply say that, Dr. Wax is a professor emerita from Washington University in St. Louis. She taught at the University of Chicago where she was a prize winning teacher as well as a research scholar. During World War II, she was a graduate student at the University of California Berkeley in the Department of Anthropology when she was called upon to do work as a field anthropologist for the evacuation and resettlement study of the University of California headed by Professor Dorothy Swaine Thomas.

She stayed at the Gila Camp in Arizona as a fieldworker for about six months and after a series of forays, she went to the Tule Lake Center in Northern California. She stayed there for longer than a year and developed the material that would later be published as *The Spoilage*—a book in which she is given credit for assisting but not given co-authorship or authorship. She later transferred from the University of California Berkeley to the University of Chicago where she did her doctoral dissertation under the direction of Robert Redfield. While at [the University of] Chicago, she published her dissertation based upon the fieldwork that she had done at Tule Lake. Since then, she has published a very provocative and popular work on the theory and practice of fieldwork called *Doing Fieldwork*, which was put out by the University of Chicago. It has been put out in hard back and paperback and it is still used on many college campuses, which I can attest to from looking at the selections on the topic in university and college book stores across the whole United States.

My first contact with Professor Wax came in the early seventies when I read her dissertation, which I was very much taken with since I was working on the topic of Japanese American resistance in the camps, particularly on the Manzanar Riot. The

information that she gave in that thesis so excited me that I not only used it in my own work, but encouraged many of my graduate students to use it. I also used it in the pro-seminars and seminars I taught on the evacuation. I shortly thereafter, came across the volume *Doing Fieldwork* and that had a similar impact [on] me. In 1980, I received a grant proposal from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a longitudinal study that professor Wax was doing, which had several parts. One, she wanted to reconstitute and edit her field notes that she had taken at Tule Lake because those had apparently not been deposited at the Bancroft library along with the rest of the material generated by the participant observers and field anthropologist for the evacuation and resettlement study. She also did some interviews of, uh, a contemporary nature in the early 1980's with some of her informants or family members and a few people who she had not interviewed during the war but who she made contact with through some of her former informants.

I was hoping that Dr. Wax could have been in attendance in 1987 at Berkeley when there was a conference dealing with the Japanese evacuation and resettlement study but she was ill at the time and so she and a number of other people with the project were not able to attend. But, I'm happy right now to be here (laughs) and to have this opportunity to meet with and interview somebody who I've long had an admiration for. Who I have been the beneficiary of her courage and her cogency, so let me just start the interview today Professor Wax by asking you to tell me a little bit about your family background. I know that you spent some time in Los Angeles, you were born I think in Illinois, but maybe you could tell me a little bit about the Hanky family and about your mother's family before we get in to your own early life.

RW: Yes, well I had a very happy life as a child living in Des Plains because we lived on a farm that wasn't huge near a forest reserve and I would walk there, (laughs) in the summer [I walked] there all the time, [I] enjoyed seeing the flowers and animals. But, my father lost his business though he was doing very well in a business making, uh, fire escapes.

AH: Oh really?

RW: Yeah, it would take many details to explain how this happened, but he ended [up] with very little money and so the only way to survive was to sell the land and to move elsewhere. The situation in the family between my father and mother at that time was pretty stressful. And after we got to California we, uh, let me see, where did we first—

AH: Did you come as a family at that time?

RW: Yes, we came as a family and I can't remember the first place—Oh yes, we went to Orange County first.

AH: No kidding.

RW: The reason being that we had planned to go as far as San Diego, which I always regretted but my father was a very pious Lutheran and my mother to some degree, and Orange had a very Lutheran church.

AH: Did you go to the town of Orange?

RW: Yes.

AH: Oh, you did?

RW: In Orange County.

AH: That's not too far from where I live you know, I live in Yorba Linda.

RW: Yes, (laughs) it was nice weather and pleasant there and then—this is going to show the kind of independence I've had since I was a little girl—my siblings, two brothers and two sisters, all went to the parochial school but I said I didn't want to go and I went to the public school (laughs) in Orange. The next three or four years were just a period of agony because The Depression was coming on and my father wasn't able to get any work and he would leave for months and not appear again; and when he'd come back, just quarrel—

AH: Just quarrel?

RW: Yes, with my mother—well I think he—he was a little of a—a little bit (laughs) and then it got to the point where we didn't even have enough to eat. So, I went to one of the organizations I had heard of and it happened at this time that Roosevelt started this program where one could get jobs. And because I had taken up fencing in my early teens, we had enough money then, and I had become very, very good at it. (laughs) I was able to get a job on the W—

AH: WPA?

RW: —WPA, Works Project Administration. It was a job at a center in the Mexican neighborhood where—

AH: Is this still in Orange County?

RW: No, by this time we had moved to Los Angeles.

AH: Okay, so was this, in Boyle Heights?

RW: No, I think it was called Mara Villa Park.

AH: In East L.A.?

RW: In East L.A. with many Mexican neighbors. So, I got this job in this center, which was sponsored by some church to help the Mexican children and I taught. The young men loved to learn to fence, they enjoyed that. (laughs) I taught the children and I earned enough money to help put my brothers and sisters back in school. They all got into college and were working hard even though I had never gone any farther than sophomore year in high school. (laughs)

So, after I'd worked there for several years, most of my brothers and sisters had almost graduated and they were doing alright for themselves. So I decided I would get my high school diploma and go to college myself if I could make it.

[00:11:12]

AH: Now when you were back in Des Plaines, how did your family get there? Have you heard [details] through the family folklore?

RW: After my father and mother were married, he was making very good money in his business and he wanted to leave the city and live out in the open countryside.

AH: Is he from Chicago?

RW: Yes, they are both from Chicago.

AH: What were there ethnic backgrounds? I know you said your father is Lutheran.

RW: My father is German and my mother's side, it's somewhat mixed. (Murmurs and laughs) I think two of my grandparents came from North Germany from Duntrick and there was this difficulty with—I forget the name of the man who was taking land away from poor people. So they left—one was Scandinavian and (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ teeth like this. (laughs) And another grandfather who I liked him very much came from what in German is called Luran or [Alsace] Lorraine. He was a very kind man who made his money growing grapes and making wine there. None of them had any education at all as far as I can remember.

AH: Your father and mother, did they meet in Chicago then? And get married?

RW: Yes, yes.

AH: What was your father's background at that time as far as school? Did he get any schooling at all?

RW: I really don't know.

AH: And your mom, do you know if she went—

RW: Yeah, I know about her, that's a sad story. She did very well in grade school and when she wanted to go to high school her mother said girls don't go to high school, they get married. So she was forced to get married whether she liked it or not.

AH: What were your father and mother's names? Your father's name was Hankey obviously but what was—

RW: Yes, (stammers) his first name was Richard.

AH: Richard?

RW: And my mother's first name was Ann I believe.

AH: Did you grow up speaking German and English?

RW: So this is one of the things that has been an enormous help to me in my work. (laughs) This was [around] World War I and people were inclined to—you know, Germans were—

AH: Low profile?

RW: —Happy to keep a low profile about it. My parents taught me to speak German before English and so by the time I was two or three years old I could speak both languages fluently. I think this ought to be taken into consideration when teaching languages because it was easy—

AH: Requiring additional languages too—

RW: —yes, and since then I had such talent in learning other languages that when I was at Berkeley, before I had gone into the camp situation, I was doing so well—I was planning to major in linguistics and become a linguistic specialist.

AH: Oh, no kidding.

RW: Yeah, and I learned about seven languages rather well. (laughs)

AH: You were born in 1911, I recall that date because my father was born in 1911 and he was also from a Lutheran background, he was Scandinavian.

RW: Yeah one of my grandfather's was Scandinavian—I've told you.

AH: So how old were your parents, and how many siblings did you have, and where were you in the sibling order? First, how old were your parents when they had you?

RW: They were relatively young. I think my mother got married when—well maybe when she was eighteen or nineteen, and my father was not much older, I'm guessing

[around] twenty-five, twenty-six. I was the oldest of the family and then next I have a sister.

AH: What's her name?

RW: Pardon me?

AH: What was her—

RW: Elizabeth.

AH: Uh-huh.

RW: And a brother called Richard who—unfortunately, was six feet' five like a Scandinavian, (laughs) but he died. I had another brother, Eugene who lives in California and another sister, Eunice, who lives in Montana.

AH: So, the only one who has passed away is Richard then?

RW: Yes.

AH: And that was recently in the last—

RW: Yes, in the last couple of years.

AH: Oh I see. So, it was this family then that you later supported as the oldest.

RW: Yes, and I had great bonds with my brothers and sisters; really strong (pause) affection, you know?

AH: Now when we you were in Orange County—your siblings went to the Lutheran school and the parochial school and you went to the public school, what precipitated the family moving to East Los Angeles? What happened in Orange County you know, that your father, uh—

RW: My father [and] mother got even less money than they had. The money that they had gotten from selling their twenty-five acre's had run out and my father was unable to continue with anything and my mother was in no state to find any work. I think we moved first to Santa Ana and then to Los Angeles in the hopes of my mother [and] father getting a job more easily there.

AH: Were there contacts for your father and mother out in California or was that just a plunge?

RW: It was just a desperate decision, I guess.



AH: Do you remember any of the reasoning [as to] why they chose to come to California?

RW: I don't know. They talked about it a good deal, but I don't know why they chose it rather than any other place except that it sounded—everybody thought that California was such a beautiful place then.

AH: How old were you at the time of the move to California?

RW: Let me see—I was eleven when I came to Chicago; I must have been about fourteen, fifteen when we came to California.

AH: Oh, so you moved from Des Plains to Chicago and lived there for a while?

RW: Yes.

AH: In which of those two towns did you start school, Des Plains or Chicago?

RW: I started school in Chicago.

AH: Uh and did you went through Kindergarten and or—

RW: No when I lived in Des Plains I went to school regularly, but it was when I went to Chicago—let me see, when was it when I stubbornly refused to go to school? (laughs) Yeah, I went to school there I believe [in] seventh and eighth grade.

AH: In Chicago?

RW: In Chicago, and I guess it was at that time that I stubbornly went—or was it—especially when we got—

AH: To California?

RW: Yeah, Orange County. I went to school there for a couple of years. I didn't like it, and I guess [it was when] when we moved to Santa Ana that I refused to go to school anymore.

AH: Tell me a little bit about your early schooling back in Illinois at Des Plaines. What do you remember about school there and what kind of experience was that for you?

RW: A very happy one. In the first grade I had a wonderful teacher and—you see I had taught myself to read before I went to school. My mother had kept us out because of the flu epidemic and so I may have been seven years old in the first grade. One thing that happened was the teacher asked second—I was in the first grade—the teacher asked the second graders to recite a German hymn and they stumbled around and did it, and then he saw me looking intentionally and he said, “Well you do it, Rosalie”

and I did it perfectly. (laughs) So, a few weeks later he put me in the second grade, he promoted me.

AH: —oh, promoted you, oh.

RW —into the second grade

AH: You skipped a grade, you mean.

RW: Yeah.

AH: Uh-huh.

RW: And, he was very pleasant and helpful in the first, second, and third grades. I just enjoyed that (to) no end, I really liked that.

AH: Now you talked about a hymn, now is this a parochial school or is it a public school?

RW: This is a parochial school—

AH: Parochial school, so you did go awhile to a parochial school then.

RW: Yes.

AH: What about when you went to Chicago in the seventh and eighth grade? Did you go to parochial school or public school?

RW: I went to a public school in Chicago.

AH: Did you experience a little bit of culture shock going from Des Plaines to Chicago?

RW: Oh, I've always, through the end of my life I've missed the beauty of [those] woods. I've been as you can even see from my picture (stammers)—(phone rings)  
(Pause in Recording)

AH: Now Des Plaines must have been a small place, wasn't it?

RW: It is, it's a very small town.

AH: Five, ten thousand, or bigger than that?

RW: I wouldn't know, but I'd guess five thousand or smaller (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_

AH: And when you went to Chicago, Chicago was a booming town by then. What section of Chicago did you live in? Did you live in an area that had a lot of immigrants?

RW: Yes, we lived in an area where [there was] one house next to the other and a very little yard. We lived right next to an ally and all day long people would go by on their horses selling things. (laughs) Whether it really bothered me or not, I suspect that it did. I did get kind of depressed over living in Chicago, but we repressed that. I missed Des Plaines and I had a very nice girlfriend there in Des Plaines so we used to write to each other often.

AH: So then, you went to just the seventh and eighth grade in Chicago and then your family uprooted and moved out to Orange County, in California.

RW: Yeah, yeah.

AH: When you were out in Orange County, you went to school for a little while before you finally got fed up and said that you weren't going to go anymore. (laughs) Tell me a little bit about this schooling in Orange County at that time. Did you live in an area that had a large Mexican population?

RW: In Orange County, no it was all Caucasian in Orange County. I really got along well in the Orange County school and I always did tremendously. I was always the first, second, or third in the class; I was awfully smart. (laughs) I just got disillusioned with the school. I haven't told this for a while—when we went to Los Angeles, because the students in the school there they were all Caucasian but they were all kind of withdrawn, I couldn't make any friends and I just felt out of things. This was when I really dropped out of school—it comes back to me now.

AH: So dropping out really wasn't in Orange County it was in—

RW: Yes, that's right that's when it was.

AH —Los Angeles. And by this time, all your siblings were coming along in school too and your family needed some money and this is when you started to teach fencing as a way of getting some income.

RW: Well, it wasn't until I had lived in Los Angeles for four or five years that the depression hit us. I can't remember the—exact years as to when I began to—

AH: Work for the government?

RW: Work for the, yeah.

AH: I'm trying to get a sense of your family fortunes there, now your family is falling apart. The tension with your father, and your father seems to have some mental— (both parties speak at the same time)

RW: Father and mother have grown apart, yes.

AH: —uh, problems and—mmhm.

RW: My father and mother, but the rest of us were very close.

AH: During the Depression, relative to other people around you, was your family inordinately poor?

RW: Yes.

AH: Okay, so when you were quitting school, some of the reason might have been economic as well as personal philosophical reasons, wasn't it? I mean that—your income was needed?

RW: Hm. It might have been, I remember more that I just didn't like school. (laughs) I think it took a couple of years for the depression years to come along. Also, with the increasing lack of money that my father could give us, my mother was increasingly asking her mother for money to keep us alive; this went on for several years.

AH: Did your mother work?

RW: No, she never worked, she had five children in seven years and she was never in particularly good health. She had no education you see, and she would have had to do housework and she didn't have the strength.

AH: Well, how did you live? You got some [money] from your grandmother. Did your grandmother have quite a bit of money?

RW: No, she didn't. She'd just send like ten dollars a month or something like that.

AH: So, you must have been the main source of economic—

RW: The first thing I did when—I realized that things were so rough and we had so little money [was I] would go from house to house and ask if they wanted anyone to do housework. I then did housework for fifty cents an hour. What hurt me [was] my mother just felt so terrible about this and I felt [that] she should feel a little bit happier that I was doing this. (laughs)

AH: Well, she felt ashamed.

RW: Yeah, she felt ashamed and she had always had dreams of me becoming a—I'd been being taught singing—I have a very good singing voice, and she always had dreams of me becoming a professional singer or an opera singer or something like that. That I should be going out—serving floors—

AH: (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_

- RW: —and I can understand that. In any case, it wasn't until the works project was initiated that I was able really to make enough money to support my mother and the siblings and myself.
- AH: But, then you decided you were going to go back to high school, right?
- RW: After a couple of years of—well it was when they were mostly through [or] in college and doing well and one of my brothers had a good paying job and was also going to school at the same time. So I thought—I'll somehow manage to finish and go through a university myself.
- AH: How old were you when you returned to school though? Were you eighteen or so when you?
- RW: No, I must have been in my early twenties by this time.
- AH: So, did you go at night or did you go during the day with the regular students?
- RW: I continued to work—I got a works project job that I could work at night—teaching fencing and basketball and other things. I went to high school in the day, and this was all awfully exhausting. Most of the days [I got] five, six hours sleep a night or less.
- AH: Do you remember the high school you went to?
- RW: Um, no I don't remember the high school I was going to. I was living out there in the Mexican neighborhood and I had to take a bus to get to the high school, so I don't remember. But, I got tired of it—the endless work and no sleep. I got this idea that—I knew this one man at this social service place that I respected and I knew he thought well of me. He was some kind of school executive and I knew that. I went and asked him if I could get these classes [or] credit—he would assign me readings so I wouldn't have to come to class and then I'd do the exams.
- AH: On your own, huh?
- RW: On my own, and then I would have more time [to complete the] work and help the family. He sat back and he said, “So you and these people who want to get something for not working.” (laughs) That made me so mad (laughs) I got up and I said, “I've never wanted anything that I didn't work for and [that I] don't deserve,” and I started to leave and he said, “Come back. I can give you a high school diploma.” (laughs) Which he could—there are technicalities [where] he could fill out [paperwork saying] that I was competent of entering a college, and he did that.
- AH: Oh, wow!
- RW: Isn't that nice? So then I entered the junior college. It was a very good junior college in Los Angeles then.

AH: Was it this Los Angeles Junior College?

RW: Yes.

AH: Uh-huh.

RW: It was so good. See there were many refugees and this is after the beginning of the outbreak or almost close to World War I—

AH: You mean World War II, right?

RW: Yeah, World War II. The refugees who had come over here were very bright people and they were teaching at the junior college and so I enjoyed that enormously. I decided that since my siblings had gone to college that I'd go too.

AH: That's interesting I didn't know that. You mean there were a lot of refugees from Europe, Jews and [other people] who came and were teaching at the community college there?

RW: Yeah, there were Jews and Italians.

AH: Wow!

RW: I remember now.

AH: And so you had some great teachers then, huh?

RW: Yeah.

AH: Did you remember having any Nisei for classmates? Did you have any Japanese—?

RW: There were no Japanese in the neighborhood then

AH: How about at the junior college?

RW: No.

AH: You don't remember seeing any there either?

RW: No—never seen any.

AH: So, you didn't know Japanese people that (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ Los Angeles?

RW: The only Japanese that we knew very well was a man in this poor neighborhood we lived [in]. The grocery man and his wife were Japanese and they were very kind and pleasant people and I really liked them. And even when my brother got a job out of

- town and my mother refused to leave, the Japanese neighbors would come and bring over food to my mother. Kitabayashi, I even remember their name. (laughs) So I was fond of the Japanese [but] I hadn't known other Japanese people before I went into the camp.
- AH: Just as a point of interest, did you meet that family later on during the evacuation?
- RW: No I wasn't able to—they hadn't been sent to any place I was. I looked for [them] but—
- AH: So they probably went to Heart Mountain or Manzanar, someplace like that. So it sounds to me like you actually had quite a bit in the way of [a] desirable background if you were planning to be a cultural anthropologist. You came from a family that had—linguistic diversity, you lived in the city, you lived in the country, you had lived among immigrants, you'd been taught by people who were—
- RW: Yes, and I got along awfully well with the Mexican students I had. We were very good friends and I even learned to speak Spanish reasonably well. (laughs)
- AH: Oh, you did, while you were still in Los Angeles?
- RW: Yes, if you speak with people who really speak the language you can learn it, you know? (laughs) I never thought of this about myself but you are quite right, that's a very astute [observation]. When we lived in Chicago, the majority of our neighbors were Jewish and also nice people. The stores were Jewish and they helped the—one time one of the young people came in and helped my grandmother when she was sick and so on (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_. So I had a kind of gentle feeling for people of other— (laughs)
- AH: Did you learn any Yiddish when you were growing up or not?
- RW: Not there, I learned a good deal of it after I was married. I married a Jew and I especially enjoyed some of the proverbs. I will tell you one, *Besser mit a klugn in gehenem eyder mit a nar in ganeydn*. [It means] It's better to be with a smart man—a bright man in hell than with a damned fool in heaven.
- AH: That's pretty good! (laughs)
- [39:16.5]
- RW: Oh, the Jews just have wonderful proverbs.
- AH: When you came out to California [and you] were going to the city college, given your background in languages did you take any more language courses? Did you take Spanish or Italian or anything else?

- RW: I did, but I found that by and large most languages taught in high school weren't really pleasant and that I really wasn't learning anything. When I lived in the Mexican neighborhood I took lessons from a Mexican lady and paid her a small amount.
- AH: Oh, you did?
- RW: I learned how to speak it—let's see uh there was [also] another language—
- AH: When you were at the junior college, you mentioned there where a lot of refugee Jews and Italians. Did you take Italian by any chance?
- RW: Yes, I studied Italian for about a year, but I didn't learn [Italian] anywhere near as well as Spanish because I was speaking [Spanish].
- AH: Did you retain some of that Italian?
- RW: Very little because I haven't seen any Italians to—*ciao*, “hello”. (laughs)
- AH: What about Spanish, have you retained some of that over the years?
- RW: Oh yeah—*muy bien*, “very good”. (laughs)
- AH: You haven't had much occasion to use it since you were a kid, have you?
- RW: No, I haven't, but I know it enough that if I hear someone sing in Spanish or speak in Spanish I can, uh—*yo comprendo*, “I understand”, then.
- AH: You—would you recognize the swear words too, wouldn't you?
- RW: *Es possible*, “It's possible”. (both laugh)
- AH: You didn't take any French, did you when you were at—
- RW: Oh, no. I took French only in school and I didn't like that.
- AH: Oh, you did? You took that in high school or something?
- RW: In high school. I also took Latin, I had a very good teacher the first two years and I enjoyed that, she was good. She taught us to sing songs and so on. Much later in life, after I had been a professor for a while and I wanted to do something new and interesting and I published everything I wanted to on the Japanese, I learned Icelandic and Swedish. I have even written a book on it and gotten it published; I studied the ancient literature.
- AH: No kidding.



RW: Mmhm.

AH: Sagas and things? The Icelandic Sagas?—

RW: Yeah, the sagas and the old uh myths; I enjoyed it very much.

AH: Did you spend a lot of time in Iceland?

RW: I never was in Iceland. I learned [the languages] while I was already a professor at the University of Chicago.

AH: So, just did it on your own, huh?

RW: Well, I went to the classes there. I could just go and the teacher was fine; he taught us Icelandic. (laughs) I took up pottery as a hobby but I have to show you this—.

AH: Okay, let's turn it off and I'll—  
(Pause in Recording)

AH: Now I know you went to Berkeley when you were about twenty-seven years old, didn't you? Or was that when you started graduate school at Berkeley?

RW: I think I was maybe twenty-five or twenty-six when I started. Because I took a couple of years of college and then I was admitted in to graduate school and before I finished graduating, I was given a part time job by the department and that was very nice.

AH: Department of Anthropology?

RW: Yes, Department of Anthropology

AH: Now when you decided on Berkeley, why was that? What was your motivation?

RW: Well, because a couple of my siblings had gone there—

AH: Oh really?

RW: —and so I went there to have company. My brother was living there with his wife and also his sister, yes.

AH: So you had family up at Berkeley then?

RW: Yeah, they were still finishing and my brother had a job by that time. This is my older brother and my sister was still finishing school.

AH: Had you had any anthropology courses at the city college in Los Angeles?

RW: In Los Angeles? No, what happened was that when I finished the junior college and was soon deciding what I would major in, I went to some of the professors who had been impressed by my work and the German professor was very nice and he said, “Uh, no I wouldn’t advise you to go and be in [German language program], it be awfully hard for women to get jobs” and I went to the physics professor where I’d done well, and he said it was awfully hard to get jobs. (laughs) And then I was sort of dismayed about what I might do, but I remember well I lived in a Mexican neighborhood I had seen these wonderful Mexican ancient monuments and things—

AH: Oh, yeah, statuettes and things.

RW: And I had thought, they were very beautiful and so I was kind of attracted to being in anthropology, so I said what the heck, I’ll be an anthropologist. But there were no anthropologist at the—

AH: City College?

RW: —at this community college. So when I went up to Berkeley—I went when I was setting myself up for a major—I went to see Professor Kroeber—Whom you have heard of—

AH: Had you heard of him at the time or not?

RW: No but he was the head of the program.

AH: Okay.

RW: And I told him that I would like to major in anthropology, and what do I hear but the same phrase that it will be very hard for you to get a job. (laughs)

AH: He had a lot of women anthropologist that he trained at Berkeley over the years, but it was still hard to get a position, huh?

RW: Yes, it was still hard—but I got so angry at this whole thing and I said I will continue anyway. If I don’t get a job, I’ll keep working at the Anthropology [Department] and support myself by doing housework during the day or something. (laughs) But, you know I just went into it with an aggressive spirit self-determination, which so often helped me later at Tule Lake.

AH: When you needed it?

RW: When I needed it.

AH: Tell me a little bit about Kroeber, since at the time what you were doing was not just meeting the head of the department, you were meeting one of the leading anthropologist in the world. I’ve read biographies of him and know quite a bit about

- him but what was your impression of him at the time when you first encountered him?
- RW: That he was a very polite and gentle and helpful man. I always liked him and then there was a kind of long story of something that happened in the department that he helped, but maybe I shouldn't take up you tape—
- AH: *Sure!* Tell me whatever you want.
- RW: Well it's minor—
- AH: That's okay.
- RW: When I got a job there in the department as an assistant, I had this idea to have professors from other departments come who were doing work [that was] closely [related] to anthropology and give lectures and have meetings with the students. There were a couple of girls among the students who were apparently very jealous and nasty to me and so they managed to convince all the other students not to come to the meetings. In all my life, women have been meaner to me than men. (laughs) They are mean and—I didn't know quite what to do. So, I went to Dr. Kroeber and said, well I've heard the students do not wish to come anymore so we should cancel the class and he looked at me and he said, "Tell them I'll talk at the next meeting." (laughs) He did and he gave a wonderful lecture, which was really very prophetic because he explained how he believed anthropology was going to expand in all these various areas, which it did at that. When I was leaving for Tule Lake—for Gila—I think he asked me to come to see him. He wanted to make sure that I was going to be well taken care of and I said uh, "I will—I'm taking along some vitamin C to help me through the heat" And he said, "I think you'll need more than vitamin C!" (both laugh) He laughed but he clearly wanted to make sure that if I got into any difficulties living in a camp like this I wouldn't be sick and die or something. I was touched by that, and then a final thing about him is that when I went from Berkeley and transferred to the University of Chicago, Kroeber wrote a recommendation and it was told to me subsequently by one of the younger members of faculty that this was the most marvelous recommendation they had ever received. (laughs)
- AH: So, from the time you came there he was a uh—
- RW: Very supportive
- AH: —So when people say that Kroeber was a sexist, you would say that that's not true then—
- RW: That's completely untrue.
- AH: Well, I'm glad to hear that because that's been mentioned before and the evidence seems to suggest that he wasn't and you're telling me a similar sort of thing.

RW: Oh, absolutely! I myself had heard some rumors about Lowie occasionally, but the professors were not particularly—I never had a professor account on that. What I have heard was that there were two women students bragging [about] how they had told a teacher that either he gives them an A or they would report that he attempted to attack them sexually.

AH: Oh, really? Tell me a little bit about Berkeley during the time that you were up there, and then after we talk about Berkeley itself, the school, what it was like, your impressions and everything, what it was like living around there, and then let's get into that anthropology department; it was a famous anthropology department. It had people of the stature of two individuals you already mentioned Kroeber and Lowie, but it was also probably a fairly friendly place if—as an undergraduate student you got an interview from (laughs) Kroeber himself, which in a major university now is unheard of for a department chair to speak to a newly entering major. But, tell me a little bit about Berkeley itself. Was that an exciting place for you during the time you went there?

RW: Well, I really liked it in all respects. The classes were well taught and as I said the professors were very kind and helpful and I can't remember even any unpleasant thing being done to me except the occasional little silly thing by these girls.

AH: Uh-huh.

RW: One thing I never will forget is the beautiful weather (laughs) Berkeley had just fantastically good weather.

AH: Did you live with your brother or sister or did you live by yourself or in a dorm—

RW: Well I lived first with my brother—I moved in with my brother, but he had a sort of unpleasant wife and she didn't take to me and so they then moved to another house and he told [me] that his wife didn't want me to live with them. So for a couple of years, I lived in Berkeley. Yeah, there was only one year I lived in a house where I did the house work for the people and they gave me room and—

AH: So, you were like a school girl too, like a lot of the Nisei?

RW: Yeah, It wasn't too long that I had to do that and then the department gave me this small job, which was enough to keep me going.

AH: Did you live by yourself? Did you get a place of your own or an apartment or something?

RW: Well, at the time I lived in an old rickety house where the people rented out three or four of their rooms to students. It wasn't terribly uncomfortable—it was tolerable.

AH: What other kinds of courses were you taking up at Berkeley aside from anthropology? Before we get into the anthropology department what else were you taking up there? Do you remember taking geography from Sauer or something?

RW: I think I did take geography and linguistics, which I really enjoyed and I think I took a course in political science, but it was mostly in anthropology that I took courses with Kroeber and Lowie and there was a physical anthropologist whose name I don't remember.

AH: Do you remember any professors outside of anthropology that were important to you?

RW: It was far too long ago. (laughs)

AH: Well I just wanted [to know] because some of them originally were involved in the group that was [intended] to act as the advisors for the evacuation and resettlement study. Like Aiken was I think a political scientist—

RW: Well I knew nothing about [the projects] existence until I was told [about it by] Kroeber. You see, what happened was that Spencer left Gila, and Thomas had to find somebody to replace him and so I guess she must've asked around to various departments.

AH: But, the anthropology department was pretty much your world then when you were at Berkeley?

RW: Yes, yes.

AH: And the people that you had up there were Kroeber and Lowie for sure. You've mentioned a little bit about Kroeber, what about Lowie? What do you remember about your impressions of him?

RW: Well he was always a very nice and kind man. I didn't think he was quite as bright as Kroeber but as far as his relations with me, they were always very friendly and pleasant and he would congratulate me on how well I was doing in classes and things like that.

AH: What [were] the differences in their personalities? You have talked about their comparative sense of intelligence already, but what about their differences in terms of their personal make-up and their approaches to the discipline? I mean you were new to the discipline yourself, but as you were trying to sort things out, what was the difference?

RW: From what I remember from the past, I really judged them by their interests in that by and large their interests were very much the same in *Doing Fieldwork*. They each had written books, which I read about their work with Indians and so on.

AH: You ended up working mostly with Kroeber though didn't you when you were—who was your mentor at Berkeley when you were there as a graduate student?

RW: Uh—

AH: Or didn't you have a principle mentor?

RW: I didn't have a principle one. I'd go to whoever was in his office. (laughs)

AH: Okay so it wasn't until you started on your doctorate at Chicago that you got a principle thesis advisor.

RW: Uh, yes.

AH: Okay, so before that you would have regarded Kroeber and Lowie as people that you took seminars from?

RW: Yes.

AH: And you—

RW: That I respected a lot and that were very helpful and [to whom] I talked a lot.

AH: So, one had worked on the Crow, and the other one had worked a lot on California Indians and things. Both of them had represented this fieldwork tradition, alright.

RW: Yes.

[01:00:26]

AH: Okay.

RW: Oh, I should tell you about the linguistic thing, which I was most intrigued [by].

AH: And who was the person that you associated with linguistics up at Berkeley?

RW: I don't remember the name of the teacher to tell you the truth, but we were a small number of students and this was when World War II began. This teacher—see I hadn't gone into the camps until the war had been going on for quite a while and this teacher had brought in a foreign student—I'm not sure if [they were] Korean to—teach us a foreign language. He would say words and then we would have to—and note and see what we got and then we would repeat them. There was one wonderful time when he said something like yar yarro and said one with this and one with something else (phone rings) and (stammers) after the students had said the young man had said this—they looked at each other and—(stammers) and I said—the difference is ya—yarrow. I just spoke up—yar—yarrow. And then he looked at the

teacher and says it's tomorrow (laughs) I had enjoyed it anyway but I felt if I could hear what the professors couldn't hear it works I was planning to go into linguistics and I've always kept up work in languages ever since then part time, just for fun.

AH: What made you decide to go to graduate school in anthropology rather than linguistics?

RW: It was that—oh yes, the experience was very close to the time that I went to Gila.

AH: Oh, so you still hadn't made a decision yet to go on and get a doctorate in anthropology?

RW: Of course, but at that time linguistics was a part of anthropology so—

AH: Okay, so it wasn't a separate department?

RW: No, no.

AH: Okay, I see.

RW: It was after years—in Gila and Tule Lake that I went. Of course, I went to Chicago immediately after that (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ Professor Redfield said there's nothing more sensible for me to do than to major in social anthropology and prepare to do more fieldwork.

AH: Especially community studies, huh?

RW: Yeah, or community studies.

AH: Tell me a little bit about some of the seminars that you had with Lowie and Kroeber, the way they were conducted, and the things that you remember working on. I know even before you went to Tule Lake, you had published a paper that dealt with ghost stories and things—

RW: (laughs) Oh, yes that was from folklore. (laughs) Well I was—it's (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_. (pauses) I don't really remember much about how the classes were conducted except that they would give us lectures all the time and answer questions. I don't remember much difference between Lowie and Kroeber in that respect.

AH: Do you remember classmates that you had who later went into anthropology?

RW: Yes.

AH: Who were important peers of yours that you remember from your Berkeley days?

RW: I can remember how they looked but (stammers)—you know, I'm getting tired. I can't remember.

AH: That's okay.

RW: —Their names

AH: Names? It's alright

RW: But, there were at least three or four that I knew, and some that I kept in touch with for several years after this was over with.

AH: And then one day Kroeber called you in and asked you whether you would be interested in replacing Robert Spencer who he had actually called away from—

RW: I didn't know that.

AH: Yes, Kroeber wanted Spencer to help him in the East Asian Language Program at Berkeley. This is in Kroeber's wife's biography of her husband; *A Personal Configuration*, I think it's called.

RW: Gee, I didn't know that.

AH: It talks about that in the correspondence, this is what was happening. Dorothy Thomas was quite angry with Kroeber because Kroeber just basically told Spencer you have no choice, I want you back here in Berkeley and I want you to teach. So he came back and Kroeber felt that since he had taken one field worker away, he had some moral obligation to try to replace Spencer. This is I guess when he tapped you for it. Can you remember the context when this was presented? How did you get to meet Dorothy Thomas and what were your impressions of her at the time? I'm very interested in that. Tell me as much as you can about that.

[1:07:00]

RW: Well, I guess one reason I did it was because I was just getting a little tired of this endless work and this sounded interesting. I also suspected I would make a good deal more money at it because the amount of money I got as an assistant was very small. I knew nothing about what had happened, but it sounded like an interesting adventure and this is the kind of thing I was likely to go in to.

AH: You didn't know Japanese Americans at that time, did you?

RW: The only Japanese I knew were the people who'd been—the grocery man (inaudible)

AH: \_\_\_\_\_.  
So, you didn't meet any Japanese American students at Berkeley?



- RW: No, it must have taken a lot of courage because I didn't know a damn thing about the kind of place and situation I was going into. I knew that it was going to be awfully hot—uh, I think I went to Gila in July.
- AH: You did?
- RW: I'm not sure.
- AH: Yeah, you did in July of forty-three. Did Kroeber sound like he thought this was a good idea for you? Was he open to you refusing it or accepting it?
- RW: He would have accepted my refusing it. In fact, when I talked to him he really sounded a little nervous about it. This was a rather dangerous situation he was sending a young woman into.
- AH: So, it was your gender as well as your youth that he was concerned about.
- RW: I think so.
- AH: Did he set you up to talk to Dorothy Thomas before you rendered a final decision?
- RW: Yeah, I think I did talk to Dorothy Thomas and to speak honestly, she seemed very cold and standoffish in how she explained it to me. But, I just listened and I wanted to get in to this weird adventure. (laughs) One thing I remember she said, "And the stipend will be such and such". (laughs) That's the way she talked, so I didn't really relish the idea of working with her.
- AH: She sort of sounded as though she were stuck with you. Or was she anxious that you take it?
- RW: She showed no anxiety or interest in my taking it.
- AH: So, she was probably somewhat disappointed when you were the one that Kroeber sent over.
- RW: Yeah, I really don't know enough about this—whether she would have rather had a man [sent in].
- AH: I'm saying this largely because of what I've read on Dorothy Thomas when she tried to get the sociology department started at Berkeley. She attracted a lot of enemies from both men and women. She was very abrasive and a lot of people were—
- RW: Abrasive is the word that she used.
- AH: Well people seemed turned off by her, at least according to this article. Now the context was that Tamie Tsuchiyama was already working for her and she had quite a

bit of problems. As I go through the correspondence, eventually they had a parting of the ways and not an amicable one either. But at that time there were starting to be strains and stresses in their relationship. I think she was also concerned about having another Caucasian because she had Spencer there, and then he was gone. Now here you were Caucasian, and you're a woman, and you're also being recommended by Kroeber who she was not happy with—

RW: Really? I didn't know that.

AH: —Well Kroeber pulled Spencer away, so here you are a White woman recommended by Kroeber. (laughs) Had you even heard of Dorothy Thomas at the time, or is she just a new thing to you?

RW: I had never heard a thing about her.

AH: Tell me a little bit about—not just that first day when you met her when she seemed diffident or abrasive—but tell me a little bit about that very early period before you left for Gila when you were asked if you would replace Spencer. You met this woman and she didn't seem to be the most receptive potential boss for you. Tell me what happened before you left for Gila had you started to forge a better sort of relationship with Thomas?

RW: No, she hadn't called me in and I had no idea exactly how to go about doing my work or even what courses in—well they didn't give courses in fieldwork—but I did later. (laughs) I don't recall any meeting except the first one.

AH: You mentioned in *Doing Fieldwork* that you had some meetings with Dorothy Thomas and some with Spencer, and that you were taking some Japanese lessons from a Korean. You [also] mentioned that you read some of the field reports that had been produced by the other people.

RW: Yes.

AH: I'm trying to understand why she would throw you to the wolves like this. Gila was obviously an important center for her. Not as important as Tule Lake, but she did have [Charles] Kikuchi<sup>1</sup> and Spencer there for a year and they had generated quite a bit of documentation that was being used for comparative purposes with Tule Lake as a check site. So there was this void produced and she was angry about it; angry at Spencer, angry at Kroeber. She wanted that void filled and she had an opportunity to fill it and whatever her reservations, she was filling it with you. I'm surprised that she didn't try to prepare you a little bit more. Did she introduce you to her husband W.I Thomas? Did you have any kind of—

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Charles Kikuchi request O.H. 2009

RW: No, she did give me some of the field notes and reports of—not Spencer if I remember but they were from other centers that the Japanese had written. But most of those were not in any way instructive because they just wrote down a series of events. They weren't particularly interesting. I really invented the way I wrote my fieldwork notes, that was to write a note to every event that happens. I also did my best to interview people and get their opinions on how things were going and to do [interviews with] as many people of different views as possible. I just figured [it] out for myself, as far as I know nobody told me to do that.

AH: Do you remember meeting with Robert Spencer at all in Berkeley before you went to go to Gila?

RW: No, I don't remember any meeting with him.

AH: So there was—you had—

RW: Although there may have been one, but it was so dull that I don't (laughs)—

AH: You don't recall it all.

RW: —I don't recall it.

AH: And the reports that you got must have been ones written by uh, [Tamotsu] Shibutani or [James] Sakoda<sup>2</sup> or [Shotaro Frank] Miyamoto or somebody else—

RW: Yeah, mmhm.

AH: Or Tamie Tsuchiyama. You mention in *Doing Fieldwork* that when you went down to Gila, after you had groped around there and had difficulty, you became very depressed and were getting signs from Dorothy Thomas and her correspondence that you were not giving her what she wanted. Your depression deepened, and one way in which it started to be alleviated is you had a visit from Richard Nishimoto and Tamie Tsuchiyama. I have a copy of the report that they wrote at the time. Tamie Tsuchiyama wrote that she thought that you were getting better stuff and had made better contacts than Spencer had the whole time he was there.

RW: (laughs)

AH: This was only within a short amount of time—by August of forty-three—September [just] two months later. Did that have to do with the antipathy that Tsuchiyama felt for Spencer or was this in fact true? Because you were feeling that your reports were quote unquote “pretty worthless” at that time, and she's coming in and saying that Dorothy Thomas doesn't have to worry, that Gila's in better hands than it's ever been

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on James Sakoda request O.H. 2010

- in before. That seems like an anomaly; maybe you were being too harsh on yourself? Or maybe she was too inflated in her opinion.
- RW: It's a touchy subject because I don't want to say anything insulting, but (laughs) I really feel that from what I have read of Spencer's reports at the time he was not as good a fieldworker as I am. That's not putting him down too much because I think I was first rate.
- AH: Did he have experience at the time too? He was a little bit older—actually he was younger than you in terms of years.
- RW: Yes.
- AH: But, he had some fieldwork experience out in the Gila area before he went to Gila, and so this was his second fieldwork experience.
- RW: All I remember is the Japanese telling me how he would participate in the wrestling matches.
- AH: In the Sumo?
- RW: Sumo.
- AH: Right, he did. Yeah, he's written an ethnographic report of one of the sumo matches. Marvin Opler also wrote one at Tule Lake. So you actually didn't have much of a chance to meet with Spencer or read his reports or anything else. You had other reports that you got from different camps, so it doesn't sound as if things were very well organized in that office.
- RW: You said it.
- AH: Okay, so then Dorothy Thomas seemed too preoccupied with other things and too diffident or even too aggressive to want to deal with you on this. So you went out there without a sense of feeling that you had a life line except for Kroeber who told you if you ever feel it's too hot you can come back, right?
- RW: (laughs)
- AH: Okay, do you remember any of the other people in the office at that time? When you first got started do you remember some people that you got to know later on you got to know? For instance, Morton Grodzins worked as Dorothy Thomas's assistant and there was a Virginia Tauchar or Galbraith that was working in the office. These were all graduate students in different departments; economics and political science. Did you meet any of those people?

RW: Yes, I talked with Morton Grodzins and he was a very helpful and pleasant man. When I made a few visits back to Berkeley, he would always talk friendly to me. He also was in Chicago at the same time I was, and we would have lunch together sometimes. He and his wife were very pleasant. Though we never did talk about the Japanese; the evacuation troubles and so on.

AH: So, you got to sustain your relationship with him—

RW: Yeah, it was a nice friendly relationship.

AH: He died very young didn't he?

RW: Yes, that's a shame.

AH: You went to Gila back in July of 1943 and you didn't have much in the way of a (stammers) lifeline or support network. You went because number one, it provides you a little bit more money. Your stipend was more than what you were getting, but also because it was a challenge?

RW: Yeah, a challenge and a real fieldwork experience outside of the university.

AH: Sure.

(Pause in Recording)

AH: So, we were talking about one of the reasons you took the job. You took the job because you got a little bit more money and it was a challenge—

RW: Yes, and it was a real opportunity to do something in anthropology for the first time.

AH: Go there and get your hands dirty type of thing, right? But you didn't have much of a political understanding of the evacuation.

RW: No, I didn't know anything about the history, but little by little I learned that in camp. I When I went into the camp, I hadn't studied or learned anything about the situation there.

AH: Well the thing that sort of surprises me is this lack of—I've heard this from others too—but the lack of preparation. I know it's a war time, and I know there's an urgency to get somebody out there and get them into the field and everything, but surely they could have taken two or three weeks and allowed some kind of preparation for you. The Jon Embree book was available dealing with [a] Japanese village and he had written something for consumption at that particular time. There was a shelf of things that could have been given to you to acclimate you with Japanese culture.

RW: Exactly. Definitely not, not one thing.

AH: You didn't get any of that?

RW: No.

AH: Some of the people talked a little bit with W.I. Thomas who had done major work—

RW: Yeah, he was a very nice man and very brilliant.

AH: Did he talk with you at all?

RW: He never talked with me about that. I only saw him at the dinners. Once or twice [Dorothy] Thomas would have the staff to dinner and I'd see [W.I.] Thomas.

AH: Did you meet him before you went to Gila?

RW: No.

AH: Did you know of him at all? Had you heard of his reputation?

RW: Not at that time, no.

AH: So, you're actually a pretty green sort of student yourself. I mean you've only been in graduate school for a very short while, you haven't really made plans to write on a particular topic, and you've maybe taken a few seminars. So somebody like W. I. Thomas may have been a legend, but he's not somebody that was a legend to you, right?

RW: Well, I knew that he was a well-known and respected sociologist and that he had written a book that was very much admired.

AH: The *Polish Peasant*.

RW: Yes, but the few times I met him he just struck me as a very intelligent and charming man. He wouldn't put on any airs and he talked to us about his love for golf and this sort of thing. (laughs) He was a very easy going and pleasant man.

AH: What do you think was the basis of the relationship between Dorothy Thomas and W.I. Thomas? She comes across as not very charming and he comes across as charming. They both at one time or another were presidents of the American Sociological Association, but I think there were worlds of differences in terms of their reputation and their work. Not that Dorothy Thomas didn't do some reasonably good work, but I mean it's the difference between say Kroeber and a hundred thousand other anthropologists, it was this sort of gap. What do you think was the basis of the attraction between the two? They did a book together, *The Child in America*—

RW: Well anything I would say would just be a guess, you know? Because I didn't know their background that well.

AH: Hold on a second, hold your point because I need to change the tape.

(Pause in Recording)

AH: Just to speculate—

RW: I'm happy to speculate. This is just a speculation, but having had the experience of working and writing with my husband for many years, I think they may have enjoyed the companionship. They also were able to work together with Dorothy Thomas developing some of the aspects and W.I. writing as I'm sure he could write beautifully. Really when couples can work together on reports and on books like this—and even from what I saw between (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ they had this kind of working together relationship that was beneficial to both.

AH: Sort of a logistic thing where they both provided something.

RW: Yes, they both provided something.

AH: Reciprocity.

RW: Working together on a project—he was probably a better writer than she was, she was really the super specialist in, uh—

AH: Demography.

RW: —in the demography things. So between them they would manage to get together and produce *Doing Fieldwork*. It's a very good job.

AH: Yeah, I'm always surprised—

RW: Not *Doing Fieldwork* I meant the—

AH: I know what you're talking about. You meant the *Polish Peasant*?

RW: This, uh—

AH: Oh, *Child in America*?

RW: No, the book that they wrote together. Thomas and Nishimoto—

AH: Oh the—*The Spoilage*.

RW: *The Spoilage*, uh-huh.

AH: But in the correspondence that I've read of Dorothy Thomas's with almost all but a few workers I was actually struck by how well she did write. I mean it wasn't just the social statistics. I know a lot of people say well she's a number cruncher, that's what she does. She did demography, she was a demographer, a social statistician and she didn't have that much interested in case histories, life histories, any of the ethnographic kind of work that W.I. Thomas did. I was always struck with how rich, rather than how impoverished her prose happened to be. I was surprised to hear that most people found her to be a hack writer. I thought the book on Swedish migration that she did—of course, that is largely a compilation of tables and it's not a kind of a book that you sit down and read. Whereas her correspondence—

RW: Writing well in a letter in a communicative way is different than (learning) to write well in an academic description.

AH: So—

RW: She did write well in letters.

AH: But you think when it came to interpretive scholarship that some of—

RW: Well, it's just that her husband was far superior.

AH: But, he would be far superior to almost anybody, wouldn't he? I mean were talking about—

RW: Yes, I'm not trying to put her down.

AH: No, no. What I mean is that we're talking about somebody who is sort of on a plain with the great social writers and theorist of the last couple of centuries.

RW: Yeah.

AH: So, you didn't meet with W.I. Thomas? There was no briefing you on dealing with people? For instance, he had dealt with Poles; he gave you nothing on how to do a life history?

RW: No, I never met him except at dinner—

AH: I was just at Gila last week and I tried to simulate the feeling that you must have had when you went out there and went to Sacaton [Arizona]. I was sitting around in this town, which hasn't changed very much. There are a few more buildings but the old Indian agency building is still there in disrepair and it was hard to even find a person to ask directions to where the camp was. You've written [about] your fledgling attempts, you went out there and you finally got taken out to the camp. Nobody particularly wanted you out there and no one had made arrangements for you. All of a sudden you thought to yourself, what have I done and it all hit you at one time. [You



wrote a] very poignant scene of yourself just pouring out grief there in this God forsaken sort of place. Dorothy Thomas didn't seem to have too much interest in you being out there, you didn't know very much about the Japanese American evacuation, and you didn't know very much Japanese outside of a few words and phrases. What did you have to go back on? What you explained is you had to go back on your resources that you developed in your extra academic life, your upbringing, the tough times you had working through the depression, working with a family that you did at (sutters) It seems like that's the—

RW: I've never said it that way, but it's true that my adverse history after coping—[it] took determination to live [in] a very difficult situation, and so in this respect the Gila situation I used the same (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ and to help myself. I figured out intelligent things to do in order to begin to get to know people and get data. Then I examined [my methods] to see if they worked and if not, I would try others. The Browns supported me in their friendship. They were very nice people and had me over—and just to talk to fellow human beings in a friendly way when—anytime one approached the Japanese they were always—they didn't want to talk and were quiet withdrawn. So, I think I had been prepared for this kind of difficult situation.

AH: Tell me a little bit about the Browns. Brown was fairly new out there himself. Gila had tried to have one community analyst for the W.R.A.—James Barnett, and Barnett just stayed for a couple of weeks and then—

RW: Well, you can see why.

AH: Right, Right! He took off and then they sorted around a little bit longer and they found Gordon Brown, so he'd only been out there a few weeks by the time you were there. So you were contemporaries as far as arriving at Gila. What was his situation? Was he staying over in the administrative section with his wife?

RW: Yes, he and his wife had been given a small apartment to live in. It was much more reasonably comfortable and that's nothing great, but comfortable. I believe they worked in Africa together and they were used to this kind of thing.

AH: Yeah I think you mentioned Samoa too that they—

RW: Was it Samoa? I'm not absolutely sure.

AH: —they might've done some fieldwork. Uh-huh

RW: They were very supportive to each other, very pleasant folk. They had at that time a much more mature image of what the administration situation was like than I did.

AH: How old were they compared to you? Were they about your age or a little older?

RW: Oh, no. They were certainly ten to fifteen years older.

AH: Oh, so he was in his mid-forties at the time, oh I see.

RW: They were experienced in this kind of work. They were very kind to me and had me over to lunch and dinner and we could talk together happily. It was the biggest help I had there for maybe several weeks.

AH: Well, the way you explain it in *Doing Fieldwork* is that you had virtually nothing. Actually, Spencer had told you to talk to—you don't mention him by name in the thing but it must've been Shotaro Hikita who was a younger Issei who had been the president of the Japanese Association in San Francisco. By this time, given the registration and the arrest of these people, he had been thought of as Ainu and so he was perceived—

RW: I remember that he didn't want talk to me.

AH: So he was a contact that fell through. Then you said the other contact was a WRA official who Spencer said would be very helpful, and he said he tried to pat you on the rump during the time. You didn't mention a name [again there] I'm trying to think of who that could have been with—

RW: To be polite uh—

AH: Was this uh—

RW: It was one of the administrative assistants.

AH: Huh.

RW: I don't even remember his name.

AH: Okay, so those two connections for you weren't there and of course Charlie Kikuchi had left even before Spencer. So you really didn't have a person from the evacuation resettlement study on sight. The closest you had were people over in post and of course you did have that visit from Tamie and from Richard Nishimoto.

RW: Yes, and that was very helpful to me.

AH: I'd like to get some profiles of Gordon Brown but also of Tamie Tsuchiyama and Richard Nishimoto who at the time you met him was still known as Mr. X in terms of the project. His anonymity was protected by Tamie Tsuchiyama. Tamie Tsuchiyama along with yourself and Dorothy Thomas was one of the three principle women affiliated with the evacuation resettlement study. As it turns out, your relationship with Dorothy was something of a disaster. Her relationship was a definite disaster with Dorothy Thomas. One of the things that came out of this study that's just been made, the *Views from Within* is that there's still a crying need for somebody to write a paper about the women of cores. And none of you were available for this conference.

Dorothy Thomas passed away in 1977 in Bethesda, Maryland after retiring at University of Pennsylvania. Tamie Tsuchiyama died about a year ago and she was living down in Texas. Not too many people know very many things about her, whether she even continued in a career in anthropology. Your reputation is known and you've written about your experiences, but nobody was there to talk about this subject. You mentioned once in our correspondence that one of the things you [would have] liked to have written more about is the women in the camps. You also said this is one of the alleged reasons why you would have been a good person in the camps. But before we even talk about the women in the camps, what about the women in the project who were observing those people in the camp? What about Tamie Tsuchiyama, what was going on with her? Did you know her before Berkeley?

RW: I know very little about her. All I can say is that I didn't meet her until she visited Gila. After that I heard she was very angry and that she was upset and disturbed. I don't know whether the rumors were true or not, but I heard that doctor Thomas had said very rude things to her. I heard Thomas had said she wasn't very competent, but all this is just very vague and mind.

AH: Do you remember when she came to Gila?

RW: Yes, she was very kind and pleasant.

AH: I haven't even had a vision in my mind, never seen a photograph or anything. Can you describe her?

RW: Yeah she was a small, small women and uh—

AH: Attractive?

RW: Well, modestly attractive and pleasant. She looked a tad anxious and tense even then. That's about all I—

AH: You both knew Kroeber and she was a Kroeber student actually and—

RW: Right, I never saw her until internment.

AH: But I mean you had that in common, did she talk at all? Or was Kroeber somebody who said one of the people you should see is my student? I guess she was a Lowie student more than another Kroeber student.

RW: Yeah, I didn't know anything. This is the first I've even heard that she was a student of Kroeber.

AH: Did Lowie talk to you since he was connected with the evacuation and resettlement project? Did he talk to you before you went to Gila?

RW: No.

AH: So, Lowie didn't say anything to you?

RW: No.

AH: So, Tamie Tsuchiyama seemed shadowy to you too then.

RW: Yes, I knew very little about her.

AH: You didn't follow what's happened to her in the subsequent years? Have you heard rumors at all about what happened to her?

RW: I heard rumors that things were not going well with her, but nothing more. I just didn't have contact.

AH: You never heard she had an academic appointment at Hawaii or someplace?

RW: No, I didn't hear that.

AH: So—

RW: I'm glad she did.

AH: Well, no. I don't know if she did—I don't know what happened to her. It's just like you know, she wasn't there. [For instance], your field notes not being at the Bancroft has sort of sculpted you out of the archives too. Then she was out of the project after a year or so, and one of the things that Dorothy Thomas and [Tsuchiyama] were haggling over was her producing this monumental report on Poston. She left Poston, she went to Chicago, she went to Cleveland, and she never finished it and finally they just let it go. The other thing that has come out—and maybe you heard it, maybe not—was that she and Richard Nishimoto were basically having an affair, and that one of the reasons she didn't go back to Poston and finish what she was supposed to was that she had gotten some missives from Mrs. Nishimoto. Mrs. Nishimoto said that if she came back, Mrs. Nishimoto was going to make it impossible for her in the camp.

RW: Talks inaudibly in the background.

RW: I didn't know that Nishimoto was married at that time.

AH: Well, he was married and had some kids. So that wasn't something that you were aware of when they came there?

RW: No.

AH: I know you met Nishimoto many times after that.

RW: Yes.

AH: In fact, his name prominently graces the pages of the study that you provided a lot of fieldwork for. What can you tell me about Richard Nishimoto? I know he was about 37 at the time, he was a younger Nisei who graduated from Stanford in engineering and—

RW: Can I get my cup of water because I'm—

AH: Sure, okay.  
(Pause in Recording)

AH: I've asked Charlie Kikuchi and Robert Spencer and James Sakoda and none of them seem to have very much information about Tsuchiyama when they did have this conference a couple years ago at Berkeley—

RW: Well, she was really a timid kind of person who didn't say much.

AH: So she struck you as kind of a reticent person?

RW: Yes, kind of.

AH: Because she certainly wasn't reticent in her correspondence. She was very outspoken (laughs) and said some things that, uh—

RW: That might be (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_

AH: The correspondence is very steamy between her and Dorothy Thomas and all of it is available to scholars.

RW: (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_

AH: Well, it's something. But Richard Nishimoto whose correspondence is also available—I know you had occasion to see him not only that time at Gila but later on, I have minutes of meetings at the JERS group had at places like Salt Lake City and he figured prominently as did you in those conferences. Then at Berkeley when the war was over and he came back to work on what became *The Spoilage*—I know you were living in Berkeley for a while and I can see that you had contact with him and James Sakoda and a number of other people at that time. But Richard Nishimoto, tell me a little bit about him, your first impressions, and how your opinions changed through time.

RW: He impressed me as a very intelligent and courteous man when I met him in Gila. As I explained in my book, I made this statement about what people had told me about

- why they had said no, and he said, “No, this is not quite correct.” He always said this very courteously and he was correct! I found out that by listening to him. And uh—
- AH: A lot of people wanted to go to Tule Lake because they wanted to get out of the draft. He told you not to laugh that off, right?
- RW: Yeah, and he also said that a lot of people went to Tule Lake because they didn’t know how in the world they were going to manage here in America, what with the hostility against them. He had no objection to that because that was certainly a (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ reason. His advice to me was always correct and often helpful. We even socialized in Berkeley. He would come to see me—he had a girlfriend then, I didn’t know he was married, but apparently he had girlfriends. (laughs) We’d have very pleasant talks. He liked to drink. (laughs) But uh—
- AH: Was he a good talker?
- RW: Oh, yes.
- AH: I mean as a conversationalist and everything.
- RW: His conversation was very nice.
- AH: Was he a charismatic figure? Did he have a lot of personal charisma? Was he a handsome man? Articulate? How would you describe him?
- RW: Well, I wouldn’t say so much handsome as pleasant and courteous. He gave an impression of being so well brought up that he was almost aristocratic—of all the people I’ve met, all the Japanese I’ve met.
- AH: Did he have a lot of vitality that would show through his personal character? Because one of the things that he had brought to the study was the importance of getting at the core of the community. I was just wondering if he was a person who was at the core of experience. Did he come across as an observer rather than an outsider? Was he a true participant observer? That is, was he very much a participant and yet at the same time could take the measure of what was happening, analyze it, articulate it—
- RW: Now that I couldn’t be sure of. He never spoke of actually being a participant. He was much more of an analyst and someone to understand what was going on.
- AH: Yeah, he had a position of power at Poston—quite a position of power.
- RW: I wasn’t there with him; he’s the kind of man who could have taken such a position. He—reminded me (laughs) more than anyone else I’ve ever met of the—particularly when the images what I guess was a real samurai.

- AH: Did he provide you with more guidance, more feedback, and assistance than did Dorothy Thomas with respect?
- RW: Oh, yes!
- AH: So, you saw him more as a sort of—quote on quote mentor than—
- RW: Yes, I saw him as a mentor because he knew what was going on and he told me honestly. He would tell me politely where I was mistaken and then I would check them.
- AH: So if you had a person in the project that you would try to—I don't mean this in a obsequies way—but a person who you tried to please, whose opinion you valued, it was Nishimoto's more than Thomas's.
- RW: Well, no. When I was working, I wouldn't say I was trying to please anybody, I was just attempting to do the very finest job I possibly could.
- AH: I know one of the good things that Dorothy Thomas did was that she used to pass the reports back and forth among the different fieldworks for comment and criticism. Even when you had those sessions at Salt Lake, often times you would make a presentation and have like an academic conference. W.I. Thomas even participated and did overviews of the whole conference. What did we learn from this paper, that person, where are we going, et cetera? The critiques you got that counted the most for you, not that you wanted to please, I didn't want to put it in quiet those words, but the critiques that were the most telling for you were the ones coming from Nishimoto [compared] to Dorothy Thomas or W.I. Thomas or anybody else?
- RW: Yes.
- AH: Now, during the conferences themselves like the one at Salt Lake City, did you spend a lot of time with Richard Nishimoto talking to him about your work?
- RW: No, not person to person, we only actually met together. (laughs) Uh and uh—we—had this uh—
- AH: You had a group you mean—
- RW: In a group. And either Thomas and Nishimoto [or] Thomas and her husband would be there. I remember after one conference I had made this fine report on what was going on at Tule Lake. It must've been December of forty-four—or something like that—I had gotten so tired and worn out with it that—we all— Nishimoto and I forget the names of all these other—
- AH: Sakoda?

RW: Sakoda and others sat around in a circle and drank and talked about things. (laughs) I was thinking as I drank about what had been going on in the camp and it got me so depressed that believe it or not, I all of a sudden started to cry. Nishimoto came right over and put his arm around me and wiped my nose with a cloth he had on hand to comfort me until I stopped crying. (laughs) But, I will never—it's the kind of thing you don't forget.

AH: He was just so gentle and understanding, huh?

RW: Yes and it helped me. He had more of an idea of what I was really going through than the others did.

AH: James Sakoda expressed not only in the interview that I did with him, but in correspondence in his journal a high regard for you and your work. Was he somebody that you remember from the meetings at Salt Lake City and other places?

RW: You know, I never really talked to him personally. That defends the very good sense of his that he had. (laughs)

AH: Well, he remembers even after the war at Berkeley. Most of the people who I've talked to about this have forgotten it, but it's in journals and stuff like that. I read the journals and of course to me it's a new experience where you are experiencing distant events. But after the war when you were living in Berkeley, in fact you had a place that was right next door to where Robert Spencer and his then wife Elizabeth lived. You were living in one house with either another gal or maybe two gals, and then Robert Spencer was living there. Then, Sakoda had come back from Minidoka for a while to help on some things, and Charlie Kikuchi even came out for a little while to work on the life histories. There were a series of parties up in there and it's very interesting, one night you hosted a party for the Sakoda's; James and his wife Hattie. Then another night you went to a party at the Spencer's, and then there were sometimes other bigger parties. Grodzins was still there, and so it was during that period that it seemed like you were really a [part of a] project. All the people sort of co-mingled a bit and knew one another. It wasn't for very long, and it wasn't that many times, but it did seem like you knew one another a little bit more. Then, people went their separate ways.

After that Spencer took a job in Oregon, and Sakoda got into graduate school at Berkeley and finished his doctorate. You and Grodzins went off to Chicago and people dispersed. But for a while there you did come together, and there were some pretty festive parties that were described in there. You had all gone through this experience together and knew what it was. There's really few other people who knew what that meant. And yet at the end you could uh—

RW: Yes. There was that kind of feeling. We were (laughs) an elite and special group (continues laughing). It didn't last long but it was certainly there I would say.

AH: For a little while, huh?



RW: For a little while.

AH: Getting back to Nishimoto, what other things can you tell me about Richard Nishimoto from your association with him? He didn't have training as a fieldworker and yet he became in a sense the central fieldworker in the project and then the co-author of this book. How does this happen? Is this just native intelligence? Well, none of you had actually that much experience at the time. Tamie Tsuchiyama probably had a little bit more because she was further along in graduate school, but the rest—Sakoda was just a kid. He had barely finished his B.A. at the time, and Sheila Tonya who's now a big name in sociology (phone rings).

RW: I'm sorry.

(Pause in Recording)

AH: So, we were talking about Richard Nishimoto, how it was that he became—

RW: I wasn't there at the time, I had left and gone to Chicago. From what I know of the situation I would say that Dorothy Thomas needed the assistance of her husband and Nishimoto when writing *The Spoilage*. Nishimoto knew an awful lot about Japanese culture and could help her with any names or statements relating to the Japanese. He could even assist in printing and writing certain words and names of people. In writing *The Spoilage* she really needed someone who knew Japanese well because a good many of the statements made very significant progress about this terrorist group were made in Japanese. You have to have a Japanese person who can translate them. It's my opinion that he would have served as a consultant.

AH: You have no grief against Nishimoto, do you? I mean you feel that that was acceptable that he should have been given a prominent role in the authorship of that book?

RW: The fact that Thomas took [authorship] away from me and then gave it to Nishimoto does not make me dislike Mr. Nishimoto at all.

AH: Do you feel that the authorship of *The Spoilage* should have been three people? That it should have been Dorothy Thomas as the person who coordinated and gathered all the funding for this elaborate project, Richard Nishimoto who played the cultural broker role in a sense that he understood the Japanese American culture and language, and then yourself who had been the principle fieldworker at Tule Lake—

RW: Who provided this enormous amount of data?

AH: Right, because the book is basically about Tule Lake. Poston where Nishimoto was is rendered as a footnote, Manzanar hardly comes into it, Gila even though this was a check cap, the hourly reports that Spencer did, one that you did there, there's one little reference to Gila, that's it. Topaz hardly figures in—it is Tule Lake!

RW: To support you in this view is the fact that you may have noticed in *The Spoilage*, doctor Thomas gives no name of the person who wrote the field notes. More than [that] she forces field notes come from my field notes, which she did not give to the University of California. That strikes me as a very peculiar thing that she didn't, it strikes me as a little odd. (laughs)

AH: Yeah, all it says is with the assistance of, and then you're listed as one of the people who is an assistant.

RW: Yeah, and you were quiet right, I'm really responsible for far and away most of the data used in *The Spoilage*.

AH: I'm having a difficult time, as have you for forty some years—trying to comprehend how this happened the way that it did. Before we start talking about your experience at Tule Lake, let me just jump over that for a second and talk a little bit about the authorship. Now what she has is by Dorothy Swain Thomas and Richard S. Nishimoto with contributions by Rosalie A. Hankey, James M. Sakoda, Morton Grodzins and Frank Miyamoto. Why were you excluded? She does the same thing pretty much with Charlie Kikuchi for *The Salvage* because 70 to 80 percent of *The Salvage* are the life histories that he collected in Chicago and yet, he gets with the assistance of, and it says Charles Kikuchi and James Sakoda. For that one Nishimoto's not listed as an author, it's just Dorothy Swain Thomas, *The Salvage*. Now, what is it about Dorothy Swain Thomas that you know oh—

RW: Well, your guess is as good as mine as to why anyone would induce—and in my case—break their word. I have no idea.

AH: So, she essentially told you that you were going to have co-authorship?

RW: She told me this in front of other people; three or four of the other people on the project.

AH: Did she indicate that you were going to (have) exclusive co-authorship or that you were going to have co-authorship so that it could have included say Nishimoto as well?

RW: I interpreted it as it would be Thomas and Hankey. (laughs)

AH: See, it's hard because your correspondence with Dorothy Thomas is not available. The only thing I can do is to get at your relationship with her through indirection. Through things that she says to other people from the time that you're at Gila right up through the end of the project. She was even making reports to a psychology club at Berkeley in 1945. She took Sakoda in tow and she talked a little bit about the project. All the way through that period I would say that her attitude towards you is positive, but even beyond that it's promotional. She doesn't say critical things about you. She applauds what you're doing, she seems to have not only appreciation, but empathy for

what you are going through especially at Tule Lake. She's in a sense saying keep it coming, and then after you're pulled out of Tule Lake, then somehow or other that's the great divide. Now something is happening there, and because I don't have her comments as to why you were pulled out, I can only hazard a guess as to why and other people have hazarded a guess as to why she pulled you off of the project. But, from then on it seems like you are consigned to anonymity or relative anonymity. Instead of co-authorship you have a contribution in *The Spoilage*—the flagship publication. Secondly, all the notes and correspondence of everybody else is deposited at the Bancroft in 1955 and your stuff is not there. So it seems like you went from being one of the favored people in the project to being consigned to oblivion by her.

RW: Well, the only suggestion that comes from hearing you talk is it was probably done because I was ejected from Tule Lake with numerous accusations against me by the W.R.A. was it?

AH: Yeah, the War Relocation Authority?

RW: War Relocation Authority. Do you know what those are?

AH: No.

RW: Hang on—I have it written

(Pause in Recording)

AH: The list of different accusations, I just want to put these on the tape here. They're in *Doing Fieldwork* on page 169. In the middle of May of 1945, Doctor Thomas telephoned me and ordered me to leave Tule Lake immediately without letting anyone know that I was departing. I packed my few belongings and got out that night assisted by one of the few staff members I could trust; the minister. Arriving in Berkeley the next morning, I learned that a Washington official of the W. R. A. had called on Doctor Thomas and insisted that I be removed from the center. He backed up this demand with a list of impressive accusations. I had consorted with pro-Japanese agitators and attended ceremonies devoted to the worship of the Japanese emperor. I had immoral sex relations with a number of Japanese Americans. I had made disrespectful remarks about the project director. I'd been a general troublemaker and had tried to subvert W.R.A. policies. I was by temperament an anarchist, and since my mother had been abused by members of the Los Angeles police force I had no respect for the law. I had communicated with the department of Justice. Okay, well now I got to turn this over it's a—

(Pause in Recording)

AH: I must say in looking at this list I can clearly understand the W.R.A. making the type of accusations they did. Clearly for them you had become like a number of people including the entire JERS project; a thorn in their side, a pain in the neck, and they

didn't have any control over [you] like they did over the community analyst section, which was part of the W. R. A. But as I look at these things, I can see them. "I have consorted with pro-Japanese agitators" of course you had. "You had attended ceremonies devoted to the worship of the Japanese emperor" also true in the nature of getting information. "I had immoral sex relations with a number of Japanese Americans" I can also understand them saying that and ways that you could not disprove it (laughs) since you have to go into different people's quarters whether it's George Yamashiro or Joe Kurihara to talk. "I had made disres—"

RW: I assure you I didn't have any rela—(voice trails off in laughter)

AH: "I had made disrespectful remarks about the project—or project director." Again—

RW: Who didn't?

AH: That's what I would say. I mean his name was best but a lot of people considered it the worst. "I'd been a general troublemaker and had tried to subvert W.R.A. policies." I suppose in so far as you are listening to what other people are saying and writing these things down, there you certainly are a troublemaker. Especially since you had your eye towards posterity rather than the next day. "I was by temperament an anarchist"—and I don't even know where this other stuff is coming. It says, "My mother had been abused by members of the Los Angeles police force." What's that about?

AH: I remember a conversation with some of the administrators at a party in which I had said that I was angry that my mother had been pulled out of the house for something or another, and that one of the persons there listening said, "Well, you don't have any respect for law"—I forget who it is. They knew that I was angry at a policeman for abusing my mother and interpreted that as me having no respect for the law, which is not so.

AH: You come across in the correspondence and in different people's accounts as a free spirit at that time.

RW: Yeah.

AH: As a person who's very outspoken, who told jokes, sang songs, did a number of things. I can see—if somebody wanted to pin this on you, that there is correspondence with general behavioral sort of things. Then the last thing, you even say that you did this, "I had communicated with the Department of Justice." Now why would Dorothy Thomas believe all these things? How did she act to you when you came back to Berkeley? You say here, "Doctor Thomas did not pay much heed to these accusations as far as you can remember. Her attitude was that if she made any fuss about my expulsion it might create a scandal." Now that sort of thing—I'd forgotten—now that seems to make some sense. Does that continue on through why she didn't want you to be too much involved in the book?

RW: I think that is a very intelligent hypothesis, the possibility that someone would come forward and denounce me and the book because of the things that—the awful kind of person I was. That’s also born out now in the last few years when several Japanese have written the most scathing denunciations of me.

AH: So, you’re talking about the Violet de Christoforo thing and that—Violet de Christo—Matsuda?

RW: It’s Suzuki.

AH: Yeah, but then this Violet de Christoforo has written this long sort of—

RW: Oh, yes. de Christoforo —

AH: At the time, in a sense what Dorothy Thomas was afraid of was that the Suzuki, de Christoforo types of things might have been forthcoming. At that time she was afraid, not that this was going to happen forty years from now—

RW: Yes, but this is just my guess.

AH: Okay, and so what she wanted to do was to not have this project of hers smeared by some kind of guilt by association with this anarchist, you know.

RW: Yes.

AH: Okay, so in a sense—

RW: I think that’s a sensible way to look at it.

AH: So, she [gave you a] low profiled but then taking this a step further, she did it also because it fit into some ulterior motives that she had too. There was a happy circumstance here in that she didn’t want you two implicated in this thing for fear that it would sink the whole JERS ship. On the other hand, it also gives her a higher profile in terms of her publication. You had once said in a letter to me that you had always felt that just as her husband W.I. Thomas had written the *Polish Peasant* with a Polish sociologist, she was in a sense replicating this situation with another group, only this time working [with] the Japanese Richard Nishimoto. It seems like there’s some pragmatic reasons but there’s also some pernicious kinds of reasons at work in her choice. Is that putting words in your mouth, or not?

RW: What you said so far sounds very sensible to me and that it was not that she disliked, but that she did this for her own safety. That would be the way I feel. I may be wrong, but this is the way I think about it.

AH: What was your relationship like with her right after you got pulled out of Tule Lake. You were around for a while after that, what was it like? Were you able to socialize with her?

RW: Well, we didn't see each other very much. She seemed not to want to talk to me about it and I didn't have—I was writing and working on—I'm not sure just what—maybe reports. I might come to the office and worked very hard, but she wasn't friendly but she wasn't ultimately unfriendly either. I just didn't think much of it.

AH: When did you get the bomb dropped on you that your work wasn't up to snuff and therefore you would not be a co-author?

RW: That wasn't until much later; until just before the book was published. That was quiet a good deal later and I was in Chicago at that time.

AH: Where were you? The book was published in 1946, where you already in Chicago by then?

RW: Yeah, I didn't stay at Berkeley very long after coming back because I got a fellowship to Chicago.

AH: Did you get correspondence from Dorothy Thomas that informed you that you would not get co-authorship and that she found your work inadequate? How do you draw this—I mean where is this coming from?

RW: That letter came to me as I said just a few weeks before the book was published.

AH: Do you have a copy of the letter?

RW: No, I didn't save any.

AH: Okay, because that was kind of a telling piece of evidence there wasn't it?

RW: Mmhm.

AH: What did she say in the letter? I don't see how she can tell you your work is not up to snuff when she turns around—and anybody who looks at your reports and everything—your field notes and everything, and looks at this book.

RW: And that three quarters of the material that's quoted comes from my work.

AH: So, you don't have to be involved in a conspiracy theory to believe that Dorothy Thomas purposely kept your field notes from being put at the Bancroft. Some people can say she kept them from being there because she didn't want to run the chance of getting sued. That you had put a lot of things in there that could have caused—but that could be true of a lot of the other stuff that was put in by other people.

RW: I finally had them re-typed and they are given to Bancroft now.

AH: And now they have them.

RW: They have them.

AH: Did you have any more contact with Dorothy Thomas after you went to Chicago after that letter?

RW: No.

AH: Not at all? You never corresponded with her? Did you ever consider taking legal action?

RW: No, that never occurred to me. I just felt angry and that she hadn't treated me properly and justly. I disliked her because of it, but that was all. I didn't dream of taking legal action. I was very busy about that time in Chicago, a lot of interesting things, so why bother with this?

AH: Well, she did have a lot of problems with the other person that went to Chicago, Morton Grodzins. He fought it.

RW: Well, he did, but he was more experienced than I was. I really wasn't interested in fighting it, it didn't occur to me. (recorder being adjusted) I certainly think I got my returns in writing a book that has now been popular and much more read than *The Spoilage*. (laughs)

AH: Did Robert Redfield who knew quite a bit about the evacuation—Because I know he came and visited some of the camps and was quite aware of what was going on. Actually I remember at Manzanar he came and talked with Togo Tanaka<sup>3</sup> and then. (phone rings)

(Pause in Recording)

RW: You see this didn't really—

AH: It never occurred to you?

RW: No.

AH: So, Robert Redfield never said anything to you? You never talked about this problem with him?

RW: I don't remember that I ever did, it's funny.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on Togo Tanaka request O.H. 1271

AH: You must have talked about the problem with your husband.

RW: Well, I wasn't married at that time.

AH: I mean over the years—later years.

RW: Yes, over the years and with many other people but interestingly, none of them ever said you ought to sue. (laughs)

AH: What kind of understanding did you have with Dorothy Thomas when you—or did you have an understanding? I mean she seems to have had a proprietary claim to the information, and I'm wondering what kind of free hand did you have to do what you wanted with it. For example, she was still alive when *Doing Fieldwork* came out with this stuff in there.

RW: See, I didn't know that.

AH: Well, she was alive till 1977.

RW: Yes, but it was only published in seventy-one I believe.

AH: But, you never heard any response or anything from that?

RW: No.

AH: Because Charles Kikuchi and James Sakoda continued to see her when she was back at the University of Pennsylvania. Everybody feels a little bit abused by Dorothy Thomas and in a lot of ways, she provided opportunities for people, but then somehow or other every one of them went sour.

RW: Well, I really feel sorry for the things she did.

AH: Do you think she was an unethical person? (pause) I mean it comes down to that really because it's stealing. Not only stealing your intellectual labor but—

RW: Well I think it was a very unfair thing to do and I suppose unethical, but it's not fair to do a thing like this.

AH: You are a fighter and you have come across in all of the stuff that you write as a fighter, it seems in this particular case you didn't fight. You have fought belatedly—I think in the 1980's once you found out you went ahead—see that was another thing, you didn't find out until too long ago that your field notes weren't at the Bancroft.

RW: Mmhm.



- AH: I mean it was one thing not to be given co-authorship, but then insult was added to injury; the field notes weren't there.
- RW: That does seem to me very improper that she would do that. But I got back at her so (laughs)—
- AH: The material is back in there (pause). Can I go back to Gila for a little bit after we've explored this? I was just too interested to let that go because it's just a festering kind of sore with me as well as some other people—not to speak of you—that somebody would do something like that. The reason it festers so much is that in a lot of the correspondence I read of Dorothy Thomas's, she doesn't seem to be a "dragon lady". She seems to be solicitous of the well-being of these younger people on the project. She goes out of her way to try to get housing for say Sakoda and his wife when they come back to Berkeley. She writes an enormous number of letters recommending people for graduate schools and seeming to intervene as a protector.
- RW: At the same time, could you see her as a scared person who was somehow frightened getting into any kind of trouble or difficulty, which uh—
- AH: See, I see your personality and Dorothy Thomas's as quite similar in the sense that—
- RW: (laughs)
- AH: Well I don't mean that as an insult, I mean as you read correspondence it seemed that both of you had a lot of not only mental toughness, but at the stage before this stuff comes out, it seems like you both have moral toughness. That you are both not devious people, that you are direct people, and that you're angered by injustices and applaud perspicacious scholarship and things that hit the mark. Your styles are different in the sense that you're more in the field and she's sorting statistics and writing. She's more of an armchair type of person. But, there's a mesh between the types, and all of a sudden she comes out here as kind of moral leper. The only thing I can think of that adds to the situation is that she was herself embattled at the very time. She was going through this while trying to establish something that Berkeley belatedly ended up getting, which was a department of sociology, and she was losing that battle. She was losing not only to the anthropologists but to the social institutions department at Berkeley, so she had institutional reasons. Then, the other thing might have been the business of laboring in the back shadow of W.I. Thomas; she had to make her mark. That somehow or other she overreached herself now and she got too avaricious, too greedy, too willing to cut moral corners. It seems that way to me, but I'm just not sure about it.
- RW: Well, I wasn't there when it happened. What you say sounds very likely to me. It's hard to figure out why somebody would do something like this unless they were scared, and as you say didn't have the guts to stand up to a possibly courageous woman. Well, she was not courageous when she took these things out or when she

didn't put my field notes in there. That field note thing is a real scandal I think, to not put a thing as valuable as those notes in the library.

AH: When did you deposit the notes at Bancroft?

RW: About three or four years ago I went through them all so that they could be read by a typist because the papers were old. I also put in a few notes that cleared up things.

AH: Did you put the copies of your oral histories that you did?

RW: No, I did those after.

AH: What did you do with those oral histories?

RW: I kept them and I haven't decided to publish them because several Japanese friends of mine have pointed out how a number of the people who talked to me would be very distressed if these were published and people could identify them as people who had been at Tule Lake. I'm not going to do the Japanese any more harm.

AH So just to respect their sensitivities—

RW: Especially since I did publish a little article with the victims in Montana.

AH: The Montana? When you were at Gila, it seemed like one of the things you wanted to do more than anything else was to get out of Gila. It just seemed like that was a depressing place and not very much was happening. If it was depressing and yet something was happening it could have compensated for the depression. But it seemed to me that you reached a point where there was relative stasis in the camp, and the one thing that was to be done was to sort out the segregees from the other ones, and you covered that in the reports that you wrote. Registration had been enacted several months before that, some of the alleged trouble makers had been swooped down upon by the authorities and yanked out of camp and sent to Moab. They were getting ready to go to Tule Lake and what you had was a—

RW: Well, the only thing that I had that was pleasant—you were quite right—was the social relationships with the family of—(phone rings)

AH: It's annoying if you get over there—

RW: (phone conversation) Hello? Yes, I did call about that. Did you have any suggestions? Would you hold on a minute till I explain? This is something important that I need somebody to—

AH: Sure, yeah.

(Pause in Recording)

- AH: Anyway, a while back we were talking about your going to Gila and not being adequately prepared for it by Dorothy Thomas.
- RW: Well, to be fair, it was the kind of situation where no one could prepare you. It was so complex and different than any ordinary kind of field trip.
- AH: Except that Charlie Kikuchi had been keeping a journal and sending it to Giannini Hall at Berkeley where they had the offices. It was a diary of every day occurrences, which would have given you a sense of what life in one of those camps was like. Spencer had been there for a year and he had written numerous reports on different dimensions of Gila that could have provided you with some kind of orientation, some kind of assistance. He could have sat down with you and spent a number of hours talking to you about the situation there so that you didn't have to re-invent the wheel. It wasn't like they had not had somebody in Gila for a while. The one type of preparation that seems to have been done—and I have these letters; they're the ones that I was alluding to before. Dorothy Thomas sent people letters saying that you were going to come, Spencer sent letters of introduction on your behalf, so when you went down, there were some people who had known you. Now of course Spencer himself was something like *persona non grata* down there. The Japanese evacuation and resettlement project was *personae non grata* now at Gila too. In fact, Bennet didn't want anybody meddling in to his bailey wick down there, so there were limits to what could have been done in the way of preparing you. Maybe things have gotten foggy over the years, but it doesn't seem from talking to Spencer or talking to you or looking at the records that an adequate—even allowing for the war, and for the unprecedented and the imponderables—it still doesn't seem as if there was suitable preparation to send particularly a young graduate student. Young in terms of how much course work and field work you completed, it seems that they would have bent over backwards to try to make this situation understandable to you, and they didn't.
- You got down there and you felt quite miserable as you have communicated in *Doing Fieldwork*. [You were] so miserable that you ate yourself into thirty extra pounds and cried numerous times as you describe it. Then you had letters back from Dorothy Thomas—we don't know where those are, but some day they'll surface—telling you that you're not giving her the kind of things [she wants]. By the time you came down there the sort of things that she wanted had to do with something that you later on became [an] expert at, and that was not traditional anthropological ethnographic work, but to be—as she used the term later on—a foreign correspondent who was on top of the action as it was breaking. She wanted you not just to be on top of it as a journalist in a superficial way, but she wanted you to gain an understanding of the evolving culture and social structure, which was very fluid. I think you did get into that after the tears were shed and you got your bearings. I'd like to hear a little bit more about how you managed to feel a little bit at home at Gila. I don't think you ever did really feel too much at home, but enough so that when you went to Tule Lake a lot of your contacts were people who had been at Gila whose family or friends you might have met and they gave you names. When you took those fore's to Tule Lake you made instant contact with people who had been “Gilans” at one time or another. Tell me a little bit about the Gila situation. Where did you live?

[02:40:32.24]

RW: The important thing was making good social contacts with people; I think I did a good job explaining that when I wrote my book. The first one I believe was a man who invited me to meet his family. He would teach me Japanese and he was very pleased with how I was learning. I think he suggested a couple of people for me to see; that's how things transpired. I took notes and worked hard while having pleasant visits with people. Near the end of my stay at Gila, I met this older man who I think printed at one of the Japanese organizations in the camp. He loved to talk to me about virtually anything and he also liked to drink, he was the one who gave me this liquid—liquor he'd made which turned my taste like then I got—I recompensed by—to bring liquor into the camp was against the rules.

AH: Because it was on an Indian reservation.

RW: Pardon me?

AH: Gila was on a reservation.

RW: Yeah, it was on a reservation.

AH: It was Pima Maricopa Indian land, mmhm.

RW: But I managed to smuggle in a bottle of vodka for him (laughs) and he was very happy. It was the human contact—which of course I worked very hard in talking—that made me feel sorry to leave these folks. They helped me a lot and the whole experience made it much easier for me to work in Tule Lake.

AH: Did you stay by yourself at Gila? Or were you rooming with a teacher? I know you did have some roommates when you were at Tule Lake on occasion.

RW: Yeah, at Gila for just a month or so I was put into an employee barrack and they did have a little bit of air conditioning, it wasn't super but it helped a little. But then they shifted me to a small place in the Japanese section, so I was living just as the Japanese lived, which was very bare and impossible. The heat was terrible and there was no way at all to keep the room from getting like an oven.

AH: What was he doing when he put you out there? Here's a guy whose major policy effort was in the direction of non-fraternization, He respected the color line and he wanted everybody on that project to respect it, and yet he sends you out to live with the internees. Was he making some sort of statement here?

RW: No, I'm sure it wasn't that. I think it was just saving money by giving my room to another employee. I could go and live out in the dessert as far as he was concerned.

- AH: So he didn't care. Tell me about Bennet, when you met him what was your understanding with him?
- RW: I had few meetings with him. I think I even mention it; he just didn't want to see me I guess.
- AH: How did he strike you as a person? Other people have described him as pompous, uneducated and racist.
- RW: I would agree. (laughs) He didn't strike me as a person worth—but as I said, I had very few contacts with him personally.
- AH: So far as you found out things about him through Gordon Brown, what did you find out? Did Brown have his ear? The goals of the best community analysts as applied anthropologists were to try to at least get there opinion heard by the administrator and to influence policy. Did Brown manage to influence Bennet? Did he get Bennet's ear?
- RW: From my memory, there wasn't much going on at the time I was there. I know he did—when this boy was shot he did try to influence and he may have got the other people to support and stand with him. Brown was a very intelligent and able man. But it wouldn't have been seemly for an employee to talk to me about that, you know. I wouldn't expect him to do that.
- AH: So that wasn't something he would have shared with you?
- RW: No.
- AH: I know you had some contact with this guy Hugo Walter who was in charge of the social welfare at the camp.
- RW: At Gila?
- AH: Yeah, I think he was a former Lutheran minister. Some people said that he in a sense became the strongest person in the camp next to Bennet. That even though Bennet didn't like some of the things that Walter stood for, he was a fan of him and he also needed his judgement. Do you recall him at all?
- RW: I do recall him, but nothing specific. But there was a man like that.
- AH: Do you recall any of the other administrators at Gila that you had to deal with? There was Lou Hoffman—
- RW: Yeah, there were quite a number but I virtually never even saw them because I was living out there in the Japanese center and eating with the Japanese.
- AH: So you didn't co-mingle?

RW: I didn't co-mingle with any other people except the Browns.

AH: For example, in reading your field notes that you sent me on Tule Lake, I got the feeling that you befriended a number of Caucasians there—

RW: Oh yes, yes.

AH: Teachers, and some people who were—well you made wide contacts. But it seemed like you even did socializing there, that you would go over—sometimes play cards or drink, and there was lots of that in those camps.

RW: Yeah, and we would have parties together.

AH: But you didn't do that at Gila though.

RW: I didn't do that at Gila.

AH: Were you preternaturally shy or something? Or were you just so absorbed with trying to find out how to be a field worker?

RW: Well nobody invited me. (stammers) I didn't have much contact with these people. It's an interesting thing I never thought of, because I became friendly with so many people in Tule Lake.

AH: You became very close friends with Paul Robertson at Tule Lake.

RW: He was a fine man. Then there were other very nice people, we would get together at parties, and sing songs and drink (laughs) at night.

AH: Again, let me try to hypothesize some things here—read between the lines, because a lot of your analysis in *Doing Fieldwork* about Gila has to do with your personal anguish or angst of just trying to find out what in the heck you were supposed to do. You put it here, "the torturous first stages of fieldwork, trying to get grounded." The second stage must have been trying to understand something about these people who you were supposedly (laugh) going to interpret.

RW: Well, I did accomplish that by going around interviewing people and—

AH: Right, on the subject.

RW: With some of them we became moderately friendly and pleasant.

AH: You haven't emphasized much about your—I mean everybody who thinks about you thinks about you largely in terms of Tule Lake. The things that you have written; the accent has fallen on Tule Lake in everything Gila was still important for you in a lot of ways. It seems to me—kind of a dress rehearsal of sorts for Tule Lake.

- RW: In many complicated ways, it prepared me to do a much better job at Tule Lake.
- AH: So that stage was your apprenticeship: that period at—
- RW: Yes, yes it was.
- AH: You got to know Japanese American culture a bit. You got a chance to learn how to be a fieldworker a little bit by running down informants—
- RW: Oh very much, yes. I learned how to behave as a field worker with the Japanese.
- AH: You learned how to tolerate stressful field conditions, and not just climate, but even though they were not going through any particular throws of a policy at that time, still that segregation must have been agonizing for a lot of people.
- RW: Yes.
- AH: And having to be separated from friends—
- RW: Oh yeah it was terrible. I attended the Baylor track, when the people got on the train to be taken away and the others, people cried. I don't know if I can even remember it because it was very sad.
- AH: You mentioned a little bit in your book just when they were leaving—maybe not your book—it reports that you wrote about it. But actually that prepares you in another way, working with the segregees at Gila, following their odyssey into Tule Lake. Some of your contacts preceded you. Actually, the quote on quote "problems" preceded you—
- RW: I told you who after my first visit how these people whom I had known, how they served special treats at the meal. I knew they must've paid a lot to get these fancy cookies or even a cake as a celebration that I had visited them.
- AH: Well, you carried some things over a lot of times that they had made for their other family members too, which was nice. Sometimes you carried pickled vegetables and things like that. Did you have any chance at all when you were in—and this probably has a lot to do with the differences between gender and opportunities in things because Spencer went to a lot of these different towns around there; Casa Grande, Coolidge and everything. Did you ever do that? So you never saw those other places?
- RW: No.
- AH: Except to take the train home or something like that?
- RW: Yeah, all I ever went to was—I forget that major city—

AH: Phoenix?

RW: Phoenix!—I'd go to Phoenix and take a train to Berkeley if I had to.

AH: Can you tell me a little bit about how Gila has sedimented in your mind over the years? When you think back about Gila—I've just been there twice, and both times I felt a tremendous dead weight of oppression. There weren't human beings to work with that would help offset the depression of just the heat and just the climatological things. But you had not only heat, you had these other conditions where you had people there and stuff too. When you think back about Gila what kinds of things most vividly stand out?

I mean for some people it's the red tile roofs, or the tarantulas, or the dysentery. What are the things that mean Gila to you? (long pause) What I'm thinking about is the way you describe Kansas when we were off tape. Whenever you spent time at Lawrence you had a real nice image of a campus community and the university town. What do you have in the way of analogous kinds of feelings about Gila?

RW: Well, it was a very uncomfortable place to live to say the least. I still have very happy memories about the relationships I had with the first people who really helped me. I even kept up correspondence with some for many years; Mr. Tochikawa, Mr. Odon and others.

AH: What about the desert itself, has that continued to haunt you? Do you ever dream for instance about Gila, about the desert? I mean I walked around the other night with the moon so beautiful and the stars and everything else. I thought gee, I wonder if that was something that you ever remembered too; aside from the barbed wire and the other things.

RW: Well I remember the desert, but it's not the kind of place I particularly warmed up to. (laughs)

AH: So, desert scenery is not something that—

RW: Desert scenery is something I don't particularly like.

AH: Okay, so you don't find it peaceful in its sparseness—

RW: No, and I think I used to watch a T.V. program about animals and birds in the desert and how well they get on out there I like to see that, put it this way, I don't actually hate the desert, but it's not a nice place to be in my way of thinking

AH: Okay, I think we just wound down this tape.

(Pause in Recording)



AH: Now, everything seems to be in good order because there was a little bit of a technical problem. In the last section you were talking about Joe Kurihara, which is extremely important for you to talk about. Could we try to go back and reconstitute that? What were you saying about Joe Kurihara and your relationship with him at Tule Lake?

RW: Well, he was always very courteous and frank and in a sense, not quite Japanese. Then there were a number of incidents—this shows how I think of him—that I have never forgotten. One was when this young man was shot by a soldier and everyone was terribly upset. I visited people, then and I visited Kurihara, and he told me he heard a hospital and then he began to cry and he said, “Sometimes I wonder if there is a God.” I was very moved by this—it was a dreadful situation. He was again very helpful in recommending that I call and see if I could interview Lester Ouchida and Mr. um—I can't off hand remember (stammers). But Ouchida was the covert leader of a very rough gang of young men. The other gentleman was a member of a particular Japanese sect, which I've got in my field notes. He was very human and saintly and very pleasant; he just talked very openly. I went to see him quite a number of times, though during difficult times in the center, he asked me to come in—there was a back way so that people wouldn't see me coming. But Mr. Fia on the other hand was very sort of—I would say distant. And [wondered] what was I doing here, and not particularly polite. His room was decorated with the Japanese warlike pictures and decorations, so I only visited him a couple of times.

AH: I think you had mentioned that he had a body guard—

RW: Later he had body guards, yes. That's right! Maybe it was even the first time, there were these strong young lads standing in front.

AH: Yeah, I think you did say that that first time he was very distant, but the next time you went to talk to him he was more forthcoming.

RW: Yes, a crisis began to develop with whether or not people should renounce their citizenship. I didn't go to see him, but he was probably very much in favor of it. The other gentlemen, Mr. Hirabayashi I think was his name—

AH: You're talking in pseudonyms, right?

RW: More or less. (laughs)

AH: Well, I know Mr. Ouchida was actually Ernest Wakayama—Kinzo Wakayama.

RW: He however was obviously speaking to young people urging them not to renounce their citizenship, saying your citizenship has already been taken away from you. With this going on it was not surprising that a few nights later, this person and a couple of friends in his church who were also urging young people not to renounce their citizenship were attacked by a gang and very brutally beaten. This made me so angry; I've never in my life been as angry as when I (laughed) heard about that.

AH: This was when you said you would physically like to go over and—

RW: Yes, and it was when I was talking with Mr. Kurihara about this, that I said I feel like going over and beaten up Kurihara.

AH: Ouchida.

RW: Ouchida—myself. He said calmly and pleasantly, with your great strength I think you could do it. But this is the kind of way he talked. I think as a matter of relief for his confinement, he did do a great deal of writing about what was going on. This was wise to do under the (stutters) of stress. One of the last talks I had with him, he told me that—this was rather late in my stay there—he told me that he had renounced his citizenship. He was almost crying as he did it, and I felt very badly about this. He was my friend and what he did was okay. Later, I was happy to hear that—in going to Japan, he did very well there. He developed a business of making bonsai plants. He did very nicely and this made me happy. It wasn't until several years later after I gave a lecture in San Francisco that one of the older Japanese came and told me that Kurihara had been killed here in America in an automobile accident.

AH: In the United States?

RW: He had come here for a visit.

AH: Oh, I see.

RW: He had an accident and it killed him, devastating—

AH: He wrote an interesting book about Bonsai that I saw a copy of.

RW: Yes, that (stammers) doesn't surprise me.

AH: Did you have any correspondence with him after the war while he was in Japan?

RW: No, I didn't. I had no idea where any of the people had gone in Japan and no way of corresponding with them.

AH: So your friendship with him affectively ended as far as contact.

RW: We weren't able to continue talking.

AH: One of the people I interviewed a few years ago was Harry Ueno who was the martyr at the Manzanar, the one who Kurihara got arrested for trying to negotiate with the administration. There was a shooting and a couple of people were killed, But Ueno and Kurihara made the rounds together, they were sent out of Manzanar and went to jails in Owen's Valley, then to Moab in Utah, and then Luke. Then, they came to Tule Lake and were put in the stockade for a short while when they got there. After, they

were released to the camp. Ueno stayed out of camp politics as did Kurihara. But I think that Kurihara was more on top of camp politics as you describe it in particular.

RW: Yes, he knew what was going on all the time.

AH: When I asked Ueno “Do you remember Rosalie Hankey she was an anthropologist who used to talk a lot to your friend Joe Kurihara” He said he remembered you coming to talk with Kurihara, but that he doesn't recall ever meeting you. You don't mention him in there either, so.

RW: No, Kurihara never mentioned him as someone to talk to, but—two people who I—Kurihara may have suggested that I talk to Mr. Tachibana. That is his real name; he was one of the most significant and respected leaders of the (stammers) back to Japan—

AH: Re-segregationist movement?

RW: Yes, re-segregationist movement and in my opinion, relatively moral and not one to (stammers)—to urge people to kill the enemies. He was also well educated and very much a gentlemen.

AH: This was Tachibana, right?

RW: Yes.

AH: One of the people I think you had a lot of encounters with at Tule Lake and who introduced you to a number of the people who you ended up having as key informants was actually an administrator. He was someone who I interviewed a couple of years ago in Carmichael, California outside of Sacramento; he's now in a rest home. He and his wife just moved into it, it's a home where they are free to come and go but they have certain things taken care of. I'm speaking of Paul Robertson.

RW: Oh, yes.

AH: Paul Robertson had been the director of the Leupp camp and then he had come over to Tule Lake as the assistant project director. When he came over, he was a little bit annoyed to find that the people from Leupp who he had pretty well written a clean bill of health for, were slammed in to the stockade by Best. Best had them stay there for varying amounts of times, but a lot of them were released within a very short while; a week or so. But Robertson met you during one of your visits over to Tule Lake when you were still at Gila, and he continued to supply you with insider information and leads. Could you tell me a little bit about your impressions of Paul Robertson? What he was like as a person, and what's the nature of your relationship?

- RW: There is nobody in my life before that I respect as much as Robertson. He was a member of the Friend's society, and the first time I came to Tule Lake and he suggested I get a policeman to drive me around instead of a soldier.
- AH: Right, and just a plane clothed policemen.
- RW: Yes, and he was very helpful in suggesting—when I began to interview people, perhaps I would do well to interview some of the people who were—he called it the underground. These were the persons who had been the most trouble makers and so on. (laughs) He even gave me a couple of names to talk to. Yeah, I would have to look in my book to know who, but one of those was Mrs. Tuchikawa; that's her real name.
- AH: Her real name is Matsuda, the pseudonym that you use is Tuchikawa.
- RW: Yeah, I guess you're right. Matsuda, so that's how I had the first contact with her. Then, during the rest of the time I was there when things would be very bad, Robertson was very courageous in a speaking up if Mr. Best was doing something he thought was improper. I can't think of more specific things right now, but he worked very hard to keep the people as comfortable as he possibly could in these circumstances. I remember some of the young men whom I interviewed telling me that when they were in Leupp Robertson, before he would leave to go to the store, would come ask if he could get them anything.
- AH: So he was a person who you thought was religious in an enlarged sense.
- RW: Yes, I admired him and I trusted him very much. If I had been in any serious trouble, I would have gone to him.
- AH: As opposed to any other administrator at Tule Lake?
- RW: Yes, yes.
- AH: Did you maintain contact with Robertson at all over these years? I don't believe I asked him that.
- RW: No, I didn't but I kind of wished—It was hard to after I had to leave that way where to find him (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_. I really would have liked to have written to him.
- AH: Well I'll send you a copy of the published interview I did with him in 1987. I regret one thing and that is that I had forgotten from reading your field notes in the early eighties that you had known Robertson and therefore, it's not a topic that I pursued. It wasn't until I was preparing for this interview and re-reading all of the hundreds of pages that I realized how much Robertson figured in your life at Tule Lake.
- RW: Yes, he was a very great help to me.

AH: He was a great help to you not just for personal solace, or introducing you to people that otherwise might have been suspicious of you, but he also gave you a sense of what the administration was thinking. He gave you access to the administration that you had lacked when you were at Gila. Is that correct?

RW: Yes, yes.

AH: If it hadn't of been for Robertson, you wouldn't have had audiences with Best or even one time with Dillon Meyer when he visited the project.

RW: At Tule Lake I was friends with a number of rather important people on the staff, not at this rank. One of the project lawyers at the end—his wife and I were good friends and they would come to parties with the man who was the head of the co-op. There was a real group of six that would have these evening get-togethers. We would talk, drink, and sing songs.

AH: At Tule Lake.

RW: Yes.

AH: Right. What about George Yamashiro and his wife Sally? You gave them the pseudonym of Wakida. George Yamashiro before your time at Gila had been very prominent as the head of the Sannanon the Kibei group in the Butte camp. The Butte camp Kibei group pretty much controlled the Kibei group in the Canal camp. But he had just practically taken over the recreation in Gila. He could pretty much determine how many people were put on salary and what kind of events would be emphasized for the Japanese. But George Yamashiro was picked up at the February round up by the FBI and sent to Moab. Then he went from Moab to Leupp, and at Leupp he of course—Paul Robertson. In fact, Robertson as you mention in some of your writings, actually personally accompanied Yamashiro when he went back to Gila to get married to Sally. When he was back there, there was a strike and they blamed it on Yamashiro; he was booted out and sent back to Leupp. Then he winds up at Tule Lake, and at Tule Lake his role is somewhat different than it had been at Gila. He became a very important informant of yours as did his wife Sally. Maybe you can tell me a little bit about him.

RW: Well, he was very friendly and he would always give me information that was helpful and his wife—many of the Japanese wives wouldn't talk to me, but she would. I liked her very much we talked a great deal. I remember when things got so tense (stammers) he said he was interested with working in sports and in baseball. And I at the time when I was talking to him I remember him saying (stammers) if you speak for the administration, you get called an Enu and if you speak for the uh—

AH: The internees?

RW: Yeah, (stammers) with internees—or (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ you get put in a stockade, so I'm going to play baseball.

- AH: And he did. but he still seemed to be a person who counted for something at Tule Lake even though he was on the sidelines of so to speak.
- RW: Yes, yes he was very much respected and then finally when they were taking the people out of camp whom they were going to deport and—the mass—what do you call it?
- AH: To the internment centers?
- RW: Taking people into an internment center because of supposed uh—
- AH: Pro Japanese—super patriotic.
- RW: Yes, yes this was a Department of Justice decision. Then to my horror, I went to visit Sally, his wife and she said they had taken George and they were going to send him away. Then, I did something that was supposed to be very improper for anthropologists. I went to the project lawyer and explained that I thought this was very wrong, that George had done nothing meriting internment, and something should be done about it. He let George go, and I think I was there when he came in. His wife ran and hugged him and it was the most wonderful thing.
- AH: There's a little bit of a conflict that I've read in these things and maybe you can help me out on it, there's such a welter of stuff that consequently it's difficult to keep straight. But at—one point it seems as though the person that you had interceded on behalf of was not Yamashiro, but Yamashiro's friend. Yamashiro had a friend who was—I think you give the name Abo who was at variance with these other re-segregationist who were going to be sent to the internment camp. He was going to be swept up with them, and if he went there his life was going to be in danger. Yamashiro was very upset because of the prospect of Abo going and so you interceded, and as it turned out, Abo did not go with the rest of them. But in *Doing Fieldwork* it comes out that you were interceding on behalf of Yamashiro. I'm just wondering if you can remember which it was.
- RW: I can remember him talking about Abo sometimes, but I did not intercede for him. This was such a rare thing for me; the only time that I really broke the law in this respect was for Yamashiro.
- AH: Who you interceded for?
- RW: Mmhm.
- AH: Yamashiro was a person who you put into a category along with Joe Kurihara as somebody who was very interested in political developments, but was not himself a political actor. It seems to me that is they type of person for whom you had a penchant and felt the most affinity; somebody who was not afraid to stand up for principles. I mean Kurihara had been involved at Manzanar. He stood up and said if

you're going to call me a Jap, I'm going to be a hundred percent, two hundred percent Jap; I'm going to be a super Jap. He got the JCL mad and got the authorities all boiled over, and of course he had been a very patriotic American; he had been in World War I and everything. But by the time he get to Tule Lake he had already made an agreement with Best and probably Robertson that he was going to stay out of politics, and that he was going to study the Japanese language. He was going to study the culture and society because he had been brought up in Hawaii and came to the mainland, and he needed to learn this in order to be able to make his way in Japan. But he was committed to the idea that what America had done to the Japanese Americans was wrong and that his destiny lay in Japan. Yamashiro made the same kind of determination when he was at Gila. Increasingly the developments at Gila caused him to be critical of the administration. His criticism caused him to be branded as a troublemaker and for undesigned reasons, he was swept off to Moab and Leupp as we've described. He comes to Tule Lake and he apparently made a deal that he was not going to get involved in politics; he was going to prepare himself for Japan. Hence, he was going to play baseball when he was there. Yet, the two of them constantly knew what was going on and were targets at different times of groups who felt they were not actively involved enough. I'm sure at any point you felt not only that your life could be in danger, but more importantly from your perspective at the time both of their lives could have been in danger because they spoke out.

RW: The major important point it would make was that men with a view like this [make] magnificent respondents in interviewing because they know what's going on, they have balanced views, and they'll talk to you for a long time explaining everything to you. They were in danger and at times I was even told I was in danger. Once after Toby's murder, I left for a couple of weeks because Kurihara told me that the radicals had said that a White person was going to be next. But there was a kind of—the Japanese had this in the medieval times. They had a sense of honor and decency in doing these things even at the risk of their life. I wasn't afraid I'd get killed.

AH: And they weren't either.

RW: No.

AH: So there was a bond.

RW: Yes.

AH: As I read all your material I get so absorbed in it and in the different personalities. Having read stuff by Yamashiro and also by Kurihara, it resonates in a deeper way than it might otherwise. But I'm trying to think about this, and I don't want to put words in your mouth so this is just a hypothesis I'm running past you and I want you to react to it. It seems to me that when you say that people like this make excellent informants, that that's a true statement. I also think it perhaps is overly clinical in the sense that it must go beyond the fact that they provided you with information.

RW: Oh yes, yes.

AH: Yes, but when I think about the deeper things that it provided you with, I think of these things. These people were decent people who had been treated indecently and had attributed to them all kinds of base motives and behavior et cetera, which you sense was unjust and you were mad as hell at the United States government who had established this evacuation policy.

RW: Well yeah, I wouldn't say I was against the government of the country, I was against the people in Washington—the administrators who were responsible for this, you see. I was still an American.

AH: But I think Kurihara and Yamashiro were also Americans.

RW: Yes.

AH: I think that they were mad not at the American people, they were mad at the policy makers and that portion of the American public that underwrite the policy makers.

RW: Yes, yes.

AH: So their indignation was a shared one with you?

RW: Yes.

AH: That's one side of it, but they also shared another indignation against the extremist, the people who were in political—ideological strait jackets, who were hell bent upon being just as punitive as the U.S. government had been. These marginal figures—marginal not just by the fact that they weren't administrative lackeys or political henchmen, but marginal because of their temperament—they had the capacity for being able to do what in a strange kind of way a good fieldworker does. They understand a situation, are involved with it, yet they do not get so caught up that they lose perspective. When you talk about Kurihara being a mentor for you, he was a mentor for you in how to conduct field research as well as how to comport oneself as a human being in a time of—crisis and stress. Now I don't want to put words in your mouth—

RW: No, I agree. It's a profound way of expressing it, I hadn't thought of it but I quite agree. There's a process of learning how to do something and they were very much helpful in increasing my ability and skill as a field worker. Gaining an understanding of the situation going on, which at earlier times at Tule Lake I didn't have. You've made a fine statement.

AH: Robertson fits in that category too because although he was an administrator implicated in the decisions of the policy makers played a role which suggested to you that he wasn't comfortable in this, it was never just a job for him. George Koritami



who was very involved in the political developments of Tule Lake before you had arrived there, in fact had been thrown into the stockade.

RW: You're thinking of Kuratomi.

AH: Kuratomi, yeah. George Kuratomi, uh—Dishakai Head.

RW: Diahyo Sha Kai.

AH: Yeah, Diahyo Sha Kai head. He had been interned or placed in the stockade by the time you had arrived there. I guess he was still there by the time you got there, but later on became as did his wife, trusted informants of yours.

RW: Yes.

AH: I think what he represented became so important to you that your dissertation explores the role of not just him as a leader of a democratic movement, but a democratic movement itself and how it can be corrupted and vulgarized into an authoritarian sort of movement. You compared this with what had happened in Weimar, Germany. But tell me a little bit about Koratomi—is it Kuratomi?

RW: Kuratomi.

AH: Kuratomi, yes.

RW: Well, I think I met his wife before (stammers) I met him; he was still in the stockade. I didn't see her very often, but she had a baby and she told me this story—which I think is in the fieldwork—but she took the baby to the stockade to show the baby to her husband. She was a very likeable person; I was very fond of her. Then when I talked to Kuratomi I was impressed with him, he was a very intelligent man and he spoke a little bit more like an American intellectual than the Japanese. He was intelligent and trying to be of assistance to people and he helped me a great deal in clearing up points about what had happened earlier in Tule Lake when I wasn't there. I'm referring to the period of the strike, and he was an important spokesman for this democratic movement. (laughs)

AH: How do you pronounce that again?

RW: Diahyo Sha Kai, and my Japanese is pretty good. (laughs) Diahyo Sha Kai, see there are no accents in Japanese. He was very helpful in clearing things up for me. When the (stammers) super segregationists became really violent, he took part in a group that opposed them and managed it pretty successfully, which kind of quieted them and so I did correspond with him now and then and I interviewed his wife.

AH: In the early eighties, yes.

RW: Yes, he's died.

AH: She just died?

RW: No, he had died and I remember her telling me when I had talked to her about how well George had done in the community where they lived on the East Coast. The house was filled with plaques that he had attained.

AH: Oh yeah, I think they were in Pennsylvania.

RW: In Pennsylvania, that's right. He was a very able and charitable kind of man.

AH: Well actually, the few people we've talked about all did quite well, didn't they? Koriyama was successful in Japan, Yamashiro became the President of the Japanese Railway board, and Kuratomi becomes quite prominent in community affairs back in Pennsylvania.

RW: Yeah, they were all very intelligent people.

AH: I want to ask you one more question on this side, and then I want to get to the final couple of questions. I know you have some things that you need to do today.

RW: Yeah, I've got to go shopping and—stop about twelve o'clock if we can.

AH: Okay, in recent years since the hearings in 1981 there has been criticism directed at you—we eluded to this yesterday—on the part of a couple of people; namely an anthropology professor at the University of Nebraska, Omaha Peter Suzuki. Secondly, one of the people who you visited with on a fairly regular basis in Tule Lake who is now known as Violet de Christoforo; she was actually Matsuda in the time that she was at Tule Lake. Both of these people have leveled these criticisms, Violet de Christoforo is directed rather exclusively at you, Peter Suzuki's is aimed at social scientist and has paid particular attention in recent time to people in the evacuation and resettlement study, but before that he had—

RW: Gee, I didn't know that.

AH: Well he's written this article exclusively on the Japanese evacuation and resettlement study. Just before I came here there was a couple of letters to the editor that appeared in the *Hokubei Mainichi* in San Francisco. One, he mentioned that all people from the E. R. S. needed to provide an apology to the Japanese people for the role that they played. Shortly thereafter, he retracted what he had said and basically restricted it to you and also said in there that he was also withdrawing the name of his institution, that he had just indicated that as convenience for his location but was not implicating them in any of his judgements. Some people have surmised that somebody involved with the evacuation resettlement study had threatened a—lawsuit against Suzuki for

the comments and so he had made this retraction. But you still remain on the enemy list.

RW: Enemy—super enemy.

AH: I'd like to turn this tape off and start a new one, so I'll just give you a little bit of time to think about that, okay? Before we even discuss those because it's a three part thing, another person who early on had indirectly leveled criticism at you was somebody who you knew at Tule Lake who is also an anthropologist; uh Marvin Opler in his review of *The Spoilage*. Suzuki makes a lot of that review so I wanted to go into that.

(Pause in Recording)

AH: Okay, I think were on tape. Now it's bouncing along pretty nicely so I think we're picking up. Three people who have criticized you either indirectly or directly while at Tule Lake in assessment of your role were an anthropological cohort member at Tule Lake Marvin Opler, Peter Suzuki the anthropologist, and Violet de Christoforo, a former informant at Tule Lake. Let's first deal with Marvin Opler and your relationship with Opler at Tule Lake and then his criticism of *The Spoilage* and indirectly your fieldwork for *The Spoilage*.

RW: Well, I was on relatively friendly terms with Opler and early on we [would see] each other—he and his wife—rather frequently. They got kind of withdrawn and what I think should be taken into account here is that after the murder of [Yaozu] Hitomi, Opler never went into the center to do fieldwork anymore. I don't know if this is generally known he (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ from a few Japanese who worked for him on certain projects. He did not seriously study the political aspects of what was going on.

AH: Did he mention anything to you about the fact that he was forbidden to go into the compound?

RW: No, I don't see why he should be.

AH: Did he indicate that he was fearful he was going to be murdered?

RW: I really didn't talk to him about this because I was sort of surprised and I felt it would be kind of insulting to speak to him about why in the heck he never went in.

AH: Now he was still in Tule Lake after you left, right? In May of forty-five he was still around?

RW: Yes.

AH: So he might have gone in then but during the interval that you were there he did not. Is that what you're saying? From the time that Hitomi was murdered?

RW: Yes.

AH: Okay, and you had had a pretty good relationship with him and his wife up until that time? Or did you continue to have—

RW: No, they didn't invite me over after a while, and I had other friends so it didn't bother me.

AH: You must've thought about it a little bit, didn't you?

RW: I had no idea that he would make a strong criticism of *The Spoilage* or of my work there. I just didn't really (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_.

AH: Have you read his criticism was of your work?

RW: I haven't seen the criticism, I've read his reports and he leaves out a lot of the important violent and horrible things that happened; he doesn't mention them.

AH: He makes just the opposite criticism of you that you focus exclusively on that, but you leave out the rest.

RW: (Laughs) In a case where one could get murdered or beaten up, it was a lot safer to study as he did as a member studying Japanese customs and that kind of thing than to go out and study what was really going on in the camp, which was very difficult and also considerably dangerous at times.

AH: Suzuki feeds into this because he lauds what Opler did, and he sees Opler as one of the few people who did traditional ethnographic work. Whereas he felt that you optimized a general problem in that there was a deviation from standard anthropological practice and a preoccupation with focusing on political turmoil and factionalism; getting so caught up in the factionalism that you lost perspective.

RW: I remember this one. She herself comments that she was crazy; there's one place she says that. (laughs)

AH: Right, but well get to Suzuki soon. But your comments on Opler would be one that after a certain point he didn't run the risk that he should have run. He stayed on the other side of the boundary and what he worked on whether it was poetry, or whether it was sumo, it was less important at that particular juncture than—

RW: Well I wouldn't assess him that critically, if he wanted to do that, fine. But there's no reason to criticize me for doing something else.

AH: Okay, so you're being a relativist about that. I mean that was his choice and he—

RW: Yeah, and I think he was—(laughs) oh this is a nasty thing—I think he was scared.

AH: You were a professional anthropologist for many years after the war as well as Opler and his brother who was at Manzanar. You even sight some of Morris Opler's works on segregates quite favorably. You must've run across Opler at academic conferences over the years, didn't you?

RW: No.

AH: You never did? You had no contact with Opler?

RW: No.

AH: Did you have contact with his brother, Morris?

RW: No, after leaving Tule Lake—academically I worked in very different things, so there would be no reason for contact.

AH: So it would have only been at a general meeting of the American Anthropological Association.

RW: Maybe, I might [have] run into them. But no, there was no meeting or contact after.

AH: Marvin Opler went into psychological anthropology I believe.

RW: I didn't know that.

AH: Marvin died a few years back. I read the obituary that his brother wrote for him about ten years ago. But for a while you had a strange relationship with him in the sense that he was providing you with some data and you were not reciprocating. This became sort of a problem for you. Dorothy Thomas told you at Gila, do not give information to Gordon Brown. However nice it is to have a colleague, you're not to share information. She told the same thing to the other fieldworkers—

RW: (Inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ we seldom talked about what was going on in camp. Who says we did?

AH: Well—

RW: I don't mention it.

AH: Definitely in your field notes there were times when Opler's name comes up and he talks to you about things. He seems like he wants to share things, and you're almost embarrassed by the fact that he's willing to share stuff. But you could not provide reciprocity because you were explicitly told not to. He at first seemed put off by that, but later on I think he accommodated himself to it.

RW: (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ it was not a matter of anything that was going on, it was of a nature (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ people told me I could not tell the administration, which I never did. I was not an informer to any agent.

AH: Well Peter Suzuki's criticism of you, you've responded to it in extended writings. Recently his criticism has deepened and broadened partly because of a confluence with the criticism that's coming from Violet de Christoforo and from the person you gave the pseudonym of Kira too. He is still living in Japan, he's about a hundred years old now and his son is a professor at the University of Nevada, Reno. He's in the medical school there, and he has been spearheading a lot of the criticism. The criticism there is essentially on the part of Suzuki something that you've dealt with except for this last round about, the principle role that you played getting Kira to repatriate, renounce his citizenship, and to go to Japan. He has been there in Japan since 1946 and he testified at the hearings in the early part of the 1980's. In 1981 he came and testified, but the charge is that you had overlooked any of his past situation, had not realized that he'd filed suit against the government—he was a test case. That he had been mistreated when he was at Manzanar, that he had been roughed up at Tule Lake and that instead of trying to find out the sources of his situation you sort of operated in a historical vacuum and just treated him as though he were a pariah. Then you entrapped him into taking an action under duress, which has led too stress for not only him, but for his family. Violet de Christoforo's critique comes down to fairly much of the same thing, only she goes beyond that and I'll get into that in a second but let's first deal with Suzuki's criticism.

RW: Well it's twelve o'clock and I have to have lunch so I can go at two, but I'll go on for a few minutes more. I was really disgusted when I read these things and I wondered what the motive behind it was. I think that Suzuki wants to get a good reputation as someone who has attacked a person who's pictured the Japanese as evil and bad people He is going to get a fine reputation of having discredited (stammers) relocation studies. That's how I figured it; some of the statements he makes about me are so asinine. Anyone who wants to take it seriously should read my book and compare the references and see how unreliable and ridiculous it is.

AH: Frank Miyamoto has addressed some of the critiques and you've said that you haven't had a chance to read those, but perhaps it would be great if you did. Miyamoto says for example that Suzuki only uses evidence from Wakayama himself, and doesn't take corroborating evidence. Miyamoto says that he obviously had a point to prove, and therefore went after only the kind of evidence that would shore up his contention.

RW: Yes, yes.

AH: With respect to the political orientation of your fieldwork during the time that you were at Tule Lake, this seemed to be the direction that you were getting from your project head Dorothy Thomas. In fact, one of the reasons that you were sent to Tule Lake was to get this sort of information; so it wasn't as though you were acting independent of the directive of your project manager.

RW: I was sent not only to get these interviews, but to get an accurate history of what was going on.

AH: One of the things that you did a lot of, which I don't think comes across in things that are said about your work is the fact that a lot of your investigation was of a historical nature, and that you tried to figure out what had happened in November because there was a gap in that period in the study. They had had the observers there till February and then two of them left to go to Chicago. Sakoda stayed there, but Sakoda left in about September to go to Minidoka. November is when the incident occurred, and the only person who was there was somebody from the community analyst section, Marvin Opler. So one of the things you had to do was go there and fill a void in the studies main site, which was Tule Lake. I think if somebody reads your field notes they will see that you spent a lot of time reconstituting the historical situation.

RW: (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_

AH: Violet de Christoforo's comments have come recently in the form of an affidavit that she has signed and it's directed at you in a number of regards. She sees you as distorting a couple of things and luring her into a false sense of security on the grounds that you were trying to get the full story of the segregees. She believed she was a very vulnerable person at the time and that you took advantage of her vulnerability. The way you've characterized her has been character assassination, that you have used names for her that are easily transparent; anybody could figure out who it is that you were talking about. Over and beyond that, you've not only cast her in a role, but you've castigated her and made her into a nefarious figure that had power that no Japanese woman could have had in that particular context. I guess in short what she has said is that you had a vendetta against her, which led to the loss of her citizenship and the dignity of herself and her family. In short, she says you owe her and her family an enormous apology. That is the burden of her critique, and you've read it so you know where she's coming from. She goes beyond that to say that you used her in lieu of almost all other women at Tule Lake to represent the situation of women, which is a point which is easily I think um—

RW: (laughs) Oh yes, if you look at my field notes, I don't have a great many interviews with her. I doubt if I saw her more than four or five times.

AH: Before we wind this up, anybody would expect that when somebody interviews Rosalie Wax in 1990 that they would make sure to ask her reaction to this affidavit.

RW: It's strange to say this, but I really feel sorry for her. In the first incident I describe—when I knocked on the door she came out kind of holding this still child in front of her, and I—was—repelled at this. I thought shouldn't have been so critical because after all, her brother was in the stockade and she had a reason to be kind of scared that the police might come again. She just wasn't a very pleasant or agreeable person to talk to. Although there's a couple places she did talk at length about things going on with him. Her blaming all these agonizing experiences on me completely leaves out

- the fact that her husband was a very prominent member of the re-segregationist group and was considered so by the administration along with the—two or three, four other men. It was a big shock, I'm sure all this is recorded in the—
- AH: Affidavit? Oh, you mean in the field notes?
- RW: Not in my field notes, but probably in the governmental records where they would arrest people. They arrested several of the Toshinden people. Once, an investigation of—let me see—I think it was Hitomi murder. But (stammers) they released them all in a week or so.
- AH: And speaking of the affidavit, she acknowledges the fact that her husband was one of the re-segregationist leaders. But I think what she says is that you conflate her with her husband and don't draw distinctions. That you characterize her as Madam Chiang Kai-Shek as a person who—
- RW: Well, she wasn't very popular with other people and I mentioned that—but maybe I shouldn't have. But then (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ of her being sent to Japan and then (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_ this is definitely related to her husband's status as a Hoshiyama man.
- AH: She even had accusations in there that she gave you letters to mail and told you not to send them through the camp post office because it would be intercepted. You promised you would take it out of camp and mail it from one of the neighboring towns, Tule Lake or wherever. She has found the letter in the government file and she surmises that you took it and turned it over to the authorities. She also says that a lot of information that she gave you and only you in confidence later on turned up in the possession of the administration. That you were informing on her.
- RW: No way, no. She just wasn't important enough (inaudible) \_\_\_\_\_.
- AH: Just looking at your field notes in themselves, it seems that she is a person that you systematically didn't care for. Your characterization of her was not an attractive one. You can juxtapose that with most of the other people that you describe in there. The two people that you describe in the least attractive terms are the two people who became the bones of contention in these criticisms of you. One is Wakayama and the other is Matsuda. Were—there's not much time spent on characterizing her husband. He—doesn't—
- RW: I hardly ever saw him. I remember once he was in the house when I was talking to her, and he looked at her sternly and critically and then walked out right away.
- AH: This is a final question. As a fieldworker, you can't divest yourself—and you would be the first to acknowledge this, that you cannot divest yourself of a certain subjective things that are caught up in your own identity. One of them is your gender and another one would be your national heritage and culture. Certainly there were a lot of



people in the camp who were repudiating America after they felt they were repudiated by America. You didn't seem to have any feelings of ethical repugnancy towards them, yet when it comes to Wakayama and Matsuda there is this deeper kind of feeling that you seem to have. Had those two passed the boundaries of tolerance for you as an American? I mean in the sense that they were outrageously pro Japan in their behavior that—

RW: Not at all, no. I didn't feel angry at Wakayama, I just didn't think much of him because of the way he behaved toward me, which was unusually rude. He was not cruel but he just said that I was boring and that I should go away. It was not a matter of what was—when I heard that he was the leader of a gang that had beat up this old man that was my friend, this had nothing to do with his being Japanese, he had beaten up a Japanese [man].

AH: So, that was a human response?

RW: Yes.

AH: More importantly he had beaten up or you suspected he had beaten up somebody who you had liked and valued a lot.

RW: Yes, and I respected a great deal.

AH: Let's further explore the sources of your discontent with Mrs. Matsuda insofar as we—

RW: It wasn't particularly strong even. It's just that compared to the other women she had a very aggressive and dictatorial way of talking, even (though) sometimes she told me things that were moderately helpful. But it's hard to describe the scenario of a personality.

AH: Oh yeah, they rub you the wrong way.

RW: Uh-huh.

AH: You mentioned it just a second ago, but you had a certain distrust for a person who would shield themselves in danger with their child.

RW: Yeah.

AH: It seemed like a gratuitous bit of nastiness for me, when I read that. That suggested to me this chemical dis-affinity that you must have had to use that comment. I mean it was something that was an index of feelings that you had that weren't all together pleasant. Now she characterizes your relationship with her as one in which she really trusted you and that you were important to her, and important to a group of people who felt that they were getting their side of the story finally told by someone. Then

- she had this feeling of massive betrayal that you were really just pumping her for information, that you didn't like her, and you were willing to use this information against her. Also, by extension you were doing the same kind of thing to a variety of other people. So for her it was the final betrayal of the whole evacuation experience. I think I you not only capstone that but symbolize it for her in a complex kind of way.
- RW: Well, there was a time that she did tell me about things that were going on. There was even a time that she invited me to a meeting of one of Hoshi Dan groups, which I forgot I spoke very little Japanese. So she's right in saying that she was helpful to me but the idea that I would pass this information to the administration is absolutely incorrect. She had got into trouble with the administration, she complained so much about being deported and so this was entirely a matter of her husband's particular status with the Hoshi Dan I had nothing to do with this, the administration knew it.
- AH: Well, before we close I know you've got lunch coming up and you've written so much about this and have lived through it for so many years. When one has as intense an experience as Tule Lake that sustains itself over the years, it's a blessing but it's also a curse depending upon the turn of events. I wanted to see if there was any closing statement that you would like to make. Anything we've talked about or haven't talked about.
- RW: No I think you've been very helpful and I've explained everything that I could being 78 and not remembering things as I would like—I would always say that people who are distressed by these criticisms of me should read my book on fieldwork, it could really clarify these criticisms a great deal. I do want to say that I'm happy to have spoken to you because anything that can be done so that this country will never do anything again as awful as putting their citizens in a concentration camp, I approve of.
- AH: Okay, just before I say thank you to you, I wanted to say that one of the things that Violet de Christoforo had said a couple of years ago was that your field notes had not been deposited at the Bancroft, and yet in the introduction this last year to the book by Yuji Ichioka, *The Views from Within*, one of the things he has in the footnotes is that they now have been deposited and are available. I wanted to set the record straight on that and encourage people not only to avail themselves of what you have interpreted in *Doing Fieldwork* but also to consult those footnotes and they will differ—
- RW: Yes, if they really want to check on these matters—if the library will allow them to, you know they have rules about this.
- AH: Yes, they have two restrictions on those. One is that they can't use real names, the other is that they have to have the permission of the director of the Bancroft library. Professor Yuji Ichioka has spelled that out very clearly in the footnote; the conditions of use.

RW: I would certainly say that my field notes tell a great deal more than my book on fieldwork because the book was meant to inform people about the problems of fieldwork and be of help to future fieldworkers in difficult situations. The notes are just what was told to me at Tule Lake.

AH: Well, one of the things that Frank [Miyamoto] says in his essay dealing with you and Suzuki's criticism of you is that one should remember the nature of *Doing Fieldwork* and also its subtitles, warnings, and advice. Some of the things that you are talking about you are telling on yourself in the hopes that when people go out in the field, they will be aware of these kinds of things. I think he feels that it's somewhat unseemly to take your warnings and to turn those against you—

RW: The mistakes I made in the hope that it will help people keep from doing this again.

AH: Let's hope that people read your book and study your field notes and that no matter how they interpret you—and people will continue to interpret you in many ways. I think that speaks to the power of your material. That it is protein and rich, and I think that it will continue to enter as a coin of debate when people deal with this experience of the wartime evacuation, and the role that social scientists have had in it. I thank you very much for the opportunity of being able to speak with you, thank you.

RW: Oh, I've enjoyed it.

END OF INTERVIEW