

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Children's Village at Manzanar Oral History Project

An Oral History with LILLIAN MATSUMOTO AND TAEKO NAGAYAMA

Interviewed

By

Lisa Nobe

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CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY

NARRATOR: LILLIAN MATSUMOTO AND TAEKO NAGAYAMA

INTERVIEWER: Lisa Nobe

DATE: May 12, 1994

LOCATION: El Cerrito, California

PROJECT: Children's Village at Manzanar

LN: This is an interview with Lillian Matsumoto and Taeko Nagayama by Lisa Nobe for the Japanese American Project of the oral history program at California State University, Fullerton. The interview is being held at the home of Taeko Nagayama in El Cerrito, California, on Thursday, May 12, 1994, at approximately 10:10 in the morning. Could either one of you tell me how the two of you met?

LM: Well, do you want to?

TN: Well, I went to the orphanage when I was about nine or ten years old. Lillian wasn't there yet, but she came later on. I can't recall what year it was. Do you remember, Lillian, the year you first—

LM: Nineteen thirty-five, right after I finished my training at Cal.

TN: Nineteen thirty-five? Oh, I see. So, it must have been about five years because I think it was about 1930 that I went to the orphanage.

LN: And, when you say the orphanage, you mean the Shonien?

TN: The Shonien in Los Angeles, right.

LN: How old were you?

TN: I was about nine or ten years old.

LN: Okay. And Lillian, when did you—

LM: I was hired by them to be their caseworker. That was, oh, let's see, probably in the fall of 1935, right after I had finished my training at Berkeley.

- LN: And do you remember how old you were about then? (laughs)
- LM: How old was I? (laughs) I was born in 1913, and that was 1936 when I went there, so how old would I be? Twenty-something. (laughs)
- LN: So, you were born in 1913, Lillian? Okay. And Taeko, what year were you born?
- TN: Nineteen twenty-one.
- LN: Okay. Are both of you Nisei?
- TN: Yes.
- LM: Yes.
- LN: Do either of you speak any Japanese at all?
- TN: I speak very little.
- LM: The same. (laughs)
- LN: Can each of you give me kind of a background of where you were born, what your family life was like when you were younger, whoever wants to start with that?
- TN: Well, I was born in Los Angeles, California. My parents were quite young. I can't remember my mother that much because she had tuberculosis and was admitted to a sanitarium, so I saw very little of my mother at home. I can't remember what year it was when I was young that she was admitted to the sanitarium. My dad had a laundry-dry cleaning business on West Sixth Street, and I can still remember to this day the address: 1622 West Sixth Street. It's near MacArthur Park there. He ran the business until he himself came down with tuberculosis.
- I can't remember if we had any relatives or not, but I remember a social worker coming over to talk with my dad. It was after that we were admitted to the Shonien in Los Angeles, when I was nine or ten years old. I had my sister with me. I had three other younger sisters, but they were taken to the orphanage when they were babies. I saw them—well, I just saw one of them, the older one, the one I think younger than my sister. My sister is a year-and-a-half younger than I. And then there's another sister a year and a half younger than Fuji. And she's the only one that I can remember seeing at Shonien. Oh, I do remember the youngest one, Chiya, yes, come to think of it, but I can't remember the other one. Maybe perhaps she was adopted before I went there because I don't remember her. But the three younger sisters were adopted into families. One of them was adopted to a family in Los Angeles. They had a chicken farm. Another one was adopted by a family that migrated to South America. And then the youngest one was adopted by a Nichigo couple who lived in Arizona. Let's see. What else was it that I was supposed to—

LN: Yes, that's what I was asking. So, you had three younger sisters?

TN: Well, it's really four younger sisters.

LN: And no brothers?

TN: No brothers. I was the oldest of five girls.

LN: So all the other four were adopted?

TN: Three were adopted, the youngest three.

LN: And you and your other sister then were in the Shonien?

TN: Yes, until we graduated high school.

LN: Your parents were both in sanitariums? Or did they pass away?

TN: My mother was for many years, and then she had passed away. I don't remember visiting my dad. It was after we went to Shonien. And then I guess he died soon after because I remember attending his funeral.

LN: Do you remember if the sanitariums were in the Los Angeles area?

TN: Yes, it was in the Los Angeles area.

LN: Were they strictly for Japanese Americans?

TN: I don't remember. I don't think so, but I can remember visiting my mother once in the sanitarium.

LN: Okay. And Lillian, you were born in Utah, right?

LM: I was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1913. My father came to Utah, I think, in the early part of the century, about 1906. At the time that I was born, he was already a publisher and editor of a Japanese language newspaper. The paper was actually first started by his older brother, who had come to America before him, and had lived in Salt Lake City. He started the newspaper. He called my father over from Japan, and he took over the paper. I've seen articles when I went to Salt Lake that he started the paper in either 1907 or 1908.

My mother came from Japan in 1912. This was an arranged marriage. My father went to Japan and was married over there, and then brought her back. My mother's family is unique. Even when she came—she spoke English back in 1912, so we grew up with some English. Her father was one of the first Episcopal ministers in Japan, and so she grew up with missionaries. She's a graduate of Saint Margaret's in Tokyo. So when my father—who wasn't Episcopalian, but some arrangements had

been made—he went to Japan and they were married in the Saint Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Tokyo. I have pictures of their wedding, and her family. It’s very unique. And she came in 1912. I was born in 1913. I have a sister and two brothers. One is now gone. And then I have a younger sister. We were all born in Salt Lake City. I attended school through high school, and in 1929 we moved to Berkeley. My father had sold the paper just previous to that to another Japanese newspaper. In a place like Salt Lake there were two Japanese language papers, so he sold his to them, and we moved to Berkeley. And that was the same year that I entered UC Berkeley.

[00:10:04]

LN: Do you remember the name of your father’s newspapers?

LM: *Rocky Mountain Times*. In Japanese, I think it was known as *Rokiji-ho*. The other rival paper was *Utah Nippo*, which I think still exists. It may be still there, but I think it existed until a few years ago.

LN: Did you help out at all with the paper?

LM: Well, it was a Japanese language paper, so nothing in it. But, I do remember that my father because he believed that we should be brought up as good Americans, good citizens—I think in the 1920s—because I must have been going to junior high or possibly high school—no, I think it was junior high. He wanted to put an insert in English into the paper. It was just an insert of not local news or anything like that, but item news about various things in America. I think there was a place that he could go and get this thing printed and inserted. So, it was my job then to go to this company and pick out the items I thought might be interesting, and they would put it together as an insert. Then once a week, or once every two weeks, he would put this insert into the paper. So that was my help. I got to learn, though, the Japanese types are single. And those things that you have to replace them in each little cubbyhole when they’re finished—and so he taught me how to put the little types back into their place. That’s about all I can say about that. (laughs) But, I do have lots of recollections of my days in Salt Lake with my father running the paper.

LN: How about in terms of in Salt Lake City? What was it like growing up as a Japanese American? Were there many Japanese Americans in the area at that time?

LM: Oh, yes. We had a church. There was both a Japanese Christian church and a Buddhist church. I don’t think there was much intermingling on a social basis with the American community as I know, but then my mother was a member of the YWCA, which was not Japanese. I think our Sunday school teachers were all Caucasians. But, I think, in a way, my family was unique in that my father tried to get us intermingled with many activities with the American groups if we could, and he tried to open opportunities for that.

LN: Do you remember any instances of racism or discrimination or prejudice towards you or other Japanese Americans?

LM: Oh, yes. I remember distinctly when I was probably in about the third or fourth grade, I think that's the first time that I really met this, although at the time I didn't realize that was what it was. I think it was at Christmastime in the school. Some organization brought lots of gifts and they were passed out to the children. Now this was public school. It was not a school for any special group. This was the regular public school. Whether that was a custom that some group brought presents, I don't know, but anyway, at Christmastime a present was brought for each child, and she handed one out. There was another Oriental person; I think it was a Chinese boy. She passed one to everyone, but the two of us didn't get one. I remember she had a very favorite Caucasian girl that she [liked], and so she got two. And then, I guess somebody else got two because we weren't handed [one]. So, that was my really first experience. But, at that time, I didn't realize that that was discrimination or anything like that, although I wondered why we didn't get it. Then I went home and told my father that this happened, but he didn't explain it to me. He probably knew, but then he didn't, you know. And I just let it pass at the time because I had a lot of American friends. But years later, when I thought of it, I thought, Well, that's what it is. But, Salt Lake had its discrimination because I think in the theaters definitely. No Orientals could ever sit in the main part of the theater. You were always sent upstairs. In those days, they used the words nigger heaven. That's what they used to call it, and that's where we were sent.

LN: Nigger heaven, that's what they would call the top part?

LM: Um-hm, of the theater.

LN: And so any person who wasn't white would have to sit up there?

LM: Um-hm. I remember that about Salt Lake City.

LN: So, in other words, you could be up there, and blacks also would be up in that section?

LM: See, it wasn't actually called that because there weren't too many blacks in Salt Lake City as I recall. I don't think there was any blacks in our classes, maybe one or two. It wasn't so prominent that you would see them here and there, but they would probably be sent up there. And I know all the Chinese and Japanese were sent up there. Any theater in Salt Lake was that way. That's the only really outstanding thing I can remember. If there were any prejudices or discrimination in restaurants or eating places, I don't remember that because we didn't go out to eat in restaurants. I went to East High School, which was a public school, but I think there were only two or three Japanese that went to that school before I did. I think I was the only Japanese, one or two, attending that high school at that time. All the rest were whites. But, I belonged to clubs and so forth.

LN: How about dances and things like that?

LM: I never went. Not because I wasn't invited or anything, I just didn't go. But, I remember I belonged in the Girl Reserves at the YWCA. But the group I belonged to was all Nisei girls our age. We would have inter—the whole Y gatherings, social gatherings, and I don't think we had any problems there. I remember one time going to sort of a father and daughter thing—not connected to the Y, but something at the school, some organization that I belonged to. Exactly what it was I don't remember, but I belonged to that, and it was sort of a father and daughter dinner, and so my father went with me. I don't think we faced any prejudice just when we were part of the whole. That's about it, I think.

LN: Taeko, how about before you were in the Shonien, what part of Los Angeles did you live in?

TN: I just know it was on West Sixth Street near MacArthur Park. It wasn't called MacArthur Park then. It was called Westlake Park. I think it was after the war it became MacArthur Park but that's where I lived.

LN: And that was predominantly Japanese in that area?

TN: No. I don't remember seeing any other Japanese around there. (laughs) It was sort of a business place. We lived right there at the business place. There was a bedroom there in the business place. Oh, the only *nihonjin* that I was in contact with was—my dad sent my sister Fuji and I to this private Catholic school, Maryknoll School on Hewlett. We attended there until I was in the third grade, and then after that I went to the Shonien.

LN: Did you interact mostly with Caucasians then?

TN: Mostly, uh-huh. During the day, when I wasn't in school, it was with Caucasians.

[00:20:03]

LN: And did you experience any prejudice or discrimination or racism?

TN: No, I can't remember. Oh, I remember there was one Chinese laundry, and just for the fun of it they would—my sister and I would be walking down the street and they'd grab her by the arm. Then I'd pull her from the other arm, and we were just (laughs) pulling either way. And I was so scared that they were going to take her because they were just jokingly, just kind of pulling her toward their way, and I was just pulling real hard on the other side. They finally let go. But, I don't know if you would call that discrimination. I remember I used to have ideas about Chinese then at the time (laughs) in what I read or heard about. That's the only time. I don't remember any other discrimination.

LN: So, you went to the Maryknoll School?

TN: Uh-huh.

LN: I know this is jumping ahead kind of, but when you went to the Children's Village, when you were there as a staff worker, did you know any of the people from Maryknoll that were there?

TN: No. That was a school, it wasn't an orphanage, the Maryknoll School. It was a private school. I lost all contact with those that I met at the school after I went to the Shonien.

LN: Could you, Taeko, just give me the names of your sisters and your parents?

TN: Oh, all right. The sister below me is Fuji. The one below that is Toshiko, and then Yoshiko, and Chiyo.

LN: And your father's name?

TN: Kojiro. And my mother's name was Kuni.

LN: And your maiden name?

TN: Kajiwara.

LN: And do you remember what part of Japan your parents were from?

TN: Yes. Yamanashi-ken.

LN: Both of them were from there?

TN: Yes.

LN: Were they married prior to coming to the United States?

TN: That I have no idea about.

LN: And Lillian, the same? What's your maiden name?

LM: Lillian Yuri Iida.

LN: Okay. And your parents' and siblings' names?

LM: Oh, my father's name was Shiro Iida, and he came from Nagano-ken. My mother was Isa Mary Tomita, and she was born in Osaka, near Osaka, but raised in Tokyo. My immediate sister is Grace Tasaka, and she still lives in Salt Lake City. I had a brother, Albert Turo, and he died a few years ago. The next brother is Ted Masao

Iida. He lives in Berkeley. Then the youngest sister is Marian Kimi Iida. She lives in Berkeley.

You know, something that's interesting about Salt Lake City, too, because back in those days they had a regular Japanese community, stores and restaurants and bookstores, and a Japanese association. But something that I recall now, that even then as I grew older I thought was interesting, back in, this would be in the twenties, the Isseis had a class in ballroom dancing, which is quite interesting in the early days, that they were forward enough to think of that. (laughs) I remember my father and mother going to a class. Who taught it, I don't know.

LN: Yeah, I was going to ask were they Issei maybe taught the class or Caucasian.

LM: I don't remember that, but they did have a class in ballroom dancing.

LN: Did most of the Japanese in Salt Lake City farm? Or what types of occupations were they in?

LM: There were farmers in outlying areas, and then business, restaurants, dry goods stores. One of the oldest dry goods stores was E.I. Hashimoto Company. Later Mr. Hashimoto started a bus service from Salt Lake to someplace in southern Utah. Dentist, doctor, I think there were other small businesses.

LN: How about in terms of being Episcopalian in a state where it's predominantly Mormon, did you face maybe discrimination or anything because you weren't Mormon?

LM: No. See, we were Episcopalians, our family, my parents. When they decided to start a Christian church in Salt Lake, the first minister that came after they established the church was Reverend Toyotome. His son later was a quite active Nisei minister in Southern California. But my parents were one of the original founders of the church. So, although my mother was an Episcopalian and so forth, both of them helped to establish the church, and then they were strong supporters.

LN: Do you remember the name of that church?

LM: It's still the same, I think, Japanese Church of Christ.

LN: So, did your father become Episcopalian then?

LM: No, he never did. He was a Presbyterian, I think.

LN: Okay. But, he was a Christian? He wasn't Buddhist?

LM: He was Christian. Although his family in Japan, in the village that they lived, up in Nagano-ken, the family has been the Shinto priest for that for over two or three hundred years. The oldest son of that family has always carried it, so my cousin on

- my father's side is now the priest in this village. It's interesting, a Shinto priest. (laughs) I guess we don't have any Buddhists in the family.
- LN: Do you consider yourself now, or did you ever consider yourself, very religious?
- LM: Not very, just average. We grew up in the church there. Although my sister and I were baptized in the Episcopal Church, my other brothers were not Episcopalians. But when I finished college and went to L.A. to work at the Shonien, I was a member of the Saint Mary's Episcopal Church down there, which is Japanese.
- LN: Taeko, how about yourself in terms of religion? Now was the Shonien affiliated with a certain religion?
- LM: They were Christian.
- LN: So, were you Christian before entering the Shonien, or did you become [one]?
- TN: No, my parents were Buddhist, but we never attended the Buddhist church as I recall. We did have a Buddhist funeral when my dad passed away, so I don't remember. We did go to a Catholic School, but I didn't become a Catholic. (laughs) I didn't have really any religion at the time. But, when I went to the Shonien, we used to have Sunday school there at the orphanage. As I remember, Ruth Takemune, who is a Christian, led the Sunday school, so that was my first training in Christianity.
- LN: Did you consider yourself very religious at the time?
- TN: No, not at all, not until I went to Manzanar camp, which I had a spiritual—I guess you'd say—awakening. That's when I first became really a newborn Christian. After that I relocated to New York City with Ruth Takamune, who was a born again Christian. We went to school together there at the hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital for Children in New York City.
- LN: Lillian, I was interested in when you started to attend Cal. Did you go straight into a social work program, or how did you get involved in that major?
- [00:30:11]
- LM: When I started, I thought I was going to be a teacher. I trained for that, but my major was education. Along the way someplace I decided to go into social work. When I first started, I don't think I was too familiar with social work or social welfare, anything in that area. But, as I attended and I think I met other people, particularly—I was the second Japanese American ever to be accepted into Berkeley's School of Social Welfare. The first one, her name was Toyo Domoto, and I think she was head of the International Institute in Oakland. I got to know her, and I think she probably interested me in that area. So, it was while I was attending school that I changed.

LN: Do you think that your religion maybe had anything to do with your wanting to go into a field in which you're helping others? What do you think prompted you to enter that type of field? I mean other than just the influence of maybe a friend or something.

LM: I don't think religion has anything to do with it, but I think mainly it was to be trained for some kind of profession or something to do. That looked like something I'd like, maybe closest to what I originally thought I wanted to be, was teaching. And then, when I changed my mind about it, maybe social work sounded as close to it as I wanted. So going particularly into children's work was actually because I was given the job at the Shonien.

LN: So, you didn't have any set motive to work with children, it just happened?

LM: Yes.

LN: Okay. How about the move to the Berkeley area? How was it different or similar to your experiences in Salt Lake City?

LM: I think I was in contact with a greater number of Japanese once I moved to Berkeley because on the campus the Japanese students more or less isolated themselves. They had their own groups. We had the Japanese Women Student Club. The men had theirs. And you more or less—your social activities are around that. Then, as far as church, I went to the Berkeley United here in Berkeley, and then they had the Berkeley Fellowship, which was the Christian organization for all the college students. So, I think, once we moved to Berkeley, I was in contact more with Japanese and did things with Japanese, a lot more than strictly with Americans. Although I had friends.

LN: How were you treated at school and within your program? I mean, I assume you were the only Japanese American in social welfare at that time. Were you treated differently that you know of?

LM: Well, in applying for the school and being interviewed, I remember a couple of the professors who interviewed me said that I would have difficulty in finding a job, or I may not be able to even find one that would accept me. But, other than that, after I graduated, I looked for some work here. I almost started to work with the Florence Crittenden Home in San Francisco, but I think the call to Los Angeles was because I had met a minister, Reverend Inora. And he said that the Japanese Children's Home needed a caseworker. They had been working without one. And I think in order to continue to get contributions from the community chest, as it was known then, I think they really had to have a social worker. And since I was eligible and just graduated, I went in and got the job at Shonien. That's how I really got started there.

LN: Taeko, when you graduated from high school, were you still at the Shonien?

TN: I stayed on to help out until we—I went with the Shonien to Manzanar. I was there at the Shonien till then.

LN: How old were you at that time?

TN: Oh, I guess around eighteen.

LN: So, you had just graduated?

TN: Yes. And then, I attended the Woodbury Business College in September, after I had graduated. And then December is when the war broke out, so I had to quit. Then I stayed on until the Shonien went to Manzanar.

LN: What high school did you graduate from?

TN: John Marshall in Los Angeles, near Griffith Park.

LN: So, in the Shonien, once you became eighteen, did you have to leave? I mean, were children then seen as adults and had to leave the orphanage?

TN: I think the majority had to leave after they graduated.

LN: But, you stayed on as staff?

TN: I stayed on, right.

LN: Did you become a staff worker?

TN: Yes.

LN: And, at that time, the two of you had known each other, right?

TN: Oh, yes.

LM: She was going to high school, I think, when I first started work there.

LN: I don't mean to put you on the spot, but do you remember how Lillian was received when she first came on? Was it seen as a positive experience among the orphans, or was there not really much contact between the orphans?

TN: Oh, yes. I'd see her now and then. And I remember watching her type and I was wishing, Oh, boy, I wish I could type like that. (laughs) It seemed like you were typing a hundred miles an hour. But it used to amuse me. I used to enjoy that, watching. I can remember when I graduated—was it grammar school or junior high—I would get, like, a secondhand typewriter. Another time I received other things, and I can remember when I graduated high school Lillian made me a real

- beautiful green—I guess it was a rayon or silk dress you had made for me. You sewed it.
- LM: Did I? I don't even remember that. (laughs)
- TN: That was the first dress I had ever received, a real nice dress, and I really appreciated that.
- LN: Lillian, when you were hired at the Shonien as a caseworker, what was expected of you? I mean, were you expected to play a role model type of figure to the children, or were you more considered office administration?
- LM: No, I think it wasn't like playing a mother role, but then I think they expected me to have a lot of contact with the children there. I didn't take part in direct contact, like bathing them or taking care of them in their personal needs, but I would take part in their activities, besides the actual office work. One of the first things in that area I had to do was to make a case file for every family that was there because they didn't have anything except just little written notes. So, that was one, to bring things officially up to date.
- LN: How did you find out about the job at Shonien?
- LM: It was Reverend Inora who contacted me. I don't know how he found out that I had just finished the training, but he contacted me and asked if I would be interested. I went down for an interview with Mr. Kusumoto, who was the superintendent there. So, that's how I got started. (laughs)
- [00:40:05]
- LN: As a staff worker, Taeko, what were your responsibilities?
- TN: I guess making sure that the children got up. It was almost like a routine to me because being raised as one of them I would do what I remember being there. I think much of the time, though, took me to Woodbury Business College, studying for that I remember. I can still remember to this day there was a young fellow attending Woodbury Business College, he was from San Pedro, and he walked me home one day. I remember Mr. Kusumoto saw him and asked me who he was and where he was from. I can remember when he said, "You shouldn't be going with him. He lives in San Pedro; you live way out here. That's going out of the way." (laughs) I can remember that when I was going to business college. I think what I learned in business college later on helped me to help my husband in his work. (laughs) Although it was just for four months, I think, so very little—
- LN: Can either of you tell me some more about Mr. Kusumoto, how he became involved with the Shonien?

LM: Well, as far as I know, the early date—when it was first organized, I don't have the dates or anything, but I think what he was doing before he became interested in establishing a home is something I don't know. He often said that there was a family with a few children and there was no—I think the parents had died or something, and there was no place for them to go. And so he was a friend of the family and he took them over and cared for them. Then I think maybe that was the seed from which he established the home, and it grew larger. I think a lot of the churches helped financially. I don't know when the buildings were built or when they moved to that place on Redcliff because it was already there when I went. But, I think it was early in the 1900s when he started. I think it was just his own personal feelings for this family of children that was left, and then from that I think he realized that there was a need for someplace or someone to care for these children. Because I think the early Issei families, you know, they were individual families, so if something happened to the parents, these children were really left orphans. I think that was one of the reasons why he started and grew into a regular children's home later.

LN: And he began this in the United States?

LM: Oh, yes.

LN: Do you remember his first name? I haven't been able to find his first name anywhere.

LM: Joy, J-o-y. And then I think his name was Rokuichi or something.

TN: Rokuichi Kusumoto. He was never married.

LM: He has an adopted daughter that lives in L.A. Have you ever met her?

LN: No. Do you know her name?

LM: Grace.

TN: Yasu Kusumoto.

LM: She lives on Redcliff. She went to Japan. Her father sent her to China in fact, and she started an orphanage there. But after the war she married a Japanese person—and then after the war she came back. But the trustees that were still a carryover from before the war, and I think they decided that in his memory, one of the homes will be given to her. There were three buildings there. And the one which was like a residential home was given to her so that she could live there. So, she's still there, and you might get in contact with her.

[recording paused]

LN: Do you remember about how much older Mr. Kusumoto was than you, or maybe his age?

LM: When I went there, he must have been in his sixties already. Do you think, fifties or sixties?

TN: I don't remember. He always looked the same to me. (laughs)

LM: He was a frail man because he had asthma, so, when he had his asthma attacks, they were really bad. He was a very, almost fragile person, small, but a person with a lot of energy. One of the things that happened at the Shonien—when I went there the board of directors were all Isseis, prominent Issei men and women, but gradually their idea was to turn it over to a Nisei board. So, I think about two years prior to evacuation, the board changed to a Nisei board of directors with the older Issei as an advisory group. I think the first chair of the Nisei board of directors was Dr. [Testuro G.] Ishimaru. He's deceased now. He was an optometrist, wasn't he?

TN: Yes.

LM: But some of the older Niseis were on that board.

LN: Do you know why they wanted to shift the power or the control over to Nisei?

LM: I think they felt that the time had come to have the Nisei gradually begin to take over and learn to have fund drives and things like that. Even then I guess they thought the Isseis were getting older. I don't think it was part of the Niseis saying that, We want it. We want to take it over. That wasn't the idea. I think the Issei board of directors felt that it was time to gradually turn over the responsibility of running the place.

LN: So, was there any conflict between the Nisei and Issei over that?

LM: The board? No, I don't think so. I think that was to the credit of Mr. Kusumoto that he made this transition very smoothly.

LN: Maybe you could each give me your own feelings about Mr. Kusumoto, just what kind of man he was like, or maybe your relationship with him?

TN: As I recall, I really looked up to him. I thought he was a very fine man. When we'd be in the dining room having our meals, I can remember when he came to our table. He said, "Now when you take a bite of food, you chew for twenty times." And I remember trying to chew for twenty times, but by my fifth one, the food was all gone. But, I kept moving my mouth. (laughs) He made sure that we chewed our food real well. I can recall he always had us have grace before our meals, and then I'm sure he always had us have our Sunday school training there.

LM: Didn't we have daily chapel every morning?

TN: I can't remember if we did. We may have.

LM: I think we did.

TN: I think I've lost a lot of memory of things. It's terrible. My sister just below me can remember more things, but I can't recall. (laughs)

LN: Was Mr. Kusumoto ever affectionate with the children? Did he ever hold them or play with them?

TN: I think so. He'd carry and hold them in his arms. Of course, being Isseis, I don't think they embraced or kissed or anything.

LM: I think he was very concerned with the welfare of the children. He was strict, but how would you describe his strict—it's not like you've got to toe the line with this or that. But he had some rules and he liked them observed, not only the children but for the staff, too. Then also for like the meals, in many places the administrative group would eat separately or have their own, and he always ate with the children. We all did. The staff and Mr. Kusumoto, we always ate with the children. We had a different table, but then it was always the same mealtime. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner, it was always the same.

[00:51:00]

LN: Did he speak English, Mr. Kusumoto?

LM: I think he understood and knew a lot more than he spoke. (laughs) Towards the end he was getting to—real things Japanese _____ (inaudible) was very important to him. But he went back to Japan on the—was it the first or the second *Gripsholm*?

TN: I remember the night when the war broke out, December seventh, I was in the room next to him. I had my own little room, and he was in this corner room. And the FBI came up and, oh, it just startled me. Oh, I was so scared! I peeked through the little crack in the door or something, and they told him to get dressed, to go with them. And I saw that all going on through this little peephole I was looking through. But, oh, I never was so scared. Oh, it was quite a traumatic experience for me, and that was the last I ever saw of him.

LM: It was about midnight, a little after? During the night.

TN: It was at night. I don't remember when. We were all asleep, and then I heard this banging on the door. Oh, it scared me!

LN: They just took him? Did they handcuff him?

TN: No, I don't remember him being handcuffed.

LM: I don't think they did with any of them. See, Pearl Harbor—and then that night, the night of December seventh—so it would be almost December eighth as it was during the night, after midnight. They just made a sweep of L.A. and picked up all the men who were leaders in the community. I think the only ones they didn't pick up were, like, the Buddhist priests or ministers. But, most all Issei men, who were prominent in the Japanese Association, prominent businessmen, even professional men, there was a sweep of them. It took place not only in L.A., but all the big cities because my father was—they lived in Berkeley. It took place in Berkeley and San Francisco.

LN: Did they give him any prior warning, or did they just come in?

TN: Oh, no. No warning at all.

LM: They had these names already. They were prepared, I think.

TN: Yeah, they had their names.

LN: And they just barged into the Shonien and went and took him? By himself?

LM: Um-hm.

LN: No one went with him as an interpreter?

LM: No. So, I don't think for maybe forty-eight hours or more no one knew where they were even, or where they were taken. Then I think the first notice that we got was to come to a certain place, bring a suitcase, and they had a list of articles that should be in the suitcase, mainly personal clothing. And we were to bring the suitcase to—I forgot where the place was, someplace. That was the first contact we had when we got this note, and that was a few days after. No one knew where they were taken. I don't recall when we took the thing. My husband and I took the suitcase down, and I don't remember whether we got a chance to see him. I have a feeling no one was allowed to see anybody. And then, from there, I think they were taken to Missoula, Montana.

LN: They were taken to Montana and then—

LM: Later transferred to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

LN: And then from there?

LM: There, after the war I guess some of them were released, or even before the war, as they cleared different ones. Some of them were sent to the various relocation camps where their families were living. And I think those who couldn't be released were eventually sent to Japan.

LN: Because Mr. Kusumoto went to Japan, right?

LM: On his own. He volunteered.

TN: Because I think Yasu was out there at Manzanar.

LM: Yes, his daughter was there, adopted daughter was there. And so he went on his own, volunteered to be sent back to Japan. He wasn't deported or anything like that.

LN: So, you mentioned your husband. At what point did you get married?

LM: The war started in '41, wasn't it December of '41? We were married in February.

LN: Of '42?

LM: Of '42. Lots of weddings took place then. (laughs)

LN: How did you meet, the two of you?

LM: I met him at Shonien. He was a volunteer worker. I went there in '35 to work and he was—let's see. Shonien was on a fundraising drive at that time. There was a movie that someone had made of—well, it's a fictional story of a family whose parents, I think, died. Because tuberculosis was an illness that was very prevalent among Nisei people. I think that this one was where parents died, left children, and they had to find a place for them. So, they went to the Shonien and _____(inaudible). So there was this movie that someone had made, and they took this movie around to various communities in Southern California to raise money for the Shonien. So, I think I came to Shonien just about the time that this drive was going on. And Harry was active in that, in taking pictures with a group to different places, so I met him there. We were married just after the war started. We were engaged before then, but then, we were married then.

LN: So, he was just on a volunteer basis at the Shonien?

LM: Yes.

LN: So, he never actually was a paid worker?

LM: I don't think so at that time. I'm not sure. (laughs) No, I don't think he was paid then.

TN: I can remember the movie that you were mentioning, but I don't remember the title. But I remember this JACL—is it Lillian Okuda? They were quite prominent up there in the JACL leaders. I forget, but I remember she was in it.

LM: Oh, yes, that's right.

LN: So, did Harry have any prior schooling?

LM: He's a graduate of UCLA. He's a L.A. boy—man. (laughs) He graduated Hollywood High and then went to UCLA.

LN: What kind of field was he in at UCLA?

LM: I think he was a business major because he worked for Union Paper Company. I think that was a Japanese, Issei run business in L.A., offices downtown. Maybe it's still there, I don't know. (laughs)

LN: Was Harry a Nisei as well?

LM: Um-hm.

LN: And his family, do you remember where his family was from in Japan?

LM: Wakayama.

LN: They're from Wakayama.

LM: Yes. He has a sister, two sisters here, both living yet. And then, a brother who passed away about two years ago.

LN: When did Harry pass away?

LM: In '88.

LN: In '88. And how old was he?

LM: Just before his eightieth birthday.

LN: Do you remember how you found out about the Pearl Harbor attack. What you were doing when you found out?

LM: Well, that was a Sunday morning. I think Mr. Kusumoto was gone—he attended church regularly at the Union Church on San Pedro—and I think my sister-in-law and her husband had a first anniversary party or something the night before. And we were supposed to go, but for some reason we couldn't make it. So, they came over that morning and brought me a piece of the cake or something. And I think when they were driving over it came on the radio, so, when they came over, they said, Turn on your radio. Something's going on. So, we turned on the radio and then we heard about the attack. So that was, like, eleven o'clock that Sunday morning, the seventh.

[01:00:00]

LN: This was your own radio, not in front of any of the kids, right?

LM: Oh, no! No, this was in my room, or wherever the radio was.

LN: Taeko, how did you find out about Pearl Harbor?

TN: Oh, I was attending Woodbury Business College. And then that day I remember that they had put the radio on, and had the loudspeaker going on, and that's when I heard that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. And it just gave me the funniest feeling. And then, to me, it seemed like everybody was staring at me because I was Japanese. (laughs) And after that, I remember the Japanese all left Woodbury to go home.

LN: What was your reaction? I mean, how did you feel about Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor?

TN: Oh, I thought it was terrible. I thought, well, me being a Japanese—although I was Japanese American, I was of Japanese descent, and it just made me feel terrible that Japan would do something like that. It made me kind of self-conscious to be there. Oh, it just gave me a terrible feeling.

LN: Lillian, how about you? How did that make you react or feel?

LM: Well, at first you just don't believe it. You don't think that that's true. You think, well, maybe it's a made-up story like the one that—what was it? Long before that where they had the invasion of the earth, you know, the Orson Welles story? You think maybe it's something like that, I guess. Now I think of it that way. Maybe that story came later, not before Pearl Harbor. But, I think at that time it seemed, like, well this isn't true. It's not real. It couldn't happen. But, when it dawned on me that it is true because it kept on, and then as they started mobilizing things in downtown Los Angeles—and then I remember Mr. Kusumoto coming home and he went straight up to his room, very stern-faced and everything. And then, he called me and he said, "Well, everybody should stay in. Don't go out." I think there was a mixture of both sadness and anger in his voice, in his demeanor and everything at that time. I think anger that such a thing was happening, and sadness that it was Japan, his country. As for me, I think it took a while to really understand what it was, but I think we were just caught up in the fact that the next day are we supposed to let the children go to school? So, I think that it was all in the business of the day as to what are we going to do?

LN: Did they go to school the next day?

LM: I don't recall that. I just don't remember whether they did or not.

LN: Was the Shonien situated in the middle of a white community?

TN: Yes, the Silver Lake area.

LM: Up in the hills, you know, above Silver Lake.

LN: So, did you notice any changes in the way the community around you reacted towards you, and towards the orphanage after Pearl Harbor?

LM: You know, as far as I know, we didn't have much contact with the private families around there. So, I'm sure that their feeling was—they might have had very negative feelings about the home, or at the children or anything. I think it was just day-by-day living.

LN: And you don't remember any prejudice from them prior to Pearl Harbor or any negative feelings?

LM: No.

LN: How about in school, though? Because you would attend regular school, and the majority of the children would be Caucasian, correct?

LM: Um-hm.

TN: Well, I was at Woodbury, so—

LN: I mean, when you were in high school.

TN: Oh, no, I didn't feel any prejudice.

LN: No? How about at the Shonien? I believe Takatow Matsuno¹ said that there were some *hapas* at the Shonien.

LM: There were some—pardon?

LN: *Hapas*: half white, half Japanese, or mixed. Do you remember any of them?

LM: There were a few, but not too many. I think the majority were Japanese, 100 percent Japanese.

LN: Do you remember any instances of the mixed children having a harder time in the orphanage because they were mixed?

LM: I don't think so, unless the children—did they call them anything?

TN: Not that I remember. They just got along fine. They didn't even think that they were, you know, half and half.

LM: I don't think there were that many that made a difference.

LN: Because wasn't Dennis Tojo Bambauer²—he was at the Shonien?

¹ Takatow Matsuno, O.H. 2339, Center for Oral and Public History.

- LM: No, he came straight to Manzanar. He wasn't at the Shonien.
- TN: No, he wasn't at the Shonien.
- LN: How about Ira Iwata³?
- TN: He was there at the Shonien, yes.
- LM: But Ira wasn't mixed, was he?
- LN: I believe he was half-white.
- TN: I remember his last name was Iwata, Ira Iwata. If he was, I don't remember. It seems like among the—
- LM: Later when we did have children of mixed blood, they were younger, toddlers or babies, so that I don't think there was any reaction against them or they towards the others. Because the older, like Taeko's age, or her sister, or those of that age. I think most of them were all Japanese. It's the younger babies that came in later, I think, where a few might have been of mixed blood. But, it was at the Children's Village that a lot more came.
- LN: Okay. How about at the Shonien, did you have adoption inspections? I was reading about adoption inspections, where there would be days when potential adoptive parents would come and examine certain children maybe to adopt.
- LM: There weren't too many.
- TN: I guess even after I went to the Shonien there were some that were adopted, like my sisters, but I don't remember the others. I just remember my sisters.
- LN: I read in the Final Report on Manzanar that you and Harry went up to Manzanar prior to the orphanage actually being built, to see if it was going to be a suitable place for an orphanage.
- LM: Well, you see, I think the Army—as they started the evacuation process, or the rumors got around that such a thing was going to take place, you know, you're aware of individual families or single people. But, I don't think they were aware that there would be large groups of children living in homes, children's homes, or that there were orphanages. So, the first reaction from our part was, are they going to make an exemption for us and let us stay? But of course, immediately the answer to that was no. Then one of the answers that came—the word that came to us was, Well, you

² Dennis Tojo Baumbauer, O.H. 2335, Center for Oral and Public History.

³ Ira Iwata, O.H. 3775, Center for Oral and Public History.

have staff members. Let each staff member take ten children and establish that as a family. So, that one staff member would be a head of a family, and then they would be sent along with where the rest of the Japanese would be going. If it's Manzanar, it's Manzanar. If it's Poston—you know, L.A. went to all different places. So, that's what they said could be done. Well, we said, We may not have any staff members because what staff members have families of their own—not necessarily married, but their parents and their sisters—and probably not knowing where they would go, they may want to return and go with them. So, we may not have any staff members. That's not a workable solution. So I think Ted Nishimura, who was our board chairman, said, "Well, maybe the Shonien—" at that time we thought only of Shonien—"could be transferred altogether to one of the relocation centers." We asked that if that was a solution, a workable solution, we would choose Manzanar because it would be the least distance for the children to travel. Also, some of the children were getting their support from countries or from the state, so it would be better to be under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Social Welfare than to be sent to some other state where they may not be familiar with this kind of problem.

So, the Army agreed that we could go. They said Manzanar would be fine. We could go and look over the place. A date was set. Harry and I, Winifred Ryder, who was a representative from the State Department of Social Welfare, and I think there was one other person, maybe not. So, we traveled up to Manzanar and we met with the first project director, which was not Mr. Merritt. It was someone that was before him. The first project director—you probably have the name of that person—met us, and we looked over Manzanar, the camp. It was just beginning there. Just the first group of people, the early volunteers that went to Manzanar to help establish, were the only ones there because none of the evacuation had yet started from L.A. So, we went there, and we looked over the place. We chose the site because we wanted it near the hospital, and we also found that that would be next to the old apple orchard, which we thought was a nice area and still wouldn't be isolated from the rest of the camp. So, the site was chosen.

I don't think we had anything to do with the three separate buildings that they built, but we asked that it be built so that toilet facilities and the dining area would be separate, that we could have our own. I think they agreed at the time that they would do that. Also the other agreement was that, even though the L.A. area, I think, was to be evacuated by the first of April, we would stay there at the Shonien until the building was ready for occupancy, and that was in June. So, we remained in L.A. for about two-and-a-half months after all the Japanese were gone from the city. But, that was what we did that helped the Children's Village. The name, I think, was given to them by the administration at Manzanar. We didn't choose the name.

[01:15:30]

LN: So, you can't think of any Japanese Americans, no staff or administration that was Japanese American, who came up with the name Children's Village?

LM: I think that was set by whoever was there because it was already Children's Village when we went there. Of course, when we had asked for the transfer of the Shonien to

Manzanar, then the Army found out that there were other children in orphanages, not too many I think, in foster homes, because the foster home program wasn't an established program in social welfare work at that time. But, there was Maryknoll home for children, and then there was the Salvation Army home in San Francisco. So, the idea then grew from there that they could all be brought there and cared for in one central spot. I know that throughout the time, many people even to this day, I think, think that there was, like, a Children's Village in each of the ten or eleven relocation camps, but there weren't. Manzanar was the only one. So, during the two or three years that the Village was in existence, we got children from all over, babies that were born out of wedlock and so forth that were sent to us. We had a large baby population there.

TN: We certainly did.

LM: And then, when the three buildings were finished and ready for us to move in, we also made arrangements because we didn't know what kind of furniture we were going to have. They said, Well, you'll have the same thing that the others have. There'll be a cot. So, we made arrangements—and they accepted that—and we transferred all the baby cribs that the Shonien had. Those things were moved over there, some of the equipment, small chairs that the children could use. We also asked that the piano be sent up there. So, those were the things that Harry and I put our input and asked if they could be transferred, and they okayed it. So we got the cribs up there, the piano, and do you remember those little folding chairs for children?

TN: Yes.

LM: See, one of the reasons Harry and I had [for] asking that these things be transferred, we wanted the smaller children to feel that there wasn't this big break from having lived in the Shonien to another area. We wanted something familiar around them.

LN: What did you tell the children about moving to Manzanar? How did you explain it to them? What did you tell them was happening?

LM: I think the older children knew. I think they got it at school and so forth, so they knew that. And it think their feeling generally was that, We're American citizens, and why did Japan attack? You know, I think the enemy was Japan. The little children, we may have explained that there was war, but probably that was meaningless. I think to them it was a big adventure. They were going to move to another place.

LN: I read that on the buses that you tried to keep an atmosphere of kind of singing and—

LM: Yes. See, my husband had to stay because of the personal things that we had to take. All the staff, what they were allowed to take was exactly the same as what every other family members were allowed to take. So, we could pack something for each of the children, too, a number of clothing and so forth, so all those things were all

packed. The organization that *really* came and helped was the American Friends Service. They did a *tremendous* amount of work to help us because the Japanese community itself couldn't help us in any way. They were restricted, I think, in where they could go by that time. In fact, they would be all gone by the time we were ready to move. Well, the morning of our move, a busload of those young people from the American Friends came, and they took care of the little ones till it was ready to board. There's so much that they did that morning. Then the truck that was to come to pick up all these things didn't arrive, and so the buses with the children had to leave. So, they told Harry to stay behind, at least until the following morning, or the trucks would come later that afternoon to load. And a number of these American Friends committee people stayed. They brought cookies and things for the children so that we'd have something to eat on our trip, so I think we owe a lot to them. You remember?

LN: I didn't know about that. When you left from Los Angeles, did you go by train first and then—

LM: No, the buses came to the Shonien.

LN: So, all the way by bus?

LM: And picked up all the children. We divided the girls in one bus, the boys in the other. And I guess our staff was divided, some were in the boys and others were in the girls. But see, on the way we also went down, and they picked up—didn't they pick up the children at Maryknoll?

TN: I can't remember.

LM: Or whether they were brought up to the Shonien so they were all loaded at the same time? I can't remember that. But then, they went with us on the same bus. Then the children from the Salvation Army home in San Francisco probably came about a week or ten days later and joined us there. Then individual children that were in other orphanages, I think one or two were brought to us the night before, and they went with us. Others were brought separately to Children's Village later.

[01:20:17]

LN: Taeko, in terms of your role as being a staff member in the Village, did you have a choice as to just going into Manzanar or whatever camp on your own?

TN: No, I just want along with the orphanage.

LN: But that was by choice?

TN: Yes, by choice. And I stayed there and worked there.

- LN: Why did you choose to stay with the orphanage, as opposed to just going into camp on your own or with your sister?
- TN: Oh, well, at that age, I think I was still fearful of going out on my own. Since I was always with the orphanage, and that's all I knew, I didn't really have that much contact outside. So, I just _____ (inaudible) to go with the group.
- LN: And how about your sister?
- TN: I don't know how Fuji felt, but I suppose she probably felt about the same way. We always stuck together.
- LN: She was a staff worker at the village?
- TN: No. I don't remember her being a staff worker, but she was younger than I so she was probably still going to high school.
- LN: So, she actually lived in the Village?
- TN: Yes.
- LN: Okay. She lived in the Village while you were working there?
- TN: Uh-huh, and she worked there.
- LN: Were you part-time or fulltime staff?
- TN: Full-time.
- LN: So you got, what, \$16 a month? (laughs)
- TN: Yes. I remember \$16 whole dollars.
- LN: Now where would you sleep at night?
- TN: Let's see. I still remember the rooms near the office. I can't remember anyplace else before that.
- LM: The buildings were divided. For instance, the first building had the dining room and the kitchen and the recreation room, and then an office space. And then there was two small rooms, which Harry and I occupied as our sleeping quarters. The other one—were you in the other one? In the front, huh?
- TN: Yes. I think I still remember that room near the office there.

LM: Then the other building, the one that we had one section for babies and then toddlers, and then the front section was for all the older girls. But, in-between was a small diet kitchen, where we made the babies' formula and things like that, and then there was one room where Ruth Takamune slept. And then there was a shower with a toilet. From the Shonien, there were Maseo Deguchi, Ruth Takamune, Alice Kaneko, and Taeko—were the four who remained as staff and went with us. Maseo had a family. Ruth had a family, but they decided to come with us and take care of the children. So, those four people came as staff. We had no men that came with us, other than Harry. (laughs)

TN: The workers there were all single, never married.

LM: They weren't married.

LN: So, you didn't need one staff member to sleep—okay, like for instance, in the girls' section or the boys' section, did you need one to sleep in that section?

LM: We always had one older person, but we also had one of the staff work as a night nurse, so we were able to have a room in the block opposite. We were able to get a room so that the night nurse could go there and sleep during the day. You remember Alice Kaneko used to take over as night [nurse]. But, Ruth Takamune was a children's nurse, so she had a room right in the girls' building. In the boys' building we had John, who later became Taeko's husband, and Dick—

TN: Akagi.

LM: Akagi. Did they sleep there? John did.

TN: I can't remember.

LM: See, after we got to the Children's Village, established that, and the San Francisco group joined us, we were a large group. So, we were able to then hire people from the camp. So we had a lot of women who came and helped during the day caring for the children. And then we had John and Dick who came and worked with the boys. I think John stayed in that room in the boys' group.

LN: Dick's last name was?

LM: Akagi.

LN: Akagi. And didn't Sohei Hohri⁴ work? He never worked at the Village?

TN: Who?

⁴ Sohei Hohri, O.H. 3786, Center for Oral and Public History.

LN: Sohei Hohri.

LM: John? Did he work at the—

LN: Did he work at the Shonien?

LM: Well, he and his two brothers were orphans at the—he worked before I went to Shonien, so I don't know him. I just met him for the first time at the fiftieth anniversary.

TN: I remember he was active in the Christian circle there in camp.

LM: Okay. I don't think he was a worker there. He might have volunteered in some way, but I don't think he was on the payroll as a worker.

TN: He was at the Shonien for a little while, not that long, but I remember John.

LM: He and his brother, huh?

TN: Yes.

LM: That was before I went to work there.

TN: There were three brothers: John, Tak—Tak was the older one—and then Willie. I remember John Hohri's father was Reverend Hohri, and he used to be there to repair shoes. He repaired our shoes. I remember that.

LM: This is going back to the Shonien days, but then much of the Japanese community gave their services to them. Like the dental association, each dentist gave time free of charge to them.

LN: To the orphanage children?

LM: Um-hm. We paid to buy shoes and things like that a lot of the time, at the Asahi Shoes, but I think it was discounted. So, the community was very helpful.

LN: Since we're going back to the Shonien, could you please tell me again the name of the individual who was on the board?

LM: You mean the Isseis?

LN: The one that had recommended for you and—

LM: Oh, doctor—

LN: Ishimaru? Is that it? What's his first name?

TN: Is it Tet Ishimaru?

LM: I think his name was Tetsuro, but he was an optometrist.

LN: He was Nisei or Issei?

TN: Nisei.

LN: He was Nisei, okay.

LM: Among the older Niseis.

LN: Okay. Now Taeko, when did you and John get married? After the war?

TN: After the war in 1947.

LN: Okay. But, did you meet in Manzanar?

TN: In camp, yes.

LN: I've heard stories about John, that he was a good storyteller, and the boys really looked forward to—

LM: No, it's not John Hohri.

LN: Yeah, I know, John Nagayama. Yeah! They would be excited because he would tell them stories and then he'd leave them. He wouldn't tell them the ending, and so they'd have to wait in suspense for the next day. (laughs) I also heard that he was very religious, right? Because I think Tamo [Tamotsu Isozaki]⁵ had told me that he had kind of followed John around. He said that he would see John carrying his Bible around, or something like that, in camp. I think we can take a break now. The tape is about to end. It's a quarter to twelve right now. [recording paused] We're continuing the interview with Taeko Nagayama and Lillian Matsumoto at approximately 1:00 p.m. on May 12, Thursday, 1994. I believe we were talking about the Children's Village and how life was at the Children's Village, and we also kind of got sidetracked and we were talking about the Shonien. Going back to the time from Shonien to Children's Village, how was it, Lillian, that you and Harry became the two people to kind of organize what was going to happen with the orphanage at Manzanar? In your understanding why were the two of you chosen?

[01:30:00]

LM: Probably because in a way we helped lay the beginnings of asking that Manzanar be the place for Children's Village, going up there and seeing the place, choosing the

⁵ Tamotsu Isozaki, O.H. 2332, Center for Oral and Public History.

- area. We didn't choose or designate any type of architect or anything like that. We asked for things we would like in the Village and then also that we be close to the hospital. So, when we went there, they automatically more or less told us that we would be in charge of the Village. Whether at that time the intent was to keep us permanently, I don't know, but it ended up being in charge until we left.
- LN: What about—okay, how was it that you and Harry became the two people chosen to actually initiate the Children's Village Orphanage? In other words, you were a case worker at the time. Why not someone on the staff at the Shonien who was maybe higher up than you?
- LN: Well, that was Mr. Kusumoto, and he was already taken so I was more or less in charge at the time, Harry and I. And then, we got these orders to do this, or try to do this or this or this _____ (inaudible) the plans. And I think we worked with, in the beginning, what what's her name? Away, she was with the community chest, and her area was homes and things like that. We contacted her, and of course Dr. Ishimaru worked a lot. Then from then on, step by step, we came to what I had explained to you before, how we thought that keeping the children together but giving us a place that we would be intact, instead of, say, going to Manzanar but living in the various blocks would not be ideal because that would mean that we'd separate and maybe each staff would have to take children again. We asked for a centralized place, and they agreed. And I think State Department of Social Welfare put a lot of input into that.
- LN: Was it more your initiative or the Army's or the government's initiative to start the orphanage? Did you present the idea to someone?
- LM: I think that it was more our—then Miss Ryder, Winifred Ryder of the State Department, I think, backed it up. She was the one that went with us to investigate the whole thing and to try to put some support into it.
- LN: How did you find out about evacuation, and how did you find out that the orphans as well were going to be evacuated?
- LM: I think it was the general order. There was nothing in there that children—it was always families and how they were to get their information and so forth, so there was nothing about groups of children, or groups like ours, particularly. I think it was from there that we then contacted—I think Dr. Ishimaru had a lot to do with trying to get contacts with the Army and whoever was in charge at the time in that area.
- LN: How did you feel about the government even insisting on orphans being interned, as opposed to just the general Japanese American population? Did you feel that the orphans should be an exception to internment, or did you feel that they're Japanese just like everybody else, they should also be interned?

LM: I think my feeling personally was that—well, of course we didn't know what was going to happen. The future was unknown. But, I think my feeling, and probably Harry's, too, was that if we were left there, we'd be so isolated we wouldn't know what was schooling going to be for them. So, I think our feeling was that if they could be moved to a camp along with all the Japanese, we'd still be a group intact with the whole Japanese, in contact with the whole Japanese community, so to say. Isolation we didn't think was very good.

From the time that the Los Angeles area was evacuated, and I think that was April first, we couldn't move because our Village wasn't finished yet. But, during that period of maybe two-and-a-half months, see, the children couldn't go to school. They wouldn't allow the children to attend school. That was maybe the city's board of education whose idea that was. But anyway, part of it would have been also protection for the children, I think. So, anytime that we needed medical help, we had to call the—what was that? Anyway, the Army command there, call their office, see what we needed. If any of the staff or any of the children needed medical help we had to call them, and they would either send a doctor over, or in the case of one of the staff who suddenly had a very bad toothache and she had to go to a dentist, they sent a jeep over with one of the officers. They took her to a dentist, and then brought her back because we couldn't. It might have been already that there was a restriction of mileage; we couldn't go beyond a certain district. So, I think that was it. But, that kind of thing happened while we were waiting to have the Village constructed.

LN: How would you take care of things like shopping for groceries and just those kind of things?

LM: I think they allowed Harry to go down to the market. He may have had a special permit so that if he was stopped by a police officer that he would have this permit showing that he could shop. I think it was limited. He could only shop within a certain area, so we had to get food that way. I don't think we went to the produce market or anything like that. Well, there wouldn't have been any Japanese there anyway.

LN: Taeko, do you remember what you would do with the kids during that time? Since they couldn't go to school, what would you do to keep the kids entertained, or what would you have them do?

TN: Since I was a student, I didn't do too much of that. It was more or less staying there at the Shonien up in my little room there near where Mr. Kusumoto used to live. I don't think I did too much of taking care of the kids but going to school.

LN: You were able to go to school all that time after L.A. was evacuated?

TN: Oh, no. I started in September, and then December is when Pearl Harbor [happened], so then I quit right then.

LN: But, you were on staff, correct, at the Shonien?

TN: Yes.

LN: But you don't remember what—in April and May for instance, when the kids couldn't go to school, do you remember what you would do?

TN: Oh, that part. No, I don't remember.

LM: We had to do something to keep them entertained.

TN: Yeah, right. Yeah, I don't remember.

LM: Of course, we couldn't hold any classes as such. None of us were teachers.

LN: Was there a playground, though, that you could let the kids—

LM: Oh, yes. There was a large playroom and quite a bit of area where they could play.

LN: What's left of the Shonien now? Is there a building?

LM: I haven't been there myself since the war, but after that some group took over, didn't they, and gutted it?

TN: I think so, some kind of group.

LM: What was that person's name?

TN: I don't remember.

LM: Suzuki. Somebody named Suzuki. He later went on to some job, a federal office in Washington, but I think they opened it up for limited—

TN: It was limited, I think.

LM: They had children there? Then it went on to maybe elderly Niseis. What they're doing with it now I have no idea.

LN: After the Pearl Harbor attack and you were still at the Shonien, what percent of the staff was taken away? For instance, what percent was Issei? And so all of them were taken out?

[01:40:03]

LM: No, Mr. Kusumoto was the only one. We had an Issei couple who were cooks, but nothing happened to them. But then, they wanted to leave with their families or friends, so in time they quit and prepared themselves to leave with the evacuation order.

LN: So then, that would leave you and who else?

LM: Ruth Takamune, Maseo Deguchi, Alice Kaneko, and Taeko.

LN: So, basically, you and Mr. Kusumoto were the only actual administrative persons employed there?

LM: Um-hm.

LN: And so pretty much all the burden of everything fell on your shoulders after Mr. Kusumoto left?

LM: Right.

LN: How about when going from the Shonien to the Children's Village? Because you were the one that was the caseworker at the Shonien, how is it that you became the assistant superintendent and Harry became the superintendent?

LM: I think it's a matter of—(laughs) What do you say? It just didn't look right for me to be—now maybe it wouldn't matter, but, in those days, I think the—

LN: Because he's the male?

LM: Yeah.

LN: Did that make you feel bad or anything at that time?

LM: No, we just worked together anyway.

LN: When you came to Children's Village, did you bring all of the files on the children with you?

LM: I did for our children. I guess we left the files, so they probably got incorporated with what files they kept there and wherever all these official things—I don't know whether they're gone, or where they sent them. Some of them might have been filed with the official records for each person that the WRA [War Relocation Authority] kept. It might have been incorporated into that.

LN: Did you continue working on the case files while in Manzanar though, or someone else started doing that?

LM: I did. There wasn't really much you could add, except when there was a particular change in some child. Sometimes when they came to us at the last minute—before we all left, a father was picked up the night of Pearl Harbor, and he was a single father taking care of his children. They were never Shonien children before that. But, when he was picked up, they were more or less so-called orphans, and their

relatives would bring them to ask us to take care of them. Because as relatives everybody was under such stress, and it wasn't that they wanted to throw their relatives' children out, but it was just that they didn't know what their future would be or whether they could care for them. So, we got a number of those children at the last minute. Later on at the Village, as these fathers were released to camps later—you know, after two or three years they were released to any camp they wanted to go. Then many of them who had children that we were taking care of came to Manzanar, and then established a family of their own. Some of those children were taken care of that way, and so we may have kept a record of the final disposition of these children.

LN: And you don't know where the records are now? You don't have any idea?

LM: See, Miss Robbins is the one that took [over] after, and where all the records went I have no idea. So, the final [report] of what happened to many of the children I don't know because she took care of that. Many of them were sent to homes back east. There were several who were adopted. I think Dennis [Bambauer] left camp just before we left, and that was in the works that Dr. Bambauer was getting ready to adopt him. But, most of them, the final action that was taken for each of these children was after we left. We left, I think, August or September of '44, and then camp closed soon after that.

LN: Did you have any kids at that time of your own?

LM: We adopted one, so our daughter is an adopted daughter. She was one of the babies there.

LN: From the Village?

TN: She was a darling, cute little baby. (laughs)

LN: Is she in the Easter Sunday picture?

LM: Yes, she's on my lap.

LN: Oh, that's the one? And what's her name?

LM: Karyl.

LN: Karyl? And that was her name since she was small?

LM: Um-hm. She didn't have a name when she was sent to us.

LN: And then, that was the only child you had at that time?

LM: Um-hm. And then later, outside of camp, I had my son.

- LN: Taeko, what would you say was the major difference between the Shonien and the Children's Village? Or what similarities can you draw on the two?
- TN: Well, the thing I noticed most when we went to Children's Village and merged with the Salvation Army children, I first thought, Boy, they're rough! (laughs) Because the children, or the boys I guess you'd say from the Salvation Army home were much bigger, older teenagers, and big, and our kids were more or less younger.
- LM: Under ten. (laughs)
- TN: Uh-huh. And I thought, Boy, what a rough bunch, (laughs) but they seemed very friendly after we got to know them. I don't know if I ever gave it a thought if there was that much difference. I guess we met a lot of new people. In camp you don't just meet people at the Children's Village, you know, you meet people from outside. I don't know, I never really gave it any thought.
- LM: I think we encouraged the older children. As Taeko said, the children from the Salvation Army were older. Some were teenagers, but we encouraged them to make friends with other children in Manzanar.
- LN: Outside of the home?
- LM: Um-hm. They would be going to the same schools, attending church, and so forth. But we did restrict one thing, and I think at the fiftieth anniversary many of the children mentioned that, at every meal they should come back to the Village. See, one of the problems I think many of the families had is that they didn't know where their children were. They were gone. Then they would eat in other dining halls and so forth, and their family life kind of disintegrated there. But, we had a strict restriction that they could go and make friends and everything, but every meal, like lunch or dinner, they would have to be back to the Village for them. And they kept that. They were very good, and I think with that we had a cohesion of the children being together. They weren't scattered. So we—I hate to use the word control, but at least I think we were able to stay together.
- LN: In instances where the children misbehaved, how would you handle that? I know for instance, from talking to some of the kids that were from the Salvation Army, they told me that they were physically abused. In some instances, they were hit—I mean, in ways, not just being spanked. I'm talking they would have a line, and boys would have to crawl through other boys' legs and they'd all get swatted on the bottom.
- LM: This was at the Salvation Army?
- LN: The Salvation Army. And I'm wondering at the Children's Village and/or at the Shonien, how would you handle discipline problems?

LM: We didn't discipline like that. I think most of the time it was through talks with them and so forth, but I don't think there was any kind of physical handling of the children for disciplinary purposes, certainly not at the Shonien and not at the Village. The Shonien never did it that way.

LN: I know this might be a tough question, Lillian, but can you describe or explain kind of your philosophy, in terms of what you felt your responsibility was towards orphan children at the time of the Shonien and at the time of internment? I mean, what did you feel were your responsibilities for them?

[01:49:30]

LM: Well, after I finished school and I got the job at the Shonien, to me it was just a job. They said, We needed a caseworker, and we have nothing here in terms of a record for each family. So, I had to establish a record for every family, and I thought it was—you know, to me it was a job that I was going to do. But then, as I worked—and I think partly it was Mr. Kusumoto's philosophy and his attitudes. He was a very strict person in the Japanese sense, but he also was a very kind and gentle and understanding person. I don't think he liked to show that, but he was that way. I think I got to know his feelings about these children, children that didn't have parents, or if they had parents, couldn't be with them, and what we had to give them in place of their parents, in how we took care of them and so forth. I don't know if you've interviewed them, what they felt, what they said, but I think it sort of grew into me, his philosophy. I felt that that was part of my job then, to not be a parent, but then somebody that's older than they are that maybe they can lean on for help. I think it just carried on at the Village, more so, and I think the workers that went with us from Shonien were all workers with that kind of feeling. I don't think they would have gone with us if they didn't have that feeling that these children needed help, and we could give it to them.

LN: Did you feel maybe that your position in administration, your role wasn't necessarily to spend time with the children as much as, let's say, for Taeko or Alice? Or would you say that no, your position was that you needed to spend time with the children as well as do the administrative type of work?

LM: I think so. I didn't do any hands-on, direct care of them, you know. They had to help feed the babies, or change and bathe them, and all the other things. But then, I felt that my presence should be known, be shown that I care, and that I'm there if they need me. So, I had some of the children that, after they'd come home from school and they had problems, they would come up and talk to me, even though they were only ten, twelve years old. I think that was my plan and my feelings, that I establish some kind of—I wouldn't say, like, I'm a mother to them, not that way, but then that I was someone that they could come to.

LN: So, the physical affection wasn't really there between you and, say, the orphanage kids? I mean, would you hug—

- LM: No, you don't show physical, like, embracing them or something because you've got so many that you don't want to show to one or to the other. I think that was my feeling, but I felt their needs, not just physical needs, but their needs for attention or love or whatever.
- LN: I'm just wondering if maybe I'm looking at it coming from being raised in the generation that I'm being raised in, and you being raised at the time that you were, and I think the ideas of how people should show physical affection and stuff are different now than before.
- LM: Yes, it is.
- LN: And there is also the element of being Japanese. I mean, I know my parents are that way, too. You don't touch. You don't show that kind of thing. So, I think that for me to look at it that way is different, and I don't want it to come across that I'm criticizing you. That's not what I'm saying. It's just that I'm coming from a different time, and so I think that could be part of it. Do you see that as more of the time, being in the forties, or do you see it more as a Japanese cultural element? Or it was just a personal issue with you that you didn't want to—like you were saying, favoritism or—
- LM: Well, I think, consciously or unconsciously, I think part of it is the way I was raised by my parents, that it just fits in my personality, my attitude towards the children. Because my mother I don't think ever hugged me like a mother would do now or give me a big kiss or anything. But I never ever felt that she didn't love me. I always felt that she cared for me and loved me, and I thought she gave me that feeling in some other way. So I think it's that kind of feeling that I always had towards the children there. Each one meant something to me.
- LN: Taeko, how about yourself? How did you feel about the children and your role towards them?
- TN: You mean while I was helping to take care of them?
- LN: When you were staff in Manzanar.
- TN: At that time, I learned better later, but at the time I just kind of took it as a routine matter of taking care of them, that I should be doing this and so forth.
- LN: What kind of duties did you have or do?
- TN: You know, that part I can't—I don't know why. I'm surprising myself that I can't remember so many things in detail. I can remember helping to take care of the little ones, the little toddlers, saying goodnight to the girls, but I can't remember the regular routine. (laughs)

LN: How about since you came to Manzanar a couple months later than a lot of the other internees had already been there, what was your feeling when you got to Manzanar, coming with the orphans? Were you self-conscious that you were coming kind of as an orphanage, or did you just feel like you were just like all the rest of the internees?

LM: No, I don't remember if I had any special feeling that I was different because we had all these children, and we were bringing them there. I think my concern was to get them established, and into a feeling that this was their home now, probably just trying to keep the same feeling we had with the children at Shonien. I didn't want them isolated from the rest of the Manzanar community. We like to have them participate, the older ones. The younger ones, of course, toddlers and a little older, naturally, we had to have them with us. But, the older ones, junior high, high school, we had some. Of course, those that came from the San Francisco group, many of them were high school age, and I think we tried to have them participate in anything.

LN: Taeko, how about your feeling first getting to camp?

TN: About first getting to camp?

LN: Yeah, as an orphan yourself and then coming as a staff.

TN: When I think back, it kind of almost seemed like a dream. I mean, it didn't seem like it was a reality. I don't know. I went along with the orphanage group, and, oh, I just did what I thought I should do. I didn't have, really, any special feeling. I just kind of went along. (laughs)

LN: The reason I ask that is because I have spoken to other internees that were outside of the orphanage who said that prejudice existed among internees against orphans, that in a way orphans were kind of lower and inferior to them, just for the fact that they were orphans. I'm wondering if either of you got that feeling from the other internees.

TN: I had the feeling afterwards, not so much before because I was always with the orphan group, but it was afterwards, living day-by-day, and meeting with different circumstances. For a long, long time I had an inhibited feeling. I didn't want to really meet people. I just wanted to kind of stay away, I guess, just to isolate myself. But, after I married John I gradually started meeting people and becoming a little more vocal. And I surprise myself, (laughs) I'm a little more open than when I used to be when I was small. For many years, I was very inhibited.

LN: So, you're talking after the war?

TN: After the war. I didn't feel it so much during the time I was at the orphanage that much.

LN: Did Japanese Americans make you feel that way, or do you think it's just—

TN: Well, I just found out through different circumstances how different Japanese did look down on orphans. I had that feeling.

[02:00:00]

LN: But, not while in camp?

TN: No, not while in camp.

LN: How about while in the Shonien? Did you get that feeling from the Japanese community?

TN: No. Well, we didn't have that much contact with the outside. But, I don't know—I guess it's just the feeling or the thought that would come to me every now and then that, oh, we're kind of underprivileged. We don't have parents like some people do. I don't know. It just kind of gave me that insecure feeling, I guess.

LN: Lillian, did you get a sense of that?

LM: Well, when I was at the Shonien, there were a lot of people I knew that I talked to who would tell their children, when they were disciplining their own children, they would say, If you don't behave, if you don't do this, we'll send you to the Shonien, making Shonien a place where the children were all bad children or problem children. So, after I started working there, I learned that this was the type of things that people said in the community. Then I got a chance to speak to the church groups or the women's club and things like that in the community, or there would always be groups that would come to visit Shonien because they wanted to see the place. I think one of the main things I always tried to explain to them and dispel [was] that they shouldn't say those things because the children in the homes are not bad, problem children. In fact, I don't think we had children that were there because of any juvenile problem. They existed, but they weren't sent to the Shonien to be cared for. So, I tried to let the community people, church people, try to dispel this kind of idea, and tell them that Shonien children are children that are just as good as their own children, but they've had a problem that's beyond their control, and they have to be cared for. I think even in the Village, I'm sure people in the Manzanar community must have said the same thing. If you're not good, we'll send you there. And maybe there were parents that didn't want their children to be in contact with people in the Village, but it never came to my attention directly that any of our children faced discrimination because someone's parents said, "No, you can't play with them," or anything like that. I don't know if any of them told you that.

LN: Yeah, I have. I think a lot of times it was just subtle.

LM: Oh, I'm sure.

- LN: They would just say, You can't play with them, or you're not allowed inside their barrack, then it could be because you're an orphan. How about in terms of—I know you said that you didn't want the children to feel that they were isolated. Around the Children's Village, was there an actual fence? No?
- TN: No, no fence.
- LM: The fence that we built was not a fence to keep children in or keep outside children out. It was a fence that was built by the gardeners as a decorative piece around. So, they were made out of wood, and they planted vines and so forth, so it was part of our landscape. It was not a fence to keep anyone out or keep the children in or anything.
- LN: Did it circle the whole village?
- LM: No, I don't think so.
- TN: No, it was only on one side because we had the buildings here—
- LM: I'll bring some of the pictures tomorrow. But the back side was all lawn that the gardeners fixed, and then we had a little—what was it? A covered—what do they call those?
- LN: Gazebo.
- LM: Yes, one of those, and then the fence was built behind that. They were made out of twigs and things like that, not boards.
- TN: Then we had a lawn, a big lawn.
- LM: You know, I think in some ways other people envied [us].
- TN: Yeah, because it was really (laughs) landscaped, and we had a lawn. Other places didn't have lawns.
- LN: But, those were put in after you came in?
- TN: Oh, yes, afterwards.
- LM: Because we hired women to help. The staff that went with us more or less acted as supervisors, and then we hired women to help take care of the children. We hired a few women who did the laundry because all of the laundry had to be done by hand, and then we had a number of men who were gardeners who took care of and planted lawns and everything. I think the administration was happy because they didn't have to do any of that. (laughs) We were able to do that.
- LN: Now is it true that you had a Clifton's Cafeteria chef in the mess hall? (laughs)

TN: Oh, I can remember an experience in the dining hall. It was at breakfast time, and I was drinking a cup of coffee. And something got stuck in my teeth as I was drinking. I took it out, and it was a cockroach. (laughs)

LM: Oh, really?

TN: Oh, yes! Oh, my goodness! (laughs) Oh, I never had the experience since then, but, oh, I tell you! You don't see it, you know, because the coffee is dark. It was probably floating down on the bottom then, and I drank. It didn't go through my teeth. (laughs)

LM: We didn't hire him because we thought he was that. He was among the applicants, but he was very good. He had a good understanding of the children and helped. And then, Manzanar got pretty hot, and so in other mess halls the cooks and the kitchen help, they would all take their shirts off, so they would be completely bare on their [chest]. But, we didn't want that kind of appearance in our dining hall and kitchen because of the children. We asked the cook, who was the head of it, if he could tell his men, at least when they were serving the children or in view of the children during mealtime, that they at least put their shirt on. And they were very cooperative, very nice that way.

LN: Do you remember the chef's name, the cook's name?

LM: Do you remember?

TN: I don't know that.

LN: He was Caucasian, though, right?

LM: No, he was Japanese.

LN: Oh, he was Japanese.

LM: Japanese.

TN: I remember my husband's parents were working in our dining hall—at least the mother was. Misty was one of the gardeners.

LM: I think we had a staff that understood the children. I have to tell you one of the most memorable times we had at the Village was our first Christmas. We decided to have a Christmas program, and different age groups prepared a program: songs and skits and different things that we would present. At that time, we received some money from the administration that they told us to use as a Christmas present that we could buy for the children there. So, we used that money, and we ordered a lot of things from the Sears Roebuck catalog. (laughs) I remember for the girls they got a mirror and some set because the teenage girls there, you know, there was no mirror. So we

got a mirror that they could have to put by their bedside and combs and different things. And we ordered that with that money so they would have a Christmas gift.

But many of the churches—the retired Episcopal bishop, he was a *hakujin*. He was the Episcopal bishop in Japan, but he had retired, so he used to come up about once every two months to give Episcopal services to us who were Episcopalians. So, he got a lot of church groups, not just in California, but back east, and told them about the Village. So, that Christmas many of them sent lots of gifts for the children. Our children were very fortunate, they got lots of Christmas gifts. But, they gave a very memorable program. Do you remember?

TN: I don't remember at all. (laughs) Isn't that terrible?

LM: It was Christmas Eve that they had it. Of course, the recreation room wasn't very large, so we just included the children, the administrative staff, which was *hakujin*, and then the staffs of ours, the gardeners and the cooks and their families. Then some of the children asked if they could invite their friends. Sure, they could come. So, it was a very nice program. One of the most memorable was we had this boy, I think he came when he was about thirteen, and he came to us from Maryknoll.

[02:10:21]

TN: That must be Kenny. I remember him singing. He had a real nice voice.

LM: He had a beautiful voice, the voice before it changes, you know, like a soprano voice. I think one of the girls from that group, too, played the piano, and he sang a solo. Do you remember which one that was?

TN: I don't know.

LM: It was one of those Christmas hymns that is difficult to sing as a group, but as a solo it's a beautiful one. And he sang that. Oh, and it was beautiful! You know, the Caucasian staff were in tears.

LN: Really?

LM: So I always remember that. And then Jackson Takayame, he later became a minister and he was one of the workers there. He was the Santa Claus, and he had a way of giving the present to the children. So, I think, to me, that was one of the most memorable things that happened. That was early, just six months after we were there, the first Christmas, but it was really something.

LN: How did that make you feel? Here's Christmas and then you're in camp, I mean, on a personal level, how did that make you feel?

LM: Well, I think Harry and I tried to prepare early that we've got to do something for Christmas. It just can't be, you know, this is Christmas Eve kind of an idea, so I think

- we worked on it. The staff helped us and we worked on that. That's why it was such a successful one.
- LN: But, how about personally? I mean, not thinking about the children for a minute, how about yourself? How did you feel about your experience, being there in camp?
- LM: The whole period?
- LN: I mean, for yourself, I guess, sitting there at Christmastime.
- LM: Oh, I think I felt then that it was all worthwhile what we, Harry and I—because Harry and I debated, too, whether we should leave Shonien and go on our own as a family of two, or whether we should—at the very beginning. I think it didn't take us much time to decide no, we're going to stay with the children. That's our work. But, I'm sure at the beginning, when everything was confused, we probably thought, Should we go on our own? But, we made the decision to be with the children. So, I think that first Christmas, too, I really felt that we were right in doing what we did.
- LN: It kind of gave you a sense of self-worth or legitimization for the decision you had made?
- LM: Yes.
- LN: So, instead of seeing it in a negative way, you saw it in a positive way?
- LM: Um-hm. I don't think there was any regret once we came to camp and started working with the children that our decision wasn't right, that it was the thing we were supposed to do. Years ago, many people who went into social work felt that social work was the type of work that was self-sacrifice. You were a different kind of person, that you sacrificed your whole life for this. But, it wasn't that kind of a feeling that I had, that I was sacrificing myself, or we were, to do this job. I think we knew that it was part of our life, part of what we were supposed to do, but I think at that time, we really realized that it was the right thing to do.
- LN: Do you think that you got that sense because they were Japanese American? Or would you have felt that if they had been black children or—
- LM: No. I think at the time it was because they were Japanese Americans. They needed—
- LN: They needed someone.
- LM: Um-hm.
- LN: And no one was really there to take care of them.

LM: No.

TN: You know, I just thought about it. When Ruth and I went to the Saint Mary's Hospital for Children in New York, how was that paid for? I don't ever remember paying for the training.

LM: The Episcopal Church did because that—

TN: Oh, the Episcopal did? That's the high Episcopal—

LM: Was that Saint Mary's or Saint Luke's or something? And that was an Episcopal training school. We got Dr. Reisnyder to see if we could get you in. Did they pay anything for your daily expenses—I mean, side money?

TN: No. I went to this office that was helping the evacuees, you know, financially, and we were able to get \$25 a month from them each month while we were there, but that was the only thing. The hospital didn't give us anything except at the time when maybe the cooks were off and they gave us fifty cents to go and buy dinner somewhere. I remember walking over to Times Square, and they had a Butoni spaghetti restaurant. They had these things that revolve around, and these dishes of spaghetti that would come out. So, we'd take one, and it would be just fifty cents. (laughs) That was our dinner. We used to always walk to Times Square, but that's the only time that I recall getting anything.

LM: The church paid for your tuition and things like that.

TN: Oh, I see. I don't know why at the time I never thought, Who is paying for all this?

LN: Was this during the war?

TN: Yeah, during the war, before the war ended.

LM: It was when people started relocating to—

LN: Oh, she lives in Mexico?

LM: And she's married.

LN: Ruth, what was her maiden name?

TN: Takamune.

LN: And now her married name?

TN: Lee. She married a Chinese fellow, a very nice fellow.

LN: So, you and Ruth went to New York? That's where you relocated after?

TN: Yes, relocated. And that's where she met her husband, too, in New York.

LN: Taeko, on a personal level, what did you feel about internment, about what was happening to you, about the government?

TN: I guess, probably being in an orphanage for so long, for so many years, my mind just wasn't—(laughs) I wouldn't say it wasn't working, but I never gave much thought of things that were happening. I just kind of took it a day-by-day thing. I don't know. I never gave it much thought.

LN: So, you weren't mad or upset?

TN: No.

LN: Lillian, you weren't mad or—I mean, was there a point where you were just mad that the government—

LM: I don't think that feeling ever occurred to me.

LN: No? Not even up to this point?

LM: No, I mean, not to a point where some people are very angry now about it. I never got to that point. I feel that the evacuation was wrong, but I don't feel this anger in me about it that some people are very—some of them are kind of reawakening, or awakening that feeling now, but I don't feel it.

TN: I can see where many of the Niseis who lost their property, things like that, it really hit them hard. I can understand how they feel.

LN: Where was the rest of your family, because they were still in the Berkeley area?

LM: They went to Topaz.

LN: They all went to Topaz? Was that a possibility for you to move to Topaz, if you decided not to go with the orphanage?

LM: Well, probably Harry and I would have gone wherever the L.A. group went to. I don't think we would have gone back to—because Harry's father was living, and he was in L.A. I don't know whether we would have gone as a group with him and his sister and her husband, but I think we would have just struck out on our own.

LN: Did his family end up in Manzanar?

LM: Yes.

LN: So, you had contact with your in-laws, too?

LM: Yes.

LN: How was that? How was the experience of working in the Village with your husband? How would that have been difference if you had been single and not married?

LM: I don't know. (laughs) Probably not too different. Maybe I felt a lot more responsibility about certain things, but I don't know. Thinking back to it now, I don't know if I would have felt any different.

LN: Did it make it easier, though?

LM: I think so, with him, sure.

LN: Can you kind of explain what kind of a man he was? Or maybe, Taeko, you might want to explain.

TN: Pardon?

LN: You might want to maybe explain what kind of a man Harry was, just to get an idea of what the superintendent of the Village was like.

[02:19:47]

TN: Oh, I thought he was more on the quiet side, but I thought he was very nice. I remember when—I guess I had already graduated high school and I went and visited your sister, Kimmi, in Berkeley. That was the year when they had the World's Fair at Treasure Island. Oh, that was a wonderful experience for me because I had never ventured out, (laughs) outside the walls of the orphanage, and I really had a great time. I remember spending the day at Treasure Island. I have pictures that I—I don't know if I took [them]. I don't remember if I even had a camera. Maybe Kimmi sent it to me because I do have pictures taken with your family, your mom, and Ted and Kimmi and Grace, I remember. Then there were a few pictures taken of Kimmi and I at the World's Fair. But, I remember, when I boarded the train to go back to the orphanage, Harry came over and took my hand, and he put some change, money. It kind of took me by surprise. I was just shaking hands and here was some money. (laughs) But, he put that in my hand, you know, for my trip home. That's the first time I ever had anyone give me money like that. (laughs) It was real thoughtful and sweet of him to do that.

LM: I think he got along very well with Isseis. He spoke Japanese, real Japanese. Because I remember this thing—this was way after the war, it happened in Berkeley. It was after his funeral. One of my friends, she came to the funeral and then later she called me. I was kind of surprised she was at the funeral because I'm not that close to

- her or do things with her. But, she was at the funeral, and she said, “I wanted very much to be at Harry’s funeral because my mother always talked about him.” Her mother was gone then. But she said, “My mother always talked about him because Harry was one of the few Niseis that would drop by and just come and talk with her and spend fifteen minutes, half an hour, every once in a while and drop in.” And since then I’ve heard that from several Isseis that said it, you know. So I think he was that kind of a person, had a real sincere feeling for Isseis. He didn’t have a lot of close friends, but I think he was in contact with many people that he liked.
- LN: Even during the war?
- LM: Um-hm.
- LN: I mean, this is when he would—
- LM: This is after the war. So, I think among the Issei in Manzanar, too, I think he knew a lot of them by just talking to them.
- LN: Do you remember what year Harry was born?
- LM: Nineteen eight, I think. I think one of the early Hollywood—
- LN: When you and Harry accepted to work at the Children’s Village, did the administration tell you, This is what your responsibilities are? Or did they kind of just leave it up to you and Harry how you wanted to run the orphanage?
- LM: I think they left it very much to [us]. I think there were several people when they heard the Village was coming to Manzanar, who I think had applied to the administration, to the project manager, saying that they would like to run the place or something. But, I think they were told that we were coming, and that we would be in charge, so I think the administration had already made up their mind. No one told us when we got there that “You’re appointed” or anything. I think they took it for granted, and we did, too. (laughs)
- LN: And you and Harry were each only getting \$16 a month?
- LM: We got nineteen.
- LN: Oh, you got \$19?
- LM: That’s the professional—see, the doctors and dentists got nineteen, I think. Wasn’t that it?
- TN: Yes.
- LM: Nineteen, sixteen, and twelve, I think was the three categories.
- TN: Just think, nineteen! Oh, my goodness! (laughs)

LM: And once in a while they gave a clothes allotment. Did we get any money?

TN: I think so. I think so.

LM: About twice we did, huh, while we were living there?

TN: Uh-huh. And I remember the rebates. You went to the co-op and had the receipt and you could get rebates on them.

LM: (laughs) I'll have to bring you the picture tomorrow. The first clothing allotment they gave to the children at the Children's Village because winter was coming. And do you know what it was? Old World War I soldier's outfit. So, they dressed one of the boys—and how we had someone take this picture is—but I have this picture. It is really a very memorable picture. (laughs) Do you remember George Yanasei, that little fellow?

TN: Oh, yes, yes! He had that little uniform on. There's a picture of him, yes.

LM: That's the first clothing allotment they gave to them.

TN: Oh, yes, and I remember the pea coats that were distributed to different ones. Some of the ladies would—oh, I just admire their talent. They made real nice capes with red lining just out of regular Navy pea coats. It was amazing. (laughs)

LM: I think the government, it was easier on them that the Japanese be evacuated because they were resourceful and did a lot of things. If they were some other ethnic group, they might have had a lot more trouble, because they right away, before the project itself started, started to establish schools. The Japanese took over and had classes and many things to occupy their time, you know, not just let them sit around. Women would organize sewing classes or art classes and things like that.

LN: Oh, and all the vegetables that were grown at Manzanar were enough to feed other camps.

LM: Well, the people in the Owens Valley, which is where camp was located, started to complain because they thought that they were being deprived of vegetables, fresh vegetables, and here the people in camp were getting such nice vegetables. And there were, of course, rumors that we were getting a lot of meat and things like that, too. So, what they did was they invited people from Bishop and Lone Pine and the communities surrounding Manzanar, invited them over and gave a lunch or dinner for them. I think it was strictly vegetarian, no meat or anything was used because the amount of meat we got depended on the coupons, the meat allotment coupons of the people in the camp. So, this dinner was strictly vegetarian, but it was made of everything that was grown there. And then, when these local people went home, they were all given big bags full of all these fresh vegetables. It was a PR thing, but then it

- let them know that this was what they were doing on their own. I remember that day. It was like a big fair. (laughs)
- LN: Now there's some video footage that I've seen of Manzanar where they had displayed squash and everything out. Do you think that was the same time?
- LM: It might have been. I don't think they had it an annual affair. I just remember this one big time they had all kinds of vegetables displayed, and then the people could take them home, and they also served this great vegetable meal. (laughs)
- TN: I remember the Children's Village was right by an apple orchard, and we could get apples. (laughs)
- LN: So, could you could just pick apples off and eat them whenever you wanted?
- TN: Um-hm.
- LN: How about in the Village, when a child became eighteen, did that mean that they automatically had to leave the Village?
- LM: There was no automatic rule that they had to leave, but many of them wanted to. They felt that they were old enough to establish themselves outside of the Village, and we encouraged that. We helped them find, with the administration, a barrack that would be close to the Village, so that if they needed any help we were close by, and then they established themselves in one of those. Now some of them, like the San Francisco group, they had some older brothers and sisters that came with them, but we considered them too old to be living in the Village, so we got them assigned barracks near the Village. But, they had their own quarters, and so they didn't participate by coming to our dining room to eat or anything like that. They went to their own block dining room. But, when we had holidays, special, we'd ask the cook to make something special because it was a certain holiday. We would invite them to join their brothers and sisters. Like in the Isozaki family, the older brother, Isamo, lived outside.
- [02:30:30]
- TN: Yes, and there's Molly.
- LM: Molly, the older sister. We had them all.
- LN: And then Tamo himself.
- LM: He lived with us. Did he later join his own? I don't know. But, he lived in the Village. He never was ever a worker with us, but he was one of the older who helped John and Dick.

TN: I can recall when Fuji and I—Fuji is my sister—we went to the housing across from the Children’s Village. We took a little apartment there.

LM: Did you, later?

TN: Yes.

LN: Were you still a worker at the Village, even though you lived out of there?

TN: Yes.

LN: And she lived with you?

TN: Yes.

LN: Could the children do that at any time? If they had an older sibling who was eighteen or older, could they just leave the Village if they wanted to, if they were underage?

LM: No. I don’t think there was a strict rule, but I think we felt that they would be under better care if they stayed with us. And most of the children didn’t want to. They had their friends—and I think probably the older ones, too, unless they insisted they wanted to, I don’t think we ever forced them to take a younger sibling.

LN: How about was there a curfew, for instance, after school was out? I know you said for meals they had to come back, but after school would the children have to come back? Or was it okay for them to stay out and play with their other friends?

LM: I think we had a curfew, didn’t we? They should be back by about eight o’clock, huh?

TN: Uh-huh. But, I remember, too, when I was in grammar school staying for sports. I think that was after school. I don’t think it was during the school—

LM: You mean at Shonien?

TN: Yeah, while I was at the Shonien.

LM: But at the Village, too, I think we had some kind of curfew, didn’t we?

TN: Yeah, there was a strict rule for that.

LM: But, we participated because the boys had a baseball team that played in the league with the rest of them.

LN: They had basketball, too, didn’t they? Weren’t they called the Villagers? Wasn’t that their [name]?

LM: Probably something.

LN: I think they had a basketball team as well, and they called themselves the Villagers. I mean, the court was actually on the grounds? Within the orphanage you had baseball and basketball, right?

LM: There was a large enough open space on one side, which we never utilized, that we could make into a garden, just west of the building that was for a dining room where they played baseball. So I think other teams used that, too, didn't they, till they built the baseball diamond down by the high school?

TN: I think so. I can remember the dust storms that we had at camp. These winds that whirl around, and the kids would jump right in the middle of them. (laughs) Oh, they thought it was such fun.

LN: Were you aware of the Manzanar riot at all while you were in the Village?

TN: I've seen them. I wasn't in them.

LM: The big one, but that was more towards the administration building. I think later on some of them came up towards the hospital, but all the children all came in and they stayed in. Nobody went out. I think even the older children didn't want to go out and take part.

LN: So, you knew when it was happening, that it was occurring?

LM: Oh, yes.

TN: I remember them carrying torches.

LM: Passing by, on the way towards the hospital where they had one of the big rallies.

LN: How about communication? Was there a phone in the office in the Village?

LM: We didn't have a phone, did we? No.

TN: I don't know.

LM: I don't think so. I think Harry had to walk down—(laughs) he'd go this way, and then when one of the garbage trucks or some truck would go by, he'd get a ride because we were really on one end of the camp.

TN: Yeah, right, way on one end.

LN: You were on the opposite end of the administration.

- TN: Right, near the hospital. The hospital was close by.
- LN: Yes, on the other corner.
- LM: Yeah. We asked that we be near the hospital, and then we liked it because the apple orchard was next to us. (laughs)
- LN: How about Merritt Park? Were you close to Merritt Park, where they had the big ponds with the rocks?
- LM: That was on the other end, but then not the length of the—you know, instead of being this way—here is the hospital—we were here. It would be this way. But much of that was made even after I left. It was towards the end of camp life.
- LN: So, you left in '44?
- LM: Um-hm, September.
- LN: How did your leaving come about? Was it just a personal decision?
- LM: Personal, yeah. We decided. And I think the project director may have encouraged us. They said, The end of the camp is coming. They would start making arrangements to slowly close up, and so they—I think, too, the administration finally wanted, for the final closing of the Children's Village for the records and so forth, I think they wanted somebody from Washington to do that. So, we just decided it was a good time.
- LN: When did you adopt Karyl?
- LM: The actual adoption took place afterwards, after we left camp, but then we had filed the papers. So, although it wasn't finalized yet, they let us take her with us when we left camp.
- LN: Was she a child that her parents had passed away?
- LM: Yeah.
- LN: So, there wasn't any conflict, I mean with parents or anything like that?
- LM: No.
- LN: So, you were able to take her and then adopt her.
- LM: Then later, when the coast was opened, she must have been—she was born in '43. Maybe around '46 we opened to have it finalized, but we had to go to the court in L.A. to have that done because all this was filed in California. And there at that time,

- too, the Episcopal Church furnished the lawyers and so forth to get all the papers done for us.
- LN: Where did you and Harry go from Manzanar?
- LM: We went to Salt Lake City, with our final destination—thinking of New York. But, when I got to Salt Lake City, I found out I was pregnant, (laughs) and so Harry had some kind of a work offered to him in New York. My parents were living in Salt Lake then. They had relocated from Topaz, and Salt Lake being our original home, my father wanted to go back there. So, they were there, and so I stayed with them and Harry went on to New York. He worked in New York for—I think he decided to come back just before Kent was born in '45, the next year.
- LN: So, you had Karyl with you in Salt Lake City.
- LM: Um-hm.
- LN: And your son's name is Kent?
- LM: Um-hm.
- LN: How were you received by the people in Salt Lake City, by the whites in Salt Lake City? Were there any problems?
- LM: I don't think so. See, many of the people from Topaz relocated to Salt Lake, so Salt Lake was beginning to have a much larger Japanese American community than before the war started. So I think many of the people who live there now are people who came from the coast and other places, the native Japanese. I never felt anything.
- LN: Taeko, were you still in camp at the time that Harry and Lillian left?
- TN: Oh, no. I had left before.
- LN: When did you leave camp?
- TN: Was it '43?
- LM: Probably, about a year before. You were in camp only about a year-and-a-half, weren't you?
- TN: I think it was two years, not quite two years. I think it was '43 that I left. I went with Ruth Takamune and my sister. The three of us relocated to New York City. Ruth and I, we were accepted at the Saint Mary's Hospital for Children, and like Lillian said, it's a High Episcopal hospital and the teachers are all nuns. They wear these black habits, you know? It was the first time I had seen a nun in their habits, and I thought it was rather strange. A lot of these things, it's the first time for me, you

know. (laughs) But, I went there. My sister had gone to the YWCA to find room there, and then she took up cosmetology in camp. They gave her a course in camp, and she got her certificate for that. She found a job there in New York City as a cosmetologist then, so I was there for two years. The course was only one year, and I worked for a year. And then, I relocated to the West Coast and got married in '47.

[02:40:53]

LN: You and John met—

TN: In camp.

LN: Did you meet because he worked at the Village and you worked at the Village?

TN: He worked at the Village, yes.

LN: How did he start working for the Village?

TN: Well, I guess to help take care of the boys.

LN: I mean, he had no affiliation with the orphanage before, and he just applied for a job?

TN: Uh-huh. He used to lead the Sunday school and I used to play the piano for him. (laughs) What little piano I knew. I took up piano at the orphanage and I had received my certificate for it. I learned from a missionary who taught me how to play hymns, and if I could play a hundred hymns perfectly, then I'd get a certificate. (laughs) So, that's what I received. But, what little I knew of piano I used to play in camp for him at the Sunday school. And, when I went to Saint Mary's Hospital, I played the organ there.

LM: Oh, did you?

TN: Uh-huh. It's a pumping organ, and I did my best. (laughs) And then, afterwards, too, after John went in the ministry, I played the piano at the different churches. (laughs)

LN: So, how did you and John end up getting married? Where did he go after camp?

TN: While I was still in camp he went to Wheaton College, and he was there when I relocated to New York, and, well, we always wrote to each other. He was to go back to the West Coast because his parents were coming out of camp, and he wanted to help them settle down. So, he came over to New York City to visit me while I was training out there. I can remember we had a green uniform, nurse's uniform, with black stockings and shoes, (laughs) but when you graduated then we had our white caps and shoes. But, he came over, I remember, to see me before he went back to the

- West Coast. Then after that I worked for a year and then I went to the West Coast, and then we were married in '47.
- LN: And you went back to the West Coast in '46?
- TN: Yes, I guess it was '46.
- LM: And Harry gave you away. (laughs)
- TN: Oh, yes!
- LN: Oh, did he really? (laughs)
- TN: Harry gave me away, right. I almost forgot about that. (laughs) We were married in the Christian Missionary Alliance Church in Santa Monica, I remember.
- LN: And then, you had how many kids out of that marriage?
- TN: I have three, two girls and a boy. They're all married and have children. I have five grandchildren. Joy lives in Pinole, and Peter lives in central California in Clovis, and Jeanne lives in Ohio. But, we meet together at least once a year for a reunion.
- LN: And then, Lillian, you have your daughter Karyl and your son Kent and how many grandchildren? One?
- LM: One. (laughs)
- LN: A granddaughter.
- LM: Karyl was married, but she's divorced and then she's never remarried. So, my son is the only one that has a child.
- TN: Karyl, I understand, is getting her term as president of the San Mateo JACL.
- LN: Oh, really?
- TN: Yes, so she's active with the JACL.
- LN: That reminds me, I think it was in Clara Hayashi's⁶ interview she had said something about you had received an award from the emperor of Japan, or you were recognized or something?
- LM: No, when I went to Japan I was supposed to take—the Shonien had celebrated maybe twenty-five years of existence or something, and at some time the emperor of Japan

⁶ Clara Hayashi, O.H. 2334, Center for Oral and Public History.

had given Shonien some kind of recognition. Maybe it was a donation in the form of money and something. We didn't know whether this would go through or not, but the Counsel General in Los Angeles wrote some letters and something of introduction, and I was supposed to meet a certain person in Tokyo that would give me—well, a thank you letter was written directly to the emperor, I think, or whoever represents him. And so, the opportunity came up that they would receive me—not the emperor, but this—whatever title he had, and it would be on the grounds of the Imperial Palace. So, I got a chance to cross that main moat and go inside of the first gate. There are certain gates you can't go beyond, so I was able to be beyond the first gate, so I was able to go beyond the first gate, and in a very formal meeting, present this letter to this man who had a title, I guess, that represented the emperor. So, that's as close as I got. (laughs)

LN: Is this the reason why you went to Japan?

LM: No, I just went with my mother. She had come in 1912, and she had never been back to Japan. This was in 1939, and she wanted to go. So, I took almost six months off from the Shonien and went with her. Mr. Kusumoto thought, well, this is a good opportunity, we'll try. We didn't know if we would succeed, (laughs) but it was an honor for me.

LN: So, did you get any money out of that?

LM: Oh, no, no. (laughs) I guess, to me, you know, to cross that moat and go through the gate, I guess it was a very high honor and something. But, when others of my relatives heard of that, oh, they thought it was such—you know, because they said, None of us, even a Japan-born native, unless there was some very particular reason, would never be given an opportunity to do that. So, that meant more to them than I guess to me. (laughs)

LN: When you left the Village to relocate, how was that emotionally for you? Or what was your feeling about leaving?

LM: It was kind of sad because I felt like I'm leaving all these children, you know. And a lot of them—what's going to happen to them? Their future wasn't determined yet. But, on the other hand, I had met the person who was going to be in charge, and worked with her for two or three months before we left, worked with her, telling her about some of the cases, some of the children, and how to deal with them and so forth. So, I don't know whether I felt that everything was left in good hands or not, but then I felt that she could do the work. The main thing was not about whether the Village was going to be demolished and be gone, but it was what's going to happen to the children there?

LN: Right. Did you make an announcement to them that you were leaving, or did you just not say anything and leave?

LM: Oh, they knew, yeah. Gradually, they knew. So, I have things that they made for me. Some of the girls made little things and brought them to me.

LN: Do you still have those things?

LM: One of them I do, but some of them got lost along the way.

TN: Whatever happened to Mrs. Ichida?

LM: Mrs. Ichida and her husband, who was a Salvation Army officer, they accompanied the children from the home. They had two boys, and, of course, he worked with the Japanese ministry group, but she worked with us. They didn't live in the Village, but she was the good contact with her group that came. I don't think she worked directly with them up there as a social worker or anything, but then she knew the ways of the Salvation Army, so when these children had problems, the older ones, she could help us. But, she was a nursery school teacher, so she conducted a nursery school for the younger ones that weren't old enough to go to school yet. Then they relocated to Cleveland, where he [was] assigned to some Salvation Army position there. I know he passed away, but we've just gradually lost contact with her. I think when the Salvation Army group—not the children but the whole Japanese group—had some kind of anniversary several years ago, they tried to contact her and find her, but I think they were unable to find her.

[02:50:55]

LN: Tamo went to that, so I can ask Tamo what happened with that. He might know something about that.

LM: When we had our fiftieth, the Children's Village, I gave them, Tamo, the last address I had. Because we sort of corresponded for a little while, and then it goes to sending Christmas cards, and then gradually that fell off, too. So, I only had this one address. I gave that to Tamo, but he told me that they received no reply.

LN: Both of you went to the reunion?

LM: Um-hm.

LN: What motivated you to go to the reunion?

TN: I'm sorry. I'm getting hard of hearing and I have to have people repeat. (laughs) I didn't quite get your last [question].

LN: For the Children's Village reunion, why did you want to go?

TN: Why? Oh, I wanted very much to see the former Children's Village kids, see how they were and what they were doing. (laughs) That's what I wanted to see.

LN: Is that the same with you?

LM: I think so.

TN: Because it had been so many years, fifty years then, and I was just so surprised that one of the girls at the Children's Village was a grandmother. One of the twins, the Salvation Army girl twins, a grandmother, and I couldn't believe it. (laughs)

LM: Well, like Clara, when she was in camp she was only what, twelve, thirteen years old, Clara Niguma [Yakushi]?

TN: Yes, something like that.

LM: Some of them, it was very interesting because they brought their children, and even their grandchildren, to let them know that their mother had been actually in camp and that these were her friends. These were the other children, so to say, that they grew up with and stayed in camp together, and they wanted their children and grandchildren to know. Clara brought a large family group with her. Then there was one girl who must have been only about three, and then her parents had died, and so eventually they were sent to their aunt and uncle, who in the beginning—they lived in Washington state, and I think that at the beginning of the evacuation, or later, they didn't want to take these children, I guess with their own personal problems. But, by the end of the war, they accepted these two girls, so they went up to live with them. But, at the reunion this girl told me, she said, "I'd ask them about my parents or anything, and they would never tell me. They would keep saying, 'We'll tell you later,'" as they grew up. Now she has children of her own. But the other thing was, too, she said, "Sometimes I wonder did I really live in a place called Children's Village? Was there other children there, or is this just a fantasy of mine, that I think that during internment that I lived in a place like this?" So she said, "I came because I had to know." And when others said, "Oh, we lived there, we did this—" and then she said, "I know now that I was there, that it was real." So, I think many of them had different reasons for coming, but they wanted to find out.

LN: Do you think that at the Children's Village that there was a sense of family, or do you think it was just a bunch of kids that were living together, that it was—

LM: I think there was a feeling of family. Don't you think that morning at the breakfast many of them got up and almost gave a testimony? A lot of tears and so forth, that they realized that living at the Village meant something to them, and being together. "And here now," he said, "we've found our family, others that we grew up with." So, I think they felt—I don't know. Some of them might have felt that they were isolated. They were young and I think many of them did, but others found that when they came to the fiftieth, maybe they got a different feeling or meaning.

- LN: Do you have any idea why none of the Maryknoll children showed up to the reunion, and to my knowledge, none of them are willing to talk about their experience? Do you have any idea why that might be?
- TN: I don't know. I'm sure they were contacted.
- LM: How many came?
- LN: There were only seven, I believe.
- LM: Seven children from Maryknoll, and one of them was a family, Hondas, who had two girls and two boys.
- TN: Right, I remember the Hondas.
- LM: I don't know.
- TN: I never heard that.
- LM: Maybe living and being cared for before they came to the Village by the nuns, maybe their feeling of closeness as a family wasn't there. I don't think I want to speculate in any way. (laughs)
- LN: Were all of the kids required to go to some sort of church on Sundays?
- LM: No, they weren't required. Some went to the Protestant, some went to the Catholic church, and I guess some went to the Buddhist church. I think we were saying, you know, Sunday school, and so different ones went to different ones. So, I think everyone sort of—it was, "I'm going here, I'm going there." We just did that as a Sunday morning practice. No one was forced to go, and if they didn't want to go, they didn't have to. I guess they went where their friends went, too. (laughs)
- LN: Well, I guess to sort of wrap it up for this afternoon, why don't each of you tell me what you're doing now in your present life? We've gone from when you were born up until camp and the reunion. What are you doing now?
- TN: Well, I'm actively involved with our church, and we have our different meetings at the church. And then we have a—well, they are retired, but this group is just all singles, whether they're divorced or never been married, or they're widowed. If we just took one group at a time, it would be a little—I wouldn't say that small, but our church being small, we thought we'd just merge together and make one group, so we call ourselves the Singles Group. We don't have any title. I did ask for any suggestions for a title, and somebody said, "Well, how about the Golden Girls?" (laughs) We had that for a few months, and then one of the girls said, "Golden Girls? I don't feel that old." (laughs) So anyway, we don't use that anymore. I know there's other churches where they have retired groups, you know, they call

themselves, well, Fifty Plus and Up, or they call themselves—what was that over at my son's church they call themselves? Oh, one of them is Second Wind. Oh, I can't think of any names. But, we have about twenty-six in our group now, and I'm involved with another girl. We take charge of the group and we have girls—in fact, just the two of us were taking care of planning the thing each month, but it got to be quite a heavy responsibility and a load. So, we suggested, well, let's get the girls together and then have the girls sign up two at a time for each month of the year, and have them plan as to what we're going to do, where are we going to go and all that, so it's working much better.

I am actively involved in the walking group. We go to Hilltop. There's about five, six from our church, and then, there's other girls in the same class. They call themselves the Mall Walkers, and we walk for three miles Tuesdays and again on Thursdays. Then we're planning to go Bay to Breakers this Sunday. (laughs) And I get involved with my grandchildren, babysitting.

[03:00:26]

LN: Lillian, how about you?

LM: Well, after camp, with my two children, I didn't go back to work of any kind. I waited till they had grown up. When they were both in high school, I decided I'd start working again. I worked at the University [of California, Berkeley] in the Biology Library, and I became their circulation head in Biology. I worked there for ten years. Then I was transferred to the main library, and then I was in charge of the inter-library lending division, and I headed that for another ten years. In 1979, I finally retired, and I'm retired now. (laughs) So, I haven't joined any group or done anything particularly spectacular or anything after that. My life revolves around my granddaughter. That's about it. (laughs)

LN: That's nice. Well, I want to thank both of you for your time and your cooperation today, and the information that you've given us—I know a lot of it, I'm sure it was hard to bring up those memories, but it was greatly appreciated. And I think it will help in terms of preserving history and what the Children's Village was about and letting people know what it was about. So, I thank you for that.

LM: Well, thank you for being interested in it.

LN: We'll turn this off now.

END OF INTERVIEW