

"Japanese American Farmers' in the San Fernando Valley Before and
After WWII Oral History Project"

Bo Sakaguchi

Oral History Interview
19 March, 2004

Interview conducted by
Teddy Avila
Yen Hoang

Transcription Summary

Bo Sakaguchi

Oral History Interview Introduction

Narrator: Mr. Bo Sakaguchi

Occupation: Retired Dentist

Address: 9145 Jellico Avenue Northridge Ca. 91325

Date of Interview: March 19, 2004

Length: 133 minutes

Session: 1

Place: Mr. Sakaguchi's home

Subject: "Japanese American Farmers' in the San Fernando Valley Before and After WWII.

Interviewer: Teddy Avila

Camera Person: Yen Hoang

Teddy Avila/ Yen Hoang
AAS 390
Prof Chen

Abstract Summary

Our first interview with Bo Sakaguchi went as planned. When we first got there we politely introduced ourselves so we can build ground with him before the interview. We talked for about thirty to forty-five minutes talking about careers and life in general. It is very important that you build some sort of ground with your interviewee so that the interviewee can open up and feel comfortable. Bo felt very open and comfortable therefore giving us a great interview with a lot of information about farming and before and after WWII. As we were building ground with Bo, we looked around for an ideal place to hold the interview. We held the interview in the dining room with a nice backdrop. The camera and microphone was properly set and the interview began.

Within the first question of being asked, Bo immediately got into the interview.

Bo provided thorough answer that really answered in great detail.

One subject he really informed us about was life on the farm. Life on the farm was a real struggle. Bo explained how his father saw farming as a great way to take advantage of his kids to work on the farm. Bo explained their daily routines and how him and his siblings were constantly working on the farm. He explained the type of crops being grown and what was done to them after being grown. Mostly bunching crops were grown. Crops were often brought to farmer markets and prepared immediately for sale. Bo also described how life on the farm was often a struggle, but as time went on, the struggle seemed to lighten. New appliances and bathroom facilities, which were acquired by their mother little by little, made life for Bo's family easier. Bo has many fond memories of her mother.

Bo's stressed throughout the interview that his mother stressed education greatly to all her children. His relationship with his mother seemed good, but Bo always mentioned his mother promoted education. All of Bo's brothers and sisters were highly educated. They either attended UCLA, USC, or a known medical school either here in the west or back east. Their father seemed to just go along and listen to his wife when making decisions about education. Bo's father was concerned about paying for their children's tuition, so the father worked hard with the whole family and paid for their college tuition through farming. The Sakaguchi family was a hard working family with education as a priority. As education continued, internment began.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, Bo and his family were sent to Manzanar. Bo recalls the day they were sent to camp. He recalls they had to leave behind everything. Only clothes and their basic necessities were brought along. Their land was left with a caretaker and later sold. Bo says that Manzanar took away their Constitutional rights. Bo said that Manzanar was a struggle as well, but it was not as tough as people seem. The toughest part was their Constitutional rights being limited. Their careers were still being practiced and life in Manzanar was limited.

Bo Sakaguchi was an ideal interviewee. He was cooperative and he was very open. Bo answered all question the best way possible and really held nothing back.

He made sure that the question being asked was answered to the best of his ability and

memory. We later thanked Bo for his time and his great effort in helping us in our project. He later lent us valuable photos and labeled them for future reference.

Bo Sakaguchi Oral History Video Tape Index

Min Topic Summary

- 000 Introduction for the interview explained by the interviewer
- 001 General overview of the San Fernando Valley in the early stages of the Sakaguchi Family
- 003 Tough times during farming life and what they did with the produce after being Picked
- 005 Experiences with his mother, her new home appliances and her role in the family
- 006 Siblings educational history in schools and in college
- 007 More Farming experiences
- 008 The demographics of their neighbors around the farm and different land marks around the farm
- 010 Occupations of their neighbors/ demographics of other Asian background neighbors

- 011 Farm life hardships
- 012 Parents and their decision residing in the San Fernando Valley
- 013 The struggles to pay for school 1 tuition
- 014 Arriving in the San Fernando Valley and purchasing and buying land
- 016 Description of the new household appliances, facilities and over experience with them
- 020 Past farming experiences of their parents
- 021 The types of crops grown and what crops were in demand
- 023 What his mother stood for

- 024 Relationship of their between their parents
- 025 Description of his mother
- 026 Role of his brothers and sisters
- 027 Hiring for help on the farm and his role on the farm
- 029 Decision making within the family
- 030 Societal hardship/property ownership/Alien Land Law
- 033 Growing up on the farm and class school experiences with friends
- 035 Household experiences/ equality within the siblings
- 037 Describing his older brothers and their experiences
- 040 The availability of spare time spent with parents
- 042 Level of strictness of parents and the behavior of the children
- 043 The presence of the closest family relatives
- 044 Japanese Customs and Values
- 045 Medical Care within the family
- 046 Family get together experiences
- 047 San Diego Exposition
- 048 Ethnic make up of his school
- 049 His friends of Caucasian descent
- 050 Describing his friends parents
- 052 Religion within the family
- 054 Marriage within the family

056	Marriage with his current wife and their wedding day and honeymoon
057	His father's development of cancer
058	Manzanar
059	Mexican American in the camp
060	Discrimination within fraternities in dental school
102	Keeping up the farm during internment by hiring an individual
104	Families role in Manzanar
107	Views on the government during the war
110	Post Pearl Harbor and its affect and its impact on their family
111	Deprived of their constitutional rights
113	What was done with the farms equipment and personal item's
115	Ownership of land during internment
118	The gathering of personal belongings and what happened to them
122	Experiences in Manzanar
125	Awaiting draft for the Army during post internment
129	Early release of family members and their role post internment
133	Concluding statement.

Interviewee: Bo Sakaguchi [BS]

Interviewer: Teddy Avila [TA]

Date: March 16, 2004

Subject: "Japanese American Farmers' in the San Fernando Valley Before and After WWII"

Transcription Summary

[001] TA: I would like to get a sense of what you; the San Fernando Valley was like growing up there.

Can you tell what it was like and how it has changed?

[001] BS: San Fernando Valley, the population of maybe 50,000, 100,00. My grammar school Class had about 30 students per half grade. We moved to North Hollywood in 1931, and we started farming there, but prior to that, my folks prior to that lived on Victory and Alameda, they had a five acre farm, I was only five years old, so I went to a grammar school, which was about a block away, and I don't remember too much about farming at that time. Then we moved to north Hollywood in 1931 because we had a big family, there was seven of us. He was a gardener till the mid-twenties until he began farming. He knew by farming, he could take advantage of the children in the family to work on the farm, and would be inexpensive. We started farming and we moved to North Hollywood and we had twenty acres and as the farm progressed, during the time of the depression, there were many tough times, I remember we would work hard, pick our crops, bunch it, crate it, bring it down to downtown Los Angeles and two days later where we take our next crop, we took our crops daily but later we would get a report saying later that the vegetables were dumped. Farming was tough in the early thirties. There was a time in the early 30's when green onions were scarce. And my dad happened to plant a lot of green onions, and so

we made a lot of money, so from there, we were able to expand our little four room house at least into a dining room area. The North Hollywood farm never had indoor plumbing, what we did have was a Japanese Fudo. You would heat the water underneath by fire, we would all take turns going into the tub, you would wash yourself outside, soak into the hot water, and then you would come out. Farming was so bad one period of time I remember we bought a little electrical stove. That was a big improvement over a kerosene stove where you had to do the cooking. We had an electric stove, we had a range, we had an oven, my mom could cook biscuits, or bake a cake. Going on those day that it would rain, cause she would work five six days a week, we looked forward to rainy days because our mom would cook make or bake something. One day we had an electric oven, I saw my mom turn on the electric burners, there were wire coils, she started Putting salt in them, and I asked her momma, why you doing that, momma I don't remember the reason she gave me, but I remember the next day when I came home from school, our white range was gone, it was repossessed. So farming was pretty bad, but things got better, our crops got better and we were stating to make money. My mother was the one who really encouraged education. So she encouraged for all of us to become doctors.

Summary: This was a great opening that Bo provided the viewer. It was a great opening because it really introduced what him and his family went through during tough farming times. Bo provided detailed information about his families coming to the San Fernando Valley. His honesty about the true real hardships of farming was great. Bo's mentioning of his house and the new acquired appliances in the home was good for the reader to imagine there lifestyle at different

times. When farming did not work, Bo mentioned that appliances were repossessed. His father mentioned that his father decided to pursue farming because he saw the idea of using and taking advantage of his children to work on the farm inexpensively. I think Bo maybe the ideal Nisei when it comes to farm work, struggles and opportunity. Bo's mother was very smart to encourage education. I can tell his mother was nice and pushed them harder to survive as students first. Their mother really set the path and dreams for her kids.

[007] TA: Can you describe to me you what your house looked like?

[007] BS: The one in North Hollywood was a four-room shack. It had a sink, no built-in's, a refrigerator, or maybe an icebox, and then when we made a little money we bought a cold spot sears refrigerator, and then of course our toilet facilities were out housed, about hundred yards from the house, and we had a barn, a mule and a horse and we raised our own chickens and we raised our own turkeys for Thanksgiving and chicken to eat. I think I remember we even raised one pig, we had a dog, he just barked, and then in 1938 we got a caterpillar tractor and that this time all our disking, tilling the soil was done by a horse, and when my brothers and sisters started school, we hired a Mexican American man who came in and helped. And we also hired Mexican American men who helped picked the produce. Labor was very cheap, I remember paying him \$.15 an hour, and close to the war in 1941, I think it up to about to \$.40 an hour.

Summary: The description of his house was very detailed. The four-bedroom shack that Bo described brought out the hardships that dealt with farm life. The lack of built in appliances were not standard for any house during the time, but appliances later gathered making cooking more accessible. The bathroom, which was 100 yards away from the house, was surprising. There was no running water and warm water was obtained by firewood. A barn with chickens, turkeys and pigs were also part of their farm, as well as handy tractors.

[040] TA: As you spent time with your parents outside work, which parent did you noticed to be stricter?

[040] BS: They were both strict. I wouldn't say they were really strict, I don't remember them being that strict. They were strict, but not brutally strict.

TA: Do you ever remember you or any of your siblings getting into trouble?

BS: No, No we never had. Pretty much you know the old saying amongst Japanese Family's or the famous saying between Japanese family are "Don't embarrass the Family," So we all behaved.

Summary: Simple yet short was this passage, but it explained how Bo's family was well behaved. Their parents did not have to be strict to get their point across. The saying is very useful not only for Japanese family but all families. It is great that no one in his or her family got in trouble. Some would think that they would easily get in fights especially if confronted especially if they were discriminated on during or even after the war. Nisei are one of the nicest people I have come across.

TA: When your parents didn't work, what kinds of activities did you and your family do?

BS: When my parents didn't work, like I said, the only time had a family get together was at a family picnic. That was the only time the family would spend time together. Other than that they worked. On a rainy day, like I said, my mother didn't have to go to work, if we had the oven she would bake something or she made doughnuts at time, those were good especially if the oil was fresh. We looked forward to rainy days cause that meant she didn't have to work and she would stay home and cook.

Summary: Family outings were not a common thing within the Sakaguchi family. Bo only remembers going out to picnics and his mother's cooking. Bo went on complimenting his mother's cooking, specifically baking. Bo and his brothers and sisters hoped and waited for rainy day because that would guarantee indoor activities while their mother cooked and baked goodies. There was no typically outing like malls, amusement parks, movies and sporting events. In the Sakaguchi family, only family time was in their reach.

[056] TA: Bo you are now happily married, can you tell me little more about your spouse?

[056] BS: My wife's name is Ikuyo; she graduated from UCLA in statistics. I met her at a dance. Right after I finished dental school, we went to a church dance, I spotted her, and I decided would stick around you and that's what I did. We were married in a Buddhist Church in Downtown Los Angeles, we had a reception at a Chinese restaurant, we had about 200 friends I guess and we took a honeymoon to Acapulco. That was in 1956.

Summary: Bo really concentrated school before he dated. You can tell by this because he met his future wife after he finished dental school. Most importantly, this time was after the war. Bo just came back from camp. I would find that the Japanese in the camps did not or very rarely date each other. The setting was bad enough for even the littlest type of fun was not possible. Camp may have put out a feeling of family togetherness and survival of the strong.

[057] BS: Once we were in Manzanar, my father developed cancer of the throat. In order to get radiation treatment, they couldn't do that at the hospital in Manzanar, he had to go to Salt Lake City. I accompanied him to Salt Lake City, we would be nearby cause he worked at a country club in the suburbs of Salt Lake City, and I worked as a dishwasher in downtown Salt Lake City. and we stayed there for about two weeks. Maybe stayed there two months. And then we went back to Manzanar, this is in 1944, by then I had finished High School, and I also worked as a cover reporter for the Manzanar free press. The things I remember most was there was a Mexican American kid who had gone to Manzanar. We knew he wasn't of Japanese extraction, but he claimed he was of Japanese Extraction so that he could go to camp. I remember talking to him in the free press office when our Managing editor comes in, he has just come from the camp directors' office, and he said, did you know there is a Mexican American in camp! All of us high school kids knew who he was cause we all talked to him, they did not know he was Mexican American until he got drafted. He was Ralph Mazo, his daughter is married to my nephew, what

a small world.

Summary: Bo was interrupted during studies as a college student studying dentistry. Bo and his family still managed to look for jobs during camp. Bo worked on the outskirts of Salt Lake Utah as a dishwasher nearby his father who was receiving treatment for his ailing throat. Bo, who was able to obtain jobs even during the war showed a good sign of how society viewed and treated Japanese American. Society had a decent outlook on Japanese Americans despite the hardships going on. Another interesting and funny situation Bo experienced during his stay in camp was him coming across a Mexican American who faked he was Japanese so he could go to camp. Many unanswered questions remain, but Bo and his fellow friends in camp knew and welcomed the Mexican American. Soon later, the truth of his background surfaced as he got drafted. The wanting of a non- Japanese American wanting to go to camp explains that treatment there was not all that bad. I remember Bo telling that the hardest part of Camp was the weather and knowing that their Constitutional Rights were taken away.

[102] TA: Now we are going to turn to the subject of internment. Bo I would like for you to discuss the time immediately before executive order 9066.

[102] BS: Well my parents knew we would continue farming. So they continued to plow and grow new crops, they did not know if they were able to pick and harvest them, but they continued to grow them. Then the government arranged for people interested in farming to meet with with people with Japanese that had farms for sale. That is how we meet this person that took over our farm. He was a building contractor, but of course at that time, there was not much demand to build homes. In order to avoid the draft he bought the farm. I think he farmed the land for about a year, or maybe long enough to pick the crops that we grew. We tried to teach him everything we could about farming, I guess he didn't want to continue. The farm was eventually closed up and I don't know what he did with the equipment. We did have a home which we moved onto the property in which we retained. He moved out, and rented it to somebody else, and that was my first experience with a Filipino American. The person that rented the house paid for a few months but after a while the rent stop coming. We hired an attorney, but the attorney didn't do much. So the income was lost, we could have used that money. In camp my mother was a nurses aid, she earned a big twelve do liars a month, that wasn't much you know when you have a brother in medical school. My father was a farm laborer and he got paid twelve dollars a month, I worked as a cup reporter and we got paid twelve dollars a month.

My brother was a dentist in Manzanar and he got paid fourteen dollars a month. While we were in high school, my neighbor and I delivered oil to the apartments, for the oil burners for warmth. I think we got paid ten dollars a month. We would deliver oil to the apartment every evening.

Summary: Bo and his family stood strong yet sometimes helpless when trying to save their farm. Before Bo and his family left for camp, they cropped and picked as much as they could before they left. Life was difficult now for the Sakaguchi family. The Sakaguchi family had just sent most of their children to college and medical school, and all of a sudden a war has broke out and slowed everything in their tracks. Their farm was taken care of briefly by a person they met through a government ran agency. Here that tried to teach as much as they could to the person. Financial troubles began to linger and rent and spending money soon began scarce. Combined in monthly paychecks, individuals in and around camp earned twelve to fourteen dollars a

month. From the stories that Bo has told, Camp was a normal type of community. Bo was still able to attend school and his parents and brothers were able to hold jobs. Bo found jobs in areas of the Manzanar newspaper delivering oil for heat burners during the winter. Manzanar seemed very organized and provided the basic necessities for the Japanese Americans.

[110] TA: Dating back, do you remember Pearl Harbor day.

[111] BS: Yes on Pearl Harbor day on a Sunday morning we were out on the farm picking weeds and a sales representative, a fertilizer representative, used to sell products he came, he came and said did you know Japan bombed Pearl Harbor? Of course we were in disbelief and yet everybody knew that we were going to go to war. The United States was putting squeeze on the Japanese was lord, in preventing them from buying the used T.F graft steel and other items. The Japanese government being stupid as they were by declaring war on this nation. Financially post war, they conquered those countries anyway. It was a very devastating day, I remember the next day in what we call the home room class we all sat and listened to the famous F .D .R speech about the day of infamy I remember sitting opposite me in school, a Jewish immigrant, he was my age, and his father was in thy movie business, and when Franklin Roosevelt declared war, he sat opposite started to applaud and he was so happy and I couldn't understand why. Because the way the Jews were treated by Hitler was so horrible, I guess he knew he had a chance and something good would happen to his race.

[70]TA: Going back to Pearl Harbor, what was going through your mind the days after?

[70]BS: The days after, it is hard to remember. We were treated pretty fairly, no one picked on us. But when going down we started to hear about the evacuations, being removed and taken away from school, it was very difficult to concentrate on studies and I know my grades were and so we continued to work on the farm. It was hard to concentrate on studies.

Summary: Pearl Harbor day is probably the hardest and toughest feeling that any Japanese American could feel. Such words used were devastating, surprised and shocked. It was a Sunday morning when news got out. Bo and his family were on the farm working when they heard the news. Bo recalls having trouble concentrating in school. This went for many young Nisei's. Bo immediately saw his grades drop. Bo was always thinking about being sent of to camp and being sent away. Surprisingly, neither Bo, nor his siblings were mistreated in school. Teachers in Bo's school told him to say anything if anyone picked on them. Despite the devastating news, Japanese Americans were treated fairly by other Americans. The understanding and reasons for Pearl Harbor and the government relationships between US and Japan were clear to Bo. Bo showed anger towards the Japanese Government because he knew it was a bad decision to go to war with the US. Bo explained how he knew that the US and Japanese were eventually going to go war. That is why Pearl Harbor was so devastating to many Japanese Americans. It initiated the war in the worse way. In a way were Japanese Americans were gathered and put to camp for precaution. Pearl Harbor was so devastating; it took away the Constitutional rights of fellow Americans.

[71]TA: What impact did it have on you and your family?

[71]BS: We had to leave the security of our home. We were going to a place we knew nothing about. We didn't know we would be treated. I remember my parents saying this is the United States and so therefore I am sure they will treat us fairly. That is probably the difference between the way the Germans treated Jews and the way we were treated in the United States. We were treated fairly though we were deprived of our constitutional rights. We always felt like second class citizens because here you were citizens of the United States and being treated as a foreigner, as a member of the family of the other side of the war. Until we got our apology and redress that felt on my shoulders for 40 years from the time of the war until Reagan gave us the apology.

[72]TA: Did any of your parents or family members get taken away prior to interment?

[72]BS: No. We had the Farmers Association and our Japanese School. In other areas, officers of those associations were arrested and taken away. But in North Hollywood about a year prior to that there was a publisher of the Japanese Vernacular and he advised in his newspaper that it would be wise if people of the Japanese associations would change the names of their officers and put them in the names of United States Citizens. In North Hollywood my sister became an officer instead of my father and same thing with the other officers of the organizations. When the FBI came looking for all these people who were officers of these organizations, in North Hollywood and they found out that they were US Citizens and no one was arrested. From that standpoint, our family was lucky that we were not broken up because they were the heads of organizations.

[74]TA: Before you were sent to the internment camps, what did your family do with all your property and belongings?

[74]BS: We stored whatever we could. We had a little shed in the back of our home and we stored belongings we did not care about too much; our beds, our mattresses, our household stuff, our farming equipment that we did not sell and whatever few other things we had. We stored them in the little shed.

The farm equipment was sold to the person who bought our farm. We did not have any of that. The shed remained intact, though they may have broken into it, they saw that there was nothing of value in there so they did not steal or destroy the shed. We had a refrigerator and sofa, we had a sofa that was fairly nice. We had a dining room table. The government said they would store those items during the war. Those items were stored and the rest of it we did not store at all. They were returned to us. Cameras were confiscated and taken to a police station immediately after Pearl Harbor. They were never returned, we never did get our camera returned or our short wave radio.

[76]TA: Who owned the land and what significance did that play? Was the land on a mortgage?

[76]BS: We were fortunate in that the land where our home was in North Hollywood, we had bought it at a state auction and so it was free and clear. The other property we had in North Hollywood close to 15 acres, that was free and clear and we bought it because the prices of green onions were good. The other farmland that we farmed was rented, I do not believe there was a lease, so the rental deed was taken over by the farmer who bought our farm. I was talking to our neighbor friend and I never knew what happened to his farm. His farm was bought by Mr. Vandera who was the owner of Von's Grocery store. When they

returned from the war from camp, he hired them to work at the store. Mr Vandera continued farming during the war.

[77]TA: With photographs in mind, what did your family do with the family photographs?

[77]BS: We did not have too many because we had experienced a fire just before we moved. Most of our family photographs were lost in the fire. We had some old Japanese records, those we threw up in the attic and we had a couple of Japanese dolls, I do not know what happened to them, we might have thrown them away because everything ethnic we were throwing away. We were afraid, even though the records were 78 rpm, they were not of anything anti-war or anything but we were afraid to have them because they were Japanese. When you have got the face of the enemy, you are in trouble kid.

[78]TA: With so many things accumulating within the past years, what did your family decide to take to the relocation center?

[78]BS: You were not allowed to take too much. I think you were allowed a huge suitcase. You just took clothes, you did not take any personal possessions. Like I said, one little carpet and one convertible sofa, we stored it with the government. There was a period in 1943 when there started to be more room in the barracks for people to have, we were able to send for that carpet and little piece of sofa and have a semblance of home life in our little apartment. That was in about 1944 or so. Other than that the only thing you could take was what you could carry.

[79]TA: Was there anything you wanted to take but could not?

[79]BS: We were not rich. I did take a bicycle but at that age I did not care if I had one or not. You are not wealthy so you do not have a lot of possessions. We might have taken a radio, I do not remember. You could not take cameras, they were taboo. You were only encouraged to take clothes because you had to take warm clothes and cool clothes too for cold climate and warm climate. You could not take much of anything.

[80]TA: Besides the items that were taken with you and your clothes, did your parents sell of the other items?

[80]BS: We were fortunate in that...well, we did sell off our items. We had a Fordson Tractor, which was only about a year old tractor. We had to sell that to the farmer who took over our place. We sold all our equipment we had. We were little luckier. I had a high school buddy in Manzanar who was so bitter at a specific ethnic group and I never understood why until he told me that they lived on Turtle Island and people who lived there had 24 hours to vacate their home and get off the island. A lot of those families were headed by a father who was a fisherman. All the fisherman were arrested and taken away by the government. Now the one who is the oldest is gone, so now the children had to sell or try to get friends to help them move out of the Turtle Island area. He said used furniture salesman would come by in their horse and buggy carts and offer them \$5 for a brand new refrigerator and ridiculous prices like that. He was so bitter, I could understand why because, they were taken advantage by because they could not move their things. Anything they could not move they left and the government destroyed it or took it or some scavengers took it because they had to get off the island. Unless you had a relative who was living not on the island, you had no place to go. A lot of them had to go to churches to find a place to stay. They

lost all their goods and possessions, they could not move them. For those people I really feel sorry. At least we were able to sell. We sold it for 10cents on the dollar which was not much but at least we sold it.

[82]TA: With all interment locations, which location did your family go to?

[82]BS: We went to Manzanar which is about 15 miles or so north of Lone Pine, CA. It was desert country, beautiful background over the high Sierras but horrible windstorms and the ground being newly dug up, whenever the wind blew we had these horrendous whirlwinds and the dust would be so thick you could barely see your hands in front of you. When the windstorm stopped you looked into the mirror and you were just coated with brown dirt. To think, we had to breathe all that too. Our apartments were built out of fresh wood and the flooring, the wood may have been together as they were built but by the time the wood dried, we had a quarter inch space between each slat of wood, and then the wind would blow from underneath it and we would have our whole room covered with dust. The bed we got, I forgot how many months it was, and we slept on a hay mattress. You had to go stuff your own hay. It was the old Army cot with the hay mattress. I wonder whether the dust storms contribute to my father developing the cancer of the throat. Never know.

[84]TA: With many Japanese Americans around you, do you remember any of Japanese Americans that did not have to go to camp?

[84]BS: Well everybody in California left for camp. There was a period where you could voluntarily leave and we had a friend who voluntarily moved to Salt Lake City. I did run into him when I was in Salt lake City. In my block was a Japanese man who was married to a Caucasian lady, she stayed all during war in camp with her husband. She being Caucasian could have left but she decided to stay and I remember there was a family with a Caucasian wife and kinds of mixed marriage, they went to camp but they were allowed to leave within about three to six months later. I never did see them. Of course my brother was in Milwaukee going to medical school, so he did not go to camp. For everybody else, either you left the area yourself or you went to camp.

[86]TA: Now we are going to approach the subject of post interment. I would like to know more about life post internment.

[86]BS: I got drafted in 1944, took the physical in Chicago, passed it and decided to go back to camp and wait for induction to be called into the army. I got called into the army in about mid-August of 1944. I got called to report to Fort Douglas, Utah. On the way to Fort Douglas, I had these glasses that had no rims and the lens were hold by two little screws in the center. On the way to Salt lake city, on the bus I broke one of my lenses doing a very stupid thing. I stuffed them in my suitcase, I checked my suitcase in a ten cent locker and reported for induction at Fort Douglas. Because I could not see it, I flunked my physical.

I stayed in Salt lake City and worked as a busboy for a few months until one day my father who had also gone to Salt Lake City for some X-ray treatments, and I was sharing a room with a friend. My friend say come on, lets go to this pool hall. Il show you how to play pool. If you have seen that movie 76 Trombones or something, you know what pool is. [Laughter] Who should be in the pool hall reading a newspaper was my dad. It was my first time in a pool hall and he sees me playing pool so he wrote to my mother saying we better get our son back to camp and get him into school somewhere cause he is going downhill playing pool. So I went back to camp in November in time for my brother to get married. Then I

started UCLA in summer of 1945. Fortunately I got drafted because I had very poor study habits by then and was probably ready to get flunked out anyway. I got drafted and that got me an excuse to get out of school. I served in the army for a year and half and then returned to UCLA in 1947. Then I went to SC Dental school after that.

[89]TA: Was any of your family members released before internment?

[89]BS: Released before internment?

You mean before the end of internment? Yes. In 1943, the tide of the war had changed and so they were starting to encourage those people in camp to seek jobs east of the Rockies like in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Denver. My sister who was asthmatic was happy to leave camp because the camp dust was horrible for asthma. But she chose Philadelphia, it was being as cold as it was, she went to work as a nursery school helper. She developed pneumonia and being single and living alone she did not take care of herself and she died of pneumonia in 1945. 1945 in camp was not a good year for us, my sister died in February, my father died of cancer in April and then my brother died of cancer in August. We had three deaths in 1945. The only good thing was that we were in camp and the government paid for funerals. I forgot what the rest of the question was.

[91]TA: After interment did you resettle in the San Fernando Valley?

[91]BS: When my mother left camp, my sister was going to medical school in Philadelphia, so she went there, by that time my father was gone and my other sister was working at Manzanar. My mother decided to join my sister at Philadelphia because she was going to have a little baby and my mother would be helpful there. By then I had gotten draft of 1945, so I was in the service. My other brother was in the service in Detroit area, so there was nobody in the valley left. Then in 1947, I the summer I applied to UCLA and got in. We came back to California. Fortunately we had a shack to move into because we had owned the farmhouse. We moved into there and my mother worked as a farm laborer because there was nobody to farm. I certainly did not want to farm and she earned an income picking vegetables for our friends who farmed.

[93]TA: During post internment, what were some obstacles that you guys faced?

[93]BS: The obstacles we faced was that we had to evict the non paying tenant from one house and we finally did and rented that out to a friend. We were living in Philadelphia so there was not much we could do. We did not face obstacles because we were not in a position to run into obstacles. We were just farm laborers.

[94]TA: We are approaching the conclusion and wrap up of the interview. Is there one memory of growing up in the San Fernando Valley that is most important to you?

[94]BS: Growing up in the San Fernando Valley, we were too poor to know we were poor. Things were tough but we seemed to get by, we had friends in the nearby area. We worked hard everyday. No one came by and called us obscenities or racial remarks, we went to school. I did not have fights in school, no one picked on me and they were all good buddies. I can't say we had a tough time. My father must have been doing okay because he did pay for the tuition for all these kids and still we had some money left over that he had the foresight to buy property so we had property to come back to after the War. We were

lucky in that on the fire property the tenant paid his rent so we were able to pay our taxes, we never lost our property. The property was not destroyed by the person who lived in it so we were lucky from that standpoint. Other people did not have that luck. I talked to a friend of mine who had built this brand new home and when they left they had to lend it to a so called friend . When they came back to the new home, that friend had practically destroyed the inside of the house, he had chickens and animals running through the house. We never had that problem. The only thing was one house, the tenant never paid his rent and the attorney did not collect it. I don't know if the attorney didn't try because he was of Filipino extraction and we were of Japanese extraction , but we retained the attorney.

[97]TA: So many topics and issues were covered during this interview, is there anything that you want to talk about that has not been covered?

[97]BS: Let's see. Farming in North Hollywood, I am sure it earned fairly decent income of the people who farmed. Like I said farming is a gamble, if you gamble and you plant the right crops at the right time, you can make money. The depression was over by then. I think if the war did not start I think most of the farmers would have been successful. Also if they were allowed to stay, they would have contributed greatly to the war effort by continuing to produce the fresh vegetables that they were so capable of producing and which were scarce after we left the area. We could have been trusted because we certainly were not spies or did any espionage work .Our only problem was that we had the face of the enemy. There were too many racist people of power who were against us. One of them was FDR. Another one was the Attorney General of California who later became chief justice of the US Supreme Court, Earl Warren. He was an ambitious politician and on us Japs to get headlines. The other one was General Dewitt, a big racist who said once a Jap always a Jap. I always wonder what happened to him if he had heard that General Shinseki, a Japanese became general of the army.

[99]TA: Lastly, anything you want to say, anything to want to leave us with?

[99]BS: Living in North Hollywood was fun. Having my Japanese American friends was fun. We met each other whenever we had JUDO practice. Going to camp was fun because I got to meet a lot of new friends of Japanese extraction. Also I did not have to work on the farm after school and I didn't have to work on the farm in summertime, though the weather and climate was miserable in Manzanar. The food was not outstanding but there are fun memories on that scenario. But I am bitter about FDR, general DeWitt and we were victims of the war. It was an interesting experience is all you can say.

Yep. That's all.

[101]TA: Thank you Mr. Sakaguchi for your time . Your interview will be used greatly for educating the future. Thank You.