

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

JANE TAZUKO KAWAKAMI MURANAKA

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

San Fernando Valley

23 March, 2004

Interview Conducted by

Machiko Uyeno

Tiffany Cheng

Transcript Prepared by

Machiko Uyeno

Tiffany Cheng

**CSUN, Department of Asian American Studies
AAS 390: Asian American Communities Field Practicum
Professor Edith Wen-Chu Chen
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, California 91330**

[Final Transcription- April 18, 2004]



LIFE HISTORY
BIOGRAPHICAL DATA SHEET

SFV JACC Representative Nancy Takayama

Date 3/23/04

CSUN Representative Machiko Uyeno

CSUN Representative Tiffany Cheng

1. Name: JANE TAZUKO KAWAKAMI MURAKAMI M / (F)
2. Address: 11119 SALT LAKE AV. NORTHRIDGE 91326
3. Phone(s): 818-366-9602
4. Birth Date: 1-23-47 5. Birth Place: ROSCOE, CA 6. Citizenship USA
- 6a. Date of immigration: NA 6b. Departure point: NA
7. List Sisters / Brothers (Eldest to youngest – Include yourself): RICHARD HIROSHI KAWAKAMI
GRACE HARUKI KAWAKAMI ZENNIA SEIKO CAMERON WALTER YASUTO KAWAKAMI DAKE
YASUTO KAWAKAMI ELMER-JOYCE KAWAKAMI MARGARET KINUKO ITABAKI JANE TAZUKO MURAKAMI
8. Marital Status (and dates): MARRIED 5-23-70
9. Spouse's Name: ROY TANOTOS MURAKAMI
10. Children (and birth dates): CHARLES MINORU 9-23-77
JENNIFER AKEMI 12-08-81
11. Ethnicity: JAPANESE 12. Languages Spoken: ENGLISH, JAPANESE
13. Religion: BUDDHIST
14. Places lived and dates: SF VALLEY SONLAND 1947-1964
SEPULVEDA 1964-1970 GRANADA HILLS/NORTHRIDGE 1970 TO PRESENT
15. Mother's Maiden Name: MORI (CHIEO) Ethnicity: JAPANESE AMERICAN
Date of immigration: _____ Country: _____
16. Father's Maiden Name: KAWAKAMI (SAICHI) Ethnicity: JAPANESE
Date of immigration: 1913 Country: JAPAN
17. Maternal Grandparents: MORIMORI & KIKU MORI
18. ~~Maternal~~ Grandparents: ASAKICHI & OREA KAWAKAMI

JANE TAZUKO KAWAKAMI MURANAKA

ORAL HISTORY INTRODUCTION

Narrator: Mrs. Jane Muranaka

Occupation: Elementary school teacher

Address: 11119 Salt Lake Avenue, Northridge, 91326

Date of Interview: March 23, 2004

Length: 44 minutes

Session: One

Place: Mrs. Muranaka's Home

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

Interviewers: Machiko Uyeno and Tiffany Cheng

**Deed of Gift
Oral History Agreement
Japanese American Experiences in the San Fernando Valley**

I, Jane Muranaka,
residing at: 11119 Salt Lake Avenue,
City of Northridge, State of California, Zip Code 91326 here by
give and grant to San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center (SFV JACC),
Asian American Studies Department at California State University at Northridge (CSUN) and
the California State Library Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) as a donation
for such scholarly and educational purposes as the SFV JACC, CSUN and CCLPEP shall
determine, the video tape/interview tape recordings on _____ (date of
interview), including the contents of those recordings and any transcriptions that may result from
them and copyrights thereto.

Jane Muranaka

Print Name of Interviewee


Signature of Interviewee

3-23-04

Date

JANE TAZUKO KAWAKAMI MURANAKA

ABSTRACT

Tiffany Cheng and I (Machiko Uyeno) had the opportunity to interview Mrs. Jane Muranaka. Jane Muranaka was born on January 23, 1947. She is the youngest of seven children. Her family grew flowers in the Sunland/Shadow Hills area.

Her father who was an Issei started the business, yet the land was purchased under her mother's name since her mother was an US citizen. Since both of her parents were very busy working in the fields, family friends who lived on their farm raised Mrs. Muranaka. This couple was interned in Manzanar with Mrs. Muranaka's family and since they had nowhere to go after the war ended, her father gave them a place to stay. Mrs. Muranaka told us that she was very close with her father while growing up and recently, she has gotten to be closer with her mother.

While she was growing up in the San Fernando Valley area, she told us that there weren't too many Japanese Americans living in the area. Unfortunately, her elementary school years were not fun for her since the other children would pick on her. Her parents were both very busy, but they still had time to celebrate the two most important holidays in the Kawakami family. They celebrated New Years and Fourth of July.

When the war broke out, Mrs. Muranaka's family was taken to Manzanar. She told us an interesting story about her grandparents. Her grandmother was sick during the time when Japanese Americans in the area were being rounded up, so a doctor hid both of her grandparents in the basement of the hospital so he could watch over her condition. Yet her grandfather had a habit of wandering around at night and eventually he was caught because

he stood out. There were no Japanese Americans in the area. Fortunately, her grandparents were reunited with the family in Manzanar.

After the war ended, many Japanese Americans had nowhere to go; yet Mrs. Muranaka's family was lucky. Their German neighbors kept a watch over their home and their land, so they had a "home" that they could come back to.

JANE TAZUKO KAWAKAMI MURANAKA

INDEX

- [0:00-1:23] Growing up in the San Fernando Valley; Sunland/Shadow Hills area
- [1:24-2:23] Japanese Americans and other Asian Ethnic groups in the area
- [2:24-2:53] Flower growers in the Shadow Hills area
- [2:54-4:19] Family history-Who immigrated to the United States first
- [4:20-5:49] History about her father who started the flower growing business
- [5:50-6:57] Life on her family's farm with her 6 siblings
- [6:58-8:20] Her father's daily routine
- [8:21-8:51] Helping out with the family business
- [8:52-10:18] Spending time with family while growing up (Vacations)
- [10:19-11:05] Her mother's daily routine
- [11:06-11:42] People who worked on the farm
- [11:43-12:07] Household chores and duties
- [12:08-12:39] Being raised by family friend's from Manzanar
- [12:40-14:40] Going to Japanese school
- [14:41-15:30] Helping out on the farm
- [15:31-16:33] Parental Expectations
- [16:34-17:39] Farming life of other Japanese Americans families in the area
- [17:40-18:03] Differences between the San Fernando Valley Community Center and the Sun Valley Community Center
- [18:09-20:16] Relationships with Parents
- [20:17-23:52] Important holidays and family vacations
- [23:53-26:22] Elementary school years
- [26:23-27:02] Teenage years
- [27:03-27:51] Getting a driver's license
- [27:52-30:50] High school years
- [30:51-31:37] Meeting her husband Roy Muranaka
- [31:38-33:07] Her wedding

[33:08-33:51] College Experience

[33:52-38:29] Internment

[38:30-41:48] Family life after internment

[41:49-43:46] Memories of growing up in the San Fernando Valley

Interviewee: Jane Tazuko Kawakami Muranaka [JM]

Interviewer: Machiko Uyeno [MU]

Date: March 23, 2004

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

[0:32]MU: My name is Machiko Uyeno and I am interviewing Ms. Jane Muranaka on Tuesday March 23, 2004 at 3:45pm. Hi Mrs. Muranaka, thank you so much for taking time to answer our questions.

[0:37] JM: You're very welcome.

[0:39] MU: First off, I'd like to get a sense from you of what the San Fernando Valley was like while you were growing up here.

[0:45] JM: Okay, it was all farmland. We lived on the eastern side of the San Fernando Valley in Sunland and actually the place where our farm was located was called Shadow Hills. Even though it was Sunland was the post office. We lived on a 45 acre farm and it was kind of in a little valley so we were pretty isolated so as far as what the rest of the valley was like, I was not that aware of anything except for a lot of orange groves and farmland.

[1:24] MU: Were there other Japanese American families living in your area?

[1:28] JM: There was one Japanese family that was like I guess maybe half a mile away. They also were flower growers. They were the Endo's. They had a rather large family also, but as I recall they moved down to Encinitas to grow flowers, so I don't remember them much at all while I was going to elementary school, so they must have moved very early.

[2:04] MU: Were there other Asian ethnic groups such as Filipino's, Chinese, Koreans?

[2:09] JM: Umm..no, not really. There was another Japanese family that lived, I'd say that was like 3 or 4 miles away but they were in Sun Valley and they were also flower growers, umm..I think their name was the Matsumoto's.

[2:24] MU: So the area around Shadow Hills was basically all flowers? And people who grew flowers?

[2:32] JM: Oh, I forgot the most important people, our neighbors the Oshiyama's. They also grew flowers. They were just west of us and um..they had a much smaller farm than us.

[2:54] MU: Now I'd like to get to know your parents a little bit more.

[2:57] JM: Okay.

[2:58] MU: How did they decide to move to the San Fernando Valley or when did they decide to move to the San Fernando Valley.

[3:04] JM: Oh, okay, I got to put my glasses on so I can kind of tell you. My father came to, well actually it was my grandfather who came to the United States in 1902. They decided that they wanted to live in California because that was the closest to Japan, but he started working on the railroads in Mexico because that was the easier passage into the United States.

[3:47] MU: Through Mexico?

[3:48] JM: Through Mexico, it was easier to come. My father eventually came, there's some discrepancy here, but he was here in the early 1900's. He worked as a house boy and they decided to start a nursery business and they moved to the Los Angeles area.

[4:20] MU: Did your father have any previous farming experiences growing flowers?

[4:25] JM: No, not that I know of, um..I'm just trying to think..this said that my dad came to the United States in 1913, when he was 19 years old and he worked for 6 years as a houseboy in La Jolla, and then with the savings, he was able to help the family to purchase the land in Sunland. But of course that was purchased with my mother as the owner since she was a US citizen and at the time, you had to be a citizen to own land.

[5:22] MU: Because your father was Issei?

[5:26] JM: But is kind of a long story because my mother came as, um..it was an arranged marriage, but she was at first married to my father's younger brother, okay, so when he passed away, she married my father.

[5:50] MU: Can you describe to me what your house was like on the farm?

[5:54] JM: Okay, um..it was a large house, but I shared a bedroom with, at one time I just shared a bedroom with my sister Dale. During some period in our childhood, there was four of us in a bedroom, the four girls, but um..my dad kind of added on to the house. And a couple of the bedrooms became a large living room to entertain company.

[6:28] MU: How many siblings do you have?

[6:30] JM: I have 7. I have three brothers and four sisters. And I am the youngest. And of the siblings, technically one brother is a step brother and one sister is a step sister, but we never really made that distinction. It's always been just sisters and brothers.

[6:58] MU: Can you tell me what your father's daily routine was like?

[7:05] JM: His daily routine was basically he got up very early I would say 6 in the morning and was out in the fields until late at night, he would be, after dinner, he would be working in the barn with the flowers that they had either picked or whatever. That would be mostly in the fall and spring, when they would be, the flowers would be blooming, so they would be getting them ready to take to market in the morning. And so, umm...he would be spending most of the time till very late in the evening, like 10 o'clock, getting the flowers prepared, wrapping them and what not, to take them to

market and he would leave in the middle of the night to go to the Los Angeles Market. Okay, but in the summer time, he was getting up just as early, but basically, it was tending to the plants, the flowers as they were growing because they wouldn't be blossoming at that time, and most everybody would pitch in to do a lot of weeding.

[8:21] MU: Did you pitch in to do weeding as well?

[8:23] JM: I was lucky though, I was the youngest so I didn't have to do it as much. But I remember spending time in the rainy seasons and in the winter time when it was cold, that he would buy newspapers in bulk, old newspapers and we would have to open them up and take out the half sheets and get them flat so that we could use those to wrap the flowers to take to market.

[8:52] MU: Aside from helping your father out occasionally, did you have time to spend with him like outside of work?

[9:01] JM: Not too much. I can only recall maybe, two family vacations and it was in the summer time. I know he took us to Sacramento and to Lake Tahoe and I think it was Yosemite. But um...there was 6 kids and my mom and dad in the car. So there was 8 of us in the car. It was my dad driving, my mom, and my one brother and me in the front and then the other four in the back.

[9:38] MU: so it was kind of cramped?

[9:39] JM: Yeah, it was kind of cramped I don't even remember where we stayed but I know we had to have stayed somewhere because it wasn't an overnight trip. But yeah.

[9:49] MU: Was it fun going on vacations with your family?

[9:53] JM: Well, because we only went a few times, it was really memorable. All I remember was that it was very tight. But I remember he also took us down to San Diego to the zoo a couple of times and where my mom you know made bento and we spent the day down there.

[10:19] MU: Can you tell me about your mother's daily routine?

[4:25] JM: No, not that I know of, um..I'm just trying to think..this said that my dad came to the United States in 1913, when he was 19 years old and he worked for 6 years as a houseboy in La Jolla, and then with the savings, he was able to help the family to purchase the land in Sunland. But of course that was purchased with my mother as the owner since she was a US citizen and at the time, you had to be a citizen to own land.

[5:22] MU: Because your father was Issei?

[5:26] JM: But is kind of a long story because my mother came as, um..it was an arranged marriage, but she was at first married to my father's younger brother, okay, so when he passed away, she married my father.

[5:50] MU: Can you describe to me what your house was like on the farm?

[5:54] JM: Okay, um..it was a large house, but I shared a bedroom with, at one time I just shared a bedroom with my sister Dale. During some period in our childhood, there was four of us in a bedroom, the four girls, but um..my dad kind of added on to the house. And a couple of the bedrooms became a large living room to entertain company.

[6:28] MU: How many siblings do you have?

[6:30] JM: I have 7. I have three brothers and four sisters. And I am the youngest. And of the siblings, technically one brother is a step brother and one sister is a step sister, but we never really made that distinction. It's always been just sisters and brothers.

[6:58] MU: Can you tell me what your father's daily routine was like?

[7:05] JM: His daily routine was basically he got up very early I would say 6 in the morning and was out in the fields until late at night, he would be, after dinner, he would be working in the barn with the flowers that they had either picked or whatever. That would be mostly in the fall and spring, when they would be, the flowers would be blooming, so they would be getting them ready to take to market in the morning. And so, umm...he would be spending most of the time till very late in the evening, like 10 o'clock, getting the flowers prepared, wrapping them and what not, to take them to

[10:24] JM: My mother's daily routine was basically the same as my dad. My two older sisters were the cooks of the family. So my mom didn't do the cooking per say, I just remember times when I would come home from school and I would have to do the lunch dishes cause they would be all piled up in the sink, at the time when my sisters were also in school, I guess my mom must have been doing the cooking for lunch, for the workers because...

[11:06] MU: So your parents owned the farm and they hired workers to work for them?

[11:11] JM: There were some people that worked for us. We had one Mexican man that my dad employed most of the year and we did have I think it was three or four housing units on the farm. Because one of the lady's, Mrs. Kinoshita worked for us for several years and she lived in one of those apartments, well, they really weren't really apartments, but they were like housing units.

[11:43] MU: So your older sisters were basically responsible for the chores, and did you ever help out, aside from washing the dishes, did you do anything?

[11:54] JM: I think I remember sweeping and mopping a little bit. But most of the time, we, it was only in the summer time that everybody had to work out in the fields.

[12:08] MU: Were you able to spend more time with your mother as well?

[12:12] JM: No, no and like I said, I was brought up by 2, an elderly man and woman that my dad brought back from Manzanar because they didn't have anywhere to live. So they were kind of like my grandparents because my grandparents had died by then.

[12:35] MU: Did they speak Japanese?

[12:37] JM: Yup, they spoke Japanese.

[12:40] MU: So, did you learn Japanese through them, or did you go to school?

[12:44] JM: I guess I must have learned a little bit, but I remember going to Japanese school every Saturday.

[12:50] MU: Did you enjoy going to Japanese school?

[12:52] JM: No, no it was 9 to 3 and I don't remember really learning all that much until I got to UCLA, and I think I learned more in my year of Japanese at UCLA than I did all the time I went to Japanese school. Cause I was a very diligent..

[13:15] MU: Were there a lot of students at your school?

[13:19] JM: There were quite a few because like each classroom was one grade or two grades and there was at least 20 kids in each classroom.

[13:32] MU: How long did you attend Japanese school for?

[13:34] JM: Well, all the way through elementary school and junior high school and I did attend the high school in Los Angeles for a couple of years until, actually I think all of us went through Japanese school until we graduated from high school and then we got released.

[14:03] MU: You felt free?

[14:05] JM: We got free.

[14:06] MU: Did you go through the Kyodo System?

[14:07] JM: Uh huh..yeah

[14:11] MU: That's the school that I went to.

[14:12] JM: Did you go to the school on Menlo Street?

[14:14] MU: Yeah, I went to the Junior high and high school there.

[14:17] JM: That's where we went.

[14:19] MU: Oh really?, wow, did you attend the schools in the San Fernando

Valley?

[14:24] JM: Uh, huh, we went to the Sun Valley Japanese school and then from there we went to the school down on Menlo Street.

[14:41] MU: What age did you start working on the farm? Did you help out occasionally?

[14:46] JM: Yeah, occasionally. Gosh, I don't remember how old I was but I was in elementary school, but mostly I remember in the summer time that I had, I remember at 3 o'clock, everybody got to take a break and my dad used to buy these huge watermelons, and my sister to this day doesn't like watermelon because I think it reminds her of that. But um, someone used to come home and cut it up and I remember we had to go and distribute it to the workers for their break time.

[15:31] MU: So, did your parents want you specifically or your brothers or sisters to take over the farm?

[15:38] JM: No, my dad was, felt very strongly that we all go to school and you know get a college degree and because he felt that you know flower farming was a very hard life and although my oldest brother for a while did take over the farm, he finally went on to mechanics school and he became a mechanic and he was working for the county of Los Angeles until he retired. But it's kind of a shame because I know my dad had you know some secrets on growing certain flowers and that's gone now because nobody really picked it up after him.

[16:26] MU: So basically their aspirations for you and your brother's and sisters was college education?

[16:30] JM: Uh, huh.

[16:34] MU: I see. Do you know if farming life was different for other Japanese Americans living in the area?

[16:41] JM: I really couldn't say because we were, like I said, we were pretty isolated because we were in a little valley. The flower growers that I knew that um lived more

toward the San Fernando community center, which my husband's family was more associated with, um, they tended to be together more and I mean they were probably socialized more than we did but the people that were at the Sun Valley Community center were basically the people that came out of camp and became gardeners. They had lost their homes and whatever and so there was a trailer camp in Sun Valley and actually that's where the Japanese school started, was at the trailer camp.

[17:40] MU: So basically at that time, there was the San Fernando Valley Community Center and the Sun Valley Community Center?

[17:45] JM: And there still is that delineation. It's just that the San Fernando Valley Community Center is quite a bit larger. I don't know why they never got together.

[18:02] MU: Even to this day..

[18:03] JM: Right, right, I don't know the reasons behind that.

[18:09] MU: Which parent did you consider to be more stricter?

[18:15] JM: We were always afraid of my dad.

[18:17] MU: Your dad..

[18:18] JM: Yeah, but he never, he was a, not very vocal, but when he did speak, you better listen, but I mean, I was the baby so, he was my favorite. I got along better with my dad than my mom until just recently after my dad has passed away and it's been like 23 years since my dad died and I've gotten a lot more closer with my mom in the last 5 years. Yeah, because we never got along. We never got along.

[19:02] MU: Do you remember you or any one of your siblings getting in trouble from your father or your mother?

[19:10] JM: Oh yeah, I don't remember anything major, but I know that we used to get in trouble.

[19:22] MU: But when you got in trouble, your dad tended to be scarier than your

mother?

[19:26] JM: Oh yeah, yeah

[19:30] MU: That's how it is for me too, was your mother more responsible for disciplining?

[19:37] JM: No, even as my mom talks about it today, she says her kids have brought up themselves because she was never really around and he was never really around and it was basically my oldest sister that really kind of took charge of us but I don't really even remember her disciplining us, so um, it's like we just grew up by ourselves, well, that's what my mom says, that we managed to grow up by ourselves.

[20:17] MU: Did they try to instill any traditional Japanese customs or values or did your sister, or the two people that raised you, did they instill Japanese values or customs?

[20:32] JM: Well, New Years was always a really important holiday for my dad. My dad would make these very elaborate flower arrangements with peach blossoms and bamboo and um, he'd always buy the big fish, I don't know what kind of fish, and tie it up so that it looks like it's flapping it's fins, and that was always a traditional thing and then he would always get the big red lobsters you know and we'd always have, all our relatives come over, and our neighbors and close friends so it was always an all day celebration. But it was really important to him. And then I guess the only other holiday per say that was, the fourth of July. And, we used to go annually to the beach and have a BBQ at the beach.

[21:38] MU: Which beach did you guys go to?

[21:40] JM: I think it was Zuma Beach. Yeah, and then we used to go to Dockweiler Beach, but that's so noisy now.

[21:50] MU: Did you guys have picnics?

[21:51] JM: Uh huh, any kind of picnics with the Japanese school, there was usually a picnic once a year with the Japanese school and I think there was a beach party with the

Japanese school.

[22:07] MU: So basically the holidays that your family celebrated were Fourth of July and New Years? What did you guys do for your birthdays? Did you do anything special for your birthdays?

[22:18] JM: I don't really remember that much, but I know that once I was in elementary school, I had birthday parties and I could invite my friends, so I mean, but it's very vague in my mind. I did have birthday parties, but I don't remember anybody else having birthday parties, so I don't know.

[22:44] MU: You mentioned family vacations and going to San Diego and going to Sacramento, is there anything besides being packed in the car, is there anything that stands out or do you have any special memories from the time that you spent with your family?

[23:00] JM: um..well, we went to Grand Canyon too that time I think, I can't remember if that was one trip or two trips, but I remember my sister Dale and my brother Elmer were hamming it up you know, he was trying to push her over the edge at Grand Canyon and um, but I really don't remember all that much.

[23:33] MU: Are you closest to your sister Dale?

[23:36] JM: I've gotten to be closest to my sister Dale because she became a teacher and I was a teacher for ten years. She just retired a couple of years ago. She taught for 37 years.

[23:53] MU: Now we're talking about school, but um, can you tell me a little bit about your school experiences, about elementary school, were there other Japanese American kids?

[24:00] JM: Um, I remember maybe two and that was it, in fact the one, Stuart Imai, I see him everytime we have a high school classmate reunion. Yeah, but um, they lived in Lake View Terrace and um, elementary school wasn't really that happy of a time really, um, had rocks thrown at us walking to school, what was interesting was that the boys that used to tease me and throw rocks and say things to me, became, I became

pretty good friends with them by the time I was in high school because we had to ride the bus to get to high school and we'd all get on at the same bus stop, but in elementary school, they used to throw things and say things.

[25:09] MU: Were they Caucasian?

[25:12] JM: Uh, huh. Yeah, cause there weren't any Japanese Americans close by that were my age, they were all older so like my sister's you know were friends with like our neighbor because they were the same age.

[25:29] MU: So basically the ethnic makeup of your school, the majority was...

[25:33] JM: They were all white.

[25:36] MU: Did you tell your parents about those kinds of experiences?

[25:39] JM: No, no, you know, I guess we've been taught to *gaman*.

[25:49] MU: Oh..

[25:50] JM: Yeah..right...

[25:51] MU: Perserverence

[25:52] JM: Yeah.

[25:54] MU: But it's nice that you became friends later on, and I hope they apologized to you.

[25:58] JM: Oh, well, yeah, I don't even, well, I guess maybe they apologized in their actions rather than words because, uh, we would um, one of them would give me a ride to school when I didn't have a car and you know that kind of stuff or if I needed a ride home I could you know ask them.

[26:23] MU: What were some of the activities that you did for fun outside of school or even within high school or junior high? What kind of activities?

[26:34] JM: Well mostly, um, the only things that I can really remember because we were um kind of, I was far from friends, so until I could drive a car, it was a matter of getting a ride to my friend's house or whatever and um, you know just the regular teenage things I guess, riding bikes and ...

[27:00] MU: hanging out?

[27:01] JM: Yeah, uh huh.

[27:03] MU: How old were you when you got your license?

[27:05] JM: 16, on my birthday.

[27:08] MU: Was that exciting?

[27:09] JM: Yeah, uh huh.

[27:10] MU: Did you have a car by then?

[27:12] JM: Well, I had the family car, but um, I managed to take it out when I wanted to. Yeah.

[27:22] MU: Did you feel a sense of freedom?

[27:23] JM: Oh yeah, it was really nice not having to walk a half a mile or more to the bus stop and you know, because I got the car and I could drive it to school since my mom and dad were working in the fields, um they didn't need the family car and my sisters and brothers had their vehicles that you know I think there was two other vehicles that they used going to college so they shared rides.

[27:52] MU: What high school did you go to?

[27:53] JM: Verdugo Hills High School.

[27:57] MU: Were you involved in any community activities like sports, clubs?

[28:04] JM: I didn't participate in too many clubs, um, I was in service clubs and that type of thing and leadership class and those kind of activities but outside of school really, nothing that was basically had Japanese school on Saturday and um, yeah, I don't really recall what we did on Sundays in fact, because we didn't always go to church and um, we did go to a Christian church when we were younger and now we go to a Buddhist temple now.

[28:45] MU: While you were in high school and you went to Japanese school, did you just go because your friends were there? Cause that's how I was.

[28:57] JM: In high school, we went because my dad said we were gonna go. If I had my brothers, I wouldn't have been there. And it was hard because it was Saturday and Friday nights we would want to be out partying right, and so, we'd be falling asleep during class and we'd get in trouble for falling asleep.

[29:22] MU: Overall, did you enjoy your high school years?

[29:25] JM: Oh, yeah.

[29:27] MU: Anything stand out like particularly? Any memorable event?

[29:31] JM: In high school? It was so long ago. I'm going to be going to a 40th class reunion in November.

[29:46] MU: Wow.

[29:50] JM: I think I met my best friends in high school, I still um.. two of the girls are still my good friends and um, we still keep in contact.

[30:06] MU: Did you date while you were in high school?

[30:08] JM: Not too much. Not too much, it was kind of difficult because there was that racial factor, you know I mean, the school was all Caucasian. You could probably count on one hand, the number of you know, Asian students. And um, in my class, there was Stuart, who was Japanese, and there was a I think it was Chinese and he was

very quiet. So there was only the three of us in my class.

[30:51] MU: Can you tell me how you met your husband?

[30:54] JM: Oh um, one of his friends I had dated him a few times and then he invited me to go to a party with him so I went to a party and I met Roy there, and so I think it was a week or two later, he called me up and asked me out and so..

[31:17] MU: That's so nice. If you don't mind, can you tell me about your first date? Where did you guys go?

[31:25] JM: He took me to Hollywood to see a movie and then out to dinner.

[31:29] MU: Do you remember what the movie was?

[31:31] JM: The movie was, The Outrage, I think it was called.

[31:38] MU: Can you describe your wedding?

[31:39] JM: Our wedding? He probably told you the same thing, our wedding was mostly um, it was a large wedding, but it was mostly our parent's friends. So like we only had maybe 100 guests between Roy and me maybe counting our family and stuff, that we knew, right and I think there was about four, or four hundred and fifty people at our wedding.

[32:07] MU: And, this was at the Nishi Honganji?

[32:11] JM: Nishi Honganji.

[32:15] MU: Were there floral arrangements? Or?

[32:17] JM: Oh well, because my cousin owned a florist, she did all the flowers and it was beautiful. It really was because her daughter I used to spend summers with her sometimes and um, so I asked her to be in the wedding party too and um, it was funny. It was um, they had white dresses with yellow flowers on it and so, my cousin got um, yellow sambidiens for all the girls for their bouquets and it was just really pretty. She

kind of went all out.

[33:08] MU: After you attended Verdugo Hills high school, what did you go on to college?

[33:13] JM: I went to San Fernando Valley State College, which is CSUN now. I went there for two years and I then I transferred over to UCLA and I went there for three years, because I got my teaching credential there, so once I got my degree in history with a minor in math, I stayed on for a year, got my elementary teaching credential.

[33:44] MU: So after you graduated from college, you became an elementary school teacher?

[33:47] JM: Uh huh.

[33:52] MU: Now, we'll talk about internment and how it affected your family. You obviously were born after the internment?

[34:02] JM: Yes.

[34:05] MU: Did your parents go to the camps?

[34:09] JM: My parents went to Manzanar and um, my sister right above me and my brother above her, were born while in camp, and so their birth records are in Independence, California. And um, my dad I guess my grandparents, my dad's parents, I think my grandmother was very ill at the time and the doctor said that she couldn't travel. So he actually hid them in the basement of the hospital in Burbank or Glendale, but my grandfather had this habit of wandering around, so at night, he would go wander around in the town and after all the, everybody else had been sent off to camp, so word got around that there's this Japanese man loose in the town, so then they finally had to send both of them to camp. My grandmother passed away at Manzanar and then, I think I'm not sure about my grandfather if he died right after the war was over or during the war, but they joined my mom and dad and the family at Manzanar.

[35:48] MU: So they were able to see them, they weren't in different camps.

[35:51] JM: They were at the same camp.

[35:55] MU: Do you know what your family did with the belongings and with the land?

[36:01] JM: Okay, the land, the title of the land was in my mother's name because she was a US citizen and we had a neighbor, a German neighbor, his name was Mr. Esser, and he watched our place while the family was at camp, and um, but I understand that a family moved into the house and lived in our house during the war.

[36:30] MU: And after the war?

[36:02] JM: After the war they moved out.

[36:34] MU: That's nice. We're you aware of what your family did with the photographs during that time? Did they? Cause I heard of instances where people burned their photographs.

[36:48] JM: I don't think that my parents did that because um, my sister Zinnia who was born before the war has her ningyo set<doll set> and my brother also has his set which is a pretty elaborate set, you know, it would cover up you know, one wall, it was a floor to ceiling thing. As far as photos, I know there's only like a few little photos that were taken at camp, that they have, but um, my mom basically has almost all her photos from um, before the war.

[37:36] MU: That's nice cause you hear of instances where people burn documents and photographs.

[36:42] JM: Yeah, I'm not aware of any of that, and I think it must have been just left in the house and the people that lived there must have just respected the, that you know, those were our belongings, because I don't know if they were moved out of the house while we were gone.

[38:02] MU: Do you remember of any Japanese Americans that didn't have to go to camp? Or did your relatives who were interned, did they ever talk about any Japanese Americans that they knew of who didn't go to camp?

[38:13] JM: No.

[38:16] MU: Your family went to Manzanar.

[38:18] JM: Uh huh.

[38:22] MU: Do you know how long they were interned for?

[38:23] JM: No. I don't know.

[38:30] MU: Now, I'd like to know about life after internment, oh, were any of your family members released um, before the internment?

[38:40] JM: My dad was allowed to come home earlier to get the farm back in order, um, but beyond that, I don't think anyone else came, in fact, I know that a lot of families didn't have anywhere to go, so they tried to prolong their stay at the camp.

[39:05] MU: Your family returned to the San Fernando Valley and to the farm?

[39:07] JM: Uh huh.

[39:10] MU: What was it like? I mean, do you know what it was like after they came back to the farms?

[39:17] JM: I don't know, I don't know, I know that um, one sister has, still has nightmares about kids throwing things and calling her names and that kind of thing, but um, that's why it's kind of odd I guess, that it lasted so long, because here, I was born after the war and it still happened to me while I was going to elementary school.

[39:56] MU: Did your parents work after internment? Did they still continue the business after?

[40:03] JM: Uh huh.

[40:04] MU: How long did they continue the business for?

[40:06] JM: They worked um, my dad, I think he retired in 1964, so they grew flowers until that time and um, it wasn't until I was in college, gosh, it was around that time that they retired.

[40:29] MU: What happened to the land?

[40:31] JM: The land was sold, um, it's a development now with horse trails. Um, I don't go back, I've been back a couple times and that's, it's you know, totally different then what I remember.

[40:49] MU: So like, where your old house was, there's a development project?

[40:52] JM: Yeah, there's nothing there anymore, there's just you know, track homes.

[41:00] MU: Do you know if your parents encountered any obstacles after internment, like coming back to the farms? I mean, do you know if business was harder to do?

[41:11] JM: I'm not aware of any of that at all, I mean, I was little, and I didn't um, all I know is that my dad you know, would save up enough money so we could all, you know, all six of us could go get shoes. You know, it wasn't like one of us got shoes, you know, everyone got shoes at the same time, so I know that he had to save for a long time so that he could take us all to go buy shoes and he was never one to do anything on credit, so it was always cash.

[41:49] MU: Is there one memory of growing up in the San Fernando Valley that's most important to you?

[41:56] JM: Looking back, I think the freedom that you had, we didn't lock doors, we, I mean, the cars in the garage always had the keys in the cars, um, we just were in a little haven almost because we were virtually by ourselves. You couldn't really get into trouble you know, and there was a lot to do as far as you know, there was mountains, we used to climb up to the top of the mountains and um, Hansen Dam was close enough that I know that I tagged along with my brothers and my sister to go fishing a few times and it seemed like forever but um, it wasn't, looking back now, it wasn't really that far

away, but you really couldn't get into too much trouble. I mean, building you know, mud castles and you know, playing in the dirt and that type of thing.

[43:16] MU: So after college and after you got married, you guys resettled in the San Fernando Valley?

[43:22] JM: We really never left.

[43:28] MU: Is there anything else that you would like to talk about that we haven't covered or?

[43:33] JM: No, I don't think so, I think that um, maybe when you talk to my mom, that I could probably add some things in if that's ok.

[43:41] MU: Cool, thank you so much for your time Mrs. Muranaka, thank you.

[43:45] JM: You're very welcome.

[End of Interview]