

NARRATOR: IZUMI TANIGUCHI

INTERVIEWER: NANCY TANIGUCHI

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NT: We are recording today in Fresno. This is Dr. Izumi Taniguchi in his home and it is March 1, 2000. And Dr. Taniguchi could you tell me a little bit about your family? When and where you were born and a little bit about your family background please?

IT: I was born in Stockton, California when the family was living in Brentwood. Brentwood is in East Contra Costa County and Stockton is about thirty miles east of Brentwood. The family moved to Brentwood about 1924. And before that they were involved in farming in San Joaquin Delta. Actually my grandfather came here first in 1904 and he worked in different jobs at the outset but eventually it went into farm labor and working in and around the San Joaquin Delta. And in 1914 he called my father here and at that time my father was sixteen years old. And he helped on my grandfather's farm work and so on and felt that there was no future in it so he went off to Los Angeles and went to an auto mechanics school and received a certificate after one year. Then he returned to the Stockton area and worked in farms but again he got together with a number of people, four other people and in partnership bought one of the very first Caterpillar Tractors. They Caterpillar tractor was first built in Hoyt, California which is just west of Stockton and they were practically known as Hoyt tractors and they financed the purchase from Spreckels Sugar Company who was located in Modesto because Spreckels Sugar Company wanted somebody to get off land and work and trees and so on in (inaudible) County and with the tractor they disked and plowed and cleared the land for sugar beet farming. Then after that he had an offer from somebody in Mexicali to develop land for

cotton growing and so he and his partners took the tractor down to Mexicali to develop the land and open up the land for cotton farming. However while he was there he became ill. I think he had an appendix attack. And so he had to leave and go to Los Angeles. While he was in Los Angeles and after he recovered from his illness he worked as a delivery boy for the produce houses in Los Angeles for about a year and then returned to the Stockton area.

Then he began going into farming and let's see. My grandfather and he went together to do some farming growing onions on land that Mr. Ushigima had the rights to the land on Bacon Island in the Delta. They did that for a while and they moved around to Union Island to farm onions and beans and so on. In the meantime, my grandfather called my grandmother from Japan. I am not sure what year she arrived. Somewhere around 1918, 1919 or something and then my grandmother was here, they decided to start a hotel in Stockton known as Kishiu-kan the word Kishiu refers to the area around Wakayama Prefecture Japan. And bought the hotel from the Quioma family and in 1921 my father went back to Japan to marry my mother and brought my mother here. Upon my mother's arrival she lived at the hotel Kishiu-ken that was run by my grandmother and did some domestic work and went to English school to learn English.

After three years or so they sold the hotel, however while they had the hotel my father visited my mother since he was farming on Union Island probably on weekends. Then in 1924 they decided to move to Brentwood because they observed that the tomato was being grown in Brentwood and they decided the family would become united by moving to Brentwood and leased land from the Pirelli family. This was 1924. My brother was born in 1922 while they had the hotel in Stockton. And then of course the

whole family lived in one house in Brentwood while farming in Brentwood. I was born in 1926 and while in Brentwood my father did intensive farming raising all kinds of vegetables from cauliflower, lettuce, tomatoes, melons and various things and he sold his produce to markets in Contra Costa County from anywhere from Antioch to Pittsburgh to Martinez and every morning I can remember every morning he loaded up his truck of produce and delivered them to markets like Safeway.

I started school at Brentwood Deer Valley Grammar School in Brentwood. And went there through the fifth grade and then in 1932 the family moved to another farm in close to a town called Knightsen which is between Brentwood and Knightsen and because our residence was located in the Knightsen School District I had to transfer from Brentwood Grammar School to the Knightsen Elementary school and finished up my elementary education that is through eighth grade at the Knightsen Elementary School. From the Knightsen Grammar School I went to Liberty Union High School in Brentwood. Now while growing up in and attending the Knightsen Grammar School I participated in the 4H Club and the Cub Scouts. However there were some things that restricted my membership in these organizations, because when the Cub Scouts or the 4H Club went out on a outing to public parks there was a place called Marsh Creek Springs at the foot of Mt. Diablo which did not permit Asians, and consequently, I was not able to fully participate in all the activities of the Cub Scouts or 4H Club.

Then in high school as the case with many Japanese-American families my parents wanted me to prepare for an academic course, in other words you would prepare to go to college so I pursued the college prep courses. Now I am going back a little bit. My uncle who is my father's brother came to the US in 1921 also and since the family

owned the hotel in Stockton he went to high school in Stockton to learn English. And played baseball for the Stockton Yamato Baseball Team but before he was able to graduate the family moved to Brentwood so he graduated high school from the Liberty Union High School in Brentwood. Now while in high school I participated in basketball and track and because the high school was a very small rural high school where the total enrollment was only about two hundred and fifty students we were all males were recruited to participate in athletics. (laughs) And so whether we were very talented or not we had the opportunity to play basketball and whatever, track and baseball and so on. However, Brentwood I mean the Liberty Union High School did have a fairly good facility in terms of gymnasium and track and so on. And so we did pretty well and got to travel to other high schools to compete.

Of course the 1930's were Depression years and times were very hard but I can remember that the because of the drought and the Depression in the dust bowl area we had a huge migration of people from Arkansas, Texas, and Kansas and so on into the San Joaquin Valley and I can remember that our schools became impacted with new students and so on. However when I look back it is amazing how we were able to cope with the big increase in enrollment and nobody talked about the lack of money to accommodate the new increased enrollment and so on.

Now as far as the family making it through the Depression a couple of very fortunate things happened. One is that back in 1931, by accident, my father was growing two or three different varieties of tomatoes and by accident they cross pollinated so that by 1932 he was making his own seed from the tomato that he grew. And so when he planted this seed they had cross pollinated he had a tremendous yield in 1932 and 1933.

Despite the very low Depression prices because of the heavy yield which approached forty-five or fifty tons per acre he did quite well at the bottom of the Depression. This made it possible for him to think about organizing an association of tomato growers and so he was able to get five other farmers to join in and they formed the Brentwood Produce Association and started a business of growing tomatoes what we refer to as green-wrap tomatoes to be shipped to the Eastern market. And by 1936, 1937 it became quite a profitable business building up their reputation for the quality of the tomatoes that were shipped to the Eastern market. And so despite the Depression and hard times the family faired pretty well. I can remember going on outings during the Depression. We went out to the coast and so on but joining in with the Association members and camping out on the coast for a week at a time and also because of the business itself, the business was able to contribute and associate with colleges like the University of California and Stanford and so the manager of the association they would acquire tickets to football games and so on and they always took us kids along. And in addition to that for participating in athletics at the high school level the University of California used to invite us to the football games to serve as ushers at the football games and so these are some of the good memories that I have. Now, Brentwood being a small town the make up of the population there were actually only fourteen Japanese families in the area not just Brentwood but Byron, Knightsen, Oakley and that whole area of East Contra Costa County. There were very few African-Americans maybe one or two but quite a lot of Hispanics at that time. And so I grew up without facing too much prejudice except for the like I mentioned about not being allowed to go to certain public facilities because during the 1930's Japan was at war with China and the United States was siding with

China so there was some hostility with the United States. But as far as playmates and so on most of our friends were Caucasian friends.

And although my father specialized in the growing of tomatoes during off season he also grew celery, even grew seeds for Ferrymore Seed Company, carrot seeds and onion seeds. He also grew a pickling cucumber for Heinz 57. And although his main crop was green-wrap tomatoes he also grew tomatoes for the cannery which is—so it was a very diversified farming. At one time he farmed close to four hundred acres (pause).

Then with the bombing of Pearl Harbor soon after that because of my father's involvement in the Japanese-American community he was Vice-President of the Japanese Association in Stockton and also because of the immigration laws and Alien Land Laws and so on he was not eligible for naturalization and since he was an immigrant he remained a subject of Japan. And because of his age he was subject to the military draft in Japan. However Japan permitted the Isseis who are the immigrant Japanese here to work off their military obligation in some other way than going back to Japan and serving in the Army. And so my father was involved in organizing an association in Japanese referred to as Heimushakii-H-E-I-M-U-S-H-A-K-I-I to raise funds to help Japan in its war effort. And so because of his activities with the Japanese association which often hosted Japanese government officials and so on he was labeled as a subversive by the FBI and was targeted for arrest by the FBI following Pearl Harbor.

Actually he was not arrested until March 7, 1942. The reason was some red tape was involved and the fact that we lived in Contra Costa County and his activities were in San Joaquin County and due to my father's activities in the community and so on there was some—from what I heard there was some problem the FBI getting the local

constable to cooperate and arrest my father. Of course my father was acquainted with the local authorities and the county sheriff and so when they finally got everything together they came and arrested my father on March 7 and that involved searching our house for contraband. And of course right after Pearl Harbor we were required to register and turn in all things that was considered as contraband which included rifles, swords, short wave radios, cameras and so on which we did turn into the local constable. We never did recover them after we returned. Now I understand that the FBI did have informers in the region to watch out for the activities of my father and all the people who were arrested by the FBI did receive some sort of a hearing. And at the hearing my father heard some of the charges which were kind of ridiculous and some were comical.

In addition to farming tomatoes and row crops my father had almonds and apricots in some orchards and in the winter time we have to prune the trees. And we had an incinerator that was pulled behind a tractor to burn all the pruned brush. In the hearing it was—we found out that he was accused of sending smoke signals from burning the brush. Also in growing tomatoes we had to start the planting of the seeds early in February still when there is a threat of frost. So we had these hot beds covered with white muslin sheets and these beds were six feet by twenty-five feet or so and we had many of these hot beds for starting the tomato plants then after they get to be about six inches tall they are transplanted out into the fields. He was accused or arranging like muslin hot beds in an arrow type figure like towards military installations which there weren't any around Brentwood. (laughs) Another thing is my father grew lettuce for the Thanksgiving and holiday market and after the Thanksgiving market you harvest all the heads of lettuce that are mature and in late December or in January the leftover he has in

the field are plowed under or disked and one of my chores was to drive a tractor after school hours or on weekends and I remember that in January I was disking this field of lettuce that had already been harvested and so in the hearing he was accused, my father was accused of sabotaging the food crop (laugh). So these are some of the things that hysteria generates in wartime so.

Now then on February 18, 1942 President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 which is an order to evacuate all Japanese from the West Coast. And soon after that my father, I mentioned that my father was picked up by FBI, arrested by FBI on March the seventh and so knowing that we had to be into prepare for being evacuated and not only that because the government slapped a curfew on us where after December eighth we were not permitted to go more than five miles from our home between 8 pm and 6am. Of course that had an affect on my activities at school since I was playing basketball for the school team I could not travel outside the five mile radius (laughs) and things like that. So as things became very restrictive I dropped out of school and I think it was in mid-March or so to help work things out since my father had been picked up and taken away. Actually my older brother assumed the responsibility for taking care of things now because my mother was not too proficient in English.

Now I should go back a little bit and mention my grandparents. (pause) They as I mentioned earlier that the family faired pretty well during the Depression years and so my great grandparents visited Japan back in 1937 and toured Japan and they were quite impressed with what they saw. So they decided to retire in 1940 and went back to Japan. My mother did take a trip back to Japan for a visit in 1935. And brought back with her— well while she was in Japan she was able to visit a temple which was being shut down so



she bought all of the flower arranging equipment that was owned by that temple and they were solid bronze vases. Actually during WWII when the government confiscated many of those kinds of vases and melted them down for the war effort but so my mother had acquired this whole set of flower arrangements and throughout most of the 1930's my mother commuted to Stockton to a Buddhist church to take lessons in flower arrangement and received a certificate to teach flower arrangement. And my father was very supportive of this kind of activity so he was—he committed the job of providing materials for the flower arrangement classes so they were off to Stockton two or three times a month in their activities both cultural and my father's involvement with the Japanese Association. (pause) Can I take a break? (laughs)

NT: Okay.

IT: When the FBI came to arrest my father actually because many of my father's friends in Stockton and elsewhere who were involved in similar activities were already arrested by the FBI. He had expected it to happen but we didn't know when it was going to happen and when the FBI did come, the constable was a friend of the family and he accompanied the FBI agent. There were two of them, one was a pretty poised, experienced agent and the other one was a younger and somewhat short tempered. And when they arrived, we were having lunch. And after they explained the purpose and so on, the younger agent looked at our lunch table and of course, we were having Japanese food and so on and he started to spout out that we would never become Americans because we had to have our Japanese food, fish, rice and so on. At that point we had a boarder who was also farming by himself and having lunch, who was older than my brother and I and he said, "Well you are no different than us, with your red hair and temper, your Irish temper and you

have your corn beef and cabbage and so on.” And so there was an exchange and so at that point, the senior agent excused this other agent and told him to cool it. So they went through the house, searched the things and as many Japanese-Americans had done in reaction to what was happening, my father had taken some of the documents that he thought would be threatening and some of the things like things that were in the family a long time. He had stuffed them into a fifty gallon metal barrel, welded it shut and buried it in advance. And so when this guy went through the house he didn't find anything because we had already turned in our contraband and so on. But never the less he was taken away. They took him to Stockton because as I mentioned his activities were in San Joaquin County. And he had to spend a night in the Stockton jail but the next day they took him to the Silver Avenue Detention Center in San Francisco and when they were transporting him from Stockton to San Francisco, they passed by my uncle's farm and so my father was able to ask the driver to stop and the agent to stop and let him say good-bye to his brother who was out in the field. So he was able to get out of the car and wave to my uncle good-bye and tell the rest of the family that he was okay and so on. And so we had that experience, then he was taken to the Silver Avenue Detention Center in San Francisco.

Now having left the farm to my brother who was still a minor, actually he was nineteen years old, my brother had a lot of questions as to what to do and so on and so I had to apply for a permit to visit my father in San Francisco and he was able to obtain the permit to visit my father and my father gave him some instructions further. But then a couple of weeks, several weeks later we received the notice for the mass evacuation and we had to take care of the house and the land and so forth. Suddenly a person showed up

at the door and he offered to look after our farm in our absence. And so my brother still not being very naïve and not knowing too much, engaged a lawyer in Brentwood to draw up an agreement for this person (inaudible) to look after the farm in our absence and that agreement included that he was to take care of the house and all the farm implements and he was able to farm the land but that he would have to be sure that our taxes are paid.

Now actually because of the Alien Land Law the land was in the name of M. Hayashi and M. Hayashi was a Nisei, American citizen who my uncle had befriended and had played baseball with in Stockton became a very close family friend and so my father had borrowed his name to purchase the land and do all of his business in that name which was getting around the Land Law illegally but, (pause) and actually this M. Hayashi became the first manager of the Railroad Produce Association my father had engaged him to become the manager. But then in 1939, he passed away. And so Mr. Hayashi's wife became the legal owner of the land and so; however she was very accommodating. Actually, her brother was the person who was the boarder in our house and was farming on his own and the person I mentioned when the FBI came to our house.

And then with the evacuation order besides taking care of the house we had to get rid of our car and the main things so people came by and we sold our car and household things at very low price. For example, I recall the car was less than one year old and I think we sold it for something like a hundred dollars. Now in trying to clean up things before we had to leave for the camps, I was gathering up all the farm implements in other words my father was farming and as I mentioned earlier close to four hundred acres and we had little plots of forty, fifty acres here and there scattered out with farm implements at various places so my brother and I were gathering them up to bring them back to the

home place and in that process, I fell off the truck onto an implement and injured my chest right before we had to leave for camp. And when we had to evacuate, I was not able to carry much or anything when we entered camp.

We were first, well we had to assemble in a place called Byron, B-Y-R-O-N, California and we had some Caucasian friends who volunteered to drive us there for the to the assembly area where we boarded buses and were taken to Turlock Stanislaus County Fairgrounds where the Turlock Assembly Center was located. We—that also, my father had a colleague who was picked up by the FBI the same day that my father was arrested and so his wife was left alone and because they had two daughters, both of them had been sent to Japan to go to school and they were stranded in Japan. So we decided to take Mrs. Mikami into our family for the evacuation.

Then we arrived in the Turlock Assembly Center of course we were all put into one room with no partitions or anything and I often wondered how Mrs. Mikami felt with not being a member of the family but we had taken her in and she must have felt lack of privacy and so on. And then from Turlock, we were in Turlock Family Center from April to Mid-April to the Mid-July. While in the Turlock Assembly Center I got a job delivering mail within the camp and so I sorted mail and delivered them to certain areas of the camp. For that, we were paid eight dollars a month. To pass the time away, we did, engaged in athletic programs or played baseball and did some body building type of exercise.

Now we were ordered to go to the Gila River, Arizona camp located between Phoenix and Tucson and I can remember how hot it was because we were traveling in Mid-July from Turlock to Arizona. And the train that we were taken in we had to go into

the siding every time some other train came by and then you knew troop trains were going by so I think it took us three or four days to go from Turlock to Arizona. Then we arrived at Casa Grande, Arizona we were taken by bus to the camps. And in Gila there are two camps. One they labeled as Canal Camp and the other was Butte Camp. When we arrived there, the camp was not finished yet. There were many trenches so that utility pipes and so on. And my first surprise as I peered into the trench, the first thing I saw was a number of rattlesnakes running around in the bottom of the trench. And we were taken to Canal Camp which is also known as Camp One. I don't know for what reason but we decided, we volunteered, my family volunteered to move to Camp Two, Butte Camp after the first week. I am not sure for what reason. And I can remember that we lived in Block 66 in Butte Camp.

While in camp in order to avoid boredom, we organized athletic teams and competed either by blocks or by region from where we came. I remember playing basketball with a group from my home town Brentwood. Baseball we joined a group of people from Vacaville and Suisun. And our baseball team was labeled as Block 66 baseball team. We were able to build a baseball field and it became known as the Block 66 baseball field. One of our main competitors in baseball was the Block 28 team and the Block 28 also built a baseball field. That team was headed by a Mr. Zenimura from Fresno and currently a Carey Nakagawa is doing the history of the baseball teams in the Japanese-American community. And one significant part is a story about the Zenimura family who were outstanding baseball players.

Now in the Gila Camp at the time of evacuation, I mentioned that I dropped out of high school in March. In March I was a junior in high school but due to the fact that I

participated in athletics, I did not have to enroll in physical education and therefore I had an extra period. And so I took, each year, I took a course in wood shop or home economics as electives. And even though I was a junior I only lacked one unit from graduating. And so in the Gila Camp I went to Butte High School just for the fall semester. And earned enough credits which I had sent back to Liberty Union High School and so the Liberty Union High School graduated me on schedule in 1943. Although I had enough credits, I did not have all my English and Math requirements which affected my admission to college. Then in April of 1943 the family decided to join my father in a family camp in Crystal City, Texas.

Now the family camp in Crystal City, Texas came about because a number of internees in Missoula, Montana Detention Center had called to attention to the Red Cross that they were being forced to do hard labor and under the Geneva Treaty, internees like those arrested by the FBI were protected from having to do hard labor and they protested that. And so the Red Cross in Spain investigated or were chosen to investigate the conditions of the internees in the Justice Camps. And told the US government that they were in violation of the treaty so the US government decided to, well another factor is that they, in the war, the US Army was able to get very few prisoners of war, Japanese prisoners of war, whereas in the Philippines and so on, many American GI's were taken as prisoners. And during the war, United States was concerned about how Japan would treat the American prisoners of war and realized that unless the United States treated Japanese subjects here humanely that the Americans there would be tortured and so on. So the US government decided to build a family camp and permit the unification of the families of the internees and the internees were able to indicate whether they wanted the

families to join them or not, so many of the internees like my father opted to have the family join them in the camp in Crystal City. And since I was a minor, I had no choice but to go along with my mother and go to the Crystal City camp. And the Crystal City internment camp run by the United States Department of Justice was labeled as a camp for dangerous enemy aliens.

In the meantime in the camps like in Gila, Manzanar and all the others, because the Japanese-American Citizens League was negotiating with the US government to give us the opportunity to prove our loyalty despite the fact that we were interned in these camps. The government decided to find out who was loyal and who was not loyal and we were given a questionnaire, a loyalty questionnaire. There were two main questions. Questions 27 and 28 and question 27 was whether we would be willing to serve the US Armed Forces, in the US Armed Forces. And question 28 was whether we swore our allegiance to the United States and of course any allegiance to Japan and if we answered both of those questions yes we were considered loyal and if we answered them no we were considered disloyal and the United States designated the Tule Lake, California camp the camp for disloyals and we referred to those who answered no as “no-no boys”. And this was taking place in the Gila Camp before I left for Crystal City and I remember that in January of 1943, my mother, my brother and I received permission to visit my father in the Lordsburg, New Mexico Camp, internment Camp. And at that time my father had directed my brother and I that under no circumstances should we volunteer for the Armed Forces given the situation. Of course I was only sixteen years old and my brother was nineteen so it applied to my brother more than it did to myself which made it very difficult for my brother because having been put into camps, we didn't know where

we stood. We had gone through public school pledging allegiance to the American flag and singing all of the national anthem and God Bless America and so on and been in the Cub Scouts and well, we felt like we were abandoned by our country. We felt that we were persons without a country. And when we were given this questionnaire although I didn't have to answer it because I left for Crystal City technically before the questionnaires were brought to us and I wasn't seventeen yet so I wasn't required to answer it until later when I turned seventeen. But we felt insulted since we were American citizens and my brother and I were not dual citizens, we were just American citizens and we did not have any connections to Japan. I have never been there. And the irony is that while the war in Europe was going on, and Japan was at war with China and so on, both my brother and I were volunteers in the community. We were kind of trained to distinguish between American aircraft and enemy aircraft, aircraft spotting, training and so on and we were volunteers for that so having gone through all of this, it was very confusing to us what was going on.

Now, when my mother and I left for the Crystal City Camp also Mrs. Mikami who was in our unit together, left for Crystal City Camp. My brother decided to stay behind and remain in Gila because he had thoughts of leaving the camp and going back to school. His education at the University of California was interrupted by the evacuation. Although my brother probably would have answered yes, yes to those loyalty questions. Because of the directive from my father, he tried to qualify his reply by saying that, you know, unless his rights were restored and my father released from internment and so on he could not answer the questionnaire yes, yes but he did not want to answer it no, no. So when he applied to leave the camp, they would not release him right away. He had to go



through a series of hearings before he was permitted to leave the Gila Camp. He did eventually get out in late 1943 and he went to Detroit, entered Detroit Tech and worked for the city of Detroit.

Now in the Crystal City, Texas Camp, we found that the living conditions were much nicer than in the Gila Camp. In the Gila Camp we lived in a barrack which was divided into four to six units and each family lived in a single unit with no partitions. Then we had to go to the mess hall for our meals and so three times a day, we lined up at the mess halls. And also the lavatory and bathing facilities were outside and we had to walk about a block to our showers and rest rooms. Our mothers had to do the laundry by hand in a washroom. (inaudible)

The fact is that in the mess hall well in the Gila Camp, the food was prepared by evacuees, volunteer people, nobody was trained as cooks or anything but they learned how to cook in the mess hall and so the food although was tolerable, was not to the liking of every person at each meal. We used to refer to the food as slop suey. And as I mentioned earlier I went to the high school for the fall semester and while I was going to school, I took a job as time keeper for the Block 66 mess hall and in the Spring of 1943 the first lady Eleanor Roosevelt visited our camp and I had the privilege of being the time keeper at the door and checking people were qualified to come into our mess hall and so and meeting Mrs. Roosevelt as she inspected our mess hall.

Somehow, various block mess halls were kind of labeled I mean as good mess halls or bad ones and so people in other blocks would sometimes try and sneak into the better mess halls and so on and my job as time keeper was not only to keep time of the

people working in the mess hall so that they could get their sixteen dollars a month pay, but also to check the meal tickets to be sure the people in our block only were admitted.

Now in the camp some people worked doing other things. There was a camouflage net factory where people worked to produce camouflage nets for the US Army and then some people worked at security guards and police and there were each block had a block manager and assistant block manager and then there were people who were recreation supervisors and people who delivered food by truck to the mess hall and delivered milk and ice to the mess hall so all the work within the camps were done by the inmates. The governing system went through the block manager who had an association that met with the outside administration which was the WRA-War Relocation Authority.

Now in the Crystal City Camps, we lived in little mini apartments. And we were issued tokens which could be spent at the commissary and the canteen and so my mother and my friends would go shopping to the commissary everyday to buy the ingredients to cook the meals and she was able to cook our own meals in our own apartments.

Although our shower facility was outside in another building our toilet and kitchen and so on plumbing was all inside the apartment. And in contrast to how our laundry was done in the WRA Camps in Crystal City, we had a central laundry and once a week we would put all our laundry bedding sheets and whatever else needed to be washed and cleaned into a big laundry bag and we delivered it, took it to the laundry and at the end of the day we would get it back all folded and pressed. So it is kind of ironic that American citizens were treated worse than dangerous enemy aliens.

In the Crystal City Camp again we organized activities athletic activities to keep ourselves occupied. We had competitive sports as well as Martial Arts and in the Crystal

City Camp, we had two school systems. Actually, a great many of internees in Crystal City were Japanese language school teachers from the US mainland and Hawaii and so the INS or Justice Department permitted creating a Japanese Language School K-12 as well as a regular public school and since I had graduated from high school or completed my requirements, I attended the Japanese Language School and spent two years full time in the Japanese Language School.

NT: (inaudible) We left off with you telling me about the two different schools at camp and that you decided to attend the Japanese Language School and you ended up attending it for two years.

IT: The, as I mentioned, the Japanese Language School there were many Japanese Language School teachers who were also Buddhist Church Ministers from Hawaii and from the United States mainland and the Japanese Language School was instructed pretty much like a regular school like in high school and we learned the language in various subject matter such as Geography, History, Ethics, Mathematics and then Language itself. We learned the grammar of the Japanese language and not only that, there was a special course in Japanese, Chinese characters how we could convert Chinese into Japanese. And also I had some calligraphy and so we went to the school from eight to three everyday. Each hour a different subject matter and therefore I learned enough Japanese to the point that later on, when I entered the US Army I qualified for the Military Intelligence Service. So ironic that being interned, internee as a native (inaudible) to learn the language there and then work for the United States Military Intelligence.

Getting back to the Crystal City Camp, I also participated in Judo and Sumo. I did injure myself in a Sumo tournament and therefore, I did stop at one point. Now also

in the Crystal City Camp we had a medical doctor who was very talented as a surgeon as well and so at the camp hospital medical services were very good. We had a number of registered nurses in the camp and the doctors and so we received very good medical and dental treatment there. Now with regard to my stay in the camp, the fact that my father having been interned by the FBI, he was intent on repatriating to Japan because having been treated as he was, not eligible for naturalization, Alien Land laws and so on and had lost everything he had developed economically, he hell-bound to be repatriated.

During WWII there were two exchanges that took place, the first one in 1942 and the second one in 1943. The exchange took place by way of the Swedish Ship (inaudible) and the way the exchange took place is if your (inaudible) took people from New York to India and then a Japanese ship met the (inaudible) in India and the exchange took place there. I mentioned earlier that a Mrs. Mikami we took in as part of our family, well she and her husband repatriated to Japan on the first exchange in 1942 and make that 1943, the second exchange I think it was September 1943.

NT: Did she remarry?

IT: No she and her husband. She joined her husband in Crystal City and then went to Japan. Now as I mentioned earlier in the Gila Camp, people in the Gila Camp had to answer to the loyalty questionnaire and my brother who remained in Gila had to answer to those loyalty questionnaires and because my father was so adamant of him not serving in the US Army while he was interned, and under the circumstances where we lost everything in the evacuation, he could not answer yes, yes to the questions 27 and 28 and so he refused to answer so they automatically made him a no, no. And because of that he had difficulty getting security clearance to leave the Gila Camp and had to go through a series

of hearings and eventually he was permitted to leave the Gila Camp and went to Detroit, Michigan. And in Detroit he entered Detroit Tech and worked for the city of Detroit. In the meantime he became very concerned for my status in Crystal City where my father was volunteering to be repatriated. And so he visited Crystal City Camp with the intention of getting permission to take me out of the Crystal City Camp and therefore he talked to the director of the camp, Mr. Rourke, and as he made these plans, he was in conflict with my father and the word got out about what my brother was trying to do and so my father's friends in the camp called a meeting and called my brother on the red carpet to try and help my father. They told my brother that he was disloyal to his father and so on and put pressure on my brother however my brother felt that there was no place for us in Japan since we had never been there, we were American citizens. Eventually, as the war progressed, my father's position softened and my brother was able to get me released from the Crystal City Camp and I joined my brother in Detroit in August of 1945 just before the very beginning of August just before the end of the war.

I enrolled at Wayne University in Detroit and completed one semester. As the war ended, the government agreed to release my father and so we waited until the end of my semester at Wayne University and in February of 1945, February of 1946 my brother and I drove to Crystal City, Texas to get my parents released from the camp. And while we were in Crystal City, Texas my father had to start thinking about what he was going to do. We still had the property, forty acres in Brentwood, California; however my father remembered that in shipping tomatoes to the Eastern market, there were some years which the lower Rio Grande Valley tomatoes competed in the Eastern market so he wanted to investigate the possibilities in the lower Rio Grande Valley. So while we were

visiting Crystal City waiting for my parents release from the camp, my brother drove my father down to San Benito, Texas to scout out farming possibilities there. While there my father met a number of other Japanese-Americans who were farming there and they invited my father to move down there. However, we first because of the farm in Brentwood my father decided to go back to Brentwood and we helped him pack and put them on the train to Los Angeles and my brother and I drove to Los Angeles where we met my parents there. In Los Angeles we had friends and so we met at our friend's house in Los Angeles. These friends were from the same province in Japan.

NT: What was that?

IT: Wakayama. Then after staying there for a couple of days, we went on back to Brentwood. Now we had a little difficulty getting back into our house in Brentwood because during the war, there was a housing shortage and due to that, you could not evict anybody and then the person who agreed to look after our house and the farm, refused to move out and he claimed that he had made some improvements in our absence and therefore unless we paid him for the improvements, he was not going to move out. So we had to pay cash and the thing is, in the agreement the lawyer of course didn't understand either and he had indicated that the agreement would be for the duration of the war. Although the war technically ended in August of 1945, the peace treaty was not signed until 1947 and so there was a question of the term, duration of the war. And so Mr. (inaudible) held us to that and he said he would not move out unless we paid cash up front. That embittered my brother very much but nevertheless, we moved back into our house and my father farmed for a year for the 1946 season.

However, he felt very uncomfortable. He felt like he was not welcome back in that he after his hearing, he became aware of who the informers were and so not only that there was a labor shortage and he had difficult time the first year farming back in Brentwood. And therefore his business to the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas where the people there were so hospitable and inviting and so on, he decided he was just going to pick up and move to Texas. In the meantime I had left Wayne University and returned to Brentwood and since I left camp I was no longer classified 4C by the selective service and reclassified as 1A and received a notice for a physical exam. But then my future was very uncertain. My father told me that there was no way he could finance my going to college and he was very uncertain about the future and so I thought about it and at that time the Army was recruiting heavily offering the GI Bill and so I decided that I would volunteer for three years and get four years of GI Bill and so that is what I did.

I volunteered and at that time when you volunteered, you were able to chose your service and so I chose the Quarter Master Corps instead of the infantry and was inducted at Camp Beale, California and assigned to Fort Lee or Camp Lee, Virginia for my basic training. And then after I finished my basic training in July of 1946 I was assigned to the Adjutant General School in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. (pause) There I was assigned to the Postal Unit where we were trained to become mail clerks. And while I was in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, I wired through our company commander about the Military Intelligence Service since I had become bilingual and was recommended by the company commander. I finished my Postal Course in Fort Oglethorpe and then I received notice that I was accepted to the MIS, Military Intelligence Service and therefore I was sent to Monterey, California to the Army Language School. When I arrived in Monterey, I was

cycled into an existing language class, Japanese language class that was to graduate in November of that year and so I attended this Japanese language class for about three months, September, October, November and received a certificate of graduation from the language class in Monterey and was promoted from private to Tech Three Sergeant and then I was given a furlough and on my furlough because my father had decided to move to Texas and in the meantime my brother had been readmitted to the University of California and it was during his Christmas break and my furlough that we were both able to help my father move to Texas from Brentwood.

We loaded all his farm equipment into a rented box car and shipped it off to Texas and my brother and my mother and my father we drove the truck and the car to Texas. When we arrived in San Benito, Texas the people who my father had met on his visit there had arranged for a vacant house although it was vacant because it was abandoned, no windows, and really broken down. So we had to board up the windows and so on to where my parents moved in and we had two days in which to make it like a camp and livable and it was very cold at that time, in fact it snowed while we were there. But nevertheless, they got moved in. My brother and I returned to California and I had to go back to Monterey, the city of Monterey and my brother had to go back to University of California.

And somehow despite the hardship my mother survived and they were able to settle in Texas. People in Texas were very hospitable and very kind to my parents and were able to establish themselves. In the meantime I was sent overseas to Japan and the occupation of Japan as an interpreter-translator-interrogator. And I spent two years in Japan interrogating Japanese prisoners who were returning from Siberia in the Soviet



Union. As you know the Soviet Union entered the WW, the WWII just the last couple of weeks of the war and they took hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers as prisoners in the surrender and they took them, they assigned them to labor battalions all over the Soviet Union and worked them in factories and the construction of railroads reconstruction from the war that is after Hitler's Army had ravaged the European part of the Soviet Union and much reconstruction had to be done. So the Japanese soldiers were recruited into labor battalions and forced to do hard labor in the reconstruction as well as some of the German soldiers. But as they became ill and could not work anymore they were returned, repatriated into Japan. And so we were assigned to interrogate these people for the atrocities committed by these Russians however while we were doing that Winston Churchill coined the term Iron Curtain and we got involved in a cold war and although the United States and the Soviet Union were allies during WWII, we became enemies and so we were sent back to Tokyo from the field for a refresher course. And the refresher course was to give us a new set of vocabulary because our assignment changed. While we were interrogating to identify atrocities committed by the Soviet Union, we now had to interrogate to identify targets to bomb in case a hot war was to break out and that was our assignment.

I was assigned to Masore, Japan from April 1947 to November 1947 returned to Tokyo for December and January and was sent to Hakodate Hokkaido in February of 1948 where we continued interrogating Japanese prisoners. While assigned to Hakodate I had—well we were in assigned to temporary duty in a detachment and while after the first two months in Hakodate the first sergeant or the administrator of our detachment was reassigned to a commission and as I was a ranking non-commissioned officer, I was

asked to become the administrator or first sergeant of that detachment. So I did some administrative work as well as interrogation.

Then in February of 1949 my three year term was up and although I enlisted in April of 1946 for a three year term because well I was recruited and offered a commission to sign up for another term. However since I refused that, I was released at the convenience of the government in February of 1949 and discharged. Of course, there were two factors that influenced my decision not to sign up for another term because I originally entered the Army so I could get the GI Bill and go back to college. But in the interrogation we were very much aware of the tension that was built up between North Korea and South Korea and through our interrogation those of us that were doing the interrogating were convinced that something was going to happen between North Korea and South Korea and given that situation wanting to go back to school and although when I was discharged, they, I was pressured to sign up for the reserves. But when I thought about it if war should break out then being in the reserve I knew I would be called back and so I did not sign up for the reserves.

NT: Good decision.

IT: So I got discharged in February of 1949 at Fort Lewis, Washington, received my transportation money and mustering out pay and I returned, well I joined my parents in Texas, San Benito, Texas. And I immediately applied for admission to the University of Houston. I debated between the University of Texas and the University of Houston but then I opted for the University of Houston because of the booming conditions in Houston, the oil industry and the job opportunities that were there since I had started as an engineering major in Wayne and the job opportunities would be better in Houston. So I

began at the University of Houston in Sept. 1949. And at the time over half of the students at—

(end of first tape)

IT: I was kind of worried about how I would do studying in college again after the break three years in the Army and so on. However things went pretty well but I found the engineering curriculum very boring. But I did get my mathematics and science courses in as an engineering major and after the first semester at the University of Houston, I decided to change my major and went into economics. And I found out that the chairman of the economics department took a liking to me and became very helpful and I finished the first year the first semester the fall semester in engineering and the spring semester in economics. After taking that one course in economics the beginning of the fall semester of 1950, the chairman of the department asked me to grade papers, if I'd be willing to grade papers, and I said I would and so I took on that chore and so he advised me throughout the rest of my college bachelor's degree. (pause) I graduated from the University of Houston in 1952 which is three years after going there and received the Wall Street Journal Student Achievement Award and my the chairman of the department who became my advisor helped me into my master's degree. And gave me a research assistanceship to work on the master's degree and this coupled with my GI Bill stipend and the research assistanceship, I felt quite comfortable working on my master's degree.

I completed my masters in 1954; also during the summers I worked as a research associate in the Bureau of Business Research and so I had a degree in Economics with an emphasis in statistics. So upon receiving my master's degree, I took a job with Anderson Clayton and Company as a statistical analyst and worked at Anderson Clayton for two

years. And then I was offered a part-time teaching position in the University of Houston night school in statistics. So besides working at Anderson Clayton, I was teaching statistics in the evenings at the University of Houston. All the time, all the time I was working for Anderson Clayton, my economics department advisor continued to push me towards going back to graduate school and along with the other professors in the economics department, they guaranteed me a teaching assistant ship at the University of Texas if I were to go back to graduate school. Because one of the professors was from the University of Texas and had gone to the University of Houston to teach and so he escorted me to the Austin Campus and showed me around and introduced me to the professors of economics at the University of Texas.

Now I mentioned earlier how Texas people were very hospitable and so on and I feel very fortunate that all these people took an interest in me and helped me out. Just on Monday night, here at the California State University at Fresno, there was a program showing a video called the “Children of the Camps”. And that video showed individuals telling their story about their growing up after leaving the camps and they sounded somewhat embittered by that camp experience. However, in my case, having come out of the camp and being helped by so many people, I felt very fortunate and changed the whole plan of my life from being an engineer to going into academia and so on.

Now at the University of Texas, being a teaching assistant, I taught two classes and each semester took a nine unit load in classes with the graduate program. I finished my course requirements in 1959 and then—then I was offered an electorship to teach statistics in the economics department for the 1959-1960 economic year because I had my graduate work with an emphasis and major in economics and minor in statistics.

Beginning of the fall of 1960 I took a job as assistant professor at the University of Missouri, but I had not completed my Ph.D and was still working on my dissertation.

Now going back onto my personal life when I pointed out that when we took my parents out of the Crystal City Camp and went to Los Angeles and stayed with friends in Los Angeles, I got married in 1960 right after accepting a job with the University of Missouri; it was during the summer of 1960. My wife Barbara was from the family of the friend we stayed with in Los Angeles going from Crystal City back to Brentwood.

NT: Did you know her before you went to Los Angeles that time or was that the first you met her?

IT: No the family knew her in fact we visited that family in 1932 but Barbara was not born yet. I was a child just six years old. We went to the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles and visited with the family then.

NT: So you actually met Barbara right after the war?

IT: Yes.

NT: How did this romance develop? Did you write letters? Did you go see her again? Did she come to Texas?

IT: Well, actually while I was in the Army I was dating her sister. But when I got back from the Army, I was committed to finishing my college and so we called it off. And while I was traveling back and forth between California and Texas and so on, I always visited them in Los Angeles and that's how I met Barbara.

NT: Now you didn't talk very much about traveling back and forth between California and Texas. Once you moved your family out to Texas, what kept pulling you back to California?

IT: Well, first of all, they had, after my parents moved to Texas and go back to Monterey and we all stopped in Los Angeles and then when I got discharged from the Army before I moved to Washington going back to Texas, I stopped in Los Angeles and then in 1949 after I went back to Texas, I went back to San Francisco to my brother's wedding and then while I was in college, I came back to California for a visit.

NT: What was the main reason? Was it your brother? Was it Barbara? Was it just you missed California or was it a combination?

IT: No, all my friends were in California, camp friends and so on, however when I visited California, it was typical to visit my friends. You know, they had returned from camp and so they were busy reestablishing themselves so some of them were holding down two and three jobs. And so then they had no time to visit so I always look back and think of those people who came back here to California stayed here in California and those of us who settled outside of California, it seemed like I was looking in the inside from the outside. And I felt that the Japanese-Americans who stayed in California had a very competitive environment even to go to college. Had I gone to the University of California, I think I would have faced a lot of stiff competition. But at the University of Houston, as I pointed out, the chairman of the department and the professors all pushed me along like you know so I had, as a student, I had friends among the faculty, since I had gone to the Army I was not no eighteen year old or nineteen year old. And so there were faculty members who were just one or two years older than I and so it was quite a different experience for me in Texas than many of my friends who came back to California.

NT: How did you and Barbara decide to get married? What pushed the process along?

IT: Well I had finished my course work at the University of Texas and I think we were ready. (laughs) It was not a long courtship actually. It was about a year. I came here in 1959, well actually when I dated her sister, I was still in the Army and her sister had some—she was going to UCLA and she had an engagement and then I visited Los Angeles from Monterey when I was in the army, I took Barbara with me to a movie and so after her sister and I broke off, (inaudible) we didn't get together until 1959 when I was a student at (inaudible) school and so one year, after that we got married.

NT: Where did you get married?

IT: In Los Angeles.

NT: Did your family come out from Texas and is your brother still in San Francisco and did he come down too?

IT: No, all my family was in Texas.

NT: Oh your brother too?

IT: And my parents came.

NT: And Barbara's whole family was in Los Angeles?

IT: Yes, in fact her whole family is still in Los Angeles. She is the only one that left.

NT: Okay.

IT: And my brother after graduating from the University of California and getting married and after working two years in the Bay Area, he is an architect, was an architect, moved to Texas because my father kept pushing him and his family because you know how the oldest son has to. And my brother moved to Texas, opened his practice in Arlington, Texas while he was engaged in this practice, I went to Austin, University of Texas and I met somehow I don't recall the circumstance, but I met an architect from the architect

department at the University of Texas. And then my brother remembered that his former professor had moved from University of California to the University of Texas to take over the architect program there. And so somehow I got my brother back in contact with the architect department at the University of Texas. And right after I left the University of Texas, the University of Texas offered my brother a teaching job in architecture and in the second year as I said the University of Texas architecture they liked him and he became Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Texas. And also he received a design award from the Texas Institute of Architecture for some of his work that he did in lower (inaudible). But then in the 1960's during the student movement my brother (inaudible) design architect and the University of Texas is a very football-minded school and they, the Board of Regents decided to expand the stadium of the University of Texas and in order to do that, they had to cut down some oak trees on the creek alongside the stadium and my brother was dean at the time and his students climbed up on the oak trees to prevent the booms from cutting down the trees so they got into Life Magazine. (laughs).

And then the University, the State of Texas was semi-dry state and so they had these private clubs so to serve alcohol you had to go to a private club. Well my brother became a member you know as dean and he entertained people and so he joined the private clubs and the Chairman of the Board of Regents was also in the same club and in the club, they often had their conflicts but the person that hired my brother as dean was the President of the University was a close friend and also a close friend of my brother was the Dean of the Law School of the University of Texas. And in that turmoil period, when all this took place, the president got fired and the law school dean was under



pressure, but when the President got fired then he got hired on as President of the Rice University in Houston. Because of my brother's confrontations with the regents and club and so on, he along with the president got released so my brother went with the president to Rice and became head of the architect department at Rice.

NT: Meanwhile you were at the University of Missouri, newly married to Barbara?

IT: Well no I was back in Fresno, here in Fresno. I came here in 1963.

NT: Oh, why did you leave Missouri? Or what made you?

IT: Well Barbara being a native Californian and didn't adjust too well to the Midwestern market and I had not finished my dissertation and so I was under pressure to get that done if I would have stayed in Missouri. And a colleague of mine from the graduate school in Texas had come here one year before I did, and we were very close friends and he is my neighbor back here now, and he continued to a, talked me into coming to Fresno State. And so I was able to come to Fresno State from inside connections you know. Not only that but the Chairman of the Economic Department at the University of Texas was a close friend of the Chairman here and they both belonged to the Shokinbach Foundation out of New York and so to that connections and so on, it was easy to come to Fresno State and because Barbara wanted to get out of Missouri, I had applied to University, I mean Portland State University in Fresno. I did not apply to the Bay Area or Los Angeles because under our system, you had the salary schedule, and you get paid the same whether you are here or there.

NT: Right.

IT: And the cost of living here is much less so it's a lot more money to be here than it is to be in the Bay Area. So I came to Fresno.

NT: I see. Were you still ABD?

IT: ABD yeah. I was ABD until 1970 and teaching twelve units and so on and kind of delayed my finishing up. I did while I was in Austin I applied to the Ford Foundation for a grant to go to Japan to finish my research but circumstances didn't come out right, in other words, in applying for (inaudible) in Chicago, it was winter time and snow and so on my flight got grounded in Oklahoma City, and I arrived three hours before my interview in Chicago and I had, although I had a reservation at the hotel, I arrived in Chicago at 5AM and my interview was at 8:30 AM and so I had to go to my interview without shaving. Well that probably didn't apply into it anyway, so I did not get my grant to go to Japan so I had to finish up my research with whatever I could get here. And then in 1975 I did take a sabbatical to complete my research and went to Japan. And while I was at the University of Houston there was several Japanese students from Japan and one of the students was a descendant of the major oligarchy that I was including in my Ph.D dissertation and we became friends and we are still in contact but since her family was a political family and a member of the (inaudible) party and so she had many connections and so when I went to Japan to do my research in 1975, she introduced me to the minister of telecommunications and the minister of finance and when I told her what I was looking for in (inaudible), I didn't have to go to a library and do my research the minister handed me a package of materials. (laughs)

NT: You need to explain how you and your father came to meet with the Crown Prince? Was that the same trip? How did all that come about?

IT: Well I think we should—

NT: Stop for a minute?

IT: Stop for a minute.

NT: Okay. All right.

IT: My father retired from farming in 1967 and when he retired, my brother was living in Austin, Texas and through his practice and connection at the University, he became involved in the city and was the architect for the Town Lake Project in Austin which is the Colorado River has a low level dam and so the landscaping and designing for the use of that Town Lake was designed by my brother and he came to know the city people quite a bit.

And then my father retired in 1967 and moved to Austin because my brother's family was there and then in the retirement being so active all his life he didn't have much to do. So my brother arranged for him to landscape a Japanese garden in the city park known as Zoka Park and my father proposed that he would landscape and do the garden for no cost to the city and no out of pocket cost to the city. What he did is the city has a motor pool for equipment and so on and a casual labor pool. And so all he had to do was requisition the use of bulldozers or skip loaders or whatever from the city pool and the location is on the side of a hill and so he landscaped the Japanese garden which included a stream and a pond and so on and became part of the project of the Greater Austin Garden Club Project. And because Lady Bird Johnson was a member of the Garden Club and when the garden was finished, it became one of the city attractions. In addition to the garden itself, right alongside of the Colorado River he built a lotus pond and through his connection in Japan, he was able to obtain lotus rhizomes that were given to the Emperor as diplomatic gifts as with the lotus plant is a symbol of peace in Asia and so the lotus plants came from the Palace collection of plants. Currently-well the garden

in Zoka Park is named Taniguchi Oriental Gardens, and landscaped completely out of native plants. Also my father had problems planting cherry trees in the garden because the cherry trees that he planted were susceptible to disease and insects so my father found a native plant that is in the cherry family and he grafted Japanese flowering cherries to the native root stock and that turned out pretty well and so they have cherry trees that blossom in the springtime in the Japanese garden. And so the garden club named the garden Taniguchi Oriental Garden and it has become an attraction to visitors to Austin and so on.

But in 1975 when I got my sabbatical to go to Japan, I invited my father to go with us and I took my whole family, and my father to Japan so at that time Lady Bird Johnson asked my father to deliver a letter of thank you for the lotus plants to the Crown Prince and so when we were in Japan, we got an appointment and had an audience with the Crown Prince and Princess. And at that time I was a Vice-President of Research and Services for National JACL and so the Crown Prince became very interested and wanted to know all about how the Japanese-Americans were fairing here in the United States and he had many questions for me. We thought maybe we would get five or ten minutes with the Crown Prince but we ended up about an hour with the Crown Prince. And they served us tea and sembei cookies and so on and offered my father cigarettes from the Palace although my father really didn't smoke. (laughs) So it was a very interesting visit there.

NT: What did your father have to say about that interview or about the visit or about Japan?

IT: Oh he was very surprised that we were there with the Prince for so long a period. He thought we would have about five or ten minutes and he felt the Prince and Princess were

very gracious. They didn't seek then they kind of put us at ease and so on and of course the secretary that accompanied the Crown Prince was very accommodating. I was kind of at first a little uneasy, the way things that are done at that level are so formalized so it wasn't that bad then.

NT: Was your mother on the trip as well?

IT: No, she was not able to go because of her health.

NT: What did you do for the remainder of the trip and how long were you there?

IT: We were there three months and in order to make it possible to stay that long if we had to stay in hotels all that time it would have been very expensive but I had a cousin in Osaka who was working for Kanebo Cosmetics but he was quartered in Tokyo and his home was in Osaka. In Japan if you rent out your house or anything, you cannot evict them so rather than not having a place to go back to by renting it out, he just left it vacant so he invited us to stay at his house in Osaka, well actually it was a she, my cousin she and her husband. I had met them back when I was in the occupation of Japan and I had been in contact with them at that time so we had a whole house to ourselves in Osaka and stayed there. And also when we were in Tokyo, we had a family that I mean, the son visited the US and we were the host family here in Fresno and so they invited us, they had enough apartment project that they lent out and at that time they had one vacant apartment so they invited us to stay there while we were in Tokyo for three weeks. Plus the fact that my friend that I had from being at the University of Houston who was in—whose family is in politics and so on, she put us up at the Pacific Hotel in Tokyo for five days. And so on that trip, having met a couple of the ministers of the cabinet and so on it was quite an interesting trip to Japan. Other than that we kind of—outside of that we kind of acted

like tourists and went sight seeing. We were guests of my friend in Hakone. We visited Kyoto many times and saw many temples and we went to Nara, we went to Nikko and so and then our two boys we had to take them out of school since we left here in early April. And then we were able to work it out with the school principal that if they were to write a report on their trip to Japan, that would suffice to make up for the time they were out.

One thing that we regretted that when we were in Japan they are so strict in the schools that we were not able to visit schools. They will not allow strangers to visit the schools. However we had a family friend who owned the private school in Misaka so we were taken on a private tour of the school in Misaka. And also when I was at the University of Missouri there was a visiting professor from Osaka Agricultural College at the University of Missouri and we were their guests for a couple of days in Misaka.

NT: How did your father become a Nuclear Peace Activist?

IT: Because of the, all that he read about the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki of course he read it all in Japanese and although my father was not too highly educated, being a high school, he only graduated from high school, but it seems that the Isseis who finished high school in Japan during the Meiji period really had intensive education. They had a lot of (inaudible) because many of them had a lot of top talent and somehow he became interested in Rousseau's social contract theory and influenced his thinking about peace and he vowed that he wanted to go on a pilgrimage in Japan to advocate for peace but he never did accomplish that. Financially, he was not able to do it himself but he wrote many papers in Japanese and spread it among his friends. But then, my mother, while in Texas, took an interest in poetry and became a student of poetry through correspondence with a well known poet in Japan and she received a ranking among poets when she

finished her program. And so because my mother kept writing these poems and publishing them in the Poetry Magazine Monthly, my father would read them and he became interested in writing poetry also. And he wrote the, what we call Kanka's it is a loose form of Haiku and so he wrote poems advocating peace and also in Texas, the churches like the Baptist Church every year would come around trying to raise funds and would come to the farmers and ask them to donate money and so my father always used to get into conversations with these ministers that came around and asking for donations about the horrors of a nuclear war and all that and so although my father was not that proficient in English, I mean he had his English was broken and he mixed it with Japanese and some Spanish, Mexican Spanish, but he managed to communicate with the people and I guess he enjoyed talking to the different people about his mission of peace.

Also I mentioned earlier how my mother had received a certificate to teach Ikebana and because of mother, my father used to take my mother to the Ikebana classes and provided all the raw materials for these classes and so on and he also became a student of the Ikebana and he did mainly the large ones cutting down a tree and so on rather than just cut flowers and so on. And so together my father and my mother used to do all the flower arrangements for President Johnson at his receptions in Austin at the Convention Center and so on and my mother had all the equipment, big equipment of Ikebana and I have some of them here now. So they became pretty close friends with the Johnsons. And when they got older and their activities became restricted, they moved into the Rebecca Baines Johnson Senior Housing Project.

NT: What happened to your mother's bronze vases during WWII, the ones that she had gotten from the temple in Japan?

IT: We stored those. We managed to get that back because I guess people didn't know what to do with them. (laughs)

NT: So you stored them in Brentwood?

IT: Yes.

NT: What happened to the fifty-five gallon drum?

IT: We never found. We were never able to reclaim that. My father buried it somewhere and he thought he knew where he buried it, but we dug everywhere and couldn't find it.

NT: So it's probably still there?

IT: Could be there.

NT: When did your parents pass away?

IT: My mother passed away in 1983 and my father in 1993.

NT: Were they both in Texas?

IT: Both in Texas, they are both buried in Austin and so I have two nephews in Austin. The older one took over my brother's architectural practice and doing quite well and the younger one is an attorney in private practice.

NT: What were your parent's full names?

IT: My mother was Sadayo- S-A-D-A-Y-O and my father was Isanu, I-S-A-N-U.

NT: And your mother's family name?

IT: Maiden name was Miyagi-M-I-Y-A-G-I.

NT: And they were both from Wakayama?

IT: Wakayama.

NT: Tell me a little bit about your involvement in the JACL? How did you get started and how did you get to be the Vice-President?



IT: Okay I first joined JACL with the St. Louis chapter when I was with the University of Missouri and since Columbia, Missouri is about a hundred and twenty miles from St. Louis, I only got—I was only able to participate in social functions but I was a member there and then when I came to Fresno I transferred my membership to the Fresno Chapter. And I learned more about what JACL was doing and since it is a civil rights organization, when I was in Texas and Houston and in Austin I got involved in politics and was with the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. I participated in precinct and county conventions and so on and was very—became pretty much involved in the civil rights movement and when I was at the University of Missouri, I participated in a sit-in at the restaurant and things like that. And so when I came to Fresno, I was already aware of some of the things the JACL was working on and the first thing I was aware that the JACL was very involved in the McCarran Immigration Act and getting concessions on immigration and naturalization rights and so on and then in the 1960's began a movement to, well first there was anti-miscegenation at the court and rescinding of the Alien Land Laws and so that's the reason why I got more and more involved into JACL and I guess it was about 1968 or 1969 when I first became a member of the Fresno Chapter board and as a member of the Fresno Chapter board and also—

(tape goes dead)

NT: You were telling me about getting involved on the Fresno Board of the JACL.

IT: I think it was about 1968 or 1969 I became a member of the Fresno JACL Chapter Board and with my connections at the University, the Central District, the Central California District Council has an annual installation banquet and it used to be a two day thing. We used to get together on Friday evening and have a business meeting where the officers for

the new year would be elected and then we'd spend the Saturday in workshops and actually in 1969 I, because of two Chinese-Americans girls at the University came to me and wanted to know why we couldn't start an Asian-American studies program and they had gone to the administration first but they apparently hit a stone wall. And so they came to me and asked how we might start it. And so I proposed that because we had a program at the University known as Experimental Studies where faculty members can test out courses and if there is a demand for it, we can put it into the regular curriculum. I proposed that we start a class in Asian-American studies under the Experimental College and I volunteered to teach the first Asian-American studies class and since my department was willing to let me teach one course, that's what we did and got an enrollment of sixty students in the one class and so the administration agreed to put it into the schedule and I was able to start the Asian-American studies program. And I went to the Dean and he gave me authorization to go out and hire a full time person for the next year. And in conjunction with teaching the Asian-American studies class, I proposed that at these Central California District Council workshop, that we should bring in some speakers and so that is what I arranged to do. We had workshops on the Identity Question and some of the JACL issues on civil rights.

And at about the same time, Caesar Chavez was starting the United Farm Workers Union here and because most of the members of the JACL in the Central Valley are farmers, there was a lot of controversy between Caesar Chavez Union and the farmers. So we organized workshops on those lines. And we got—I got more and more involved in bringing to this rural community, what is going on in the urban centers like Los Angeles and Bay Area with regard to civil rights and so on and started bringing speakers

in from that area. And what I did with the authority to hire a full time person in Asian-American studies, I hired a Bill Tsugi, who had a Master's Degree from Los Angeles State, California State University of Los Angeles and he had his contacts with people in the Los Angeles area so we were able to get some speakers. And from the Bay Area we had people like Edison Uno to come in. And at that time Edison Uno was proposing the repeal of Title Two of the Internal Securities Act of 1950 which was put there by Joe McCarthy. Now on the Title Two of that law empowered the government or the President to intern subversives and so on.

NT: How successful was he?

IT: We were successful in the mid 1970's. The Title Two of the Internal Securities Act of 1950 was repealed and signed by President Ford. Another project of the JACL in the 1970's was to get Executive Order 9066 rescinded. And another project of JACL was that we felt that Iva Tagori, the person we labeled as Tokyo Rose, was not guilty as charged and so we had a project to get her pardoned.

NT: Were all of these successful?

IT: All of these were successful.

NT: What was your personal role in all three of these? The Title Two, the rescinding of 9066 and the Iva Tagori case?

IT: They were to educate the people of the local areas of these were National JACL Projects and the chapters and districts were trying to educate the people and to lobby local politicians and the community people to give us support on these projects. And that is what we do is use the JACL network for such things.

NT: Coming out of the late sixties with the workshops between the Chavez United Farm Workers and the Nisei farmers, how close was your relationship, your personal relationship with for example the Nisei Farmers League? Did you have any direct contact with the League or was it individuals or what?

IT: With individuals because they were JACL members and actually when I first came to Fresno in 19—I came here in 1963, in 1964 was an election year and having been active in the Democratic Party in Texas, however the majority of Nisei here are registered Republicans. And when the Caesar Chavez started the union movement I suggested, well the JACL, the President of the Chapter used to have a election orientation night in which we reviewed the propositions and the candidates and gave presentations on both sides because JACL being non-profit, cannot be partisan and we used to have those programs. And at that time I remember telling the people that to deal with union organizations, the farmers need to organize also. And before that you know the farmers used to complain about the governments agricultural policy and they complained about how prices were not high enough and wages were going up too fast and all these types of things. And being an economist, I advised them they need to organize as a farmers association of some kind but they didn't believe in that. Farmers are independent (laughs) individuals. But when Caesar Chavez organized the union, it forced them to form the Nisei Farmer's League.

NT: Oh, what was their immediate purpose when they formed the Nisei Farmer's League?

IT: To counteract I mean the UFW I mean although they were not recognized by the (inaudible) at that time, they individual members of the organization engaged in some violence like vandalism on the farms, damaging equipment of the farmers and things like

that and consequently they organized, they had to organize to help each other out. In fact I think there were some farmers who patrolled the farms at night to watch out for any vandalism and so on. And in order to do that, they had to organize to see who is on duty and this and that.

NT: Were the Nisei also organizing with farmers of other ethnic backgrounds at this time?

IT: Yes, when the Nisei farmers got organized, other farmers in the region joined in and in fact now, I think there are very few Japanese in the organization. Most of them are non-Japanese because the Sanseis have not taken over the farms.

NT: Is it still called the Nisei Farmer's League?

IT: I—it is still there. There is an office here but there is a Stockton branch of the Nisei Farmer's League also.

NT: Populated by a lot of other?

IT: A lot of other people and they have an annual banquet in February, I think.

NT: How did this kind of activity helping the farmer or encouraging the farmers to organize in the face of the farm worker pressure, how did that square in your own mind with your civil rights activities back in Missouri and Texas?

IT: Okay, now in the late 1960's when the college campuses or students became very active, the young people and urban tenors were very sympathetic with the union. And actually the JACL hired some youth into their regional offices like in Los Angeles. And they, I don't know whether you heard of the name Warren Furutani, he became—he was employed by the Los Angeles Pacific Southwest District office, regional office and because he was sympathetic, he had a banner of the United Farm Workers on his office wall, as a result the Central California District Council here called him on the carpet and

tried to educate him on some of the problems some of the JACL members were farmers were having. And so we had several meetings here by bringing those young staff members and trying to educate them but at the same time, they were educating us about the civil rights movement.

NT: Did this have any resolution or was there just tension?

IT: It was quite a bit of tension at the time but there was a resolution where the JACL had to ask them to take down their banners and be more considerate. And then we had to—well some of JACL chapters and districts of the urban centers passed resolutions in support of the UFW and the Central California District Council objected to that, for example, at the Chicago Convention.

NT: Did that have—what affect did that have on the JACL as a national force, for example, in trying to get Executive Order 9066 rescinded or anything like that? It seems that the split was taking place at the same time of these national projects. Is that true?

IT: Yes, but then because we were all involved in the evacuation rescinding of 9066 and so on, I mean, I think we were above the UFW controversy because that was only between mainly the Central California JACL and all the rest of the National JACL.

NT: What about your other experiences? You said that you were active as a liberal Democrat in Houston and Austin, that you were involved in the civil rights movement and at the University of Missouri and sit-ins at restaurants. First of all, were those activities to aid the civil rights of others or were you still discriminated against as a Japanese-American?

IT: No, I was supporting the African-American and the NAACP and so on because when I was in Houston as a grad—when I was a research assistant at the University of Houston, the Bureau of Business Research received a grant from CBS to do a study within

Houston, Harris County of the situation I don't exactly remember the actual title of that project but being involved in that project, I found out that the segregated school system, the black schools many of the teachers in the black schools had only an eighth grade education. And I began to see the inequities in the schools. I mean there is no such thing as equal, separate but equal, and all that so I got involved in trying to support the civil rights movement.

NT: In what ways was that similar and different from the UFW movement here which also was in depth civil rights?

IT: UFW only overlapped in civil rights. It was really a labor management situation. And, well when I was at the University of Houston getting my Master's Degree, my Master's Degree emphasized labor economics. And I was familiar with the labor laws, the National Labor Relations Act and the Wagner Act and all that and therefore I was very sympathetic with the farm workers, their living conditions and wages were way out of line. I guess my economics kind of tied into that situation and I felt that how they discrimination and segregation in the labor market was a total waste as far as American economy was concerned, we were wasting human resources.

NT: How much of that could you communicate to the farmers in the CCDC?

IT: I tried to communicate but at the JAACL meetings, I was kind of labeled.

NT: What was your label?

IT: As a pinko. (laughs)

NT: I think you've come a long way from that. You are certainly one of the most respected individuals in the CCDC today.

IT: Well I don't know about that.

NT: No, I was there when you got the Ruby Pin. How has this transition taken place?

IT: Well, I'm not one that goes for confrontation. I am a strong believer in education. So I continue to kind of bring about the people on both sides together and discuss and talk and so and so every year when they had the CCDC, Central District Council Conventions, I was involved in organizing workshops to bring speakers in who will talk about the other side and try to reconcile the differences and follow the path where we had common grounds. We always agreed when there were differences we tried to work it out by talking about it in the workshops and so on.

NT: Who were some of the speakers you brought in at this particular sensitive time when the UFW was organizing?

IT: Well, present day we had Warren Furutani, Edison Uno, Ray Okamura. Ray Okamura at the time, he was the chair of the National JACL Committee to have Title Two repealed. And they were all activists. In fact Jim Matsuoka who was sort of an artist who does caricatures and so on was also on that too. And then when I hired Bill Tsugi he was friends of all of these activists in the Los Angeles area and then because Bill Tsugi only had a Masters again the administration said that he could not stay on unless he got his doctorate so he had to move on. And then I hired Steven Tom from again LA State. He also had a Master's and was here for two or three years. And then the Department of Anthropology hired James—the name slipped my mind. James Jen and he served it for one year but he was an anthropologist and not really an Asian-American scholar so he served for one year and then we went out and made a search and we hired Franklin Ng and we hired Franklin Ng in 1975. Then and actually he arrived here when I was on



sabbatical in Japan. But I was able to be involved in the search before I left on the sabbatical and then he's been here practically ever since.

NT: Yes.

IT: Then back at in those days one year when we had Edison Uno here as a speaker at one of the workshops, he had mentioned about redress, reparations so we had an informal conversation and so at that time I became a supporter of reparations having gone through the 1959 Evacuation Claims Act, my father applied for some of that. But then under the Claims Act we were required to supply evidence of our losses. And all of our evidence was lost in the situation of everything so I mean it was like a catch 22 situation and I felt there had to be something done about the fact that attention be brought to the fact that our Constitutional Rights were violated in evacuation but left it at that. But then Edison Uno introduced the resolution at National JACL Convention in Washington D.C. and I think that was 1970 and in concept the resolution passed but nothing was done about it. And each year another resolution was passed 1972, 1974 and it was not until the 1976 National Convention that a resolution was finally passed to form a reparations committee at the National level.

NT: Were you involved in that?

IT: No, I was not directly involved, although let's see. In 1972, I became the Governor of the Central California District Council and went on the National Board and while I was on the National Board, we had some problems. We had the governors were automatic members of the National Board and then we had elected officers of National to make up the rest of the National Board. And the executive director and the national officers would have an executive council caucus before our National Board meetings and they would

come to the National Board meetings with all of these recommendations and somebody would make a motion but the governors was not aware of what was going on yet. And so we, the governors got together and I proposed that we create a governors caucus so that we can block vote on the board if we are not ready to vote. And so I mean that is when we formed the Governor's Caucus of the National Board.

NT: Was it successful in meeting your objectives?

IT: At the time it was and some people are objecting to it now that the Governor's Caucus has too much power. But at least it, you know, provided us with a voice to give us a chance to study whatever resolutions or proposals are being made by the National Council. And while I was Governor of the Central California, we did not have a regional office yet. And I found that it was difficult as governor to keep in communication and so although we did have a small budget from National for stationary and things like that, we did not have an office and telephone and so on. So I wrote a proposal to create a regional office here in Central California.

NT: Okay.

IT: And at the same time I felt it would be nice if we used the regional office to have a drop-in center for the senior citizens.

NT: What would be the function for the senior citizens?

IT: Well, we would help—I mean the service center. Right now we call it the Nikki Service Center here to provide service to the Issei, we still had Isseis at that time who were Japanese speaking so when it comes to social security issues and medical problems and someone at the service center would help them out. So I wrote up a proposal and took it to the National Board and at the 1974 Convention we were allocated seventeen thousand

five hundred dollars to establish a regional office and the service center, to open a service center. And so we searched for a location and found out this place 912 F street was open and we can get that for a nominal rental fee so we took some of that money and put in new lighting, carpeting and so on and made it into the regional office. But before we did that, this address became the regional office of Central California and Barbara was the secretary for the regional office until we were able to move into our regional office.

NT: How long did this house serve that purpose?

IT: Almost a year until we were able to get the place refurbished and set up for, get furniture and air conditioning and so on.

NT: And as soon as the office was ready did you hire a staff? Who did you hire?

IT: Yes, the first Regional Director of the service center was Rita Yee who was a student in Asian-American studies program at Fresno State. And then about a year after that we hired Yokota, I can't think of her first name who was, who had a lot of ideas. Well, I am not sure whether Rita Yee or Yokota who started the monthly birthday program but I know Yokota is the one who started the hot lunch program for the seniors and we got and also she applied for at that time the CETA Grant, C-E-T-A and we received about forty-five thousand dollars each year on the CETA Grant so we were able to get a van for transportation through the Older American's Act and we had a staff of about four people in the service center. And actually the CETA Grant permitted us to really get the service center started but when President Reagan was elected and we went to Block Grants the CETA was eliminated and we had to cut things back because we didn't, we could not hire people from the grant. And then when Ms. Yokota left Sachi Kuwamota became the Regional Director and Director of the Service Center. You know, through that activity in

the 1972-1974 period, I got talked into running for Vice-President of National JACL so I became Vice-President for National JACL, Vice President for Research and Services, at the 1974 convention, served 'til 1976. And while I was on the National Board, I became a member of the JACL National Education Committee and that committee, well we had—we got a grant and got what was that? Well a grant from the U.S. Department of Education so we published a teacher's manual on the Japanese-American experience in 1975. And ever since that time, I've been involved as a district—Central California District representative on the education program of the National JACL. And then in the JACL I have served on many National Committees such as the, right now known as the Nikkei Biennium, the National Scholarship Committee, Nominations Committee and of course, the Education Committee so ever since becoming Governor, I've been involved at the National level.

NT: Is that something typical for a Governor or are you just a more active person?

IT: Well, it is not typical and most people serve the term, their Governor's term and then they drop out. They don't continue on in National affairs. Some of them stay on another term or two and go to National Conventions but only a few people stayed involved or continue like Fred Hirasuna, Frank Nishio.

NT: What do you feel has been your greatest personal satisfaction from your JACL involvement?

IT: The greatest personal satisfaction was the success in the redress movement and I strongly believe and the fact when I was evacuated, feeling like a person without a country and losing faith somewhat, and in getting redress passed, I learned a whole lot about how our system really works. And in order to make it work, you have to be involved. You got to

lobby, you got to raise funds. You got to lobby, you have to find out the contacts, make contacts and so right now I am involved in these teacher education—teacher training workshops to tell our story about the Japanese-American experience and how we were able to get redress, being a very small minority and getting all the support in Congress was a lot of hard work but then we really learned how to do it and so it has restored faith in the system that if you work at it, you can accomplish something.

NT: What role did you personally fulfill in the redress campaign?

IT: Mainly, the District and Chapter level, helping to raise funds when National needed funds for lobbying purposes. I served as the fundraising chair of the chapter most of the years. At the District level, well my first National Board meeting as Governor, I roomed, my roommate was James Sujimura who was going to become, who was Governor of the Pacific Northwest District and he eventually became President of National JACL. But there was a small group of people in Seattle who from the outset organized a proposal for going for redress. Their proposal was not approved as it was but they contributed a lot to the education of how to go for redress and so on. But James Sujimura came to the National Board Meeting and he was asked by that committee in Seattle to feel out the National Board about how they feel about redress. And he asked me and I told him about my meeting with Edison Uno who talked about redress and told him that I was very sympathetic but we have a lot of educating to do in JACL because most of the Niseis were opposed for going for reparations.

NT: Why?

IT: By the mid 1960's then Japanese-Americans had successfully recovered from the evacuation and Newsweek Magazine labeled them as the model minority and statistically

if you calculate average income per capita, we were above that average and so most of the Nisei were saying "Don't rock the boat." And culturally it is not in the books for Niseis to demand reparations. But that was because they focused on reparations only, not on the Constitutional aspect of evacuation. And the twenty thousand dollars that we received is earnest money, it is really not reparations, I mean. If it were reparations, we should have been paid a whole lot more. But it was just a token thing to go along with the apology from the government to make the apology meaningful. Even it were one thousand dollars, it would have been just as meaningful because we lived in a different (inaudible) society.

NT: What specific steps did you take to try and educate the Nisei about the reparation campaign?

IT: We had workshops annually at the convention on redress year after year. At the Chapter levels, we spoke to people and in the community from the mid 1960's I was going to high schools and Pacific College and so on to tell the story about evacuation and redress and so on whereas there are many Nisei who are unwilling to talk about it. And I wondered whether the severe competition that the Niseis faced in California in recovering from the evacuation had anything to do with not wanting to talk too much about it to their kids and so on. But I have no feelings about that. I told our two boys and whatever and they knew about the situations. In fact when I went to National Conventions, they always went along with us. We took the whole family to Convention and I think, I feel the older son Neal now living in San Francisco, he is pretty much involved; in fact, he went to work for JACL at the National Headquarters for a couple of years and then he became Vice-President of Operations for JACL and not only that, during this a, 1970's Barbara and I

were senior advisors for JAY, the Japanese American Youth JACL youth arm. We had a chapter here and we advised them and took them on field trips and took them to conferences and so on. So I was kind of involved in that and Barbara became President of the Fresno chapter. And in the community we have done things like, we've sponsored specific Philharmonic Concerts. We sponsored exhibits and Barbara was really involved when she was President. And so I've always felt that JACL not only did we, should we engage in things for the Japanese-American community but we also need to support (inaudible).

Then getting to the end now, I taught at Fresno State for thirty years. Served as Department Chair for sixteen of the thirty years and right upon my retirement, I was asked to serve on the grand jury, county grand jury, and spent one year on the grand jury. And since my retirement I've worked with the Friends of the County Library and was involved in getting and increase in sales tax for the benefit of the library last year.

NT: What year did you retire?

IT: Nineteen ninety-three. And while, also in terms of education, I got involved in mid 1970's I got involved with the State Department of Education and served on legal compliance handles to clean up public school text books on the presentations you know and derogatory terms that were used in text books about American Indians being savages and name calling at minority people and so on that were in print. I served, I headed in fact I chaired panels to review text books and then recommended (inaudible) all that and then recommending to the State Curriculum Commission what the problems with some of the books were and so on. Then I was appointed to a State Commission--The Educational—Innovation—no, Education and Innovational Planning Commission which

involved Title Four. Then I served on the Asian-Pacific American Advisory Council to the Superintendent of Instruction.

NT: For how long?

IT: What was that, a couple years ago—for about two or three years on that after—well after and during the time I was on the Education and Innovation Planning Commission which was Title Four and when President Regaan got elected and went to block grants, the whole Title Four was wiped out so. And then I was appointed to the Jesse Unruh Assembly Fellowship Executive Board.

NT: Is that the one that chooses?

IT: Chooses the Fellows to the State Assembly.

NT: And how long did you serve on that?

IT: Two years.

NT: So you have been very involved in education.

IT: That's right. Also I served at the Advisory—on the Advisory Council for School of Education and Human Development at Fresno.

NT: I want to go back to a couple of questions that I had. From when you were speaking earlier and I guess the easiest way to do that would be to start at the beginning. You told me a lot about your brother but you never told me his name.

IT: Oh, before evacuation before we went to camp he was known as Yamato-Y-A-M-A-T-O. and he took on the name Alan-A-L-A-N while he was in camp.

NT: Why did he do that?

IT: I'm not sure what the reason was. I guess too many people. It may have been because he was planning to go to Detroit and leave the camp and he needed an Anglo name.



NT: And you also mentioned that your uncle, your father's brother came to the United States and what was his name?

IT: Katsuji-K-A-T-S-U-J-I. But then he took on the name Edward.

NT: You said he was about a few years older than you?

IT: No, he was just a few years younger than my father.

NT: Oh okay. Did you do anything in particular with him, with your uncle? Or was he just a farm laborer or was he part of the family and took you fishing?

IT: Yeah, we used to go fishing all together. He loved to go fishing.

NT: Where did you go?

IT: Oh this was in Texas. We used to go to the Gulf of Mexico. Port Isabel.

NT: When you were back living in Brentwood and you said the whole family lived in the one house, who was living there?

IT: My grandparents.

NT: Okay.

IT: My parents and my brother and I.

NT: And your uncle?

IT: No, he married and had his own home. He had two children, a son and a daughter. And my cousin Edward, Jr. lives in Arlington, Texas. And my cousin Yuri Shida, S-H-I-D-A lives in Mission, Texas and then we had a, I grew up with another cousin which is a second cousin in Brentwood and she became quite well-known, Michi Reagan.

NT: Oh yeah, that's your second cousin? (laughs) So she was one of the—you said there were about fourteen Japanese families?

IT: Right, the Nishiura family was her maiden name was Nishiura, N-I-S-H-I-U-R-A.

NT: In Brentwood. When the, in the thirties, with the drought and all the Dust Bowl migrants coming to Brentwood, what were the attitudes expressed towards the newcomers?

IT: My mother was a very sensitive person and she, I probably shouldn't say she felt sorry for them, but she empathized with them a great deal and so many of them came to the farm to ask for jobs and so on but most of our workers were all Filipino workers who lived in—we had housing for them and everything. But then, there was a couple of families whose car broke down on one corner of our farm and they just camped there so my mother said leave them alone.

NT: Did you employ them?

IT: Well they did little odd chores around and (inaudible).

NT: How long were they around?

IT: Well just less than a year I think they finally found a job somewhere.

NT: The Filipinos you had working on the farm, how did you—how did you originally hire them?

IT: In the 1930's many Filipinos came here to work on the farms and I think one, hiring one or two of them lead to bringing in their friends so they tended to have clans and so if you hire one, they bring the whole clan.

NT: And then did their children go to school with you?

IT: Yes, those that had families, in fact one girl that lives in Fremont now Rose (inaudible), her family did all the cooking for the Filipino workers.

NT: Are you still in touch with her?

IT: No.

NT: Did you hire any other ethnicities to work on the farm?

IT: Some Mexican workers during the harvest season or planting season when we had to have a little extra. The Filipinos were more—well many of them were seasonal but then we had a number of Filipinos that were year round. And so we had this—I mean we housed and fed all the Filipino workers and before we hired this family to do the cooking and feeding them, my mother used to do the cooking and fed all the workers.

NT: How many were there? How many workers?

IT: During the peak of season we had sixty, seventy workers but year round, we had about six.

NT: How did your mother and father meet?

IT: They are from the same village.

NT: Oh I see.

IT: And in Japan most of the marriages are arranged by family.

NT: Right.

IT: And actually way back there, Barbara's family were family relatives of my great-grandparents, her great-grandparents and my great-grandparents were probably relatives.

NT: What were your grandparent's names?

IT: My grandfather's name was Yunosuke, Y-U-N-O-S-U-K-E and my grandmother's name was Kinu, K-I-N-U.

NT: And her maiden name?

IT: Yuasa, Y-U-A-S-A. And Barbara's great grandparents were from the Yuasa house clan.

NT: I see. Well it sounds like your grandfather was a very innovative man to learn about auto mechanics and—

IT: No, my father.

NT: Your father—your father was very innovative to learn about auto mechanics in 1914.

That is a little early on. Was that one of his traits, would you say?

IT: Well he went to a trade school in Los Angeles. And it came in handy because when they bought that Caterpillar tractor and did and he knew something about the internal-combustion engine.

NT: That partnership that he formed the five farmers? Were they all Japanese?

IT: One was Caucasian. There were six members all together in the association. He was the sixth one.

NT: I see. (pause) Oh, you talked about the business association that your father formed in Brentwood, the Produce Association?

IT: Uh-huh.

NT: And that they had an association with the California Berkeley and Stanford that resulted in getting tickets to sporting events. How did that association develop?

IT: No, it was just the business manager's connection. The business manager who became—who founded the Watsonville Strawberry Cooperative after the war, his name was Ted Tomita, T-O-M-I-T-A.

NT: Okay.

IT: And through the success of the Strawberry Cooperative in Watsonville, he was appointed by the—I think it was during the Kennedy Administration as an Agricultural Consultant to Puerto Rico. Also, the Brentwood Produce Association was the very first shipper of green-wrap tomatoes to wax the tomato; in other words, it contracted with the Food and Machinery Corporation out of San Jose to invent the machinery conveyor belts and tubs

to wash the tomatoes that come from the fields and dry it through a roller mechanism and wax it automatically before it was packed for shipping.

NT: Who was doing all the packing or was it done mechanical?

IT: We hired seasonal workers for the packing. We hired seasonal workers who were specialists in making boxes to pack the tomatoes in and stuff.

NT: What did you have to do personally on the farm?

IT: On the farm? I just drove the truck and hauled the tomatoes to the packing shed or drove the tractor and things like that.

NT: You mentioned earlier that your dad also gardened. Did the gardens in Brentwood, right?

IT: Well that was his own personal garden.

NT: Did he garden for others?

IT: No.

NT: But how much did you do on the garden?

IT: I mean?

NT: Did you have any specific chores or just sort of helped out?

IT: Oh just chores like watering the plants or something like that but see Brentwood is still in the valley so it is quite dry.

NT: Oh, and you mentioned that your grandparents visited Japan in 1937 and that they retired there in 1940. What part of Japan?

IT: Wakayama.

NT: Were they still there when you went back after—?

IT: In the occupation?

NT: In the occupation?

IT: I went back to look them up after I got to Japan and they were there. In fact they came to visit me in (inaudible) Japan when I was in the service.

NT: What did you tell your grandparents about the internment?

IT: I didn't tell them very much about the internment. I told them our family was fine. I always tried to help them out. I mean things in Japan were really horrible after the bombing and destruction and when I first arrived in Tokyo, the whole city was leveled. And people were living under bridges and so on and they were very hungry and that was—when I first got there and I got worried about my grandparents and friends and worried about how they were so when I first visited them, I found out that they were on a farm and so, they were much better off.

NT: How much did the destruction of Japan affect your father? I understand he got his peace activist ideas from reading about the war in Japanese? What kind of literature or what was—what was the major theme perhaps of his literature as opposed to what you might have gotten in English?

IT: Well, of course we have Japanese language magazines here in San Francisco, Los Angeles and he subscribed to all of them. And also, he subscribed to Japanese magazines and literature after the war. I can remember when things settled down.

NT: Did he ever discuss with you what he was reading?

IT: Not specifically but I know that he was receiving various kinds of magazines in Japan.

NT: What language did you speak at—

(tape ends abruptly)