

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE



# AFSC ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS: SERIES 400

Personal accounts of individuals who were placed into internment camps following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and accounts of people who assisted in the relocation of Japanese American students from the camps to colleges and universities around the country.

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**Oral History Interview #401**

**Narrator: TAKASHI MORIUCHI**

**Interviewer: Geraldine Henry**

**July 8, 1991 Medford Leas, New Jersey**

H: [Today] is July 8th, 1991. This is Gerry Henry interviewing Takashi Moriuchi at Medford Leas, New Jersey, for the American Friends Service Committee Oral History Project.

M: I am Takashi Moriuchi. I was born in Livingston, California. That's in the San Joaquin Valley. My birthday is August 31st, 1919, so that makes me 71. Let's see. What else do you want?

H: That's all for now. (tape goes off and on)

M: Livingston was a small town of 800 at the time I was there. It was started--I don't know whether Livingston itself was started by the Japanese Americans, but the community, the Yamata colony where the Japanese lived, was started as a Christian colony by the publisher of the Japanese vernacular newspaper in San Francisco. I don't know but maybe there were about a hundred and fifty families there at that time. My parents were essentially fruit tramps, I guess, about the time I was born, and my mother set her foot down and said, "We're going to stay put some place so this kid can go to school in one school." And that's how my father and mother got started in farming. As far as a religious background is concerned, at this time, when father and mother started farming, father was in partnership with a very Christian man, raising sweet potatoes together, and my father was converted to Christianity at that time. I think if it weren't for this man, Mr. Okomoto, I don't know how our family would have fared and whether we would have ever survived as a family.

From that point, father and mother had a small farm in Cressy, California. Then a year or two of that as a sharecropper, they moved to Livingston where they farmed, I think again, in partnership with Mr. Gordon Winton. Then eventually, in 1929 I think it was, that father purchased a farm in the name of (Merced Rural Farm), because first generation Japanese were not allowed to own real estate to farm, or to own anything in real estate. I can remember, if you're talking about early recollections, I was a skinny runt of a kid, so father tried to fatten me up by having goats around for goat milk. And I didn't like that so he got a cow. And I remember moving from the one farm to the other farm. It was twilight when we drove the cow to the new farm. It was from this farm that I was eventually evacuated. You want to stop it?

**(Tape stops and begins again)**

M: Well, apparently you want to know whether I had any brothers and sisters, and I didn't. I was an only child and one of the troubles with being an only child is when both of your parents want you, you can only go to one and the other one stays mad. (interviewer chuckles) So consequently when I married (Yuri) I told her, I said, "We're either going to have more than one kid or no kids at all." (laughter) So that's a little bit of--well, let's see.

We were farming essentially vegetables--tomatoes, eggplants, squash, cantaloupe--at the time we were evacuated.

H: Can you say something about the Depression years? How did that affect your family?

M: None. Not at all. It didn't affect me at all. (laughter) Everybody was poor.

H: (laughter) Anyway. That's true.

M: Yes, and I don't think anybody thought to much of it. I think one of the things that probably affected--it didn't affect me particularly, but where there were large families and they couldn't afford to even buy bread to make sandwiches, it was--they thought about taking rice balls to school and they objected to that, that kind of stuff. Actually, in a country setting, I don't think being poor or the Depression bothered us too much. The Okies, when they arrived in California, they had absolutely nothing. So I remember that. The story that's written in Grapes of Wrath is pretty nearly the way it was. And now those same people that came as Okies are the large landholders in California.

H: Is that right?

M: Some of them.

H: That's interesting. How about your schooling when you were a child there. Did you go to the school with mostly Japanese Americans or were you mixed with the Anglos?

M: No, we were in a regular public school. It was not segregated. I think as far as the school was concerned we had understanding teachers. I think--I don't remember anything particularly derogatory about it, except that too many of us became valedictorians and as a consequence they started to limit the number of Japanese that could be valedictorians. (interviewer laughs) Truly!

H: (laughs) This is really enlightening.

M: I was one of them.

H: Were you really?

H: Yeah. The way it happened with me is that four of us were called into the principal's office and we pulled straws to see who was the valedictorian. I think that the first two would have been Japanese, me and Franklin (Akudo). So Clifford (Gaff) and Bobby Arnold, we were called in. Fortunately it turned out that Frankie pulled one of the long straws and Clifford (Gaff) pulled the other long straw. So it worked out the way that the principal wanted it done anyhow. (laughter)

H: O.K. So progressing from the Depression to the next few years, how did your life go? How about your schooling at the University?

M: Oh, well, you see my mother, as I said a little earlier, my mother wanted to be sure that I'd go to one school all through, and so I did. Livingston Grammar School and then to high school. And then I went to the University of California. I graduated in 1941, so I graduated before the war started.

H: In June of '41?

M: Mmm hmm. So I was back with my dad farming when the war started. I can remember leaving home. See at that time we didn't have electricity, and I think the battery in my radio had run out, so I didn't even know that the war had started until on Sunday evening, as I was headed for a young people's church program, I stopped at the drug store and there in headlines it said that the war had started. My recollection at that time was, "Oh my goodness." And I didn't know what to expect.

H: What were your parents' reactions, when they first heard the news?

M: I don't know. I don't remember. I think, as has been the history of Japanese Americans, they probably took it as, "Well, it's too bad." But I think that it was something that they couldn't do anything about. So they didn't--I'm sure they worried about it but I don't think it was too apparent.

**(tape stops and starts again)**

H: At the time of the war, did your parents and your community realize the full extent of the backlash that would occur in the United States against Japanese Americans?

M: No, I don't think anyone ever expected anything like the evacuation would happen. We grew up, all the kids we grew up with, and all families that we had grown up with, or my parents had been in contact with--the general feeling was, and it was expressed, that "We know you're all right," but that somebody blew up something up in the northern end of California or something, which never really happened. But the rumors went around. And the reason for the evacuation was military necessity, but by the time we were evacuated the Battle of the Coral Sea had already occurred, so the real military reason for our being evacuated was gone by the time we were evacuated. There was no way that the Japanese Imperial Forces could ever even reach the United States. Many people are aware that a Naval man made a survey of the Japanese American population and he came to the conclusion that there would be no acts of sabotage or espionage by Japanese Americans, as history has proven. Roosevelt didn't want to hear that. It's my thought that he wanted the United States to get into the war anyhow so he welcomed this almost. Actually, you know, it was six months before we were evacuated. And we were told that if we didn't continue farming we were committing sabotage, so we put in our crops and took care of our crops. But when we were evacuated we were given one week's notice to leave, so

there was no way that we could take care of our business affairs, and even personal affairs, very well. Just imagine leaving with just what you could carry, to go into the camps.

H: Were your parents able to salvage any of their property?

M: Fortunately I arranged it so that we didn't lose everything. We did salvage some. We left the farm, the eggplants especially, with a Mexican actually physically taking care of it. My Scout master and high school coach watched them, and he took care of the rest of the farm, but he said, oh, he lost money. Cantaloupes, for instance, that we would sell in 1940 for 40 cents a crate he was selling for 4 dollars, and he said he lost money. We left June 13th and cantaloupes would start to get picked--July 4th they'd start harvesting. So he had to have made some money. Fortunately, the commission merchant in San Francisco, (L.J. Hopkins), and my father had worked together for a number of years, and so the eggplants that were shipped to (Hopkins), he retained half the money for us and half went back to the Mexicans. That's how we were able to salvage some of the money from that.

H: Did your parents have to go to a camp?

M: Yeah, we all went together.

H: Which one did you go to?

M: To the Merced Assembly Center first, and then eventually in September--that was June 13th--and in September about we were moved to the camp in Colorado. So we stayed there. The following year, I tried farming in Fort Collins, Colorado, and I got a lot of experience and no money out of that deal. As soon as I could see some of the other people starting to run a plow I couldn't stay in camp anymore. (laughter)

H: When you came East did your parents go back home at that time?

M: No, no, no. We were not allowed to go back to California. It was still a restricted area. And I think it was--I started working for Lew Barton in 1944, March 1st, 1944, and--it probably was another year before California was opened up. See, the war was '41, evacuated in '42, farmed in Colorado in '43, and I came East and worked with Lew Barton, a Quaker farmer in Haddonfield. And he lives here at Medford Leas. He was the prime mover starting Medford Leas. But I worked with him for two seasons. And he arranged an \$8000 loan for me, and with that I started to farm. A John Deere tractor dealer here in Medford by the name of (Haines), he literally gave me a tractor. I paid for it, but he could have sold it many times over to anybody because just like new cars were unavailable, tractors were even more unavailable at that time. And he helped me. Many people helped me as I got started here. It was hard to start farming because I didn't know what the dickens I was doing.

H: What was your first contact with Quakers in this period?

M: I don't know that I knew that I was contacted by any Quakers, particularly, in the camps. Maybe Nicholson, Herbert Nicholson. I guess I knew about him in California, and didn't know exactly what he was doing, but he was trying to be helpful at the time, but, you know, we didn't know who was doing what. But when I came to Philadelphia, Henry Patterson was the man that ran the War Relocation Center office in the Stephen Girard building in Philadelphia, and you know the [American Friends] Service Committee was right on the corner, so that was a beginning. And it was his wife, Mary Patterson, that apparently knew Lew Barton very well, and that's how I made the connection with Lew Barton.

H: Well, once you moved East, did you come to Morristown initially or were you somewhere else?

M: Well, as I say, March 1st, 1944 I went to work for Lew Barton in Haddonfield; he had a farm in Haddonfield.

H: Did you live there at the time, in Haddonfield?

M: Yes. I lived there two years.

H: How did you adjust to the new community and how did they adjust to you? Did you find any problems with the people there?

M: No, we didn't. I didn't find any problems, but I think Lew did. I think he probably got calls that he's never told me about, probably. I went there to work with him and labor was very scarce so he asked me to get people to come to work on the farm. So (Sam) Endo's family--maybe you know Betty Endo, she's at the Germantown Friends School.

H: I've seen her name.

M: And, let's see, (Nogamis), a large family, (and Nakows), another large family. I recruited those two people and the (Nawasaki) family. I went to Tule Lake and recruited these people and they came out. They worked on Lew Barton's farm for maybe like three years. So with all these Japanese showing up I'm sure that Lew Barton must have gotten some calls. But he was giving us a place to live and work; at the same time we were also helping him grow and harvest his crops.

H: Do you harbor any bitterness towards the United States?

M: No. No, not really. And I think it's--I've always thought that it was a kind of tribute to us that we came through all of this without a heck of a lot of bitterness. I'm sure that there are a few. Because the lady we were neighbors with, she has indicated that she has been very bitter.

H: Yes. About her time in (Manzanar).

M: But I've never had that feeling. I was always too busy working so I never had a chance to even get bitter, I guess.

Just going back, I think one of the reasons for the evacuation was--in the beginning there wasn't, it was just a continuation of the discrimination that the Orientals have had right along. But I think in due time some of our neighbors started to think, "Heck, if we get these people out of here we'll get their farms." And I think that's one of the reasons why the evacuation happened.

H: I'm sure there was a lot of theft at that time, outright stealing of these properties.

M: Yeah, yeah it happened. Well, legally, no. But practically, yes.

H: I imagine that it must have been a really trying period in that, from what I've known, Japanese Americans are very prideful people and proud. It must have been a terrible period to be in this situation where people are casting aspersions on you as a whole people, and you have to accept all of this burden. How did you really come through that? Was there anything that really carried you through? Was it the family, or the fact that you were all in this together?

M: I guess that's a hard question to answer. We came through it without... Well, we were too busy working. There wasn't any other thing to do but to work, so we did. We just didn't sit back and expect something to happen. I know that--see, when I left camp--I was probably one of the first ones to leave camp--we were cleared by the FBI, and then after we were cleared by the FBI we were told, "Now you good American citizen, go out and work for the war effort." That's one of the things, I thought that was pretty doggone ironic. (laughter) I felt like giving somebody a good swift kick. But most of us just didn't want to live in the camp conditions. Because we were used to being independent and in camp you were not. I did work as a procurement officer in the camp, so I had important work to do and I enjoyed doing that.

H: I've been told by other people that life in the camp, since it had to be, was well organized by the people in them. I heard from George Oye that there were poetry competitions and all kinds of things to keep people's spirits up.

M: Oh yes. Well, there's a carving in the next room that my father did, which is--he was a dirt farmer and here he is, he came to camp and learned how to do a little bit of wood carving and he produced a thing--I think it's quite something for a dirt farmer to have accomplished that. I often wonder, you know, if there is just something a little bit inborn of artistic beauty in Japanese people.

H: Oh, definitely there is. No doubt about it.

**(tape stops and starts)**

H: When you were in the camps were you married at that time or did you marry later?

M: No. Lots of people got married, in fact (laughs) one of my very good friends had his friend drive him to Reno to get married. But then that gal was after that guy. (laughter) Lots of people did get married because they didn't want to get separated, but I couldn't see getting married and not knowing what the future held. I don't know whether--never even thought of it, even asking, seriously thinking about it. Everybody must have thought about it. But it was after I came here East and I was working at Lew's farm. And there was a reception for a couple of the boys that were injured in the 442nd. There were 100th infantry people that were injured in Italy. These two guys appeared in the Life magazine. One had lost his eyes and the other had lost his legs. The reception was held at International House. That's where she [Yuri] showed up with a funny hat and a feather in her hat. (laughter)

I killed myself driving from New Jersey to Essington, Pennsylvania, where she lived with her parents. Her older brother Hiroshi worked for Westinghouse. There was a government housing, you know, cinder block square, housing project. And that's where she lived. So I'd go courting and then come back to the farm and work all day. It didn't work. After a while I got sick! (laughter)

H: You were too tired. (laughter) Then you had to face her father besides!

M: Oh, no, they received me very well. And I keep kidding Yuri, you know, that her mother always had watermelon and a little sushi. (laughter) She liked watermelon so, and I like watermelon. Anyhow. Yes. She was very nice to me. (laughter)

H: Well, she probably spotted a good thing.

M: Well, I don't know. We kind of kiddingly talked about it. I'm sure my mother-in-law must have thought, "Oh my goodness, my daughter's gonna marry a poor farmer." (laughter) Which I was at the time.

H: Every parent says that. (laughs)

M: Well, you see she raised her two sons to be engineers and this was very important to her, that they have white-collar jobs. And her daughter's gonna marry a dirt farmer. (laughter) And honestly, in the beginning, we didn't have any extra money. We had to make each crop pay for itself or we couldn't make it to the next crop the next year. She put up with very little while her friends that had city jobs were buying new homes and all. But she put up with this, raised my kids. I didn't give her much help in raising the kids. I keep thinking about it now.

H: I'm sure you were quite busy. (laughs)

M: Yes, but. Anyhow, she put up with the lots, for which I am very grateful.

- H: Just goes to show you made the right choice.
- M: Yeah. She's been great.
- H: Were her family in the camps too?
- M: Oh yes. They were--I guess they were in (Ror), which is in Arkansas. And they came out here.
- H: Some of those camps--well most of them were in the South. I guess you couldn't get out of those camps.
- M: No, no, no. There were some in Montana, and Utah. Well, I guess there were... Manzanar was in California, and there were a couple up in Arizona. But no, they were scattered around. Wherever they could find a God-forsaken place, that's where they put these camps.
- H: (laughs) That's right. Well, I was wondering what happened in those camps in those God-forsaken places? Did you have to run into the civilians?
- M: No. No, not really, because they had barbed wires around them. There were barbed wires to keep us in. Then, I think later on people started to get leave slips and go out into the immediate neighborhood. For instance in (\_\_\_\_\_) where I was, and some of the other camps too, sugar beets had to be harvested, and all the boys had gone, had better jobs someplace. So the young men from the camps were recruited to harvest sugar beets. And I think--well, in the intermountain areas, there were Japanese there in the first place, so we weren't that much of a curiosity. Because see, all through Colorado and Idaho and all those areas the Japanese were farming all through the war. But then they needed our help. I never went out. I didn't want to go work on a sugar beet farm. (laughter)
- H: You had your pride.
- M: No, no, no. That's not it. I couldn't see any point in going and doing that. (laughter)
- H: People change their attitudes when it's expedient. (laughs) So I guess you're glad that you've settled here. Did you ever want to go back to California, after you settled here?
- M: No. Once you buy a farm you don't move very much. (laughter) Except for the first farm that I purchased. I sold that to buy another farm. The second farm I bought from a Quaker farmer, and I guess all the other farms that I purchased were from other Quaker farmers. (laughs)
- H: So you've been active in Quaker things ever since then.

M: Oh yeah, yeah, very much. We've been involved with the Morristown Friends Meeting. We were the first members, I think, to join the Morristown United Meeting.

H: Is that right? When was it founded?

M: Well, you know. You know the Quaker history how they were and then they split, and then United Meeting. I think in the 1950s. I could look it up, but it's something like that.

H: Well, this is a good area to settle in and have children.

M: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yuri and I don't have any regrets of how our life is going. In fact we're thankful, forever thankful for the friends we have around here. For instance like Bob Gray. He showed up right away. (laughter)

H: Well, he would.

M: I know, he would, but we were very good friends. Gladys was the secretary of the Morristown Meeting for a number of years.

H: Well, is this a good stopping point?

M: I don't care, wherever.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**Oral History Interview #402**

**Narrator: SUMIKO KOBAYASHI**

**Interviewer: Geraldine Henry**

**July 26, 1991 Woolman Commons, Mount Holly, New Jersey**

H: Today is July 26, 1991. This is Gerry Henry. I'm interviewing Sumi Kobayashi at Woolman Commons, Mount Holly, New Jersey, for the American Friends Service Committee Oral History Project.

K: I was born in a Japanese agricultural colony in Florida near the town of Delray. It was an agricultural community with about five families, only about three of which had children. It was started as a project of the Florida East Coast Railroad. (tape goes off and on) My father at the time, even though in Japan he was not a farmer, was a farmer. He was raising green peppers and eggplants and tomatoes during the winter to ship to the northern market, the cities, including Philadelphia. I remember (chuckles) he used to say that the prices were always lower in Philadelphia because the Quakers were very thrifty people. (laughter) I hope Quakers will not take offense at that! (laughter) So he did that.

He came to America when he was 22, in 1914. At first he worked for another Japanese man. [Then] he went north to the Detroit area [in] about 1917 intending to learn auto mechanics, because the automobile industry was just beginning at about that time. But World War I came along and the Ford factory which had this learn and work program stopped that because they converted to making war materiel for World War I. He didn't have enough money to pay tuition and learn. They had only the day school then. So he went to Chicago to look for work. He had no money, very little. He found work through the Japanese YMCA, of which I recently did some research, and found a job at Riverbank, which was a 600-acre private estate in the town of Geneva [Illinois]. About 35 miles west of Chicago. He was a single man, of course. He worked there about 18 months, saved some money. It was a real international community working at Riverbank. It was a little world unto itself. But he was able to save enough money to go back to Florida. First he rented some land. Eventually he was able to buy. So he went into farming for himself and had a couple of successful seasons.

In the meantime, he was approaching 30, his family thought it was about time he should get married and settle down. So they started asking around for a suitable bride. This is the way marriages were arranged. Even when both parties were in Japan they had go-betweens look into family histories and try to match people up. Well, they found my mother and they exchanged pictures and letters and they both agreed to the marriage. So, in 1922 he went back to Japan. They got married there and spent a short honeymoon nearby at a hot springs resort. Then they proceeded to return to Florida. He went to Japan by way of Seattle and they also returned that way. The ocean voyage took 14 days in those days. And so they got on the train at Seattle.

Oh, my mother had never worn Western clothing before. Her family dealt in kimono material, so she had plenty of kimonos, but my father said, "You're not

going to need them so take as little as possible." She didn't take much. So when they landed in Seattle the first thing [they] did was go to a department store. She was not familiar with Western clothing so he picked out everything from underwear (laughter) to dresses for her. She wouldn't allow that later. She wanted to pick out her own.

So, they got her some Western-style clothing and they got on the train. They stopped at Chicago and went out to visit Colonel Fabyan, who was the owner of the estate, and then they continued on to Jacksonville and spent a night there to break up the trip. Then they went to Yamato, which is near West Palm Beach. As I said, the nearest town was Delray, which was called Delray then and not Delray Beach as it's known today.

So that was in 1922. I was born the following year, in 1923. Two years later the land prices started to go up because Miami Beach was being developed about that time and that shot up the land prices in that part of Florida. So the Japanese there, most of them, decided to sell and take a profit, and they went to Chicago and New York and Miami. They spread out. Just a couple of families were left. My father was offered a job by Colonel Fabyan at the estate. He had sold his land and was in the chicken and quail business -- no chicken and squab, which is baby pigeons, which were sold to restaurants and markets in that area. He decided, "Well, farming's a pretty risky business." So he decided to take the offer.

We got on the train and moved to Geneva, Illinois, and that's where I spent most of my school years starting with kindergarten. We lived there until the beginning of my junior year. I've kept in touch with a couple of my classmates. This past June, 1991, we had our 50th class reunion, which I attended and saw all these people that I hadn't seen in years. I've gone to a couple of reunions. The last one before this was the 35th, 15 years ago. And so I went and we had a great time. We had a dinner on Saturday and then we had breakfast the following morning at a different place. Some of the people I recognized, most not. So that was my background until the beginning of my junior year.

The colonel had died in 1936 and three years later his widow died. They had no heirs, so Colonel Fabyan's family, which was originally from Boston, sold the property. About half of it was sold to Kane County and is presently a forest preserve. The villa, which was redesigned -- there was a structure there but it was redesigned by Frank Lloyd Wright -- is on the [National] Register of Historic Places. The "colonel" was an honorary title because of work he had done for the army. He was a man of many interests and one of the things that he was interested in was acoustics and sound. Another thing was a Dutch windmill that he found somewhere in the United States. They dismantled it and took it piece by piece and set it up again on his estate. It's still there and that also is on the register of historical places. So there are two places on the former estate. It was a great place to grow up. They liked animals so they had registered cattle for milk. We got our milk originally from a cow right on the farm. They raised championship hogs. They had horses there. Mrs. Fabyan raised registered dogs. She had a kennel which was right below the house where we lived. Besides that they had their own private zoo.

H: Wow! (chuckles)

K: It was a great place to grow up! They had deer in a couple places on the property. They had a couple of bears in a cage. They had... I don't know whether it was wolves. I know they had foxes. They had some other wild animals. A circular cage was divided into pie-shaped segments and they separated the animals that way. They had parrots in the house. They had alligators which they kept in an open-air pit in the summer and they were taken to the greenhouse in the winter. They had a big room called a conservatory attached to the greenhouse which kept the tropical birds and animals warm because they would have died if they'd been kept outside.

My father was put in charge of the commercial greenhouse, so he was manager of that. The original manager decided to go into business for himself, so he left and my father, because he'd managed his own farm, was given the title of manager for the [green]house and he kept the records... He raised carnations and roses for the commercial market. They were shipped to Chicago every day. They developed some new variety of roses and one year they got a prize for it.

Well, the 1929 crash sent Colonel Fabyan's income into a tailspin. He suffered so they shut down the greenhouse and they had to let go a lot [of people]. They had about a hundred people at one time. If you can imagine, a 600-acre estate needs a lot of maintenance. That was a veritable United Nations. They had a Norwegian there to take care of the boats. They had a boat house and a Japanese garden. They had a man to take care of wild animals. They took the animals to livestock shows, so they had somebody do that. They had a French Canadian there. They had a couple of chauffeurs. They had a Rolls Royce and a Cadillac and some utility trucks. It was a fabulous place!

H: Did you mingle with the children of these other people that [worked there]?

K: Yes. They took us to school in a car. We car pooled. My mother was a terrible driver (laughter) but she learned to drive and took her share of driving the kids to and from school.

H: What were your school years like? Can you talk about that a little bit more?

K: Well, it was a small school. The classes must have been twenty-something. I think the kindergarten class was even smaller. At the reunion there were about five of us who started kindergarten together.

H: Oh wow...

K: I remember Memorial Day when we all gathered at the county courthouse with our flowers and our little flags. We paraded down Main Street to the east side of the river to a cemetery there, and we put our little bouquets and put the little flag there at the soldiers' graves. I remember that.

H: Typical small-town life.

K: Yes, it was. I remember there were beautiful elm trees. Big elm trees lining the streets. The streets were fairly wide. But those elms were killed off by that blight so I don't think there are any more elms left. But it's still a very nice community. I think the sign said there were 9,000 something. There were just under 5,000 people when we were living there, 4,800. It was a small town. It's still a small town, people know each other, and some of their memories go way back. For example, the widow of one of the boys that we grew up with, she had three children by him, remarried, and her present husband remembers that his grandfather worked on the windmill when they were putting it up.

H: How exciting that must have been for you.

K: People there had been in the town for a generation or two and so they had memories going back. Even though there are people who moved there and there are newer people too. People have more or less stayed put.

H: You have brothers and sisters?

K: I have a brother. He's an architect in Red Bank, New Jersey. And I have a sister who's in Germantown in Philadelphia.

**(tape goes off and on again)**

K: Religious background. Well, my mother's family was Buddhist in Japan and my father's family was Shinto, I believe. He was converted to Christianity while he was still in Japan because his sister had married into a Christian family. They were Japanese but they were Christian. So his sister talked him into becoming a Christian. He, I guess, was baptized over there. He also learned English while he was there, although he learned it from an English lady so that when he came to this country (laughter) his ear was not attuned to American English. When he first arrived in Florida he worked in fields during the day. When you're young, you know, you have energy, so he got on his bicycle and went to the teacher of the local one-room schoolhouse. It was a man, a young man. So he went there to brush up on his English and learn spoken English. He could read and write better than he could speak and this is true with most Japanese who have not been to this country. So he converted to Christianity.

I think they both kind of let their religion lapse when they got to Florida because they were in a small Japanese community and there was no Christian church there, or even a Buddhist church. When we moved to Geneva there were several churches there. I don't know why they chose Methodist. Maybe he was baptized Methodist. I'm not sure what branch of Christianity he was baptized in, but I remember being taken to Sunday school, the Methodist Sunday school --

very nice minister there -- just a few years. There was a Methodist church in Delray, because I remember when I interviewed some of the other families whose children were a little older than I -- I was just a baby, of course, I was just two -- they spoke of being taken to a Methodist church in Delray when they were children. Their mother stayed home but their father attended the church services there. That was our background up through Geneva.

H: We're in Geneva now. You say you went to California after this?

K: Yes. After the widow died, the estate was broken up and my father had several job offers in the town. We could have stayed, but I guess he had an adventurous streak in him. He had never been to California, you know, everybody hears of California. Through a visitor that we had one time while we were living in Geneva who was the son of somebody that he knew either in his home town or Kyoto, he got a letter of introduction to a man who owned a greenhouse in San Leandro, which is just south of Oakland. So he wrote to them and told him about his experience growing roses and carnations and things. He was told to, "Come on, we have a job for you." There were five of us by that time because my brother was born in 1926, and my sister was born in 1929, and of course they had progressed through the public schools in Geneva. When we moved there I was 16, [at the] beginning of my junior year. My brother was three years younger and my sister was six years younger.

All five of us disposed of most of our things because we were going more than halfway across the continent. The employer was going to supply a house. We also had that advantage in Geneva. So we packed up our worldly possessions (chuckles) including our dog, Tippy, who was eight years old at the time. She was my dog. She was a birthday present when I was eleven years old. Anyway, we packed up the whole family and moved and went by train. There was a very nice lady, I don't remember her name, but she had cooked up a little picnic lunch to take on the train. I believe some group in Geneva sent a basket of fruit along. We were given a very nice send off. We arrived in California about two days and three nights later, I think.

That was my first look at a palm tree. Of course we had had those in Florida too, but I was two when I left so I didn't remember them; but I remember being quite awed by this scenery that was quite different. Where we were living we were assigned a house. The climate was different, of course. It didn't get as cold in the winter and it wasn't really all that hot either. But we did look out on some very low mountains out of our kitchen window. Geneva is similar to this area right here, Mount Holly and Philadelphia, except the winters were much colder. It got below zero several times every year. You could count on that. But when we got to California, we looked at these low hills. They were brown for about ten months of the year and then during the winter months we got rain, drenching rain, kind of misty at times. I remember when we were on the bus at times the rain came down continuously so that the water didn't drain off fast

enough and the water was up to the middle of the tires on the bus. That's pretty high!

I went to San Leandro High School and my sister and brother went to their appropriate grades there. Junior high I guess. I graduated from San Leandro High School about a year later. This was June of 1941. My father grew roses and carnations and maybe some chrysanthemums. My mother had a part-time job in the greenhouse. After the growers like my father -- there were several there -- had picked the flowers they would take them into the packing house. She and about two or three other ladies would go in there and cut and trim and bunch them and get them in the boxes, pack them for shipment to Los Angeles. They were grown in the Bay area but they were shipped to Los Angeles. I guess maybe it was too warm down there for roses. They were shipped down to the brother-in-law of the owner. They had a truck going down there every day.

I graduated from high school that year. I looked around for a summer job. I had to wait a year to attend the University of California because I didn't have the money. So I looked around for a job and I found a summer job, right near where we lived, with dried apricots. They were sun-dried. We laid them out in these little trays and put them out in the sun. During the summer there's practically no rain in California. They need irrigation. I guess it does rain sometimes but it's very rare. It's really a Mediterranean climate. So I got a summer job, but when apricot season was over, I lost my job because there was nothing more. So I looked around for another job and I found a job in [a] Del Monte packing house packing peaches.

Now, we had not really experienced much discrimination, at least not overt, in Geneva. We were the only Japanese family in town. We did well in school and we integrated all right. We didn't have the mindset -- now I can understand why the people in California had this attitude -- but my mode of dress was a little peculiar because at 16 I was wearing heels and wearing makeup. The girls my age did not do that so I guess they thought I was a little strange. Also, my parents wanted me to learn Japanese.

Now in Geneva my mother had tried to teach us Japanese. Our everyday conversation was a mixture. I knew only three words of English when I started kindergarten: "hello," "thank you" and "goodbye." When you go into school as a child you pick it up very quickly. So I took it home and between my brother and my sister, we grew up speaking English among ourselves although we spoke Japanese to our parents. But every summer my mother would try to teach us how to read and write. We stopped when September came along. We had to go back to regular school and in that time we would forget. So next June came along (chuckles) when we would finish our school and we had to start all over again. So we never progressed very far.

But in California they had the Japanese schools to which all the Japanese Americans were... well, they were forced to go.

H: Is that right?

K: Yeah, well, their parents made them go, not anybody else, but the community and the parents. So they had Japanese schools. That's why we got on the bus after regular school was over at about 3:30 or 4:00. We got on a bus [and] we were bussed into Oakland to the Buddhist church who had a Japanese-language teacher. As I say, I must have started seeming strange to the others because here I was 16 years old and I was in the elementary, basic Japanese classes with the little six- and seven-year-olds. I didn't feel especially bad about it. I think my sister might have felt it much more than I did. Of course we weren't there long enough. This was the beginning of 1939. Well, I finished in 1941. I did not continue with Japanese school after that. But we also went Saturday mornings, so we had long school days.

I had to help my mother, of course. She didn't ask a lot of us. I had to wash the dishes. When I think about it, she really did a lot of work, cooking and working mornings in the packing house. I may have had to make the lunches for us, but I can truthfully say I didn't feel overworked. (laughter)

**(Tape goes off and on)**

K: Before I digress, I started to say that people who grew up in the Japanese communities on the West Coast really felt the discrimination whereas I had not. So when I went to look for a job I went to this Del Monte packing house and asked for a job. The man looked at me and asked, "How old are you?" And I said I was 17 and he said, "Well, we have no openings on the day shift but we do have some on the night shift, but you have to be 18." So I had to wait a few weeks until I was 18; it wasn't long. He put me to work when I turned 18, on the night shift. When I went back and told our neighbors who were Japanese, they were surprised because they said they had not heard of any Japanese Americans who were working there. They said, "Oh, we didn't know they accepted Japanese for employment."

H: They never tried, did they.

K: They never tried! That's it! If they hear of another Japanese having a job there, then they might go try, but it never occurred to them, I guess, to go apply; and I, not knowing any better, went to apply and he said, "O.K., you have to be 18, but we'll put you to work." So I got a job there.

The state of California has a good educational system and I felt that I ought to start thinking about being able to find a job. Now, when I started my junior year in Geneva, I was able to combine an academic course, you know, college prep, and secretarial. So I started typing and shorthand. But when I moved to the San Leandro, California school, I had to make a choice. Fortunately I had the brains to pick the academic course and not the secretarial because I guess I'd been thinking in terms of college all along. I didn't have the money to go to the University of California at Berkley, which was within commuting distance, so I went to a free post-high school school which they had, to relearn shorthand, which

I had dropped, and pick up my typing so I could find a job. I went there and I also worked part time in a family. A lot of Japanese Americans did that, worked for a few hours a week for room and board and [went] to school. So that's what I was doing.

Well, I became ill with pleurisy. So I had to leave that job. The doctors were convinced I had T.B. -- they took all kinds of tests but they never found a T.B. bug in me -- but the doctors were convinced, so I was sent to the sanitarium. I myself think it was maybe the peach dust. You know how there's fuzz on a peach. Well, the job that I'd had at the Del Monte canning factory was taking these peaches as they come down the belt and sticking them on this machine which peeled them and took the pit out. I think I must have breathed in quite a bit of that peach fuzz and I think that's what gave me the pleurisy. But the doctor was convinced that I had T.B., so they put me [in] this sanitarium, and that's where I was when the war broke out, December 7th, 1941.

H: A pivotal point in everybody's life.

K: That's right. Of course, for Japanese Americans and I guess for a lot of others, that was a very definitive date. You remember exactly where you were like you remember when John F. Kennedy was shot, you remember where you were. So I was in this sanitarium in Livermore. My parents, on their day off, would take the bus because we didn't have a car in California. We did in Florida and Geneva but not in California. So they got on the bus and came out to see me. They were there that day visiting me when one of the other patients, I think, heard it on the radio, that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. I guess we weren't immediately at war. There was probably a lapse of a few hours at least before. That happened [at] 8:00 a.m. Honolulu time, I guess, and it was later in the day when we got the word on the West Coast. What is it? Three or four hours difference? So that's how I learned that we were at war.

H: What was your reaction and your parents' reaction the moment that you heard it?

K: We were shocked. I guess we had heard rumblings that there was trouble between the United States and Japan but we never dreamed that we would be at war. At least not in that way. (laughs) We kept up with the news reports on the radio -- no television then -- and [in] the newspaper. When the President, Roosevelt, issued the proclamation that we were going to be evacuated, or at least that the military commanders could do certain things, they decided to evacuate us.

At first it was just to get us away from what they considered the military zones that were subject to invasion and bombardment or whatever. It was not internment at first. It was evacuation. They encouraged voluntary evacuation and a few who were able to, with relatives or friends away from the West Coast, did evacuate, especially if they had money, to places like Salt Lake and maybe Denver, probably got as far east as Chicago even. But they were very few. Most of

the people, their family and friends were right there in that community and they had nowhere to go.

The first few who did go to the interior states like Utah and Idaho, they got alarmed because they had small populations to begin with and they didn't want to be inundated with these people who were considered dangerous -- dangerous enough to be taken away from the West Coast -- entering their communities. So the governors and the politicians got to the people in Washington and said, "Hey, we're not going to accept these people running around loose." So it turned out that evacuation turned into internment.

They put us first in these temporary assembly centers. They were called assembly centers, in places like fair grounds -- in our case, it was a race track in the Los Angeles area, it was Santa Anita -- because these places were already set up to handle large numbers of people. They had places to feed us. They hurriedly built barracks, army-style barracks. Horse racing was stopped during the war because it was considered frivolous activity and not something to be encouraged. Then they whitewashed some of the stalls where they kept the horses. Fortunately, we were placed in one of the new barracks and not in the whitewashed stalls. You could still smell the former occupants (chuckles) in the stalls.

We had to line up. They gave us the tin army trays. We had to eat in three shifts in the mess halls. I was still considered a bed patient, so my parents had to bring back a tray for me. I was considered well enough... The sickest people were left on the West Coast in institutions and hospitals, but I was in a recuperative stage, so I was evacuated with my family. But I was not supposed to go to the mess hall yet and stand in line. So they brought my meals back to me. I was that way for about a month or so I guess. Eventually I joined the others in line at the mess hall. They [also] had common latrine facilities. Latrine is bathroom. And shower facilities and laundry facilities.

We were evacuated... they posted these evacuation notices, area by area. Of course they couldn't handle everybody, all 120,000 of us at once, so they set up military areas and posted these notices and told us what we could bring. Some of the people had, unfortunately, only about 48 hours. Of course, we knew it was coming, so we were able to sell some of our things, our furniture and things. We didn't have a car to dispose of. But they were really sold at distress prices. We had a refrigerator, I guess, that was sold for \$5, which, even when you consider that prices were a lot lower then, was very little money. The vultures descended on us. They knew they could get things at a bargain. In a book it just said, "One lady burned her things rather than give them up at such a low price."

- H: Did your family really feel betrayed? It must have been quite a shock considering your background as the real small- town American...
- K: Yes, but, you know, everybody around us was in the same boat. Most of our friends were Japanese Americans and in those days the mindset was different. You know, everybody worshipped F.D.R. He pulled us out of the Depression. Everybody believed that the government could do no wrong. The people, the

whites were hostile to us. A few of them told us that they didn't hold us responsible, but in general, I guess, people were suspicious because we lived in more or less self-contained communities. Our parents did not speak much English and the English-speaking generation was about 18 to 21. Our parents were still the leaders in the community. There were very few who were older, [in] their 40s, who were brought up in U.S. schools. So we were really in a very poor position to exert any leadership. Leadership was sort of thrust on [us] when the Issei, as we call them, first generation, were taken away to separate camps -- not the relocation centers.

The day after Pearl Harbor, the F.B.I. and the local police came and took my father's employer because he was the leader in the Buddhist Japanese-American community. He was one of the [first to be taken away]; he was a leader in the Oakland Buddhist [church]. They took away the Buddhist priest. Fortunately, he had a grown son, he was in his 20s, who'd carry on the family business, which was raising these flowers. So they were able to continue the business. So they at least had an income. But there were other people with younger children where the fathers were taken away. [Our parents] were not allowed to become citizens by law -- that didn't take place until about 1952, after the war was over, but until then they were not allowed to become naturalized citizens, they were forced to remain Japanese citizens -- so as aliens, their assets were frozen immediately. Some of the families, I guess, had to rely on friends or other people for help for everyday eating money. Especially the women, I think, with young children whose husbands were taken away suffered terribly, because most of them spoke no English. They were housewives and mothers and they knew nothing about how to make a living. It was really hard on them. Here they were forced to take care of disposing of the family assets in preparation for removal.

I can't really appreciate what [that was] like because my father spoke English and he was able to deal with people who came to buy our things. I don't remember too much. I was off in the hospital at the time, so I don't remember. But I do remember being told later that -- I guess it happened a day or two after Pearl Harbor -- there was a picture of me taken when I was a hundred days old. It hung, a framed picture, in our living room.

**(Side one ends)**

**(Side two begins)**

K: The local police and the F.B.I. came to visit our family and they saw this picture of me taken when I was three months old, a framed picture hanging on the wall, and they thought it was the Emperor's son. They were ready to confiscate it and take it away. Fortunately, my father spoke enough English that he was able to convince them that, no, it was not the Emperor's son, it was his daughter. So we were allowed to keep the picture.

We had some Japanese newspapers. You were not supposed to have any guns, any ammunition, any shortwave radios, no Japanese-language newspapers or magazines. We had those [Japanese-language newspapers and magazines] around. I suppose they took those away. As I say, I was not there, so I'm not sure what happened to those things. But they didn't take my father away because he was not important enough, he was just a worker.

H: So families were split up then?

K: Yes. Absolutely!

H: I thought they all went together to the camps.

K: Well, they did, but some of the leaders of the camps...

H: Were they arrested?

K: Yes! They were arrested! My father's employer was taken away! His wife and children were left. As I say, he had a son who was adult and was able to continue the family business, but a lot of them did not have adult children who were able to do this and they really suffered much more than we did. Fortunately, we had recently moved from Illinois. We didn't really have that [many] possessions. You have to remember a lot of these people had built up from almost nothing. They had put about 40 years of their lives into whatever they had, and they had automobiles, and tractors, and farms, and fishing equipment if you were fishers, and boats, and capital investments. And they had to either sell at distress prices, or maybe Tak [Moriuchi] might have told you what his family went through.

H: Yes.

K: They had a lease. My father's employer leased his greenhouses to somebody, not a Japanese, of course. Then we were given word that we had to move. The posters were put up in buildings and [on] telephone poles. We were moved in about May, I believe. We were told we could only take with us what we could carry in our two hands. No pets.

H: Oh, heartbreaking...

K: And that was my greatest loss. My dog. We couldn't take her along. And she knew something was strange because, of course, all the furniture was gone. She went into her little bed. She would curl up in her bed and whimper and we'd call her and she wouldn't come out. So we left her in the care of a Spanish family, but when we sent for her later, when we were told we could have pets, she had run away. She probably was looking for us. We never saw her again. More than any

material possession... at [18] you don't really have that much that's not portable anyway. (laughter)

I had sort of started on a hobby of photography. I had a little Brownie camera and I had bought some developing and printing equipment. Well, we were not supposed to have cameras. So I went into the field and buried them. (laughter) Sometime [maybe] somebody plowed up this field and found this camera and all this... (laughter) The contraband was, as I say, shortwave radios, and dynamite, and some guns, and ammunition of course. You can understand that.

We were under curfew. Just Japanese Americans. Nobody else. This was not martial law. The military commanders said that we had to be in our places of residence between [8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.], which allowed people to go to school and return, and people to go to work and return, and get their hair cut if they had to, I guess. My parents were not allowed to go more than a radius of five miles from their place of residence.

H: What happened to those who did? Were there any incidents like that?

K: No, because Japanese are very law-abiding people and they would follow the rules, and I guess they just kind of accepted it. If I thought about it, it was unconstitutional. But at that time, this is what the government said and you did what the government told you to.

We stored some things in the government warehouses. They were supposed to be locked and we got most of our things back. Some of our dishes and things were broken but nothing drastic happened to our few possessions. I'm sure other people had much [more]. For example, I think some of the families had samurai swords which were family heirlooms, and I think a lot of those things were buried in fields too. I don't know how many were turned in. We stored a couple of trunks. We sold our furniture, I believe, and family albums and things we were able to store. I'm sure we didn't take them with us. We fortunately had family albums. What I have here is postwar, but we had pictures from my parents' Florida days and the Geneva days. So they came through unscathed. We were not allowed to take pictures... I think later on, toward the end they might have relaxed the rules, but any pictures taken were official government photos.

H: They wouldn't let you keep them?

K: I guess they must have, because there's a picture of my mother... There was an official photographer in each camp and then there were people sent out from Washington, from the headquarters of the W.R.A., to take pictures. So there's those pictures. For example, there are pictures of the camp baseball and football teams, and I guess high school graduates had their pictures taken because there are pictures in the yearbooks. My brother graduated from Topaz High so he has a yearbook for that. He has a copy himself, and I got a copy and I turned that in to the Balch Institute. It's in their archives.

H: So you were in Santa Anita.

K: No, we were in Tanforan, which was also a race track. Santa Anita is in the Los Angeles area. We were there from about May 1942 to about August or September of 1942, just a few months. During that time they had sent in army construction people and on federally owned land they set up these barracks communities.

There were ten of them in four or five different states. Mostly desert and mountains. Two of them were in the Sierras; the rest were in desert areas in Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona. There were two on the Mississippi, which were rather swampy lands: Jerome, and I forget what the other one was. But most of them were desert camps. Each of them was built to house about 8 to 10 thousand people and they had to have access to water, of course. We never had any water shortages. They had to be near railroad tracks, I guess, so they could bring in food and other supplies.

So during the time that we were in the [assembly] center they were building these barracks communities. I believe at our peak we were the second-largest city in the state of Utah (laughter) after Salt Lake City. (laughter) We were about 140 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. They finally, in about August or September, piled us into these railroad trains again.

Oh, going back a little bit, when they came to pick us up to take us to Tanforan Assembly Center they came to get us in army busses. We were told to report to a certain place, a little community park, a city park. Might have been Hayward. There were army busses waiting for us. There were armed soldiers with guns waiting to escort us.

H: Were you frightened?

K: No, because they didn't act unfriendly. (laughter) It was their job, but it wasn't like they had their guns and bayonets affixed. They might have had bayonets, but they didn't act unfriendly. They probably might have if it were all men. But it was, you know, old people, women, children, very few young adult males. They had nothing to be afraid of.

H: What happened to the young adult males?

K: Well, most of them were left to be evacuated. Some of them were sent ahead to help prepare the way for those of us who were being moved. Some of them were left behind to help process us as we were being moved. I must say that not everybody in the community was hostile, because I remember it was either a volunteer community group or a Red Cross group that had tables set up with volunteers and they served us coffee and donuts as we were going on these busses. We [had] sold our cars, we had no way of getting to these assembly points, so I guess some of us... I don't remember how we got there. We were taken there by friends who had transportation or maybe some of these younger men were

assigned as chauffeurs to take those who had no transportation to the assembly point.

So we were processed, we were taken aboard the busses and we were taken just across the Bay. It was a short distance, maybe a half-hour trip, at most an hour, to Tanforan Assembly Center. Then, of course, we were processed through and assigned to our barracks and given our numbers. I think we were assigned [family] number 21518.

H: If that were me, knowing me, and knowing what was happening in Europe, it would have frightened me to think they were doing so much that was so similar to what was happening there.

K: (laughter) Well, we didn't know all this. And we were surrounded by people we knew who were all in the same boat. I hadn't been in San Leandro long enough to have a lot of friends on the outside. We pretty much lived within the Japanese community.

Before I get to our life in the camp in Utah, maybe I should at this point mention religion. I guess we were not very dyed-in-the-wool Methodists, because my parents' boss was a leader in the Buddhist church and all of our neighbors were members of the Buddhist church. So we boarded the bus and went to the Buddhist church also. We became kind of adopted Buddhists. I had no strong feelings either way, so I'm glad I went.

There are aspects of [Buddhism] that I like very much, and if I were really religious, I might even consider becoming a Buddhist, although I'm much more eclectic. I've gone to Catholic services, you know, and Presbyterian, and Methodist. I'm not a regular church-goer, but I've been to Buddhist services and I find nothing strange... it is different but they have adapted because of exposure to Western culture.

In Japan, for example, there are no regular weekly services. But the Buddhist churches here, nearly all of them, have regular Sunday services like the Christian churches do. In Japan, for example, there are certain Buddhist festivals that everybody goes to. Otherwise it's more or less associated with death, so if someone in your family dies or one of your friends or relatives dies, you go to services conducted by the Buddhist priest. And then there are certain anniversary days when you go for memorial services. There are no set days for religious services and it's more or less chanting. There are no songs. It's ritual mostly. I don't know, maybe things have changed now, but that's the way Buddhist churches are in this country anyway. They have adopted many of the forms of the Christian religion.

When we got to the camps, they had Christian and Buddhist services and churches. Not very elaborate, just another barracks (laughs) that was called church, but they did have churches.

While we're on the subject, I went to a Buddhist service in the camp in Topaz -- there were not many Catholics -- and I really remember being offended by this: there was a Caucasian minister who was very anti-Christian. It was a

Buddhist church and he was a Buddhist priest who I thought was offensively anti-Christian, and I thought he shouldn't do that. (laughter) Well, he was a convert and I think converts are that way.

Anyway, we got on the train and I remember we had to go with our shades drawn at night. We were guarded by soldiers and they were carrying guns. They were not unfriendly, they just had to stand guard over us, I guess, to make sure none of us tried to escape. Who's going to escape from out of this train?! (laughs) It took us, I think, two days and two nights or something like that. The train moved very slowly.

Well, the first night out, there was an outbreak of diarrhea on the train because something we had eaten in the mess hall the previous day did not agree with us. I don't remember being sick myself but I remember a train full of people sick with diarrhea. I don't remember how we weathered it, but somehow we managed.

When we got there, our sleeping quarters were army barracks divided in six apartments each. Later on I will show you something I just came across in the past few days of what the camp was like, a diagram of the camp and how these barracks and how the blocks were set up. There were 40 blocks in the camp where we were. There was one set aside for the hospital; one was a high school; there were about four elementary schools; there was a rec hall; one was called a PX, where you could buy sundries, toothpaste, cigarettes, and candy and gum, that sort of thing. Some of them were set up for Buddhist and Protestant churches. Have I missed anything? I probably have. But 32 living quarters to live in. There were 12 barracks in each block for sleeping only. There was a mess hall in the center. There was a laundry, shower, and latrine room. All common. Nobody had a private room. If you were alone you were teamed up with somebody else who lived alone. So the bachelors had to have roommates.

H: So it was really like a prison then.

K: Yes, it was.

H: It wasn't like families having a little apartment.

K: Absolutely not!

H: So how did that work out then? Did your father have to stay with the men and your mother was...?

K: No, no. It wasn't like that. Families were assigned sleeping quarters depending on the size of the family. There was a large, a middle-sized and a small. Two of each in each [barracks]. Six in each. We were a medium-sized family, so we were assigned one large room. But the partitions did not go all the way to the ceiling. The roof comes to a point and partitions only went to the eaves. So there was open space. You could here people talking and coughing and sneezing. (laughter) We

were not supposed to have any cooking facilities in our room, although I think some people sneaked hot plates in, because every once in a while all the lights would go out. Somebody had plugged in a hot plate.

H: Did you have radios there?

K: Yeah, we were allowed to have regular radios. We had them I'm sure. We must have taken it with us. You couldn't really play them because you'd disturb your neighbors.

My mother worked in the mess hall two or three shifts, serving food as people went through with their army-style trays which had compartments. Stainless steel, I believe. I don't think we had automatic dishwashers. I think some of the evacuees did the dishwashing. My father, because he was used to growing things, worked in the garden which was outside the residential area. Eventually they had livestock, I guess, and they grew vegetables. My father grew flowers. On each table in the mess hall there were real flowers, fresh flowers. And they also sent flowers to the hospital and probably churches and maybe the schools too.

H: So the camp was self-contained and self-sufficient.

K: At least in the beginning, until they got these things started, they had to bring in fruit and vegetables and meat. Especially meat. And cheese and oil. Japanese do not like cheese, so a lot of cheese went to waste. We happened to like cheese, but I know a lot of Japanese, especially Issei [didn't like it]. In the interior, I guess we didn't get a lot of fresh fish and freezing was just beginning. Most of the work in the camps was done by the evacuees themselves. When I got well later and was able to work, I worked in the office processing bills of lading, which kept records of what came in by train. Most of our food, at least in the beginning, had to come in by train.

H: Did you have a form of self-government amongst the Japanese?

K: Well, yes. Interior police who really had no real power except what was allowed to us.

We were guarded round the clock by military police which had their own quarters outside the fence. There was a fence surrounding us. A barbed wire fence. A watchtower with searchlights pointed in. Those guard towers were manned seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The M.P.s also, military police, were at the entrance. There was one entrance. The way you go into a military post; it was like that. You had to show a pass or some kind of permission to leave or go in. In the beginning nobody was allowed to go in except for the Caucasian personnel. They had their own quarters. They were government employees. Some were teachers. All of the administrative heads were government employees. There was a camp director who was appointed by [the head of the War Relocation Authority].

In the beginning, when we were still in the assembly center, we were controlled by a branch of the army, the W.C.C.A. [Wartime Civil Control Administration]. Later on the administrative duties were transferred to a civilian administrative branch, which was under the Department of Agriculture, I believe. (laughter) The first director was Milton Eisenhower. [He was General Dwight Eisenhower's brother.] I guess he couldn't stand it, because he didn't last very long. He left the job within a year or so after being appointed. Somebody else, I forget his name, came in as [director].

But they were not military-minded people. A lot of them were social workers. As a matter of fact, one of the teachers in Topaz was a young Jewish woman from New York City. I forget her name now, but she later married Governor Milton Shapp [of Pennsylvania]. I forget what she said was her reason for doing it, but I guess she was an adventurous sort, too. We really had no hostile administrative staff or others. Many were sympathetic and many became quite friendly with the evacuee staff, and those friendships, in many cases, have lasted until the present day, as a matter of fact. I know Mrs. Shapp is still friendly with someone who lived near her. I don't know if she was in the same camp, probably not, but they're still friendly.

H: I was wondering if you had any contact at that time with any AFSC people?

K: American Friends Service Committee? Not directly, not in the beginning. But I know they must have been active on our behalf. I learned within the past five years that the American Friends Service Committee was sending layettes for babies that were sent into [or born in] the camp and I understand they were later sent to Haverford College.

Haverford College was going through their things and there was an index-card list and they didn't know what it meant. I don't know if they had anything about babies or not. But it just so happens that this was in 1985 when the Balch Institute had mounted their exhibit on Japanese Americans. I was involved in that. We got national publicity for that and somebody, a Japanese American who lived in Los Angeles, came especially to see that exhibit and she happened to be visiting here when these cards came in from Haverford College. They came in to the staff of the Balch Institute. "Would you be interested in this?" So Joe Anderson, the library director, showed it to Sue Embrey, the visitor from Los Angeles, and said, "Do you recognize any of this?" And she recognized the names of people who had been born in her camp. So they decided, "Yes! This is very important historically and we'll be glad to take them!" So that's how those cards wound up in the card catalogue of the Balch Institute, by way of Haverford College from the American Friends Service Committee. I'm sure I would not have recognized it except that they were Japanese names. I would never have recognized their significance. But she just happened to do so.

When we got [to Tanforan] we got off the train and there was a welcoming committee of Japanese Americans who had preceded us. Our sleeping quarters were not ready yet. They gave us cotton ticking, the frame of a mattress, and they

pointed us to a pile of straw and told us to stuff the mattresses. That was what we slept on. The only thing supplied in the barracks was army cots and a bare light bulb in the ceiling to provide light. One light per barracks. I remember we had to bed down in the recreation room for a couple of nights, I think it was. The also gave us blankets, but that was all.

Later on, those who had some resources were able to order some furniture from Sears and Roebuck and from Montgomery Ward. Some of the more clever people made tables and chairs from scrap lumber, [from] stuff that was left over from building the barracks, and also from orange crates and other things that would have been thrown away. But they managed to use them to build dressers and pieces of furniture. There is an exhibit in Washington, D.C. I think it's nearing the end of its five-year stay. [It's] in the building that houses American history, on the third floor. It's a very nice exhibit. It opened on the bicentennial of the Constitution. My father, for example, built from scrap lumber a small table and a large table with drawers. The small table I've given to the Balch Institute; they have it now. The large table my brother still has. He said he'd take it so we moved it to where he is in Red Bank.

So there we were. We moved into a bare room except for cots and army blankets and the mattresses we filled with straw and the light bulb. What I remember about when we moved in was the dust. When you take an area and you tear it up... it was very dusty. Every day at about 1:00 a dust storm would come up. We knew it was coming so we closed the windows and closed the doors. It was such fine dust that swept in. And every day we'd have to sweep all the dust out. When it did rain it was muddy, yucky. Sometimes the wind was so strong that when it came up we had to flatten ourselves [against] the building, to keep from being blown down and blown away.

At our camp, Topaz, we were surrounded by barbed wire. There was an instance where an old man was killed by one of the guards. We never really got to the bottom of it, but we knew he was shot and killed. Now, I heard one story that he was chasing after a ball with his grandchild. He was out near the fence with his grandchild playing ball and the ball got away from him and he went to get it. [I have since learned that the man was a bachelor and that he was walking his dog.] He was an old man. He might have been hard of hearing. Maybe he didn't understand English too well, he didn't understand the word "halt" and he was killed. As I said, we were never really satisfied as to how it happened. I'm sure they tightened up on their procedures after that...

H: Did you have any recourse in a case like that? Could you go to authorities and say, "Investigate this?"

K: Yeah, I think our internal government probably did, but if the camp director said no, you had no other recourse. Although I must say, I think there was a gap between the civilian staff who administered the camp and the military police. They [the military police] lived separately, they ate separately and they [the civilian staff] got to know us better than they got to know them. They were

probably rotated on a regular basis too. I never heard of anybody that got very friendly with the military police. (laughter) Although they weren't too happy either. They were probably mostly young kids, they wanted to be someplace else and they were in the middle of the desert guarding these "Japs," as they probably called us. Well, it was an unhappy situation for anybody.

The schools were supposedly held to the standards of the states in which they were situated, but my brother's English was terrible. I remember he wrote an application to the same college that I had left to attend, and the admissions director came and asked me, he knew our last names were the same, "Is this a relative of yours?" He hadn't told me he had applied. Or maybe he had. I've forgotten. And I said, "Yes! That's my brother!" I was shocked [at] what a poor level of English he used. Since [then] he's gotten much, much better because he's had college and all. But I was astonished.

H: Did they have civilians teaching there in the community?

K: No, no. They were civil-servant teachers. Employees of the Agriculture Department. Some of them may have been residents of the state but they all lived on the post, so to speak. They had their own living quarters. They had private rooms and I think they could probably cook too. They did not eat with us. The evacuees tried to make life as much like a regular community as we could. Some of the men got permission to go up into the mountains and bring down trees. Some people built little miniature Japanese gardens around their barracks and they watered their trees. Trees normally would not survive on their own, and after the camps were closed down I'm sure those trees did not survive. Not unless they were situated next to a stream, which ours was not. We apparently had enough water we got from underground because there was a Topaz mountain not too far away. It was probably farther than it looked from where we were. So we nurtured our own greenery, and we raised vegetables and flowers outside the camp.

I don't know whether Topaz ever raised its own cattle and hogs and chickens for food, but I know some of the camps did. They were circulated to the camps to provide food. Originally the army, I guess, bought our food and shipped it in. As I said, I was working in the office for a short time processing these bills of lading which kept track of what came in. I don't think there was anything before that all came in. This was in September or October 1942, and I was on bed rest for a few months after that.

Eventually they decided that maybe they should be careful that we didn't become permanent wards of the government. We were still not allowed to go back to the West Coast, but they did encourage us to leave for other parts that were not restricted. So one of the first groups to leave were these temporary farm workers. They were called seasonal workers. They were all young men. This was wartime and [there was a] labor shortage. They had a sugar beet harvest coming up. Did someone mention this?

H: Tak [Moriuchi], uh huh.

K: Tak did. Yeah. Did he go out [on this]?

H: He said he refused to pick sugar beets.

(laughter)

K: Well, some of the young guys did. It was back-breaking work. They were sent out with permission. They got these seasonal passes. They were sent out to various farms to pick the sugar beets. They were paid [prevailing] wages, fortunately, I think.

H: Were they able to keep them?

K: Yes. Yes. These were American citizens! (chuckles)

There were younger aliens too, but most were American. I think you probably had to be an American citizen to be allowed to go on these seasonal passes. So they would take short leaves to harvest the sugar beets. I guess some of them could have escaped, but where are you going to escape to? Their families were all in camps. So they came back and entered camp life again.

One of the first groups to leave on a permanent basis were college students. I was planning to eventually enter the University of California. Now the University of California has a system where they had applicants take what they called a "Subject A Exam." It was an English composition, maybe grammar too, exam to test your proficiency in reading and writing English. So I took that and I passed, so I was ready to enter when I got my finances in order. But before that happened we were evacuated. I got sick first and then we were evacuated. There were many students whose college careers had been interrupted, though. For example, I know one family whose son wanted to enter medical school. He left voluntarily. He entered a Midwestern or Eastern medical school. So he never entered the camp.

H: He just went right into school?

K: Yes. But some, for example... There were four or five or six students who entered Drew [University] with me. Most of them were upper-classmen. There was one woman and about three men, and there was one man who graduated with me [who] appears in the yearbook. One of the men was a pre-med student. He only stayed about a year and then graduated and went on to med school. Another one was Albert Mineta. Now, I did not make the connection at that time. In fact, I didn't make the connection until I met his sister who is Mrs. Endo.

**(Side 2 ends)**

**(Side 3 begins)**

K: One of my fellow Drew students was Albert Mineta, who is the brother of Aya Endo, who is a resident of Medford Leas [retirement community]. And also [he is] the brother of Representative [Norman] Mineta from San Jose [California]. The family is from San Jose. He didn't stay long either. He was an upper-classman so he left shortly after. I was the only one who started as a freshman. There was another young woman who was married and she commuted from either New Jersey or New York City to attend classes, so she was a day student.

Well, I hadn't told how I left camp and how I got to Drew. I had been working there [at the camp] for a while, and when they encouraged us to leave for college they wanted to screen us first to find out first whether we were emotionally able to go out into the community and not be overwhelmed by it. We might encounter some hostility... whether we'd be able to handle it. Well, I had lived in the Midwest, away from other Japanese, so I guess I was a viable candidate, shall we say.

H: (laughs)

K: I remember being interviewed by Tom Bodine from the American [Friends] Service Committee staff. And that was his job. He went to all of the camps. I met him later and I don't have a good memory for names but for some reason that name stuck. He was, from what I've heard, very popular with the students that he interviewed. Apparently he was able to establish a rapport with them very quickly and very easily. So he interviewed me and I guess I passed muster, because the Quakers got me a job as a school girl working part time, about three hours a day, working for a family.

The Japanese American Student Relocation Council was the group that pushed for getting at least the young students out and into colleges, out of these camps. One of the people on this council was Dr. [John W.] Nason [who was president of Swarthmore College in 1942]. Another was Gordon Sproul [of] the University of California at Berkeley. Then there were civil rights organizations and people who kind of helped the downtrodden, what we would call minorities today. There were other churches involved too, but not to the extent [of] the Quakers. We were very conscious of the Quakers, not the name the American Friends Service Committee, but the Quakers.

H: As students you were.

K: Yes. They did not supply any money but they facilitated all of this. So I was able to get a tuition scholarship from Drew University, and the Quakers through their network got me this part-time job with a physician's family in Short Hills, which is about three stations down the line from Drew. So I worked there for maybe the first two semesters. For spending money, for train fare and so forth, my mother

sent her entire wages, which was \$16 a month. I guess money went a lot further in those days than it does now. She sent me her wages and [for] their own spending money they used my father's. She sent me all that she earned for my spending money, so I earned room and board by working for the family.

I decided later that it was a little far for me. I got another job in Madison, which is where Drew is located, where I could just take a ten-minute walk through the Drew forest and walk to the campus. I didn't have to take a train to get there. There are pictures in there [a family album] of the Thayer Smith family. I worked there for a short time. In the meantime my brother had left camp, and he must have been given a scholarship too because he stayed there for a short time. He worked in the dining room washing trays and dishes and pots and pans for money. But then he was drafted. (chuckles) So he had to go into the army. He never returned to Drew because by that time he had decided he wanted to be an architect and Drew was a liberal arts college. (pause) So he eventually wound up at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, which had an architecture program. But this was after he was discharged from the army.

Drew, at that time, was on an accelerated course. They had a tri-semester instead of the regular two-semester course. They split [the year] into three equal parts so we had three semesters per academic year. Those who wanted to could go straight through, so I finished the equivalent of what is now four years in about two and a half years.

At the same time I was [at Drew] there were a few other Japanese-American students who were ahead of me and graduated. But there was, at the same time, a Navy V-12 unit there, which was an active branch of the Navy but their assignment was to attend school and get an education. There were about 200 of them and they slept and ate by themselves. They marched to meals. They marched to classes.

Funny things happened. (chuckles) My picture in an article by the Associated Press appeared recently. An A.P. reporter in Philadelphia interviewed me by phone and later I was asked to go to the Balch Institute for an A.P. photographer to take a picture of me, so I went in. They sent the thing over the wires. They didn't know who was going to pick it up, but the Burlington County Times apparently picked it up and it was seen by one of my former V-12 classmates who's now a judge in the Burlington County courthouse!

H: No kidding! Isn't that something!

K: Well, I happened to be in the hospital. But he saw this and he looked me up in the phone directory. I wasn't there so my brother answered the phone. So I got a call from this Paul Kramer in the hospital. He said, "You may not remember me but..." We made a date for lunch, and a neighbor and I went to see him in action in the court room and he took us to lunch afterwards. (laughs) Afterward I remembered him, but I didn't at the time.

In the same hospital stay somebody else, a girl that I had known at Drew [who volunteers part time in the hospital], noticed my name. After people leave

the hospital, if they [have] cards or mail directed to them, they forward the mail [and this was her task]. She looked in the computer to find my birth date to find out whether I was the right age. It turned out I was so she called me. Sure enough. I recognized her name right away. We're going to get together for lunch one of these days. But that's funny! This year all these people from my past are popping up in my life! Which is great! I don't mind at all! I like it! It's funny, you know, you don't hear from these people, you forget all about them and suddenly they pop up! (laughter)

Well, let's see. I was talking about my student days. There was a Quaker professor, my major professor it turns out. I majored in economics and he was a one-man economics department. It was a small college. Now I think they have more than one person in the economics department, but at that time he was the economics department. Some years -- this may be true of other colleges too -- a certain course would not be offered every semester, so we had to wait for another. Which is just as well, I guess. It was a pleasant interlude in my life.

I remember one of the questions that you had on there was how was my reception there. Well, of course, I didn't know what to expect. I was alone. Here I was carrying my one bag. I got off the train the first time in Madison and I got directions on how to get to the campus. I started walking up to the campus and here was this young man coming down, walking in the other direction. I'd never seen him before. He had never seen me before. But he offered a very cheery hello! I was so surprised but it was such a nice reception to get when I was out of a concentration camp! I've always called it a concentration camp.

H: That's what it is.

K: Absolutely. I found the environment very friendly on the campus. We didn't have too much to do with the Navy students except this one who happened to be sitting next to me. He was very friendly and several others were friendly to me too.

Let me tell you a little bit about Drew. Drew started out in the 1860s, I think, as a theological seminary and it was that way for years and years. In [1928] the Baldwin brothers -- now I don't know if they were the locomotive Baldwins or not -- but the Baldwin brothers apparently had a lot of money and left an endowment to fund a liberal arts college. The basic purpose of the college was to prepare young men to enter the seminary. Of course they didn't limit it to that. One of the first graduates was a man who went into physics named Baez, and you know who's father he is? Joan Baez! I never met him but I see his name every once in a while in the alumni news. He was a well-known physicist in his own right, but of course now he's known as the father of Joan Baez. (chuckles)

So Drew, the liberal arts college, graduated its first class in 1932, so it's a young college, especially as colleges in the East go. When the draft and the war started making inroads on their enrollment, it went way down. Even if the men weren't drafted, a lot of them enlisted. So the only men left were pre-theological and pre-medical students. You could count maybe a dozen of them altogether, fifteen, so they decided to admit women on a trial basis. (chuckles) Well, after the

war was over they decided the trial was a success, I guess, (laughs) because it became co-ed permanently. They were the forefront of the colleges that went co-ed, I think. We were only the first or the second group of women to be admitted...

H: Could explain the very friendly reception.

(laughter)

K: I guess so! Again, it was a small group, the civilian group. It was a small college to begin with even with the 200 V-12 unit. I'm not sure what the student body was. I doubt whether it was even 2,000 at that time.

I entered Drew. Brothers College it was called then. It's now called the College of Liberal Arts, and of course you know that Governor Kean went recently to become president of Drew. In October of 1943 I entered as a freshman and, as I say, I went straight through. I wouldn't recommend that to anybody though. It's really a pretty long stretch of hitting the books and taking quizzes and exams with no let up. I kind of wish I'd taken a break, but then I didn't have a summer job or anything and it was wartime. A lot of people did that. I can't think of any of my fellow civilian students who didn't do that.

In the meantime my brother graduated. He came to Drew, didn't stay very long, as I said, but he came. My parents had gotten leave, through the Quakers again, to go to a farm in Connecticut which was owned by a Quaker, again, who taught in the medical college of Columbia University. This was his summer home in Connecticut. He had a son who worked the farm full time and he went back in the fall to teach at Columbia. I had a younger sister who was in high school at the time. It was way in the country and it would have been very inconvenient, especially in the cold winter. It gets pretty cold up in Connecticut in the winter. So they asked to be closer to a school for my sister.

The Quaker network got busy and they found a job for them in [Wallingford]. It's a town southwest of Philadelphia, near Swarthmore and Media. Closer to Media I think. So they went from the farm in Connecticut to this suburban home in [Wallingford]. My sister continued her education at Nether Providence High School and that's where she graduated from.

This family was a large family of Quakers and they had a cousin from England who was living with them. She was escaping from the bombing, from the war in Britain, of course. My mother had a big job taking care of them, cooking and cleaning and doing the laundry for this large family. I think it must have been about eight or nine people all together, plus my father and my sister, who was commuting to high school, of course.

Domestic work was the only kind of work that was open to Japanese aliens during the war and, of course, they got their room and their meals taken care of. It was a good way to start out. Eventually they left. My mother retired to become a private housewife, but that was the way they started. That way they had enough money to send me, so eventually I was able to quit this part-time housework and

move into a dormitory for my last two years. I became a regular resident student. That's where I learned to play bridge. (laughter)

We had bridge games going in the dorm. Well, before that they had a commuters' lounge and that's where I actually learned, because there were quite a few commuting students who did not live on campus. To get the full benefit of college it's best, I think, to live in a dorm and have the bull sessions with your dormitory mates and all. So I eventually, in 1946 I completed my academic work. I still owed some money, so they wouldn't give me my degree until I paid it off. I worked in the registrar's office for a year. They offered me a job.

H: At Drew?

K: At Drew. It wasn't very interesting work. I forget what I did but it was pretty routine stuff. I decided, "This isn't getting me anywhere." By that time my parents had relocated to the Philadelphia area, as I said, so my sister could continue her high school education without too much inconvenience. I came down here and went to a business school for a short time to brush up on my shorthand and typing, and I got a job with this law firm in center city. I've always worked in center city since. I worked there for about five years.

Then I decided that I didn't want this as a permanent job either. I saw an ad in the paper for government civil service work overseas. So I took the exam and went to an interview. They did offer me a job but I'd been on the East Coast [and] I wanted to go to Europe. You signed a two-year contract working for the Army as a civilian, is what this job was. They didn't have any jobs in Europe because I think a lot of the people who took other less-preferred jobs stayed on when the war was over to take more-preferred jobs. So they offered me a job in Japan. I'm glad I went there since that's where my ancestors came from. I took the job. I went by train to Seattle, got on a Navy ship and I went to Japan. I was in the Tokyo-Yokohama area for two years at a place called Camp Zama. That was the headquarters of the Army Forces Far East.

H: Sort of ironic wasn't it?

(laughter)

K: This was during the Korean War, 1952 to 1954. We hardly ever saw any second lieutenants or first lieutenants or majors. They were all up at the front. So we had lieutenant colonels and what we called "bird" colonels, who got a lot of respect -- they were usually West Pointers -- and one general. There were several "bird" colonels, [so called because they wore eagle insignia on their shoulders], and lieutenant colonels who ranked below them we called "light" colonels, so there were several of those. But a lot of them were reserve officers who had entered the Second World War and stayed in. I worked for Colonel Meidling and I think the major that I worked for was Timberlake, something like that. And then there were various sergeants around and other enlisted men too. Now we lived and worked in

an army setting, so on holidays and weekends we were free to go to Yokohama and Tokyo, so we did.

H: So you were glad you knew Japanese.

K: Well, it wasn't too good then. I'll tell you, when I first got there, my mother and Japanese school in California had taught me some simplified Japanese and not the complicated characters. So I was painstakingly able to read some of the signs. At the end of two years I was reading those things with some facility. But I was using English every day in my work so I really [did not feel] very sure of myself. I always took a Japanese-English dictionary with me when I went to visit my relatives.

Now in Tokyo, and Yokohama, most of the Japanese that we dealt with had learned some English. (laughs) I have to tell you about this friend of mine. There were usually two or three fellow employees, non-Japanese, that I travelled with. This one girl was quite proud of herself. She felt she had learned enough Japanese to say "ohayo" and "sayonara," which are "good morning" and ["goodbye"]. So she learned to say "ikura desu-ka," which means "how much is it," so she proudly would walk up to a booth and she'd use her Japanese: "Ikura desu-ka?" Well, the clerk responded in Japanese, and she'd have to turn to me and ask, "What did he say?" (laughter)

But we were able to travel around two years because we had accumulated leave and we got weekends off. We got to know Yokohama and Tokyo pretty well. I was able to meet my one living grandmother and my uncle -- one uncle had died but one uncle was still living -- and my two aunts. So I'm glad I was able to do that, because I had never expected to be able to meet them. So I was able to travel around more, really, than my parents had, because they had left at a young age. I really saw more of Japan than they did. I did not get to Hokkaido, the northernmost island, where the climate is colder and they have these ice festivals. I didn't get to see that. That's where they had the Olympics, you know, in Sapporo Hokkaido. But I was able to travel to my parents' hometowns and I got to big cities and I even got to a resort on the tip of the southernmost island. There's two islands that I did not get to. But I saw a good deal of Japan.

I decided at the end of two years that I wanted to go back. So I did at the end of my contract. They were very liberal. I was allowed to take 2,000 pounds of luggage free! Of course, this was because we went by ship. I couldn't have taken that much back... but I guess even those who went later by plane might have been permitted to ship that back. But they packed very well so the dishes and things I'd bought came through beautifully. Good packers in Japan, they were all Japanese. Very thorough and painstaking.

So we left Yokohama. We got on board at Yokohama and then we went through the inland sea. We stopped in Korea to pick up troops and then we went back across the Pacific in about ten days. I think we got there a little ahead of schedule. Our captain was kind of a speed demon, I think. (laughter) It was a good trip, no untoward incidents, and so we landed in Seattle.

We were offered tickets to go back to our own towns. Speaking of tickets, this goes back to when I left camp to go to Drew. We were given our transportation, a train ticket and I think \$25 in cash. That was all the government gave us. But getting back to coming back from Japan. We were given train tickets. But I decided I'd never flown so I wanted to take a plane. So I [paid the difference for] a plane ticket and was ready to take off from Seattle airport. But Seattle was fogbound and so they loaded us onto two busses. United and Northwest airlines passengers were loaded onto busses, taken two hundred miles by bus, and we finally left from Portland airport I think it was.

H: And that was your first flight?

K: That was my first flight. Not only that, I tried to get tourist class but they were sold out. The only tickets I could buy were first class. The only difference, I think, was \$21 for a meal, which is not much but it meant a lot more then. We landed in Denver. We were coming in just as the sun was either setting or rising and the mountains were bathed in color. That was just gorgeous. Then the plane landed in New York and that was nice too because it was just at dusk. It wasn't quite dark but it was pretty dark and those lights of New York we could see below us. I still remember those festive lights. My first flight. We didn't have all these problems we have now. Then I took a train and came back to Philadelphia.

Then I had to look around for a job, of course. The first job I had I was able to use my art. I had gone once to a summer session at the Chester Springs camp of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. But most of it I got at Pine Street, at the Philadelphia School of Industrial Art. They were training people for commercial work, but they had painting and sketching and croquis and sculpture classes. I took croquis, I remember, and I think still life. [Croquis are quick sketches of models.] So my first job after Japan I was able to combine my art training and secretarial work in a marketing firm called A.J. Wood and Company. I worked for a part-time consultant. I did art work for their brochures and things like that, and I did secretarial work for A.J. Wood and Company.

After that I went to work for the Franklin Institute Laboratories. The Franklin Institute has a museum and at that time they also had a separate group which did research for firms on a contract basis. The Franklin Institute Labs, at that time, had a computer center. They had just purchased this from the Remington Rand Corporation, UNIVAC I. They did computer work for industry. So I went to work as a secretary there and eventually I was promoted to administrative secretary, which is just a glorified name for secretary.

They were originally doing only scientific work so it never occurred to me that I could do computer work. Well, this kind of computer work meant that they were always in the red. They were always losing money, so they decided to put it on a paying basis. (pause) You had to be either a scientist, a chemist, or a physics or mathematics major... they did not have academic courses for computer work, not at that time. You took an aptitude test and if you passed the aptitude test then they would send you for training for two weeks or three weeks. I eventually did

that. As I said, they continually lost money so they decided to take contract work for commercial work in which you program once and then you keep using that program to put out monthly reports or whatever. All that requires, actually, is to be able to add and subtract, multiply and divide. So I said, "Well, I can do that!" You don't have to be a mathematician or scientist to do that.

I asked to take the test and I could tell my boss was not sympathetic. I guess he felt I was doing good work. I'm sure he thought I was going to flunk the test. Well, it must have been that I passed it, because I got sent to a two-week course at the University of Pennsylvania, and I came back and I was kind of a backup or fill-in. I didn't do much computer work at the beginning. They still were losing money, so it folded, and I was transferred to another part of the Franklin Institute [Labs].

Well, (chuckles) that was very boring work. I was assigned to a man who was doing studies for the space program. He did centrifuge [work] where they put you in a thing to see whether you can deal without getting airsick. Anyway, this guy was a nut! He paced around in the elevator -- it was a large elevator -- between the first and second floor. I think what got to him was the fact that I was able to keep up... He dictated into a dictating machine at all hours, and I was able to keep up with him. I think he never had a secretary who could keep up with him, but I was able to keep up with him and turn in a finished transcript the next day. Well, anyway, to make a long story short, he finally fired me. I was in a comfortable rut. I shouldn't have stayed but I stayed just because it was comfortable. No strain on me. They had these machines. You feed something in and these big sheets came out... it was basically a copy machine. I spent a good deal of my time doing that, so I should have got myself out of it, but he did it for me. He fired me. (laughs)

So I had to look for a job. I decided that I would look for work in the computer field. Well, right at that time Provident National Bank was taking on some additional work. It was in mortgage accounting. They put their checking and savings systems on the computer but they were going into mortgage accounting, so they set up additional staff to do that. I think on the basis of my experience at the Franklin Institute I was hired even though I was just a beginner programmer, actually. So that's where I got my real solid work experience.

Then about six years later, somebody that I knew -- I think she probably worked at the bank and went over too -- told me about this job that was open at FMC and they were offering more money than I was getting at [Provident National Bank]. I went over and interviewed and they hired me, so I spent the next 19 years there in computer work, no more secretarial work. I think we started at Suburban Station [Building] and then the company moved to [2000] Market Street. Then in 1985... before that they had been acquiring all kinds of... it became a big conglomerate. Well, FMC had started out as Food Machinery Corporation in San Jose. They bought Link Belt, for example, and they also were making cellophane at Marcus Hook. But they were now a national company so they moved the national headquarters from San Jose to Chicago. Our chemical branch had headquarters here in Philadelphia. It also had a few plants elsewhere. But I

guess they were losing money, so they wanted to get rid of some of their employees.

In order not to fire anybody they offered this incentive to about 90 of their employees and about 75 of us took it up. It included complete medical coverage for three years and a supplementary bonus for three years which was a percentage of our regular pay. We had to go on pension but they gave us this incentive. I sat down and figured it all out and decided, "Well, I guess I can at least survive on this, I'll take it," because I was not happy with my job. I didn't like my boss's boss. My boss and I got along fine but I didn't like the man above him. Most people there did not. So I retired at the end of 1985 and I lived in Philadelphia there for a while.

By that time, the legislative push for redress was in full swing and I had been asked to be Pennsylvania coordinator for that. So I had taken on that responsibility starting in about 1983. FMC didn't know it at the end but my duties were not too demanding at that time, so I said, "Well, I'll try (laughs) helping redress with a copy machine and using their typewriter." I didn't do it on their time, I did it on my time. I figured FMC was supporting redress. It was a good cause, they just didn't know it. So I kept busy with that after I retired.

Then in 1989, Tak [Moriuchi, president of Medford Leas] said, "When are you coming out to look at Medford Leas?" So finally one day my brother and sister-in-law and I were talking on the phone and we decided, "O.K. We'll go down and look at Medford Leas." In April of 1989 we came to look, got the tour, and we decided, "Hey, this is all right!" And my mother was 88 or 89 at the time, and I had been thinking, "Well, what if she has to go into a nursing home. That will eat up my assets and everything." That started to worry me. She was okay. You know when you get up to 80 you've got to think about these things. So I looked at the various options and, well, the cheapest one was Woolman Commons [where we live independently]. I don't have the resources that Tak has to live in his mansion over there. There happened to be an opening at that time so I signed up right away. I pulled together things out of my savings account to put down a deposit for it, and I wasn't able to sell my house right away, so I had to dip into savings to meet the entrance fee.

**(Side 3 ends)**

**(Side 4 begins)**

K: We're at the point where we decided to come to Woolman Commons. There happened to be an opening here and because of my mother's age -- I wasn't ready for a retirement community -- my brother and sister-in-law and I all decided we better make the move, so we came. I think a lot of people are passing because they can't sell their house at the price they would like to sell it. Without selling their house it's hard to meet that entrance fee. Well, I hadn't invested that much in my house so I was able to scrape together enough to meet the entrance fee. We saw the place for the first time on April 19th, and less than two months later on June

12th we moved in. That was kind of a drastic move because we had a three-bedroom house with garage and basement.

H: All crammed full. (laughs)

K: Crammed full of stuff. It was an accumulation of 37 years. Fortunately it wasn't so far away. I kept commuting back and forth to clean things up at the old house after we moved in. We had to clean up at the old house to make it presentable for selling too. It took from May until about November to find a buyer. The real estate agent said, "Don't worry, somewhere out there there's a buyer for you." (laughter) I had to lower my price a little bit but I'm satisfied with what I got for it. I've been very pleased with my life here.

H: It looks very comfortable.

K: It is.

I have to tell you about the N.S.R.C.F., Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund. A group in New England started this. They're Quakers. They're Japanese Americans, the leader of whom became a Quaker. They decided the best way to pay back the Quakers [for the help] that they had given us in our time of need was to organize and help Southeast Asians who are currently in need of the kind of help that we received at that time. So for about the past ten years they have been contacting people like me who have been helped. Tak has been one of the founders of this Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund.

The first award in 1983 was to the American Friends Service Committee. They had a dinner here at the AFSC office. Asia Bennett was here, and the Emlens. I don't know if you know them or not. [The Emlens] were involved in the original Student Relocation Council. They were there at the dinner and they invited us out to their Main Line home the next morning for breakfast. (laughter) That was very nice.

Ever since then the group, which is a very small group of volunteers, takes care of sending out an annual appeal for donations. I've been sending them a little money every year. I forget what their funding base is now, but they have a considerable amount and, of course, it keeps getting bigger every year but then college costs keep going up too. So they have given out scholarships, originally \$500 each, to Southeast Asians in places like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, St. Louis I guess. In cities all over the U.S. which have a fair number of Southeast Asians in the community. Last year, 1990, was the turn for Philadelphia. We got up a local committee headed by Nobu Miyoshi.

H: A young woman?

K: Oh, no, no. I'm sure she's past 80. I never asked her age but I'm sure she's older than I am.

H: I think once they had a commemoration or a fair of some kind. I know they sent out invitations that we printed in our print shop and there was a young Asian woman who was taking care of the business end of it. I don't remember her name.

K: No. She was a volunteer, she was the local chairman. Tak [Moriuchi] was on that committee too. They started us off with \$4,000, I think, from the headquarters in New England, and we tried to at least double that with solicitations. We solicited mainly corporations [and also] teachers' organizations and some of them came through. We asked for \$5,000 each. Well, nobody contributed that much, but if you're in fundraising you start high and be grateful for whatever you can get. Subaru is one of those companies that's always been generous about things like that, so I think they helped us, and Bell Telephone helped us. We managed to get enough local contributions so eventually we got up to about \$10,000.

[Dr. Matthew Hamabata] the dean at Haverford -- he's a Nisei from Hawaii -- had a very efficient setup. Only two or three of us of about ten who reviewed the applications were educators. I had never done it before, Tak had never done it before, but he [the dean] had a system set up so that not everybody read all the applications. Each one had to be read by at least three people. So that happened, and of course the educators were able to go through them very quickly. The rest of us plowed along a little bit more slowly.

We came up with twelve applications that we thought were worthy of being awarded -- I call them scholarships, but they call them something else. In our committee meeting we had decided that we wanted to award not \$500 but \$1,000 to each recipient since \$500 doesn't go very far... In the first appeal we had touched even the Archdiocese. We tapped our Nisei community and eventually we got together \$12,000, so we were able to award 12 recipients \$1,000 each.

H: Isn't that wonderful?

K: This year it is in Seattle. Now I understand they pulled together \$17,000, but they have a larger Japanese-American and maybe Asian-American community to work with. So we don't feel that bad. (laughter) So each year it goes to a different city.

So that is one outgrowth of what happened to us. We felt that rather than return money to AFSC we could best continue in the Quaker tradition by helping others.

H: That's very inspirational. I'm sure that whoever types this is going to think so too.

**(Tape goes off then on)**

K: When I was asked to be on this local N.S.R.C. committee I had to tell Nobu [Miyoshi], "No, I can't volunteer for anything until about October." So I spent about four months commuting back and forth between here and Philadelphia, bringing a car-full over each time, staying over some nights. My mother was well

enough then that I could leave her for maybe a night or two. But she's gotten older in the two years since we've moved.

Even that one night when I was in the hospital I wanted to come back, but they said, "You take your life in your hands if you do." (laughs) I called my mother and she answered the phone. I wasn't sure if she would, but she answered. I told her I was at the hospital. "Are you all right?" "Yes, I'm fine!" So I called my brother the next day and he came down and stayed with her while I was in the hospital, while they were doing all these tests on me. They gave me well-balanced meals but they had taken me in as a cardiac patient, so no salt, fat-free. It was nourishing but tasteless. Ach, tasteless meals. (laughter) All's well that ends well. They didn't find anything wrong with me so I'm back to my normal activities. I got a thorough screening.

H: You should be good for another ten years. (laughs)

K: (laughs) I think so. (laughs) So I guess that brings us up to the present time, doesn't it. Is there anything we overlooked?

H: I doubt it. (laughter) This is a good stopping point.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**Oral History Interview #403**

**Narrator: FRED SWAN**

**Interviewer: Paula Goldberg**

**Date: August 3, 1991**

G: Today is August 3, 1991. My name is Paula Goldberg and I have agreed to interview Fred Swan at Fred's home in Media, Pennsylvania for the American Friends Service Committee Oral History Project. And if you could just rename yourself and the date and place of birth.

S: You want me to state my name. I'm Fredrick W. Swan and I've been living in Indian Orchards now since 1970. Do you want some of my history now or do you want...

G: No, just your place of birth.

S: I was born at 169th Street and Amsterdam Avenue in New York City in 1907, July 20th. I've been by several times and there's no bronze statue or marker telling anything about that. But at the age of three I got tired of the Big Apple and my family moved to Westview, New Jersey, where I went to the public schools through 9th grade.

**(tape goes off and on)**

G: Okay, continuing on the interview, I just want to get some background of your family and when you were growing up, I guess since the age of three when you moved down here. (chuckles)

S: Okay. Now, I've started already. Well, I had one sister. She was two years younger than I, and we both went to Moses Brown School, a Quaker school in Providence, Rhode Island, after we finished the 9th grade in public school in Westfield. Moses Brown School was coed when I went there. And after my senior year, the Yearly Meeting decided to transfer the girls to the Lincoln School and have Moses Brown an all boys school. My sister made that transition, so she had the experience of both places.

After finishing Moses Brown School I went to Haverford. My father had gone to Haverford and graduated in '98, so it was not unreasonable for me to go there too. I played football all four years, and track, and did specialized math and engineering, thinking I wanted to go to M.I.T. afterwards. But the Depression precluded that, so I didn't carry through that notion. During the summers, I worked in the family building material business in Brooklyn and drove a Ford Model T truck around delivering cement and lime cement.

Then, after finishing Haverford College, I decided that I'd better look for a teaching job. There were numerous opportunities availed to me. I was invited back to my own alma mater to teach math, or Will Reagan wanted me to go up to

the Yearly Meeting school at Oakwood. I was a member of the New York Yearly Meeting and [he] thought it'd be nice if I came up there and managed the dormitory and taught physics or geometry, but that didn't quite appeal so...

G: Were you part of a Meeting down here as well?

S: Well, New York has a Yearly Meeting, and Philadelphia has a Yearly Meeting; and New England has a Yearly Meeting, then Baltimore has a Yearly Meeting. There are a lot of Yearly Meetings around. I had been a birthright member of New York Yearly Meeting. My grandfathers were all New Englanders, or both of them were, and had gone to Moses Brown before I had. My father went to Moses Brown too. So, that's old tradition being maintained there.

During my junior year at Haverford, I was invited to represent New York Yearly Meeting. And I was a Young Friend at a Canadian conference. The Canadian conference was called by William Firth, a well-to-do Canadian Friend who had an island up in Georgian Bay, \_\_\_\_\_ Island. And various other young Quakers were there: Elizabeth Marsh Jensen, later of the Service Committee, and Ruth Outland Marris, later of the Service Committee, and Gordon Bowles, and Mary Elliot Edmonson from Newberg, Oregon, and Paul Jones from Chicago. This was a chance for me to learn of other Young Friends in different parts of the country. Eleanor, let me see, what was her name... (pause) Well, I can't think of it right now. Anyway. She was representing the Moorestown Friends hicksite group. But, that was my first kind of stepping out of the home into a wider Quaker interest.

G: Right, it seems that you were very involved with the Quakers. Was your whole family very involved? Were your parents?

S: Yeah, yeah, both father and mother were New England Quakers. We'd come at it from a long way back. But now, I was influenced in coming to Westtown because I had a cousin, Elizabeth Page, who was teaching at Westtown.

G: Was this after Haverford?

S: Yeah, right after Haverford. She persuaded me to think about coming there. And Wister Wood had been teaching physics there and had decided to take his family out to Culver Military Academy to get a fatter salary. So, anyway, James Walker, the principal of Westtown School, offered me \$1600 to teach two sections of physics and one of solid geometry, one of eighth-grade arithmetic, and live on the third floor dormitory, and have charge of a student table in the dining room, and take charge of the stone house athletics in the afternoon, and go to Harvard summer school and learn the finer points of pedagogy. So. Well, I did all that.

At the end of my first year, 1931, my salary went down \$100. This is in the Depression, you've got to keep in mind. Well now, the next year they substituted

two sections of plain geometry for the solid geometry and eighth-grade arithmetic. And I had to coach the swimming team and help with the track team instead of doing the stone house athletics. So, my salary went down another \$100 at the end of that year.

Well, then the school decided, the committee (chuckles) decided that it'd had enough of the bear market, and they took the bull by the horns (chuckles) and started taking in non-Quakers. Up till that time, you could only go to Westtown if one of your parents had been a Quaker. They'd got it watered pretty thin. (interviewer chuckles) But by taking in fully non-fledged Quakers, they turned the things around. And my salary started going up, and I embraced every non-Quaker that I could get my arms around.

G: (laughs) Thank you for coming here.

S: Yeah, thank you for coming here. And by 1937, I had enough money to buy a brand new car. I bought a brand new Ford car for \$700. By the way, at that time Westtown's board and tuition was about \$675. Today, you have the same choice. You can buy your kid a brand new Ford car for about \$12,000 or you can send him to Westtown. (interviewer laughs)

My wife was the first lady to be president of a class at Westtown School. She was president of the class of '27.

G: When did you get married?

S: Well, I'll tell you that in a minute. I didn't even know her then. She went to Mount Holyoke school after Westtown. She took a year between graduating from Westtown and going to Holyoke. Anyway, she was invited by James Walker to come back to Westtown and be assistant dean and assistant athletic director and teach social studies to the seventh and eighth grade. And she did that and came back in 1932.

Well, I had another girl in Moses Brown, when I was there. She went to Wellesley. But then she decided to be a doctor, and so she went on to Ann Arbor from Wellesley. And we kind of drifted apart.

But anyway, in 1934, the Service Committee was busy trying to help in the coal fields. The coal fields were having a desperate time with unemployment. In 1928, the big steamship lines shifted from burning coal to burning oil. And every big steamer had been taking trainloads of coal to get across the ocean and back. And when, they suddenly shifted to burning oil, that dumped all the coal miners on a heap. And all through the Appalachian territory, there was real misery from unemployment.

The Service Committee was trying to help people get little industries and co-ops going. Bob and Dora Wilson were down in Beverly, West Virginia, trying to get something going. They thought it would be a nice idea if Westtown sent down some students and put on some Christmas parties for the kids.

Well, the headmaster called in the assistant athletic director and assistant dean from the girls' end, and called in the assistant boys' dean, me, at the other end, and said, "Wouldn't you be willing to take two cars of kids to Beverly during Christmas vacation, some of your Christmas vacation, take these people down there and put on some parties." Well, we thought that'd be nice. Sara was going to drive Meryl Clark's car and I was going to drive James Walker's car.

Let's see, Martha Mitchell played the violin and Concy Brown recited Kipling's "How the Elephant Child Got Its Trunk," and Elsie Muloney had three bears and a Goldilocks puppet, string puppets. And Wendell Wallam was going to be Santa Claus, and Skinny James was going to be master of ceremonies. And David Hawk was going to, he had a movie projector with a comic strip. And the kids at Westtown had made toys and raised some money for candy for these parties. And so off we went. We put on several enjoyable parties in Beverly, West Virginia, a coal mining area. Bob Wilson had made the arrangements ahead of time of places for us to go.

Well, we were supposed to be chaperoning the kids, but the kids were sort of chaperoning us too. So, this is how our acquaintance began in 1934. She had been there two years, you see. But I was beginning to get acquainted with who it was. (interviewer laughs) There were lots of other lovely young ladies in the faculty at Westtown too. But anyway, we had to chaperone a few skating parties at the lake, and so we got to waltzing and ten-stepping on the ice. She was a pretty good figure skater. So, we got more and more acquainted.

Well, finally, on Valentines Day in 1936, I found myself all alone in the faculty parlor with the assistant girls' dean and assistant girls' athletic director, and I said to her, "Would you be willing to assist me in matrimony?" Well, (chuckles) a smooch and a broad smile and a hug convinced me that I'd asked the right question at the right time. So, that day we decided not to announce our engagement until sometime later in the spring.

But a mysterious thing happened. Right next to the faculty parlor is a classroom in which is a closet, in which is a long wooden box in which hangs a skeleton. And it was used by the health classes to explain some of the mysteries of health problems. Anyhow, after we left the parlor, somehow that skeleton got from the closet into the faculty parlor and sat down where we'd been sitting. Well, faculty came there in the morning and discovered it. I had heard it was there and I went and peeked, and sure enough it was sitting where we'd been sitting. I didn't tell anybody about it. (laughs) Nobody knows yet how it got there or how it got back (chuckles) to the closet. But that did happen. But, some years later, Molly Ali wrote a book about Westtown, Winter Mischief, in which she tells of some "shackers," those are kids that are out around at night; they had spied on some young faculty people who were romancing. So that's a clue as to how it might have got there.

Anyway, we didn't announce our engagement until the faculty banquet in the spring. But at that time, we discovered not only was the assistant girls' athletic director and the assistant boys' athletic director getting married in June, but that Helen Bell of the Latin department and Alan Hall of the French department were

getting married in July, and that Edith Smith was going to marry Lou Mitchener of Media in August. Well, when the girls at Westtown heard that, that sent them in a tizzy and they were around in clumps matching everybody in the whole place up, pairing them off.

At that time, there was a gang of younger girls on the dormitory that lived near the assistant athletic director, and they had a kind of a crush on her and they went to the housekeeper and said to the housekeeper, "We'd like to put on a kitchen shower for the assistant dean and assistant athletic director. And she said, "Well, that'd be all right. You can use my parlor for that." Well, they marched off to the housekeeping department and got a big mattress box; and they marched off to the library and they got a big hand truck; and they marched off to the boys' end and got me and stuffed me in that mattress box and wheeled me into that shower as a combination bread winner and dish washing machine, and I've been working at it ever since. So.

Well, we got married that June and the Service Committee had prevailed us to run a work camp at Crossville, Tennessee. They collected boys from thirteen states, Quaker boys, mostly, from Quaker schools, or some public schools...

G: Let me get back to the coal mine. When you worked at the coal mine earlier that year, was that the first time you worked with AFSC, with the Service Committee?

S: On that Christmas game thing? Yeah.

G: Was that your first experience.

S: Well, yes. My second, actually, was with the work camp in Philadelphia in 1935. That Christmas in 1934 was how we sort of got acquainted. That was a semi-Service Committee-sponsored project. Bob and Dora Wilson were their representatives.

G: How did you get involved? I mean I know that you were very involved in Quakerism and Yearly Meeting. Is that how you got familiar with the Service Committee and their work?

S: Well, we had known about the Service Committee all along. Being in Philadelphia Quaker circles, or even New York Quaker circles, you knew about the Service Committee. Various members of the Meeting had been in the overseas projects right after World War I. Well, in 1936, after we got married, we took over the deanship at Westtown, and we succeeded Wilmer and Millard Young. Well, Wilmer and Mildred Young had been in Poland for the Service Committee feeding. And Wilmer and Mildred Young also ran the first AFSC work camp out in West Mooreland in...I forget which year.

Anyway. We knew about the Service Committee for a long time. It just happened that we stumbled into these projects and the Service Committee was in on them. I suppose that 1928 conference up in Canada was semi-Service

Committee-related. All the people that we met up there, the Canadian Friends and all of them, had been active with the Service Committee during the wartime.

So, we ran this work camp in Crossville, Tennessee with these kids. And our job was to build a gristmill, a stone building, using for our foremen the native builders. Masey Stanton of Middletown Meeting was actually the architect for the government homesteads. So he was our mentor. And he wanted the building to look real old. We had to get stone out of the streams to build it with, and no modern cement block or anything. And we had to rive (?) out our shingles, cut them up, and we had to adze our timbers, and do all the early way. But the gristmill never did get finished. I mean after we left it, it was a pretty finished building, but the mill part never got completed. The CCC boys were building a big dam right next to it, and that impounded a wonderful lake. And now, if you visit there you'll find that that building that we built is a hostel that'll sleep thirty-three people. And we visited it a bit ago, and we found a singles group from the national Episcopal church were using it (chuckles) for the weekend.

G: It's still standing though.

S: Yeah, the lake is a beautiful lake and it makes a very nice park for the area. That was the CCC boys' contribution. We never worked along side (?) of them so to speak.

But after coming back to Westtown from that work camp, we plunged into being dean of boys at Westtown and living on the dormitory. And we proceeded to have our family in a year or two or three.

G: So you were living in Westtown at this time.

S: Yeah, we lived on the dormitory from 1936, when we got married, till 1940. We'd had two children by then. And they decided that we could have a house on the lane. One of the faculty had lived down the lane and was going to move off campus. So we were offered that house, and we proceeded to live in that house for thirty-two years, the rest of our time at Westtown. So, we had ten years in the dormitory and thirty-two...

G: And you taught at Westtown this whole time? What did you teach?

S: I taught physics all the time, and I coached swimming all the time and track from time to time. And I taught other sciences, sometimes biology and quite a lot of physical geography, and toward the later days I was teaching seventh-grade science in addition to my physics.

So we very much enjoyed our years at Westtown. And in the summers we came down and worked on the farm here. Some of the summers we went up to Canada and helped with the Young Friends camp at Camp Naconas (?). They have a young peoples' camp there and they welcomed our going up there during

the '50s. It was quite a helpful international connection. And most of the people connected with Camp Naconas (?) were Service Committee-oriented.

G: So you always had this connection with the Service Committee. It was continuous, even throughout your term at Westtown?

S: Yeah, yeah. Yes, yes.

G: Did you involve the students with the Service Committee?

S: Yes, there were various work camps. More of the work camps were run by the Yearly Meeting. David Richie was a famous work camp leader and he'd have weekend work camps, and they'd have a weeklong work camp studying urban problems. They were related to the Service Committee but I think were actually administered by the Yearly Meeting. The Service Committee gave up work camps after a while. I'm not quite sure why. The summer we were there in Tennessee, we had the junior work camp, and then there was a senior work camp over at Norris Dam, where college-age kids were. Ours was for high school-age. They also had one up in New York state. David Richie and Mary ran one with T\_\_\_\_\_ Indian School. That was a work camp.

So, our connection with the Service Committee has been all along. During the wartime, I was allowed to stay teaching at Westtown, where a lot of my colleagues went to CPS, which was Civilian Public Service that the Service Committee cooperated with.

G: You were still at Westtown during the war?

S: Yeah, I was there during the war.

G: Do you remember when the war first broke out? I mean, what was your reaction and what was the reaction around Westtown, which was probably different than the country?

S: Well, the war edged in on us gradually. Of course the break was Pearl Harbor. But, before that Westtown was impacted by quite an influx of British Quaker children because of the London Blitz. They were sent over to this country for safekeeping, so to speak. So, we had a number of, maybe a dozen or so, British children, which was a very nice stimulus to the school, bringing in a flavor of the English culture.

The first impact on this farm of the war came through the Nazi persecution of the Jews. There was a young Catholic chemist and his wife who escaped through Austria, I think through the auspices of the Catholic church. Anyway, Herman and Edith Cope, Sara's parents, were always sensitive to meeting problems. And this kind of thing came up through the Meeting. They hosted this couple for a month or so to help them get oriented. They were going to Chicago. I

think they had an appointment to go there. So that was the first refugee touching here. They stayed in the big house up there with Herman and Edith Cope. And I've forgotten their names, unfortunately.

But then a little later, another Jewish couple came, Ted and Helen Marx. They lived in the little house over here. It was a little house in those days.

G: This was your farm that they stayed in?

S: Yes, yes, yes. And this was still before 1940.

G: Were these Jewish refugees from overseas, from Europe?

S: Yeah. The first one, I think they must have come through the Service Committee somehow. The first couple, as I say, came through Austria. Emma Cadbury, I think, was the Service Committee representative in Vienna and helped steer them this way. Ted and Ellen Marx, they escaped on their own somehow, crossed the border and came here. The Service Committee, I think, helped get the Copes connected with them. They lived in this little house over here for several years and had two children, boys.

So. They moved to North Philadelphia. Eventually, Ted divorced his wife and went back to Germany after the war. And his wife stayed on and remarried. She lives up on Cape Cod now. We keep in touch with her. Her two boys are grown up, teaching college and other things like that. The grandparents were here too, her father and mother.

G: So when did you start hearing about the impact on the Japanese community?

S: Yeah. That didn't happen till after Pearl Harbor. Before Pearl Harbor, there were military pressures on the school for drafting, I guess. But, Pearl Harbor precipitated the situation, naturally, because we weren't officially at war until then.

I had a brother-in-law, my sister's husband, who was in the immigration service. He was up in the North Dakota area on the border patrol. But in 1941, the United States had taken German seamen off of German boats that were in the harbor, freighters, and incarcerated them in work camps or camps. One of the camps was in North Dakota and my brother-in-law was one of those in charge of that camp. They just kept them there for safekeeping and made a life there of sort of camping in North Dakota. That was German seamen.

We made a trip to California in '41. I went out to the University of Southern California to study bacteriology and botany and some other things, summer school at USC.

G: So you were out on the West Coast.

S: Sara's sister lived out there and we had quarters with them. We made the trip by train out and back. We had just two children.

G: How long were you out there for?

S: All summer. It was a summer school proposition. But coming back we came back through Minot, North Dakota and visited with this camp that was for seamen. And so this was '41.

G: Did you see any signs of war hysteria back then in 1941? On the West Coast...

S: No, I don't think we were conscious of the war much if any in '41. We didn't have any Japanese-American contacts on the West Coast at that time, that I remember. Anyway, we came back through North Dakota. So that was our first touch of war activity on the part of the United States.

Anyway, '42 came and people began to get displaced from the West Coast. December 7th was the day of the attack, Pearl Harbor Day. I don't know the month, but it was quite a while before the machinery got cranking up to put Japanese in camps and began to temporarily herd them into racetrack areas and things like that.

G: Was much known on the East Coast about what was going on on the West Coast?

S: Well, we learned quite a bit about it because the Service Committee was aware of it. The service committee had people like Herbert Nicholson and Esther Rhodes who already had a lot of Japanese experience, contact with people in Japan, through their mission work and so on. Esther Rhodes had been over at the Friends girls' school for quite a while. And the Friends had a center there in Tokyo, where Hugh Borden had been--Hugh Borden was president of Haverford College and he'd been there. And Tom and Esther Jones from Earlham College had been stationed there for a while.

So these people with Japanese orientation plunged into visiting the Japanese camps in the hope to alleviate as much suffering as they could and run errands when it was possible, because people were yanked out of their physical positions and out of their communities without very much anticipation.

Well, we began to get some people who had roots in the East. For instance, Emma Hatayama (?) was a woman studying to be a doctor at Women's Medical College in Philadelphia. She had learned that if people on the West Coast could get jobs in the East, they could avoid the camp experience, having to be pushed into the camps.

Well, the Hatayamas (?) had a big ranch near Fresno, peaches and raisins and grapes. And they also had a Mexican foreman who was very good and whom they felt they could trust. And so they were able, in their case, to turn the ranch over to him and let him continue to run the ranch. They were mostly sent to camp. But Emma, who was out, arranged for her brother and sister-in-law to come to this area and look for a job.

They got--through the Service Committee--in touch with Herman Cope. A pair of pictures here--I'll pass that over. This man and his wife here, Niromi and Iko Hatayama (?), arrived here and they stayed with Herman and Edith Cope up at the other house for quite a while.

G: This is the family that stayed in your house?

S: Umm hmm. Well then, later, when they decided they were going to have children, they were moved down to the little house over here. And then, later still, he was instrumental in persuading his family to come and live in this house. So his father and mother and brother and another sister, a sister-in-law, came here and lived in this house.

And so, in order to pay for some of this business--Herman Cope's orchard wasn't awfully big, it didn't go across the highway here--what he did was go to Mrs. Scott of Scott Paper Company, I guess, over in Brookhaven. She had an orchard that had kind of been allowed to go to pot. The trees were still reasonably healthy, but it had grown up. And he made arrangements, Herman Cope through Mrs Scott, to take over that orchard. And so he turned in his work clothes and cleaned out the orchard and got it to producing enough apples to help pay for the cost of the labor. And so, that was done. This orchard and that orchard helped take care of quite a number of people.

G: So if they had sponsors, and you were their sponsors, you could get them out of the evacuation camps?

S: Yeah, Herman and Edith Cope were sponsors.

G: How many different families did you sponsor?

S: Well, eventually, the Sanos (?), the Suzukis (?), the Ashiazawas (?). I guess the Harakawas (?), the Elkingtons (?) were their sponsor.

G: They were all here at the same time?

S: Not exactly, they overlapped.

G: Where would they go after they would leave?

S: Some of them went back home after the war. Then the Yamamoto (?) family came on, they had been up in the Spokane area. Mr. Yamamoto (?) had three daughters. Some of the daughters got jobs in the Philadelphia area and the youngest one came and lived with us. Ruby Yamamoto (?) became our daughter for several years and lived at Westtown. Finally she went to the University of Cincinnati and became a nurse. In '55, when we were out in California, we helped her get married. So we married off our daughter in 1955.

G: (laughs) How did you get involved with the Japanese relocation program? How did you become sponsors?

S: Well, Herman and Edith Cope, by taking in the Hatayamas (?) here. When they were here, then we came and helped with the farm and so we got acquainted with them. There's a picture over there. It shows a lot of people. (tape goes off and on) There's some pictures of Japanese Quakers that Sara organized at Westtown. That was in the '60s.

G: I just want tell the tape that he found in his attic a bunch of pictures of, I guess, your work when you went over to Japan and families you stayed with over there.

S: Yeah. Some of the families we visited there were friends of Edith Sharpless, who I mentioned earlier. And a few of them were related to people that had been here. There were two families we visited like that. Here, by the way, is Edith Sharpless. (tape goes off and on) I still haven't found the farm picture that I need here.

G: This is on the farm, with the family?

S: Yes, right here. These are peaches. You saw the peach trees. So. Now, that's Niromi Hatayama (?) and that's Iko, his wife. And they were the original Japanese to come to this house. And then he persuaded his father and mother. Where are they? Let's see. This is Mrs. That's her other son, his brother. And that's his wife. Now that's another lady. She went to the Friends school in Tokyo, and she was in the photography business in San Francisco and made colored pictures.

G: Were all the younger people, were they born in America or were they born in Japan?

S: Yeah, sure. (points out three people born in America and two Nisei) Where's Mr. Hatayama (?), isn't he here somewhere? That's Mr. Mita (?), that's another one. And here's Dick Harakawa (?), that's another one.

G: And everybody worked on the farm?

S: Yeah, during harvest time.

That's Mr. Hatayama (?), the father. That's the father and the mother, and the son, son, and daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law. I'm confused as to who she was. Anyway, Mr. Mita (?) was a single man who came in. He did odd jobs in the community in addition to helping with the harvest. He didn't live on the farm. And Dick Harakawa (?), his father was a printer and he did work with the Service Committee. But Dick just helped at the harvest time. He was a student.

Keller Pedess (?) was a neighbor boy that helped with the tractor. And these two girls, the Whitsun (?) girls. That girl, Peggy, was killed in the Coconut

Grove fire in Boston. She was a student at Wellesley. She's still over in Germantown now.

Anyway, that gives you a flavor of the families who were here. Now when the Hatayamas (?) moved back--they had the Mexican foreman in charge of their ranch, and so they could go back as soon as...

G: Their property wasn't sold?

S: No. No. A lot of the properties were never sold. People tried to get hold of them, buy them cheap, that kind of thing. A lot of people didn't own property, they were renters or tenant farmers and that kind of thing. And that was the case of the Yamamoto's that came on, the girl we had with us, Ruby Yamamoto.

Well, let's see. Mrs. Ashiazawa (?). We went and saw her in California after she'd gone back, and her daughter Sumi.

G: How did you neighbors respond?

S: Well, lukewarm. We were isolated somewhat. All these houses weren't here. You see, New Middletown Road that you came in on, that super highway, wasn't there. That was all trees and orchard. And so, in a sense, we were an island back here. The biggest neighbor was the Linvilles (?). They had a great big farm here. And they were appealed to for helping and they gradually got to accepting them all right.

G: Did you get any opposition to what you were doing in the community or in the area?

S: No. I wouldn't think we did. Niromi (?) had (laughs) some interesting experiences going into Media and so on. I think he told a story about somebody said, "I thought Japanese all had cloven hooves. Why don't you take off your shoes and show me," he said to Niromi. And Niromi said, "Well, you take off your shoe first and show me your foot." (chuckles) See, so many people had worn tobis (?)--these split-toe shoes--so they got this idea that Japanese had a cloven hoof. So that was one of the interesting stories that he told. But I wouldn't say there was obvious public opposition. I'm sure there were some people in the neighborhood. But some of the Quakers in the community--pretty influential people, who were presidents of big companies and all--they took them right in. And so they recognized the maladjustment to society that the government was perpetrating.

G: How did the Japanese families adjust to out here? There wasn't at the time a very big Japanese community out here, was there?

S: No. Practically none. Now, the second family that came here after the Hatayamas (?) left were the Sanos (?). And they were people who didn't have property rights back in California. The father and mother had been born in Japan. The children were born here. And they had one son who was in the Japanese army and one son

was in the American army. But they had Florence and Bell, two lovely daughters, and a son Roy. And they were Methodists, and so they attended a Methodist church in Media.

**(End Side 1)**

**(Begin Side 2)**

S: There's a picture here of Roy Sano. Roy lived here and he was very faithful in going to the Methodist Sunday school. And they very much appreciated him. He went on and became a Methodist bishop in the Canadian (?) Rocky Mountain region. When the Methodist church celebrated its centennial here in Media, about a year or two ago now, they invited him to come back. He was a Methodist bishop in the church and was very much welcomed, and the memories of the days when his family was incarcerated here (chuckles) were remembered.

Anyway, we hear from them all at Christmas time. They had a daughter in Japan. Their oldest daughter stayed in Japan. She was married to a man who was in the Japanese army. But he, of course, went off to war, and so she was having to keep the family together. And she spent practically all of the war raising silkworms, trying to get enough money to keep the family alive.

Well, we went to visit them in 1955. That was one of our special missions, to visit this girl whose family had lived in this house. We had a wonderful visit with her. And she had two very nice high school boys who acted as guides for us, took us around. They lived right near Mount Fuji on the west side. And we walked up the valley with her and she said, "You're the first white people, or Americans, ever visit this village." So it was kind of an interesting experience. Our guide was Yuki Takahashi Brinton (?), who is a librarian at Pendle Hill now. She was our interpreter and guide and took us up that journey.

G: Did they teach you any Japanese when they were living here?

S: (chuckles) No, they didn't. They weren't interested in teaching people Japanese. They were Americans. (laughter)

G: How did they feel about the whole situation?

S: Well, they were frustrated. They worked hard here, but they could see that this wasn't the place for them to settle. They weren't used to the climate or the opportunities weren't open to them here, particularly. I mean, this farm wasn't very big. This wasn't a big farming community. They needed something more. They went back to the Fresno area and we visited them.

Actually, when our grandson, Jody Peacock (?), was born, he was born in San Jose. His father and mother were helping with a ranch not too far from San Jose. And Florence Sano (?), who had lived in this house, was nurse in charge when he was born. (laughs) So it was kind of an interesting connection there that

- she should be around when that happened. She'd known Betsy, here, as a little girl.
- G: Did any of the families that were living here have families still on the West Coast that were being harassed or that were in evacuation centers?
- S: Yeah. Quite a number of them had folks that stayed in the camps as long as they lasted.
- G: Were they able to keep in touch with them?
- S: Yes, they would communicate some. We had quite a lot of interesting gatherings with them. People like Herbert Nicholson and Esther Rhodes made a point of going and calling on families that wanted connections made.
- Another family that came here after the Hatayamas (?) left--the Hatayamas (?) left two houses and moved to their own ranch, and so a family by the name of Suzuki (?) came and lived in that house and the Sanos (?) were living here. So when the Sanos (?) left, the Suzukis (?) were thinking that they'd like to move here and take charge of the farm, but Edith Cope, Sara's mother, didn't feel that that was feasible. She didn't see how to finance it and didn't think it made sense. So they moved back to California, and they live in the Berkeley area and are in the bonsai business. They make and sell bonsais. We keep in touch with them every Christmas.
- Ruby Yamamoto (?), who lived in our family, had an uncle who lived in Japan on a farm. And we went and called on him. He was a real peasant farmer, and it was a very interesting experience to visit in his home. They were busy raising asparagus and canning it, or taking it to a canning factory. (chuckles) I was interested the cans had on them, "Merry Land" as though it were made in Maryland. It was M-E-R-R-Y land, kind of a play on words to facilitate the sale thereof, I guess.
- G: I was wondering how the families originally came? I mean, how did you know the families? Was it coordinated with the Service Committee?
- S: I would think so, yes. I don't know any other way that that would have happened than by the Service Committee. Now the Suzuki (?) family that came here came from another Quaker family out near London Grove. They had been working on a poultry farm. I don't know whether they weren't needed anymore or whether they wanted a little different arrangement. I can't understand quite why the Suzukis (?) came from the poultry farm here, but they did.
- The Sanos (?) came directly here from camp. How that was arranged I never heard.
- G: Did you work with people at the Service Committee at this time?

S: Well, Herman Cope worked in Philadelphia, and so he would be on telephone communication. Sara and I were all the time at Westtown, teaching there. So our contract was sort of peripheral, really, because we'd come down here for weekends, and we'd come and work in the summertime with them and so on. But Mrs. Cope was the main agent. Herman Cope died in '46 or '45. So that left her widow and that's part of why she felt less able to take Harvey Suzuki (?) on then as a foreman.

The Copes, interestingly enough, during the Depression, started a barter system in Media. Things were so bad that people just didn't have money, and so they worked out a barter system. A number of projects on this farm were created on the basis of barter. They got a concrete bridge down here built across the stream to make a park down below, and traded eggs and vegetables and fruit and so on for so many hours of work. That kind of thing. They actually tried to start a script system, but I don't know how far that went. But out of it grew a co-op and the co-op lasted quite a while. Those were early days of struggling with lack of cash in the community.

Not many people appreciate how much inflation we've had since then. Take my salary of \$1600. Nobody would think about teaching for that price now. At the same school an average salary is something like \$20,000. As a matter of fact, by the time I got to retirement in 1972 I'd only worked up to \$9,000 plus a house. Now, it's a very different proposition.

G: How did the families living here support themselves? Were they employees? Could you support that amount of people?

S: Well, they earned a lot of their food by farming here. They were able to use wood from the place for fuel. Water was supplied to them. Electricity was supplied to them. And they had some resources.

The Hatayama (?) family, I'm sure, was a pretty well-to-do family. They had a nice big ranch and they had a daughter studying medicine in Philadelphia. Mrs. Ashiazawa (?), who lived up at the house with mother, had been a Friends school graduate. She was a friend of Edith Sharpless, who we had mentioned earlier. And that's how she came to get here, I guess. She had a daughter, Sumi, who was able to go out and get a job.

The younger kids, who were several years younger, were able to work around, or able to get jobs.

G: When you taught at Westtown, were there groups set up there to help with relocating families?

S: I don't think I was aware of anything like that specifically. There were quite a number of Japanese students who came to Westtown school, and I assume that they were probably from fairly well-to-do families that were able to send their kids there. Actually, I don't know how many of them did that in lieu of going to

- camp. That's a question that you might have wanted to know the answer to, but I don't know it.
- G: Were you involved at all with the student relocation program that took the Japanese college-age students and put them in colleges instead of the camps?
- S: Well, that would have been part of the picture at Westtown.  
A large number of Japanese Americans who came to this area went to a place called Seabrook [frozen food], into the New Jersey agricultural area. And quite a number of them, I think, were sponsored perhaps by other church groups than Quakers. The Moriuchi (?) family over in New Jersey were great fruit growers and they acquired quite a lot of land in New Jersey. Tak Moriuchi (?) headed up the Apple Growers Association of New Jersey for a while. He was that able. They still are very active in the community over there, have been very active in Moorestown Friends Meeting.  
Esther Rhodes and Herbert Nicholson were great bridges. They actually helped to interpret to their community a lot. The Elkingtons in this area were connected to Japanese by marriage. And, as a matter of fact, the Copes were to some extent. Mary Outland was a cousin, and she married Tay Kotski (?).
- G: Did they come out to your farm?
- S: Yes. The Kotskis (?) lived in this little house over here for a while.
- G: I meant Esther Rhodes and Herbert Nicholson. Did they ever come out here to meet the families?
- S: Yeah. (pause) I might say this. After the war, and right close to the war, Sara was chairman of the Japan Committee of the Yearly Meeting. And they used to have what were called Japan American fellowship picnics. And so each summer they'd choose some Meeting to go to, and then the Nisei and Issei of the area were invited to come and that gave them a chance to fellowship with one another as well as meet other Friends and friends. So Sara was responsible for organizing quite a lot of those summer meetings. And they helped in various ways with the acceptance of Japanese people in the area.  
Now, some of the Japanese Quakers came over here in the '50s and came to some Quaker conferences. They had successive conferences at places like Westtown and Guilford and were part of the post-war activity that I think helped people understand the Japanese problems a little better.  
Now we have a good many settled in the area, that a lot of them know each other somewhat. And they've acted as a leaven in the lump.
- G: How do you think all your involvement with this affected you and your work and your family?

S: Well, it's broadened our horizon. As I mentioned, our middle daughter went to Japan on her junior year. That would have been in the 1960s, right in the middle '60s.

G: How old was she when the families lived here?

S: Well, the one that went to Japan was born in '42, so she didn't know the families here other than as an infant. She would have heard a lot about them.

Now, in 1955, that was the year we went to Japan. That was my sabbatical. And at that time, the two younger daughters went to California and stayed with their cousin and her sister, went to public school for that year. And so, they got to see and feel some of the California influence.

When we were getting ready to come home, for instance, we went to the Hatayama (?) ranch. Actually, Betsy's appendix acted up, so she had to go into the local hospital for an appendectomy and we stayed for that two-week period in the Hatayama (?) home in Fresno. So it was turn and turn about.

Emma Hatayama (?), who'd been the one studying medicine in Philadelphia, was on hand to help--she didn't do the operation, but she helped to select a surgeon who was suitable for the occasion.

G: When you went out to Japan did you meet any of the families [of the] people who were staying in your houses?

S: We met their families but not them. Let me explain that. We spent the summer crossing the United States in a car, visiting Quaker groups all around, for the Friends World Committee and for the Service Committee and Westtown groups. When we finally took off, we then visited all these people in Japan, with Edith Sharpless and with the Friends school. And we also visited people in Japan that had come to visit us before we went to Japan. A number of the Friends girls' school principals had come to Westtown. And Sara, as I said before, was helpful in getting young Quaker teachers, girls, to teach at the Friends girls school for a year or two at a time, English conversation. So we were well known at the school before we went. And there were a number of families that had visited us here who we took up with over there.

Part of our mission was to visit the roots that we could find of the families that had lived here. And I mentioned earlier the Sano (?) family had a daughter who had lived on the side of Mount Fuji, and we went to visit that family. And Ruby Yamamoto (?), who had lived with us, her uncle had a place on the side of Lake Biwa. It's a big lake in Japan called Biwa Ko (?). Ko (?) is the word for lake, I guess. Anyway, we went there.

The Vories (?) had a mission at the end of Biwa Ko (?), and we went there and got an interpreter to go help us find this farmer. We found him and brought him greetings from his family that had lived in our house. Not only had Ruby lived with us, but her sisters, she had three sisters, and her father all had stayed with us for a little while. The sisters all settled in this area. One married in South Jersey,

and another one did library work for a while and then she went to Kansas City, and another one worked for a doctor and still does this in North Philadelphia. The father, I guess, has since died. Anyway, that was the Yamamoto (?) family, and they had humble roots in Japan which we were very happy to visit.

We never did get to meet the Hatayama (?) family in Japan. Niromi Hatayama (?), who was the first one to come here, went with Herbert Nicholson on the ship that took goats and cattle back to Japan after the war. The war had devastated their stock and they had several shipments of goats to go back to Japan.

G: That was part of the government that was doing this?

S: I think mostly church-financed. I don't think the government had a finger in it. They permitted it or something. But, there was a book in Japan written about it, and Herbert Nicholson was known as Uncle Goat. He was instrumental in getting a lot of rural communities re-equipped with goats. Norumi, who had lived here, had gone along on one of those cattle boats to help with it.

So that was a post-war action that was designed to relieve some of the suffering.

G: So you stayed in contact with many of the families. Are you still in contact with any of them?

S: Yes, we are. Yeah. We had a visit about a week ago from Ken Nunikawa (?). He had come over to study farming in this country and worked on the Wallison (?) farm down near Kennett Square. He stopped here then.

The family that I mentioned got married in Beirut, their daughter's at Bryn Mawr. We went over and got hold of her, took her around to visit the places where her family had courted and so on. (chuckles) So, that was another one.

Quite often members of the Friends school faculty come through. One of our friends, Kitty Taylor, who taught at the Friends school for a while, later married a Japanese boy. And they lived in Japan for quite a while. She continued to teach at the college level and he was kind of a farmer. They have since moved back to this country and are living over in New Jersey now.

G: How do you think the families that stayed here were impacted by all of this? What were their impressions of the Quakers, of the Service Committee?

S: Well, a great many of them were very grateful, and quite a number of them joined Quakers. A lot of them were still very faithful to their Buddhist traditions. Some of them who were already Christian, like the Methodist family I mentioned were, continued with their Methodist connections, that's all.

It's a little hard to generalize on that. I can think of specific people who did specific things. For instance, the Moriuchis over in New Jersey, as I mentioned, are very active Quakers, helped with the retirement community and helped with the Meeting area and the school.

G: I just meant, how did they view the Service Committee?

S: Well, they were very grateful to the Service Committee. I wouldn't be surprised if you'd find, if you looked at the donor list you'd probably find quite a number of Japanese names among the people who contribute to the Service Committee. I don't know what other gauge to look for than that.

**(phone rings)**

G: I'm just looking for any last remarks or comments or funny stories. Do you have any funny stories from the families that were living here?

S: (pause) I'm trying to think...

G: Have you continued your contact with the Service Committee? Have you done projects since then?

S: No. Let's see. Well, when we were in Japan in '55, Sara was teaching and I was sort of taking a busman's holiday. I took lots and lots of pictures. And I helped in several work camps. Japan had work camps in the city, at orphanages. I went around at one orphanage and helped replace a lot of broken windows.

And we went to a work camp in Hiroshima. It was put on by college students and they were trying to help the youngsters in the orphanage to prepare the ground for a garden. And we did that. We played a game of baseball with them, and my wife hit a home run. That was quite a thing, that she played ball.

Then after we did that we went in to eat lunch with them. Well, we were having curry for lunch and the kids just ditched in and gobbled it right down like lightening. We started to take a big bite, and oo the fire. (interviewer laughs) We had to practically drink a whole lot of water to put out the fire. We weren't used to the hot curry that the kids thought was just ice cream. I don't know. That was an interesting experience. That was in Hiroshima.

I had to give a commencement address at an agricultural school up near a place called Mo\_\_\_\_\_ (?). Mr. Kobayashi (?) had visited our own school at Westtown and he'd visited farms over here, and when I arrived in Japan he thought it'd be nice if I talked to his students on commencement time.

The young fellow I had [here about a week ago ?] was a survivor from Nagasaki. He was a young Quaker, but he'd been eight years old in Nagasaki when the bomb went off. Ken Nunik (?). He fortunately wasn't hurt. The family seemed to survive it.

G: Did you know any of the Japanese students that were in Westtown?

S: Yeah. I had quite a number of them in class. Dick Harakawa (?) was one of them, and Rose Adachi (?) was another. There was a daughter of the Japanese ambassador to Taiwan, I guess, Moriuchi was a girl that came. We tried to find

her in Japan when we went. And we finally saw her for a couple of minutes at her home. They had wanted to entertain us at one point, but we had been busy.

G: When the families moved back after the war, how was the readjustment period?

S: Some of them couldn't move back because they didn't have any roots there. The ones that had property made the adjustment all right. There was a good deal of remorse in the areas for the foolishness that had been carried on. That was heartwarming to realize.

There's an interesting story that happened when the Hatayamas (?) were here. Sara's sister lived in Los Angeles and her brother-in-law had a son up near where the Hatayama ranch was. And so he went up there one time visiting his son, and he thought he'd go over and look up the Hatayama (?) ranch and see how it was getting along. And he went to Del Ray, which is the town post office nearest to the ranch, and asked the postmaster how to get to the Hatayama (?) ranch. He said, "What do you want to know for?" And he explained how the Hatayama (?) family was back with his family in Pennsylvania. "Oh," he said. "Well, in that case I'll tell you. If you had meant them any harm I wasn't going to tell you." So that was heartwarming. And he went to the ranch and found the Mexican foreman and had a nice visit with him. So things were going along pretty well. So that was a good sign. That was John Kimber (?). He recently died.

We went to Japan in '55 and '74. I meant to tell you. In '55, that was only ten years after the war, and Japan had very little progress since the war. People didn't have refrigeration. They didn't have hot water heaters. We rode in one automobile that belonged to a private family and that was of a doctor. We rode from one village to another. That was the only automobile privately owned. We rode in some taxis and things like that, and we were there six months.

And when we went to Hiroshima we were entertained in a doctor's home, one of the doctors who had come to this country with the Hiroshima maidens (?). And I saw in his front hall a big carton marked RCA. I said, "What's this?" He said, "That's a television. I bought an RCA television in New York City when I was there so I'd be ready for television when it was started here, and we're about to have it," he said. This was 1955. "We're just about ready to have television." So he had an RCA television all ready to go! So. Now you can't buy (laughs) an RCA television. You have to buy a Japanese one in this country. Anyway. (laughs) But that was in 1955.

All right. We went back in '74, nineteen years later. And we rode in 35 cars belonging to our friends, all over, [and we were] only there two months. And we found everybody had cameras and everybody had refrigerators and everybody had instant hot water heaters--a little gas thing in the kitchen. You'd turn the water faucet on and the gas heater would come on immediately and you'd get instant hot water. Everybody had those. They had tricky things in their bathrooms. The water that filled the tank went into a little bowl so you could wash your hands with the water that was filling the tank. A conservation measure so that water could be twice used or something. (chuckles)

So between '55 and '74, nineteen years, the landscape had turned over and traffic was terrific and everything. Everybody had automobiles or motor scooters or something. And all the fixings were available in 1974 that hadn't been available in '55.

G: I bet you were shocked.

S: Yeah. In 1986, [this was another twelve years later], we had our fiftieth wedding anniversary. And people in Japan became aware of that, and also they became aware of the fact that the Japan Yearly Meeting had started a hundred years ago and they were going to celebrate the centennial. And so they said, "Well, what shall we do? We'd better invite the Swans to come over to the centennial." One of the things that was a little conflicting was that the school was started a year later, and so its centennial was coming in '87. And they wanted us to come to both. Well, we didn't have commuter tickets, so we didn't go to both. (chuckles) But they paid for us to come to Japan in '86. They said, "You come and we'll send you the tickets." And so.

Well, we had previously gone to Japan twice by boat. Sara had never been to Europe, and one of the ways to get to Japan is to go the other way. We'd gone across the Pacific, across the United States, to get to Japan. This time we decided to go the other way. So we bought airplane tickets. And so we flew to England. And then we got a plane and went to Finland. And while we were in Finland we visited a member of our Chester Meeting. He had joined the Chester Meeting when he was at Pendle Hill. We visited with him for about a week. Then we flew back to London to visit with our former students and friends in London. And then we took a plane that flew all the way from London to Hong Kong.

Well, that was an experience in itself. We found ourselves on a big plane. Several hundred other people on the big plane. And we had gone (?) in the evening, had a Chinese baby with a lady on one side and a Chinese baby with a lady on the other side. One side was sick but the other side was all right. (chuckles) But the concert between them was all night long. (chuckles) Anyway. That trip was unbelievable. This plane gets up seven miles in the air, or five and six miles in the air, and flies at about the speed of sound, seven hundred miles an hour. And you go over France and the Mediterranean and Israel and Turkey and India and the Himalayas. Mount Everest is way down there two miles below you. And fly over China. When I saw this Chinese lady the other day, I talked about mowing the grass. She asked me if I'd ever been to China. I said, "Yes, but only in the sky. I flew over (chuckles) China because we landed in Hong Kong." And so I said, "I've been close to China." (chuckles)

G: How long of a flight is it?

S: About thirteen hours. I won't prove that that's right, but it was only over night. But it was just one of those unbelievable experiences. How can man use a blow torch and send this thing through the sky for thirteen hours, over all that land, around

the earth, and then land it on a little strip. You look down. There's water and water and a little bitty strip of land, and you have to land on that. We came down, no serious bump or anything, and got off into the hordes of Hong Kong.

We visited friends of ours who were teaching in Hong Kong. We stayed with them for a while, over a couple of days, mostly to rest up after (chuckles) the long journey. Then we flew on to Japan. And we stayed in Japan two months visiting on this paid-for visit, celebrating the centennial and our fiftieth wedding anniversary. All these wonderful goodies.

This time we actually went to Nagasaki. We hadn't done that before. The Friends there arranged for us to take the train down and get on a plane and fly around. We went to visit some friends that had been visiting us here, in Kokura (?). A young man took us in his automobile and drove us way down to Nagasaki. And after we'd been visiting all the sights he put us on a plane to fly over to Tokushima (?), where another friend entertained us for several days.

He took us up on the volcano. He's a volcanologist, Yosuo Osoto (?) is his name. He taught seismology at Tokyo University for years and now he's been transferred to Kyushu (?), the southern island, right next to the big volcano that erupts every so often and sends a big cloud of dust out.

He took us up on the side of the volcano and to visit the seismograph station and see the seismograph that tells how much activity. He also showed us a huge valley that they had made so that when the volcano erupts, they can guide the ash down and get rid of it without hurting the countryside. Kind of clever, manipulation of a volcano. We hear from him every so often.

So we went from there back to visit a lady in a place called (?), near Kumamoto City (?). She teaches seventh grade there and she had come over with a bunch of teachers to this country and had visited Swarthmore. And we'd had her in our home here. So this was the second time we'd gone to visit her, and we stayed overnight in her home. So she and her mother entertained us for a night. She's a single lady who lives with her elderly mother.

The first time we visited there was a great big rice paddy in back of their house. This time when we visited there were more houses in the back of their house. (interviewer laughs) They suffer the same thing of urban growth that we do. I got a letter from her the other day.

So we went from there back to Tokyo and visited more friends. And finally, when we came to get back to the United States, we went down to get on the six o'clock plane to Los Angeles, which we thought we had a reservation on. Well, we did, but we hadn't confirmed it lately, and apparently you have to confirm your flights a day or two ahead. Well, they said, "We're sorry, you're bumped on that flight, you can't do it. But how would you like to go, by San Francisco or Seattle? You can take another, alternative route." We said, "Well, let's think about it. Let's go to Seattle."

So we went to Seattle right away, or the same evening. No great problem. When we arrived in Seattle we found we had a little wait. We could fly down the coast of the United States in broad daylight and have a wonderful view of Washington and Oregon and California, all along the coastline. Perfectly

beautiful, much better than going to (chuckles) Los Angeles directly across the ocean. You wouldn't see anything but water and land.

G: So it worked out fine. (laughs)

S: We arrived safely there. When we came to go from there on home, we were flying from Los Angeles. We had to go to St. Paul, the routing went that way for some reason. We were flying up the Colorado River and I had my nose pressed against the window pane looking at the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon, and the stewardess came and tapped me, "Pull your shade down. We're going to show Karate Kid." (chuckles) I said, "Hooey for you. You should be showing a television camera on what I'm looking at and telling people on the screen what it is that we're going over. This is the Grand Canyon." (chuckles) I pulled the shade down maybe an inch to reduce the glare or something, but I was disgusted. (laughs)

We flew on to St. Paul and transferred and got home safely. So, that was the third trip to Japan. And we've been very, very lucky. We've been around the globe. We missed out on one day somehow, by going that way.

G: Right, you lose a day.

S: I think that's right. (laughs) Time clock is confusing. We crossed the Pacific dateline a couple of times. (laughter) It throws you a little bit.

G: Sara, do you have any comments to make or any stories?

S: Well, she's had a wonderful life with a lot of experiences, but now the memory trick has played on her. But she was a guiding light in most of this stuff. I mean, the Japan connection was her work, not so much mine. I went along as a busboy. She taught at the school.

The principal of the school, Oriay Shimazaki (?) was a wonderful lady. And whe came over with the head of the Yearly Meeting, Yoshi Yukashi (?). They came into (laughs) New York harbor and she said to him, "Throw your hat away!" He was wearing one of these old beat up Japanese hats. She didn't want him arriving in New York City looking like a bum. (chuckles) So when they came on the freighter (?) or something, she had him throw his hat into the river.

But she was a wonderful lady, having been trained to be the headmistress of the school. She was very much interested in American culture. She would go out to the Indian reservations and find common sounds and language tones between Indian culture and Japanese culture, because of the roots of coming across Siberia and the Asian background that way. A lot of the Indian culture preserved things that are still practiced in Japan. And she had a wonderful voice and would sing in the various communities. But she went back to Japan and was head of the school when we were there in '55.

**(End Side 2)**

**(Begin Side 3)**

S: Elizabeth very much took up with Oriay Shimazaki (?) and they had very happy times with her. And she, of course, was working on her English all the while. And Elizabeth had been a schoolteacher before, so they had a lot in common. When we went back to Japan she was very anxious for us to try Japanese and not fool around with translation all the time. We worked at it.

She got the school to build a summer camp up near Mount Fuji. Somebody got hold of land for them and they had a very nice camp. But one summer she was up attending the camp and she got killed by a drunken driver down the main street. A great tragedy. She had great promise for the school.

Oriay Shimazaki. This is her picture. And here she was visiting Swarthmore Quakers. Dorothy Harris (?) and (?), they were very good pals.

We visited Mrs. Ashiazawa (?) one time back in San Francisco. This is Mrs. Ashiazawa (?) and her daughter and her son. They run a photographic shop.

And this Roy Sano, the one that became a bishop. That's good to have. These are members of the Sano family. Here's his sister and that's the sister of this boy. And both the sisters were married. This was after they went back to California. He's a county agent now. This is Roy at the Methodist church in Media.

G: Right. And they stayed over here?

S: Yeah. He's this boy I just showed you on the other side. He was a teenager here and went through high school, and then he went back and stayed with the Methodist church and became a bishop.

Now this is his sister. He would be the youngest brother of the family. And so they had three daughters and three sons, six children. She was the one that stayed in Japan, and that was the one that we visited when we were there in '55 and went with Yuki Takahashi Brinton (?) from Pendle Hill down to visit them. And he was the one that had been in the Japanese army during the war, and she was the one that raised the silkworms to try to keep the family together.

So they were very interesting connections who enriched our lives. We would never have had that opportunity without that.

G: And you're still in contact with them. That's amazing.

S: Yeah. It's wonderful.

G: Okay. Do you have any last comments?

S: Well, P-P-O, profound philosophical observation, is what the English teacher at Westtown used to ask his students to make, Carroll Brown (?).

I don't know. All I know is we've had a very wonderful life together. We're approaching the end of it now. She's eighty-one, I'm eighty four, so we're wobbling around. I can't vent my spleen on anybody any more because I had a spleenectomy in February. (laughter)

G: That's a profound philosophical last statement. (laughter)

S: So that's one way to size it up.

G: You've done a lot.

S: This is Norumi and Iko (?) when they first came here. You can see how they'd be attractive people.

G: I'm sure all these families are grateful.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**Oral History Interview #404**

**Narrator: TOSHIYUKI FUKUSHIMA**

**Interviewer: Geraldine Henry**

**August 8, 1991**

H: Today is August 8th, 1991. This is Gerry Henry. I am interviewing Toshiyuki Fukushima at 218 Lafayette Avenue [in] Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, for the American Friends Service Committee Oral History Project.

F: Okay. I am Tosh Fukushima. I was born in Tacoma, Washington, on September 26, 1921.

**(Tape goes off and on)**

H: Tosh, could you tell us something about your earliest childhood? What sort of town was it you were born in?

F: Well, I was born in Tacoma. Tacoma, I guess, at that time, was smaller than Seattle. We lived in the city where my parents ran a typical Japanese business. They made tofu and things like that. Probably by the time I was about six or eight my parents divorced, and I went with my mother to Japan to visit in 1928...before the Depression. When we came back they were separated and we moved to Seattle.

H: Were your parents born in Japan?

F: They were both born in Japan. My mother was a typical Japanese woman who married a man who was already in the States. After we moved to Seattle she remarried, and they ran a variety of businesses in downtown Seattle where Orientals lived in Seattle. Basically, Orientals lived in a section of Seattle where the Chinese, the Filipinos, all lived together.

H: Was it a city setting as opposed to a...?

F: Oh yes. It was right in the center of the city, within a half a mile of the train station in Seattle. If you know Seattle at all it's probably within three-quarters of a mile from where the King Dome is now located. It's an area that was adjacent to what is now a big tourist attraction in Seattle. Down near [Pioneer] Square, which was and still is the skid row area of Seattle. At the time of the war, my mother ran a small hotel in Seattle.

H: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

F: I had a half brother in Japan who was a number of years older than I was and who's deceased now. She'd kept in touch with them until he passed away, and kept in touch with his wife. I never really had much dealings with them. I really didn't know him at all. I met him the time that we went to Japan.

H: So you grew up as an only child, then?

F: Basically I grew up as an only child.

H: How about your schooling in [Seattle]? Was it basically a neighborhood school with mostly Asian kids, or was it mixed with the other community?

F: No. In those days, you know, the elementary school that I went to was probably just like 80 percent Asian, simply because it was a neighborhood school. I started there. I only went to the seventh grade and then we had to move to an adjacent elementary school, which was not quite that large an Oriental [population] because it was located in an area that tended to merge into a very large Jewish population.

H: Really!

F: Yeah. Then the high school I went to was one of the old high schools closest to the center of town. It had a very large Oriental student population but it was also adjacent to what, at that time I thought, was a fairly affluent community in Seattle, which was the Capitol Hill district. I guess the Oriental population in high school might have been 25 to 30 percent, which is still a fairly large percentage. There were typical urban schools in Seattle. Looking back at the kind of education I had in high school and the kind of education our kids get in suburban schools, I think the schools were pretty good now. I finished high school in 1940 and I was in the first class to come out of the eight public high schools in Seattle that had had calculus in 1940. The suburban schools in Philadelphia did not start calculus until 1955 or close to 1960.

H: You had some of the big-city privileges in school.

F: I think the educational system in Seattle was fairly progressive. We still had the run of courses that were typical of those days, but in terms of opportunities for education, there was no hindrance in your getting the kind of education you really wanted. Another thing was that Seattle in those days was a great place to grow up, which is not typical now. It's become an urban sprawl area where everybody lives 30 or 40 miles away from the center of the city.

H: When you were growing up it was more like a big small town.

F: Yeah. There was no development on the eastern side of Lake Washington and everybody lived in the city. The city provided recreation. They had public beaches and you had access to all that. Looking back, we had all the activities that you could take part in. Of course, another thing was, until I went to high school, typically of all Japanese, you went to Japanese language school. That was fun until you got involved in high school activities.

H: Then it took up too much time?

F: (laughter) There was no way you could do it.

H: That's really interesting to see how other people grew up, especially at different periods and places.

F: I was in Seattle, must have been '83. Only visit I've made to Seattle since then. I met a friend of mine who I knew. He lives in his parents' home. His children get bussed all over creation. They'll spend an hour on the bus. He lives within a half a mile of the elementary school he went to and he says his children never went to that elementary school because of the bussing.

H: Things have changed a lot since then. Tell me, let's move on a little bit to the Depression years. How did that affect your family? Did you have a harder time than before?

F: I don't think we had any tougher time. The socioeconomic level..we were not what you would call middle class. We didn't own a car. Because not many people owned a car before the war and you went everywhere on public transportation. I don't think we had the affluence that you see our children have. I think psychologically you accept things the way they are. You know what other people are doing but I don't think you especially suffer that much from it.

H: No, not when everybody else is too.

F: Yes. It's hard to imagine what it was like. Cars were going for three or four hundred dollars then. We had enough money so I owned a baseball glove and I could play ball, and we played football. Never had things like stereos. Never went skiing. (laughter)

H: At Aspen, no. (laughter) My sentiments exactly. So you had a pretty good experience in your childhood, which seems to be typical of other stories I've heard.

F: I guess the thing that makes life difficult for people who are in the lower economic levels these days is the fact that they see the affluence on the T.V. I think that makes you crave for things. When we were growing up, the only form

- of entertainment was either the movies, which you knew was a different world, the world of make-believe, or the radio, and on the radio you really could not see what the affluence was. Whereas on the T.V. you get a visual impact of the kinds of things people are doing.
- H: Daily and hourly, not once a week like the movies.
- F: I think that makes a big difference in how young people behave.
- H: Exactly. Mind warping I call it. (laughter) So you were in high school in 1940?
- F: No. I finished high school in 1940. I went to the University of Washington. By December of '41 I was a sophomore. I was a sophomore at the University of Washington when the war started.
- H: What was your first impression or reaction to the news? Can you remember? I'm sure you can.
- F: Well, sort of a disbelief that it had happened. The other thing you have to understand is that most Niseis were politically very naive at that point in their life. I would guess that my age group must constitute a fairly large proportion of the Niseis who were coming into maturity at that point. At that point I hadn't voted, because the voting age was still 21. There were people who were older, but at that point in our lives we were really not concerned with public affairs and things like that. When the war started, obviously you had concerns about how it was going to affect you but I don't think that you were ever conscious of the fact that eventually you would get displaced.
- The first thing that happened, obviously, was [that] there was a curfew imposed on us. I don't know if you knew that.
- H: Just your community. Not the others?
- F: No, there was a curfew and travel restrictions on all people of Japanese ancestry. You were basically restricted to...I don't know what the hours were but they were daylight hours, and you could really not travel more than three miles, I think, from your domicile.
- H: That was the first act that hit you?
- F: Yes. Fortunately the university was within that distance. Since we didn't own a car it didn't affect us very much in that sense.
- H: What kind of talk was there amongst your neighbors, friends and other family. Was it all the same shocking disbelief or wondering what was going to happen?

F: I think the question was what was going to happen. At least in the Pacific Northwest the prejudice and the outcry to get us out really was not prevalent at all. I think that if it had not been for what happened in California we would probably have stayed.

H: Another aspect; the two people I interviewed before were in California at that time.

F: Yes. I think the social climate in southern California was entirely different.

H: So basically the Japanese community and the rest of the community lived pretty harmoniously up until then. No incidents?

F: Well, the people I saw at the university were very supportive. The thing that was different was that when I went to the university I did not join the Japanese student club. The Japanese student club at the university had a building and had their own social functions. But I got involved with the university Y, which was physically, I guess, about three or four blocks away. It was an entirely different kind of social life that I got. I joined something because I needed some place to hang up my hat, because being a commuting student...I mean you could get a locker, but you really had no place to spend a lunch hour or spend time between classes. So I joined the Y and was fairly active. The only other Nisei in that organization was Gordon Hirabayashi. I don't know if you know who Gordon is. Gordon Hirabayashi was one of the four who was convicted for...Gordon refused evacuation, but I guess he was convicted for a curfew violation or something. I guess it was in the last few years, his conviction was overturned.

H: Just in the last few years?

F: I would guess it must have been in the last 10, 15 years...the courts overturned his conviction. Gordon was maybe a junior or senior at that time.

So I was fairly active there and all the people I knew were very sympathetic and very supportive. So I think that was a great help.

H: Did you see a diversity of opinion among students? Were some of them really militant like Gordon was and the others kind of passively accepting it?

F: No, I think people like Gordon Hirabayashi who...opposed it, I think was a handful. I think the majority of the people really did not know what to do and just went along with the evacuation order. As I say, we were very politically naive. To me it's unfortunate that the only active Nisei organization, the Japanese American Citizen League, that their position was that, in order to show good faith and your support of the government, that you obey the evacuation order and go.

H: That was probably typical of America at that time in general. I think most people were naive then, politically.

F: Looking back at my own thoughts now, it's pretty hard to determine whether you would have the courage to defy. The only kind of defiance that I've ever done is I walked out of a CPS unit. But I think it took years of personal growth to reach a point like that. As I say, because of the fact that we grew up very politically naive, back when the war started I don't think most of us would have had the courage to take action.

H: When you first heard the news, how long was it before you were contacted by the government that you would have to move?

F: I don't know...

H: A short period after that?

F: No. The war started in December and I think...it's hard to remember exactly when we were actually evacuated, but I think the evacuation order only preceded the actual physical move by probably like a month. I don't think that it.... [Because] when the executive order was handed down and the move was to take place you had a very short time in which to get your things in order to move.

H: Once you got the order they only gave you a month to collect your things and sell everything.

F: At the most it was like two months. I would think. I can't remember exactly when we got to the assembly center. I don't know whether it was May. It was in the spring sometime. Since I don't keep a diary, I have no idea.... We were in the assembly center until we moved, which was in September. We were only in the assembly center for a very short time.

H: How did your parents make out with their possessions? Were they ripped off like a lot of other people or did they manage to salvage anything?

F: Well, my mother sold her business and I don't think that she got what you would call a fair market price for it. It's unfortunate that that happened, but...I don't know what you could have done under the circumstances.

H: Did the people at that time think, because I'm sure that like most Americans at that time they believed in the government 100 percent, did they think this was an aberration that would be corrected very soon?

F: I don't think there was any thought like that at all. I think it was one of those things you accepted and you just went along.

H: O.K. Well, so you went to this concentration point before you went to the camps. Where did you go, exactly? Where did they put you?

F: Well, the first place we went to was.... See, this is the peculiar thing about the evacuation, that you went to the pickup point voluntarily. The government didn't come to you and escort you to the place where you got on the trucks to go to the assembly center. You voluntarily went to the place and you got on the trucks or the buses. We went to what was called an assembly center, and the assembly center for Seattle and most of the Pacific Northwest was built in the Puyallup fairgrounds. Puyallup is a community which is south of Seattle and west of Tacoma. Puyallup was basically a farming community and that was where the state fairgrounds were. The main part of the camp was in the fairground itself and they had two satellite areas which had been built on the parking lots of the fairgrounds, and we were in one of the satellite areas.

H: Did they have tents for you?

F: No, they had built barracks. Typical army barracks and in the assembly center the partitions between the dormitories only went up part way. Typical army barracks with straight walls but a pitched roof and the partitions only went up to the height of the straight walls. You had a cubicle which was probably like...eight feet wide...a typical army barracks. Each of the areas had a dining hall, a communal dining hall, and a communal bathroom.

H: So it was sort of a dormitory set up?

F: No, each family unit had a cubicle, depending on the [number of family members]. It was just my mother and I at that point so we just had what was called one room.

H: So you had to share that little space?

F: Yeah. (quietly)

H: Wow!

F: Wow. (laughter)

H: No T.V.? No air conditioning? (laughter)

F: No, no. I think basically a room like that could probably have housed up to four people.

H: Yeah, I've heard that. So you were there for a very short period?

F: We were there over the summer and then they decided that...I think the original intent was that they would put us in the assembly center and then disperse us east of the mountains, east of the Rockies. But then they decided that it was going to be a more permanent, more long-term internment. Then they built what was called the relocation centers, which were more permanent-type army barracks.

H: Where were they located?

F: Well, we went to the one in Minidoka, Idaho, which was west of Twin Falls. I don't know if you know southern Idaho very well, but it's a typical southern Idaho desert area.... I guess of all the places, looking back, I don't know whether Tule Lake would have been a better climate. Tule Lake was situated between Death Valley and...what's the large mountain in California, Mount Whitney? But that was the desert country in the eastern part of California. The ones in Arkansas I think would have [been] horrible places because of the humidity. It was hot in Idaho in the summer but it was very dry.

H: Did you feel better that way?

F: Well, we weren't used to the altitude. We had gone from sea level to southern Idaho, which was three or four thousand feet. But winters were cold, typical cold winters and howling winds, but it was very dry.

The relocation centers were more permanent-type army barracks with walls all the way up and the buildings were arranged in blocks. Each block had their own dining room and communal facilities. But [in] Idaho, Minidoka was a sprawling camp that spread out over probably, I would guess, four or five miles in length. Whereas the other camps were built in a rectangular block.

H: And yours?

F: Each block had probably 12 barracks with dining room and bathroom facilities in the center, but the blocks were arranged. Most of the camps were closely knit. Whereas in Idaho it was a long, spread out camp with administrative buildings in the center of the camp.

H: Oh, yeah. That is different than the other ones. I've seen diagrams of them. Did you have a school set up somewhere?

F: Yes. They started the schools. I don't know if they started schools immediately, but they ran elementary and high school. At that point I just worked in the camp. I worked in the camp engineering office.

H: Oh, did you? What did you do there?

F: Basically I guess we worked on facilities. I can't really recall exactly. One of the things I did was I remember going with the camp engineer. They were going to build a road. I think they were going out to an area to bring some sort of materials back. I remember going out with him on a road survey. I was in camp from that September to the following September. I was only in the relocation center for a year before I came east.

H: O.K., well then let's progress to that point. At what point did you know that you could come east, or how was it arranged?

F: They started a program for resettlement earlier. All during this process I was trying to go to the university and that didn't come through. Of course, you also realize that during that winter of '42 the army decided to open the army again to the Niseis. From the time that the war started until then all the Japanese Americans had been classified as..."unfit" or "undesirable for service." Then they decided to open the service to the Japanese and they asked for volunteers. The pitch was that to show your loyalty to the country you should volunteer for the army. Here you're incarcerated because they don't think you're loyal and now to show your loyalty they want you to volunteer. Of course I didn't volunteer.

I guess the students were the first to be permitted to relocate. Then they began a work relocation. I guess the first ability to leave camp to go to work was to help with the local harvest wherever the camp was located. But then they decided to open it up. In my instance, because the Student Relocation Council could not get me out to school, they offered me a job in Philadelphia. So I came to Philadelphia at that point.

H: Was there any Quaker or Service Committee involvement with that at that time?

F: With the student relocation? The Student Relocation Council was located in the building right next to the 12th Street Meetinghouse where the rest of the Service Committee offices were. On the corner of 12th and Chestnut. So that's where I worked.

H: Oh, you worked in that building?

F: Yeah, I worked in that building.

H: Tak Mariuchi came through there too. That's how he got his job on the farm when he came here.

F: When I arrived in Philadelphia the War Relocation Office was across the street from 12th Street Meeting in the Stephen Girard Building, and the people who ran the War Relocation Office were Henry and Helen Patterson. I didn't know who they were. The Pattersons lived in Swarthmore for years.

You arrive east very naive, not ever having been in a city of this size. I keep telling my children, when I came east the only things that I owned I could carry in two suitcases. That's the sort of thing to tell them when you transport them back and forth to college and they have a station wagon full of things that they carry. (laughter) My wife says, "Well, you can't judge them on what things were like."

Of course at that point I didn't know who the Pattersons were. It was one of those fortuitous [events] that I arrived in Philadelphia and went to see them. Helen Patterson rummaged through her list of places that you could stay and she said, "You're going to go live with this family," and gave me directions to it. Because the name didn't mean anything. But I went to live with Reed Cary. You know Steve Cary?

H: Of course, yes. [At the time of this interview Steve Cary had recently resigned his post as chairman of the AFSC Board of Directors.]

F: Steve wasn't home because at that point I guess he was in a CPS camp. But I trudged out to Mount Airy and lived in the most opulent house that I've ever...I don't think [the] Carys' house you would call "opulent," but it was the most comfortable house I've ever lived in.

H: It must have been quite an experience for a young man at that time, being through what you had been through.

F: Oh yeah, it was quite an experience. You have to know Margaret Cary to know what sort of a person she was.

H: Well, I don't know her. Maybe you can tell us. I know Steve but I don't know her.

F: You don't. Steve's mother was an entomologist. She was a Bryn Mawr graduate. Steve and his father both went to Haverford. Margaret Cary was a Bryn Mawr graduate, was an entomologist, and was the only real live person that I ever met who had been profiled in the New Yorker magazine. (laughter) She had a bug collection, well, I shouldn't call it a bug collection, but she had a collection. When she passed away it went to Yale University.

It's hard to believe...what it was like. They lived on Wissahickon Avenue right adjacent to Wissahickon Park. You went out of your back yard and you were right in Wissahickon Park. It was a lifestyle that I'd never seen. I don't think the Carys [were what] you would call very social, but it was a very comfortable life. Reed Cary was vice-president of Leeds and Northrop. He was on leave from L and N working for the Service Committee at that point. It was the only house that I'd ever seen at that point that had a four-car garage with four cars in it. (laughter) A (car ?) collection. And, of course, the Carys were very active in Coulter Street Meeting.

H: So how did you adjust to all of this? Were you just in awe for most of the time that you were with them?

F: No, because I think the Carys made life very comfortable for you. I went to Meeting with them and...met their friends.... There was no sense of condescension on their part. We were just accepted as part of the family and I lived there for a few months. That was my introduction to Philadelphia.

H: Well, you were lucky you had a good one.

F: Yes, I think I was very fortunate in light of what's happened.

H: So what happened after that point? How did you get back to school, or did you after you came here?

F: I worked for a while and then I guess the draft finally caught up with me.

H: Really, they were drafting Nisei?

F: Yeah. They finally began to draft people. I registered as a C.O. and went to Big Flats. Big Flats was in New York, near Elmira, New York. Then I went down to a camp in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

H: So you went from one camp to another.

F: Yeah,...essentially you went from one camp to another. Well, a different kind of camp. Then from Gatlinburg I went to a CPS unit located in what was at that point Metropolitan Hospital in New York on a diet experiment. I spent...I can't remember how many months I was there but I went through two diet experiments there. I think both Big Flats and Gatlinburg were under Service Committee auspices. I can't remember who was responsible for the one in New York City. I was in New York City when the war ended.

H: Oh, I see. So you were in that camp for about two years?

F: I went to a Brethren unit at the veterans hospital in Lyons, New Jersey. The veterans hospital in Lyons, New Jersey, is a psychiatric hospital. I worked in the wards there for a while and then I decided to walk out. I came home and I had a trial in Trenton. I was one of the very fortunate ones. It's terrible I can't remember the name of the lawyer who defended me but I pleaded nolo contendere [no contest], was convicted, sentenced for a day and sent home.

H: Really! I guess they didn't want to publicize something like that too much.

F: I don't know. The lawyer who defended me was an old Philadelphia Quaker lawyer. He was surprised that I was not put in jail.

H: Yeah, I guess you were too. (chuckles) Were there others being tried for the same thing?

F: No. I was the only one tried in Trenton. Then I came home and I worked for a while. Then in 1949 I decided that I would go back to school. And at that point I came to Swarthmore. My mother and I lived in Drexel Hill. I was still interested in studying engineering, so Swarthmore was the closest school. I guess if Haverford had had engineering I would have gone, but I came to Swarthmore and finished two years at Swarthmore. That's how I got here. (laughs)

H: (laughing) You're right. Your story was different than the other two. Very interesting.

F: After I graduated I went to MIT for a year and then I worked at a variety of jobs. In 1956 I came back and taught engineering at Swarthmore for four years, five years, I can't remember. Then I left Swarthmore and taught at Drexel for four years. By that time we had a family and I couldn't see how I could make ends meet financially, so I got an industrial job. I just retired a year ago.

My exposure to the Service Committee and the Society of Friends in Philadelphia are probably more extensive than the average Nisei here. I don't go to Meeting.

H: Were you ever a Friend? Did you ever become a Friend?

F: No. My wife is an Episcopalian so we go to the Episcopal church in Swarthmore. My personal feeling is that I found Coulter Street Meeting a very nice Meeting, and Providence Meeting in Media was a very nice Meeting. When we lived in Media with my mother we went to Providence Meeting quite regularly. But when we moved to Swarthmore I tried going to Swarthmore Meeting and I did not enjoy Swarthmore Meeting, but I think that's a matter of personal preference.

H: I forgot to ask you all the way back in the beginning. Did your mother have any religious affiliations when you were little?

F: I think she went to the Japanese Congregational church for a while. She was not a regular churchgoer. Obviously we did not go to the Buddhist church. After she came to Philadelphia she was very active. I think the Isseis had a nondominational Christian church that she went to quite regularly. When we lived in Cambridge, when I was at MIT, we went to Christ Church in Cambridge. When we came down here we went to Providence Meeting, and then after we moved to Swarthmore we started to go to the Episcopal church here.

H: That's quite an interesting story. I think you probably covered most of it, then, and I thank you for the interview.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**Oral History Interview #405**

**Narrator: THOMAS BODINE**

**Interviewer: Antonio Leal**

**August 17th, 1991 Bloomfield, Connecticut**

AL: Today is the 17th of August, 1991. I am Antonio Da Motta Leal and I have agreed to interview Tom Bodine in his home in the suburb of Hartford, Connecticut, called Bloomfield. This is for the American Friends Service Committee Oral History Project on the Japanese American Student Relocation Program. Please Tom, will you introduce yourself.

TB: I'm Tom Bodine. During the Second World War I was field director of the Japanese American Student Relocation Council. It's in that capacity that I'm being interviewed this afternoon in Bloomfield, Connecticut by an AFSC staff person from Philadelphia.

AL: Can you give us your [date] of birth and place of birth as well?

TB: Sure. I was born [on October 10, 1915] in Philadelphia into the Coulter Street Meeting of the Society of Friends in Germantown. I was born and brought up there, went to Germantown Friends School, and when the war came along I was living in Hartford, Connecticut working for one of the big insurance companies.

We don't have to go into the details of how I came to be excused from the draft if I went to work for the Quakers. [It's an] interesting story but one that we don't have to tell [here].

Anyway, I found myself on the west coast following Pearl Harbor, working in the Seattle Office of the American Friends Service Committee, particularly concerned with the problems of the Japanese American population that was being evacuated from the west coast to camps in the interior.

AL: I think I would like to know a little about your background. Your family background, if you were a born Quaker, what was your parents' place in the community. Just to give us a little bit of background about yourself.

TB: My father was a banker in Philadelphia, as was his father. My mother was active in various civic causes like the board of the Philadelphia Orchestra, but not particularly Quaker activities. They sent us four children to a Quaker school and to a Quaker First Day School at the Coulter Street Meeting. One of the things that I like to tell is the fact that there were two Meetings in Germantown. One of them was Hicksite and one of them was Orthodox. We were members of the Orthodox Meeting and we went to the Orthodox Friends School. Right around the corner there was another Quaker Meeting, a Hicksite Meeting, with a Hicksite Friends school. The two Meetings did not speak to one another at all. They'd had a quarrel that had gone on for a hundred years. To keep the children from talking to one

another, and perhaps thus the Orthodox children [from] being contaminated by contact with the Hicksite children, the schools let out in the afternoon at different times. My memory is that our school let out at three o'clock in the afternoon and the Hicksite school let out at three thirty. So we children would not walk home together, but naturally we disobeyed and did walk home together.

AL: What were the major influences of the time when you were growing up that made you become involved in the Service Committee work? What were the political trends and events that triggered the interest in you?

TB: I think the major trend was the coming of Hitler into power in Germany and driving out of Germany the Jewish population and also the liberal political population. I became involved, in Hartford, in helping refugees from Hitler's Germany who were not being helped by anybody else. Most of the Jewish refugees coming out of Germany were helped extensively by the Jewish organizations in America. But there were people who fell between the cracks. I remember an Orthodox Greek priest who fled and came to America and had twelve children. No one knew how to cope with that family, so we, the Quakers, picked up and did our best. So my work with refugees made it quite natural for me. When the Second World War came and the decision was made to treat our population with Japanese ancestry badly, it was fairly natural for me to have found myself in the [student relocation] program. And also, as a conscientious objector, the normal procedure for C.O.s during the Second World War was to go into camps, in a former C.C.C. camp in the woods. During the Depression the federal government established camps for young people in the forests of America. When the war came along these same camps were used to sort of store conscientious objectors out of the way until the war was over. My draft board didn't mind my being a conscientious objector, but they thought it was a waste of time for anybody to go live in one of those camps all through the war. So they said to me, "Isn't there something useful you could do?" And I said, "Well yes. I could work for the Quakers." And they said, "That's great! We like the Quakers. Their good people. You go work for them for the duration and we'll give you a 2-A deferment from the draft." 2-A meant I was doing work essential to the war effort. Well, it wasn't essential to the war effort in my mind but if they wanted to classify [it] as such and leave me free to do something useful, who was I to object?

The AFSC was very kind about allowing me to join a group at Pendle Hill, a group of "guinea pigs"--we were referred to in French as the "cobets"--who were being trained for overseas service with the American Friends Service Committee. It was the first time that the Service Committee had had this idea of a training program for people who were going to serve overseas. There were seven of us in the program, three of whom ended up in the Japanese American relocation movement.

AL: What were your family's and peers' reactions to your being a C.O. and then to your becoming involved in this work at the time? How old were you first of all?

TB: I was twenty-one or twenty-two, and I have to say I had a pretty easy time of it. The Hartford Quaker Meeting in which I was ensconced were obviously supportive as Quakers. The insurance company I worked for--I worked in the office of the president of the company and he had two sons going into the military and yet he was prepared to write a letter to my draft board vouching for my sincerity as a conscientious objector. Also, I was living, at the time, in the home of the managing editor of the morning newspaper, the Hartford Courant, Bill Foote, and he was also willing to write a letter on my behalf on Hartford Courant stationery saying that I was, in his judgment, sincere in my conscientious objection. The lieutenant governor of the state, a man named McConaughy, had been the president of Wesleyan University where I graduated in 1937, and he too was prepared to write a letter to my draft board. So the poor draft board, when they had all these letters from distinguished people, said to me, "We don't question your sincerity, we just don't want to have a C.O. on our roles because it might set a bad example for other people. Therefore please can you find something else for you to do than have us classify you as a conscientious objector.

AL: In between your work in Hartford and your eventual going to Seattle what went on? How did that take place?

TB: That's a good question, because the insurance company that I was working for had a program where the men who were drafted into the army or navy, military, were given leaves of absence from the company so that they'd be assured of their jobs when they came back from war, and also their insurance and health schemes were maintained for them, and their pension plan was maintained for them during the war, just as if they were at work. The Connecticut General Life Insurance Company was good enough to accept me into that same program. I was a conscientious objector going and doing what I considered to be my duty in the war time. The company recognized that and gave me the same status that they gave people going into the military. So really, I didn't have a tough time, as some C.O.s, particularly in the First World War, did. Things went very smoothly for me. I was glad to be working in something I believed in.

Later, after the Japanese camps were opened, I spent my time travelling constantly, visiting all the camps in rotation over a three year period. That was not exactly a picnic. Transportation during war time was difficult. It was almost impossible to get sleepers, one went by coach on the trains. Most of the camps were in remote places in the American deserts. I was the only civilian that I'm aware of who visited the camps in rotation, other than government employees in Washington. My job was to try to persuade the college age [people], among the Japanese Americans, to go out of the camp and return to college campuses in the east.

AL: O.K. well, I think that leads us into the program and I have a few questions.

TB: Good. It's hard for me not to ramble. (chuckles) That's the trouble with an oral interview, you cover so much territory.

AL: No...I have a few questions that I prepared from the research that I did. I wonder... prior to involvement in the project itself, what kind of contact, perceptions, and views of the Japanese, and Asian community in general, did you have? Was it something that was close to you or was it something divorced that you came to work with just because of the war.

TB: Yes. Certainly when I lived on the east coast and worked in Hartford I had no awareness particularly of the Japanese American community on the west coast. I was conscious, as would any pacifist be, of being critical of the American government for the so called Yellow Peril Laws of the 1920s. Yellow Peril Laws forbade people of Oriental ancestry from owning land in the three west coast states. I was aware of the insult to the Japanese nation in the 1930s when President Roosevelt paraded the American fleet up and down a hundred miles off the coast of Japan. I decried all these actions because they were the sort of things that might lead to war. As a pacifist I was aware of these things in principle, but I didn't know anybody in the Oriental community in Hartford, in fact I don't think that until I arrived in Seattle I had ever met a Nisei, a second generation Japanese.

AL: And what was the climate in Seattle at the time toward the community. Was it particularly bad? How was it like for you as a Caucasian person to be working with that community?

TB: I think it's fair to say that the Seattle community was a little more liberal and open than some of the communities down the coast. However, there's no question that the people in Seattle were frightened by the fact that after Pearl Harbor the American military lost every battle to the Japanese forces as the Japanese moved across the Pacific toward the United States and took Singapore. The fall of Singapore was in April of 1942. It had a terrible effect on [people], frightening people. In Seattle, as elsewhere on the coast, there were people who were eager to have the Japanese Americans moved because they could take over their land and their crops and make money. Because the Japanese had never been allowed to own land on the west coast, and in most of the states they couldn't obtain licenses to be doctors or funeral directors or whatever, it was fairly easy to propose this. They ought to be moved because they were accused of being traitors to America [sic]. There were wild stories told that in Hawaii, on the day of Pearl Harbor, that the Japanese Hawaiians had cut swathes through their sugar cane to lead the planes in to bomb Pearl Harbor. It was totally untrue. The FBI kept telling people it wasn't true, but these were the stories that were told in Seattle as well as elsewhere.

It didn't particularly affect me personally. The people in the Japanese community that we knew were not directly suffering. On the night of Pearl Harbor itself, the FBI rounded up the dangerous Japanese. By dangerous [they meant] the

ones who had some connection with the Japanese government, or people who were known by the FBI to have firearms. Maybe they were hunters or something and had firearms in their basement. People who had shortwave radios were suspect. A lot of those people were rounded up on the night of Pearl Harbor and taken off to Missoula, Montana and given a trial by the [Department of Justice] to ascertain whether they really were dangerous or not. The dangerous ones were held in concentration camps and the rest of them were released. Oddly enough they were released back to the west coast and therefore became subject to the eventual evacuation of everybody in April and May of 1942.

AL: Do you remember, where were you on December 7th, 1941?

TB: Oh very clearly. I was still at Pendle Hill as part of the training program for AFSC workers going overseas. Spencer Coxe, who later became head of the ACLU, American Civil Liberties Union, and I had been tentatively assigned to go to Shanghai. My memory of it is that we actually had tickets on the China Clipper which was a Pan American airplane that flew the Pacific in those days. It was a flying "boat". We had tickets to fly to Shanghai shortly after Pearl Harbor. We were very lucky because if Pearl Harbor had come a few weeks later Spencer and I would have been in Shanghai. Why we were being sent to Shanghai? Shanghai was the one free port in the world where Jews from Germany, and others kicked out by Hitler, could go without a visa. All sorts of refugees from Hitler Germany had ended up in Shanghai in the most appalling conditions of poverty and deprivation. The Service Committee heard about them and wanted somebody to go and see what could be done for them, and see if some program could be developed to help those German refugees in Shanghai. That was what we intended to do. If Pearl Harbor had been a few weeks later we would have been in Shanghai and been rounded up with the other Americans when the Japanese invaded and took over the rest of China. But, fortunately, Pearl Harbor occurred when it did and Spencer Coxe and I were not sent to Shanghai. Instead I was sent with a couple other of the trainees to the west coast of the United States. The leaders of the Service Committee realized that there might easily be problems for the population of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

AL: This goes a little bit off the subject, but do you know what happened to those German Jews who were in Shanghai?

TB: (laughs) No I don't! They sort of faded off the public consciousness because when the Japanese took over there was no communication. I have to say that I really don't know what eventually happened to the people. I'm not aware of any AFSC project at a later time, after the war was over. The people must have still have been there. By then, of course, Shanghai had gone to Communist China, so I'm not sure if they could have gotten there if they wanted to.

AL: Did you have any contact with those first Issei who were taken to Santa Fe and Bismarck and Crystal City.

TB: Oh, good. You've got a good list! I remember Missoula, Montana, but maybe that was the jumping off point.

I personally did not, but in the Seattle office of the AFSC there was a wonderful man named Floyd Schmoe who was on the staff, and Floyd made it his business to make a trip out to the centers or camps or prisons that you are referring to, to call on the Issei from Seattle who were ensconced in those places. He made a tour. I don't know specifically what he did to be helpful to them but it must have lifted their spirits to have somebody come all the way from Seattle to visit and to find out whether things were all right with them, and maybe help them prepare their case so they could be released. I don't know the details of what Floyd Schmoe was doing.

I remained back in Seattle beginning to help when the word spread that the evacuation was to take place. We first heard of it in the middle of February. We began a counseling program. There were students at the University of Washington who were part of a student program run by the AFSC in the Friends Center in Seattle. We interviewed quite a number of these young American citizens of Japanese ancestry who often didn't speak any Japanese, knew nothing about the Japanese government or Japan, they were Americans. They were like the rest of us, born in this country, citizens, and they were going to be rounded up. Some of us interviewed them to see if we could be helpful to finding them a place to continue their schooling somewhere in the east. The staff at the University of Washington, from the president down, worked hard at this project of helping Japanese American students on the campus get into colleges in the east. It wasn't easy because the colleges in the east were prejudiced against them as everybody was. Fearful that they were going to be traitors or something.

I do have to tell you a little about Gordon Hirabayashi. Gordon Hirabayashi was a Japanese American member of the Seattle Friends Meeting. Quaker Meeting in Seattle. He was a student at the University of Washington. He, as a member of the Friends Meeting, became a conscientious objector. The same sort of status that I had. A curfew was imposed on everybody of Japanese ancestry in greater Seattle. They had to be indoors by nine o'clock every night and stay indoors until dawn the next day. Gordon felt this law, or ruling, was wrong. He was an American citizen. There was nothing that said that American citizens could be rounded up or made to stay at home under curfew without cause. If he had committed a crime that would be one thing, but he hadn't done anything. His only problem was that he was of Japanese ancestry. So Gordy decided to take a stand and break the curfew deliberately. The Quaker Meeting in Seattle tried to discourage him from this because he was a personable young man and it seemed wrong for him to go spend time in prison. Certainly the Quakers were not aiding and abetting him in any way, but they did have a support group. In fact, my memory of it is that on the night that he decided to break the curfew the Quakers

gathered in the Meetinghouse and had a prayer service for him, thinking about what he was doing.

I volunteered to drive him into the center of the city so he wouldn't have to do it alone. So we drove into the center of Seattle and tried to get Gordy arrested. Well, first we couldn't find any policemen anywhere. We drove all around and there wasn't a policeman in sight. When we finally found a policeman the policeman said, "Oh, nonsense, you don't want to be arrested for that! Why don't you just drive home?" Gordy insisted that he was breaking curfew as a matter of principle and the policeman said, "Well, that's a lot of nonsense." Finally Gordy said, "Where is the nearest precinct?" Gordy and I didn't even know where the nearest police station was. The policeman told us where to go. We went into the precinct station and Gordy said, "I'm a person of Japanese ancestry and I'm breaking the curfew." And the policeman said, "Well, nonsense! Why don't you go home? I don't want to bother! I have no instructions as to what to do. Nobody's handed down any. We don't know what to do with somebody whose broken curfew. We don't know whether we're supposed to hold you or what." It was a real problem to this poor young lieutenant on the police desk. Eventually he agreed that he'd hold Gordy in jail overnight and have somebody higher up in the morning decide what to do. [Gordy's version of this story is that it was his Quaker lawyer, Arthur Barnett, who went with him to be arrested for breaking the curfew.]

AL: That brings to mind the terrible xenophobia that was going on at the time and I wonder if in your capacity as a Service Committee representative if you were ever personally attacked by groups such as the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West.

TB: No. I was never bothered by any such people. I was troubled by news stories they released to the press which were false, like the stories that forest fires had been set in Oregon by Japanese submarines off the coast. Totally untrue. These things were bothersome but they didn't bother me personally. I went to a good many other churches to give talks about the Japanese Americans, but most of the church people on the west coast were pretty good about the subject. Personally we weren't persecuted. I don't know that the Japanese Americans of my acquaintance were particularly persecuted until they were rounded up. When they were in camps, again, they were being taken into so called "protective custody". That was Roosevelt's phrase. That was the phrase that Hitler used when he rounded up the Jews. The irony that the president of the United States should use the same language, to protect these Japanese [Americans] from their neighbors. But their neighbors weren't being difficult. Most of them were very sorry to see them go. They were people they knew and the neighbors were often helpful. Some of the neighbors were not. Some were very anxious to buy refrigerators for ten dollars or pianos for twenty because the Japanese [Americans] were desperate. When they had to move they had to give up all their possessions. I'm not very articulate about the sons of the Golden West, I just know the results. Their pressure on the

California delegation, that Roosevelt needed the votes of the California delegation in Congress, and that's why he signed the evacuation order. Liberal people, Governor Earl Warren was governor of California. I think every political figure on the west coast, except the mayor of Tacoma, was in favor of the evacuation on the grounds that if we didn't evacuate them, the American people were getting so hysterical about the defeats across the Pacific with the Japanese getting closer and closer, there was fear of what they might do to their neighbors. But they hadn't done anything, at least certainly not in Seattle.

AL: Talking about Roosevelt. Do you know what was Eleanor Roosevelt's stance?

TB: Oh yes. Eleanor Roosevelt and John J. McCloy, who was the Assistant Secretary of War, were both of them very distressed at this decision, as was Francis Biddle, the Attorney General. In the cabinet meeting--in those days they used to make some decisions in cabinet meetings--in the cabinet meeting on Lincoln's birthday, February 12th, when Roosevelt proposed to issue this evacuation order he turned to the Attorney General Francis Biddle and said, "It's your job to carry this out." You've done a very good job rounding up the dangerous Japanese on the night of Pearl Harbor and sorting things out with them. Now your task is to take all these people of Japanese ancestry up and down the west coast and move them into camps in the interior to protect them from their fellow citizens.

Francis Biddle said, "I won't do it. That's what we're fighting the war about. I'll resign first." Roosevelt said, "I cannot have my Attorney General resign in the middle of the war." So Roosevelt turned to the Secretary of War, Henry Stimson--he called him Hank--and said, "Hank, it's your job." Stimson said, "I'm fighting a war on two fronts! I'm trying to build camps and get people trained and get the war machine going, get past these current defeats. You're asking me to interrupt and move a hundred and ten thousand civilians into the interior?! Well, you're out of your mind!"--I'm paraphrasing--Roosevelt said, "It's an order!" Stimson said, "You're the boss. You're the commander in chief. If it's an order I'll do it and I'll do the best I can to do it in a humane and decent way." Generally speaking I think the army did do it in a humane and decent way.

AL: I read, though, that often the evacuees were taken to less than desirable locations.

TB: Yes, the initial roundup of evacuees was into assembly centers while the permanent camps were being built in the deserts of Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, eastern California, Arkansas, and Idaho. While the permanent camps were being built the people of Japanese ancestry were rounded up and placed in assembly centers. Some of those were pretty undesirable. Race tracks were used and the people were herded into the stalls where the horses had lived. It was a proper place for human beings. It was a place for horses. In Seattle the assembly center was hastily built out of lumber at a place called Puyallup outside the town of Tacoma. We Quakers visited the Puyallup assembly center and I got myself in trouble for taking some pictures of it, which was illegal according to the army. I

wrote an article for the Christian Century about how difficult life was. There was no space. It was a barbed wire camp hastily thrown together [with] barracks. It certainly wasn't comfortable living.

It's hard for me to say that anybody died or was tortured or anything like that. It wasn't like the German concentration camps. There were no ovens. The army did the best it could do under the circumstances of having all these civilians suddenly thrown on their hands. If some ancient elderly person had to walk a distance in the night to get to the latrines, that may have precipitated a heart attack or a death perhaps. Later, when they were herded into the permanent camps in the interior, with the barbed wire fences around the outside and American soldiers up in little towers with guns, inevitably there were one or two instances, or three or four instances, where somebody got shot. One time when I was visiting the camp at Topaz, [in Utah], an Issei, it happened, was chasing his dog and had gone out near the exterior fence. The rule was that no inhabitant of the concentration camp was supposed to go closer than twenty feet to the fence. He was chasing his dog and the man up in the watch tower thought, "Oh, I can get my Jap," and BANG, he shot him dead. The U.S. government was beside itself. They were so afraid that the Japanese government, hearing about an incident of that sort where an American soldier had shot a civilian Japanese in the camp, they were afraid of what the Japanese government might do to American soldiers and others being held by the Japanese in their camps. So being an outsider visiting the camp at that time, I was summoned to the camp commandant's office and given quite a song and dance about how important it was that when I left the camp I not tell about what had happened. And I didn't. I didn't want to jeopardize the people in Japan by an incident that happened in America. But other than that, there were very few cases, it seems to me, in my experience, where there was loss of life.

Loss of liberty? Well, ah, the army general who interviewed me on the Fourth of July tried to give me a story that liberty was taken from the Greek concept of liberty of the spirit and not liberty of the body, and therefore they had their liberty. We were talking about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Their happiness? Well, it was true they were being fed and they didn't have to work. Life in the camp wasn't all that bad. There were sand storms sometimes. It was terribly hot at Poston. And I do have to say a word about the Alaskans. There were some people of Japanese ancestry in Alaska because Japanese fisherman had come along the shores of Alaska and had left behind some offspring. Those people were people of Japanese ancestry and under the evacuation order they were to be rounded up and brought to be put in these camps. It was very sad, because the Alaskans--there weren't very many, about fifty as I remember--were brought down and put in Poston in Arizona. Now, Poston was a camp on the shores of the Colorado River, in the desert, at THE hottest spot in the continental United States. These poor people from Alaska who lived above the Arctic Circle in Kotsebu and places like that, were suddenly thrust into this desert. It was summertime, 1942, when they arrived, and it really was pretty grim. Fortunately people learned pretty quickly at Poston camp that if you dug down into the sand, and if you could snatch some wood from somewhere to make barriers to hold the sand back, and if you

got deep enough in the sand, it was relatively cool. Most of the people that I visited at the Poston camp had cellars underneath their barrack rooms where they had dug out so they could sit in relative comfort of ten or twelve people.

AL: I have one question. You said they didn't have to work and I read that they had to work forty-four hour weeks for nine to twelve dollars a month.

TB: I think the nine to twelve dollars a month is correct because that's the amount of pay which the private in the American army received over and above his room and board. I had forgotten. It may be true. I didn't realize that the people HAD to work. There was work available because the operating of the camp, running the school, running a hospital, the administrative work of running the food, cooking the food... All the life of a group of twenty or fifty thousand people suddenly plopped down in a desert. It became a city. The camp in Wyoming was the third largest city in Wyoming. Cody and Laramie were the only towns bigger. The hospital at Heart Mountain in Wyoming with the Japanese doctors was such a good hospital that the ordinary Caucasians in Wyoming pleaded to be allowed to be treated by the Japanese doctors in the hospital in Heart Mountain.

I hadn't realized that they were required to work but it's certainly true that nearly everybody did work. While the pay was terrible they were eager to establish good hospital service, and good food service, and schools and teaching, and all the things that a community requires. I never heard of anybody being punished for not working.

AL: What I read, actually, was that in face of inadequacies of services that they really got together as a community and worked through them.

TB: Well, there was strife and strain in the communities because there was a struggle between people who were loyal to Japan [and would not sign an oath of loyalty to the United States, and those who wanted to show themselves loyal to the United States] and there were some who were really embittered by the experience. The Issei, the first generation may not have spoken any English, and many of the second generation Nisei didn't speak any Japanese. There was little communication between the older people and the younger people in the camp. There were often quarrels. The older people felt they were entitled to be the bosses and the younger people didn't approve of that. There were stresses and strain between those who were cooperative with the American government and people who were running the camps, and the people who rebelled and were not cooperative. So there was a lot of stress and strain.

AL: Do you know of any particular serious incidents around that?

TB: Yes. I can remember going to the Tule Lake camp in California. At one stage, I think about 1943, maybe early '44, the United States government had the silly idea of requiring the residents of these camps--it may have been Senator Helms's idea,

it was the sort of thing he'd dream up--that everybody in the camp should take a loyalty oath and swear their loyalty to the government of the United States and forswear loyalty to any other government. When you talk to Helen Brill later this afternoon she's more up on it than I am. It caused a lot of stress because it was scary to sign a statement, particularly if you were first generation Japanese, that you were loyal to the United States government and that you would never have any loyalty to the Japanese government. Suppose Japan won the war? What would happen to you then? Anyway, you didn't feel terribly loyal when you were sitting behind barbed wire out in the desert. The young men in the camps were being drafted into the American army and [some] were serving in the Pacific, [but] they were mostly serving in Italy. The young men that were drafted went into the 442nd battalion. That was a battalion in Italy comprised of Americans of Japanese ancestry. They were very brave and they won the most purple hearts of any battalion in the Army in the entire world. They were trying to prove that they were loyal to the United States.

But signing this loyalty oath--to get back to Tule Lake--if you didn't sign the loyalty oath, if you were a refusenik, you were transferred from the camp you were in to the Tule Lake camp. All the so called disloyal people were housed in Tule Lake. Well, the difficulty was that there were already people in Tule Lake who could not be categorized in this way. The disloyal people decided, "Well, since we've cut off our ties with America anyway, why don't we organize a Japanese structure." And they beat up anybody who didn't join them and called them *enu*, I think was the word, Japanese word meaning dogs. I can remember being at the Tule Lake camp and hearing the people being verbally beaten up--I never saw anybody physically beaten, for being *enu*. It, in fact, caused problems for me. I was interviewing youngsters about going to college.

**(End Side One)**

**(Begin Side Two)**

AL: This Antonio Da Motta Leal. I'm in Bloomfield, Connecticut with Tom Bodine. This is side number two of his interview on the Japanese American student relocation.

O.K. Tom, we are in....

TB: We're in Tule Lakecamp in northern California and we were talking about the people who failed to sign the loyalty oath, the Japanese Americans, had been moved from the camps they were in to the Tule Lake camp. But there were people at Tule Lake who had signed the loyalty oath and there was conflict between these two communities; the ones who were loyal to the Japanese government and said they were prepared to go back the Japan when the war was over, were apt to beat up on the ones who were still good Americans, loyal to the United States. The camp directors, I think, rather winked at what went on out in the camp. It was considered unsafe for me as a Caucasian to wander down into the Tule Lake camp

because I might be mistaken for one of the military who were operating the camp. I also found it was very difficult for any of the students to come and interview me in the camp administration area about their going out to college. We had had correspondence with students at Tule Lake who would very much liked to have had an interview with me but they were afraid, or their parents were afraid of what would happen. If they went and interviewed me they might get beat up! So that's a story about which I don't remember much detail, but it wasn't very agreeable at the time.

AL: There were Caucasian teachers who were recruited to teach in the camps, and I wonder what were the criteria of selection by the U.S. government and how were they looked upon by the internees? And their own peers outside the community. Were they in a double edged situation? What was their role like?

TB: Generally speaking I would say the American government, the Education Department--I don't remember just exactly who it was that chose the teachers--but they did a good job. They recruited people from all over the United States, many of whom had a concern, who had a feeling, who wanted to do something in war time that was useful and helpful. They accepted these government appointments. Actually they got quite good pay. I know the teachers from Arkansas loved working in the relocation camps because the pay was so much better than it was in school system in Arkansas.

My impression was that the people who went to work in the camps were not frowned upon. They were thought of as doing their war time job, generally speaking. The youngsters in the camps, as with so many school children, if the teacher was somebody who was personable and intelligent and a good teacher, generally speaking the children followed them about and liked them and worshiped them the same way youngsters do in any school. If they were not very satisfactory teachers, and inevitably some of were chosen who were not, the youngsters might be in rebellion against them. The youngsters were very American. (chuckles) Like all American youngsters, they had their views about their courses and teaching. So I don't think it was very much different from the school outside.

We, the Student Relocation Council people and American Friends Service Committee indirectly, we chose in each camp, with the help of the camp administration--the choice was a mutual choice by the camp administration, the principal in the high school usually, me as a field director from Philadelphia--we chose people to be student relocation counselor. We chose a school teacher living in the camp to be the student relocation counselor for that camp. There was only one of me circulating around ten camps. Over a three year period I didn't get frequently to all of them. It might be a four or five month interval before I came again. In the interval somebody needed to counsel the students as to choice of college, and how to work out the finances, and discuss courses to say when they applied for admission, what they were going to major in. The kind of counseling that any high school youngster needs. There were, therefore, in each camp a

teacher designated as a student relocation counselor. By and large, my opinion is they did a good job.

AL: There were some demonstrations and some riots as you have mentioned. I wonder, what was the government's reaction to those spontaneous protest activities?

TB: Well...(chuckles)... again, Helen Brill, who you're going to talk to later this afternoon, is a better one to ask. She lived through the demonstrations at Manzanar and I did not. I only know about them hearsay. My impression is that the government in Washington who was responsible for these camps--the War Relocation Authority under Dillon Myer--was as distressed by the rioting as the rioters and the people who were being rioted against. Their constant concern was that they were fighting a war with Japan and there were Americans who were in the hands of the Japanese in camps in various places; in China and Singapore. The American government was terribly worried that the Japanese government would hear about our treatment of Japanese, Issei or Nisei, and take it out on Americans in Asia. So I think their concern was as much for the American soldiers who might be bothered or treated badly as it was for the decent people in the camps who were being beaten up on by some ruffians from the community that didn't sign the loyalty oath.

AL: Did those riots result in tightening up of the situation by the government, therefore impacting on AFSC work at all?

TB: Occasionally, yes. At the time of the Manzanar riots I was due to pay a visit and was diverted. I was told that for the moment I wasn't welcome and I went off to another camp instead. My recollection, and my recollection could be wrong, is that none of those occasions lasted very long and pretty soon the doors were opened again, even when I myself had offended by writing a description of what I had seen at the Tule Lake camp, a description which only went to my own superiors. This was not a case of my publishing something like earlier on when I had an article in the Christian Century that was critical of the army. Naturally the government didn't like that. But this was an internal memo from me to some people in the AFSC describing the conditions in the Tule Lake camp. Unfortunately a copy of it fell into the hands of some of the government people and I was summoned back from the west coast to Philadelphia, given a scolding for being critical of the U.S. government by the AFSC itself, and told, "Really, Tom, you're there under sufferance. Your permission to get into the camps will be revoked unless you eat a little "humble pie" with the people you criticized."

So I made a trip to Washington and met with some government officials and ate my "humble pie", and said that everything wasn't all bad and that I wouldn't write any more reports like that. It was important to keep the permission to go into the camps to do the job.

AL: I read, as you mentioned also, that those considered to be disloyal were sent to Tule Lake. I wonder how accessible was that camp to the work of AFSC. Did you have access at all?

TB: Oh, yes. I did pay two visits to Tule Lake following the time that the so called disloyal were shipped there. My recollection was that at the first visit there were youngsters who were able to come and interview me. I did get out into the camp a little but it was scary. I was warned that it was better for me--they refused to let me live out in it.

I have to backtrack. I preferred living out in the camp in a vacant apartment and having the same living conditions as the evacuees, eating in their mess halls and associating with them. This, to me, was the Quaker way of showing respect for them as human beings. My purpose was to try to encourage young people to come and interview me about getting out of the camps. A lot of the parents didn't dare let their girls go out. Terrible things were happening to Japanese people on the outside. It was safe in the camp and it was often a block, on the part of the parents, from having the youngster come and talk to me. So to overcome some of that I often lived out in the camp.

My recollection is that at Tule Lake, by the time the disloyal people were being stored there, I was not allowed to live out in the camp. I had to live in the administration area and I had to pretty much stay in the administration area and have the young people come to me. I'm sure that that cut down on the number that came to see me.

AL: Can you describe a little bit the process?

TB: Yes. Once the youngster got accepted by a campus in the east... Incidentally we had a lot of difficulty, at first, getting the schools and universities to accept students. If they had a government contract, particularly from the War Department, they were not allowed to take these youngsters on their campus. Yale, Harvard, Wesleyan, Swarthmore, Haverford, were told they could not take American citizens of Japanese ancestry as students because they were doing important war time work for the U.S. government. The schools that were allowed to take students were smaller ones like Wooster, and Huron, and Westminster, often campuses sponsored by church groups who were not doing any particular war time work and were often rather empty of students because the war was on. They had a scarcity of undergraduates and therefore they were very glad to have Japanese American students come along who were bright and intelligent and desirable youngsters. They were very welcoming. But at first the major institutions in America were not allowed to take students. Only toward the end when the hysteria died down, we were beginning to win the war, people were less afraid of Japanese, and the first ones to go out had proven that they were like any other Americans, completely loyal to the United States and just ordinary American youngsters. Once that got established it got much easier to open the

- universities and colleges up. By 1944, I think, the War Department lifted all their restrictions and allowed students to go anywhere except the west coast.
- AL: I read about the nutrition experiments and some real unfortunate experiences that some of the people who were removed from the camps for those had. Do you remember?
- TB: No. The only nutrition experiments I was aware of was when the conscientious objectors in the C.O. camps were invited to take part in starvation experiments. They were to find out what was the lowest level of calorie intake a human being could live at. These were volunteers from the C.O. camps who were anxious to do something useful during war time and therefore volunteered for these experiments that were going to be helpful in relief work when the war was over. I wasn't aware of any of the Nisei being eligible for those programs.
- AL: When the Americans of Japanese ancestry were allowed to volunteer and serve in the army, there were conscientious objectors. Did AFSC have any role in advising them?
- TB: Not very much. Let me first say that as far as I know the young Americans of Japanese ancestry were drafted into the U.S. army. Maybe they could volunteer in advance and maybe some of them were volunteers, but there was also the draft. Secondly, I wasn't aware of many C.O.s among them. If there were three or four I would be surprised. Other than Gordon Hirabayashi, there were not very many. I don't know that the AFSC had any particular program with them. I think we as individual Quakers at Seattle, for example, were very supportive of Gordon Hirabayashi throughout the war. His case came before the Supreme Court to test the validity of the curfew laws that were imposed in the beginning. The AFSC didn't play much role in that court case, in fact neither did the ACLU, although now it boasts of having done so, it didn't.
- AL: Did the AFSC have any role on December 17th, 1944 Supreme Court ruling on the \_\_\_\_\_ versus the United States case.
- TB: I wasn't aware that the AFSC had a role. My understanding of it was that it was a group of lawyers in Seattle under Art Barnett's leadership who pleaded the case before the Supreme Court, carried the case to the court. It's hard because there's an interlocking directorate among all the good causes. Arthur Barnett's wife, Virginia Barnett, was at one time a board member of the AFSC in Philadelphia. Clarence Pickett could easily have helped raise money for the Supreme Court case. Somebody would have to go and interview Art Barnett, who's still alive, to ask him about the story. I think it's been written up in a book, the story of the Supreme Court's decision regarding the evacuation.

AL: I read also that it took two years for all the camps to close after it had been ruled unnecessary for the Japanese Americans to be kept in them.

TB: Well, it took a fair length of time. I wouldn't have thought it took two years. The decision was reached in 1944. I need to admit that at that point I was serving in France doing relief work out of Paris. So I wasn't travelling in the camps. I did go in the winter of 1945. They had a hard time closing the camps because the people who were left had become so used to living in camps that it was difficult for them to go back and live in an ordinary community. They didn't have jobs so they didn't have any money. They didn't have any place to live. While the War Relocation Authority was given the task of helping them, it was not an easy assignment. Even though the war was still on and it was fairly easy to get a job, people were still doubtful on the west coast about hiring persons of Japanese ancestry, just from the traditional bigotry against anybody of oriental ancestry. Not so much because they were Nisei or Issei. But it was not an easy task, as I understand--this is mostly from my reading, not my first hand knowledge--to help families relocate at the last part. I'm a little surprised it took two years. I would have said it was about a year it took to fold the camps up. They'd just say to people, "The camps are really closing, you've just got to leave. You gotta go. There's going to be no food served here next week." It was that sort of proposition.

AL: Well, eventually the United States recognized the injustice that was done and there was the redress legislation of 1980. There was a commission on war time relocation and internment of civilians. Could you talk a little bit about that? How did you feel when that finally came about?

TB: (pause) I had mixed feelings. It's somehow... paying people some money doesn't really redress a wrong. It's nice to have it admitted that there's a wrong. It's hard for me to articulate why it makes me feel uncomfortable that money would be offered. I'm very pleased that some of the Nisei friends of mine who are supposed to be getting money eventually have said that they will give their grant away to somebody else. They appreciate the apology from the American government, although the real redress bills never use the word "apology." They don't want the money, it's tainted money. So I have a little of that feeling, but on the other hand I'm glad to see the American public aware that this was America's worst war time mistake. I agree with the author who titled her book Years of Infamy by the American Government. I think that's a wonderful title instead of just the Day of Infamy that Roosevelt called Pearl Harbor day. I'm glad to see the American people behind them, admitting that they made a mistake, and I hope that it never gets done again. What I'm sorry about is the movement to have the Supreme Court reverse itself on the subject of the evacuation. It was a four - three decision and the cases were not terribly clear. It's scary to have on the books the fact that the president of the United States can, in war time, under the excuse of military necessity--he doesn't have to have any other reason than that--round up citizens and put them behind barbed wire without any cause. I think that's terribly un-

American and very frightening. To have the Supreme Court say that the president of the United States has that power, has the power to declare something to be a military necessity that requires the rounding up of citizens. People who had committed no crime, who were not tried, were not found guilty of anything, who only because of their ancestry, who happened to be Oriental, Japanese in this case. I think that's a very frightening precedent to have in the American scene. Therefore I'm very anxious not so much for the redress and the payment of money to the people who lost money as a result of the evacuation. Incidentally there was a payment early on, just at the time of the return. people who could establish cash losses were repaid early on, before these current bills redressing everybody regardless. just on the fact that they resided in the camp, [they were entitled to the money].

It's frightening! If the President has that kind of power and the Supreme Court says it's all right under the constitution of the United States that the Commander and Chief is supreme! That's what we fought wars about!

AL: I always read that it was five cents on the dollar if they could prove losses (laughs) at the time of internment.

TB: Earlier it was something like that. Still, it was a hundred million, it was a fair amount of money.

AL: General Charles Willoughby gave a statement on the bravery and accomplishments of the all Nisei combat unit, the one that you mentioned that got the most . . .

TB: 442nd Battalion, right.

AL: What was his image before the United States, before the Japanese-American community, before AFSC? Were there any opinions on him at all?

TB: I'll have to say I don't know. Maybe because I'd left for France by the end of '44, early '45. I actually went to France sometime in the winter, or March I guess it was, and I don't remember Willoughby at all, I remember that statement, reading about it.

AL: I also read that a number of religious organizations and religious groups were active in the whole relocation.

TB: Oh good! I'm glad to be asked that question because I'd like to give as honest an answer as I can. It wasn't just the Quakers alone. Particularly outstanding was the Baptists. Somebody we referred to as John the Baptist was the man who was the head of the Baptist Church at that time in New York. The YWCA was very helpful in raising money for scholarships for the young people and they'd had programs in the camps for girls who were potential YWCA candidates. The

Episcopal Church did a good job, particularly raising money. I just single them out for a particular compliment.

There were some exceptions. The YMCA was not at all helpful. At no time did during the whole process the YMCA exert itself one bit, either to raise money or to assist students when they arrived on campuses. It was known for its hostility toward people of Japanese ancestry. [This was] in contrast to the YW which was very open and helpful.

AL: And did that work at all at any time as a coalition? Were there concerted efforts? How easy or how difficult was that? Especially considering the diverging views I would imagine that the Quakers would have from some more Orthodox Christian organizations. How did that work?

TB: In those days I wasn't personally particularly conscious of evangelicals and the right wing. We didn't talk in those terms or think about it in those terms. That is a concept of the '80s and '90s, not of the '40s. I'm not saying there weren't Evangelical churches at the time but they were not in the same league that the present right wing is.

If we looked at lists of the board of directors of the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council--a great long name--I think we don't really observe the church groups who appointed somebody to serve and who, as a result of being on our board, were expected to raise money. That was their primary function, and also to be welcoming through their churches at the locality where the students settled. I have a recollection of the girls that went to Smith and Holyoke. I don't remember now exactly . . . I think it was the Congregational Church, was very welcoming to those youngsters when they arrived. Now the campuses were welcoming too. Colleges did their job, but they went out of their way to find these youngsters. They knew about them ahead of time, they raised the money to pay the fees because fees at Holyoke and Smith are quite formidable and a lot of these folks didn't have any money. So I have a warm place in my heart for the Congregationalists, particularly, [and] as I say, the Baptists.

There was even cooperation with the Buddhists in the camps. I can remember in the Arkansas camp the Buddhists tended to dominate. There were more Buddhists than there were Christians in the Arkansas camp. I'm not speaking of the youngsters but of the camp population as a whole. And the Buddhist church was fairly effective. My task was to meet with Buddhist leaders and persuade them that if their youngsters got out to a college campus those youngsters would not be lost to Buddhism; that their heritage and their religious experience would not be overwhelmed by being placed in a Christian community. The people who helped me most with that situation were the YWCA. They understood the importance of a Buddhist youngster who'd been brought up and trained and religiously educated in a Buddhist setting arriving on a college campus in Missouri would be given some opportunity to find the Buddhists community in St. Louis or wherever it might be. My memory of it was that the YW was very good. It had the word "Christian" in the title but it respected the right or humanity of

[those of other faiths]. Otherwise the youngster would be held back in camp by the pressure of the parents and the Buddhist priest who wouldn't want to lose [his job]. I'm now being a little cynical, but people are human if they have a job they want to keep it. And they also believed! It was their belief! I don't want to decry Buddhism.

AL: After leaving the work of student relocation, what were the impressions that you took with you? Did you reach your aim? Did you feel that what you were sent for was accomplished?

TB: Oh yes. I felt it was wonderful. We ended up having relocated 3500 students. Most of the youngsters had an opportunity to go on to higher education, even those who failed to sign the loyalty oath. When the war was over the American government forgave the ones who said they wanted to go to Japan after the war if they changed their minds. If they still wanted to go to Japan they could go, but if they didn't want to and wanted to remain in American it was good.

I think the relocation experience, what the AFSC achieved and what I personally achieved, was well worthwhile and helped change the course of human events. True, Eleanor Roosevelt and John J. McCloy were terribly important in the decision to allow these students to relocate, and Clarence Pickett's friendship with them led them to ask the Quakers to take on the assignment of finding a way to keep these camps from being permanent; to start relocating students out of the camps right away! The first student to relocate was [on] July 4 of 1942, Harvey Itano, who was the gold medal winner that year at the University of California in Berkeley. That meant that he was the top of his class. He had an acceptance at the University of St. Louis Medical School. He was at the Tule Lake camp long before Tule Lake was a special camp. It was in 1942, and I was summoned to the office of the West Coast Defense Command of the military to receive a document that entitled Harvey to leave camp and go to school in St. Louis. It was the Fourth of July. I jumped in the car and drove--this was before gas rationing--to the camp and took Harvey Itano out of the camp. It was a big ado to get him suddenly plucked out of the camp, and onto a train at Klamath Falls to go east to go to school. Harvey Itano later became the head surgeon at a hospital in Los Angeles. I always (chuckles) make too long a story out of everything, but my point is that John J. McCloy would not have come out to San Francisco and sign an order releasing a student from camp to symbolize that eventually everybody was going to be released from these camps. These camps were not to be permanent like Indian reservations. All that was done through the influence of somebody like Eleanor Roosevelt against the tide. True, the defeats in the Pacific had ceased. I think the Battle of Midway, which was the turning point, was something like in April of 1942. By July we were just beginning to win a few battles, so the hysteria on the west coast was not quite as great as it had been, but there was still plenty of fear of Japan and Japanese and of anything Japanese. So I'm pleased to have played a small role. By the relocation of these students into normal life onto college campuses in the east we changed American popular opinion so that it was

possible for the camps to be shut down in 1945 and '46 and all of the people [were] restored to civilian life.

AL: You were very young at the time.

TB: (laughs) Yes.

AL: And I imagine that it must have been a very impressive experience in your life, and I wonder what happened in the years that followed that related to that experience that were meaningful to you?

TB: Well, the most significant thing to me is that I have never been able to write anything about it. I collected material during the experience itself which we jokingly in the office referred to as "the book" that was going to be written afterwards. I collected 3000 letters, addressed usually to me but often to Trudy King who was my counterpoint in the office. I was out in the field, she was in the office. We tried to treat each student as a human being, individual person, and build the morale of that student. The letters were friendly. We were not an admissions office. We were writing chummy letters. The correspondence between us and the students was friendly and cheerful and joking and so on.

The book never got written. At one stage, after I had been retired and I lived in England for four or five years and I thought I'd gotten the emotion of the thing out of my system, I thought, "Really now, it's time." I went to Stanford, took all my files along--I didn't have Trudy's at that time but I had all mine--and I spent five months in Stanford working on my files with the intention of writing the book. In [December] of that winter I wrote the first four or five chapters. I went off for a Christmas holiday and came back and read the chapters I had written and said, "You know, they're not really any different from the hundreds [of] books that already exist. I really don't have anything special to add." True, the story of the students was a little different from the story of other people, but the evacuation experience was the same, camp life was the same, the issue of American policy and whether it was right for the Supreme Court to rule it was constitutional, all that had already been written about. Also I found that I was still so emotionally involved I now . . . There's a row of books about the relocations centers. I can hardly read them because it upsets me so. What was done was so wrong to all the things that I think are right that I have not, even to this day, really recovered. I can write about my French war relief experiences. That would be no problem. But this is something I can't do. So I am still bruised by my watching what happened to all of these perfectly marvelous people. In fact I've never visited in Japan because I thought it would all bring it back to me too vividly.

AL: And did you have any personal experiences with individuals that marked you heart?

TB: Interestingly enough, perhaps because I went abroad to do relief work in Europe in the winter of 1945, I suddenly was cut off from all contact with the Nisei and I kept in touch with none. To this day I really don't have any friends among the Japanese Americans. I mean there's individuals. Kay Yamashita I occasionally meet in Chicago for one reason or another. There's a woman down in Portland [Connecticut] who runs the program--the Nisei themselves raised quite a lot of money [and] the students we helped are now helping other Asian students. They very kindly invited me to a couple of the occasions. The only person that I continued to correspond with when I went to France was a Canadian of Japanese ancestry who had tuberculosis and therefore had a lot of strikes against him. He appealed to our Student Relocation council to help him. There was no program in Canada. They were just rounded up, put in camps and forgotten. There was no AFSC activity. The Canadian Friends Service Committee wasn't strong enough to do anything over and above what they were engaged in. So Michael Hoshiko and I corresponded about his situation, and I helped him, even though I was living in France, to cross the border and get accepted at the University of Indiana. He eventually graduated and went back to Canada and I'm not in touch with him any more. But he's the one person I continued to keep in touch with. But that's a closed chapter. I mean I went on to other things.

AL: If you were to make any recommendations for future AFSC work--let's hope not of the same nature ever again--what would you . . .

TB: I would hope the AFSC would support the movement--maybe they are for all I know--to get this Supreme Court decision reversed and to make it unconstitutional so it could never happen again. The President of the United States should not have that power to round up citizens with no charge.

AL: This might be a disconcerting question because it's one of flattering nature, but I read in one of the essays that I researched from that you were the most significant individual who worked on the student relocation.

TB: No. I would correct that by saying that Trudy King was the most significant individual. She too had this concept of treating people as persons and it was from her I learned that, and it was her letters to the students that did more than my visits. And there are lots of other wonderful people to name in the AFSC scene like Marny Schaffer. I don't know whether you've run across her name.

There were other people that Trudy and I couldn't abide. We were constantly being given bosses we didn't like, (chuckles) who didn't see it our way, who thought it was a waste to be writing these long letters to the students, [that] it wasn't needed. That kind of thing made us very distressed. Transfer the glory to Trudy. (laughs) She's not alive (laughs) so you can't go interview her.

AL: Is there anything I've missed that you would like to add?

TB: No. No. I'm glad you came. I'm glad of this opportunity to chat and I appreciate the skill with which you've asked the questions.

AL: Well, thank you very much Tom.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**Oral History Interview #406**

**Narrator: HELEN ELY BRILL**

**Interviewer: Antonio Leal**

**August 17, 1991**

AL: This is Antonio Leal and today is August 17, 1991. I'm about to interview Helen Brill on the Japanese-American Student Relocation Program for the American Friends Service Committee. Could you please, Helen, introduce yourself and tell me where and when you were born?

HB: I was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1914. I was 28 when I went as a teacher to the Manzanar Relocation Center. I went out to California to college in the depths of the Depression, graduated from Scripps College and then hunted for a job. I picked up a master's degree because there were no jobs, and then got my first teaching job in Compton, California, just south of Los Angeles.

In the meantime I had learned about Quakers. I came from a Presbyterian background, and I was very attracted to Friends because of pacifism, really, and the Orange Grove Meeting of Friends in Pasadena.

So every Sunday I used to go by inter-urban--[it] took two hours each way (chuckles)--to get there. I thought I had never met such wonderful people. And so it was that in 1941 I joined Orange Grove Meeting. That followed three years of work camp experience under the American Friends Service Committee.

First I went to Philadelphia for the University Settlement Camp, and there my eyes were really opened. Then the second summer I was in Mexico, near Torreon.

AL: You said your eyes were really opened. What do you mean by that?

HB: Oh, I had had a very secluded kind of background. I had never seen poverty, I had never seen slum housing. I remember being goggle-eyed when I was taken to a birth control clinic, the only one in all South Philadelphia. A room not as big as my living room now. And they educated us every weekend! (laughs) It was just a great experience. That was the first summer.

The second summer, in Mexico, was very different and just great. Then the third summer followed Pearl Harbor and was at the Hidden Villa Ranch outside of Palo Alto. This was that great Duveneck Quaker family. We lived [in a youth hostel]. We had sleeping bags and every day we went to a migrant labor camp to do work.

And from there I went direct to Manzanar. I was with a lot of like-minded young people and they've all done wonderfully. It's marvelous to run into these people, although we didn't really make much effort to keep in touch with everybody. The war was on and everybody was caught up in it.

But I ended up in Manzanar in spite of some strong arguments with a wonderful chap, a Quaker. What was his name? Foote? He used to say: "Well,

you're going to help the government by being a teacher in that camp. Even though they need teachers, that's helping the government, and you ought to resist!"

And he went to prison, in either Washington or Oregon. When last heard from, he was teaching penology (chuckles) at the University of Pennsylvania. I don't know how long he was incarcerated.

But we used to argue back and forth and I remember that wonderful Josephine Duveneck said: "Well, if you don't go--if you wait for a perfect society, you'll never get it! They're going to need teachers and you go ahead--get to Manzanar!"

AL: So you were hired by the government to teach in Manzanar.

HB: Yes. That's right.

AL: And by virtue of being so close to the Quaker values you became an ally of the program.

HB: Very much so. Yes.

AL: When did you first come in contact with the program itself and what was your experience in that sense?

HB: You mean the program...

AL: The AFSC's Student Relocation Program.

HB: I did not have any contact with that until I was in the camp. The camp was set up in the spring of '42 and I was there in August. It was still very crude. The school started, I think, in September or October. In order to get into the camp, you had to have the name of somebody within the camp. So I was the name that enabled a lot of Quakers to visit.

It was a strategically located camp because it was the nearest one and certainly had the most publicity. I was very glad I happened to land at Manzanar, for a lot of reasons. But it was while I was there that Esther Rhodes came for student relocation, Tom [Bodine] came. I'm a little uncertain because I've gotten them mixed up with the YM-YW program, which I was also active in as a contact person.

AL: The YM and YWCA program?

HB: Yes.

AL: And that was Tom Bodine you just referred to?

HB: Yes. Tom was definitely Student Relocation. And he was the first Quaker from Philadelphia that I had ever met. When I knew he was coming I thought, "I wonder who this person will be?"

And I remember so clearly that he sat in my barrack and read Our Hearts Were Young and Gay all that evening, laughing and laughing. I thought, "Well, this is a different kind of Quaker than I had envisioned!" Because I still had great stars in my eyes--I still do--about Friends and the Service [Committee]. I thought it would be very serious and solemn and we would go over all these records.

When Esther Rhodes came, she had a list of the people she wanted to see, and together we went around the camp and knocked on the doors and she [counseled them]. She, of course, had Japanese.

Herbert Nicholson used to come often to Manzanar. He spoke Japanese and he was a tremendous Quaker. Now he has died but his two sons are carrying on.

After the riot at Manzanar--I'll never forget the effect that it had on that camp when he drove a truck of toys into Manzanar at Christmas. The total camp was closed down, and he drove this truck of toys to the middle of a firebreak and simply stood and threw them out to people. It changed the whole feeling of the camp.

I used to get mail from the Service Committee, about this or that person who was applying for Student Relocation. Actually, Manzanar was probably one of the poorest of the camps. There were very few students who had been in colleges at the time of the evacuation. As I recall there were about seventeen that we had the names of when Esther Rhodes came, and we went around to see them and encourage them about applying for some of the Eastern colleges--and Midwest.

AL: You mentioned the riot in Manzanar. Was that November of 1943?

HB: No, it was the first anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. So it was ...

AL: December 7, 1942.

HB: Yes.

AL: And by the way, where were you the day of Pearl Harbor? Do you remember exactly?

HB: Oh, sure. Yes. I was at the [Orange Grove] Friends Meeting in Pasadena, and the report came through that afternoon as I recall, around three o'clock. I had already left the Meetinghouse on the inter-urban to get back to Compton. But I knew what to do, because every Sunday I would hear from these wonderful people: "Well, you should get acquainted ..." We all knew the war was coming. Everybody knew it. And they would tell me that I should go around and get to know the Buddhist

priest in this rural area where I taught, and that I should know about the Japanese language schools and so on. So I did.

After Pearl Harbor I called the principal of the school, and she was eager to talk to me. Because of all these work camp experiences, I used to talk to her business and professional women's club, and she liked that. [I] said: "What will we do tomorrow, Monday, when the kids all come to school?" She said: "We're going to have an assembly and we're going to listen to the President make a declaration of war." And she was very much in favor of all the Nisei who were students in that school. At least a fourth of the students were Nisei. It was a truck-farming area.

AL: This was a Japanese language school for Japanese Americans?

HB: No, no. It was a regular public school and the kids came from all over, but mostly they were [white]. [The Nisei were] the only minority. Today it's totally Black, I understand. (pause) There was a KKK headquarters in Compton, I found that out later. But it was a working-class community and [the Japanese-American] kids would come from humble, humble houses. You could see right through the walls, the cracks. They were poor.

And that was true, mostly, of Manzanar. The wealthy ones were in the Northwest, and they went to different camps, so that our Student Relocation work wasn't that heavy. I would get the papers and I would have to write references and stuff like that for these students, but very few actually went from Manzanar to colleges.

I remember one of my students went to Berea, and I read the catalogue because I didn't know about Berea College in Kentucky, and I've never forgotten-- it said that you have to have two pairs of pants to come to college. "But if you don't have two, you can get by on one!" (laughs)

AL: It's interesting to me that you mentioned you had had a rather sheltered life up until your contact with Quaker service work.

HB: Yes. The work camps.

AL: And I wonder, what was the extent of your contact or awareness of the Asian community in the U.S. up to that point?

HB: Absolutely zero. When I walked into that schoolroom the very first day ... I taught in Compton for three years and then went to Manzanar, and I saw these children with round heads, black [hair], bent over filling out some cards, and I thought: "My goodness, I've never seen them!" They weren't in Iowa where I had been, nor were they in college in Claremont when I was there.

The multicultural business had not hit at that time, so I had an awful time pronouncing their names. My roommate helped me out that night and I discovered how easy it is, but that first day they just tittered.

You see, I had almost 100% Nisei in my classes because I was teaching Latin, of all things. In those days you had to have Latin in order to get into college, and these families put a big percentage on getting their kids into college. So they were all signed up for Latin and I was teaching the first two years of Latin! (chuckles) Which was really a joke, because I hadn't had it since high school. But I struggled along and we were good friends.

AL: What was the age group of the kids?

HB: It was what they call the 6-4-4 system. It was ninth and tenth grades, and then they went on to junior college after that.

AL: And your experience, being a Caucasian woman, going off to this very desolate place in the middle of the desert ... how were you perceived by the community and how were you perceived by your own peers outside Manzanar? I mean, was there any antagonism? Did you ever feel questioned? You know, why were you doing this?

HB: The superintendent of schools absolutely couldn't understand, because I was one of only two teachers in that entire district who had been given tenure that year. It was still the Depression. You couldn't get jobs. And here I was throwing it over, he felt, to go to teach "those Japs!" (chuckles)

And he said: "Oh, I know they're good people! But you can't trust them! They've got to suffer just the way everybody else is suffering because there are some bad apples in the barrel!"

And this was the universal feeling. But I had the Friends Meeting, and they were always there. It was a great experience. When Esther Rhodes came out, she came within twenty-four hours of the bombing of Pearl Harbor ... She was in Philadelphia, of course, and they telephoned her. She said: "I'll take a plane out today." And she did.

I've never forgotten it. She was tremendous, and she found an abandoned Presbyterian school building, in the heart of Little Tokyo, in Los Angeles. She got hold of it, opened it up, got a mattress factory person who was very much in favor--he was in the F.O.R. [Fellowship of Reconciliation]--and he donated his fleet of trucks.

And when they evacuated on twenty-four hours' notice the Terminal Island fishermen--now they were the poorest of the poor ... This was the island in San Pedro Harbor of Los Angeles. These fisher folk were very poor. They didn't have English. Their wives, when the fishing boats would come in, would work in the canneries. They didn't know any English.

And Esther Rhodes was there at the door of that hostel, bowing and greeting them in their own language, and serving soup and sandwiches and rice and things. And we were all busy making it in the back room! (chuckles)

That made a tremendous impression on me. I was eager to go and applied for the job.

AL: One thing that really moved me in my research on the camps was the experience of isolation that those Issei who had no English must have felt, and also how very much divided from the Nisei who didn't speak Japanese in turn. I wonder if you could elaborate a little bit on that. Did you ever come in contact with those people? You don't speak Japanese, do you?

HB: No, I don't. I tried to learn it there in the camp and quickly gave up (chuckles) because it just didn't fit in. But they were so grateful, those Issei, for anyone who would come and be a teacher in that camp. There wasn't anything they wouldn't do for you. The kids, unfortunately, didn't have [much of] the language. When finally they were allowed to sign up for the Army, they rejected them all because they didn't have adequate Japanese.

They were to be sent to the Pacific, and some did go to Europe but it was a very disappointing thing for those kids. They were itching to get out of that camp and be in the armed forces. It was the war that was on.

So (sighs) my family in Iowa thought I was crazy to go off on that desert but they went along with it. (laughs)

AL: And outside the camp? Well, first of all, were your living arrangements different from those of the internees?

HB: No, we lived in the same barracks, exactly, and at first we slept on the floor because they didn't have beds for us. Eventually they bought a hotel--the government did--in San Francisco, and shipped beds out to Manzanar. And even bureaus from the hotel. But until that happened--and I don't know when it was--we slept on the floor on mattresses. Now residents in the camp didn't have regular mattresses--they just had cots with canvas bags filled with straw.

AL: Did you get to leave the camp often to visit with friends and family?

HB: It was like any civil service job. It wasn't geared for teachers at all, and because it was the war, you were supposed to teach all day Saturday. Well, the superintendent of our school thought that was for the birds and she said to us: "Just don't make yourselves too visible on Saturdays in the camp! But you can prepare your lessons and everything."

You got two days off per month, and so we saved up those days and then you could hitchhike down out of the valley if you were lucky and get to Los Angeles. And that's what I did a couple of times.

They did have a bus that went through occasionally. Well, it went every day but at the wrong hours as I recall.

AL: In the face of the xenophobia against the Japanese Americans, did you ever feel that you had to conceal your sympathy?

HB: I never did. No, no.

AL: So you never felt threatened in any way for your views?

HB: Not threatened ... After the riot, you couldn't go into the little town, Lone Pine, which was fifteen miles away. They wouldn't sell you anything if they knew you came

from the camp. There was great anger in the valley because we had an X-ray in the camp and nowhere in that valley was there an X-ray. The people were bitter that the government would pay to put an X-ray machine into our camp hospital when this was the enemy and they couldn't get an X-ray.

Of course it didn't do any good to try to talk to them. The X-ray was put in not out of sympathy for the internees but because our government was deeply concerned that if the word got to Japan that we were not giving adequate medical care to the people in the camp, then they would have a good excuse to treat the U.S. people interned in Japan badly.

So they made a real effort to get good health care, good food, and the International Red Cross even sent us once--by way of Switzerland!--some musical instruments. That amused the camp very much because the camp [director] couldn't touch those musical instruments. They came through the Red Cross and the Red Cross only could distribute those. (chuckles)

AL: You were there at the time of the great protest in Manzanar. Can you describe exactly the experience of being there and being a Caucasian woman and your recollections of the government's reactions? Can you tell us a bit about that whole time?

HB: I've read the official stories since and it didn't jibe entirely with my experience. I remember it was four o'clock Sunday afternoon. The commander of the Army guards [quartered outside the camp] had gone off for the weekend, and these Army rejects [the guards] were bitter men. It was the anniversary of Pearl Harbor. A lot of the young fellows [Nisei] in their early twenties, I would say, came down to where we were all living, which was very near the police station, and they all started shouting "Banzai!"

Well, the guards showed up and lined up and told them to quiet down and go home, and they wouldn't. And they jeered at them. They had no weapons or anything. They were just looking for something to do. So we all turned out. I was there and everybody was, and there was nothing else to do. And it looked a little ugly and they didn't have anyone in command. That was a real difficulty. I'm sure somebody was supposed to be, but it wasn't obvious as to who it was.

The guards were getting angrier and angrier and finally they threw tear gas to disperse the crowd. I don't even remember how many there were. It wasn't a big lot. When the tear gas came, I left, went back into my barracks. The wind would just carry it away anyway, the tear gas, but most people dispersed.

And then, at that point, when everybody was dispersing, someone--and they never found out who--gave the order to fire.

Or if the order was not given, somebody fired. And then several shots rang out, and people were killed. I think the number was seven but I can't guarantee that. I'd have to check it out. What got through to us was that it was one of my eleventh-grade students. He was shot in the back [as] he was leaving.

And then the camp was filled with the wildest rumors about the number killed, about what the soldiers had done, about what was going to happen, and you didn't know what to believe. The camp was closed down entirely. Schools were canceled, the mail was canceled, everything was canceled.

The Caucasian teachers were evacuated out of the camp because the government was so scared that there really would be a riot. They flew in--goodness, what was it?--fifteen thousand troops who camped out in their little pup tents in the field (chuckles) alongside the camp.

I got to stay when nobody else--none of the other Caucasian teachers--could stay, because I made myself indispensable. I remembered from college days how to run one of these switchboards, and this was the only telephone for that camp of ten thousand people, that connected the camp with the outside world.

The government was so frightened about what might happen. I was the midnight to eight a.m. shift--graveyard shift. All I had to do was to just flip that little switch and I could talk to Washington, D.C., or San Francisco, the Western Defense Command. The whole thing! In a day when you couldn't put through long-distance calls. They were so terrified.

This was a tiny little closet where the telephone [switchboard] was. An armed guard was there the entire time. (laughs) He was a pretty pathetic person. He was so homesick. Christmas was coming--why was he out in that desert? He was one of the rejected people for active duty and he was bitter but I had a little hot plate and used my coffee ration to make the poor guy coffee every night. We got to be good friends. Anyway, that lasted for [about two] months.

AL: Did you ever use your conviction and your vision about the human aspect of the whole situation to bring some of these soldiers, like this one that you befriended, to see the absurdity of the whole thing? Did that happen?

HB: They made quite an effort, the officer group, to be friendly with the teachers, the Caucasian teachers. After all, what else was there to do except to gamble and drink? I remember once, the commander tried very hard to be friends with me. I did not respond.

He was a nice chap, a more superior person. He never let on that he was bitter and so on. He was an educated man. (pause) He supported, of course, the action and everything that they were doing. So I didn't make friends--which some of the young teachers did. They'd go over to the recreation hall that the soldiers had and they'd have dances and things. But that wasn't for me.

AL: And there never was a story in which you converted one of those guards?  
(laughs)

HB: Oh, no.

AL: Let me see, a couple more questions I might have here.

**(long pause)**

HB: We were right on the way to one of the Civilian Public Service camps and so we got a lot of those men who of course believed in the same things we did. That's how the person who came to be my husband happened to come to Manzanar. He was on his way up to the Coleville camp north of Bishop, which was the great hunting and fishing area. Still is, in the high Sierras.

AL: This was a CO [conscientious objector] camp?

HB: Yes, and he and another chap came once and so many came! Gosh, the whole FOR came, the YW from New York City, and any number of people. This was a constant thing. They'd use my name to get in and I'd give them the tour of the camp. This is written up in one of those sheets.

I would give them all the same story when they left. I'd say, "If you possibly can, get us some film!" Because the students all wanted to have a yearbook. They'd come from beautiful schools and this represented what you do when you're a senior.

But you couldn't get film. And we had some great photographers in that camp. The greatest one, Toyo Miyataki, has died but his son is now in the business, I understand. But he couldn't have a camera because no internee could have a camera.

So I gave that same story to these two men that came and one of them was Bob, and I never thought any more about it because I never got any film. And along came four films from New York City! His parents lived in New York and he knew where to get them and he wrote to his parents and said: "Would you send them to Miss Ely?"

When I saw those four films I was absolutely thrilled. I went tearing across the firebreak to Toyo Miyataki and I said: "Look! It's like gold!" And as a result of the riot we got a great man as director of the camp. Up to that point it had been a very mediocre person, I believe in the Indian Service. But Ralph Merrit was first-rate, and he got out Toyo Miyataki's three cameras and said: "Here, use them!"

He would bend the rules. He was a friend of Ansel Adams and he invited Ansel Adams to come to the camp. That's how we got that great photographer.

Anyway, we had a yearbook and I wrote the best thank-you letter I could to Robert Brill and inside of a year we were married.

AL: And did you succeed in getting in contact with Ansel Adams while he was there?

HB: Yes. He came, but he was very discreet and we could not tell which side he was on. He just went silently around that camp. He took all our suggestions and I would feed him the stories about some of those people. And he let us buy the prints for 35 cents each, and I still have them. He put them in a book. Perhaps you've seen it--called Born Free and Equal. I have a copy downstairs. They're rare.

But it didn't succeed, and so years later he turned over the whole business to the Library of Congress. And there it sat, until somebody happened to discover it. And of course he was a well-known name and so they put out that hardcover book entitled Manzanar with the same pictures. Which was great fun to see.

AL: And from that whole experience and from the years that followed, what happened later on that relates back to that experience that was remarkable in your life?

HB: Oh, I made tremendous friends. I got a letter yesterday from one of the students I taught in Compton. She wasn't even at Manzanar and she's going to come see me. She lives in Chicago. And Manzanar is having a reunion and I've got to write and tell them I'm not going to be there. (pause)

This will be the fiftieth reunion. They had one two or three years ago. The kids that I taught are now the big people in the community of course. And here are all their names and they're all married and with kids and they send you the program afterwards and they all write cute little things. The same as the stuff you've got in the yearbook, you know. "Dear Miss Ely ..."

AL: And what is the name of this student who's coming to visit you?

HB: Her name is Kimii Nagata Yamauchi, and she was Kimii Nagata then. She was from a Methodist family and therefore had help. It was an exceptional family, I realized that since. She's been a teacher and is now retired. So, it makes me feel pretty old! (laughs)

AL: If you were to sum up the experience, the tragedy of it in one sentence, how would you describe it?

HB: I think I would say it was the greatest two years of my life. It's gone on to bear fruit ever since and I've been active in Quaker things ever since.

Robert Brill: Is there room for a story?

AL: Yes!

Robert Brill: Years ago, Helen was out in Iowa visiting her parents. A friend of ours in the [Hartford] Meeting said she had a visitor that she'd like to bring here, a visitor from California who had been placed in her home back in the 1940s by Tom

[Bodine], a Nisei visitor. Helen was away; I served them tea, and ... what's her name?

HB: Shizue [Dobashi].

Robert Brill: And Shizui said, "Does anybody know about a Miss Ely who had taught at Manzanar? Some of my friends said she was a wonderful teacher and I wondered if I could get in touch with her." (laughs) I said: "You're in Miss Ely's house! This is her house! She's away visiting her family."

So it was a lovely coincidence.

AL: This is Bob Brill, by the way, Helen Brill's husband. As you've heard, they met due to that experience at Manzanar. Is there anything else, Helen, that you'd like to say?

HB: I've appreciated this opportunity because it's now been fifty years and the restitution money has finally been allocated. My dear friend Mrs. Ogimachi died just before her check came, at the age of eighty-nine. The memories are still very strong.

Shizue will come again. She comes every year. This wonderful woman that Tom Bodine placed in this home in West Hartford, a Quaker home, and they just cherish her. She's a member of that family. It's nice to have these memories brought up to date.

Let's hope that this can never happen again. There is a sociology teacher, not Nisei, Sansei--third generation--teaching at Smith College and I gave her a lot of my books. She interviewed me and I remember the last thing she said: "Can this ever happen again?"

And I said: "I'm sorry to say, I think it can. What do you think?"

And she said: "I agree with you. Our civil liberties aren't that tight."

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**Oral History Interview #407**

**Narrator: KAY YAMASHITA**

**Interviewer: Antonio Leal**

**August 23, 1991 Chicago, Illinois**

L: This is Antonio Da Motta Leal and I am in the Chicago office of the American Friends Service Committee on Friday, August 23rd, interviewing Kay Yamashita for the Oral History Project on the Japanese-American Student Relocation Council.

Kay would you please tell us your name and place and date of birth?

Y: Kay Yamashita. This is August 23rd, 1991. I was born in Oakland, California, on March 31st, 1918.

L: Would you please tell us a little bit about your home town. Was it an urban setting, a rural setting, suburban? How was it like?

Y: Well, it was Oakland, California, and I was the sixth child of a family of seven children. My father came from Japan in about 1897, I think. The one and only time he went back to Japan was to marry my mother in Japan. Then he brought her to the United States. We lived, actually, not in a ghetto sort of situation, because in Oakland the Japanese were not concentrated in one area. My father bought a house away from the city. Not a fancy house or anything, but a house that he hoped my mother would be able to live in the rest of her life.

L: Did your mother speak English?

Y: No, not very well. Haltingly. She would completely forget her English at times, but she understood. She certainly could understand the newscasts and so forth. But she spoke with a heavy accent.

L: Did you grow up speaking Japanese as well as English at home?

Y: No, she was born and raised in Japan, you know. She came at 18.

L: I know, but [I mean] you.

Y: Me. Oh yes. Yes. Oh yes. In fact Japanese was our second language and that's because I was six of a family of seven, so our first language was English. We had to be forced to use our Japanese, so my parents requested that we speak to them in Japanese. And at the dinner table at one time they said, "Well, let's all speak only Japanese." Nobody talked. That was abandoned, because our happiest time was at the dinner table when we were able to just share the whole day with our siblings. They were all much older though.

L: What was the percentage of let's say "foreigners" in your school and in your neighborhood, in your community? How were you seen as a family of a different ethnic background?

Y: Well, I guess we were in a way fortunate because our next-door neighbor was an Irish family. The father was a carpenter and he made us various things. He had a little workshop in the basement of his home. Mrs. O'Hara was one who just loved us as her own. We used to go running in and out of her home. The other side was a large house, corner home, in which was a music studio. By the time I came along the music studio was sort of going down, so I wasn't too aware of it, but my sister was. As I told you, we were not confined in a ghetto situation. All our playmates were non-Japanese. In grammar school, in junior high school there were quite a few Japanese Americans, but not a lot.

L: Before the Second World War did you ever experience any kind of hostility due to race?

Y: Oh surely. But I should explain to you that my parents were not Christians when they came to the United States. A lady, Mrs. Harrison, was very kind to my mother and my mother became curious, and after she got to really know her asked her what made her the way she was. What made her so kind and interested and caring and so forth. She explained to her that maybe it was because she was a Christian. My mother became, therefore, very interested in Christianity in general. Then, I don't know at what point, but the Methodist missions became active in Oakland and all the way up and down California, and my mother became a Christian. My father was not. He was, in fact, anti-Christian. It was not until about the time I was born that he became a Christian. By then he did not smoke, he did not drink, but he did not go to church. Yet when he died we, the children, discovered that he had worn out [two] Bibles, so that indicates something. My brother became a minister later.

L: During the period when your mother had become a Christian and your father was not yet one, did that make for conflict in the house?

Y: No. Not at all. In fact our whole social life was around this Methodist church, and therefore when you ask me, well, did we, you know, co-mingle with others in the neighborhood or in the city, we didn't. It was a Japanese-American Methodist church and all of the social activities that the family indulged in were within the church.

L: What was your father's occupation?

Y: Tailor.

L: He was a tailor.

Y: Yes. It's very interesting, because he had been sent to Tokyo from his little town, Naegi, in Japan to become a doctor. He was planning to become a surgeon when all of the sudden, while he was still in Tokyo, his two brothers died. We really think that maybe they might have died of alcoholism, which is a kind of a joke in our family, because Japan was changing from the feudal to the so-called industrial age. The farmers around there tithed the samurai family with rice. Well, they had to do something with the rice, so they became brewers. They had a large brewery somewhere in the Gifu area and when my father's two brothers suddenly passed away there was no, actually, means of an income. So his friends and the relatives suggested that he go to the United States.

At that time, 1890s, American or so-called Western clothes was just beginning to be the thing in Japan. So they told him to go and learn (chuckles) tailoring. So he came, and unlike most Japanese, he just stopped for a day in San Francisco and went directly to New York, where there's this Mitchell Cutting [and Tailoring] School. I still recall this huge diploma that he got, so he did finish the course. He was on his way back to Japan when he thought--this is in California--he'd stop for a little while and make some money before going back to Japan. He never went back except for the one time to marry my mother.

He became a very successful tailor, incidentally. He had six or seven people working under him whom he taught to cut, to sew.

L: That's very interesting. At the time when you were growing up, by the time you were an adolescent, which were the main social and cultural events that marked your life, that made you aware of the world around you?

Y: I guess I wasn't very aware of the world around me, because we were a very closely knit family, and as I mentioned, the church was the social center of our lives, and everything we did we did within the context of the church.

L: What was your first awakening to social issues?

Y: Well, we were a talkative family, and being the sixth, my sisters and brothers were older. There were always two in college while the next two were out. We helped each other all the way down the line. They were interested in social issues, and there was a great deal of conversation and give and take at the table and otherwise... And our reading too. They read a lot. But it just sort of seeped down to me. My younger brother and I were sort of the kids who just listened. We got it, I guess, by osmosis.

L: But, for example, in 1924 when immigration from Japan was stopped on the West Coast and also the fact that the Japanese immigrants were never allowed citizenship, was that ever talked about in your home?

Y: Oh yes.

L: How were those feelings expressed? It must have been a hard thing to take.

Y: Well, of course. I wasn't affected but my sisters and brothers were certainly talking about that all of the time, that my parents could not be citizens. In fact, my mother went to the local high school in the evenings to take this English course. Everybody in the class was allowed to take the test and become a citizen except my mother, and that incensed her. I remember, even as a child, she decided (thumps hand) she never wanted to become a citizen. That she was denied that privilege because of her ancestry. That was it.

L: How did you feel, personally?

Y: Well, I wasn't terribly affected at that time. I was so young I just didn't really... But I know my sisters and brothers were... It's been a bone of contention among Japanese Americans that the Asians were not allowed to become citizens. In fact, buying property and so forth. I guess the house that my father bought must have been in my brother's name. Yes it was. We realized that at the time of the evacuation, when he sold it.

L: Well, then that leads us into the evacuation, and I would like you to tell me about your first contact with the Friends, the Society of Friends and with the Service Committee.

Y: Well, I remember with gratitude the kindness of countless people throughout my life, but especially from the time of the evacuation. My life was really profoundly influenced by the unexpected warmth, love and kindness of people who helped me when I really needed it. I was alone, I was forlorn certainly, and bewildered. Most of the people who came to help me were Quakers and I am deeply grateful for that. You see, over and over again, Antonio, while we heard the testimony of the Nisei at the Chicago redress hearings, so many recounted and remembered that the first and only group were the Quakers who came to help us with direct help. Some took jobs as teachers and, I don't know, other things, and came to the camp and actually lived within the confines of the barbed wire, and for this we are grateful.

L: You were directly involved in the Relocation Council work in Philadelphia. Is that true?

Y: Yes. That's true.

L: How did it happen? Were you evacuated to a camp?

Y: Oh yes.

L: You said that your father had to sell the house. Tell us exactly from that moment...

Y: My father died when I was 13, so he was gone many years. It was my mother and us. Do you want to know how we felt when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

L: Yes. I want to know exactly where you were and how did it feel at that moment. Please tell us exactly where you and your family were on the day of Pearl Harbor and what was your immediate feeling about it.

Y: Well, I remember this was a Sunday morning, this is December 7th, and we were studying, actually, around the dining room table for our final examinations. Then we were planning to go to church and then go to the library. Well, I guess it was about 9:00, when all of the sudden my brother says, "Listen! Listen to the radio!" I guess he was in the kitchen. He came running and we were listening and, of course, Pearl Harbor had been bombed. We could hardly believe it. It was just an incredible thing. It was unthinkable. But as we listened we realized it really had happened. Then we went to church about 11:00 and it stopped. There was hardly any talking at church actually.

L: You said your church was one of Japanese Americans.

Y: Methodist. Umm hmm.

L: Methodist Japanese Americans.

Y: Yes. Umm hmm.

L: And you also said that hardly anything was said, but was there an unsaid feeling that you could sense as a prevailing one in that moment? All of you were of Japanese descent and having just heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, were there any expectations and any fears that you shared?

Y: Oh yes. Certainly. Certainly there was a lot of fears. But it was so unexpected. The reaction was, "What do we do now?" But we said, "We're Americans, we'll just have to go through with this." But I recall that after, which was about two or three days later--I was actually working part time at a gift store on Grand Avenue in San Francisco. After I had finished my finals I was on the train going to San Francisco. I just couldn't help [it], but tears came rolling down. It was a very emotional time. We could see these lines of trucks filled with soldiers coming across the bay. I guess they were being mobilized. I'm going the other way to San Francisco and I'm thinking to myself, "What will happen to us? We're Japanese and the Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor." Certainly, war had already been declared.

Well, the Japanese community as a whole was just absolutely devastated. One of the things that happened was the fact that all of our wealth--there were a lot of mom and pop small stores and my mother by then owned a cleaning shop.

My father had died. She was trying to help us to get through college and so forth. Our shop was away from the Japanese stores. The Japanese stores were together. They were all either broken into or tomatoes, eggs, anything was thrown at them. And then there was some violence. Some violence of homes with windows being broken and so forth. All and all, from that and the fact that the newspapers, there was no TV then you know, but the radio kept blasting away the fact that since Pearl Harbor had been attacked, certainly San Francisco and the bay area was a fearful sort of area.

The non-Asian population was certainly up in arms. At that time the Japanese were in competition with the Italians in terms of the whole flower market. Then the produce markets were also, we were in competition with the Italians. So there was a great deal of friction and fear. Then the Associated Farmers of California were very, very active. Then the "yellow peril," the whole thing, the newspapers were just full of stuff. So that there was a terrible feeling of unrest, and for us, fear. And fear on their part too, because the white population really felt that maybe off the coast there there'd be some submarines and so forth and so on.

Well, finally, I don't know about the whole state of California, but [in] our local area, all of the Japanese-American stores were ordered closed. That identified every shop and every owner. So therefore people stopped coming. That was the whole thing. So even when we reopened, people did not come to trade with us. Therefore our living [was] completely cut off. I remember my making stew week after week because that was the cheapest and most nourishing food. We had friends dropping by and staying for dinner and stew could be stretched. Something else could not be. So that's how life was.

That went on for two or three weeks, and then the rumors started to surface that we would probably be evacuated. We kind of laughed at that because we thought, Well, that's unconstitutional! We were Americans, how could it be that way? And how could they tell the difference between a Chinese and a Japanese? Well, it happened. I guess it must have been in February when all of the sudden every telephone pole was covered with this, "Attention Japanese Americans," these signs with this whole proclamation of our getting ready to be evacuated. Where we were to go, what we were to do and so forth, that was all on this thing. I should have brought that with me. I have one.

At any rate, that was the atmosphere. This was war and it was terrible, because Pearl Harbor was really a horrifying episode. We knew that many, many Americans had been killed. There were many Japanese Americans that were killed in Hawaii too. But Hawaii didn't have the closing of the shops and all of this, restrictions that were put on. We had a curfew that was slapped on us. No Japanese American, no Japanese could move beyond so many miles.

L: At that time of the curfew, was that when Gordon Hirabayashi decided to go against the law? Did you hear about that?

Y: No. Not at the time. No. We didn't know what Gordon had done, but we heard about it later when we were in camp, I guess. But see, some of our leaders were imprisoned. I don't know whether you know, but what happened was that when Pearl Harbor happened, December 7th, zoom, the FBI just had all of these people and their homes spotted. Even before church, which was 11:00, they had already gone to a lot of the homes and picked up the so-called "dangerous," in quotes, or people of questionable loyalty, and taken them.

It was made very real to me because one of my closest friends--a father worked for the Mitsui Company, which is one of the largest Japanese companies, had an office in San Francisco. Her family had picked up a lot of people and gone to church, so they left early. While they were gone the FBI had come to their home. When they got home there were two men sitting in the living room after having ransacked, and I mean ransacked--went through all the drawers--everything in their home. They were sitting there. Kay tells me that they asked the father to just pack a little bag and he was taken away. But they assured them that if they found nothing wrong, that he would come home. But the very fact that he was working for a Japanese company--he was certainly not a subversive in any way, but there you were.

Well, a great number of people like that... Incidentally, my brother worked for Mitsubishi, and he was a specialist in oil. They didn't pick him up, because he was an American citizen, but I'm sure he must have been watched. I don't know, but anyhow. But all of these other people, Buddhist priests and, you know, Japanese chamber of commerce, and all of these people who were Japanese association leaders and all, were picked up. But none of the Japanese Americans were picked up at that time, yet.

L: That was my next question to you, whether you knew any of those first Nisei who were sent to Santa Fe, Bismark and Missoula. That's interesting.

Before Japan's first having involvement in the war, did you hear of people's expectations that that might happen, and were there any speculations?

Y: Yes. You know, I might just tell you that my brother, as I told you, was working for the Mitsubishi company. What was so strange to us, he told us all of the wives and children all went back on a boat, because there were no planes at that time, fifty years ago. But still, the top heads were still in San Francisco, and they left the United States [on] the last gripsholm, or the last boat. But my brother was left holding the bag. He was an American and he therefore stayed in the office, [was] required to stay in the office. Every day the FBI would come and go through all the papers, and days and days of all of this. I remember my brother, he was already married and living in Berkeley--we were all living at home in Oakland--he came home one night and he said, "You know, I think I'm being watched and our telephones are being tapped, so be careful. The other thing is maybe we should burn all this stuff that would in any way incriminate me," because he was working for a Japanese company, "and the rest of you."

My minor was Oriental history, and I recall my brother going through my notes and all of a sudden he said, "Gee, Kay. I think we'll have to burn up all this stuff." I had made these comparisons of what happened in Europe at the same period as what was happening in Japan, and maps and so forth. They were all, I thought, very valuable to me and my studies, but we just threw them all in the fire.

Then, of course, the evacuation was declared. My oldest brother felt that as a family we should all be together. We didn't know how long the war would last or where we were going to be taken or what would be happening to us. So he thought we should all be together, we should all move to his house.

Well, my sister--I had one sister who was a nurse, a public health nurse--was living and married in southern California, right on the border of Mexico and California. [Her husband] was an engineer but he was in production of produce, like lettuce and melons and so forth. They decided that they wanted to be with us to be together. So my brother-in-law's godfather was not a Japanese. Mr. Hunter suggested that they come in two cars and that they get a special permit to leave the area, because it was all curfew and you couldn't travel five miles beyond where you lived. So they came back in two cars, Mr. Hunter the lead car with all of their junk, and they left their home in the care of Mr. Hunter's son, who was to move into their home.

Because my brother-in-law came to the United States at 7, he was not an American citizen and could not become an American citizen at that time. So his bank account was frozen. It's very interesting, because who gave him the credit to eat while this thing was going on? It was a Chinese grocery man. Ma-chun was so kind. He let them have anything and everything. Very interesting episode in their life.

At any rate, they came back to Oakland and then we moved to Berkeley, and we actually slept in my brother's garage and everywhere. We took along even one youngster who my brother, being a minister, had befriended. He had run away from home and Tom didn't want to go back to be with his family. He wanted to go with us. So he came and so there was this big crowd of us when we went to live in Berkeley. Then, from there, we then went to Tanforan.

L: You talked about having to sell your property. Well, your brother did not because a friend's son took care of his house, right?

Y: No, no, no. My mother's home. My father had left a debt of, can you imagine, \$1500 and my brother could not pay that off. For the honor of the family he decided he would give the house to these people, so we just left it. It was kind of sad because, for instance, we had had new carpeting and couches and things just put in about six months before. My brother, being a minister--just [gave] these things away. "Oh you can have that, and you can have that." And everybody came by and took all these things.

L: Everybody who?

Y: These are just people who knew my brother or knew that we were leaving. But they didn't offer to pay anything and, to my mind, it was sort of strange. But the one thing that I thought was important was the piano--I had used it and so forth. My brother decided, well, maybe it would be good if we gave the piano to the Black Baptist church or anybody in their congregation that would like a piano. And we called them, and we were very shocked. I don't think this would happen now, but at that time they told us, "We wouldn't want a Jap's piano, we'd never think of that." So there it was. That was a shock for me. At any rate, we just left the piano. A lot of the stuff that we left, our next-door neighbor told us that people had just come and taken it. So that was it.

We, as far as things were concerned, we were very poor. We didn't have very much. Because my father's wish was that we would all have a college education, and so everything went towards that. And each of us was getting a college education, so things didn't mean very much, and we were grateful, because at that time we lost nothing.

Then we went to my brother's and from there we were taken to the Tanforan racetracks, which was the big shock. When we arrived there we had no idea what we were getting into. They were in the process of building a few barracks in the center of the racetracks. This was one of the biggest racetracks in California at that time. [It] was just whitewashed over with paint, fresh paint, with the dung and the hay, and even the horses' hairs that had stuck to the walls. All of that was right there and then it was just completely whitewashed over. Being a fairly large group, which was our family together, we were stuck in one of the larger horse stalls. Well, I was just stunned. All I could do was just cry. (pause)

That evening we were told to go to the grandstands for our food. None of us were hungry but we just decided to see what they were doing. We were all lined up and we were given one small wiener and a piece of white bread from whoever was serving, with their hands. No plate, no nothing. To this day I do not eat plain white bread. (thumps hand) Somehow or other there's something that clicks in my mind. Spam, that was another thing there was. But for the first time in my whole life I was hungry and cold. It was a good experience for me, I think.

When we went to our horse stall we had to figure out how to live, how to settle down. There were beds enough; all we had to do was go to the central area and get a bed and, you know, spring it open. It was one of those beds, army cots. Thank God, at least there was a thin mattress on it. I remember my cot was right there. I don't know how to explain it. There was a window in the horse stall, and these watch towers were all over the racetracks. Then they had these sweeping lights that went through the assembly center or camp every so many minutes. (laughs) It happened that my cot would be right there and it would be hit [by the search lights] through the little teeny window. I guess it was the groom's side of the horse stall.

**(Side 1 ends)(Side 2 begins)**

L: We were just talking about the temporary arrangements which were found in the racetrack horse stall. Kay, can you resume, please?

Y: Well, I've forgotten where I left off, but actually it doesn't matter... I graduated in May of 1941. Pearl Harbor was December 7th, 1941. We're talking about, now, March or April of 1942, when we were evacuated. So the time lapse is... (pause)

I was active in the YM/YWCA at the University of California. It's too long to tell you why I got involved, but we had various speakers come to talk about the issues of the day. Of course, we had had a speaker from the Chinese. The Japanese and Chinese were at war, you know. We had asked the Chinese representative to come and so forth, and then we had asked the Japanese one to come. They couldn't send anybody from the consulate, so they sent this man. This man was then being tried [for acting] as a foreign agent without registering as a foreign agent. One of the people at one of our student YWCA/YWCA meetings was a UP [United Press] correspondent's wife, who immediately reported it to Washington and the powers [that] be, to check on this fellow. So that's how I got mixed up with this and the Cal student Y got mixed up in it.

Anyhow, to make a long story short, this man was to be tried in the Bay area but they didn't think that he could get a fair trial, so it was moved to Washington, D.C. The FBI agent came to see me, because I was the one who got the speaker and therefore the connection.

L: And this was when?

Y: About October of 1940.

L: So this was prior to everything.

Y: Yes. But then the trial therefore came up, and I was told before I left to go into Tanforan that I may have to go to Washington. Well, my brothers tried to get me to get a deposition so that I wouldn't have to do this, but they said, no, it was a criminal case and therefore they could not do it that way. So anyhow, lo and behold, I was notified that I had to leave this Tanforan racetrack where I'd just gotten into, to go to Washington.

You see, one of the things is, we were so afraid. We had no idea what was happening to us. Incidentally, all our cameras, our radios, everything had to be turned in to the police department; therefore we had nothing. No communication. We had no idea what was going on in the outside world. We had no papers. There we are sitting in camp. The young people were much more enterprising and they were certainly active. They were getting people together and all kinds of baseball and all of this going on. They kept the children going. And there were schools and

so forth being started. But the rest of us, we were not informed. We really were afraid of what was happening.

Well, my brothers said, "No, we're not going to let you go alone." And so then we notified--by then the authorities in the area were taken over by the army. It was called the Wartime Civil Control Administration and it was the Western Defense Command... (pause)

So they got in touch with me, they knew where I was. They came after me and I was taken to headquarters. It was a goofy thing. It was really ludicrous actually, Antonio, if you think about it. The man who was arranging my itinerary or schedule to go to Washington was a Southerner. [He] was so anxious for me; this poor innocent, naive gal was going to go to Washington. He thought, "Gee, may as well make this a fun good trip for her." And so he scheduled me and my mother to go through Texas. He said, "You've got to see Texas. I'm a Texan. I want you to see Dallas and Houston and all that. And you may as well go to see New Orleans, you know. Bourbon Street and all of this, jazz and whatnot, and then from there take a train on." This was all by train. They gave us a coupon book full of (laughs) pullman tickets so that instead of staying in a hotel we could just get on a train and go on our way and so forth.

As it happened, we went to Kansas. I'm not sure whether that was Kansas City, Missouri or Kansas City, Kansas. I can't remember at this time. But we had to transfer trains and there was a considerable wait. We walked around the park. We did all these things, saw the monuments and so forth, and lots and lots of soldiers. Then we went back in the train station, went to the cafeteria and sat down and decided to have lunch. As we were watching, a whole trainload of Black soldiers came off of a troop train. We thought they were coming into the cafeteria or dining room at least. They weren't allowed to. My mother was shocked. We were stunned, really. Then we could see this great activity going on in the kitchen [of] which we could get a slight glance. They were making these piles of sandwiches and the sergeants were then--the soldiers were ordered back on the train and then the sergeants were bringing this whole pile of sandwiches onto the train. And then we realized, this was our first experience of the South.

Then when we got on this train to go to Dallas, my mother decided, "Gee, let's go see the..." This was a family we knew very well in Berkeley. We decided to get off at Dallas. There was a fast train between Dallas and Houston. That was supposed to be our next stop. So we would then have time to get off and see these friends. I don't know, when we just got off, then the porter naturally had to bring our bags. At that point we were looking at the train station and it says, WAITING ROOM and COLORED WAITING ROOM. My mother noticed it right away. She poked me and I said to her in Japanese, "What shall we do?" And she said to me in Japanese, "Let's just follow the porter who's taking our bags." He went into the waiting room. Then we noticed COLORED WATER and WATER and all of that stuff. For me it was an eye-opener.

L: And all of that time you were traveling, just you and your mother on your own. You didn't have any military accompaniments or...?

Y: Well, from then on, you see, we had gotten off at a[n] unscheduled stop, and wow. (knocks) When we got to Houston we were being met by a Travelers Aid Society person, who was obnoxious. And on and on, we were being tailed from then on. Finally, I think it was after I left New Orleans, I called the San Francisco Western Defense Command, this man that I was supposed to call if I ever got into trouble, and I just said, "You've got to take these people off. It isn't that I can't understand English or that I'm not an American. And these people are obnoxious." But I was in the South and I guess they had never, never really--and they thought, "What's this person doing? She can speak perfect English," and so forth. I really don't know what; whatever, they were not very kind. And they did, they took the Travelers Aid Society off our tail.

Then we went to Washington. If you knew anything about wartime, there were no, absolutely no hotel rooms to be had. Already we had an assigned room in a very nice hotel. I was given instructions as to where I should go and whom I should meet. The FBI agent who originally interviewed me in Berkeley was there. I was astounded. He had almost my whole testimony verbatim yet he didn't have a tape recorder. It was an incredible thing. At any rate, I went to the trial and I was frightened stiff, because every time I'd open my mouth--I was being questioned by the defense, or the prosecution--but every time I would open my mouth somebody would protest. The attorney would protest. So then I got sort of frightened and shook up. This was a terrible experience, and then this whole crowded court room--well, whatever. I did very poorly and certainly the government didn't get very much out of me. But I do think that they made the connection. They could not deny the truth of my testimony, that I did really call the Japanese consulate and they did send this man and so forth. He hardly looked at me, so it didn't matter.

Then, what was really interesting and really kind of delightful was the fact that the Southern colonel had routed us through New York. He decided we must see New York. We were met by friends in New York, and then we went on to Boston, one, because we were interested in getting my brother into MIT or something possibly, and my mother wanted to see the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. As you know, the best of the Japanese things are there. And we did. It was really very, very nice. All of this.

L: But during this entire trip through the South and the Northeast, during the period when on the West Coast people of Japanese descent were being treated as enemies, as aliens, wasn't there the same kind of sentiment [on] the part of the Caucasians wherever you went on the East Coast?

Y: In fact, when I walked into the hotel to sign the register (laughs) the man said to me, "My, you speak such perfect English!" (chuckles) I said, "Sir, I was born and raised in Oakland, California!" You know, but that's the sort of stuff we get all the time. We've gotten so used to it now it doesn't faze us.

But I guess... No, nothing happened, except it was interesting. I'll tell you another story. This man literally routed us through the Grand Canyon. I've forgotten whether it was going or coming. No, it must have been going. We took this trip around the rim and all, but we also went to the gift shop, and in there the Indians looked so Japanese. They looked at my mother and my mother looked at them, and we were really surprised. No words, nothing. We didn't say anything, but we knew what the other was thinking. And I'm sure the Indians were thinking, "Goodness, what are they doing here?" (laughs) But that was a funny incident.

But anyhow, we went on and we went to Boston; and then I did come to Chicago, and we took a taxi and saw all the main things, because we only had so many hours between trains, and then we got back on the train and got back. When we got back to Oakland, that was so heartbreaking, because we could not go home. We went to stay at the YWCA, which had a few rooms where you could stay. We stayed there. I had known this before I left, so I went there.

My friends in [Tanforan] wanted me to go see a professor at Mills College to get books to be sent into the camps right away, because that was one of the things that we really wanted. So I made an appointment to see Professor Wagner at Mills College and took the bus and went there and left my mother at the YWCA. I saw Professor Wagner. She was just wonderful. It turned out she was a Quaker. She said, certainly, she'll get right to this business of getting the books in. Then she suggested I go to--gave me an address on Baker Street in San Francisco where she thought that they would be very helpful. She didn't tell me it was a Quaker center. That's what it turned out to be. It was just a house and so forth.

Well, when I came back from Mills College, the desk clerk stopped me and said, "Kay, don't go up to your room. Your mother has been taken to the police station." I said, "When?" She said, "Shortly after you left this morning." I said, "Oh my gosh!" So I immediately went to the Oakland police station and showed them this document from the Western Defense Command which had my mother and my picture on it and this whole itinerary and so forth. In those days they didn't have Xerox machines or I could have made a duplicate, because I wished I had that today. Well, whatever, it was a very official document that permitted us to be outside of the camp. And at that time there were no Japanese or Japanese Americans outside of camps, within 200 miles of the coast from Washington [state] to southern California. So that for me to be walking around, I did need this. So I showed it to the chief of police right away and, oh, he apologized all over the place. He gave me a personal card and he said, "If you're ever stopped anywhere, show them the card or call me and they'll get me anywhere, if I'm home or wherever I am. But you shouldn't have any problems." So that was it. We went home. But poor Mom. She didn't even have any lunch and it was a terrible thing and kind of an ordeal. But she said she wasn't worried. She knew that we hadn't done anything wrong.

Then, after that I went to the University of California, Berkeley, where the YM and YWCA were working very hard at gathering all of the information they possibly could about the students. Then I found out too that the president of the University of California, President Gordon Sproul; President Lyman Wilbur, the

president of Stanford University; the president of the University of Washington--those are the three big ones--and then some of the presidents of smaller schools, had gotten together and were trying to urge President Roosevelt to change the regulations regarding the students. Nothing could be done. We knew this. They were in camp.

For instance, it's heartbreaking, because the graduation of May 1942, the top student who was getting this--I've forgotten what honor it was; it was the top honor at the University of California at Berkeley--was Harvey Itano. He was in the assembly center at Sacramento, which was in the fair grounds there. He could not attend his own graduation, much less to be honored. The other top student was a fellow named Dr. Paul Yamauchi, who graduated with top honors from the medical school, and he was awarded the Cane, which is the honor at Cal Medical Center. He was at Tanforan racetracks working his tail off because people were getting sick. People were [having] babies. You know, all of this was happening, so the doctors were needed. But that's what was happening.

In the meantime, my mother, after this terrible incident--I must tell you what had happened. The Filipino maid who cleaned our room that morning and made our bed went through all of my luggage. Can you imagine? Everything. [She] found out that we were Japanese Americans and she reported us to the police. That's how the whole thing happened. I should have mentioned that at first. But anyhow, that's the story. What had happened was that Filipinos were trying to be overzealous. They were trying to be good citizens because they themselves were having their problems. And, of course, the Japanese, after that, went into the Philippine Islands, as you well know, and they hated the Japanese. So her actions were justified. And of course Asians, up and down, were told to report any Japanese if they saw them. At that time, I understand that I was one of two people outside of the camp, you know, so that in itself--and a funny incident happened in San Francisco when I was going up to Baker Street.

L: Was that after the incident [in Oakland]?

Y: Yes. After the incident, yes, and after my mother decided she wanted to go back into camp and to the horse stall, that she didn't want to be out. But I wanted to stay out and do as much as I could. I was even thinking of staying out and going, you know, getting a job beyond the 200-mile zone and doing something. On my way to Baker Street I got on a streetcar. Somebody lets out a [small] screech. It was Ernestine Candean, one of our neighbors in Oakland, California, who knew we were Japanese and who knew we were evacuated and who knew that we should have been in camp. "What's Kay doing out here roaming around?" She gasped but she didn't say anything. And then she smiled. If she reported me that was all right; but she didn't, of course. But she was a friend. She was just so surprised that this happened. Well, anyhow. I wasn't. Then I went on to Baker Street and people there said, "So good to see you out!" You know. But they didn't ask any explanations.

L: It was a Friends center?

Y: Yes. It was a Friends center and they told me, "Just stop, stay and wait in front of the front door in the lobby"--well, it's not a lobby; it's a home, so it's an entrance--"and there'll be a lady coming presently and we want you to meet her." So I just sat there. All of a sudden this tall handsome lady comes in with a basketful of vegetables and flowers. She sees me and she drops the basket and she just hugs me tight, and she says to me, "I'll never let you go, I'll never let you go back into that horrid place. I just came from Tanforan." I just looked at her. And of course I was in tears. (starts to cry) That was the beginning.

L: It was your first contact with the Quakers?

Y: Well, Professor Wagner was, but I really didn't know that she was a Quaker. Then Josephine and Frank Duveneck. They're well-known Quakers. He passed away last year. But, she took me home. They had a large home in Los Gatos, which is in the mountains behind Palo Alto. They were really ready to hide me there. I was there about two or three days, really thinking what I should do.

L: You were at Josephine's house for two or three days?

Y: Yes. Duveneck. They were interested in helping me to get out of the area, which I had to, and to get a job. So, I had been working as an NYA, let's see, that was right at the time of the evacuation. That was kind of a--you got minimal pay and worked for the federal government. I was working for the U.S. Employment Service. I was too naive to be bitter, but to have a college degree and to be working as an NYA was in itself--later I found out that a company union was formed over the fact that a person like me could not get a job and [would] have to just work at minimal pay. But I was happy, because all I was doing was trying to pass the exam and get a federal or state or city job. In those days Japanese Americans were not being hired for anything. But I think we have to understand that that was 1941. The Depression was just beginning to end. War changed the whole thing, you know, but until then it was the Depression. Anybody was having a hard time, so we just sort of took it for what it was worth. But when I think about all of this now, you know, I really had a lot to be angry about; but my bitterness came with the evacuation and what it did to us and what it did to everybody.

Anyhow, the Duvenecks finally did, (knocks) because the Western Defense Command said that if she had a bona fide job where she could prove it in writing, we may or may not let her go back into camp or let her go to Washington [D.C.]. Okay. So the Duvenecks and the Quakers really worked hard, and they did get a telegram that was sent from--and I remember this vividly--Richard Neudstadt. That's a German name. The head of the U.S. Employment Service sent a telegram to me at Hidden Villa--that was the name of the Duvenecks' farm--offering me a job, quoting the salary--I've forgotten what the salary was--and the

G whatever it was, G-6 or whatever, which was the federal designation or code for the position. It would be to start as soon as I could arrive in Washington, D.C.

Well, here I was gleeful. I remember Frank Duveneck driving me to Tanforan to see my family and to tell them that I got a job and I couldn't... And at that time they let me actually go into the inside of the camp. So I went to the horse stall and sat down with the family. Do you know, my sisters burst out crying. They said, "What do you think you're going to do all by yourself out there? We don't know where we're going, how long the war will last. We may never see you again. That's a terrible thing for you to do." They didn't want me to go. I was stunned. Here I thought they would be very happy. Well, so I had to do some soul searching as to what to do in the meantime. I went back with Mr. Duveneck to Hidden Villa. Then in a day or two [I] got a phone call. You know, while I'm doing all this soul searching and wondering what I'm going to do, I got a phone call to report to the Whitcomb Hotel, which was the Western Defense Command.

Mr. Duveneck promised--he knew I was frightened--he said, "Don't you worry, Kay. I'm going to take you there. I'm not going to leave this place. I will not leave without you. I'll be waiting for you downstairs, so don't worry." So I go up in there. Do you know, I was interrogated for six hours! I didn't know it, but I had been tailed from the moment I left California and went all over the United States everywhere and went back. See, they were trying to find out if there was anything (laughs) I was doing that I was subversive or whatever. But it was a grueling experience. As far as the army is concerned you are guilty until you can prove yourself innocent. Well, I wasn't guilty of anything but they had tailed me everywhere. They could name the person I saw and what I did, how long I was in there, wherever.

What was interesting is--I haven't told you these two things that happened to me. While I was out and I went to Cal Berkeley, I was invited to dinner by Gerty Landauer, whose parents were refugees from Germany. He had been appointed that semester to come as a professor of economics. So Gerty's parents were living in Berkeley, and they were the ones that were inviting me to dinner, to which I took my mother. That was just before my mother went back into camp. It was a very interesting--I have it written down, and I could tell it to you better, but they were living north of the campus and they had just gotten their mother, in other words Professor Landauer's mother, out of Germany and she had just come. It was a very formal dinner. The mother came into the dining room on the arm of Professor Landauer. Did not speak a word of English. My mother by then was so frightened she did not speak a bit of English, but the two of them understood each other completely. It was a most remarkable and delightful dinner. That was one of the ones--and sure enough, Western Defense Command knew exactly where I had been. They went and they saw me. But those are the kind of incidents that really kind of shook me up. But I decided, what was the sense of my trying to stay out, and that maybe I could do more for the students if I went back into camp.

But one of the things that the Quakers wanted me to do was [to attend] an International Institute being held. I don't know whether you knew that there were institutes that the Quakers sponsored and got together at various campuses where

they had marvelous speakers. The Quakers and students and various people. This one was at Mills College and they insisted that I should go, because there were lots of people who were curious to know what the camps were like and what had happened and so forth. So I was taken there. By God, Western Defense Command knew this, and knew who the speakers were and were there to listen. That was a terrible thing, but anyhow they did. I think at that point they decided that they had to drag me back in, because I was seeing too many important people. The interesting part, I think, was the fact that I knew that there was, to some extent, a little bit of apprehension on the part of the Western Defense Command regarding the Quakers. They were the only outspoken group. They were the ones that came. They were the ones that sent people from the East Coast to help us. And they were the ones that were speaking out, whether it was in Washington or at these meetings.

L: Were they present at the camp where you first stayed? Were they there?

Y: Who?

L: The Quakers.

Y: The Quakers couldn't come into the camp, the Tanforan camp. But they were certainly at the gates and they certainly did come. Like Josephine Duveneck came every single day and various other Quakers came. They had many friends who were inside, the inmates, the evacuees, and they were bringing in things like brooms and mops and, you know, detergent and all of these things to clean up because it was so horrible. It was really terrible. In fact, one night the guy up at the tower got real panicky. He could see that, oh, there were so many people all going, coming in (laughs) and congregating in these areas. Then they had, I don't know, whatever it was. A group of soldiers came into the camp [to investigate]. You know what they found out? We had diarrhea. (laughs)

L: So people going back and forth to the bathroom.

Y: Yes, yes. But you see, our experience in the assembly centers was really quite different from the relocation centers located in the deserts. I'll tell you why. The difference was because these assembly centers were under the command of the army. We were not allowed to even have knives to cut fruit, mind you. At one point what they did, which was a shocker for us, they came in, in a cordon, and they swept through the entire camp, barracks, or horse stall after horse stall, and searched everything. They were looking for knives or weapons of any sort. See, so, you know, it's really kind of goofy. They were telling the American public that we were being put into these camps for our own protection, but they had to have watch towers all around. In the watch towers the guys with the bayonets and the guns all were pointed inside, not outside. It was ludicrous.

**(Side 2 ends)**

**(Side 3 begins)**

L: Kay, you were talking about having had the choice of going East and getting a job and going away from your family, and how hard a decision it was. You went back into the temporary camp and you saw your family, and your sisters questioned you as to why you were doing that. So what happened from there? Did you stay with them? Did you go East?

Y: It was a wise decision to have not gone, because I would not have been able to do the kind of things I did without that experience of being in the camp, the concentration camp, with everybody and to get the feel and to know what was happening there. So it was, in reality, a very good experience.

L: Which permanent camp were you relocated to?

Y: We went to the Topaz, Utah, what they called a relocation center, which was really a concentration camp. It was a most shocking thing to arrive there. We were sent there a little earlier because my sister was a public health nurse and was to set up the hospital facilities. But the hospital hadn't been completed when we got there. It was a really terrible thing, because she had to scrub down one of the washrooms to be used as a temporary place for nursing facilities.

The day we arrived, the temperature must have been in the 100s and there was a dust storm. This fine dust. It was indescribable. We couldn't breathe. Here we are from the cool West Coast to this. The train ride itself was terrible, but I needn't go [into] that. It was a long terrible train. The Black porters were kind. They tried to, for instance, let us off the train where there were no people, because whenever we went through any city, town, or anywhere, we were made to pull down the shades. We could not see out and so other people could not see in. So most people didn't know that this was a movement of 5,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast into Topaz, Utah. We got off at Delta and then we were transported from there in trucks.

L: So do you mean that the locations of the camps were not publicized?

Y: They certainly weren't. I mean, the evacuees found out, finally, when we got on the trains, where we were going, but Topaz, Utah is really in the salt flats of Salt Lake. There were other places and I don't know where these others are. That's the only place I know.

L: I recall reading, I forget which state right now, but the governor of one of the states where there was a camp spoke openly about his reluctance and objection to the establishment of Japanese-American camps in that state. And I just didn't know that the locations were not publicized to the populations of the states.

So you went to Topaz. What was your role there? I understand that everyone went on as if life were normal, and everyone had a job. Tell me, what did you do there?

Y: Well, I immediately set about trying to do the student relocation thing. Gee, I forgot what division that would have been, but it was in the social services division and they let us have one end of a small barracks for our office, and the students were able to come there to pick up the questionnaires and the applications and so forth. From then on, of course, we were in close contact with--by then the Student Relocation had been moved from San Francisco to Philadelphia, and the National Student Relocation Council was permitted to use a portion of the Chestnut Street AFSC offices.

L: But there is a gap there.

Y: O.K., what gap?

L: How soon were the transfers of students allowed, once the mass relocation took place? How soon did that happen, because I read that Attorney General Biddle and Eleanor Roosevelt were opposed to the confinement of the students and therefore that made it easier. And also of Eleanor Roosevelt's admiration for Quaker work and that's how the whole thing...

Y: I'm glad you mentioned that, because I've noticed that there was no other first lady like Mrs. Roosevelt, where Mrs. Roosevelt really knew what the Quakers were doing all over the world. For that reason many, many good things happened. We've never had a wife of a president--she's one of my heroines.

But getting back to that episode. How soon? What happened was the NSRC--I'll just mention NSRC from now on as National Student Relocation Council--in Philadelphia had to devise a process or a way of getting these students out. In the meantime, piles and piles and hundreds of these applications were coming into the Philadelphia office along with the recommendations. The students were writing back to teachers and professors and whatnot. And there were various levels of students, those who were already in colleges, there were some in junior colleges, and some who were just graduating and wanting to enter universities and colleges as a freshman. But whatever, the process was heartbreaking and long because, for one thing, most of the important schools in the United States were proscribed by the provost marshal. That meant any school that had an ASTP, which is Army Student Training Program, or was near any main railroad artery--those were two very important [proscriptions]. Besides that, if there was any kind of research, and most of the universities and colleges did have important wartime research going on. Well, that just left--it was only the schools in the boondocks or, you know.

That's one of the things that, now that I meet students who had been relocated by us, they tell me that, "Well, I was really shocked. I was sent to Baker

College." Well, this fellow has a Ph.D. and is a professor at the Medical Center in physiology here at the University of Illinois. He was a top student at Sacramento State, but he was sent to Baker College. Well, where's Baker College? Nobody even knows where it is. Well, it's in Kansas. It's unknown. These were the kind of things that happened.

Whatever, the students were grateful to be getting out of camps. The proscribed schools we couldn't do anything about. But there were a number of people within the staff who were writing to various schools to try to get students to the schools that could be free to admit Japanese Americans, and a number of them did. But they just couldn't go there and appear, because most of these schools never had a Nisei on campus, never had seen a Japanese American much less one that didn't have any money and came out of a concentration camp. So the Council and the members of the staff had to prepare the campus, get the papers and take care of all of the details and see that the student had a place to stay and could work for their room and board, and so forth and so on. Most of those students had no money at all, and the parents certainly couldn't help them.

A case in point is my own brother. We were astounded, because my brother was one of very, very few that was released from the assembly center. But he was an active member in his third year at the University of California in Berkeley--an engineering student--and he was in two social service honor societies. So he was known to Dr. Monroe Deutch, who was then provost. If anybody talks about student relocation they will mention Dr. Monroe Deutch, who was himself a German. But he was working very hard from the '30s to try to get German refugees out of Germany while they could leave. So he certainly helped Tom to come out. Suddenly Tom got a phone call and he was told to be ready and they'd pick him up. He had admission to the University of Nebraska to finish his schooling, and a place to stay. But you know, we were elated and happy and glad for him, but we were sad too. For one thing, none of us could give him any money. To this day I don't really know how he made it. I did send the \$19 checks that I got at Topaz to him. But he worked at some frat house for his room and board. I don't know how he bought his books or anything like that, or how he managed. I don't think he even got one candy bar, actually.

L: Were the school fees given as scholarships by those schools, or were they being paid by other organizations?

Y: Well, it all depends. That's very interesting. I think you should know that the Council certainly went about systematically trying to gather funds. So there were a number of foundations. All of the churches, the Protestant churches, the Catholic churches, gave money for tuition and scholarships. But certainly there wasn't any money for anything else; but that they did. Even the state universities gave tuition scholarships and so forth. But I think that's very little known. And the reason why nobody ever talks about it or wanted to say anything about it was the fact that it was a very unpopular thing. After all, we were related to the enemies, you know, children of the enemy, and we were being helped. But I think you would be

surprised to know that all of the major foundations, like Ford, Carnegie, Mellon, gee, you name it, all of them gave substantial amounts of money for either administration or scholarships. Betty and Woody Emlen would know more about that. They're Quakers near Philadelphia--I think they're living near Bryn Mawr--who could tell you all about that, because they were the ones that not only worked with it but administered the funds.

I don't know where we are or what I should be telling you.

L: Well, where we are is that you are in Topaz. How were you first contacted to do relocation work? How did that happen? Who contacted you?

Y: O.K., when I left Tanforan the committee at the YM/YW[CA] knew that I went to Topaz. Then I wrote back and told them, "I'm ready now. I've got an office," and so forth and so on. They sent me the materials. Then people like Dr. Robert O'Brien, who was one of the first directors of the student relocation, Tom Bodine came to camp, certainly. Tom visited all ten of the camps. He actually saw the students in person. This made a tremendous difference to the students.

I don't think people know that really there was--first there was a surge of wanting to get out. And then there was a fear. For one thing, we didn't have any money, the kids didn't have, parents couldn't help them. They didn't know what the outside world was like. No news was coming in to them. They had very few contacts outside of this community and their schools, and now the camps. So there was great fear and reluctance. One of the jobs that they gave me to do when I got to Philadelphia was to write a newsletter, which went to these camps and the kids got to read them, to tell them, "Look, these are the things that are happening and these are some of the students that have written back." We made excerpts of letters that they sent back, to give the students encouragement of what was possible, what was happening, and to try to encourage them to get out of camp and get into the schools. Now that meant applications and so forth. But the thing that was so heartbreaking to people like me who were working with the students in the camps was the fact that, so-o-o, they come in, they fill out all the applications and the questionnaires and all of this, get their teachers to send all the stuff to Philadelphia, and then the staff--I'm telling you, this is the thing that overwhelmed me--these were Trudy King, Betty and Woody Emlen, Tom Bodine. They were actually, when I think about it now, not very much older than I was--they were there working 10, 12, 14 hours a day trying to get through this pile of work, of paperwork. Not only that but to answer the students. Not only that but to get the schools prepared if they could get them in. Then they had a staff of people who were admissions officers and so forth of schools around there, including Haverford and Swarthmore and so forth, who were helping to evaluate, so that they had to make some decisions as to who should be helped first. You get thousands of these. Yet, the students back in camp, they're a little afraid to come out.

Well, when I was still there, in camp--I only stayed there about three or four months, when Tom Bodine came and said, "Kay, I think you could do a lot

more help by coming to Philadelphia." And they offered me a job in Philadelphia. [You] had to have a job to get out of camp. At any rate, while I was in camp I was seeing all these students and trying to help them and getting everything sent in so that we'd be sure. Then sending in recommendations on my own thinking as to what--and heck, I was only what, 23?

L: You were older than Tom Bodine?

Y: [No.] I had graduated, you see. That's why I could be of more help.

So anyhow, we sometimes got it all in, got everything ready, even the scholarship, the money, and then something would be held up at the provost marshal's office in Washington, D.C. I don't know if most people knew that we had to get that clearance for each student. The way the Council was doing it, to be sure that the papers and everything got to Washington, was that somebody was a courier and took it, hand carried it, to be sure that they got to Washington. Yet, sometimes, just because maybe the father was a member of the wrong association or something, the student's papers were held up. Or the FBI had some little old thing on somebody or other or extended family, and that meant that the student's clearance didn't come right away. Then the starting date of the semester or the quarter would come and go, and the kid is waiting in the camp, and nothing is happening. It was really something.

I remember myself, I got all the paperwork done and it was ready. The permit from Washington did not come. It was a nursing student who was supposed to go to Salt Lake City. I remember storming into the administrator's office--this was the fellow who was the head of the social services department. Such a sweet, kind [man]--he and his wife were there because they wanted to be of some help. And here I am, in a rage. But he couldn't do anything. I said, "Look, Mr. Lafabrique, you could write a letter. This girl is only going to Salt Lake City. It's the next-largest city and we know where she'll be. Just write a letter, get her out of the gate so we can send her on her way." And he couldn't do that. That was breaking the rules. But he said, and I could understand, if you did that for one you would have to do it for many others, and then the whole system would break down. I knew this, I should have known this, but anyhow I was in a rage. And the entrance date came and went, and this girl finally got so discouraged. She came to Chicago. I don't know what happened to her. I don't think she ever became a nurse. But this sort of thing happened time and time and time again.

L: How long were you in Philadelphia? Were you there through the end of the war?

Y: In Philadelphia?

L: Yes. You were in Topaz for three months.

Y: Yes, and then Tom... Actually, Tom went out the gate with me, so he came for me. Then I went on the train and I saw my friend who was in the army in

Laramie, Wyoming; stayed there one night and then went on, came here to Chicago where my brothers... I'm getting ahead of my story. My brother graduated college.

L: During that period?

Y: Yes. He graduated. See, he left the assembly center. All he had to do was finish his one year. I stayed in the assembly center quite a long time, seven months or something.

Anyhow, one brother was here [in Chicago], the one that was at Northwestern Theological Seminary. This is part where it gets kind of fuzzy, because I'm still on my way to go to Philadelphia. I saw him for one evening and I got back on the train. This is when my friend--who is doing tremendous work now for the National Student Relocation Commemorative Fund--at any rate, Nobu had asked me if she could join me in going to Philadelphia. I said, "Sure, why not? We'll all go together." And we went. I remember going to the University of Nebraska graduation [of my brother Tom]. I borrowed \$100 in camp so that Tom would have some money to get started on, and then the camp gave me \$100 for travel to get to Philly and to get started. So, gee, I felt real rich. I had (laughs) all this money. So Nobu and I went, I remember going to St. Louis. My nephew was there at Washington University. We went to his graduation and went to my brother's graduation at the University of Nebraska, and then Tom and I went. That's how it was. Then we came to Chicago. It's all fuzzy there.

L: But you were in Philadelphia how long doing work for the Council? When you were working for the Council at AFSC, were you in Philadelphia during the whole period, or did you go back to the camps?

Y: No, no. I was there for the whole time. You know, for a Japanese American from the West Coast, this going to Philadelphia was a new experience. The bitterness of the evacuation experience just fell away when I met the National Student Relocation staff. (begins to cry) It's very emotional.

L: We can turn it off for a while if you like.

Y: Yes. (tape goes off and then on again) It's easier for me to read this part, O.K.? (reads) "All I can say, it was a heartwarming experience. When I look back, they were really not much older than me. Tom Bodine, Trudy King, Betty and Woody Emlen were working 10 to 12 hours a day to get through the piles of work that was on their desks. It was incredible what they accomplished, what they gave up in their personal lives. If they were being paid at all it was subsistence wage and minimal housing. Since we arrived in Philly with nothing at all, the Council saw to it that we were paid a subsistence wage too and they helped us find housing. We were free," (pause) "happy and doing something worth while.

"As I look back on my 50 working years, I think the student relocation experience seems to be the most satisfying and meaningful. Almost everything I did after that grew from or hinged upon what I had learned." (pause) "The Quaker ethic has left an indelible mark on me.

"It is not surprising that the Student Relocation Council played a significant role in the promotion of the entire relocation process. It reduced the resistance of evacuee resettlers and the evacuee resistance to leaving the camp."

It's like, I look at the Russian experience now, you know. Those not in Moscow or Leningrad but those--I think they're a little at a loss as to what to do with themselves. The Russian system is gone and what are they going to do? Well, these people, my people, the Japanese Americans, were in these camps, some of them for two [or] three years. They had lost the will to try to do something about it. They certainly got it back after, but it was great resistance to come out.

So my job, part of it, as I started to tell you about writing this newsletter, was to write about what the outside was like. Now isn't that silly? But we had to tell them what the outer world was doing and [that] it was really quite normal out here, you know, and the happy kind of things that happened to students. There were a lot of tragic things that happened too. But anyhow, I wrote letters, answered letters. And that's what the whole staff was doing. Tom [Bodine] was one of the most prolific, incredible, remarkable, wonderful letter writers. If we could even gather back some of the ones that he wrote to the students it would be marvelous. He usually wrote these...

L: Tom was writing letters?

Y: Yeah, he wrote hand-written letters. Pages and pages, baring his soul in a way, to help these students; and they in turn were responding. I know there are lots of students who remember Tom [Bodine] with great affection and gratitude. Now, there was a person like Trudy King who was on staff. Trudy was a daughter of the president of Amherst College and had a lovely apartment in Cambridge on the Charles River. She left it to come to work at the Council. The first weeks or so there was no place, couldn't find housing, so she took me to her place. I found out she was sleeping in a bunk bed, minimum. I don't know, but she walked miles to get to wherever she was staying. Trudy was an amazing person, and she continued to write to these students after, on her own, after the Council closed, in the schools, wherever they were. There were many, many students with great affection for Trudy. I'm sorry that when she died she didn't hear from a lot of them because they didn't know where she was. I could refer you to somebody who really knew. But her daughters kept in touch with the Student Relocation.

Did you know that there is an organization, the National Student Relocation Commemorative Fund, in Boston? Well, they are the ones who were relocated and made it, and are now contributing and helping Southeast-Asian students with scholarships every year. But anyhow, that's another story.

L: So you mentioned that there were happy stories about those students who were taken to college campuses, and there were also tragic ones. Can you give us one instance of each?

Y: Well, the happy ones are the ones that--it's a remarkable story, this whole student relocation. I wish somebody could really write it. And some have. Tom was going to do that. Tom Bodine was going to try, but he said that after he went back to the files that somehow 50 years have gone by and so forth--he just felt he couldn't do justice and he couldn't write it. But the remarkable part is the fact that the students at first were dispersed to the not-so-good schools, but they went on to the better and bigger schools. A great number of them went on to higher degrees and masters. They say that there's a great disproportion of Ph.D.s amongst the Japanese Americans. We, from being only on the West Coast, Washington, Oregon and California, because of this whole experience, got dispersed all over the United States. A lot of the students then stayed on or made successes of themselves within the areas in which they found themselves, or traveled to, or got their parents and friends or their families to, or got married and stayed there. So that the dispersal of the Japanese Americans from the West Coast was one of the good things that happened through all of this. And of course, I do believe sincerely that it was the Student Relocation that was the forerunner. They were the ones that made it possible for the camps to be opened up. From then on the directors felt that they made it, they did it, they can do it now, so. I think the camps were closed much earlier because of this impetus.

L: You mean to different ethnic groups?

Y: No, to Japanese Americans themselves. No, it didn't get to [other] ethnic groups. One of the things that I think is not known to most people, I don't know whether I should tell you about it, but we discovered that in writing to all the schools trying to get these students in, that we could not get even one Southern school to open their doors. Of course, we could understand that from what happened in the 50s and the 60s and how long it took the Blacks--the whole history of that, you know, and the civil rights movement. I really--well, we thought about it. We talked about it at the Council in Philly. "None of the Southern schools are responding, in fact some of them are downright rotten about it." Well, they couldn't. If they can't admit Blacks they certainly couldn't admit enemy Japanese. You know. So, I think this was evident.

L: Tell me one of the tragic instances deriving from the relocation of a student.

Y: Well, there were a lot of them, but I remember one in particular. There were very few Catholics amongst the Japanese Americans, but there were a few. One of the Catholic students had applied and he was the oldest of seven children. Well, we were all excited. Here we got this tremendous scholarship, stipend, everything. I forgot what school it was, now. Wherever it was, he was all set to go. We even

got the permit. Everything. Last minute, he wrote us that he just could not leave the family. He was responsible. The father, I think the father might have been in one of those detention camps for aliens. Whatever, he could not go. To this day I keep thinking in my mind, often when I think of the Catholic student, I think, "What happened to him?" I'm sure he must have gotten to school at some later date, but what a--now that's not a tragedy maybe, but it was to him, to this student. So he didn't come, he didn't go. I don't know where he went. I know that when the camps were closed he probably was responsible for getting them relocated.

L: Now, I want to go back to when you were at Topaz, or even perhaps to when you were at the temporary accommodations. You were there for seven months, you said.

Y: You mean at Tanforan. Tanforan, I was there, let's see... I think we must have moved there about September.

L: So about six months. Maybe you are not equipped to answer me this question, but there were two things that struck me as being very moving when I was doing my research. One of them was the feeling of isolation that those Issei who didn't speak English must have felt. Your being able to speak Japanese, I wondered if you had contact with those people and if you shared their experience at all. My second question regarding the time when you were in the camps is, I read also that there were at times conflicts between groups that rebelled and that were questioning the U.S. policies and groups that, for fear or just for outright respect to authority, were against rebellion, and that there were lots of conflicts. So there are two questions regarding the camps. One is the isolation of the Issei who didn't speak English. If you shared any of their experience. And the second question is how did you feel, I think it was a generational conflict and it was also a different ideology conflict within the community. Let me change the side.

**(Side 3 ends)**

**(Side 4 begins)**

L: So, Kay, the question was, first of all, did you share the experience of those Issei who didn't speak English, and what was it like.

Y: No, I really didn't. I'm sorry. So, to be honest with you, my mother--we spoke to her in Japanese but she really understood English too. The Issei that I knew, our church friends, made the best of it. It was the first time in their lives that they didn't have to work or worry about the every days of doing, of living. For my mother, it was the first time she did not have to work. When we look back we were very grateful that at last she could enjoy herself. She learned to paint in camp. The teacher was a professor at the University of California who was also evacuated and in the camp and he decided to set up a classroom of Issei, who then

- learned to paint and watercolor. He had paints and stuff sent in. From that beginning, my mother then, when she later on went back to California and was living in Berkeley, was going to school to see Professor Obata. She's left with me some of the paintings that she did and they're really quite good.
- L: Did any of them depict life in the camp?
- Y: No, no. No, she didn't. (laughs) No, she didn't. But we became very close friends with Mine Okubo. I don't know whether you've seen her sketchbook, but she was a real artist. She had been traveling in Europe at the time this whole thing happened. She came back by boat and got in. What was interesting was her number; 13660 was her number and that's the title of the sketchbook that she has printed. Well, we were 13661. The next one that was checked in. Mine's sketchbook is very revealing. I could share it with you. I could send you the book if you'd like. Somebody else has it right now, but whatever.
- L: Do you know if it's available?
- Y: It could be. I won it as a prize recently when I went to a reunion.
- L: Maybe I should do some looking into that.  
So, Kay, you were in Philadelphia. Oh, you did not answer my second question, which was, did you experience the generational conflict and also the [ideological] conflicts.
- Y: We were lucky. We were lucky in our family, because we didn't have the conflict; but in some families they had deep schisms and differences about this whole thing, about trying to register for the army, the "no-no" and the "yes-yes" boys and so forth. From my family, we were all for it. We knew we had to--what was the use of fighting it?
- L: The "no-no" and "yes-yes," you're referring to the forms that people were required to answer whether they [would] be loyal to...
- Y: Yes, yes. We were willing to fight for the U.S. Army and whether they would register for induction and so forth. Well, my brother wasn't in camp. He never came to Topaz. As you know, I told you that Dr. Deutch got him out and he left from Tanforan, so that he never was involved in this. My older brother was in a theological seminary, so that was another thing. But in other families it was terrible, terrible. There was one very close family friend of mine, the doctor who won the Cane at University of California Medical Center, his father was a diehard pro-Japanese. He would not believe that the Japanese would not win, and he was willing to take his family and go to Tule Lake, and in fact he did.
- L: Which was the camp to which all the dangerous aliens went.

Y: Yes, yes. Yes. He took them there, but then the family at least convinced him that they would not be returned to Japan with him. If he wanted to go that was his doing, but they did not go. We were grateful, because this fellow is a tremendous doctor in Los Angeles. But [it was] in lots of families. Then there were many of the leaders, our leaders, the Japanese-American Citizens League leaders, [who] were older Nisei, and they were the ones that were trying very hard to work out something with the government. Of course, the younger ones were not going to take all this and felt that they were actually collaborating with the government to keep us in camp and get our fellows inducted. That was not the way it was anyhow. It all has turned out, you know, 50 years later; it's something. But at the time, it was turmoil, and really, in a way, very tragic.

There's one fellow that we know, there's a family. This is a family we knew very well in Oakland, California. Hayato was still an undergraduate, and the brother was in the army. The father was a real gung-ho pro-Japan man. Hayato was cramped in these small barracks quarters with his father and he kept wanting just to get out of camp. It meant that if he signed up to go into the army that would solve the problem. But he couldn't leave his mother with his father like that, and it was a terrible situation. I remember my brother who was going into theological seminary was still in camp at the time. They were so afraid, because Hayato was so depressed that he was ready to commit suicide. There are students who did it or people who did that, you know. At any rate, friends of Hayato stayed with him day and night until they got him out of camp without going into the army. This guy's got his Ph.D. now and is in Texas. He's done good things since then.

L: Well, the army eventually drafted the Japanese Americans, and when that happened there must have been...

Y: Yes, they did. But the first ones were all volunteers, you know.

L: Yes. But also eventually they drafted, and at that time there must have been conscientious objectors. Were there, and did you ever get in touch with any of them?

Y: I didn't. I really didn't. No.

L: So you don't know. That's O.K. Did you become a Quaker yourself?

Y: No. Since we were born and raised as Methodists and my brother was a Methodist minister, and we were very active in the church. But I did go to, and I have been going to, Quaker Meetings. I believe so much of what the Quakers do. I like the way the Quakers actually do their social work or their social services.

I think you'd be interested to know that my older sister, the one that was a nurse, she was with us in camp and set up the [hospital] and all of that. Then they came and settled in Chicago. My sister, her husband and her son. They spent a

period of time in Idaho trying to run a ranch and so forth, and then they came here. One of the things--it was wartime now. The war was still not over, and housing was one of the most terrible things to find. So, I came back from Philly. By then...

L: That was after your service...

Y: Yes. The student relocation funds had dwindled and the number of students that had to be relocated was now, you know, minimal. Actually the WRA, Wartime Relocation Authority offices could take care of [them]. A lot of the schools were opening up. All of this was changing. So I then left and I came to Chicago. And I, naturally then--my mother and two brothers, they had an apartment in Evanston.

I wish my sister could write this whole story. My brother was in the theological seminary then. A professor wanted to be helpful, and he had a home in Evanston and was willing and offering to rent it for a year or two while his family left this area, because his child was asthmatic and they thought that leaving this area would be very helpful. They knew about our housing situation and they wanted to help.

So my sister and brother-in-law wanted to rent this house--my brother was staying at the dorm--and then have my mother and my other brother come live with them. They had made all the arrangements, signed the papers and were ready to move in, when the professor decided he'd better let his neighbors know that they had done this and they were going to rent it to a Japanese American. And all hell broke loose. It was just a terrible thing. Now this is a professor of theology at Northwestern University. He didn't know how to handle it.

Anyhow, as the story goes, there was a great big meeting held of all the neighbors. The next-door neighbor happened to be a lawyer, who felt that if Japs moved in next door it would certainly--it's just like the old, old story about Blacks moving in next door and therefore, you know, the property value would go down and, you know, how to take care of it and so forth and so on. It got to be a terrible, terrible thing.

My younger brother, who was living in Chicago, tells me at that point he decided that he didn't care, maybe he didn't want to be a Methodist anymore, because the church, the largest--can you imagine, now?--the largest Methodist church in this area is the one that is in Evanston, the First Methodist Church in Evanston. Reverend Dr. Tittle was at this meeting with all of these real estate people, the neighbors and what do you call it. He didn't say a word. And he didn't [say anything] from the pulpit. Tom said he'd been going every Sunday. He never was able to say anything. It was a tremendous disappointment to me too, because I was still in Philly and I was coming to Chicago, that this had happened.

From then on my sister and brother-in-law then had to find another place to stay. They finally got an apartment in Chicago, in Northtown. But then that particular house was sold from under them and the new owners were insisting that they get out. My brother-in-law finally had to quit his job and spend every day [looking]. My sister was then a public health nurse in Chicago, and every evening the two of them went all over. The heartbreaking stories that they tell you--"No

Japs wanted." But that was the thing that shocked me so much when I went to Philadelphia. That first week in Philadelphia when we were looking for an apartment, I was shocked to find "No Jews wanted." That we had never seen. We had come from the West Coast, and we thought, "Oh my God!" you know.

But these were good experiences for us, because I can really empathize and feel with my Black friends. They don't have to tell me any more; I know. Even where I'm living, the Near North Side, at one time when I went looking for an apartment in that area, no one would rent [to me]. So that's the way things were. Things have changed a great deal since then. But the apartment complex that I moved into, I made very sure, even when they were building, that it was open housing. And it is. We have all kinds of people living in this complex of seven highrises. But it's a good feeling to know that this is possible in Chicago, which is a terrible place for many.

L: So let's go back to Philadelphia. Tell me a little bit more about your--you told me what you did for the Council, but I'd like to know a little bit more about your experience in the city and your experience with the Quakers and just your being there.

Y: O.K. Well, just being in the atmosphere of certainly the AFSC headquarters, being able to be a part of the Monday morning sessions where somebody back from the field would speak. We were allowed to be a part of that and we did join in all. We also had--well, Pooh Baily I met in the International Institute in Mills College. Her father and mother lived in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and they had a huge Pennsylvania Dutch home, part of which they'd converted into dormitories because there were a number of C.O.s on detached service working in the mental hospitals in and around Philadelphia. And their one day off, or whatever, they had a place to come to, and that was the Baily farm. So Uncle Bert and Mam, that's what we called them, had goats and a vegetable patch and so forth. They fed all of us and, of course, we were invited to join. And it was a good experience for a person like me, because I grew in meeting these wonderful C.O.s that had dared to be C.O.s. It was not easy. And then I met other people that came and went. The Bailys had all of these people, it was always just full of people. But that was a good experience. Again, it's the Quaker experience...

L: I would like to hear a little bit about your feelings just after you left Philadelphia, not just about how difficult--I mean I'd like to hear that as well, how difficult it was to reintegrate into society and try to start from zero where obviously you were not welcome--but also the comparisons that went through your mind and the feeling of having done the work you had just done. Can you put all that in one context?

Y: Yes, I think I can. But, you know, I had had this naive idea that Philadelphia was the city of brotherly love and that, you know, we could--like, for instance, my oldest brother, who worked for Mitsubishi, didn't have his master's in accounting

but could do accounting very well. He had gone to Cal Berkeley, finished Cal Berkeley, and then he went to Harvard. He didn't finish his MBA at Harvard; he took a trip around the world with the money he had. Anyhow, whatever. Yet, when he left camp--he refused to cooperate with the army to train American soldiers in Japanese; he was bilingual, incidentally. At any rate. So anyhow, he came to New York thinking he could get a job. He couldn't get a job, and he came to Philly. He went to employment agencies, and Quaker places, and I knew they were wanting and needed accountants or anything, anybody who had, you know, a college background. Yet, no job. And he could not, therefore, get his family out of camp, because he couldn't get a job. He stayed with me just a couple of days. He was so discouraged, I felt so badly. But he left and he went back to New York, and then he went back to California. He took a course in refrigeration, and he became a door-to-door salesman for small appliances.

I might mention to you the fact that it was the older, the Issei and the older Nisei, who really suffered the most through this whole evacuation. It didn't hurt me. I was just beginning and started to know a thing about anything. But like my sister and her husband, the Stanford man, lived on the border. They had a tremendous thing going for them. After all, we were at war. Production of food, you know, was an important thing. Yet they had to leave everything, just leave it, and leave. My oldest brother, again, he didn't have a job. Therefore, that was tough. But they're the ones that lost. Just beginning to get started with their small children and so forth, they're the ones that lost the most. And of course the Issei, their whole lifetime. I'm glad my father was not alive; it would have killed him, it've destroyed him, because he really believed this country was the dream that he had for all of us.

L: I would like to hear about your feelings on the redress legislation of 1980 and the commission on wartime relocation and internment of civilians, and finally Reagan signing the approval for the monetary...

Y: What could I say, it was tremendous. Didn't believe that it would ever happen. I had friends who worked for ten whole years for that. When the thing passed, I was visiting my sister, who, incidentally, was living in Japan for a little while, and I was there. I called [Chiye Tomihiro] who worked so hard here. What a triumph it was. But I never in all my life thought it would happen. I'm just sorry that my mother could not have shared, because we had nothing. And we were poor, poor, poor all the time. But it was O.K.

I think the thing that we really learned in camp, thrown in with 10,000 people--we all were given pea coats. Sears, you know, and mine was so long. We didn't have any pictures, we didn't have any photographs, we didn't have any cameras, so nobody saw us; but it was a goofy, funny thing. Everybody looked the same, you know, and nothing fit, but anything was O.K. But the thing that we realized was that ultimately things meant nothing, and that the clothes that you wore meant nothing. That the thing that was the most important was education, how you felt, and what your relationship was with your fellow man, and with

God. Because other than that, what did we have? And that's the lesson we all learned in camp. Who could top anybody else? We were all the same. We were eating in the dining halls. And some people were washing toilets. It didn't matter. We did what we could, and we were given 12 dollars and 14 dollars and 16 dollars a month. What could we buy? But I learned a lot, and I'm glad, grateful.

L: One last question. In times, I feel today, of increasing racism and more social tensions, and with the economic crisis and all that, I fear that something like that could happen again. Do you think it could?

Y: We do, we worry about it. But I think that a great number of us will rise up and fight. No more letting it, you know, quietly. We were known as the quiet ones. And I know a lot of people, our third generation, criticize the second generation for having quietly, like sheep, gone into the camps. But they didn't realize how the times were. We couldn't fight. We wouldn't have been mowed down like the Russians or some of the other, you know--or even the South American groups, the El Salvadoreans and Nicaraguans and so forth. We didn't have the fear for our lives, but we knew that we could not fight the government and we just had--and it was a good thing. We did what we were supposed to do and therefore; and we did get the \$20,000, and I've been able to give [most of it] away. And it's been a wonderful feeling to know that it's possible and it did happen.

The hearings, the ones that I went to here in Chicago, were very, very revealing. A lot of it was taped, and I think that you could hear them. Over and over again, as I said, people recounted the Quakers. And that's why, just recently--my brother died in December, so--finally I got this letter out in February. This was a small group of us Japanese Americans who knew that some of us would be getting some money and that we could share it, to do good things with. And so we sent a letter to friends that we thought would respond. At that time this particular [AFSC] office was having a hard time. I know that the contributions have decreased. And it was a kind of a thrill, because two weeks ago I suddenly got a call from [Chiye Tomihiro] who does the accounting, who's a volunteer, a Nisei, and she said, "Hey, Kay, one of your friends sent a thousand dollars. I just wanted you to be happy for today." (laughs) And it was a great thing. I'm very pleased to know that they are contributing.

I don't think the Quakers will be forgotten. My own family, we've been so indebted to the Quakers. I didn't tell you about this, well, the whole looking-for-a-house business and my brother-in-law then had to find a job. Two Quaker men, they were chemists who had a formula for a moisturizing lotion, needed somebody to work with them. My brother-in-law's an engineer, but he was just so grateful. And so he went to work with the--I forgot their names. Abrams, a Jewish fellow who was a Quaker who went to Quaker detached service in South America. The other one was Lloyd--I've forgotten what his name is. They went to live in South Carolina, and they're Quakers. But again, you see, the Quakers came to our rescue. And then when we couldn't find the housing, do you know, it was finally--my brother-in-law I told you quit his job--the Quakers then went with them to the

various places where there was a for sale or for rent sign. Finally they found a realtor in Oak Park who was going to help them to find a house, and they did find a house. The one and only house they looked at was the one they immediately bought and moved in to.

And the goofy part of that whole thing is, [they] moved in and then I came back from Philly. And after living with them in [Chicago] and then months and months of really misery, we moved into this Oak Park house and the stuff isn't even unpacked. And then a lot of our things were coming there from the church, that we'd stored and all. And my brother is in uniform. This is the engineer, the University of Nebraska brother's in uniform and he's home on a home leave. Somebody comes to the door and he answers the door and this is a man. And he welcomed him and said, "Sorry, we haven't got a place to sit on, but you can sit on one of these packing cases." And they had a wonderful chat, in fact they had a beer together. And the guy leaves. And we found out later that he was sent by the group of neighbors to get us out, you know, and that they were against having any Japs as neighbors. But he couldn't say anything. He was so shocked just to be greeted by a guy in uniform that he, (laughs) he went away without telling my brother what he came for.

Months, months later, and it's an interesting story, because one of the neighbors, Mr. Gustafson, was a fellow who--he just couldn't even talk to us. I remember when I moved there and I was working in the Loop and I would have to take the train. I would be walking to the train, same path as he was, but he'd be running, running, running or going into alleys and whatnot just so that he wouldn't have to talk to me or be near me. And yet, at the end, before he died, he was one of our best friends. It's, you know. And I learned a lesson, what love can do, because his wife never felt that way, and she was the one who--we would hang out our laundry on the lines in the morning before going to work, and then it might start raining--she would be the one who would take it all down, fold it all up and bring it into her house and give it to us when we got home.

But these are wonderful stories that we could tell. That's why it tears us apart when we think of the hate things that are beginning to happen. And the new Asians, the refugees that are coming and are having. And of course, the Blacks. They must suffer every single day. You know, the rottenness. But the thing that I realize, that this country is very racist. And I keep wondering: How do we overcome this? What do we do to make it better? Of course if they were all Quakers that would be a different thing. (laughs) You know. I think a lot about a lot of things.

You know, I never told you, I didn't tell you very much about the student relocation thing. You know, I figure that somebody else will be telling you. It's a long thing. But I should at least tell you that--maybe, quickly--that there were three very important meetings that were held. You know, Mrs. Roosevelt was very concerned about the whole thing. And then, I think very few people know, but it was Undersecretary of War, a guy named John McCloy, (rustling of paper) asked--here it is: "On May 5th, 1942, Assistant Secretary of War John H. McCloy would question Clarence Pickett, executive secretary of AFSC, to assist him in

formulating policies and obtaining support for an extensive program of student relocation. So on May 29th an impressive group of educators and administrators from most of the leading national institutions of higher learning gathered in Chicago, called together by Clarence Pickett--representatives from YM/YW, churches, government agencies and the AFSC. Trudy King and Tom Bodine were there." Did Tom mention this?

L: Yes.

Y: Did he tell you what happened?

L: Well, that is the kind of information that is very much recorded, and the experiences that you have shared with us are the other side that we wanted to hear.

Y: Did he tell you about the funny story, that this meeting was held at the University of Chicago?

L: No.

Y: Well, this is a funny story, because what happened was, nobody knew it, and here it is, this meeting is called at the University of Chicago under the football field, Stagg Field. The atomic bomb was being created and Enrico Fermi was the man, with his colleagues, that was doing the research there. And, therefore, it was the most horrifying thing for anybody to think that this meeting was being held there. But not only that, Dean Redfield of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences goes ahead right after this meeting and admits two students, Japanese-American students, who appeared at the University of Chicago. He doesn't even go through the regular process of the student relocation, and therefore they didn't have any permits or anything. I remember AFSC and I remember Student Relocation people were horrified. Did Tom tell you this story?

L: No.

Y: Well, there they were. So they decided--they couldn't let Dean Redfield know why they couldn't--and so they just said, "Just let them stay." And the two students actually enrolled and graduated from the University of Chicago; and Dean Redfield never knew until years later that that was what was underneath that Stagg Field.

L: Now, if anything were to be done differently or if you have any advice to future AFSC laborers of love, or [if there were] any other--let's hope there aren't any (laughs)--but any other similar situations in the future, would you tell them anything?

Y: No. Except how impressed and inspired I was. These people were giving up everything, and working 10, 12 hours a day. There was one fellow, his name was Robert King Hall, whose half of his salary was being paid by Harvard and half of it was being paid by NSRC, who came to work for the summer at NSRC. And he was going to be doing exactly the same thing I was doing, trying to answer the letters, and we were using--what do you call this thing you put on tape? It wasn't tape, though.

L: Mimeograph.

Y: In those days it was in [wax] rolls. And then there was a student, an Armenian student, who came in at night and transcribed those letters. But Robert King Hall worked 10 hours a day, seven days a week. He was there even on Sunday. Well, how could I not be there? So (laughs) I appeared there seven days a week. And it was hot. But I was inspired by this guy, who I'm sure he was being paid minimal, but whatever, you know, he had a family. But he was doing this just for the summer, and he wanted to get through as much as possible, and he did. But you know, I don't think he was even a Quaker. But whatever, he came there to do this job and he was a marvelous man. And for me, again, it was a wonderful learning experience.

I don't think the Quakers could have done anything any differently or better. The outpouring of love, sensitive, concerned caring, (begins to cry) it can't be duplicated.

L: Thank you, Kay. It was wonderful.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**AFSC Oral History Interview #408**

**Narrator: LAFAYETTE NODA**

**Interviewer: Sarah Brooner**

**Date: 9/3/91**

B: Today is September 3rd, 1991. I am Sarah Brooner with the American Friends Service Committee doing to oral history project with Lafayette Noda. And Lafayette, would you please give your full name, your place of birth, and your date of birth.

N: Lafayette Noda, born in Livingston, California, March 13th, 1916.

B: O.K. Now just to make sure we have this lets go back...

B: Lafayette, since we're both in the same birth month we're gonna get along fine. (laughter) How long did you live in Livingston?

N: Oh. My. I was there until I went away to school in Berkeley in 1934. So that means from 1916 to 1934 I was pretty much in Livingston attending kindergarten, grade school, high school. And then from high school, after graduation, I went directly to Berkeley.

B: And what was your field of study?

N: I started out in organic chemistry in the college of chemistry at UC Berkeley. Incidentally, ROTC was required of everyone at that time so I put up with it one class a week for the required two years.

B: You were supposed to have two years and then you became a commissioned officer at the end, but you didn't have to do that.

N: No. I don't think one automatically became a commissioned officer, it was just you could do that.

B: What did your parents do? What was their occupation?

N: My parents were basically farmers. Father came over and worked with the Intercontinental Railroad and then settled down on the farm, married mother who came over as a picture bride. They were married in Morgantown, West Virginia. We were basically a farm family, and then Father took up hauling produce from the area -- originally from the area of Livingston to San Francisco -- and the later he moved the growers transfer company to \_\_\_\_\_ Beach, which then hauled vegetables, mostly grown by Japanese, to the market in Los Angeles as well as San Francisco. The family stayed in Livingston and Father ran the trucking

- business as a partnership in \_\_\_\_\_ Beach and we nine children grew up on the farm.
- B: Nine children.
- N: Nine children.
- B: What was your main crop?
- N: Our main crop was grapes; table grapes and then later wine grapes.
- B: Your father came over in what year?
- N: I don't know exactly what year he came. It was very close to 1900. He was pretty much of a teenager at that time. The story that I hear about him is that he was quite independent in his thinking and took issue with his community with regards to the establishment of a tuberculosis sanitarium in Kamomoto (?)\_\_\_\_, his argument being that it was too foggy and wet a climate to be suitable. I don't know whether this might have been part of the reason for his emigration to the U.S.
- B: And your mother a picture bride. Was he at West Virginia at the time?
- N: No. I don't know how that connection formed. I think it probably went through Mother's contacts in Japan, either through a friend in Japan who was a friend of the Morgans in Morgantown or some other connection. At any rate, the marriage took place there and the parents settled down on the farm, calling it Paradise Farm.
- B: And nine children. Where were you in the nine?
- N: I was fourth. My brother was the oldest. He was named Andrew. Then came Grace and Lilly, and then Lafayette, and then Harriet, then Patrick, and Lois... oh, before Lois was Grant, and then Lois and Mary. You can pick out historical names there. Father had the idea that here was young America and old Japan had something to contribute, and the children should be some help to young America. Father certainly was not a pacifist. I think he probably would turn over in his grave if he knew that Andrew and Patrick and I have been pretty much pacifists, and I guess Grant not so much so.
- B: Did you have a particular religion that was practiced in your home?

N: Father and mother wanted us children to grow up with a religious background, and we lived outside the town of Livingston and they kind of insisted that we should go to church. So we went to the Methodist church which was the dominant church in Livingston. In the town of Livingston was established the Yamato colony which is the Japanese colony set up by the newspaper man Habiko (?) who bought the land and felt that Japanese me were being too loose and that they should be settling down. He felt that farming would be a good profession for them, so he helped establish this Yamato colony which ultimately consisted of about sixty families of farmers. It was primarily a cooperative -- well farming in general -- but primarily a marketing cooperative of produce, grapes, and some other fruits; peaches, apples, apricots. Also they did get involved with the truck crops, but the truck crops were fairly early in the history of the Japanese.

B: When you went to school were you mixed all together or did you go to separate school?

N: We were all mixed together. We were all very much aware of being Japanese. In my own experience I felt ashamed of the way we lived as Japanese. For example, we had our bathtub -- a wooden tub with sheet metal bottom -- set on a kind of a fire support and the water was heated from burning the brush from the vineyard and the trees. I wanted a regular indoor bathtub and indoor toilet. We had an outhouse. Maybe this is the kind of experience that poor people have in general, but anyway I think that this was the kind of thing we grew up with. Our family lived apart from the Yamato colony with the sixty families. We were several miles away on our farm. So we didn't have quite as much relationship with the activities of the colony people. Still, our parents did want us to learn Japanese so we went to Saturday morning Japanese school. We children really revolted at this, although we went because we were forced to. We really didn't put a lot of effort into it. We just tolerated it. And then later as we grew up and realized what an opportunity we missed we felt sorry that, well, we were really in the wrong in the thinking that we knew better than our parents in regards to learning Japanese. (chuckles) It happens again and again I guess.

B: You did not have an opportunity to know your grandparents then.

N: No. No. We didn't hear too much about our grandparents and our relatives. Communication with our parents was really difficult. Among us children... The oldest ones, because of this, learned the most Japanese. They had to communicate with the parents for a while. But as children began going to school and brought back command of English to the home, why then the younger children knew less and less of Japanese and could communicate even less well with our parents. So that our youngest siblings really hardly knew a word of Japanese. They could hardly communicate.

B: How were your parents affected by the Great Depression?

N: Well, that was really a severe blow to the family, like it was for so many people. Up until that point father was really quite expansive, mortgaging the farm and acquiring new land, planting new vineyards. Then came the crash and we lost everything and had to leave Paradise Farm. Then we lived in rented houses and in the \_\_\_\_\_ Ranch outside of Livingston, running the ten acres of vineyard and having use of the house. Those were difficult times. At that time Father's trucking business in \_\_\_\_\_ Beach was able to provide a monthly income. During the course of the years when Father was no longer able to do his part of the partnership -- because he had had a stroke and had \_\_\_\_\_ -- my oldest sister Grace had gone to business school and she, then, went and lived in \_\_\_\_\_ Beach and took over Father's responsibility in the partnership. This was a source of support for the family. I remember that we used to get checks of seventy five dollars a month, and Mother somehow managed to have the family grow up, maintain going to school. Even during that period of time I joined the Boy Scouts and that was stupid, with some dollars going that way from Mothers... That was difficult times and Mother took in the business of washing the towels for the high school athletic group. So we did that for, well, less than a year I guess. It was something that we did for a while.

B: How did they feel about Roosevelt and his New Deal? Do you know how your family politics were at that point?

N: I don't know just how are parents might have felt. I think that they felt it certainly was a big help. The assistance that Washington was able to give, the WPA that we would see meant doing work on the highways, the roadways for example, with pick and shovel, doing work along the road that really wasn't too essential but still it was work for the men. I think in general that people approved of this effort by Washington.

B: How did your family react in terms of things... You said it was difficult when the depression came and of course you lost everything. What was the reaction of your family, your parents, at that point? Did you hear any discussions about, "We can start over" or "we're angry?" The attitudes.

N: I think that as a Japanese family we probably weren't too different. And as far as the depression was concerned I think of the general Japanese attitude that's really characterized by the word \_\_\_\_\_(?) You can't do anything about it. You just face it and do the best you can with that situation. I think that's pretty much the attitude of the Japanese during the depression. Just trying to make the best of it and there wasn't a lot of complaining about the fact that this was a situation [where] times were difficult. I suppose also there was the aspect that, although there were some families that did relatively well because of the way things worked out for them, still there wasn't the attitude that, well, they shouldn't be so well off. There certainly wasn't any feeling against, just a feeling of

- acceptance of the situation. I think that pretty much characterizes the depression as well as later on in the evacuation and relocation.
- B: When you went to Berkeley, where were you when you heard on the radio about Pearl Harbor?
- N: Oh, well, I'd finished my bachelors degree at Berkeley and then I went home and spent about a year at home. Then I decided that I would go and try to find a job for myself in Los Angeles in the area fruit products, in which I had a minor major at Berkeley. And so I tramped the streets of Los Angeles looking for some kind of work in orange juice concentrates or fruit by products of some kind. I just had no luck at all. So then I found a part time job at UCLA on a project that was studying the maturation of avocados. Professor Appleman in the Division of Irrigation had a project. This was part time support for myself, and then [I accepted] a school boy job, I then started with graduate work. It was a Sunday after coming back to the laboratory, after having been at church, that my co-worker in the laboratory said, "Japan has bombed Pearl Harbor." But, of course, it slowly sank in and it was a real shock. I just didn't know what to make of it. I feel, looking back on it, that my attitude was again one of, "Well, it's something that I can't do anything about." But also I had begun to feel more and more that I didn't want to be involved in warfare. I felt pretty clear about that. But other than that I think that I had generally the attitude of acceptance.
- B: Did you feel any fear at that point that people perhaps might react to you personally? Did people say anything to you at that point?
- N: I wasn't aware of it there in west Los Angeles. In fact, the people I came in contact with there were very supportive and didn't look upon me as a Japanese enemy by any means. So I didn't feel any hostility, I though, people expressed sympathy for what was happening. I didn't have any difficulty in that way in my limited contact. And then, I think I tended to be nonchalant about it and I tended to rather disobey some of the rules that we had, like the curfew. My friends did pressure me and say, "Well, you really shouldn't do that. You should conform."
- B: These were other Japanese Americans?
- N: No these were white. These were Caucasian.
- B: The curfew came almost immediately.
- N: Yes, fairly soon.
- B: Were your family concerned about you in Los Angeles? What was happening to them at that point?

N: I think I was rather selfish in saying [that] I would just stay at school. My oldest brother was there already in the home place. Oldest sister arranged things in regards to the transfer company, and she went back to the farm to be with the family. Father had died just before Pearl Harbor. I felt that there wasn't too much I could do at home anyway, and like I said, maybe it was rather selfish on my part but I just said, "Well, I'm here at UCLA, I'll just stay here as long as I can. Then I was relocated separately from the family.

B: How much time did you have to prepare yourself when the relocation order came, to report?

N: For the family, I don't know how much time they had. It wasn't very much, it was a matter of weeks I guess. For me in Los Angeles it was a relatively short time, but certainly no difficulties for me, just packing up a suitcase.

B: But you were right in the middle of an academic year, too, weren't you?

N: Yes. I was at the stage where I could conceivably just write the masters thesis, and so I just dropped everything at that point and left. As it developed later a Friend, with a capital "F", arranged that I might write my thesis at Swarthmore College and stay at Pendle Hill. That's where I eventually ended up.

B: You went to a reporting area. Where was it?

N: That was at San Anita Race Track where we people from west Los Angeles were taken. I, being a single person, was housed together with two other single people in one of the horse stalls at San Anita Race Track. Like the experience of many people in the assembly centers, we managed to set up a school for the kids who had to leave their schools. Some of the older people grew vegetables in the center of the race track for use by the mess hall. They were also weaving camouflage nets at San Anita because they felt this was something that could be done with the facilities that were there, which was involved in having netting -- I guess fish netting or something -- in which different colored burlap was woven. The residents did this job.

B: How long were you there?

N: Relatively short time of several months. Then we were moved inland to the relocation centers.

B: Before we go there, what did you do? What was your role at the race track?

N: I was part of the group that was involved in education. I taught something for some of the grade school students on the grand stand of the race track. We met every day and tried to carry on this way.

B: How did you feel about all this?

N: As I think about it, I feel it was just the general attitude of \_\_\_\_\_ (?) This is something you can't do anything about. Just an acceptance. Looking back to it now, I ask myself -- and maybe when we're talking together -- "Well how come we couldn't feel like Gordon Hirabayashi did about how wrong all of this was." It was so far away from our own feelings and what we were facing. It wasn't like a picnic of "well, this is fun" but some people were very much involved in the center newspaper. That took a lot of time and effort. There were groups of people doing various aspects of that, gathering the news, sending it out, actually sending it off to the mimeograph, distributing it, that sort of thing. We were working in the school. Other people helping with the mess hall. People in general did a lot of these different things. There was a system of payment in which you were given something like sixteen dollars a month for being part of a job like weaving the camouflage nets.

B: The U.S. Government paid you?

N: Yes, yes. And then there would be issues -- not so much in the assembly centers but in the relocations centers later on -- in Heart Mountain (?) \_\_\_\_\_ when it was rather cold we were issued winter jackets, either navy blue heavy jackets or the khaki army jackets. That kind of thing was issued on an individual basis.

B: So you were transferred to Heart Mountain in Wyoming.

N: Yes. The group from west Los Angeles was moved there.

B: How were you moved?

N: By train. It was several days getting there. We were told that we had to pull down all of the curtains and turn out the lights at night so that the movement of the train would not be detected. It was somewhat strenuous for some of the older people in particular. It was dirty with limited toilet facilities. The food had to be eaten as catch can. At times meals were planned pretty well. At other times it was very irregular. The locomotive was burning coal, I guess, so we were all well blackened by the time we got to our destination.

B: And you had to take everything you owned at that point with you.

N: Yes. We were supposed to come, initially in reporting to the assembly center, with only two suitcases that we could each carry.

B: What happened to the rest of your belongings?

N: I think in our area we were rather fortunate in that we had this cooperative marketing arrangement and we just turned the farms over to a Mr. Malberg (?) \_\_\_\_\_ who was then given the power of attorney to run the farms for all of us. Then he sublet the farm to other individuals, many of the "Okies" who had come into the area. He ran the farm, took care of the farm in a sense, while we were away, and we had these farms to come back to. In some areas, like San Pedro area, fishing people had a very short time to move and had to dispose of their belongings the best they could and had nothing to come back to.

B: So your family got the farm back when they returned.

N: Yes, we had legal titles to the farm.

B: And the "Okies" went on to someplace else.

N: Yes, and they did very well during the war, which could be guessed of course, with very high prices, and with their labor they managed fairly well with the equipment and all that was left behind for them to use. They then, after the war, were able to buy farms of their own and get settled, which was a benefit to them too.

B: Heart Mountain, what time of the year did you arrive?

N: It was the fall, I guess. With the passage of time we were encouraged to go out and seek labor in the surrounding area because of the need for labor. I remember from Heart Mountain we went out to harvest the beans that farmers had grown.

B: The dried beans.

N: Dried beans, yes. This meant loading the beans on to wagons and bringing them to the central area where they were spread out on huge canvases and rolled to shake out the beans. [They were] put through a kind of a blowing machine to separate the beans from the chaff and the strings, leaves, things of that kind.

B: You went out as a team from the camp?

N: Pretty much, yes. We would go out to the different farms?

B: Did you ever have the feeling that you were a prisoner?

N: We were pretty much treated that way. We were restricted. We couldn't go off as a group. We were there on the farm doing the work during the day. As was the custom in the area, the wives would get together and make a huge dinner for noon and all the workers would have a really great Thanksgiving dinner almost. With these hard working men it wasn't really surprising that we also, along with the

- men, ate very heartily. At the end of the day, then, we would all be moved back into the camps.
- B: How was it in the camps? How did you feel? What went through your mind when you were living this life?
- N: Well, I think we pursue some of the things that we might have been most interested in. Just the best that we could. Schools were set up. We had a commissary. People in Heart Mountain grew vegetables that we could use. Again, all the different kinds of activities that one would need in a community. There was a hospital and some of the Japanese American doctors practiced in the hospital. There was need to take care of the sick. We just tried to set up a community as best we could, with help from the government, of course, in providing the barracks, and the organization, and the material needs of food and shelter and clothing.
- B: Did the white folks, the administration and the people that you went out and worked for, did they treat you with respect, or were you just sort of treated as hired hands?
- N: Well, we were considered hired hands. They didn't treat us too badly because, after all, they did need to get the beans harvested and the work done, so they did appreciate that part of it. I don't know just what the arrangement was with the government in terms of payment, but we didn't get the regular salary that an ordinary outside person would get in doing the work. We just got what the people in the camps were given; sixteen dollars a month. That was really the professional pay, laborers was something like twelve dollars a day. The idea, of course, was that our necessities were provided, we didn't need a lot of money anyway.
- B: It got awful cold there.
- N: (chuckles) Yes, it did. And then we would get these dust storms, not so much in Heart Mountain maybe, but certainly in Hamachi \_\_\_\_\_ in southeastern Colorado.
- B: When did you leave Heart Mountain for Hamachi?
- N: It was within about a year. Fairly early I applied to join the family in Hamachi. The permission came through.
- B: Had you been able to hear from your family?
- N: Yes, yes. We had corresponded by letter.

B: Did you have to apply by yourself or did somebody come and help you facilitate that transfer.

N: No, no. It wasn't really that terribly involved as i remember. I had to go to the administration building and indicate that that's what I wanted to do and the reasons for it; join the family. It was just a matter of time.

B: How were you sent from Wyoming?

N: I was just given permission to go and I really forget if I took a train or a bus.

B: By yourself?

N: Yes, yes. By that time I was getting on to turning thirty.

B: A military person had to accompany you?

N: No.

B: So you went to Denver and... Hamachi (?)\_\_\_\_\_ was down there near Trinidad?

N: Not too far from it but Lamar was the closest big city.

B: Down there in the southeastern part.

N: Granada was a small rail station that was within a mile of Hamachi (?)

B: And all of your family was waiting for you when you arrived, when you go there?

N: Yes.

B: All your sisters and brothers were there?

N: No, my oldest sister died there in camp. She had suffered from ulcers before and this developed into cancer. So she died in camp. But the rest of the family were there.

B: Your mother?

N: Yes, she was there.

B: How was she doing?

N: I think she was like everybody else. In the way of activities, I think she did some crocheting and sewing, and kept busy with some studying. Some English studies I think.

B: When you got to the camp in Colorado it was what, 1943?

N: Yes, it was along about that time.

B: Was it very long after you were there that you started connecting with Quakers.

N: My first connection with Quakers was while I was at UCLA. Patrick Lloyd came over from Orange Grove Meeting to the religious center in UCLA, just off campus. I joined the group, the paper bag luncheon group that met once a week with him. He certainly introduced me to Quakerism and I was very much impressed with him. He kept in touch with me while I was at San Anita and then also when I was at Heart Mountain. He sold books, being careful to sell just good books -- although any book that he could get he certainly tried to get for friends. He introduced me to Quakerism and I continued my connections ever since.

B: Did you find a Quaker meeting in camp to go to?

N: No. We didn't have a Quaker meeting. We did have small cells, discussions. Not so much of a religious character, though. Not worship cells in the sense of Quaker meetings. I attended the center church and lived pretty much like most of them. I wasn't set apart because of my Quaker inclinations.

B: Because you didn't suddenly go and join the army you weren't ostracized. (laughs)  
What prompted you, with Quakers, to get out of camp and to be able to go to Swarthmore? Can you fill in some pieces for me?

N: I guess it was Patrick Lloyd who [did] some researching for me, as well as Esther Rhodes in Los Angeles who suggested my need to finish writing a masters thesis could probably be best done if I could get out of camp. They suggested that going to Pendle Hill and then using in the Swarthmore library might be a way to do this. Things did work out that way and it was very helpful. This was largely through the efforts of the National Japanese Student Relocation Committee of which the American Friends Service Committee was largely instrumental in setting up, although there were many churches; YW and the \_\_\_\_\_, even President Sproul and \_\_\_\_\_ of UCLA Berkeley lent their names initially. As things worked out, why I think it was largely the AFSC that took the major responsibility for this student relocation council.

B: You filled out the form and submitted it. How long did you wait?

N: That took several months to get clearance and to get assurance that I wouldn't be taken care of. I came directly to Homer Morris' home on Plush Mill Road just adjoining Pendle Hill. Then next door, of course, was the Pickett's home and so it was very close.

B: This must have been a real anxious time for you, waiting after you applied to the relocation board to go back here.

N: Yes, it was rather anxious, but then also it may have been a little worrisome too, the idea of going back east away from the family. Still, the family was encouraging of it.

B: A scary big step. (chuckles)  
So you took a train to Pennsylvania?

N: Yes.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**AFSC Oral History Interview #409**

**Narrator: NOBU HIBINO**

**Interviewer: Sarah Brooner**

**Date: 9/5/91**

B: I am Sara Brooner, and today is September 5th, 1991. I am doing the Oral History Project.

Nobu, please give your full name and your date of birth and your place of birth.

H: Ok, my name is Nobu, maiden name Kumekawa, Hibino. I was born on June 13th, 1921, in San Francisco.

B: Did you grow up in San Francisco?

H: Yes I did, for the first six years of my life. Then my father thought that all of his children ought to absorb some of the Japanese culture. He took us all back to Japan and I went to school, from grades one through four, in Japan in Yokohama. But [it was] a bilingual school because they realized I would be coming back and my English should not be lost. It was a school called \_\_\_\_\_ by the Belgian sisters.

B: When you came back did you return to San Francisco?

H: Yes I did. I was tall for a Japanese American, and because my math ability was so advanced compared to the other fourth graders they put me up to fifth grade. So I've been one year ahead all of the time.

B: What did your parents do? What was their occupation?

H: My father was involved in importing [and] exporting, and he had a retail store on Grant Avenue which is in the Middle of San Francisco China Town. But that's where the Japanese businesses were before the war. There were two full blocks on both sides of Japanese art goods stores. Then, starting from Sacramento down toward the North Beach in became Chinese stores. But the first two blocks were all Japanese run businesses. He imported silks, antiques, scrolls, things of that nature; art goods. Those were unobtainable after the war, so if he'd had them it would have been worth something.

B: You had brothers and sisters?

H: Yes, I had an older sister who was already married and gone. I was a first semester senior at the University of California at Berkeley. Then my next [sibling] was [my brother who was] a junior in high school, and the youngest brother [was] a freshman in high school, both in San Francisco.

B: When you went to Berkeley what did you study?

H: I took up Psych because I didn't know if I wanted to go to a school of social work or go into high school guidance counseling. I didn't know so I majored in Psych and got my degree in Psych, although that was after I had done six months in Boston University after getting out of camp. Then [I got] my diploma at Berkeley.

B: How did the depression affect your family?

H: The Great Depression. Fortunately, I was in Japan from 1926 to '30. Because of the crash we came home, but my father was able to continue with the business so we were fortunate.

B: Do you recall anything about the presidential election of Roosevelt in 1936.

H: Yeah, but before that I should tell you about the depression. What remains so vividly in my mind is the breadline at St. Mary's Church which is only two doors down. I saw these *great long, long* breadline of people trying to get in there for just a little bit of food. I remember that. That was '30. We returned in August '30 and that winter was a bad one.

B: How old were you at that time?

H: I was ten, almost ten, so I could remember. The '32 election [is] not to vivid I'm afraid, but I knew it was Hoover versus Roosevelt and Hoover got the raw end of the deal. Everybody thought it was he who caused the depression.

B: Do you know if your family was supporting Roosevelt?

H: Well, see, they couldn't vote because they were not naturalized and you could not become naturalized until after the McCarren Act in 1954. So I don't know. I know that my parents wanted us to be more than 100 percent American. I knew that. My mother's family had always been Christians, and those are rare in Japan, so we had no trouble going to church or associating ourselves with Protestants when most of our friends were Buddhist.

B: What church did you go to?

H: I went to Pine Methodist.

B: You parents met in Japan or in San Francisco?

H: No, no my father came here in 1897 because his father was already involved in exporting seaweeds from the northern most island of Japan to China. He had learned something about exporting and he'd always wanted to come to the United

States. He was the second son. When you're a second son you're not going to inherit the land so he chose to come to the States. He was only 19 years old and I didn't know this until I went back to Japan on a trip there in 1980. His relatives told me, "Did you know that your father got the passport, managed to save the money, the visa, took care of everything and didn't tell us until the night before departure." The night before he was to leave he told the family that he was going to the United States, and he was only 19. So he was an adventurous soul. He came in '97, he worked for other people, and then he wanted to learn bookkeeping so he took that up. He went back to Japan and came back in 1906 for that St. Louis exposition, to work in a Japanese firm. He always knew what he wanted to do and he pursued it. He'd been in that business for forty five years or so when the evacuation came.

B: And your mother?

H: My mother never worked. [She] had four of us. She helped him, though. She made kimonos on special order.

My sister when to school part of the time in Japan, part of the time in the United States. [She had graduated from Girls High School in San Francisco and also a college in Japan. So she was absolutely bilingual and married a man who worked for Mitsui Company, one of the "big six" in San Francisco, and was in Shanghai at the time of evacuation. We didn't know where she was for years.

B: In Shanghai. I'm not sure she got the better end.  
(chuckles)

H: That's right.

(pause)

B: Did you ever feel any discrimination for being Japanese?

H: Well you know, I think the Japanese people avoided that as much as they could by dealing with only Japanese grocery stores, Japanese language schools, church, bank. You really didn't need to go outside of the Japanese community. And although where we lived was mostly Chinese, there were only about ten families of Japanese Americans living in China Town, the Japanese school was in Japanese Town. So I'd have to go there every day all the way through high school and on Saturdays to keep up my Japanese. So I was in Japanese Town anyway, I belonged to the Japanese YWCA and everything else, so I didn't feel it as much. Anyway, with our parents not speaking English well I could have my Caucasian friends at school but they would feel so uncomfortable if I brought them home. So we never had what you'd call a social intercourse between any Caucasian families, which was, in a way, too bad, because when evacuation came we didn't know anybody to leave our household goods with. I'm sure it's only a small

- percentage, maybe under five percent who had trusting Caucasian friends who they could leave there businesses, or cars even, with.
- B: And you had no trusting relationships with the Chinese community?
- H: Oh, absolutely not! My mother wouldn't let me date a Chinese boy! We were kind of in a bind. I'm sure it would have gone on like that if evacuation hadn't come. That's the only shining light that I see out of this evacuation; that I did get out of that so called "ghetto" in San Francisco, in California, and chose to remain out east when the majority went back.
- B: What was going on with your family? What did they feel or thing when the proclamation...
- H: Well, before that the bombing! The December 7th bombing!
- B: That's right! Where were you and what happened?
- H: The December 7th bombing was before that. I was studying for my final exams at Berkeley. It was a Sunday. That kind of rumors get around fast, so we heard it on the campus. I called home. The telephone was just jammed. But I got through to my father and he told me to come right home. I was living on the campus at the time but I came home and we were all upset. The fear of unknown, "How is it going to effect us? What's going to happen to my father's business?" We never thought that we'd be rounded up, though. My father's business had begun to suffer because [of] the anti-Japanese sentiment. Nobody wanted to buy "Made in Japan" goods. So his business was affected and he's started to let go some of the employees already.
- Shortly after that the events happened so fast. I finished my exams and went back to register for the second semester. A lot of my classmates chose not to come back, but I only had five months to go and I was just determined to finish. So I re-registered. But then, you know, the curfew was placed and you couldn't travel more than five miles. Berkeley's more than five miles. So I had to withdraw anyway. But I did try. Then my father started to dispose of his inventory, but nobody would buy it. Nobody would take it because the rumors were flying that we were going to be rounded up because we had committed all this sabotage. They said twenty five thousand Japanese Americans were lining up to commit sabotage or something. That's what it said in the Hearst newspapers when actually there were only six thousand Japanese Americans living in San Francisco. Everything was exaggerated. The mass hysteria... Pretty soon my father just practically gave away his things. There were \_\_\_\_\_ you know, there were scrolls, ivory. He couldn't take it with him, and since the bank accounts were frozen -- both the business and our family's -- you had no way of paying for the storage of any of these things. It just happened so quickly. I think maybe he might have gotten ten cents on the dollar. He practically gave it to people. Those

are the very things that became more dear as the bombing and everything occurred in Japan and you couldn't buy these antiques.

There were rumors, one after the other. Anti-Japanese hostility. You were afraid to be even out on the streets. Then the curfew went into effect anyway between 8:00pm and 6:00am so no one was on the street. They would put the notices on the telephone polls of what's going to happen. How you must register. You must get your household number. You must do this, you must do that. At the very end, just hours before we were to go to the designated place to get on the bus, we sold everything in the house including a new refrigerator, [I don't know] how many beds, sofa, sewing machine, the entire household goods, plus your car, [all] for thirty five dollars to a junk man on a horse drawn carriage. If they hadn't taken up on him they would have just come in with the big trucks and taken it all away. At least we got thirty five dollars. It's just unbelievable.

B: What were your feelings? What was going through your...

H: I think it was the worst on my mother 'cuz my mother comes from a pretty high class. In Japan there's classes and they opposed her going to the United States. The family was all into banking and different professions. Since she chose to marry this man and go abroad they wanted to be sure this is what she wanted to do. Then she could always go back. Before that she went back to Japan several times and the relatives could see that they were doing well. We were bilingual and everything seemed fine. So now, after being so one hundred and ten percent American, this is what's happening. I think she felt it more than anyone else in our family. She, for the first time, developed ulcers in camp. It couldn't be controlled for a long time. I'm sure it was all due to this evacuation and incarceration.

B: Where were you in all of this?

H: Well, you know, I was trying to help my father dispose of all this inventory. I tried the likes of gumps in San Francisco all the way down to second hand type stores and I couldn't get anywhere because every other store on Grant Avenue is trying to dispose of their things. My father looked so crushed and I'm trying to hold him up, and hold her up, But they were sure that the children were not going to be evacuated because we were American citizens. So mother said, "Well, thank God you three are old enough to function on your own." I was almost through college anyway and I could get a job and take care of my two brothers who were no longer babies. So we felt pretty smug at one time. Then, there's no storage, sounded like even American citizens were going to be incarcerated and really, you couldn't almost even breathe. My husband always tell story about getting rid of his dog, the family dog, even. He put an ad in the paper. Someone wanted it [and he] gave [them the] dog. [It was] miles away. He lived in Berkeley and this was on the other side of Oakland. Just when they were ready

to leave the dog came back, just skin and bones. That just did it. That always brings tears to my eyes. But it was that kind of thing happening everywhere. My mother, who was a seamstress, when you could only take what you could hand carry, she decided to whip up these duffel bags, [which] were not so easily available in those days. You had to put all your beddings in, all your clothing, all your eating utensils, and be prepared for hot or cold weather. You didn't know. And you could only carry two of those. And no one had a knapsack in those days, so she made one of those. My mother even put in things like raisins and dried foods, and put a broom and a dust pan in there too because we didn't know where we were going. But that's what we were doing; trying to get rid of our furniture and all our... " what are you going to do with your family photo albums and things that you can't replace?"

B: What did you do?

H: Well, they said, why don't we put everything in a box and bring it to the church. Surely nobody would break into the church -- which was a big mistake, but everybody did. And they allowed you to bring just the smallest amount of space and we put things like our high school yearbooks, things that we wanted to keep, baby pictures. We put them all in. After the war they were all gone. We couldn't find it. That happened across the west coast.

B: The church had no answer?

H: The church, they don't know who took it. I guess they broke into things. They knew it was a Japanese church. This anti-Japanese hostility was really scary.

B: You must have just felt like crying.

H: Oh, yes, even now I just think about it and it gets really bad.

B: Where did you have to report?

H: To a Japanese language school. There was a Japanese language school in the middle of Japanese Town and all of the heads of the households had to go there. But my father wasn't sure of his English and we were dealing with the army so I tagged along. Everybody was there. We were just indiscriminately given a number and we were to stitch that onto everything that we were to bring. So we did that. We only had a week to do this, six days, to get rid of everything. When I realized that there was no point of return, "this is it", it was only six days. We got everything together. I was grateful that we didn't have little children. I don't know what I would have done. Anyway, we got to this place two days after we registered and we were put aboard the bus at the point of a bayonet.

B: A bayonet?

H: Oh yes, there was a bayonet at the end of the rifle and you're just herded on like that. Across the street and up the hill you could see the Caucasian looking at us. It was terrible. Then we all got on. We didn't know where we were going. We headed south thirty five miles or so to this Tanforan race tracks.

B: Which race tracks?

H: Tanforan. It's race tracks. It was there for years and years. I went back to see that Tanforan race tracks. They tore that down and it is now a mall in San Bruno, California?

B: Still called Tanforan?

H: No, no. I guess, with such a short time for the army to find places where they could put, I think there were about six or seven thousand of us, they could only choose Santa Anita race tracks in Los Angeles, Tanforan up north, or they used to have these state fair grounds and they put them into various state fairgrounds. I realized after once we got there that if you were a family of four or less you were put into the horse stalls. But we had five. The tar paper shacks in the middle of the race tracks. were not ready, so our family of was put into a two... well it's a horse stall but it has a partition in the middle. It's about nine feet by eighteen feet. No nine feet by nine feet in the back is absolutely pitch black and had just mud and dirt on the ground. The droppings had been taken out and the walls were whitewash, but the horsehair and everything was inside the wall there. In the front portion where my father and mother stayed [were] two little windows. That was the only light. The three of us children just stayed in the back next to each other on these army cots, steel cots, and had no mattress.

B: On the springs?

H: On the springs. And we didn't want to put our duffel bags on the ground because it was dampish, so we put them on these steel cots, and then they said that night we could go and fill these mattress ticking or whatever with hay and go and sleep on it. So that's what we did. My youngest brother is allergic to hay and he was sneezing all night, all through six months of Tanforan. He was fourteen. In order to go into the horse stall you had to go over an open sewer ditch. Then we would eat our three meals under the grandstand. There was some kind of a cafeteria arrangement. We all washed our dishes in cold water in the horse trough in all this dirty, dirty water, no soap, and then you just rinsed it under running water. It's a wonder there was no outbreak of any kind of epidemic.

B: And you were there six months?

H: Six months. But I was in that horse stall for only about four weeks. But my husband's family is only four so they stayed there six months.

B: Where did you go after four weeks?

H: Into one of the tar paper shacks. It's in the middle of the race tracks and we got to stay there, five of us.

We had to stand outside for headcount, morning and night. We were lining up to go the johns. Now the johns, I don't know if the Nodas told you, but in our Tanforan assembly center they had no partitions between the toilets and no doors. So you tried to go to the toilet when no one was there. That would be 2:00am or 3:00am. There's be people all lined up and you'd have to say "excuse me, excuse me" in front of all of those people and go and sit. One woman, an elderly woman, had a paper bag on her face for some privacy. You know, I went to Dachau about three years ago and I saw toilets just like that, without partitions, without doors.

B: Like one big outhouse.

H: Yes, so that you could see that no one would escape, I guess. It was awful. You had to line up to take showers, to do your laundry, to get your mail, to eat. You were lining up all the time. At least in Tanforan it was the kind of weather we were used to because it's only thirty five miles south.

B: What time of the year was it?

H: That was May, May 7th, so it was ok that way, weather-wise. It's when we left Tanforan and got to Topaz and you had to line up and had only Bay area clothes, that's when we really suffered.

B: How did you leave Tanforan and go to Topaz?

H: Well, we were all taken by a train, a very old rickety train. We were told *never* to raise the shades. We were let off the train once in the middle of the Nevada desert to stretch our legs. Even then the MPs with bayonets, fixed bayonets stood all around us as if we'd run away. But anyway, we did that. There's a pretty place, it's called Feather River Canyon. We never got to see it but I know the route we took is by the Feather River Canyon to get to Utah. [It's] about thirty five miles west of Delta, which is a town that still exists today.

B: You were very crowded on this train?

H: Oh, obviously, yeah. I can't even remember eating, but we must have all had some kind of bag lunches.

B: How long did the train take?

H: Quite a long time, I thought. Maybe all day. It went real slowly and, you know, the main lines were used for military so we're taking the round about lumber route?

B: And how did you go to the bathroom on the train. You know I can't remember that. I cannot even remember that, to be truthful. But I heard lots of babies crying. It was September, it was warmish, but not that unbearable heat-wise. But that part of the ride I just don't remember except for getting off and seeing all those soldiers, MPs. I remember that but that's about it.

When we got to Topaz we found rows and rows of tar paper shacks and mountains, and for the first time in our lives heard the coyote howl at night. It didn't take long before the snows came. There, the worst physical feature of that camp was the sandstorms. The camps were not air tight. The doors were open underneath and so whenever you had sand storms the sand came in and I couldn't even see my mother sitting six feet away. It was so full of dust and inside your mouth was all gritty.

B: Was this a particular time of year or was this all the time?

H: It must have been the particular time, but it was shortly after we got there. There was no furniture. We had to make our furniture and you have nothing to make it with and you have to steal lumber. You know, the Japanese don't, as a rule, steal or cheat. They're like that, they respect authority, but what are you going to do? You can't sit, you can't do anything without making some kind of a box for stools. So everybody went out at night and stole the lumber.

B: Where was the lumber?

H: The lumber was near the administration office because they were still making [shacks].

B: You didn't even have a bed?

H: We had cots, and we still had the hay filled mattresses. I should remember the exact figure, but it's about twenty by twenty-four feet. We tried to create a little privacy by making some kind of a closet effect in the center. My mother and father would be on this side, my two brothers would be there, and mine would be the sofa, like a day bed, so we could sit on my bed and I could sleep at night. And that's where we lived, for me a year more, but for my youngest brother [it was] four years. My mother and dad too, four years.

B: So you were given the army cot and the mattress. Were you given any cooking facility?

H: On, no. We all went to the dining hall, which is quite a ways out. I have a map there if you want to see it. Now we have ten thousand people instead of six. Now, Portland today only has nine thousand, but this is a camp of ten thousand with rows and rows of barracks. In the middle would be the dining hall and the laundry/shower facilities. This would be for the blocks. Ours happened to be the sixteenth block, but there's blocks of all of these. Then there would be the church, the schools, the elementary, the high school, the junior high, out there someplace. I left before it was completely finished. You have no grass, you have the sand storms, so you're in constant haze.

B: How was your family doing when you got to that point?

H: You know, the most interesting thing, and maybe because I'm a psych major I was very conscious of it... In Japanese homes the father is the unquestioned head of the family. Like in Japan, when we went to live in Japan for four years by father got to take the bath first. After you bathe yourself with soap and rinse it, you go into the tub of clean water, well, father goes in first. Then the first born son goes in next, then the second born son, then the daughters, and the last was mother. That's how we were raised. You never questioned authority, so even if you thought your father was wrong you wouldn't question him at home, you see. Well, he had this kind of power, and then, of course, he has a business of his own, so he's kind of the master and lord of everything. You get into camps [and] now that father is really second class because he can't take the good jobs because his English isn't that good. So the administrative jobs went to the older Nisei who were finished with college, and the doctors and the nurses, all of those people were now Nisei. There were only about two or three Issei doctors left. Not only that, they got nineteen dollars a month, which is top pay, right? Then, because I worked in the high school I was called skilled employee, so therefore I got sixteen. My father could only get twelve because he is now reduced to being janitor in the police station. That was a terrible blow to him and many other, many, many other Issei men. My mother who'd never worked for pay in her life just got the same pay as the children, which was four dollars a month or something for all the children under sixteen and non-working mothers. So that in itself was something. Then, where we always ate together and father said the grace or mother said the grace, now the children at the dining halls or mess halls would rather go sit with their friends and would take off. So this family just collapsed in camp.

B: This must have been a terrible thing.

H: Oh, it was. And, you know, the tragedy of it is that I never did get to talk with him about it while he was alive because shortly after he came out to Boston -- my next brother finished Boston University and got a job at Pepsi Cola international in Japan -- he left and my parents went with him. So I never really got an opportunity to discuss all this and I'm sure it affected him greatly. On top of that

he had nothing, nothing that you could call cash, in his hands. The bank accounts were still frozen and remained frozen until the '50s, so he had to rely on us to house them after coming out of camp. And what kind of job could he get when he was already 67. Japanese as a group came late to the United States and he had his children late in life. He passed away at 84 whereas mother was twelve years younger and lived 'til 94. So she got to come back and forth from Japan and she saw how well the children did, the grandchildren. She saw them get married. She was sort of satisfied and renewed her faith in coming here, whereas my father never had that opportunity.

B: He left embittered.

H: I think so, though my brother was able to provide him with wonderful living facilities. He lived with my brother and his family in Japan. I was he wasn't that embittered, but to see his forty-five years of work just go down the drain like that, I'm sure it embittered him.

B: Where you psychologically in all of this.

H: Well, let me see. You know, I was just so preoccupied with having to survive. I went to work for the American Friends in Philadelphia for three months after camp. I was working in a high school guidance office. Tom Bodine made these annual trips to all the camps, you see. I was working with a woman named Kay Yamashita. Because I was going to Boston University in the fall, Kay got a job at the National Student Relocation Council in Philadelphia on Chestnut Street and I got a job for three months to work in Philly and then go on to Boston University. While there I was able to eat and live, and I did get a scholarship [to] pay for my tuition. For my room and board I met this wonderful woman, Trudy King \_\_\_\_\_, at the NSRC office in Philly, and she gave me the keys to her apartment in Cambridge to live while I go to school for six months. It was a beautiful place! I mean, coming from camp to Judy's apartment overlooking the Charles River, right across from the Harvard boathouse. On Thursday, I couldn't believe it, a Jamaican woman came to clean the house. I was in heaven then. That only lasted six months, until December, and then I was on my own. That's where I encountered so much discrimination just trying to find an apartment, or trying to be served in a restaurant. I couldn't believe it.

B: In Cambridge.

H: In Cambridge. A university town.

B: When you were in camp you applied to the Relocation...

H: To the National Student Relocation Council. You must know the history. They set one up first through the university presidents and interested people. Then they asked the American Friends Service Committee to house it.

B: Who was the first person from AFSC that you came in contact with.

H: The first person I came in contact with was Betty Emlin, my boss. She was my boss. It was so interesting. When Betty Emlin went through my files I had a letter of recommendation from my high school teacher who happened to be her aunt, Louisa Herman. It's a small world and this was Lowell High school, an academic high school where you have to take an exam to get into it. It's still that way today. But her aunt taught there and it was such a coincidence I'll never forget it. Soon I met the whole staff; Woody, her husband, Tom Bodine, Trudy King. Trudy was not a Quaker but she was recruited in the west coast. She had just finished Stanford grad school. Her father was president King of Amherst College and first cousin to \_\_\_\_\_ so she, I guess, could afford to volunteer her services to this cause. She had a wonderful sense of humor and she just wrote mounds of letters to all these students who went from camp to college and they were kind of lost. She kept them encouraged. [She] was very supportive.

B: When you found you were going to leave camp I would like to know the journey from Topaz to Philadelphia.

**{END SIDE 1}**

**(BEGIN SIDE 2)**

B: You were put in contact with somebody at camp who was working to get you out.

H: That's right, but you know, you had to get an FBI clearance, you had to assure WRA, the War Relocation Authority, that you had a place to go to -- they didn't want us on welfare -- and so it took a while to get that.

B: Who was writing you at the time.

H: At the time I heard from everybody from Hibberd to whoever was there. We would wait for these letters. Betty Emlin's job was to get, in my case because I was a Methodist, to get the United Methodists to give a scholarship at a Methodist related college, which would have been Northwestern, Boston University. [She] got me one at Boston University. I don't know how they managed the Buddhists. Most of the Presbyterians went to Presbyterian schools, Reformed Church [went] to Reformed Church schools. I got my acceptance at Boston University. The Japanese do not want to be obligated to anybody for money, mother and father didn't have any money and what can you save on sixteen dollars and twelve dollars when you have to buy your winter clothing, stamps, shoe repair, all those

things. You had to pay out of that. They gave me what they had and it was the War Relocation Authority that paid for the ticket to your destination, so I had the railroad ticket. I was afraid, though, because I had never traveled on a train that long a distance, and it was war time.

B: It must have been scary.

H: Yeah, and the drunken soldiers, that bothered me just no end. The Japanese were never what you'd call the embraceable type. They always bowed or shook hands at most, so that even when the second generation boys went off to war fathers and mothers said, "Perform your duties well, don't bring shame to the family," all that, but they wouldn't hug you to say goodbye. My brother in Rhode Island always says that he was impressed because my brother-in-law, my husband's brother, was the only one hugged by his grandparents. See, now, none of the Nisei living in America had grandparents because it was the parents who came. But in the case of my husband and brother, grandparents came long ago and then their children came. They're really not third generation, but they were here. Furthermore they had worked in, of all places, Tennessee, in Suwannee, Tennessee, so they were used to American ways. My brother always tells that story: When they went off to war he was the only one that was hugged.

Anyway, coming back to this owing money. They also don't like to get something for nothing. They wanted to be sure that we repaid that money that we got from NSRC later on in life. So we're doing what they wanted us to do now. You know about the new NSRC Commemorative Fund.

I said goodbye at camp and took a little bus to Delta. From Delta I got on the train. It was so crowded and I finally found a seat, but this soldier was getting too friendly for me. Pretty soon he's drinking and he's sleeping on my shoulder. And do you know, I thought if I moved I'd wake him up and I'd have more troubles. I just stayed like this as long as I could. Can you imagine how shy I was and how afraid I was for fear of not offending. If they asked me where I came from what would I say? It would open up a bag of worms, so I didn't want to say that. I had that same feeling until I came to Portland in '51. I came out of camp in '43. It took how long -- nine years for me to get my self respect, security, all that. Now I know how people who are raped feel, or a Black that's been pushed down for years and years, how they feel. That was exactly the way I felt. I knew I was smarter than the person sitting next to me, and yet I wouldn't open my mouth with my suggestions.

The Friends at the Friends Meeting would invite us to speak about the camp life. I could recall saying how good it was because I didn't want to tell them the truth for fear of reprisal, I guess. How did I know that the Quakers were any different from another Caucasian extreme right? So I just said it was great, it was fine, when all the time I knew it wasn't fine, that I had to eat the same canned sauerkraut and canned beans with bread and apple butter every night for six months in camp assembly center at Tanforan. I wouldn't say that because I thought if I said that I would offend them. It takes a long time to become self confident again.

B: And it's still happening.

H: Yeah. Finally, when I came to Portland, Connecticut in '52 I remember volunteering to be a Scout leader. I went to the first meeting and I still kept quiet. Then I decided, by golly it's time, and so I spoke out my ideas. Of course it was the best because I had years of experience running these things amongst the Japanese kids. I was an advisor in camp, I had so many clubs where I advised young people. Well, anyway, from that day on there's no holding back.

B: Well, you know where your liberation was!

H: I felt that part of the trouble back in California days was that we never, ever integrated socially with the Caucasian. They didn't know us, we didn't know them. So after I came to Portland I was going to participate in every community organization that I felt was worth involving myself. So I'm a member of the League of Women Voters and served on the State board, the local board, on a community housing development corporation for the lower income. I worked my head off during the civil rights movement amongst the Blacks because I could really empathize with what they were going through. They would talk to me when they wouldn't talk to whites in a real self revealing manner. I felt I was serving a role there. So I did that. I decided that I should also be on the other side of the power structure and so for seventeen years I've been on the board of directors of a bank, which is a conservative, insensitive to the plight of the poor, minorities. I decided, "Well, I'll have to change their minds too, from the inside." So I've been working there too. Oh, it certainly is working. Every time I speak, "Oh, oh, here comes the voice of conscious." But what I'm saying makes so much sense that they're no longer so condescending. They now ask me for lunch dates to work on something so I now feel accepted finally. But it took this long to do it.

B: When you came out to Cambridge you said you were feeling the discrimination.

H: Yes, when I first came out to Cambridge I wanted an apartment of our own because we were going to get married.

B: Oh, and you met your husband.

H: Yes, he worked with me in Philadelphia. We were engaged so he came out the Cambridge too, for me to go to school in Boston, and I was staying at Trudy's house with my brother who came out next to go to Boston University, and Don had gotten a job in Boston. He was staying for a little while with Ed Seeler, Catherine Seeler, Quakers in Cambridge. But anyway, now we wanted a place of our own. We would answer the ads in the paper and they would say, "Yes, it's available." So we would go and they'd take a look at us and say, "I'm sorry, just after you called I accepted a call and gave it to them because they're friends of

mine." Or something like that. We finally got wise and we would call from these big apartment houses. Don's got his door at the elevator open and I'm on the phone asking if the apartment's available. "Yes it's available." "Could we come and see it." "Yes, you may." Get on the elevator, go up to the sixth floor, it's taken. Then you know it's absolute discrimination. They didn't even know he had a masters, he had a good job, and I just got my bachelor's and I was working for Social Service Index of Boston. They don't even ask that. It was just purely on race.

B: This was what year?

H: 1943. In a university town, Cambridge. Then we would go to eat -- not at all the restaurants -- but we would sit at a booth and we would see all the rest get served, and we're still waiting. We would ask if someone's going to come to take our order. "Yes, someone will be with you in a minute." And it goes on for hours so you have to leave, right?

B: How long did this go on?

H: You know, I used to think maybe I was supersensitive. Not when it happens time and time again, it's not. This is still the war years. The war is going on against Japan, and at the beginning, you know, Japan was winning. So that was reflected on us I guess. I'm sure Chinese had just as bad a time because they can't tell the difference.

Eventually we got a place in Harvard Square just two blocks from the divinity school and I remember saying to this women, "Are you sure? We're Japanese Americans you know." She said, "I don't care! Please!" So we were just so thrilled! We stayed there all the time in Cambridge. They were French Canadians and they had graduate students all over the place. It was a house converted into apartments and we had no problems there.

B: Did you know of AFSC in Cambridge during that period of time. See now, if I had gone there... What I did was I started working at the Unitarian Church. My church was the Unitarian church and I never got over to the AFSC office and didn't know too much about it. The man that married us was the Unitarian Church minister and I taught Sunday school there. I just stayed there. We never rocked the boat, nor were we too adventurous. We're accepted at this church, we're accepted at this house, just stay put.  
(ringing in background) Excuse me.

B: When we stopped for the telephone call we were where you just felt very uncomfortable to go out of the circle of security, and so that you didn't know AFSC in Cambridge. But, I would like for you to go back to Philadelphia and tell me about that period of time.

H: I never enjoyed three months of my life more than those three months. It was such a short time, but the friends I made there -- not only the Caucasian staff, but there were three or four Nisei's going to Temple University, U. of Penn, whatever in Philadelphia -- are bosom friends to this day.

B: Who are they?

H: One is Terry Hyashi (?) \_\_\_\_\_ who just retired, but he ended up as the President of American Association of Gynecology and obstetrics. Isn't that a wonderful story? And there are so many more Nisei who were helped by the National Student Relocation Council through the American Friends Service Committee that have done so well you can't imagine. I wish that somebody would make a list of all those people who were helped who went on great things.

The very first Nisei who went from camp to college is a fellow by the name of Harvey Itano (?) \_\_\_\_\_. The other day when Tom Bodine stopped here he said he was the one who was sent to his camp to bring him out and escort him to the state line so he could go on to St. Louis University. (coughs) He is the member of the team that found the means to cure sickle cell anemia, and a member of the American something of Science, I don't know, that prestigious organization. There are so many other Nisei. You can't believe how their lives would have either taken longer if the Friends hadn't gotten them set up in a way to help us. It would have taken so long or people would have been discouraged and just quit. I just think of all these people. The other one that was there at the time, his name is Now Takasumi (?) \_\_\_\_\_. After Temple he got his MBA at Wharton and he is today the mayor of Oxnod (?) \_\_\_\_\_ California. Kay Yamashita who left the NSRC and went to work for the World Federation of Students or something. It's another organization that helps with scholarship students. She ended up at University of Illinois as a counselor and she is presently on the board with me and Lafayette Noda on the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund. Then, of course, Bill Stevenson was not much older than us. He was, as he says, absolutely poor but he wanted to do something for the Nisei so he got himself a job as a messenger. The "nice Quaker ladies" he says, on the main line would feed him and clothe him and house him (chuckling) and so he was like one of us, but he worked there. Today he finished a retired as a social worker for the Contra Costa Country (?) \_\_\_\_\_. He has been a wonderful help to our organization now in suggesting names who could be the local committee chair for our scholarships. And then of course Betty and Woody Emlen have kept in touch, more so with Trudy King Toll (?) \_\_\_\_\_ who I kept in touch with until her death about ten years ago. But these are *wonderful* people that I met there. I met people like Natalie Kimber in Germantown. She had us over. The first night we got to Philadelphia we were treated to Philadelphia scrapple. It was in this magnificent house. It must be Clarence Pickett's house. We were there and he wasn't there, but somebody there, one of the girls or somebody staying there gave Kay Yamashita and I a place to stay and we had that for supper. I remember that. It

was out on the Main Line someplace, Bryn Mawr or one of those places over there, Swarthmore or...

B: And that's where you stayed.

H: First night.

B: And then where did you stay after that?

H: After that the up in the northern part of Philly there the International Institute and we got an apartment there, Kay and I. It was located right next door to a factory. At eight o'clock sharp, every morning, the what ever it is would start "brum brum brum brum." I don't know what... Was it a mill? A knitting mill or whatever it is, it started going at eight. And it was hot in Philadelphia and it was awfully muggy that first year. But [I have] wonderful memories of three months. I felt very much at home and at ease and comfortable. I think that if Trudy Kind, who was not a Quaker, hadn't offered us her apartment -- she just gave me her keys and told me to go and stay there -- I think I would have looked up the AFSC office.

There was an incident at Trudy's house where my brother and I were guests when the building superintendent came over and said to me, "I don't mind having you people stay here, but the rest of the tenants would like to see you vacate the premises. So I called Trudy in Philadelphia and she came that evening on the train to Cambridge and went around getting all the tenants to sign this petition that they hadn't registered objections and that they were willing to have these two, sister and brother stay there, they had caused no problem. Then she confronted this district super and the woman again said the same thing. So she was able to produce this document and got her fired.

I have nothing but wonderful memories of people who worked there. Then after that it was survival, the children coming, so I really hadn't gotten to thinking about all this kindness until we met at Lafayette's house one summer. You've heard that story.

B: No.

H: No? We met up there in the surrounding area by the pond. You must have seen that pond. They had an outing there and we were sitting there. Now these are really unique Nisei because we've lived fifty years since evacuation in a non-Asian environment and we're pretty sure of ourselves. We've gotten to where we could do something about helping others. Now this was the outgrowth of a workshop that I attended in San Francisco sponsored by the Japanese American Citizens League. They said they would like to sponsor a retirement conference for the Nisei, and anyone who feels that they have something to offer can apply. So I applied because I'd been so involved with elderly housing and I knew all about where to get the grant proposal and all that. So I applied and I was chosen to go there. There were only fifty of us from all across the country and we spoke about

every facet of retirement. Well, they told me on the last day that I had to go back to where I came from and host these similar conferences. I'm no longer involved with Nisei. I don't know where the Nisei live in New England. I was so desperate that I went to Boston and got hold of the suburban Boston phone book and I was looking under Hs, Ks, Ws, Ts, where the Japanese names are. But you know some of them are Japanese nationals. I didn't know where they were! Finally I got hold of twenty-four Nisei that I've never met in my life before and we all met at Boston University. These other 23 people had never been in the room with this many Nisei in forty years or so. So some of them sat behind an open paperback so as not to get involved. But they were curious, you know, and they didn't know what to do. But anyway, we went around the room and asked why they came. First they told us what camp, what age, what college, all that. So I knew we were all about the same age, we're all from the west coast. There were a couple of people who never lived with Japanese. They're Nisei's but raised in Wyoming, or raised in Idaho, or raised in Philadelphia and never been with Japanese, you see. They were all in there. This one fellow who came out of curiosity didn't really want to get involved so he thought he could just go on reading his paperback. But sure enough, they all got involved and so we started a very loose group called The New England Nisei. This is the group that grew into, now, about a hundred fifty who come every year on New Years Day out of the hamlets of New England to eat the Japanese food on January 1st, and to talk about the traditions so that the children would know that you ate these black beans because you want to be industrious, or you ate these other things so you'd have long life or whatever. That group met at the Noda's one summer for a picnic. So it's a really unique group of adventurous, independent Nisei, very much like the first group of Issei who came out of Japan. So we were talking and we said, "Gee, we wouldn't have even been here if it wasn't for the American Friends and the NSRC. Why can't we do something about some other group that's now in the same predicament we were in back in the forties?" And we thought of the boat people. I could hear many saying, "How are we going to raise that much money?" But we said, "First we've got to find these people who were helped to go from camp to college." We put several articles in the Japanese newspapers on the west coast. Not much response. So then I found out through the American Friends that most of that material from the Philadelphia office of the NSRC is now at the Stanford University's Hoover Institute Archives. I go to take care of my mother-in-law every other month in Palo Alto, so why not go to Stanford. So I holed myself up at the Archives at Stanford for day after day, getting the names of the people, what school they went to, and then the worst part: writing to the alumni association of every one of those hundreds of colleges they went to for the present address or information on their whereabouts. From that list, we told our story and if they agreed they were to send in money, and that's how we got started and were able to raise two thousand dollars that very first year to award to AFSC. We thought that we should start with them, and then on and on. Now that endowment has gotten up to a hundred fifty thousand, and we're planning to bring it up to five hundred thousand. We've awarded just hundreds of Hmong and Cambodians and Thais. And every time

we tell the story about how when they make it they are to turn around and help someone else. So this will be a long going tradition.

B: That's wonderful.

H: Yes. And we wanted to do it before John Mason and everybody else passed away.

B: So AFSC certainly changed your life.

H: Oh! It certainly has changed! And you know, it's not only Lafayette and Mimi that's now become Quakers. There are Quakers all over the country because of AFSC. I think that's something too. The Moriuchis in New Jersey, Kitsusis in Illinois \_\_\_\_ (?). They all became Quakers thanks to the efforts of the American Friends. So it's a wonderful story.

B: It is. You had no desire to move back to California?

H: No. No. [It was] my husband who said, "Why go back to the state from which we were ousted?" He would never go back. Because he didn't want to go back and that meant I would stay here too because I agreed. My two younger brothers also stayed out here. My youngest brother's in Rhode Island. The other brother was in Darian in Connecticut. We grew to like New England and why go back. I go back often to California, but I see that that life out there for the Japanese Americans like me is a very restricted life. The reason I say that is because the Isseis are the first generation still there. The churches and all the other institutions that supported these people are still there you have to respect your elders. You're not going to get up and say whatever is on top of your heads because you're not supposed to do that in our culture. The Japanese culture gets in the way of accomplishing what you yourself want to accomplish. Here I'm free at a town meeting to say whatever I want. Also, if I thought my CEO was wrong I could tell him off. You would never do that back in California because to do so means that either your judgment, your values, your upbringing, something is wrong. You wouldn't do that if you were Japanese. That gets in the way and I don't have that. I'd lose my freedom.

H: So the Quakers got you back to freedom!

B: (chuckles) That too! You see? That's why, yes, evacuation and incarceration were a terrible thing which shouldn't have been ever committed. They shouldn't have committed us into camp and taken away our freedom and all that, but because I chose to stay here -- and that's a very small percentage -- my life certainly has changed, my outlook, the way I raised my children. The whole thing is different. Now I have an older daughter that was in Peace Corps and now works with the Peace Corps headquarters in Washington. I have a son in the Office of Civil Rights Enforcement, Department of Education. We're all into service and I think

- that also is because Don and I are on that track. And that also comes from NSRC and doing all these things. So I look at my peers that I went to college with and I think, "Gee, that's pretty sad, the life they're leading." Because now they have the three or four car garage house and they have all these material things, but they really haven't grown, if you know what I mean.
- B: I sure do, I sure do.
- H: I think I owe that all to my experience and the experience I've had with the Friends and the NSRC.
- B: Have you ever thought of doing something with AFSC now?
- H: Other than partake in whatever they have here, you know. There's a big [AFSC] group here at Wesleyan and I do participate in their drives and contribute, but I have not... because I'm up to here yet in bank, League of Women Voters, NSRC that we're trying to hold up with six people. (laughter) But once I retire from the bank, seventy is the mandatory retirement age, I'll have more time. I haven't done any more than that. I'm not satisfied with the Methodist Church here so I'm sorting of looking around too. I don't know if I will stay here. I've got a ninety-four year old mother-in-law that I can't forget even for a minute. Every time the telephone rings I think it's her because she's already had to call 911 twice. She insists on living by herself and I don't blame her. Her mind is sharp. She does have help: Life Line, Meals on Wheels. But we wanted her to come here. Two days before departure she just cried and was upset and didn't want to leave her house so we left her there. All her things are downstairs, sitting with George down there. (chuckles) But until that's settled too my life is really not my own yet. The oldest sons wife is expected to take care of the mother and father. That's the Japanese culture, you see, and it's very difficult because I can't forget any of those. Especially me, because it was reinforced during the four years in Japan. I can't say, "Well, she's got two boys. The other one has to do something too." I can't quite make myself to do that. She is a very difficult woman.
- B: (laughs) You're doubly devoted.
- H: (chuckles) That's right, yes!
- B: Is there anything that I have forgotten to ask of anything you've thought of that you would like to say?
- H: No, but I think that perhaps my brothers' classmates, because they stayed in camp longer, were more exposed to the Quakers. I think he might have a lot more to say from a different angle. I left camp after a year and a half. My husband was only there for three months.

B: Was he in the same camp?

H: Same camp as me but, remember I said, he had the money faster than going through the NSRC channels because here's a teacher with a check. All he needed was a University who would accept a straight A student. So he just left earlier. His experience in camp, and the side effects of it, is far different from my youngest brother's: four years plus three months.

B: And your youngest brother, tell me his name again.

H: Glenn, Glenn. His real name is Ryozo. We called him Rosie and the daughter wasn't too happy with that name. (laughter) But you find him and he'd be willing to give you the time of day. He is going to chair for us the next year's tenth anniversary Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund project in Boston. We chose greater Boston because there's so many Southeast Asians in Lowell and Lawrence and up there, and all housed together in Brighton. That's another. You know, those Southeast Asians have now been here... we've given it for nine years. The first group that we gave it to in San Francisco in the bay area, they were like recent immigrants off the boat. This year I went to the ninth award in Seattle. They were a lot more sure of themselves, outwardly, dress and everything else, their English, but do you know that out of those ten people who received one thousand dollar scholarships, the average income was ten thousand six hundred combined family income. Only ten thousand six hundred. Can you beat that? And they are not on welfare if the father and mother are there. There were two unaccompanied minors, one who was twelve years old, and the whole family came to the dock and there was only room for one. This twelve year old girl was asked, "Do you want to get on board?" She said yes and she's been on her own all these years. She told me she lives in a foster home so she must get AFDC. But the combined income is ten thousand six hundred, but their grade point average is like 3.59 out a possible 4. But they tell me they have to use the dictionary to ascertain the question, and then to write it all with the dictionary. They just study around the clock.

B: You would have to.

H: Yes, you would have to. Some people say, "Oh well, they've been here long enough, they're going to make it. How long are you going to award it to them?" But every year we run into this. Hmong's getting the salutatorians, second in the class. Wonderful stories, so we keep going. Really and through us we tell John Mason and all the rest. So they must know what's happening too. We should send one to Asia Bennett because then they could print it in the papers. I just thought of that.

B: Keep the circle going round.

H: Circle going round and round. Then we feel that the first group is already graduated and making it, and we hope that the local committee would stay on top of these people so they can now turn around and help.

B: Yes. Wonderful story.

H: Can't think of anything else at the moment.

B: Well, let's just stop it, you've give me so much...

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**AFSC Oral History Interview #410**

**Narrator: GEORGE OYE**

**Interviewer: Paula Goldberg**

**October 6, 1991 Media, Pennsylvania**

G: My name is Paula Goldberg and I have agreed to interview George Oye in Media, Pennsylvania, for the American Friends Service Committee Oral History Project. Would you please state your name, date and place of birth?

O: My name is George Oye. I was born February 11, 1915, in a small community near Sacramento, California.

G: Starting the interview, we want to get a basic idea of your family background and where you grew up; how the neighborhood was, where your parents came from.

O: My father came to America by way of Hawaii in 1902. After ten years he went back to Japan. He was from the Yamaquchi prefecture and got married. Then he came back and stayed another ten years. During that time there were four children born in the States. My grandfather's health wasn't too good, and in 1922 he felt, as the oldest son of the family, the responsibility of going back. Also, he couldn't see much future in America for us of Japanese background because anti-Japanese feeling was getting quite bad. 1922 was only two years before the Exclusion Act, so you could see how bad it was then. For those two reasons, although he was doing quite well owning forty acres of vineyard in partnership with his friend, they both agreed it was the right time to sell. So they sold that forty acres of very good farm at a very good price. My father, at the tender age of thirty nine, went back to Japan as a successful farmer. And of course all of us children had to go with them because we were too small to be independent here.

After finishing elementary and secondary school in Japan, I always wanted to come back to America. This was a time when Japan's military was taking hold of everything and the Manchurian incident and all happened. People were talking about America's strong stand against the Japanese expansion in the continent and they were saying that a war between the U.S. and Japan was just a question of time. It wasn't a time for anyone to come to America, but somehow my father allowed me to come back. Of course, I was only seventeen at that time when I graduated from high school.

G: So your family went back to Japan.

O: In 1922, so I was there just shy of ten years by the time I finished my elementary and secondary school. But my English [was not adequate], other than very basic conversation.

America was in the middle of the Depression at that time, but my father's two old friends acted as the guardians for me and I was able to come back with my birth

- certificate and some of the report cards of the elementary school and some school group pictures and so forth as evidence of my citizenship. I had been detained at Angel Island, San Francisco Bay, which is the Ellis Island of the west coast, for a couple of nights. That was an experience in itself. But I was able to land again and struggled through the Depression years.
- G: What did you family do in Japan?
- O: Where were they living?
- G: My father's home was, as I said, in Yamaquchi prefecture. It was one of the islands in inland sea. The mild climate and scenery was very nice. Basically, they were farmers. In recent years all those rice fields are converted into tangerines. It's all citrus farmers now. So my father was from a farming family, although my grandfather was a carpenter.
- G: So when you came over to the States, you came over alone?
- O: I came back by myself.
- G: Not knowing any English?
- O: Well, I knew some. It was the Depression, so first thing we had to do was earn as much money as we could. So I worked as a farm laborer, picking grapes at nineteen cents an hour. After the season was over I started to attend the high school in the community where I grew up. I had some friends from before I went to Japan. I could have gone to junior college on my diploma from high school in Japan, but without adequate English... And also I was hoping that I could stay as a house boy in a family. They'd take me in and allow me to finish my education. But in the Depression years, nobody could afford such a person. So I had to work and study.
- G: Who was the family that you went to? How was that set up?
- O: Oh, it was a hard working farming family and I helped them.
- G: Were they a Japanese family?
- O: Yes, they were. My father's friends. I had to help them after school. In other words after school I'd go pick grapes and at nighttime pack them for shipping. Then I had to catch up with my home work and study. Those were struggling years.
- G: When you were at this family, where were you in California?

O: This is about eight miles out of Sacramento. Florin, F-L-O-R-I-N. That's where I was born and my father had the farm. One of my guardians' farm was right next to my father's. They were neighbors. They maintained a correspondence and friendship with my father, so he felt comfortable enough to ask them to be my guardians, and they were gracious enough to do that.

G: Did they have children as well?

O: One family, the immediate neighbor didn't have, they were just a couple. The other friend had three sons and one was going to U.C. Berkeley. In those days there weren't too many of that second generation who were going to college because they all had to work so hard to survive.

G: Were there many Japanese in that area?

O: This was very heavily a Japanese community. In fact they even had a segregated elementary school, although the elementary school I went to wasn't segregated. This was one of the few segregated Japanese schools that existed then. This often was mentioned in the Japanese American history.

G: Was it easy for you to become integrated into the area.

O: It wasn't hard. That wasn't a problem. Before going to Japan my father used to send us to Methodist Sunday school, so I picked up where I left off sort of. I think the Methodists' youth groups are called Epworth League and The King's Daughters for the girls. I became a member of Epworth League and made friends, mostly Japanese of course.

But it was an unusual community because the young ones all spoke fluent Japanese. From that angle it wasn't good for me. I should have gone into the English speaking community. (chuckles)

G: Did you have a lot of interaction with the [Anglos].

O: At high school, yes. Taking Spanish was a breeze for me because I wasn't handicapped at the same level as the others. But as I said before, I had to study and work and I ruined my health. I had to go to the sanitarium. I had t.b. and I was forced to stop working and take a rest cure. It wasn't a serious case. As I became an ambulatory patient I was able to enroll in the vocational school, taking a business college course, accounting, typing, and English. Also, I started to work in their office there.

G: How long were you in the TB sanitarium?

O: I was there for quite a while, four or five years, but as I said, I was working part of the time. Since I had no place, really, to go, I didn't mind that. I could continue my

- studies. In the meantime I took the state civil service test with the encouragement of my teacher. Evidently I passed pretty high because no sooner than the announcement was made, I started to receive invitations for an interview. Two or three years after I came back my older sister also remembered American life and wanted to come back. So she came back and got married. So I did have relatives by that time.
- G: She moved into the same area that you moved into?
- O: Yes. She was married to a Japanese who was a college graduate. He graduated from college and also attended Carnegie Mellon. But even with that kind of educational background, all he could do was work as farm labor. Also, he acted as the secretary to the Japanese Association.
- G: Did they live in the east for a while?
- O: He was when he was going to college in Kansas. But he had no job as long as he had a Japanese face, so he was working as a farm hand. He was a friend of my guardian. That's how we got to know him.
- G: What year did [your sister] come to the States.
- O: My sister came back in 1934. They had six children, so now we have plenty of relatives, although we have only three [children].
- G: It wasn't until about 1940 when you came out of the sanitarium?
- O: Yes, that's right. I started to work for the State of California in the Agriculture Department accounting office.
- G: Now how were you able to get a job?
- O: I took a civil service test while I was still in the sanitarium and I was ready when I came out.
- G: Did you feel any pressure being Japanese?
- O: Now, not with the civil service test. At least I don't think they discriminated. And shortly after that the war started. I was living in a hotel room, eating out and working in Sacramento. My sister's family was in Florin, California. When the war started my boss said that if I should face anything unpleasant, to be sure to let him know. But I had no problem. Everyone was kind to me. They said we were just caught in the situation. We were not the one who started the war. But the politics, of course, got in. The state civil service personnel board was under pressure to fire all of us. In the meantime other Asian groups like Koreans and

- Chinese started wearing buttons saying, "I am Chinese" or "I am Korean." That used to irritate us. (laughs)
- So the state decided that since this was war time they had to make sure that all state employees are loyal citizens. They had to start from someplace so they started in the Japanese American group. Nobody else received the questionnaire. I kept it because it was such an unusual questionnaire. (paper shuffling) Like, "Can you name two witnesses who witnessed your birth?" That's one of the questions! There are seventy six questions. I just copied it and I still have it.
- G: And you had to fill this in and give it...
- O: To the state personnel office. But they didn't use this. They just did that, but nobody else received such questionnaires.
- G: This was to prove that you were loyal?
- O: In their eyes. My colleagues, especially those from the Midwest, had been working for the state for years and years and years, when they saw this they said, "What am I going to do? I can't prove that I'm a citizen." They didn't have a birth certificate.
- G: Were you a full fledged citizen at the time?
- O: I had a birth certificate.
- G: Oh! You were born in the States, weren't you? Of course you were a citizen.
- O: But they didn't even have a birth certificate so they were fearful. I said, "You don't have to worry about this. This is just aimed for us."
- G: And nobody else received these questionnaires.
- O: Just us. My boss saw this and was shaking his head and said, "George, this is something. You might as well fill out everything honestly."
- G: Did you ever hear anything after you sent this back?
- O: No comment, no follow-up or anything. It was just harassment. In the meantime some of them got disgusted and resigned. Because of the curfew and travel restrictions slapped on us we couldn't continue to work. In my case, my sister was expecting a fifth child with only one at school age. My brother-in-law, because he was secretary for the Japanese American Association, and because of his language, he was able to help those people in legal matters, employment of welfare matters. He was on the blacklist. Well, as soon as war started he was taken right away and sent to Bismarck, North Dakota. My sister was about five

- months pregnant then and the pressure for the evacuation was building up in California. First it was the travel restriction and curfew. War started in December. At first the letters to the editors and so forth were very favorable for us, saying that we were just caught in the situation. There wasn't any harassment or anything like that. There was verbal harassment, but no [accusations of] sabotage or anything like that.
- G: Were you ever asked to leave your job?
- O: Nobody asked us, but I had to look after my sister's family after he was taken in. When the evacuation became just a matter of time, I quickly moved back to where my sister was living. If I stayed in Sacramento we could have ended up in two different camps. If you wanted to be assured of going to the same camp, you had to stay together at the time of registration. So I resigned at the state civil service before they fired me. I knew probably I'd get fired anyhow. But I don't think anyone was fired. But the state later recognized their mistake and after the war the state employees who had to quit because of the evacuation, or regardless of what the reason was, they compensated us for payment of five thousand dollars. Due to State Congressman Johnston's efforts, so many years later former state employees received five thousand dollars over a four year period.
- G: You were really lucky in that case.
- O: Yes. The Internal Revenue Service (chuckles) questioned me because I didn't show that as income. I said, "I wasn't trying to evade. I called the IRS and talked to the lady and explained the circumstances and she asked me if this is the repayment of the lost wages. But I said that wasn't the case because everybody received the same amount regardless of how much they were making or how long they worked. So this is part of the state of California recognizing the wrong they did. So she said that in that case I don't have to report that as income." So I explained that when they questioned that and nothing happened. So I guess they accepted that.
- G: At the time that war was breaking out, did you feel a lot of harassment in your hometown?
- O: It wasn't bad because there were many Japanese in that community and the relationship between the Japanese and non-Japanese [was good]. There never was a problem. It was predominantly Japanese. They were all good neighbors and good farmers and they worked together. Although, I remember before going to Japan--going back to 1921 before the Exclusion Act--I remember driving to Sacramento they used to throw tomatoes at my father's car and things like that. But I don't remember receiving any bad experiences at the school. I was in third grade of elementary school.

- G: Did it get any worse in the time you moved back?
- O: Of course, I was way after Pearl Harbor. Actually, I personally did not have any experience. As soon as the evacuation was announced and we realized we had to get rid of everything and we can't take anything to the camp or keep anything, they saw it as a good opportunity to buy cars cheap, or refrigerators cheap.
- G: Did you have any property that you had to sell?
- O: As I said, I was still single. But my brother-in-law and my sister had a tofu making business, so I learned to do that too to help them. When my brother-in-law was taken and the evacuation was announced and there was no question that we would have to be evacuated, I had to help my sister get rid of the equipment. When my sister went to have her baby I had to take care of those kids; cook for them and do the laundry, and everything, and at the same time get ready for evacuation. This was really a trying time for me. I was about twenty six and had no experience in such domestic details. (chuckles) But I learned a lot. The neighbors were helpful and helped us to get ready.
- G: Did the evacuation come as a surprise to the Japanese community?
- O: Well, we were hoping that we wouldn't have to. It was several months after Pearl Harbor the war was moving away from mainland, U.S.A. But it became evident that the evacuation was imminent. (shuffles paper)
- G: Is this one of the notices?!
- O: This is one of the notices, yes. They posted these all over. This is actually referring to my district.
- G: Where did they have these posted?
- O: They were posted on telephone poles and all over the place, and individual families received them also.
- G: You were sent one in the mail.
- O: Not in the mail. I don't how we got it. Maybe through the Japanese American Association or something like that.
- G: What did you [think would happen] if you didn't follow these instructions?
- O: There were some who felt that since they were not treated as citizens why should they follow this. But you couldn't avoid it. They were taken in right away and put in jail.

- So this [notice said that] everybody living in this area must report to a certain place at a certain time and wait for further instruction. And the second page tells you what you could take personally.
- G: What were you able to take?
- O: Very few things.
- G: Just basic things like linens, toiletries. Just one suitcase?
- O: This says, "What you can carry in your both hands." In my sister's case, she was carrying a baby and four other small children. Without the help of our neighbors and friends it would have been an impossible task. You just had to limit to what you can take to live on.
- G: When you first heard of the evacuation, did you and your friends look at it like, "Can you believe this is happening?"
- O: I remember a fellow member of the church, a young man, was very angry. It was unusual for him to show anger like that. He [said], "You remember George, now, that God is not going to permit this. There will be a time that comes when this wrong will be righted!" I still remember him. But we were powerless. The average age of the second generation was probably less than twenty. If this war had started ten years later they would have been better educated in the second generation. First generation Japanese were not allowed to become a citizen by law. So it's not their fault that they weren't citizens. Some of the families used the children's names to acquire farms and things like that. Then they passed another law saying that if citizen's parents are aliens they cannot own the land. At every turn they made it difficult. First they used Chinese labor. They came in the late 19th Century. As soon as the railroad was finished they had no need for them, so they were kicked out. Then the Japanese moved into the land. The prices were low, and you could go in and cultivate it into very productive farms. Some groups felt that this [relocation] was a chance to take them over. There were all kinds of reasons, I'm sure. There are many books documenting many all these incidents leading to this war. Many, many good books now. The state's personnel board, to issue such a silly questionnaire as that, shows it. I don't think that any sane mind would allow this to be distributed in this day and age.
- G: You were talking about your sister's family. It sounded very interesting. Why were they separated?
- O: Because he was taken in.
- G: Immediately?

- O: As soon as the war started.
- G: And the whole family wasn't taken in?
- O: No. Just him, because he was helping. His title was Secretary of Japanese Association, which meant that he was one of the leaders, they felt. Not only him but anyone, the president, and treasurer, anyone involved in that was taken in. We were leaderless, actually, as a Japanese community, and what can we do? We weren't a dangerous group or anything like that.
- G: So after he left you went down to live with her family and how was it selling her stuff, the property?
- O: We had to get rid of the car for practically nothing.
- G: And the business.
- O: Yes we had the business. As I said, he was making tofu as well as being a secretary because a secretary's salary didn't support him.
- G: How much time were you given when you heard the notice and had to sell everything before you had to go?
- O: We had more time than some of the other, living close to the military zone. Maybe two or three weeks to get rid of everything. Even if you had three months it would have been a very difficult task. People would just come in and look for a bargain. You had to practically give it away. Some of them were lucky enough to have a friend who said they'd look after it, or some said, "Well, you leave your things in our garage and we'll look after it." But after going into camp some of my friends received a letter saying that they had a mysterious fire and everything was lost. Without knowing your future, how long you'll be taken, it was a hard decision to make. If you were sure you were coming back after the war ended... But there was no guarantee! I could see if they were only rounding up so called dangerous Japanese that were on the FBI list or something like that, I could understand that. But not only Japanese, but Germans and Italians, because they were also enemy aliens at that time. But enemy alien Germans and Italians would just walk around free, other than those who were taken in, whereas we, the citizens of the United States were not allowed to travel beyond five miles or stay out beyond the 8:00 curfew.
- G: Was their any organization in the Japanese community opposing...?
- O: We were powerless...
- G: Even the church groups, making statements to their congressmen?

O: Well, the Quakers, one group, AFSC sent Homer and Edna Morris to investigate this. I think they have a record of this in the Archives. The Quakers and the Mennonites. Very few religious groups stood up for us. The ACLU probably stood up for us.

G: I was also reading that even though there might have been personal harassment of American Germans and American Italians, they didn't go through the same experiences at all. There must have been questions about that.

O: It's a mass hysteria and lack of leadership that led to this. If there were groups strong enough to say, "Wait a minute, this is not an American way of doing things. Seventy five percent of these people are citizens. Those so called dangerous ones are already taken in. Why are we doing this? They are productive citizens and they contribute to the community."

G: How did the community react to this?

O: They were not unkind, but they couldn't do anything. They didn't have any mass demonstration opposing this or anything like that. (chuckles)

G: Did you feel somewhat betrayed?

O: We all did, of course! Just put yourself in the position. You're a birthright citizen and just because the country that your father or mother came from happened to attack this country... That's what happened with the Italians and Germans but they weren't treated [this way]. It was strictly a racial thing. If they treated the Germans and Italians the same way, that would be different. But they couldn't do that, of course, because they had more power than we did. We were too young. Now we have senators and congressmen and judges, but we didn't have that. The average age was less than twenty.

G: So what did your sister end up doing with the business and her house, did she sell it?

O: Well, the house was rented. We didn't own the property. We took what we could. At least the government said you could store anything you couldn't take like the washing machine or something like that, but you had to crate it.

G: The cars?

O: Not the car. But at that point nobody trusted the government. Like my sister, we had no other way of disposing of it, so we left a few things with the government.

G: I did read in this book that did give their stuff to the government, it ended up being confiscated anyway.

O: Not necessarily. At least, after going to camp in my sister's case, they asked for the washing machine and they sent it to the camp in Arkansas. So that's one case where the government followed through on a promise. So my sister and her family were very popular everywhere, people wanted to use the washing machine. (chuckles) There were many children, you know.

G: You went with your sister and her family, and did you also go with some of your friends?

O: Yes, our community, Florin, was divided into four. Just like, "th[is side] railroad track goes to this one and the other side of the highway goes to this..." So we, as a community group, were not sent to one same camp. We were divided up into four. That was another way, probably, of making sure of breaking up future possible sabotage. But there was not a single case of sabotage proven before evacuation. Even now, not a single case. And the money that our government spent on us when we could have been productive citizens. This is what the racial hysteria could do, and this could have happened to the Chinese groups a few years ago, and the Middle East Iranians, for instance. They could have faced the same thing.

G: What camp were you sent to?

O: First we were sent to the so called assembly center. This was the fairgrounds and places like that. We were sent to Fresno near Sacramento. That's quite a way south. We were there until the end of May, May 29th, 1942. So about three months after the war started this possibility of evacuation began. So they started sending us to assembly centers, and our group was sent to Fresno. This was a fairground, and some of them had hastily built barracks with no ceiling, and the asphalt floor, so during the hot summer days you could sink into the floor, especially the post of the bed or something like that. If a baby was crying at one end of these barracks everybody's sleep was interrupted.

G: How many people were in each barrack.

O: Each barrack had, I would say, about six families or eight families divided into cubby holes. All we had was a place to sleep. Each block had a mess hall where we ate. We had a public latrine with no privacy. They didn't even have a partition. Can you imagine that? At one end they had a trough with water coming in, and when the water is full it dumps water and that flushes the rows of latrines. We used to have a talent show, or something like that. Some of us worked in the mess hall or office, and especially those working for the State of California were asked to work in offices. Some were talented in entertainment, and so as a

- community we'd put on a show, just to keep morale up. One of the scenes (chuckles) is sitting on the long bench reading a paper and every once in a while they all stood up! That's when the water flushed down! (laughs) So there was humor there too!
- G: (laughs) Keep the humor up.
- O: Yes, and that went over big 'cuz everybody experienced that. But especially the women's side, for it not to have a partition was ridiculous. So finally after fighting and fighting they made it a little more private.
- G: How long were you in the assembly center?
- O: We were there until October. But in the mean time my brother-in-law was paroled. So he came back much to my relief.
- G: So he came to join the family?
- O: After the evacuation, but at least at that point we had a head of family there.
- G: The families at the detention centers were allowed to stay together?
- O: Yes. Actually one of the children, the incubation period [for mumps] was two days short, or something like that, so we had to leave him. A child of about three years old or something like that, we had to leave him in Sacramento County Hospital.
- G: What happened to him?
- O: He was taken, the nurse came with an ambulance and they took him. He was crying his head off. That was terrible!
- G: Did he later join up with the family?
- O: Yes, a few days later. A little boy with a nurse and MP guarding him.
- G: They wouldn't let them wait a two days?
- O: Oh, no. Nobody. No exception
- G: Was everybody in the community taken by train?
- O: Depending on where you went. Some were taken by bus. In our case we were asked to assemble at the Elk Grove Train Station. That's where the high school was. That was a sad morning. Many friends came to send us off and served us

coffee. That's when you really realized that freedom was [being] taken, with MPs guarding.

**(TAPE 1, SIDE 1 ENDS)**

**(TAPE 1, SIDE 2)**

O: When we registered we were given a tag like this. From here, after you registered, you had a family number. 8690; that's my sister's family and myself.

G: Each family had one number?

O: Yes. So this number written on the back is for everything. We went by this number.

G: And when ever you were being called or anything... you probably became a number.

O: I kept it, you know. It's at the Balch Institute in Philadelphia. I thought it might be better for them to keep it than for us to keep it so I donated that to the Balch Institute.

G: Do you remember the date when you...

O: Oh yes, Friday, May 29th, 7:00 am. The Southern Pacific group number 27. 27 probably went in one car. (chuckles) Everybody wore this like a dog tag.

G: You always had to wear it?

O: During this trip.

G: You didn't have to wear it while you were in the camp.

O: No, not in the camp. Not after we were assigned the barrack in Fresno. It was funny; in Fresno we were put in a camp with a barbed wire fence around, MP towers, you know, search light. Outside the fence you could see Japanese farmers still working because they were not evacuated yet along Fresno. So here we are in the camp and we could see other Japanese.

G: Well, what was your reaction to this?

O: It was ridiculous! (laughs)

G: Weren't they getting nervous, weren't they scared?

O: No. What can we do? It was just funny. (laughs) They finally came, of course, but they were evacuated later than we were. I don't know where they went.

G: How was the treatment by the guards when you were going there.

O: There were some incidents when they wandered off, especially children, you know, from the camp area got shot at. Some of them were rumors probably but actually some were killed by a guard. Those guards who were taking, quote - unquote, *us* weren't the cream of the crop, you know. All the good soldiers were needed elsewhere; some of them couldn't even write their name. They had to print their name. I was moved to Arkansas [with others] friend from Fresno. [It was] a more permanent camp. There were ten such camps scattered over the states. Here's a map showing where they were. There were two in Arkansas and we were in Jerome, Arkansas.

G: From Fresno you were transported all the way to Arkansas.

O: Five days. A loooong trip, because the military trains are constantly moving. We'd have to stop and then when some of the track was clear you go, and then stop. It took five days to get there. Actually, from October 14th through 18th, 1942, to get from Fresno to there. After two or three days they stopped in nowhere, in a big open field, stopped the train and let us out. The MPs made a big circle and we were allowed to stretch our legs and such.

G: But everything was always under guard. Was it under gun point too?

O: Not gun point. They were carrying guns, of course. If we had started to run away they would have shot us, I'm sure.

G: Why were people transported all the way from California. Wouldn't you have been moved to a closer camp.

O: Well, they were filled to capacity. Each camp is limited. This camp, we had about, close to 10,000 people. There were about 120,000 of them. They didn't want to have a heavy concentration of us, you know. So these are not near any big city either, but in the middle of the desert in Arizona, or even Utah. This is away from anything. I remember seeing this camp.

G: This was in October, so you stayed six months at the assembly center. At the assembly center there were some gatherings... You were there for a while. Was there any information given to you about what was going on in your future, where you were going to be taken, what was going to happen?

O: We knew we were going to a permanent camp, but where we were going we didn't know until a couple of days before it actually happened. Also, when we were told to get ready to go to the assembly center, we didn't know what kind of clothes to take. We didn't know are we going to a hot country or cold country or anything. So there's nothing much you can prepare for. Even from Fresno to Arkansas we only found out three days before that we were going to Arkansas. There were rumors going around that we were going to Arkansas. That's close to the Mississippi, swampy, a lot of chiggers.

G: A completely different area from what you were used to.

O: Yes, right. Then we were there and they decided to close a lot of the camps because by then the government realized they weren't going to keep us forever and they started encouraging us to go out, to relocate. They used to call these camps relocation camps. Then, as they started to relocate, they probably decided to close one of the camps because there were fewer people. Also, they needed POW camps. They closed ours and they turned that into a German POW camp. At least, they said, if you have a friend in another camp that you want to go to they will honor our request. But I didn't have any friend so we left it up to them, and we were sent to Arizona, to Gila.

G: Did you have a choice?

O: Well, we could say, "I have a dear friend in a camp in..."

G: You only had a choice of a different camp, not of not going at all. (laughs)

O: Well, if you had a place to go... but at that time not many were going out yet, mostly students in the relocation which Quakers were involved in. Students were able to continue their college education, some of them, thanks to church groups.

G: How long did you stay in Arkansas?

O: We were there from November '42 to June of '44. It was cold in the winter time, I'm telling you.

G: You didn't get any clothes or any supplies?

O: We ordered them from Sears and Roebuck and Montgomery Wards. In Fresno, for instance, the assembly center hired for sixteen dollars. I think doctors got sixteen dollars a month. I don't know, I think semi-skilled got twelve dollars a month. Mess workers and so forth got about nine dollars a month.

G: At the camps did they have some kind of internal structure, did everybody have jobs there?

- O: Not for everybody, especially at the assembly centers.
- G: There were 10,000 internees there?
- O: No, not at the assembly centers but at the relocation centers. Close to 10,000, some of them were over 10,000. I think there's some books showing how many were at each. These are the [people] in one block. They were pretty much from Florin, California where I grew up. We were at least kept together.
- G: This is your block?
- O: Mmmmmmm hmm.
- G: This is you?
- O: Does it look like me?
- G: (laughs) I could tell.  
And this is your sister and her children there?
- O: Yes. Let's see, this is my brother-in-law. This one of their children... This is my niece. I don't know whether this is my sister or not. I think this is my sister with the baby.
- G: A lot of kids.
- O: He was from Los Angeles area but he wanted to be close to his sister's family, so he came to Fresno.
- G: So this is in the assembly center?
- O: This is Arkansas, block nine, May 14th.
- G: And the blocks were separated? 10,000...
- O: No, this camp was divided into many blocks. Sometimes between the blocks they might have an open field; a fire break.  
This is the Arkansas camp picture.
- G: Were there always guards at the towers?
- O: At the beginning there were. But going in and out of the camp...
- G: So you were able to go in and out of the camp?

O: In Arkansas, I signed up to be a senior time keeper for the agricultural section because the farm was outside of the camp and this gave me a chance to get away from camp. So I signed up for that and was lucky enough to get that job. This was a farm community just outside of the camp. This was a picture of harvesting a cucumber. This Caucasian supervisor went back to his home told them, "Tomorrow we're going to harvest cucumbers." And his farmer friends said, "Are you kidding us? You can't harvest cucumbers this early." But see these California farmers knew what to do, so when the seedlings were small they put a hot cap on them, and as a result about three weeks earlier than the local [crop] that they had we started to harvest and had a steady flow of farmers coming in to see how we did.

G: You taught them. (chuckles)

O: Yes. I think I'm in that picture. They had about seven or eight crews. They were crew farming.

G: You would bus out and then bus back in?

O: That's right, you had to go away from this camp. (Showing more pictures) This is also this same camp, and this is the warehouse area. They had about ten or twelve barracks like this in each block. Then there's another block. Then they had a block manager who was appointed by the administration. We also had a councilman which we would elect among ourselves. At least we had an election. The manager was appointed but [in] some of the decision making he had to work together with the council. The council met every month or every week. So we had some order like that. But a community of eight, nine, ten thousand, needs a job that any city or community can offer, from policeman to fireman, cook, you know, janitor, office worker.

G: Did they have their own nurses?

O: Oh yes, hospital work. Yes

G: Nurseries I guess.

O: Yes. Yes, it was a big deal, the hospital.

G: In the centers, was there a community center, were there schools...

O: Oh yes. Schools. Elementary and high school. Each block had a, so called, recreation hall.

G: Who were the people working, was it people who were interned who were working there or were there outside people?

O: Some teachers were from outside, but qualified internees worked there teaching. Doctors were mostly, other than the superintendent of the hospital, evacuee doctors. There were many evacuee doctors qualified to work as a doctor. But nineteen dollars was the top salary. Plus there was a clothing allowance of three and a half a month, or something like that.

G: But you had to order out somewhere.

O: That's right.

G: They didn't set up stores or anything?

O: They had a store called a canteen. Sometimes they might have ice cream and there'd be a long line of people.

G: Did you have entertainment?

O: One thing we had was all this idle time, and as a result I think the government was really letting us keep our culture, interests. So a poets' group, an artists' sketching group, or painting or woodcarving. Those things were in the camp. Before, everybody was too busy working. We were lucky that in our camp in Arkansas there was a teacher, a well known poet. So we gathered around him and started a poets group. The same teacher went to Arizona, so we continued that, I remember. We used to publish publications. I had a whole stack of them but they are all at the Balch Institute. I didn't want to be responsible. Every time we moved I was afraid I'd leave them.

At the time that we left Arizona, (rustling papers), this album... Actually they had a contest. The title was "Light." Mine received the second honor. Someone from a Wyoming camp wrote this in beautiful calligraphy and sent it to me. This was the prize, this album. This is my teacher's, he wrote this for me.

G: Did you do these?

O: No, my teacher did. This is mine. This is "drying socks in a window, a bachelor's quarters." (laughter)  
I'll give you my booklet that I put together.

G: I hope it's in English. (laughs)

O: It's in English and Japanese. Before I retired I realized that I'd been doing this only in Japanese. My children or my grandchildren would never understand unless they studied Japanese. So I translated some of the translatable ones. When

I was with AFSC my secretary was a poet, Kitty Karsner, and she and I spent lunch hours translating. I asked her for this translation of it because she's a poet so she can polish it up better than I could. But some of them she said, "That's good, you don't have to do anything." We used to have a lot of fun during lunch hour doing that. Actually, Information Services staff liked that and published some for internal distribution at the AFSC. So the year I retired I put them together. These are the farewell poems from the farewell poet, as I left camp. They're beautifully done.

G: Beautifully written!

O: Some of these are really beautifully done. Some of them are, I don't know, aren't done as well. (He reads) "Among the pleasant memories there are the hills of Gila." And Koshyu is my pen name. This is my teacher's writing. In fact I have one that he wrote for me in the camp. It's actually hanging over there. So those were some of the positive things we did in the camp.

As I said, I was in this agricultural section in Arkansas because I wanted to get away from the camp. But the agricultural crew became the lumberjacks in the wintertime because we had to saw wood for the stove, pot belly stove. We were busy year round, because Arkansas was plenty cold. Then, as I said, we went to Gila and stayed there about a year. That's where I met some of the Quakers. When I was in Arkansas I first heard about the Quakers. There was a senior foreman who was very bitter about this evacuation. He didn't have anything good to say about Caucasians.

G: Was he Caucasian?

O: No, no. He was Japanese. One day he said, "George, you know anything about Quakers?" And he said something like, "You know, the Quakers must be all right." Then I found out that when all the farmers started to recruit able persons to manage their farm, he was interviewed by a Quaker lady. I don't know who she was.

G: In Arkansas?

O: In Arkansas. And that was the first time he had anything good to say about Caucasians. He used to fight all the time. That was the first time I'd heard anything [nice about Caucasians from him].

G: Did you meet with her also?

O: No. That was just him; he didn't accept the offer because he didn't go out. But he could have gone out, probably, had he wanted to.

G: She would have sponsored him to go out.

O: Probably, because she was looking for someone to manage her farm and he was a very able farmer.

G: So you didn't really have much contact with them in Arkansas.

O: Not in Arkansas, but in Gila. When we were transferred to Gila, the job I applied for was the superintendent of staff housing. That's a very impressive title. That was taking care of the Caucasian staff's housing and also the guest rooms that we had, because we had many visitors from outside. So I got to meet all the visitors from outside because they had to come to me for the assignment of the guest room. That's how I met the Quakers.

G: Who were the visitors?

O: Some of them came from Washington. Some of them were people coming to recruit workers, or some were just visiting their friends, some church group and so forth.

G: Were the internees allowed to have visitors?

O: Yes, they were allowed to have visitors. That's where I met some of the *real* Quakers, in Arizona.

G: They came as a delegation or something to look at the camps?

O: No. Esther Rhodes was in Japan for forty years, spoke fluent Japanese, and came out there. [She was a] white haired lady in a plain, one piece dress. [She said,] "I would like to have a room in the evacuees barracks." It was unheard of! Usually they say, "George, I want the best air-conditioned guest room," because it was hot. Here, I had to consult with my boss. "Is it all right to do this?" He said, "You fix up the room and make it as comfortable as possible." So we hauled a bed in and a night stand, things like that. She stayed a few days visiting her friends from Pasadena area. She knew many because before the evacuation she was helping evacuees to move in the Pasadena area. So she knew many people from Pasadena area.

G: How long was she staying?

O: She just stayed a few days. I would accompany the visitors when they were visiting the evacuees. One day this man came in with a truck loaded with boxes and suitcases and things like that. I found out that the people used to write to him. He was also from Pasadena and was a Quaker missionary to Japan, so he also spoke fluent Japanese. They would ask him, "Next time when you come will you please bring a suitcase for a family, number so and so, the baggage number

whatever it was." And so he used to go around to those storage spaces and pick up those, load up the truck, and save up his gas ration card--because it was a long trip from L.A. to Arizona--and visit, delivering the packages to the families. There was one family with a very old man [who] had to be eighty, and he probably felt like he wouldn't be seeing California again, you know, that kind of thing. Here Herbert Nicholson would say, in his fluent Japanese, "Here Grandpa, I have something special for you." And he took out a thermos bottle full of water from Pasadena. All of us who witnessed that scene will never forget that. Every time I talk about that I can feel my eyes getting warm. Then I found out he was a Quaker missionary. A Japanese textbook has him as Uncle Goat because he used to take goats in to help the farmers. He's well known in Japan as Uncle Goat. His son is living in Southhampton and I met him after coming to this area. When ever he came I used to see Herbert Nicholson.

As I told you, the Quakers and other church groups helped the students to relocate to continue their college education. Usually those high school kids didn't have anything good to say about the Caucasians, because the parents were bitter, so naturally they hear what the parents feel. I used to hang around the newspaper office because that's where they printed the poetry, so I got to know some of the people. There was one young man who the kids had high respect for, and that was Tom Bodine who used to come representing the Student Relocation office, to encourage kids to come out to continue their college education and arranged for their support and all that.

G: Is this the first time you were hearing about the student relocation program?

O: Yes, until then I didn't know about this at all. But it was going on long before I found out. Many students started to come out of the camp way before others were not permitted.

G: Other church groups were involved with that?

O: Yes. It was out of 20 South 12th Street where the Quaker office was, but support came from other church groups too. Most of the work was done there, so Quakers were deeply involved in it.

G: Did you know some of the students who left from your camp?

O: No. Not personally. After coming out here I found many who were helped by that group. Actually, that group is now in a position--they are successful engineers and doctors and so forth--and they want to repay what they received. They are now raising a fund to help other minority groups who are in need of continuing education. Last year, we had that presentation in Philadelphia. They go to different cities to find a group, and here they picked Southeast Asian students worthy of continuing their college education, and they offer ten or twelve one thousand dollar scholarships to them. The presentation took place at the AFSC

office and Tom Bodine was there. I said, "Tom, you know you're one person that the kids really liked and had confidence in." I said, "What was your secret?" He laughed and said, "George, I had a song. I'd sing, "What a boring life this is. You can't even make love without everyone knowing." (chuckles) Of course the kids just loved it. He made a big hit with the kids and the kids trusted him. He said, "That's one of the secrets." (laughter) You ought to interview him.

G: Actually, we did! (laughs) Were you involved with the student relocation thing?

O: No, I wasn't involved, but after coming out I heard about the Student Relocation office. I didn't even know that this was a Quaker headquarters. But my sister had a baby in a camp in Arkansas and she received a set of layettes, and that came from the AFSC. She had a card and kept that card which said, "Compliments of the American Friends Service Committee," or something like that. After I came out I worked for the University of Pennsylvania for a little over a year, teaching Japanese. After that ended... Well, it's a long story, but I applied for the Service Committee and they had an opening at the warehouse at 23rd and Arch. That was a big operation then, considering all of the war torn areas; both in Europe and Japan. It was a year to year appointment, and an emergency program, but I stayed there thirty four years. (laughs) First as a bookkeeper, then as assistant to director, and I think it was in 1958 when the director left and I was asked to direct the program. I said, "I'm not qualified for that," but they forced me to try it and from 1958 to '80 when I retired I was Director of Material Aids Program.

G: So you were qualified! (chuckles)

O: The last few years I also was wearing a cap as a business manager because the business manager had a heart attack. So those were memorable years.

G: Do you have any striking memories or anything that sticks out about the camps? Any events that happened while you were there?

O: Well, some of the things I told you about. It wasn't a pleasant place to be. The weather was terrible, it got extremely hot or cold.

G: How about when you went to Gila?

O: It's hot there. But the camp was already there. When we went to Arkansas, Arkansas was just opening up. Everywhere you went was mud, nothing but mud. At least Gila was already established so the physical setup wasn't bad and as people went out there were more rooms available. I could have my own quarter, I didn't had to stay with my sister's family.

G: Could you see any differences between how people were treated?

O: It was pretty much the same. By then people were relocating and knew they had to get out of. But I wanted to be close to my sister. I didn't want to just take off on my own.

I forgot to tell you. As this relocation became a reality, my brother-in-law and two others from the Arkansas camp were sent out to Seabrook, New Jersey, because they had a frozen food plant there at Seabrook. There were many already going there to work, so they wanted to know if this was a place they should encourage the evacuees to go or not. So they went out to investigate the Seabrook plant; the community sentiment, the schools situation, how close it was to a big city, what kind of place it was. They went back and reported very favorably, not as a permanent place to locate, but because any family with many children had a hard time finding housing during wartime. That was true for anyone.

G: When you went to the camps if you found other places to live in the east you were allowed to leave the camps and relocate?

O: After a certain time. I couldn't get out first because I was reared in Japan, so I was on the black list as potentially dangerous. I could have gone out to Wisconsin or something, but east was out for me.

G: So how could you get out?

O: In time they relaxed that. Toward the end they wanted all of us to get out so, you know, there was no problem about that, but finding a job and suitable place to live... especially those with big families. In the cities the housing was really ugly. They could get jobs easily enough, but finding a house was something else big enough to get a whole family in. For a couple it was no problem.

G: They didn't have too much money.

O: No, that's it. How much was it they were taking with them, twenty five dollars or something like that when they left the camp? Pay for the transportation and that's that. And what can you save in a camp getting nineteen dollars a month and having to buy your own things? So unless you had previous savings, you couldn't expect to come out rich. Two or three years in the camp.

G: Internees who had family from the east coast, were they able to move in with them?

O: Yes, if they had it. But very few had such a connection. Those people were not evacuated, just the western three states, part of Arizona and Nevada. Some of those took voluntary evacuation. Some of them moved out of California but it didn't always work out. Some governors might say they were welcome to come

- but then opposition would start and they wouldn't want to take an unfavorable political stand on any case.
- G: In closing, what happened to the evacuees?
- O: They were forced out. They had to move someplace. Many of them are back in California. Many. But I was not about to go back to California. That was one thing I was very clear on.
- G: Where did you and your family go?
- O: Well, as I said, my brother-in-law recommended Seabrook, so he felt some obligation to at least initially move there. There were many Japanese out there, so he decided to come out to Seabrook. But I didn't want to work at Seabrook. I was looking for a suitable job in the Philadelphia area which was close enough to Seabrook but [I felt] it was about time to be on my own. So they had the so called "War Relocation Office" in Philadelphia. They tried to help you in finding a job and place to live and things like that. The most suitable job, for my background, was to teach Japanese at the University of Pennsylvania. They had an Army Special Training Program and they were in need of instructors. So I did that. This was toward the end of the war so none of them were going to fight, but many of them went as an occupational force in Japan.
- G: 1945, 1946?
- O: Yes. They used to have reunions at Palumbo's, and they used to invite me and tell me about what their experience was in Japan and so forth. But when that program ended...
- G: You were teaching people going over?
- O: Well, this was language, strictly language. I was more or less taking the place of a phonograph that would take care of pronunciation. This was a completely immersed program on Japan. They had to learn history and everything and language was part of it. Army's Special Training.
- G: I must say, you were in a strange position teaching Japanese to people who were going over to occupy Japan.
- O: But they had a good time there.  
You should see some of the pictures in Gila. (They begin to look at pictures.)
- G: This is a huge camp. How many people do you think were in this camp?
- O: About ten thousand I think. I don't know.

G: Were you able to walk around the area?

O: Oh yes.

G: Not much around the area to look around. You were in the middle of the desert. When you were in the camps were you able to contact your family at all, back in Japan?

O: I think at a certain time, through the Red Cross, we were allowed to. We didn't know anything about what had happened to our families in Japan.

G: How about before the war?

O: Before the war, yes, we were able to.

G: Did they know about the evacuation?

O: They heard about it I'm sure, because they can't hide that kind of thing.

G: But were you able to send letters?

O: Actually, I remember that the government of Japan sent barrels of soy sauce and a few things to the camp, tea I guess. So they knew what was happening.

G: But you didn't hear anything from your parents.

O: No, not for a long time. But as soon as we came out we established contact and heard that people in Japan were really suffering and in material needs; sugar and salt and that kind of thing. We sent many care packages through parcel post to Japan.

G: How was your family?

O: One of my uncles who was younger than I was killed in action, and my younger brother who was supposed to be taking care of the family--I'm the oldest son but I left Japan and left everything to him--he was a POW in Russia someplace and he was unknown for four years after the war. Russia declared war the day before the end of the war or something like that, and had many POWs who did not survive. Luckily my brother [did].

**(END TAPE 1)**

**[BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE 1]**

G: ... (they talk through each other)

O: I hope you'll get inspired to compose something yourself.

G: Unfortunately I'm not very poetic (laughs) but I like reading though. We're just looking at a book of poetry by George that he wrote when he was interned and after. I suppose most of these poems are about how you felt during the camp...

O: There aren't too many expressly on that period. I have over two thousand, going back to, many of them, during camp time. Maybe some day I'll go back and translate them. As you get older you lose the inspiration somehow... (laughs). But I continue to write poems and every month I send them to Los Angeles to the two Japanese newspapers. (talks very softly and under his breath.) One reason is, of course, I'm interested in Senryu, but also this is a way to keep up with the Japanese language.

G: I'm sure you're still in touch with your family in Japan.

O: Yes, but writing a letter is such a struggle, you forget and you have to look up in the dictionary. Modern Japanese is quite different from my Japanese, although I have no problem conversing with people from Japan. Mine tends to be too polite and modern Japanese is more rough.

G: When was the first time you visited Japan after the war?

O: 1966. I was asked to visit the [AFSC] material aids distribution area. At that time I went to Algeria and then Congo--it's now Zaire, but at that time it was still Congo--and east Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, Sudanese refugees in Sudan, and Middle East. A three week trip with Will Patterson who was the expeditor of this. He is now retired. So he and his wife and I took this trip, and it was a very memorable trip. Instead of coming back from Beirut to New York, I decided to make it around the world and visit Japan. So I continued east and did the AFSCs Hong Kong program and finally Japan. That was 1966, and that was 34 years that I had not seen Japan, although I'd been communicating with relatives. I spent nineteen days of my vacation there. I already had a letter from Pasadena and San Francisco, they had a meeting scheduled for me to speak to them about my visit to AFSC distribution areas. Luckily I had some slides developed in Hong Kong and in Japan, so I was able to put together some kind of visual as well as oral report for them. So I gave a report to San Francisco and Pasadena before even coming to Philadelphia. After coming back to Philadelphia I went out to the sewing groups and regional offices, probably about fifty times among eight different states. That part was more difficult than the trip itself! (chuckles)

G: When did you begin working with the AFSC?

O: 1946. July, 1946.

G: Right after you came out.

O: That's right, from University of Pennsylvania. I forgot to mention this. I didn't want to live in a boarding house or place like that. I was looking for some place where I could stay with a family. Quakers by the name of Homer and Edna Morris were just such people. Homer was concerned about Edna's health and she needed a little help around the house. One weekend I went and we both agreed to try it out. I ended up almost like their own son. In fact, we were married in the Morris' home.

G: Where did you meet your wife?

O: Uh, actually at Seabrook. My brother-in-law and my wife's father happened to come from the same community in Japan. They didn't know that [when they were in California]. So that's how they established the friendship and one thing led to another. They were in Watsonville, California which was a different area than us, between Santa Cruz and Monterey, nice area.

G: And their family was interned as well?

O: Oh, yes, nobody escaped.

G: And what camp was she in?

O: She was in Poston, Arizona. She was in Salinas assembly center and then went to Poston. She was only in one relocation camp whereas I was in two different ones.

G: So you met when she came up here.

O: Yes, I was visiting my sister's family and one thing led to the other and our paths crossed and, you know, those things happen.

G: When you started working with the AFSC were you surprised to find out how much work they had done with the relocation centers and the student relocation?

O: Yes, I didn't know AFSC's real involvement. The AFSC material aids program had their warehouse at 23rd and Arch. That was one of the larger programs of the AFSC at the time. We had many people working just in the production crew alone. There were close to thirty people working there. AFSC also was nice enough to hire, not just me, but Japanese ladies to do the sorting of clothing, the

- processing end of it. They would have had a difficult time finding a job. The Service Committee was able to hire them and kept them until they built up enough to qualify, to be eligible for social security. Many of them were just plain housewives and they didn't have any social security. Otherwise they would not have qualified for social security. There were about three Japanese ladies who worked there. Their families still tell me how much that was appreciated because they didn't have to ask or beg for spending money from the family, and that really made their retired life with dignity. I just met the daughter of one of the persons who worked for us at the time. She said the same thing, how much they appreciated AFSC keeping her until social security quotas were filled.
- G: When you moved into this area, how was the reaction and acceptance for the Japanese?
- O: Coming out of the camp... I was scared stiff because we were constantly [watched] and we were all of the sudden turned free. And every time I'd see a GI I'd be scared. The GI's were always kind to us, offered a seat for the kids on a crowded train. If they had a comfortable seat they would give it up to evacuees and things like. After coming out I kept a low profile. I wasn't about to make myself too visible, although I had good times with the GI's at the University of Pennsylvania. But commuting time and so forth, I just kept a low profile. I didn't stick my neck out at all. Even during the V-Day celebration I just didn't feel like going out into that crowd.
- G: Were you in touch with other Japanese families?
- O: Well, after we got to know other Japanese in the Philadelphia area. There weren't to many Japanese coming out to the Philadelphia area. There's a Japanese American Citizens' League in Philadelphia. They're still existing and a few times a year we have a chance to gather together. My sister's niece is living in Bryn Mawr and she has three children. They're all married now so time's moving on. (chuckles)
- G: After some time, through the readjustment and processing and going over everything, how do you feel about this whole experience.
- O: Well, as you know, at least our government recognized a mistake was made and the redress bill went through. We received the redress money. I was old enough to be among the first group last year, so at least the government acknowledged that a mistake was made and are trying to undo what was done. That helps, especially those of us who didn't make much money in our life. You'll never get rich working for the Service Committee. This will make our retired life a little better, easier to bear. We don't feel like going out and buying a big thing or anything like that. AFSC receives a number of contributions from that group. You could ask Scott Duncan, [the head of the Development Department.]

G: I was just talking to someone before I did the interview and before I got involved with this project. Not much was known, especially in the east coast. In the east coast you would never have known it happened.

O: That's one of the things we are concerned about. You look in the American history textbooks, social studies, and nothing is written. Nothing. So this Japanese American Citizens League is working toward that. Nobody knows about what happened, and the younger [generation] is angry.. Our generation was told to bear the unbearable. We didn't make much wave. But the younger generation are much angrier and assertive, and the Chinese Americans too. Young Asian kids are now trying to be more visible and certainly the textbooks should be rewritten.

I was at Strathaven High School last year. Fortunately, a social studies teacher I know personally asked me if I would come over and speak with the class about my experience. I ended up speaking to four or five classes, one after the other. During the break, I was having coffee at the teachers lounge and one of the teachers said, "Oh, you're the speaker. The kids came to class and they just kept on talking about what [you] had said!" So it must have left some impression on them. She was glad that the kids were able to discuss what I had spoken to them about.

G: Did you find at the time, back in 1946, that most people around here weren't aware of what happened?

O: Of course, the world was much smaller then compared to now. Before, very few of the Japanese in California took a trip to the east. They didn't have the financial resource to take a vacation. They worked hard for the sake of their children's education. That was their main goal, to educate their kids. That's why so many of their kids were good students. I can't say that I was a good student, but... (laughs)

G: I mean, like in Philadelphia neighborhoods, besides AFSC.

O: I was immediately involved in Quaker circles. Before I came to live with Homer and Edna Morris, I had never attended Quaker meeting. The first Sunday I went to the Quaker meetinghouse here, the minute I stepped into that place, right away I knew, this is what I was seeking. As I said, I was at the Methodist Church. Before the evacuation the church elders used to say, "We don't know about our future so you should get baptized and be a Christian." I just couldn't see that just because you go through that ritual you're a better person than others, so I just fought off and I never did get baptized. The minute I stepped into the meetinghouse, right away I felt that this is what I was seeking. And I'm still attending the same meeting.

G: Providence Meeting [in Media, Pennsylvania]?

O: Yes. Yes, you drove by there to get here this morning. Things never went as I planned. I just stopped planning and [thought,] "The way will open", and things worked out for me very well. Raised three kids and fulfilled my responsibility. Of course, only one is married. (laughs)

G: That's not one of your responsibilities. (laughs)

O: The youngest one is still in and out of the home. We can't get rid of him yet, (chuckles) so we can't move to the retirement community yet.

G: Are they in the area.

O: The oldest son was here last year but he accepted a position at MIT in Cambridge so he's teaching political science and international relations there. He's married. My granddaughter's pictures are all over the place. And you can see the toys around here, they're for her. (chuckles).

Both [sons] went to Swarthmore and the second one is at the UCLA Medical Center. He's a doctor, busy, very busy. Too busy to get married, but someday I hope he'll settle down. He comes east several times a year for meetings and conferences so we get to see him occasionally.

G: A spread out family.

O: Yes.

G: Did your children ever ask you, or did you ever talk about your experiences?

O: I guess not as much as I should, probably. It's not a pleasant experience. They have to dig it out from me. I'll send them copies of this tape. (laughs) I hear some of the younger generation complaining that their parents never talk about the experience during the evacuation period, so I'm not the only one. There are many, many families. There are many books out so if they want to study about it, there are many ways of finding out.

I don't know... I think this will ever happen again to any minority group. Of course, Blacks went through a difficult time too, and many other groups did, but we were U.S. citizens placed behind the barb-wire fence by their own government, without any due process. If we had been found guilty, that would be something else. Our constitution, the Bill of Rights, was completely ignored because a few groups felt like this. We were too weak to speak out and our parents, very few of them had adequate language because they just worked, worked and worked. So the third and fourth generation, I guess, will have a better time with this country that we did. They ought to. Each nationality group has their good points and (speaking to softly to understand at this point.)

- I think I was very fortunate that I was given the opportunity to be among a group like AFSC. My life was shielded by these surroundings. Others probably faced a much more harsh reality than I did. I should have been more assertive probably, I don't know.
- G: It's difficult when you're faced with conditions, you don't know how to react. I wanted to ask you one question. You told me that when you were at the camp you met Esther Rhodes, and you met her afterwards at the AFSC.
- O: Yes. Afterwards I started to serve on the [Philadelphia] Yearly Meeting's Japan committee. [This committee] went back over a hundred years or more when the position of women in Japan was very low. Most Quakers were concerned that they had to have better educational opportunities. They started the women's high school in Tokyo. [That school] just recently celebrated their 100th year. Esther Rhodes was, for four years, in Japan teaching, or as principal, in that school. When the war started she came back. She went back [again] as a post-war representative to Japan for the relief work. Then she came back and served in Tunisia for the AFSC during the Algerian wartime. She and I [both] served of the Japan Committee, so we used to see each other often.
- G: Did you mention that you were...
- O: I mentioned that at one of the gatherings honoring Esther Rhodes. At the time of her death, at her memorial service someone remembered that occasion and what I had said. Also I wrote that piece in the Esther Rhode's book, The Quaker Footprint.  
(long pause - papers rustle)  
Actually this is a memorial message, all written in Japanese, but I translated for the Rhodes family. It's all about Esther Rhodes. A Quaker's Footstep is the title. [The section I was responsible for] I said in English, but it's translated in Japanese here.  
I mentioned about (papers rustle) ...  
(Long section of chatting about pictures and various people unrelated to the interview.)
- G: Is there anything that you want to add? Anything that you feel we didn't cover?
- O: We didn't talk much about my experience in the Material Aids Program, but that's another chapter.
- G: Right, I think what we wanted to concentrate was on the relocation.
- G Well, thank you very, very much for the interview.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**AFSC Oral History Interview #412**

**Narrator: VIRGINIA HECK**

**Interviewer: Stephen McNeil**

**Date: August 8, 1991 Chico, California**

M: This is August 8th, 1991, and we're at Chico, California at the Pacific Yearly Meeting and I'm Stephen McNeil, along with Virginia Heck from Redwood Forest Meeting. Why don't you talk a few minutes about how you came to Berkeley Friends Meeting.

H: My specific interest in Japanese American activities goes back much farther than that. My earliest childhood memories were of an aunt that was a teacher in the Penn's Grove School in Japan. And every seven years she used to visit us.

M: This is Esther Rhodes?

H: No, it was Alice Lewis Pearson. And she went out as a teacher from the Japan Committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1903. She stayed there until 1923 where she was part of that group with Esther Rhodes. Tom Jones was an American educator for a long time. He and his wife Esther were out there and it was a... Edith Sharpless was another one. We have a picture of my aunt's wedding. She married late in life and it was an historical Quaker picture of the wedding.

Canby Jones, who you may or may not know, was sitting on his mother's knee in that wedding picture at the age of one or something like that, so it was a long personal family kind of connected history. And when my sisters and I became teenagers we came to live with my aunt in 1927 after she retired, and we all lived together in Pasadena. She kept her connection with not only the Japanese community in southern California, but with the parade of people who came through California and always stopped to visit her.

M: Philadelphia and Japan?

H: Japanese people, teachers.

M: What do you remember about your Aunt Alice?

H: Oh! She lived to be 93. I remember a lot! What would you like to know? She eventually settled in southern California, was very active in the AFSC there, was chair of the Personnel Committee for many, many years, and always held a membership in the Friends United Meeting. She was a registered minister with the United Meeting and her husband was an elderly man when she married him. He was a professor of classics at colleges all over the county. \_\_\_\_\_ Wichita, and when he became widowed he decided that he would marry his former student, Alice, and then he went to Japan and they were married there.

- So, it was a perfectly natural thing that we should be more familiar than lots of people, even most Quakers, with the whole history of Friends in Japan, and I have a strong feeling of sisterhood...
- M: Did you ever go out into the rural communities of southern California where the Japanese were? The Japanese churches?
- H: Well, I moved to northern California when I was first married. I graduated from Whittier College and was not specifically involved with the Japanese. There were a good many Japanese students at Whittier and both local and occasionally a foreign student, too. But our whole orientation was to people of all kinds of faiths and colors and so on... I moved to San Francisco or Berkeley in 1941, so there were Japanese there, too, of course, and I worked for the YWCA. Our office secretary was Japanese and I was involved in the activities of the YWCA. There were many Japanese in the YWCA, as you know. When they were first evacuated the Service Committee took over the Japanese YWCA and were there on Sutter Street for many years, and took care of that property while they were gone. So, it isn't just one kind of event that was important to us. Berkeley Meeting was quite small at the time. When the evacuation hit there wasn't a group in Berkeley that wanted to actually \_\_\_\_\_. Not just Quakers, but I was involved in work with small children so I wasn't free to do a lot. But I did visit the... I should describe how that happened. In Berkeley they were evacuated from the First Congregational Church, which is on Durant and the campus there.
- M: That was the staging area where everybody...
- H: It was for the East Bay. I forgot exactly what the area was they came from. But on several occasions the two women from the Friends Meeting went down to the center where we knew they were going to be evacuated and their busses pulled up. There were soldiers at the side door of the Congregational Church with Bayonets on their guns. It was really my first real shocker in terms of the power that was behind the thing. We set up coffee and doughnut tables and talked to the people when they came. They could take only what they could carry.
- M: And you were joined by people from the Friends Meeting and other like-minded folk?
- H: There was nobody from the Friends Meeting.
- M: Oh really.
- H: No. I should say that there were isolated people who were concerned about their lives, there were some from the student YMCA and YWCA, but the fear was so great. The war had just started. This is February 1942, and the Executive Order

by our very popular president \_\_\_\_\_. [There was] the latent racism and fear of minorities, you know. It was a very hostile time.

M: In your work with the YWCA had you noticed any newspaper articles calling for this?

H: OH! There was...

M: Not in Berkeley?

H: Oh no. In the public press there was not outcry at all, as I recall. The fear was so great from the bombing of Hawaii and all the other things that were going on. I was working with a group of women sort of related to the YWCA at the time, and I remember that the next Christmas the AFSC had a project providing some kind of Christmas for the Japanese who had had to stay behind because of illness. We used to have a TB hospital. I think it was in Pleasanton or somewhere out in that area. They didn't evacuate those folks; the ones that were chronically ill. And so we had a project of getting some kind of Christmas presents to all those people. We each drew a name, and I got the name of a man who told me how old he was and how big he was and all that, and what he really needed was a pair of pajamas. So I went to a men's store and bought pajamas. I met a women that I knew and she said, "What are you doing/" I said, "Well, I'm buying a pair of pajamas for one of the Japanese people who weren't able to be evacuated and don't have any family." She said, "You know, I'm really astonished at you, Virginia, that you would be so unpatriotic as to do a thing like that. Why don't you send something to our boys over there?"

Well, that was the response that you got in Berkeley from intelligent, ordinarily caring people. But as I said, there was a hard core of people who were outraged and who worked very hard. Josephine Turtleneck was one of those and you know her story, about what Josephine did.

M: What were your impressions of her?

H: Josephine?

M: As a person.

H: Of Josephine? She was an old friend. Fantastic. My kids went to her camp and she was one of the most creative people that the Society of Friends Produced, I think, because she was involved with every good thing that happened: Children's schools, integrated camps for kids. She started two different school; Presidio Hill School in San Francisco, and Peninsula School on the Peninsula. She actually stated San Francisco Friends Meeting. And just by accident I happened to be at that meeting. I didn't go. I was living in San Francisco at that time for a short period of time. I wanted to do some volunteer work with the American Friends

Service Committee, so I met \_\_\_\_\_. He was in Philadelphia. There were no regional offices then at all. So he called me back and said we would meet in San Francisco at such-and-such a time at San Francisco Meeting. I just got on the bus and got over there. Got my name in Josephine's book, because I just happened to be [laughs] signing the guest list at the San Francisco Meeting. So, anyway, that was in early 1940. And then I did spend a year with the Service Committee as a volunteer in a refugee hospital in Richmond, Indiana.

M: What year was that?

H: I went there in the summer of 1940 and finished in '40, '41. Do you know Quaker Hill?

M: Yes, I do know Quaker Hill area.

H: Well, we were the first occupants after the grandson, who was then an old man, used a lot of his money to restore it. It was family, an old, old family residence of his grandparents, and he wanted to restore it because it was a beautiful old place, and have it used by some Friends group.

M: Was it mostly German refugees?

H: German and Austrian.

M: German and Austrian.

H: Uh-umm. Well, we're getting off...

M: No, but when you came, that was your experience that certainly made you see what dislocation and \_\_\_\_\_ was.

H: Oh, yeah, well... The Service Committee was just inundated on all fronts because even before the war started about seventy-five percent of its resources were being put into relocating European refugees. And then comes this other one, on the west coast. And there were no region[al offices.] It was all coming out of Philadelphia.

M: When you were in Berkeley and the staging area at the First Congregational Church was occurring, were you attending Berkeley Friends Meeting at the time?

H: Oh, yes. It was women in the meeting that did this. Who did it at a very modest... I've forgotten. They're not around any more. I think I'm the only one left who was in Berkeley at that time and is still around. That's why they invited me to do that thing with the Forty Year Commemorative.

M: The Day of Remembrance?

H: Yeah.

M: 1982, I guess it was.

H: I think I am just about the only Friend left.

M: Besides the AFSC project that sent some Christmas gifts to the Pleasanton TB hospital, were there other activities that you or the Meeting were involved in?

H: Well, I remember we went down to Tanforan, which was the regional gathering place, and met a lot of our friends the... they were in stalls. We met them all on visiting day, on Saturday, when we went. A lot in the stands... it was such an awful experience. It really was.

M: So you had to meet them in the stands of the race track?

H: Yes. They were living in the [horse] stalls. Here were our friends. We have attenders at Berkeley Meeting. \_\_\_\_\_ was an architect, and a dear friend, and it seemed absolutely nutty, you know, that these people... one felt so terribly helpless. I remember that day when we went in. I had gone to see this friend who had been in the YMCA, and we tried very hard to but... We didn't have much money, either. We had just gotten married and started out, but we bought as much of their furniture as we could so that they would have something to go on. I've kept up that relationship with here.

M: What is their family name?

H: Kobayashi. It was Mary Kobayshi. She married a wounded Japanese soldier that she met in the hospital in Chicago. Mary got some young people who had been relocated out of their homes. She left the camp in Arizona and I don't know how she did that. But she ended up in Chicago, and then these wounded Japanese soldiers from the 442nd or the 101st, whichever they happened to be...

M: So they were Japanese American soldiers?

H: Oh, yeah! They went into the Army out of the camps. There were Japanese girls in the Chicago area and the other large city areas, and so they visited these wounded guys. She visited her husband. He was from Maui and eventually they married. I also met another woman whose husband is a dentist in Honolulu. She was able to relocate out. She eventually got a PH.D. from Stanford.

M: She was a student who was relocated out of the camp?

H: Yes. By the AFSC.

M: And where did you meet her? At Tanforan?

H: No. I had some relatives who had an estate in Santa Barbara and her family lived in a cottage on that estate. He was a gardener, the caretaker, and she was only a junior high school girl when I first met her. She ended up going to school in Santa Barbara. Well, I didn't know what happened to these folks because my relatives who had this estate were not friends. But I figured she must have gone somewhere. You know, the whole family must have gone somewhere, I didn't know until I got a letter from her. She said, "Do you remember me? My name is so-and-so?" She said, "I'm trying to get out of this camp and I need a character reference. Would you be willing to talk to the F.B.I.?" They put every one of those kids through the F.B.I. I had a number of visits from the F.B.I. at that time.

M: You were living in San Francisco?

H: In Berkeley then. So I wrote back and said, "Of course!" And I was doing it under some [risk]. There were problems, maybe because my husband was an enemy agent. I married a refugee that I met in the hospital.

M: I see.

H: I had the F.B.I. come over every once in a while. They were snooping around with the neighbors to find out what kind of a citizen he would make. And here were the Japanese American kids writing me for character references, and I said, "So, what the hell." You know. [laughter] I might as well do what I can, you know.

Well, it's an interesting story because this girl, the daughter of the caretaker of the estate, I never knew what happened to her. So fast forward to 1973 in Honolulu. We were organizing a committee over there to bring the exhibit...

M: Now, at that time in 1973 you were in the AFSC's Hawaii, Honolulu office?

H: Right.

M: And the exhibit you're talking about is the Executive Order...

H: Executive Order 9066. Before I got there, there had been some talk about bringing it. AFSC was so focused in on the Vietnam War, and the whole peace activities were very important and all that, but I felt that AFSC was putting a narrow focus on peace education. When I discovered there was some interest in this activity I did what I could and got a few people together.

M: Now, there interest for it, did it come from Committee members who were Japanese America? Or were there...

H: So we organized the committee. We got people from the Japanese Methodists, from the Congregational Church, and people who had had contact with... Give me their names and we got them together. And they said, "Sure. Let's go for it." We were very successful and raised \$12,000 to bring this exhibit. One day we were having a meeting. Obviously people had been in contact with the Friends Meeting House in Honolulu. I didn't know some of them, and [there was] this woman who was sitting next to me. She drives up in a Mercedes and she stood next to me, and I said to her, "I'm Virginia Heck, I'm new here." And so she says, "Yes, I know. I'm Ruth Kono." And I nearly died.

It was even sadder when it turned out that she had this fancy degree, her husband was a dentist, they had matching Mercedes, and she withdrew from the Committee because she didn't approve of the other things that the American Friends Service Committee was doing in the peace area. She and John were yuppies and there was little Ruth Kono from Santa Barbara whose father was a caretaker and who had been helped by the American Friends Service Committee to get out of those camps and go to school in the east where she got her first scholarship. Well, can't win 'em all.

M: No. But at the time you must have been, you must have felt...

H: Well, you know, I had a few regrets. I didn't have any regrets about having done that because I'm sure that... I had a feeling that her husband was so anxious about the Committee, this stuff in the community.

M: Well, how long did the exhibit on the...

H: We had six weeks. We had it shipped to Gilo first, and one of our volunteers was the director of the art department at the University of Hawaii. This exhibit is very, very large and it's all set. You don't need to remount it or anything.

M: It's on panels that are self-standing?

H: You can set it up. But he arranged for a place for it to be shown and it was two weeks in Gilo, and then came to Maui. [It went to] shopping centers and some of our people saw it over there. It caused tremendous, tremendous reactions in the press. And then we were showing it for three weeks, I think, in the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii. And there we had discussion groups around it. One of the interesting things about that was that the most support we got was, of course, from the people who had been in the camps, and there were a number of them. But [among] the students at the University of Hawaii, this was a period of great racial identity, you know. There was a lot of ferment. And we met these students who were very upset. These students were very upset that the whole

- Japanese experience during the war in Hawaii had never been talked about. In fact, parents of Japanese students in this country didn't talk about it because it was so humiliating and so hard to talk about. So the University students, at the same time that our exhibit was there, did a lot of research in Hawaii through the library and through the law offices and so forth, of what the Hawaiian experience had been.
- M: Which is a little different than the mainland.
- H: Yes, Because they weren't interned. There was no place to put them. There were too many of them. So we helped them publish this thing that they put out, then gave copies to every librarian in the state of Hawaii.
- M: Were these students at the University of Maui too?
- H: Yes. Now, there's one other story, if you want a vignette. After the war was over, for some time before the Japanese started to come back from the camps, [we knew] they were scared to death, of course, and needed a lot of support. We had a committee and we were working on it...
- M: You mean the Service Committee or the Berkeley Friends?
- H: No, there was no... it was a Berkeley Committee. [We worked] gathering up household equipment, furniture, anything that anybody had had, and storing it in case anybody needed it. So we were already working on it before they started to come back. By this time I had a couple of kids and I was taking care of a couple more. I was involved in the nursery school and all kinds of stuff. I belonged to a parents' group at the nursery school where you had to participate one morning for three hours. So I decided that I would have somebody come in and watch the baby and do some laundry, some ironing and stuff while I was at nursery school. Somebody had to stay home with the baby. So I went to the employment office. In those days you could discriminate. You could tell them what color people you wanted without getting arrested. So I went to the employment office and I said, "I'm looking for someone who could take care of my baby and do some light housework and so forth. I would prefer a Japanese American." Because I knew what a hell of a time they were having -- pardon my French -- getting jobs and being accepted. So what came to my door was a lady named Mrs. Imamura. She had four kids of her own and they had been evacuated out of Santa Maria or someplace. Her husband was a native. He was an Issei and he was a Buddhist minister. He had been called to start the Buddhist church in Berkeley. They didn't have any money. There were so few Japanese. They were trying to put it together. So Mrs. Imamura came and she took care of my baby and she ironed and so on. She was an American. We got very well acquainted. Time went on and things got better and her kids got older. They became musicians and they were favorites. All these kids were doing very well. In fact, they went to school with my kids as they were in junior high and senior high.

They remembered each other. But I had no connection with Mrs. Imamura until we had this exhibit at the University of Hawaii. How, she is the chairman of the committee to arrange the refreshments and so on. Her husband was the Bishop of Hawaii in a big Buddhist church there. She and I had not seen each other since those days when she took care of my baby. Her son eventually became head of the Student Buddhist Center at the University of Hawaii and, as far as I know -- and I have some references to him in this reparations business -- he's the minister of the Buddhist Church in Alameda. When he first came over I got in touch with them, you know, [and] renewed old acquaintances.

But that she should be the one highly regarded in the Honolulu hierarchy... We just fell into each other's arms. It was so touching.

Ok. Now where are we?

M: Well, I was wondering... you started to talk a little bit about Tanforan and their relocation staging area, about going and visiting and I'm wondering if you have any other...

H: Well, in talking with Toshi Koba, the YMCA person that I knew best, she said that the hardest part of this whole thing is having to look at so many Japanese all the time. They're just not used to it.

That was a pretty generous statement to make! (laughter) Then, of course, everybody was dispersed.

M: We'll have to stop here in a second. (pause) This is the second part of an interview with Virginia Heck on August 8th, and we're in a slightly quieter place in Chico at Pacific Yearly Meeting.

H: Do you have the dates of that meeting, the Day of Remembrance?

M: It was in February of 1982.

H: February 1982. Right. I had a call from Connie Jolly, I believe it was, asking me if I'd be willing to do this on behalf of AFSC because I seem to be the only person surviving. (laughs) So, I did my best to recall what I thought would be interesting for the gathering of the fortieth anniversary of the Executive Order. It was [in] a church in Japantown, San Francisco. It was walking distance from the Unitarian Church and we were having our Annual Meeting of the AFSC at the same time, it fell on the same date.

So, I did the best I could to pull these remembrances together and Josephine Duveneck's book was very helpful. There was life on two levels. I was greeted very warmly and it was a crowded occasion. I think there must have been three hundred people or so. There were many young people. I remember that Harry Bridges was there with his wife, and she's been very active in all the Japanese affairs, the relocation and reparations activities.

- I described some of the things that Friends had done, and older people in the audience knew this. They were very aware of it. But the children, the younger people, had absolutely no idea that anybody helped them at all. It was surprising to them. And a number of them came up afterwards and said that it made them feel a lot better, to know that not everybody was behind this illegal effort. So I felt very good about it and I talked to the older people, some of them who had been in the... When the Japanese started to return, Josephine and some others put together a kind of a way station/half way house for people coming back to San Francisco, in a church basement as I recall. You probably have that already.
- M: Actually, it was at the Buddhist Church, I think, Booker T. Washington Community Center.
- H: Right. All those older people were there, and we stood out on the sidewalk, and just had a really good old talk about how tough those times were for everybody. But I think they were especially grateful to know that there was somebody who had been through the whole thing with a different view of it. They were the ones who were affected, but there were those of us who were suffering on the outside. So, I was very glad to serve the Committee when they asked me to do that. There was a little plaque that they gave me, and I came back to the Annual Meeting and they presented it to me at the Annual Gathering.
- M: It's on the office on the second floor.  
You had mentioned, now, when you were a teenager and you were living in Pasadena with your aunt, that you knew Madeline and Herbert Nicholson.
- H: Well, whenever they came to visit, every seven years, they'd bring a little family. I didn't mention my own trips to Japan.
- M: What years were those?
- H: Well, through a series of interesting coincidences I got an opportunity to go on one of the big American President liners. And I made two round trips, four crossings at a most inauspicious time. It was late 1939. Herbert and Madeline were still in Japan then, and there were very few people. The war had started in September and we were the first American ship that landed. We got to Japan after the British-German declaration of war had come about, so all the wartime stuff was in operation. There were intern ships already in Tokyo Harbor. The people in Yokohama, the Americans, had no information at all. And they came down to the boat to hear what we had over our radio. This was only a matter of five days or so. Then we proceeded on. I didn't see the Nicholsons then and the ship was one of these that made the coast. We went to Shanghai, Manila and Hong Kong, Hong Kong and Manila and came back the same route. When I got back to Kobe, Herbert and Madeline were on the dock to meet me. They had come down to Kobe for some kind of meeting and they came on the ship with me. I went back

with them all through customs. Americans were exceedingly unpopular, of course. At that time, and as we went through customs, back through the barrier where the officers were looking at everybody's pockets and purses and so on, Herbert got frisked and said something to the guy in Japanese which was, "I don't think we're really in Shanghai, are we?" This poor guy was so upset. Herbert spoke perfect Japanese and he didn't expect this gringo to come up with a comment.

Well, it was probably a year or two later that they came back, maybe sooner. And then Herbert immediately began his missionary efforts in those camps. They were since documented everywhere else, so we don't need to go into that. But it's incredible now. Absolutely incredible.

M: What were your impressions of Japan when you were there?

H: Well, when we got there I had made friends with a young man who had left Stanford and he was going out as a... [He was] from Time/Life. They had agreed to take... What do you call these reporters that are not on staff, but they have a connection... freelance, yeah. He had been in Indiana University for a year or so and he really wanted to get back to the Orient. So he decided that he wanted to take a look and see whether there was something possible to do, anything, in Japan at all.

The first thing that happened was that he had a book with him. We had to go into this huge big place where they looked at everything we had and there was a book that they didn't like. So he stayed there, it was his book, and I went back and put it on the ship and we came back again. We spent the day in Kyoto and around. By that time he decided he was not going to be able to operate at all in Japan. So he got back on the boat.

That was the first trip. The second trip, we went to Kyoto again on the train and they were bringing back barge loads of little boxes with ashes from soldiers that were the ones who had died in China. It was the whole Japanese-Chinese war, which had been going on for a long, long time. [It] was so much more vivid there, of course, that anything we were aware [of] here. We knew that things weren't good over there, and the whole area around Shanghai had been taken over by the Japanese except in the national settlement. So it was not a good time to be a tourist traveling. Most of the people on the ship were either diplomats or military. [There were] a few gangsters who had shipped out to Manila. If they were in trouble in the United States, Manila was the place to go.

I grew up a lot. I was about twenty-three at the time and it was a real real good education. And I didn't see Herbert and Madeline again for a number of years, until they got settled back here and he began his work through the camps. Every Japanese on the west coast knew Herbert and Madeline.

M: I think they did a lot of work with the East because they spoke Japanese.

H: They buried people. I don't know how many funerals they did in the camps. In Japanese. Strange, strange, guy, but just a real authentic original. And he wasn't bucking for sainthood. I think he's pretty amazing. (laughter)

M: Well, he also, like you in your work with the Service Committee in Hawaii, did a lot of publication in order to keep the experience alive: What had happened to people, especially the rest of America.

H: I have been to Japan since then and have visited the Friends Girl School and received a tremendous welcome, and so on. I have a dear friend who was the head of the Friends Center in Japan for a long time. Fumi Omiko. She's known to Friends everywhere. She was in Hiroshima at the time of the bombing. Was near death. But she's now retired and living in Honolulu. There's a lady who you ought to interview. Want to go to Honolulu? (laughter)

M: Somehow I don't think the Service Committee is going to send me there. You had mentioned, getting back to the time you went to Tanforan, did you go more than once?

H: No.

M: The one time that you had also met the architect and his wife.

H: Oh! I don't know whether I met them there or not. But I met them the minute they got back from the camp. We got better claim on them. A member of our Meeting who you may remember, Jerry and Harvey House -- Friends from southern California would know them, of course, they were very active -- they lived in their house and took care of it while they were gone. So as soon as they got back we had a little get together and a housewarming and they had a couple of children that we had to clean, and so on. That worked quite well for them. But the discards, they remain. It was a terrible thing.

The thing that I am so glad about was that they finally got it together to make a protest about it. There were a few, like Gordon Hirobayashi, and some of the others who really protested at the time, but most of them, traditionally, wanted to forget it. But that doesn't mean that they didn't suffer.

M: No. And the Japanese American redress, which really...

H: You know, we had people here at Yearly Meeting who could tell you a few things. This man, he's in my worship group. and he was in the Army prior to the declaration of war and was four years in the Army. He was an interpreter in the Pacific for the Americans. M: What was their family name?

H: His first name is Fred.

M: Fred. Ok.

H: And he did say that he was eligible for the \$20,000. Some people have been paid. The older ones.

M: Do you remember Esther Rhodes coming through Berkeley or San Francisco during this time?

H: Oh, Berkeley. But I also remember when she came to Honolulu all the time. So I've seen Esther in fairly recent years, though she's dead now. Her nephew, George Rhodes, was clerk of the Meeting, so she always stopped here. She was a young missionary or young teacher when my aunt was there. She came out here in 1918 and Esther Rhodes went back and administered the United States relief funds for Japan. Did you know that? I guess you did.

M: She also went to Tule Lake Camp in 1942.

H: Yeah, but she was [also] in Japan. Working with Douglas MacArthur. My cousin, Richard Lewis, who is a member of Salem Monthly Meeting in Oregon but grew up in California, did his field work with Esther Rhodes in Japan.

M: Oh, really. Right after the war, in 1948?

H: Well, whenever they started the draft for guys during the Korean War? He had to do something so he was in Japan working with Esther. He learned to speak Japanese and did his Ph.D. on political organization of Japanese villages or something like that, I don't know. We had a whole Japanese thing in our family.

M: Well, than you very much for sharing your memories and vignettes.

H: As a matter of fact, it brought up some things that I hadn't thought about for quite a long time. Mrs. Imamura, that was especially a personal one.

M: It's amazing how people's lives go on, and become sometimes things we're not even aware of. Well, great. (tape goes off and on)  
This is Stephen McNeil again, with Virginia Heck, and you were just mentioning that when you were in the First Congregational Church at Berkeley.

H: Oh, yes. When we went to say goodbye to the people who had to leave on the busses with their little bags. On one occasion there was a Black woman who was standing on the curb with us. And I said, "Oh, do you have friends who are leaving?" She said, "No, I don't, but just feel so afraid that if they could do it to them, they can do it to us." So I thought, "Sad. Everybody's sad that thinks about it at all."

M: Ok. Thank you.

**END OF INTERVIEW**

**Oral History Interview #413**

**Narrator: WILLIAM STEVENSON**

**Interviewer: Stephen McNeil**

**Date: 9/26/91**

M: This is September 26th, 1991. I'm Stephen MacNeil with the American Friends Service Committee. I'm interviewing Bill Stevenson. If you could speak this will be a good sound check.

S: Yes. You're interviewing me on my 70th birthday.

M: Oh! Happy Birthday! Congratulations.

S: If you could say something about the countryside, town or city you grew up in.

M: Yes. I was born in a small town in Utah. It was the fifth largest city in Utah at the time. Bryce. That was on September 26th, 1921. I was born into a family that already had two children. I have an older sister and an older brother. Subsequently, there were two more children born in Utah. A younger brother and a younger sister. When I was sixteen, when we moved to Los Angeles, there was a sixth sibling, a younger sister.

In my younger years my father was working for his own father who owned a lumber and hardware company in Utah. This area in Utah is a coal mining area, and also was along the D & RGW Railroad. It was a major railroad stop, although a smaller place called Helper nearby was the place where they put on engines so they could go over the mountains into Salt Lake City. So it was a small town. The community was mostly Mormon. There were some Greek Orthodox groups. There were a large number of Catholics - not nearly as many as Mormons. The Catholics had a high school and grammar school, and they had a real say in the town. My grandfather associated more with the monsignor than with any one else, although he was not particularly religious. My family was associated with the Methodist church. There were very few Jewish people. Of course, in a town with a lot of Catholics, there were a few Italian people. (chuckles) Times were rough. While the rest of the world was having the roaring twenties with great economic stability and so forth - in theory, I don't know how it really was - our area was depressed because after the war the coal mines dropped in business. This was a bituminous area. I suppose the anthracite area around Pittsburgh and the steel areas maybe did better, but coal was very different. So there was a lot of poverty. I consider that I was raised in poverty even though my father worked for his father in his store and it looked like he might be very wealthy. My grandfather did okay, but there was no affluence. The background was important from the standpoint of who these people were because it gave me a realization later, as I pulled things together into my own philosophy, that it was extremely important in developing a repugnance for discrimination.

M: Is there any particular incident that you recall.

S: While we were there the discrimination by the Mormon Church people was pretty extreme. One reason that the lumber company had trouble was that they tended to not buy from a non-Mormon lumberyard. There were various things like that that made it very clear that they discriminated. My mother was always aware that this happened. [She would talk about how] how somebody in the family was [discriminated against because they] were not a Mormon. In a school play or something, my older sister who had a very good voice always got the second part, and my mother was always sure that it was discrimination. (laughs) I can't tell you that it was, I always thought maybe the other girls were prettier (laughs) but they didn't have a better voice. That was clear. My sister had a very good voice. When I went to join the Boy Scouts the troop that my older brother had joined was full. They said that they were forming a new Boy Scout troop and I heard about how they were organizing, and that there was a certain patrol that would be set up. I joined that patrol with some of my junior high school colleagues. When we first had a troop meeting it was after some of us had already passed some of the merit badges and so forth, and we had been at many patrol meetings and were really swimming already. Then they had the troop meeting I was singled out by the troop leader together with the other non-Mormon who was in the group, and we were told that we couldn't belong to the troop because we weren't Mormons. (pause) So that really came home to me. My family weren't activists, otherwise the Boy Scouts of America might have heard of that. In those years I guess activism wasn't a prominent feature of minority groups. That was something that made me conscious when there was discrimination against Black people. There were very few Black people in that area, so it wasn't that I was conscious of discrimination against them then, but later on when I was very much interested in civil rights and the attempt to get rights for Black people in the Bay area, for example, I worked very hard with some of the local groups that were fighting discrimination. I realized that I really was conscious of the stupidity of the business of "because you're not this, you're not Mormon or you're not white or something." This [Scout experience] had a real impact on me.

Another thing that had an impact on me aside from that [involved my grandmother.] She was a gold star mother. She had lost her oldest son, [he] was killed in France in World War I, I think in 1918 or 1919 sometime. He was a very good looking, very bright and promising young man, I gleaned from the family history and so forth. He was very well loved and he was not going to be forgotten. The way this was translated in my family was extreme patriotism - same kind of thing you still see today. We won the Gulf War and patriotism was real high. My uncle George had citations throughout my grandmother's house. Very often when I was just a little guy crawling up the stairs I saw these plaques on both sides of the stairway. When I got old enough to read I saw on one side they were in French and on the other side they were in English. They were citations from the French government and from the United States government. He was a Marine and he was highly decorated. The impact of that loss on my family was very notable

to me. Why I felt it, and why my older brother didn't I don't know. For me, given my background and my development as the third in the family, it was extremely important to me to recognize that the war had taken someone's life and there was no good reason why his life should have been taken. There was another aspect to that and that is that it was a German soldier who found my uncle and removed his papers and belongings from him and sent them to my grandparents. Later on he came and visited. It was almost like they adopted him in Germany. He was really a great guy. They didn't get the connection that I did, which was "Why the hell was this guy involved in killing [Americans like] my uncle and why was [my uncle] involved in trying to kill all these [German] people?" It was an early thing that had some influence in my development of a pacifist attitude.

M: So you were in Los Angeles and...

S: Later on, when I was sixteen, we moved to Los Angeles. There my family went to what they called a United Church. It was a Congregational and Methodist Church. What they did was over a certain period of time they would have a Congregational minister, and then they would change and have a Methodist minister. When I was there as a teenager the minister was a Congregational minister by the name of Gaylord. His father had been a Congregational minister too. He himself was a victim of polio and had no use of his legs to speak of. He had to use braces and crutches. He was really a pacifist. He was really a very good guy working with young people. He got young people's groups together and let them look at what was going on in the world. There was a lot of open discussion about what was happening in the world. He brought in excellent speakers in what would be considered controversial issues now, as World War II was approaching. From that I had associations with other pacifist groups, and I was very concerned about what was happening with Japan. I, along with some others, were feeling that the way the [United States] was treating Japan, even though we didn't think that Japan was treating China right, was very bad. [We were concerned] about the boycott that we had on some islands that were essential for Japan to survive. We thought it was going to make it even worse, that they would go out and get their goods elsewhere by being imperialists, and that's exactly what they were doing. I didn't approve of the imperialist regime in Japan, but that wasn't the point.

M: At this point had you come in contact with any Japanese Americans or Asians in Los Angeles.

S: We had very few. Actually, back in Utah the president of the student body when my sister was a senior was a Japanese American, who was also the captain of the football team which I was very much interested in. They were a very good team, went to the state championships. I don't think they won the state championship though. (laughs) There were a few Japanese Americans in the area. I didn't have any [Asian] friends, though, and I didn't know the president of the student body,

but my sister knew him pretty well. This was my older sister who is also the only real pacifist in the family of six of us. The rest of the family is all the more redneck type. (chuckles) In Los Angeles we had more contact and as we got into the war, while we were in this youth group before the war broke out in Japan, we had contacts with various groups. Our youth group would go to Pasadena and there were segregated churches, but there was a real attempt on the part of the ministers to get people mixed together. After I graduated from high school in the summer of 1939 I went to Los Angeles city college in the fall. There I joined the Wesley Foundation group led by a man and his wife, Herman Binefore and I forget her name. They also were fairly pacifist in their orientation. Somewhere in there I also got involved with Allen Hunter, who you may know. Allen Hunter was the pastor of Mount Hollywood Congregational Church and was a very prominent pastor. He had a brother up here, Stanley Hunter, who was the minister of the Presbyterian Church in Berkley.

My parents got rid of the lumberyard after my grandfather died. My grandfather decided to sell it and move to Los Angeles where an aunt was living who was head of the Los Angeles County Campfire Girls. So my family moved into Los Angeles in fall of 1936 with my aunt and grandmother. My dad wasn't able to get a job that was a regular steady paying job. He worked his head off working on a commission basis, selling building materials and so forth. He was a very hard working man all of his life, and he worked very hard for his father. Anyway, because of the family's financial situation I just had to earn some money. I worked for a wealthy millionaire together with some of my friends on Orange Grove Avenue in Pasadena. His name was Hulet C. Merrit and he was an heir to the Merrit Iron Mine fortune Minnesota. He also owned the Tagas Ranch in the valley which had the largest peach orchard in the world. I was impressed with the penny pinching of this guy, but I was glad that I was able to get a job that paid nineteen cents an hour. In those days it was really great to have some kind of work to do. So I worked scraping the iron fence around his Italian manor along Orange Grove. If you know that area there's Armstrong College there now. They have the old Merritt property there. He wasn't very good about donating to his workers. He had a son who went up to the Tagas Ranch every once in a while. His son would go up afterwards and he would find that his son had increased his workers salaries by a penny an hour. He would have a fit and he would reduce the salaries back down. This was the kind of guy who would go to the races at San Bonita all the time and his pretty daughter would get into the big limousine and drive off while we were working around the place, but he couldn't afford to pay his workers. These kinds of things always build up a bit of an impression about where I needed to be in the world's philosophy. (chuckle)

As I started to say earlier, in the summer I was working doing that kind of thing. I got a call from a friend of mine from high school who was a Cal Tech scholarship student who was working in Catalina at the Hotel running elevators in the summer. That was really a great job for him and he knew I was looking for something better than I had so he called and said one of the elevator operators had just gotten fired or quit or something, and if I got on the boat right then and came

over he'd try to get me in. So I quickly packed a bag and grabbed a red streetcar down to Wilmington and caught the next boat over to Catalina. I got the elevator job. This was the kind of thing where you got a very small pay, but you also got room and board and whatever tips there were. The tips weren't too bad, but what was really impressive was that the tips that the bellhops made were extremely good. There were also beach boys. The hotel is on the beach. It was an old hotel, sort of an exclusive one in the old days. It was physically falling apart because it used a saltwater flush system so the pipes were rotting. The engineers had to keep working to keep the thing working, but it had a clientele which included a lot of Hollywood stars and so forth. Jack Benny was there and Bob Crosby played. The bellhops averaged about \$35 a day in tips. Some of the guys who were beachboys were just Stanford guys who just worked in the summer and were paying their way to Stanford. I was trying to figure out how to go to any kind of school at all and have enough to pull together to finish my education. So, at the end of the summer I found that the season at Catalina ended and the bellhops tooted off to Arizona or to Palm Springs and there were gaps in the corps. The guy who was in charge of that was approached and he agreed that if I stayed through the winter working as a bellhop that I would be able to work through the summer. I figured that by doing that I could pay my way through college. There was no way to fritter away the money over there because there was no way to spend it. There was a dance hall and a theater at the casino. Otherwise you could lie on the beach in the afternoon one day, in the morning the next day - there was a rotating shift of twelve hours in two days and six hours the next day. It was really kind of neat, very relaxing. A lot of the guys, the kitchen guys and bellhops and so forth, would stay out gambling all night throwing away their tips. I didn't gamble, so I decided to stay. That was 1941. Then came Pearl Harbor and we were stuck out there in a very interesting situation. The ships, of course, quit running immediately. The only way you could get out was to either take a water taxi or fly out. I realized that with the war I was going to have to face the draft which had been instituted earlier on and I was going to have to face anyway. I was twenty the September before Pearl Harbor. I decided to get back to the mainland and see what I could do to make use of myself some other way and to prepare myself for CPS [Civilian Public Service], because I thought that's where I was going to go.

M: When had you heard about CPS?

S: Oh well, the whole draft thing... In my young people groups we had talked about what the draft was going to be like. We had fought against the draft. I was very conscious about being a C[onscientious] O[bjector], that I wasn't going to be involved in killing anybody.

So I decided to get back to the mainland, home, which was Eaglerock. I took a job that I heard about from another friend from my church which was at an instrument company in Los Angeles, making trumpets and trombones. It was a well known company and this was just one of their locations. It was a nice little machine shop and I learned how to do that. I had, throughout my life, learned to

used my hands. My father was actually a jack of all trades. He built furnaces, he put on roofs, he built houses. He did everything. He did mechanical work and overhauled the trucks in the company, and overhauled his father's cars and his own cars and so forth. So I had some kind of aptitude and I was able to fit in very well. The only problem was that very shortly after I started working there the good old war machine escalation thing got going so that they began to subcontract for parts from all these little shops. The company began to make bolts for the aircraft industry, so I quit. I couldn't make any parts for those machines. I had been encouraged to go to Douglas Aircraft. I had a friend who ultimately became my brother-in-law who worked for Douglas. I went down with him when he filled in his application. I considered it but I thought, "I just can't do this." So I didn't apply. I decided I needed something that would really keep me away from that. I went to work for Sears, Roebuck in their sporting goods department. Then the [government] started evacuating Japanese from the Pacific coast. We had this whole fake air raid business that went on along the Wilmington area. I remember the air raid sirens going off and looking out of my window. My bedroom was on the second floor and we were sort of on a slope. We could look over the city somewhat and we could see the anti-aircraft fire and so forth. I'm not sure, but I still think there was something staged that was going on there, but there were accusations that the Japanese had some kind of signals to Japanese planes. I don't think there were any Japanese planes in the area. I do know that when I was in Catalina there was a Japanese submarine that surfaced and was recharging its batteries right near Abalon. One of the state fish and game boats coming through the fog saw the thing and turned tail as fast as they could to get out of the way. I don't think there was anything fake about that. Ultimately there was some shelling by a submarine along the Santa Barbara coast while I was in Catalina. But the other was mostly to try to create some kind of propaganda along the coast, that there was going to be some kind of invasion, which was ridiculous, of course. So, with the evacuation coming along, I decided I should be talking with the American Friends Service Committee. So I went over to Pasadena and talked with David Henley.

M: How did you know about the American Friends Service Committee?

S: You know, pacifist groups... you know which ones are... I had some idea about the American Friends Service Committee and was very sympathetic to the pacifist position of American Friends. I forget who specifically knew David, or whether I just called the American Friends Service Committee, but I went over and talked with David Henley. He was a sociology professor from Whittier who was working as the head of the Pasadena office of the AFSC at that point. He must have taken a leave from Whittier or something, I forget. Dr. Henley said, "Well, we do have an AFSC activity that's going on. We're gearing up to do something to help out with people who are being evacuated. Why don't you go down to Los Angeles to see Esther Rhodes?" So I did.

Esther Rhodes suggested that what was most needed was help in the valley while people in the valley were being evacuated. They had already evacuated along the immediate coast, so that people were already in Manzanar at that time. I had been outraged about what was going on. I still kept in touch with our church. We had information about what was happening with our Japanese American friends. At one point our high school group had visited an orphanage in Los Angeles and we were very much impressed with a Japanese American orphanage there. We were outraged when we found out they had even evacuated those orphans, little and big alike. There was obviously no way they were going to be any harm to anybody. But of course, there was the propaganda that it was for their safety that they were being evacuated, which was baloney. I never saw any real threat to them in any way, except for in the newspapers. The L.A. Times was pretty reactionary at that point, depicting Japanese Americans as having certain characteristics that were different from other people, even the Chinese. It was so ridiculous.

M: Do you have any impressions of Esther Rhodes? Was that the first time you met her?

S: Esther Rhodes was really a great lady. I didn't know her before. She had been a missionary in Japan and she had had to leave. She was trying to get her roots in this country. I don't know too much about that history, I only know that's what she was about. She was working on trying to help people during the evacuation, to make them as comfortable as possible. She had a number of errands for me to take care of, like going out to Santa Anita to see Reverend Lester Suzuki who was a Methodist. I think Lester Suzuki may have been the man who was in charge of that orphanage at one point. She had some message to give to Lester Suzuki and it had to be delivered. Manzanar had already been set up. In the meantime Santa Anita racetrack stables were converted. I knew, in general, where it was because we'd gone to San Bernadino from LA and gone past the race track, so I thought, "Oh, okay, I can take that out there." I borrowed one of the family cars which was an old '28 Buick sedan. I tooled out. I had an appointment, a certain time. It was ridiculous, you really had to get there at a certain time.

M: The relocation authority was in charge?

S: Yeah, whatever. Before the WRA there was a preliminary group with a other title. But Western Defense Command was in charge at that point, the military.

**(END TAPE 1, SIDE 1)**

**(BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE 2)**

M: I'm starting this tape again with Bill Stevenson. I'm Stephen MacNeil and we're here in the Stevenson's home here in Berkley, California.

You were saying the Esther Rhodes had sent you out on an errand.

S: I headed out on the usual highway that I took when we would go out to Riverside and so forth, before the freeways, of course. Well, traffic was the usual southern California traffic and it was jammed up. As I approached the Santa Anita area I realized I was going to have a hard time making it by the time of the appointment. I got to the road that I knew was where I had to go and there was a barricade across it - huge big barricade - with big signs by the Western Defense Command saying, "Prohibited to Enter." I knew that I was really stuck because I knew it was several miles to the next road that went across which was apparently the main entrance to the race track. I didn't know because I never went to the race track as such. I was at Santa Anita but I was on the wrong side. (chuckles) So that was one place where I decided to be an activist. I could see the guard towers and the guys with their guns up there, just like a prison - which again infuriated me because I thought it was incredibly stupid to be treating people this way. To put them behind these guards. To treat them as though they were criminals. Lester Suzuki was the sweetest kind of guy, really a nice guy. Very passive. There was nothing aggressive or hostile about him in any way. To be delivering a message to him and to find he was in this kind of situation aroused me enough that I drove around the barricade and drove down the street. The guards looked down at me and they obviously didn't know what to do. It was outside of the barbed wire fence that they had the towers, but it was obvious that they were really concerned about this guy coming along. (laughs) I had no one with me, by the way. I was alone. Pretty soon I could see a military vehicle coming my way. It was loaded down with about ten guys hanging out of it. So finally I decided I would say, "Well, I have a pass. I have this piece of paper that's a pass for a certain time." I knew damned well it didn't mean that (chuckles) but I thought that what I needed to do was just take the initiative and if I get arrested, so what. I'd be in no worse condition than these people who are being treated this way. So the jeep pulled up, and I'm waving this piece of paper and acting really innocent, and I said, "Where do I take this?" They were flabbergasted, they didn't know what to think. They gave me a short lecture and said I wasn't supposed to be coming in this way, I was supposed to be down there - which was obvious - and don't let this happen again. So I went on my way and just barely got to my appointment on time. (laughs) I have no idea about the message, I've completely forgotten. The only thing that was important was the huge impact that made on me. When they say they were being protected, well, if there was any idea in my mind that they were being protected it was dispelled by that image of these guard towers with the barbed wire fence. All I could think of was the concentration camps of the Germans and were we any better? Of course, we weren't killing people, but it was certainly a real question.

S: So, after that, Esther wanted me to work on the student relocation. At that time there was a student relocation office in Los Angeles which Esther Rhodes was running, and [one] in San Francisco that Joe Conard was running, and one in Seattle - I can't remember who was running that. Esther started me working on the applications that came in from the L.A. kids at Santa Anita and so forth. She had organized some kind of a filing system. Shortly after we started on that, before we got into anything really significant in terms of actually working on getting anyone out, the message came from Philadelphia that they were combining the offices from Seattle and Los Angeles with the one in San Francisco. Now that was at 1830 Sutter Street, which had been the Japanese YWCA. It was a wonderful little place. Esther said, "Will you please take all of these records in tow and move them up to San Francisco." As far as I knew, that's what I was going to do, and then [I was going to] come back. So I took them out to San Francisco and met Joe Conard, and Joe asked if I would stay. So I did. I stayed and started working on that in San Francisco. That was my introduction to the National Japanese American Student Relocation project.

Joe asked me to be in charge of the records department and see to it that we collected the records that we needed, to get the references required, the transcripts required, to get the things in shape for an evaluation. That meant that we would evaluate a rate what the level of presentability of the student in terms of academics and the kind of person they were. They would be an emissary for the Japanese Americans out there in the wilderness - the eastern schools. (chuckles) In the east they didn't know anything about eastern schools, in the west we didn't know anything about eastern schools. There was nothing there because all the schools were here, like Cal and Stanford. (laughs) Right? (laughs) There was no money to do that. The AFSC was recruiting people who could volunteer, really *volunteer* pretty much. My family was still in pretty bad shape. It wasn't long afterwards that my dad went in to work for Lockheed and began to pull his family together financially, but in the meantime we didn't have any money. I didn't have any money saved because I didn't have a chance to stay long enough at the Catalina experience to establish any pot of money. So I indicated that I needed to be able to live. They arranged that I would get a compensation of \$40 a month to pay for my room and board. I accepted that and joined a cooperative house. It was a house that had been occupied by the Sekei family. There were three flats where the Miako Hotel is now, on Post Street. The Sekei's left the house in the charge of a guy by the name of Joe Goodman, who was a student at the University of Washington, and his wife Betty. Betty Goodman was a Quaker. There were some others who were involved. I came into that fairly early. We used two levels of that three level building for our \_\_\_\_\_. We survived by virtue of the fact that we didn't have to pay a heck of a lot of rent for it. We were really taking care of it for the Sekeis. We could get by with very little for food. We would go shop and cooperate putting the food on the table. Some of the others who volunteered at the AFSC at 1830 Sutter - either for the AFSC or for the Student

- Relocation - stayed there from time to time. That went on all the time I was in San Francisco. Most of that time I was in the Sekei House.
- M: Some of the people that Joseph \_\_\_\_\_ memoirs mention, if you can recall any of them, if you have any memories of them besides Joe and Betty Goodman, are Edith Roberts, Elaine Shell, Bill and Aida Wardlaw, Caleb Buchanan.
- S: Yes. Caleb came and then he took a different place which I rented for a while. He didn't work for the Student Relocation.
- M: There were quite a few people volunteering for Student Relocation at that point.
- S: Yes, from time to time. There were people in and out. Sometimes the CPS people would come down and stay at the Friends Center. There were a few places to sleep there.
- M: Where would they be coming down from?
- S: From Coalville, for example, from Elkins, from various CPS camps. People would come in and find out about what they could lend a hand doing. There was always a lot of work to do. We worked from early morning to late at night, usually, took a break for lunch and dinner.
- M: And you were dealing mostly with records that were sent from the camps.
- S: Records from the camp. Then we also had to arrange for people to do the evaluations we needed to have. We wanted to have reputable people so we got people like Dean Alice Hoyt from the university. She, I think, was at the University of California. We got people from the Dean's office. Margaret Cosgrove from Fresno State came out and volunteered over a period of time. Also, [we] began the work of actually getting people out. People like Betty Emlin and Woody Emlin from Philadelphia, Bryn Mawr, came out and volunteered. Woody's family was pretty wealthy, and Betty's father was the dean at one of the schools in the east. Trudy King, whose father was President King of one of the schools [came out.] Ultimately Howard Kennedy Deal, who was the head of the history department at the University of North Carolina came. He wanted to be the head of the whole thing but (laughs). It was a fascinating time.
- M: How did he want to become the head? Of the Student Relocation Committee or just the way it was organized.
- S: Well, he had an idea that he was really being very altruistic and he was putting in his time. He was living very well and had a very good income from the University of North Carolina, but he had his own idea of how things should be run

- and he thought he should be doing it. (chuckles) So there were some conflicts. He wasn't a Quaker.
- M: There was an AFSC committee at that time?
- S: Yes, there was a committee and Joe, of course, ran it. Actually, I was very impressed with the way Joe operated. He had a Friends Meeting every morning before we started to work. We had a silent meeting and sometimes we'd speak if we felt the need to comment about something. Sometimes we talked about other issues than AFSC's involvement in the Japanese American Student Relocation Council. Sometimes we talked about specific things that had to do with the Council and so forth. It was a very useful, clearing the air kind of thing that really helped to get us motivated to do a sensible job. If there were problems that came up they would get discussed in a Friendly - big "F" - kind of way.
- M: This is on Sutter Street?
- S: Right. There was a little room that overlooked the street, smaller than this room, and we'd crowd in there. Did I mention Tom Bodine?
- M: No you hadn't.
- S: Tom came out and took over responsibility pretty much. Joe was busy with the AFSC kinds of things too.
- M: What were the ages of the people that would gather in the morning? Were they mostly young people, or mixed?
- S: Well, quite a few were young people, but there were various ages. I thought of them as being old. They probably weren't that much older. I was still pretty young. When I went out there I was only 20. \_\_\_\_\_ told me later on he thought I was 29. Wow! That was really something because I was really a very late maturer. The only thing that made for some rationale that I was older was that I had some gray hair when I was 20 or 21. He may have thought that nobody under 30 had gray hair. I don't know how he judged that, because I didn't think I looked particularly old.
- M: Did you spend your days on the telephone, or did you go out and do interviews to get references?
- S: No. We didn't do the references face to face. We did the references by mail. One of the things that was very impressive about that was that most of them were overwhelmingly positive. Once in a while you would get one that was very negative and fit the stereotype of the anti-Japanese. Like, if it was somebody from one of the farm areas, a Japanese student might have thought they were friendly

- people [and ask them to write a recommendation], but they were [actually] people who had intentions of taking over the farm. They would come out with vicious statements or something. But [those] statements just wouldn't fit with the teachers and others who really knew the students well and gave a positive and warm report about them.
- M: Did the entire file follow the applicant? If you were sending it off to a college in the east would you send the entire file?
- S: No, we'd make a summary, or make copies of the references as necessary. Betty Emlin was working on financial things. These kids couldn't just go off to someplace. They had to have some money to support them. Tom [Bodine] and Trudy [King] were working on placement, as well as trying to get students cleared. They had this stupid business of colleges being proscribed by the military; by the Department of the Navy or the Department of the Army, Air Force. If there was any ROTC unit anyplace, it was off grounds for the Japanese American. We had to get special permission from Washington, on a student by student basis, for this student to go to that college. You can imagine. That was like pulling hen teeth. That was one reason for moving the whole thing to Philadelphia; they had to be closer to Washington and people could run down and talk to those people in the War Department. (chuckles)
- M: You arrived in 1942 and stayed until...
- S: I forget exactly when we went to Philadelphia, but I remember at some point they decided to [move] to Philadelphia. One reason they left the west coast was the Japanese couldn't come to the west coast. In Philadelphia they could come, so we could get people who themselves had come out of the camps, like Kay Yamashita, who was one of our favorite people there.
- M: How was the decision made that you would go to Philadelphia. Well, I had all of knowledge of the files. We set up a row of files across the gym in San Francisco. We had about 14 or 15 filing cabinets and I had all of the information about how that was structured and so forth.
- M: This is the gymnasium at Sutter Street?
- S: Yes, right. Actually we started off with pasteboard boxes on the stage, and then we graduated to having files. I had all the information, and I had also worked with the people who were coming in to evaluate, and set those dates up so they would come in and spend several hours. I would bring them the files that needed to be evaluated and then I would work up a rating system. We put colored metal clips on the tops of the files to depict one thing or another. It was important that somebody who knew what these were like would be able to tell people in Philadelphia about it. Again, like in Los Angeles, I was asked if I would take the

files on the train with me, which I did. I took the files to Philadelphia and then I was asked if I'd stay.

M: When were you asked? After you arrived?

S: Shortly after I arrived. Within 48 hours. Again, there was always this problem; where was I going to live and all this stuff. Woody Emlin's parents ultimately invited me to stay with them in Germantown. They had plenty of space. They had a nice big mansion which is no longer there, on School Lane in Germantown, Philadelphia. Before that I stayed a few days with Tom Bodine, and before that I had stayed at what they called the Brooder Coop in Philadelphia. That was a co-op of young people who were interested in social work. Many of them were Friends. There's a newspaper writer by the name of Bill Worthy who was one of them. I see his name every once in a while. I shared a room with him. He was a Black newspaperman. I see his name occasionally these days, but I never have achieved any contact. In terms of the kind of background they came from, I have to say that some of the people in the AFSC came from affluent families and they couldn't quite "dig" this poor young guy from California coming and staying in that terrible neighborhood in North Philadelphia. It was a bunch of row houses, and we moved in the winter and it was cold and snowy and sooty. I think they thought, "This is not appropriate for one of our colleagues." (chuckles) I think there was a conspiracy to get me invited by Tom to his place, first. Tom was an insurance man and he continued as an insurance man later on in Hartford. He was always pretty well off, and he was well spoken. I was very naive and I was poorly educated in terms of... well, very unsophisticated, let's say. I don't think that, to this day, these people understand that I didn't have at least some money of my own to survive. I think they had a hard time. I had a hard time with the cost, sometimes, if they wanted to go somewhere for lunch. I couldn't afford to spend anything. I couldn't afford to eat out with the crowd when they were eating someplace that was pretty nice.

S: Were you working out of Race Street at the time? Which meetinghouse or area were you in?

M: In Philadelphia? It was 20 South 12th Street, and it was a meetinghouse. The building next door, the Provident Trust building, also had a number of floors that were AFSC. We took one of the floors and split it with someone by the name of Danforth who had some project with the AFSC.

S: When you were talking about going out and eating lunch with someone was this Philadelphia?

M: Yes. I probably stayed home in Germantown and ate with the family more often than I should have, but I got along. The main thing was to get the job done.

S: How long did you work in Philadelphia?

M: It was probably 13 or 14 months, I think. April 1944, maybe. I set up the files again and it wasn't too long until I was in charge of placing engineering and chemistry students. So I did that, which was a whole new experience for me, writing letters to provide an opening for people. It was a very revealing thing. Academia can be pretty stupid sometimes too. I forget which college, maybe it was Monmouth - there were a whole lot of colleges that did accept colleges. The Quaker colleges provided places early on - but there was this college that had a Naval ROTC unit and they rejected one of my chemistry students because of that ROTC student. At the same time that they were rejecting this chemistry student, there was a chemistry student who was an exchange student from Japan who had been there, going to this college, when the war broke out. He was still there, he was still free to wander about the campus or the city, no obvious restrictions. Maybe he'd been cautioned that he was an enemy alien and he had to obey a curfew or something. But during the time that I was working on trying to get this student in there, this [other] student graduated and he was exchanged to Japan on the exchange ship. They trained him, he could have gone around taking pictures of the ROTC unit, he could have done a whole lot of espionage IF he had been of a mind to - which he probably wasn't - and they just sent him back to Japan. But our American, Japanese American student, couldn't be allowed to go on campus because he would be a hazard. The stupidity was pretty obvious.

M: How did you find out about the Japanese national?

S: I don't remember [how I got] the information, but it was there. Probably in the records that are now at Stanford.

M: Did you have any personal contact, face to face contact or telephone contact, with the college officials about this?

S: No. No. We were too busy, and we didn't have the money to run someone to Illinois or wherever it was. There were a lot of stories like that. Trudy King, who is unfortunately no longer around, was a very bright lady and had a fantastic photographic memory. She could tell some fascinating stories about her contacts with the War Department and some of these people. Tom Bodine can do that too, but Trudy would have been a great consultant. I don't know what is available in her papers. She was very prolific in writing so there may be a great wealth. I don't know if you've been down there [to Stanford]. Tom spent quite a bit of time down there trying to get that organized. Let me say that here I was, a draft age CO - that's something I haven't mentioned in this whole business.

M: Had you gone before your local board?

S: At one point I had gone before my local board. It turned out that my local board was one of the more enlightened local boards in this country.

M: Where was this?

S: In Eagle Rock. There was a Mr. Maclaine who was the father of a classmate of mine in highschool, and who was a professor or administrator at Occidental College. I forget who all was on that board, but he's the one who stands out. One of the things that I was impressed with was that when I went they kept questioning why I was asking to go to Civilian Public Service. I said, "Because I could do work of national importance." And they laughed at me, not maliciously, but they made it clear that I was naive, that Civilian Public Service was not that important. It turns out that Bill Webb, who was the son of the superintendent of school in Los Angeles County, and who was the older brother of another highschool friend in my class at school, had gone to Cascade \_\_\_\_\_ early on. He was older so he was drafted early. Bill Webb is another very bright guy and I'm sure he's still around someplace. He was also very vocal. He came from a background that promoted maturity and so forth, and he was pretty up front about what his feelings were about Civilian Public Service. He kept in conversation by mail with Dr. Maclaine and with the board in general. I learned about this later, they didn't tell me. They were saying, "Can't you do something other than Civilian Public Service? Can't you do some other kind of work?" So, somehow or other we got the notion, Henley had talked to the local board at some point, and they suggested that I should be deferred to work for the American Friends Service Committee. Ultimately I was planning to try to go overseas and do some work for the AFSC overseas. I wasn't trained for it, my major in school had been engineering. That was frustrating because I found that engineering jobs were in the military effort and I had to change my mind about that.

Apparently, early on they got the impression that if the local board had a request and documentation from the American Friends Service Committee they would defer me. And they did. They deferred me 2-A, which was "work of national importance." There was a lot of correspondence between the local board and the AFSC at various times, Joe Conard, the Japanese American Student Relocation Council, Mason, the president of Swarthmore, asking for my deferment. I always asked for a 4-E. I was always paranoid. I thought if I asked for something else I'd lose my CO status. I didn't trust the Selective Service System. But when the Selective Service System finally [ended] the requirement that the local board had to make the decision about [the status] of people in their area, when they took that decision away from them, then I was immediately given a 4-E and sent off to Civilian Public Service. So that was always a possibility, and the review was constant, every six months or something they had to consider your classification.

M: How did that happen when you were in Philadelphia? Just by mail?

S: Yes, they did it by mail. Actually when it became essential for the Selective Service System to review, they sent that file to Philadelphia. Elmore Jackson was involved in some correspondence with me about the fact that they had put that [file] in Philadelphia. Elmore Jackson was also the person I corresponded with, and talked to, about the overseas possibilities. There was one point where there were no people being allowed to go overseas. That's here in my correspondence, that they were not going to be able to send anybody else overseas until after the war. So that was all stymied. I was moving in the direction of trying to do that, and it became obvious that I should get out of Philadelphia and get back to doing something with the AFSC back in San Francisco. Joe agreed with that. I have some letters in here indicating that they were piling up work for Bill Stevenson (laughs). They appointed me, ultimately, as associate secretary of the AFSC. It wasn't that big an office to have an associate secretary (laughs) and Joe was the guy who was doing all of the work. But I did decide to go back and leave the Student Relocation Council.

There were young people from the camps who were able to come and fill those positions in Philadelphia. I mentioned Kay Yamashita, and there were other people. I suppose I could come up with a list of people, but there were quite a few Japanese Americans coming into the office, and it was a good idea to make the change. So I left and went to the AFSC [in San Francisco.] It wasn't much later that I was sent to CPS. When I went on leave from Elkton CPS Camp I was so impressed with the fact that I was doing nothing of any significance to anybody - I was just sitting it out, not doing anything. When I was in San Francisco with Joe we were setting up the hostels for people to return to from the camps to the west coast. I set up the hostel at the Japanese Language School, just a block away...

**(END TAPE 1, SIDE 2)**

**(BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE 1)**

M: Again, this is side three of an interview between Bill Stevenson and Stephen MacNeil in Berkley, September 26, 1991.

You were mentioning that you had gotten formal leave from the CPS Camp at Elkton, or...

S: Yes, I was on leave. I came down to San Francisco on leave and volunteered my time with Joe while I was on leave. I was getting more and more involved with the relocation of the Japanese back to the west coast.

M: 1945 probably?

S: Still 1944, if I remember correctly.

M: You were saying that there had been a hostel set up at the Japanese Language School on Bush Street.

- S: A block from the 1830 center, so it was on the 1900 block of Bush. I decided when I was on leave that I would not return to Civilian Public Service because I was not doing anything up there. I was very allergic and actually, anybody in the military who was as allergic as I was would probably have been deferred. When I was in San Francisco I would go to the Stanford Lane Hospital and I would get four shots twice a week because of my allergies. It was many years before I grew out of the allergy situation. I had an operation on my nose because I always had a stopped up nose. From a health standpoint there was some question about what I would be able to do. So what I was doing at Elkton was, part of the time, office work. I helped in the infirmary. And otherwise I worked in the kitchen. That was my work at Elkton. I went to a side-camp once and was in charge of all the cooking. I was the cook, period, I was it - did the ordering and so forth. I didn't feel that that was an important thing for the United States, considering the kinds of problems we were having, to have me sit up there and add to the bill of the AFSC. Of course, we were visited by the AFSC and we didn't have pay, as such. I really developed a strong feeling that work without pay was slavery and ethically wrong. Aside from the other factors, that was enough of a reason for people to not be cooped up like that and required to work. If they were going to do that, and it was work of national importance, we should have been paid. I understand why the AFSC couldn't pay them, because they didn't have the money either. We had a small allowance. But again, if people in CPS had families who could send them money then they had something to live on, a little more than what was provided at the camp, but my family didn't have any money. I empathized with people who were in my boots and there were a lot of people in CPS that I knew who were from families who didn't have the where-with-all to send them anything extra. My family would have, probably, even though they didn't agree with me. My father was, himself, in World War I and was very patriotic like his parents were. We disagreed and we fought over the philosophy of pacifism before the war actually broke out, and got into a lot of loud arguments about it. He was very disappointed in me because I wasn't accepting his philosophy.
- Anyway, CPS didn't seem to be so important, so I decided that the best I could do was to try to help out with AFSC's work and let the chips fall where they may. I was AWOL then from the camp and the camp had to report that. I also kept my local board aware and I called the FBI and let them know where I was. On July 18th, 1945, I got this note on my desk at 1830 Sutter Street.
- M: It says, "Mr. Stevenson, please stop at the FBI office, 111 Sutter Street, tomorrow morning between 8:30 and 9:00am and ask for agent W.H. Marr.
- S: Right. So that was at the point I was arrested for being absent without leave. Toward the end of the year I was sent to prison by a judge from Portland, Oregon. I think I got six months as a draft violator, here.

M: Were you, between the time you were arrested and sentenced, were you released on bail?

S: Yes, oh yes. Released on bail. Mr. Marr had me processed and taken to jail. I was manhandled a little bit in the jailhouse by some of the more patriotic police officers who didn't like my attitude. I don't know what my attitude was, I think I pretty much cooperated with them and did what I was told, except for one thing. That is, I was being interviewed and I was asked to go sit down at a place by a window while they were doing something else... This very officious looking lieutenant, or whatever he was, in the interrogations unit - after I'd been fingerprinted and so forth - said, "Go sit over there." Well, instead of going over and sitting down on the bench I went over and was just looking out of the window. I thought he just meant to go over [there] until he had time. I wasn't thinking of disobeying him, you know. But all of the sudden I heard footsteps behind me, and this guy grabbed me and threw me into the bench and said, "I said SIT DOWN." And I mean he really threw me. I thought, "Well, this guy doesn't like pacifists." (laughs) I wasn't happy about that, but before the end of the day I was out. Somebody arranged for my bail. Then I was asked to report to the court in Portland, Oregon, so I got myself up there and went through the process of indictment, arraignment, and finally getting a court hearing. It was, maybe, in January of the next year that I finally went to prison. But I was out in early June. It was a six month sentence and I got off early for good behavior.

M: Where did you go?

S: MacNeil Island. (laughter) You're island!  
There were quite a lot of COs up there. Caleb had served two different terms up there, I think he was on his second term when I was there. He had refused to go to the farm. I wasn't going to make that issue, I wasn't the absolutist that he was about it, so I went to the farm afterwards. That's a whole different story.

M: You mentioned when you came back from Elkton that you helped with the hostel at 1900 Bush Street.

S: Right, and also the one in Oakland, there was one at the Buddhist Church.

M: What was that like?

S: It was interesting because it was my first introduction to squid. I had no idea what squid were like and they had boiled squid in soy sauce. That's what I remember most about that (laughs) trying to eat squid.

M: Were you living at the hostel?

S: I think at that point I was at Caleb's place on Buchanan Street, I just can't remember. I know I was at Caleb's house for sometime before I went up to CPS... (pause) I can't remember if I stayed at the hostel or Friends Center. They had a few beds at Friends Center all through CPS so that the CPS men could visit from the camps and stay there. I may have stayed there, it wasn't very long after they gave me the notice. Maybe I only worked for a month before I got this notice from the FBI and they made me report right away to Oregon. So I went up to Oregon and took a job working for \_\_\_\_\_ company, in their dining room, busing dishes. I was living in the International House in Portland. There was a guy whose son was a CO who owned a flower wholesale, Hunterford, Bob Hunterford. He rented or bought this house which he set up as an international house. It was an old home and it was pretty nice.

M: Did any returnees from the camps come there or was it mostly young people?

S: Japanese Americans? No. Mainly it was just a place for me to stay during the time I was pending. In addition to working for pay, I worked for the Fellowship of Reconciliation up there. It's all very vague in my mind now.

While I was at International House my friend Rick Hirito was also tried because he refused to transfer to the government camp from Elkton. He was ordered to report to Colorado and he refused to go. He was out of the Elkton Camp and living in Portland, and he came in one day to the International House to see me and brought his sister. [His sister] was living and working in Eugene and had come to visit him. She's my wife now. That's while I was there that I met her. (chuckles) But Rick's case was dismissed on the grounds that they didn't have jurisdiction in the court in Portland. The Colorado jurisdiction was at \_\_\_\_\_ and so he would have to be tried in a different jurisdiction. I don't know whose bright idea that was, it might have been the judges. By that time the judges were getting tired of sending COs to prison. Even my sentence wasn't too bad. People had earlier been sent for two years, things like that, or more. But the judge decided he didn't want to prosecute this guy. He didn't say he wasn't going to stay in Elkton, he just had been transferred to a government camp and he was resisting the administration by the AFSC at that point.

M: I understand that there were a lot of tensions at a lot of levels.

S: Oh, I'm sure Steve Cary has a lot of information about that. He had to deal with it. I remember when I was back in Philadelphia, we had regular morning meetings at 20 South 12th Street in that old building. Clarence Pickett and Steve Cary's father were very often making reports to the meeting. They had something of a little amphitheater in there, it was almost built as if it was a classroom at some point. But we got reports on the progress of AFSC work wherever they were throughout the world during the war, and what was happening in developing services in places where they could get in. Of the "Burma Road to China" men, I actually met one by the name of Briggs in San Francisco later on.

- M: You were mentioning that Steve Cary had to give a report on CPS tensions...
- S: Steve Cary later on, after I was out of Philadelphia was involved in the CPS project.
- M: After you were released from MacNeil Island where did you go?
- S: After I left MacNeil Island, Marie and I got married. She came to see me all through the time I was out there. We got married and we took a honeymoon which included a trip with Joe Conard in Florence, up into the Sierras into the Echo Lake area. Also a trip into Yosemite with my brother-in-law and his family. At that point I didn't have a job and didn't have any money, but Marie had gotten a job with Meyer and Frank Company as a member of the staff in the record department. So she supported me until I got back from the honeymoon.
- M: Where is Meyer and Frank Company?
- S: Meyer and Frank Company was the biggest department store on the west coast at the time. A twelve or thirteen story building and a whole block square, a fairly large block. It really was a fantastic, big store. I imagine it still exists in some form but I doubt it compares with some of the big stores they have now. Before we left on our honeymoon I had applied at United Airlines to be an agent. When I got back they told me that because of my prison record they had decided against hiring me. I went down the same day to an employment agency. They sent me to a steamship agency which happened to have a job open and they hired me on the spot. I worked for them for a couple of years. When there was a strike on out on the Pacific coast, 1948 - there was a BIG strike - my boss and I were in charge of the purchasing and billing departments in this United States Intercoastal Steam Ship Line. The Southern Christianson Incorporated was the international [section] and we had a line out of Norway which shipped throughout the Pacific area, from Shanghai and so forth. There was still a lot of activity post-war, trying to build up the economies of various countries. When the strike came on my boss and I were alternating days because there was nothing to do in the office. So the big boss had sort of let the staff take the day off as long as somebody took care of their department. One day I was on my day off and I got a call from the head of the overseas shipping company part of it, and he said, "Be ready in two hours, we're going to Vancouver, British Columbia. We're going to operate out of there, I'll pick you up." Well, I don't consider myself a strike breaker. (laughs) I don't know how I'd think if I analyzed it today, whether I'd make the same decision, but I decided I wouldn't go. So I called the *big* boss at the top of the whole agency. I said, "I'm not going to go to Canada." For one thing Maria was there and there was no idea how long I'd be gone. They didn't tell me anything, they didn't prepare me in any way. There wasn't any reassurance about her being able to visit. We hadn't been married very long, just a couple of years. She was in charge

of her department by then and had seven or eight people working for her. She couldn't just drop everything and go, she'd lose her job. So I decided that since we had been on vacation in California shortly before that, and I had been offered a job to manage one of the co-op service stations, I'd just go ahead and do that, move out of Portland and get out of the rain. (chuckles) It was very wet out there. So I called and asked in the job was still available and he said yes. So I called the big boss and told him I wasn't going to go, and he said, "All right. Goodbye. (click)" So I called my immediate superior at work, and he said, "Well, I better come in because you may be right, you may be canned tomorrow." I think that they had to check with the central office in San Francisco about any personnel decisions, so he didn't tell me I was fired but I think it was in the process, probably. I came in, ultimately saw him and he tried to smooth it out to work it out so I could come up in a couple of weeks to Canada. But in the meantime I had this job in San Francisco. But I said it was probably a good time for me to get out of the steamship business because it really wasn't what I was interested in anyway. I was more interested in something else. I was really more interested in social work but hadn't developed any training yet. He was very nice. He paid me a whole month's advance salary and said I didn't have to come in during the month and that would be okay because the strike was on. It really was a long, bitter strike. He said he thought I had a good chance to get in a good position in the company and so forth, but let me tell you, in the two years that I worked for that company I decided I didn't want to be one of the (laughs) people in a position of authority in that steamship business. It was in NO way a place that I belonged. It was really awful, the kind of personality you had to develop in order to live in that dog eat dog kind of business. Ultimately that company went out of business and my immediate supervisor was out looking for a job while I was out in this area working. He dropped in on me one day to see if I could help him find a job. Pretty sad, but I really made a smart move getting out of there when I did or I might have been stuck for several more years.

So I came down here and worked as a service station manager for Consumers' Cooperative Enterprises, which went out of business. I also worked for the Fellowship of Reconciliation on a volunteer basis or a minimal salary basis. Maria and I both did and tried to live on a non-taxable income as long as we could. I decided I'd better go back to school and I finally got my masters degree from the University of California School of Social Welfare. After working for a number of years in a family service agency, and then adoptions in the county for the State Department of Mental Hygiene. I was an administrator in social welfare in \_\_\_\_\_ County for seventeen years and then retired. (laughs)

M: And spending your birthday being very patient.

S: After all these birthdays it doesn't matter that much any more.

M: I'm trying to think if there's any other...  
Does the Booker T. Washington Center...

S: The Booker T. Washington Center was where the Japanese Language School was. Hope Foote worked there as a social worker. She was a social group worker and she was very sarcastic about case workers. She didn't have anything to do with it, but when I went into social work I went into social case work. Maybe she had something to do with it, but I didn't know it at the time. (chuckles) When I actually saw what it was I didn't think it was as bad.

Tom and Trudy Hunt were active in the \_\_\_\_\_ Institute and at one point I had some contacts with them that were related to the possibility that I might go into working on that more. I can't remember what happened with that, whether the work didn't develop or somebody else went into it instead or what, but I remember going out to \_\_\_\_\_ College - they had a home in that area - and talked with Tom and Trudy at length.

Subsequent AFSC connections - I just keep in contact with the AFSC. We haven't done anything particularly in terms of providing services or anything. Being in social work as I was for all those years, I didn't seem to have any need for any additional (chuckles) work. But I really had a lot of respect for AFSC's work camps and so forth. I went to an International Service Seminar one time when I went to work in Philadelphia. This was during the war. I went down to North Carolina, to Greensboro, to Guilford College. I remember getting off in the \_\_\_\_\_ Railroad in Greensboro, and then taking a little rural train, with wooden cars and so forth, probably it was a narrow gauge thing, that went to Guilford. I remember naively insisting that I wasn't going to be involved in the segregation on the train. I say naively because I didn't realize how much of a problem I would be creating for some of the Black people. I got on the rear of the train and sat in the rear on purpose. I was really thumbing my nose at that whole segregation bit, but it wasn't very well thought out. It really created a little bit of discomfort. I don't think that any of the Black people wanted to sit next to me because they wanted to follow the rules. I did experience that people were unhappy with me. Nothing was done, they didn't boot me off of the train or something like that. Maybe they should have. Then a couple of Black people would have had a seat. It was a crowded train. They needed more seating.

M: Well, you also were in the Philmore area when you were working in San Francisco that was becoming more Black.

S: Oh, yes. It was primarily Black when I came back from Philadelphia. It was becoming that because of the influx of people from the south to work in the shipyards in San Francisco. It was considered the center of crime in San Francisco by the police department. A very well educated school teacher who was also working at the Booker T. Washington Center was renting a room from the Footes. She was relatively light skinned, so periodically, when she was walking a few blocks from work where she lived, some San Francisco police officers would stop and offer to give her a ride out of the neighborhood because they thought she was a white woman in a Black neighborhood and she didn't belong there. That

was a matter of regular joking because it happened periodically. She always denied the need for a ride, and so forth, but I don't think they ever realized that she was Black.

The Committee for Racial Equality was active in trying to break a housing covenant in one of the areas in San Francisco. At that time it was possible to break a covenant if you got one person in the street to refuse to sign the covenant. If everybody signed up it would hold, but if one person refused to sign then it was knocked down. Now Caleb Foote, when he was the editor of the Harvard Crimson, helped break the fraternity prejudice against Jewish students who were denied admission into fraternities. The case that he used to break the discrimination was that of Casper Weinberger. Now, the reason that's interesting is because when we were working on the covenant, the person who was trying to get the covenant signed up was Cap Weinberger's father in San Francisco, and this was after Caleb had worked on getting Casper into the fraternity at Harvard. It was kind of ironic. We did get people to refuse to sign the covenant so the thing got broken up. It wasn't too long until the whole thing was made illegal anyway. We set up a co-op in the basement of the AFSC at 1830 Sutter - an interracial buying club. Food and soap and that kind of thing. We would go over to the Oakland co-op wholesale and buy a carload of stuff. The \_\_\_\_\_, Bill and Aida. At the time when they were living on Post Street it was \_\_\_\_\_. She was enough of a feminist that she insisted on keeping her name. The Committee on Racial Equality was primarily white. We got a few [Black] people. There was one by the name of Riles. He was with Golden Gate Insurance which was a Black insurance company. He got involved with us.

M: There's a Wilson Riles who became the superintendent of education. Related?

S: No. No. I know Wilson Riles and his son who is now working for the AFSC, right?

M: In a couple of weeks!

There were a couple of other names of people. I don't know if you came across them when you were there. Dr. Howard Thurman and \_\_\_\_\_ Fiske.

S: I did go to the church there sometimes on Sunday. Virginia Scar\_\_\_\_\_ whose name I mentioned is very active in that church, so if there's anyone who's still active in that church they will know Virginia and if she's still alive. She would know a lot about what was happening between the colleges and universities in this area in supporting their students.

One of the things I just thought of which comes to mind, in the area of records: We had some Japanese American students who were in dental college from the University of Southern California or other places. We tried to place them at Washington University in St. Louis because it was an excellent school with a very good school of dentistry. Some of them were from the University of Southern California and we would write them and ask for the records of their students.

Apparently there was some hanky panky going on in that school and they didn't want the records to get out, so we had some trouble with any of the records from Dean Ford. The school of dentistry was separated from the University of Southern California per se. It was sort of a contract arrangement, but it was really a separate institution, so we couldn't get the records without some difficulty from this guy. I remember writing and writing about that. We finally got records and we found that students were disadvantaged because the experience they had at USC was not adequate. They had to do some repeat work. And we got very bad references for the students from the dean. At that point I wouldn't have wanted to go to a dentist who got their degree at USC dental school. Washington University school of dentistry in St. Louis, on the other hand, was top notch in my mind. I'm sure he didn't like these Japanese students.

**(END TAPE 2, SIDE 1)**

**(BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE 2)**

S: There's probably a lot more stuff you could drag out of me but it's probably not too valuable to take too much more of your time.

Regarding the AFSC connections later, I was going to say that we do attend the annual meetings now, like the ones that are usually held in San Francisco but are now in Oakland. I considered the whole thing an AFSC experience because even in Philadelphia it was so closely tied in with the AFSC. We attended the meetings in the morning with all the AFSC staff. Through this project I gained a great deal of respect for the AFSC in general and Joe Conard in particular, and I think it was a tragic loss when he developed cancer and died at a very young age. While he was working here he continued to get his degree in economics at the University of California. In spite of the fact that he was working his head off he always found time to spend with me. Later on when Maria and I were married and down here it was always a wonderful thing to visit with Joe in Florence. I don't know how his reputation in Philadelphia is in general, but I felt that he was really an outstanding person and he had a great influence on my life. I think he encouraged me to get back into school. When I was back in Philadelphia there were some people who wanted me to work for a settlement house back there, but I didn't have any training in that. Although it was a basic social work kind of experience, I didn't know what they were talking about. I think somebody in AFSC had a tie with them and was interested in getting me to work with a settlement in South Philadelphia.

Josephine Duvencek was an amazing person too. How she came in on a regular basis to San Francisco from down the peninsula and worked. I didn't talk much about Esther Rhodes. I didn't have too much contact with her over the time, but she was really a very good, level headed, calm, I would say a very peaceful person. When I saw her she was fantastic. My experience in working with her was that she sent me first of all out to the valley. San Joachim Valley. There were some people out there who were really concerned about the evacuation too.

- They said if I came they would give me a room to stay in while I put my work in at this department at Sears, Roebuck. I bought a sleeping bag and a few other things, and jumped on the bus with my sleeping bag to help out however I could. The bus lost my sleeping bag. I didn't see it for a couple of years. (laughs)
- M: You actually got it back?
- S: Yes. Finally I got it back after I had filed a claim. They kept saying they were doing a search. Ultimately, I said, "Give me the few bucks that I get, the ten or twelve dollars or whatever I get on my claim check." And it showed up. It was really strange. I had a feeling that they didn't really try until they were really pushed. It must have been there all the time.
- M: What were the people in \_\_\_\_\_ like.
- S: They were very nice. I didn't have too much contact with them. Their name was \_\_\_\_\_. They weren't Quakers. They were with another peace group. Mennonites or Brethren, I can't remember now.
- M: What did you do in Reedly?
- S: Well, they had various people who were going to be in tough situations. They had a certain deadline to get out and get on the train. They had a train schedule for a certain day and there were various tasks that people had to take care of. So I ran around one thing or another. One of the things I remember was visiting a young lady by the name of Molly Manno who was in the hospital. She was having a baby. She was in false labor when I went to see her. They thought she was going to deliver but she didn't. It was another thing that was very annoying: They put that lady on the train and shipped her off to Arizona. As I understand she had her baby okay, later on when she got to Arizona, but they loaded that train up in the heat in the valley and it was loaded. As you can imagine they had the worst cars that were available. They were using the better cars for shipping the soldiers around, so conditions were very poor for these folks. I was very impressed with the pacifity of the evacuees. They just took it. The denial is massive, you know. They felt they had to do what was best for the country, and they had to go because of all the dangers they were told about. They were told that people might attack them and so forth.
- M: Were you there when the trains actually left?
- S: Yes. I watched them. The soldiers were standing there with their guns and so forth while people loaded into the train. It was really sad. This gal went to Poston, Arizona.  
I never got down to Poston. I did visit Granada and a camp in Utah when I came back across country.

M: From Philadelphia?

S: From Philadelphia, right. I stopped and spoke at various places. I stopped at a Pennsylvania state college in Indiana, Pennsylvania. In one of my letters I described to Joe what I had to do. They had me going from one group to another, \_\_\_\_\_ Club, International Relations Club, and then I had to speak to a convocation of the college. That was nothing to put a young man through without any training, unaccustomed as I was to public speaking. That was really awful, to get up and talk about the evacuation before the whole convocation of the college. I thought I was going to speak to the International Relations Club, period. (laughs)

M: Were they somewhat hostile?

S: No, no. They were not. But I wasn't the most eloquent speaker in the world and I don't know what kind of impression I made. I think they would have been much better off if they had some kind of audio-visual thing.

M: Did you visit individuals in the camps when you went to Arizona?

S: I visited the family of Kay Yamashita there. She had an older brother who was an engineer who was not evacuated. A few years back he bought a house across the street here. He was operating an engineering business in Hong Kong and had no contact with me here. He came from Hong Kong to find a place. He found a place here and his wife didn't like it so they moved to Piedmont to a place she liked. Sadly, about a year ago they had an accident in which he ruptured his gut and got peritonitis in the hospital in Indiana. The hospital decided he'd had a heart attack and they were treating him for a heart attack. The peritonitis killed him. It got out of hand before they realized what was happening. So we did visit them in the camp. I talked to various people about sending the people on. There was a lot of apathy among the young people. The high school kids graduated from high school and they didn't really have the incentive to move on. We talked to them in groups.

M: There's a heck of a geography involved in all of this. You were all over the United States during that period. (laughs)

S: Yes. I stopped in Chicago and Iowa for other reasons and saw some of the country I never had seen before that way.

M: Well, I want to thank you very much for your time. I know it's very tiring.

S: Oh, yes, but it's very interesting to drag all of this out of my head. It's such a part of my past. If you talk to Kenje Murache you might ask about the sequel to the Japanese American Student Relocation Council; that is that the Japanese

American students that were helped now have a program to provide scholarship for Asian students coming into the United States. I was on the committee that set up the program here and I got Kenje Murache involved in that and he became the chairman of that committee and has been involved since. They pick a city each year. First they started off with AFSC in Philadelphia and gave a contribution to the AFSC. Asia Bennett, I think received that. They had a big thing there and I went back to Philadelphia. They gave us plaques. My Japanese friends were actually not proud of this. They don't think it's good. Somebody put in a lot of effort.

M: So you were involved locally and in getting Kenje Murache involved. Is there any Student Relocation alumni group?

S: This is it. There are a number of people who've been involved in this. They say that this is not really good writing and so forth, but I think somebody tried really hard to provide us with something really meaningful, and for those of us who can't read it and understand that this isn't exactly classy (laughs) I appreciate having it. Kay Yamashita is one of the people who got a plaque. She worked with Betty Emlin on scholarship. She is so ashamed of it she wouldn't put it out. That's because of having Japanese friends who might understand it. I thought it was pretty neat. It's the thought that counts.

After that we had a scholarship thing here in the Berkley area and gave out scholarships here. In various places across the country they've been doing this every year. They continue to get money for a continuing fund. We were very much impressed in the choosing of candidates to receive scholarships.

**END OF INTERVIEW**