

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Children's Village at Manzanar Oral History Project

An Oral History with TAMOTSU ISOZAKI

Interviewed

By

Lisa Nobe

On March 13, 1993

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NARRATOR: TAMOTSU ISOZAKI  
INTERVIEWER: Lisa Nobe  
DATE: March 13, 1993  
LOCATION: Monterey Park, California  
PROJECT: Children's Village at Manzanar

LN: This is an interview with Tamotsu Isozaki by Lisa Nobe for the Japanese American Project of the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton. The interview is being held at Mr. Isozaki's home, on Saturday, March 13, 1993, at approximately 1:30 p.m. So, I'll just start asking questions now. First of all, I know you have four brothers and two sisters.

TI: Right.

LN: So, can you tell me how your relationship is with them now, and how it was when you were growing up with them?

TI: Our brothers and sisters were pretty close because, age-wise, we're close, too. We're a year-and-a-half apart, at the most maybe two years apart, except in-between we had lost a sister. The oldest one is a sister. You want the name, too?

LN: Sure.

TI: The oldest one is a sister, and her name is Molly. The youngest one is Haru. My oldest brother's name is Sam, the one next to him is Kiyoshi, then Tak<sup>1</sup>, then myself, Tamo, and then Aki. The boys are all in between. We're sandwiched between the two sisters. What else do you want to know?

LN: Is there anything else you want to say about your relationship with them?

TI: Well, I live in Monterey Park, and Tak lives the closest to me. He lives in Gardena, and he has four boys, one daughter. I have the same; I have three boys and two girls, my family. My wife's name is Matsy. You want the children's names?

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<sup>1</sup> Takeshi Isozaki, O.H. 2337, Center for Oral and Public History.

LN: Sure.

TI: My oldest is Nancy, Paul, Donald, Julie, and Ralph.

LN: Okay. So, going back in time, now, you know, get away from the present and kind of go back to the past, can you just tell me where your birthplace was and when your birthday is?

TI: I was born in Stockton, California. Actually, the birth certificate gives Stockton, California, but the actual place is Mandeville Island. In Stockton, there are a lot of man-made islands, and Mandeville is one of them. In those days, way back in the twenties, there were midwives. Plus, you couldn't go all the way to Stockton to have a baby. It would be too late. Then the second most important thing: they didn't have money to even go to a hospital, so it was all midwives. So, I was born that way, and I was the last one born on the islands. From there we moved near Visalia to a town called Exeter. They had two more, so it would be a boy and a girl were born in Exeter. Then we moved to Visalia, where my father ran a restaurant.

LN: Um-hm. Was it a Japanese restaurant?

TI: Yeah, a Japanese restaurant. I'm trying to—my mother passed away giving birth. We were too young, so Father actually couldn't take care of us anymore. It was too tough on him, so finally, we went to an orphanage in San Francisco. That's the Salvation Army Orphanage Home in San Francisco. It's on Geary and Laguna. We were there in 1935, around May of 1935. We were there until the war broke out. Do you want me to say about the time from San Francisco we went to another orphanage in the country for a short time?

LN: Oh, did you? Okay, um—

TI: After war broke out. You don't need that?

LN: Actually, I do need it, but it would be easier kind of to go maybe chronologically. You know what I mean? And then, maybe go back a little because, for instance, you didn't tell me when your birthday was. Unless you don't want to tell me! (laughs)

TI: My birthday is June 17, 1926.

LN: Okay, 1926.

LN: Also, what generation are you?

TI: I'm the second generation.

LN: So, you're Nisei?

TI: Yes.

LN: Okay.

TI: Actually, I look like Issei. (laughs)

LN: (laughs) So, both of your parents were born in Japan, then?

TI: Yes. They were from Kanagawa. Kanagawa-ken.

LN: So, were they married before they came here?

TI: No.

LN: They married here?

TI: Actually, I think they got married in Hawaii.

LN: Oh? Did they go to Hawaii first?

TI: Yeah, they lives in Hawaii for a short time, and then they came to California. I think it was a picture marriage.

LN: Yeah, okay.

TI: I'm sure it was.

LN: So, your mother was a picture bride? But, you're not 100 percent sure?

TI: No, they are picture bride.

LN: Okay. Going back, you said that one of your sisters had passed away?

TI: Yeah.

LN: Is that what you had said?

TI: The oldest one drowned.

LN: Molly?

TI: Before Molly, but I don't remember her name, though.

LN: Oh, it was before Molly?

TI: Yeah.

LN: Okay, before Molly.

TI: In those days, a husband and wife both had to work out the field, so, even if there were little two-year-olds running around, they were supposed to be around their mother. [But], they'll drift away, and somehow the child fell in a ditch and drowned, the oldest one passed away that way.

LN: Was that in California?

TI: Yes, the same place.

LN: So, all of the siblings were born in California?

TI: Right.

LN: Okay. So, your parents were married when they came to California but were married in Hawaii, and all of you were born in California?

TI: Right.

LN: Do you remember when they came to California?

TI: I don't remember.

LN: Okay. So, you were talking about the Salvation Army. How old were you when you went to the Salvation Army?

TI: I was about nine years old.

LN: About nine years old, okay. And then, do you remember, how did your father tell you—what did he say to you about going to the orphanage?

TI: Well, it wasn't a matter of saying, "Oh, you're going to an orphanage." The welfare [people] said that he wasn't able to handle us, to take care of us, so the welfare sent us to the San Francisco orphanage at that time.

LN: So, it wasn't your dad's decision? He did not just all of a sudden say that he wanted to put his children in an orphanage.

TI: Not directly.

[00:09:00]

LN: So, did he approach the welfare people or the welfare people come—or you don't know?

TI: No, I don't know.

LN: Okay.

TI: The main thing was he just couldn't take care of us by himself, be a mother and a father at the same time. Plus, we were too young.

LN: You didn't have any other relatives to help take care of you or anything like that?

TI: No, we don't have any relatives in the United States.

LN: Your parents were the only ones in the United States?

TI: Uh-huh. I think he was a rebel. He was the oldest but—usually the oldest in Japan stays with the family, but he didn't. They get the property. He got it anyway, but that's why I say he must have just say, "Hey, I want to go adventure," so he took off.

LN: And then, when you went to the Salvation Army, was your father still living in California? Was he still having his restaurant?

TI: No. After that, he was sick, too, so he wanted to go back to Japan. They asked us if we wanted to go back to Japan with him. We said no, we didn't want to because we had nothing in Japan, so we stayed in the orphanage.

LN: And that was 1935?

TI: No, this was about '39, '40. About three, four years afterwards.

LN: Okay. So, he didn't go back to Japan until after 1939 or 1940?

TI: Yeah.

LN: Okay, but you and your siblings were already at the Salvation Army in 1935?

TI: Yeah, right.

LN: So, in-between that time, when your father was still in California, did he come visit you? Did you have any contact with him at all?

TI: Very little, very little. Plus, it wasn't easy. He was kind of a hard man, tough man, so that's, I think, one of the reasons that we did not want to go, too. Our memory with him was not as great as it should be, father-and-son type of deal. So, I think that was one of the reasons we did not care too much.

LN: Okay. I'm sorry, what year did your mother pass away?

TI: Uh, 1933, '34, somewhere around there, about two years before we went to the orphanage.

LN: Was that hard? Were you close to your mother? Were you closer to your mother than your father?

TI: We loved our mother more than we did our father because our father was too strong. He was kind of heavy. My mother was sweet. So, when you talk about my mother, I kind of miss her. It is like I never had a mother cause too short of a time, so I can't picture—even this day, memory is not there. I just can't look at [someone and say], "Oh, she looks like my mother." So, the closest mother to me was my wife's mother because she stayed with us for a long time. It kind of hurts when I see people that is not nice to their mothers, you know, they don't treat their mothers nice. It hurts me. I don't like it because I missed out, and they have theirs. I wish my father was a little better. It could have helped, too.

LN: Is your father still alive, right now?

TI: No, he passed away. I think he passed away around '47.

LN: So, right after the war?

TI: Yeah, after the war. Just about after the war.

LN: And while he was in Japan, you really didn't have any contact back and forth?

TI: No. I just went to Japan one time with my wife, and we went to the family cemetery.

LN: The area where he came from?

TI: Yeah, the home that they lived in. You know, those oranges, those—

LN: They're small oranges?

TI: Yeah. That is what they used to grow.

LN: In Japan?

TI: Um-hm.

LN: So, he went back and became a farmer or—

TI: Well, he took over the farm because—

[recording paused]

LN: Okay, we were talking about your father being a farmer, kind of farming the land.

TI: Yeah, orchard! Actually, it's an orchard. God, I can't even think of the word. Nectarine!

LN: Oh, okay. Nectarines!

TI: About twenty acre property. It's between Yokohama and Fujiyama. Yokohama is in Kanagawa, just like the capital. You heard of Odawara? It's like Chicago where all the trains come in and they spill over here and there, so heavy on the train traffic there.

LN: Now, you mean?

TI: Yeah.

LN: So then, your parents were farmers when they were out here, too? Did they have their own farm, do you know?

TI: In California?

LN: Yeah, in California.

TI: No, they were like migrant workers, just always working on the farm. They have a little shack they live in, that type.

LN: But primarily, in the Northern California area?

TI: Northern and Southern California. Well, Visalia was Central California, Fresno, Visalia.

LN: What was your experience? Because you were born in the Stockton area and then you lived in Visalia, also, which was Central California—how does your experience differ? How are they similar in between the two areas?

TI: I don't recall Stockton at all because, after I was born, a little after that we left, so I was just an infant when we left. And then, they moved to Exeter, which is an outskirts of Visalia. The only thing I remember there was taking lunch to my father in the fields with my older sister. I can't remember the islands at all. And then, after that, we moved to Visalia, and they started the restaurant, the Japanese restaurant. Then Mother passed away, and then we went to the orphanage.

LN: During this time, then you would help out with your family at the restaurant?

TI: Very little. I was too young.

LN: How about schooling?

TI: We had a hard time in school because our folks only spoke Japanese, and they didn't want us to speak English at home because they didn't understand what we were talking about. It was worse for us because we only spoke Japanese at home, and then we would go to school and have to speak only English. We didn't understand it, so I flunked kindergarten, I guess. And my behavior, too. That's another—(chuckles) I probably flunked both ways, you know? Like the kids nowadays, at two years old, they know their ABCs. I did not know my ABCs until at least third grade, so that was really slow, very slow. Plus, there are so many boys in our family. We used to get into trouble quite a bit. We were city boys. Visalia is a town, and the country boys would come to Japanese school on Saturdays. We used to go out there and tease them and get into trouble and have fights and stuff. We were more mischievous than studious.

LN: So, you would tease other Japanese?

TI: Yeah. On Saturdays they had the Japanese school kids from the country come out. The city people go Monday through Friday, like for one or two hours, but the country people come on Saturdays for eight hours. They'd come in the morning and leave about four o'clock. We used to go and tease them and have fights with them. We were very mischievous. We weren't sweet little boys. (laughs)

LN: Was the conflict because they were from the country?

TI: No, just mischievous little boys, that's all.

LN: So, you would go to Japanese school during the week, and you would also—

TI: *I didn't.*

LN: Oh, you didn't?

TI: No, no.

LN: But some of the Japanese children would?

TI: Yeah, right.

LN: But then, you would go to regular school?

TI: Yeah, English school only. I didn't go to Japanese school at all.

[00:19:30]

- LN: Okay. For the English school, was it mixed? Were there white children in your class as well?
- TI: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh.
- LN: Were there Hispanics in your class?
- TI: Gee, you know, I guess I was too young to—I just remember white people and Oriental people. I don't remember too much about black people or white people, Hispanics. There might have been, but very few. It wasn't very noticeable. Yeah, I don't think I remember. Plus, we did so much together—the brothers—that I guess we kind of kept to ourselves. Then, in town, the rich boys they keep to themselves. They don't want to be rubbing shoulders with the bad boys, and I don't blame them. (laughs) We depended on each other quite a bit.
- LN: And the teachers, were they mostly white? Or some of them—
- TI: I would say mostly white.
- LN: Mostly white.
- TI: I can't remember any other race.
- LN: You don't remember any Japanese?
- TI: No, no. Japanese teachers, no. Just white teachers.
- LN: And then, in the area where you lived at the time, did you live among other Japanese?
- TI: Oh, yeah, we were in a Japanese area, a Japanese community. That was the Japanese business area at the time.
- LN: Did you feel it was kind of segregated in a way, that you had to kind of stay in that community, you couldn't go out maybe where whites lived?
- TI: Only time we used to go beyond our area was to go to the movies or go play sports or go watch sports, then we'd go out of the area. We weren't scared to go to the white area. There was no problem, but basically we were around the Japanese community.
- LN: And then, do you remember any experiences where any whites or any non-Japanese, Chinese or anything—
- TI: Oh, there was a few Chinese in our area.
- LN: There were? Did you have any experiences of prejudice, or racism, or discrimination?

TI: Not so much then, no.

LN: Okay. So, moving up now to when you were in the Salvation Army, in the orphanage there, it was you and then what, four brothers and two sisters were all at the orphanage at the same time?

TI: Right, um-hm.

LN: And at the orphanage, did they separate the boys from the girls?

TI: Right. They did that, so we didn't see the sisters too often because the girls did their things and the boys did their things. Sometimes we would see them at the dining room or out—there was a play area where we'd play with tennis balls or something like that. They might come out then. You're not restricted in that area, but we were not allowed to go in the girl's area. They divided that, so we didn't see the sisters too often.

Then, at the orphanage, once you're out of high school or you are eighteen years old, you move out. A lot of the girls went to do housekeeping jobs or something like that, unless they had relatives to go to or something like that. My sister did that. She went and did housework in minimum wages—less than minimum wages, actually. You'd get room and board. But, I think it helped her by being there because she learned English. She learned to cook, bake, and those things, so it kind of helped her out that way. But financially, you're always broke.

LN: Okay, so out of all of you, you only had one sister that turned eighteen and left the orphanage? Or how many—

TI: No, my brother went out, too.

LN: So, one sister and one brother?

TI: Yes.

LN: What did your brother end up doing?

TI: Oh, he went to a cannery in Alaska. He did farm work, you know, farm labor work. He did his cleaning. I guess, at that time, it would be called laundry work, plus they had cleaning, pressing, and that kind of stuff, kind of manual labor-type jobs. Then, one of my brothers—if you don't behave yourself, they'd send you to the county where you came from, and then they would place you into some foster home or something like that. Kiyoshi—the second brother, the second oldest brother—he left, and he went to like a foster home where they had a grape winery. He stayed with an Issei couple there, so, when the war broke out, he went to Amache. When he was old enough, he went and volunteered for the 442nd.

LN: So, he was not interned?

- TI: He was interned at Amache. People from Livingston, right around central California, were in Amache. But, you know, in camp you can't say that all the people are from Manzanar or Los Angeles. You can't make that kind of statement because some were from other cities. I don't know how they did it, but they did. Like my wife, she went to Heart Mountain, Wyoming, and she's an L.A. girl.
- TI: And your wife is from the L.A. area?
- LN: Yeah, she's downtown area, from Little Tokyo.
- LN: What happened? Did your brother do something then that he got him kicked out of the Salvation Army?
- TI: Yeah, because they weren't quite behaving themselves, so they figured they'd send him back to the county. And the county decides what they're going to do.
- LN: Do you know what he did that got him kicked out? Or are you not really sure?
- TI: No. Well, you see, actually what it was, there's two brothers. The oldest one was going to be kicked out, so, Rub [Kiyoshi], the second one, he said, "Well, if he's going, I want to go, too." When they would go to the county, then older one, they split them up. The older one was sent to in an orphanage home Salvation Army but it was *hakujins* and other races. It was not a *nihonjin* orphanage.
- LN: So, the Salvation Army that you were at, it was all Japanese?
- TI: Yeah, 98 percent or 99 percent.
- LN: Who were the other 1 or 2 percent?
- TI: Oh, they'd be *hapa*, mixed race.
- LN: So, the *hapas* that were there at the time that you were there, what were they, half-Japanese and half-white—
- TI: *Hakujin*, usually.
- LN: Okay, white. When your sister left and then with your two brothers gone, did you keep in contact with them at all?
- TI: Well, I saw the brother—gee it was so many years before he went overseas, he came on a furlough and he come to visit us.
- LN: While you were in camp?

- TI: When I was in Manzanar. Yeah, because he was going to go overseas, he had a furlough.
- LN: That's Kiyoshi we are talking about?
- TI: Kiyoshi. And then, we didn't see him until I got discharged. I got discharged later in '47. He got discharged in '45.
- LN: And your sister? The one that had left the Salvation Army and she was doing the housekeeping, did you see her?
- TI: Oh, yeah. They, even my brother, they eventually came to Manzanar. They went to Santa Anita, the racetrack. They were there for a while, and then I guess they said, Hey, my brothers are in Manzanar. So, they allowed them to go to Manzanar.
- LN: Okay, and the sister was Molly? The oldest?
- TI: Molly and Sam. They were both able to go to Manzanar. So, when they got a section in the barrack, Tak, he eventually wanted to get out, so he went and lived with the two. So, the three of them moved.
- LN: So, they weren't in the Children's Village. They had a regular barrack at Manzanar?
- TI: Yeah, right. Sam and Molly. Tak *was* in the Village. He was in the pictures, but afterwards he left.
- LN: Okay. At the time that you were at the Salvation Army orphanage, culturally, how Japanese would you consider yourself, in terms of how much Japanese you spoke? The customs?
- [00:30:00]
- TI: Ah, well, actually, we knew how to speak very little English. When we went to the Salvation Army, they only spoke mostly English, except for the oldest Issei workers who were there. We were able to converse with them. Eventually, we started moving away from the Japanese language because all our playmates speak English, so we started speaking English.
- LN: So, in terms of the staff at the Salvation Army orphanage were they—
- TI: There were a lot of Issei workers there, too.
- LN: Were they all Japanese? Or were any of them white?
- TI: In the beginning, when I went in '35, I think it was 100 percent Japanese operation. Eventually, the older staff passed away; then they had *hakujins* come in.

LN: Did you consider yourself close to your siblings at the time?

TI: Oh, yes.

LN: And I realize you were only about nine years old or so, at your oldest at the Salvation Army orphanage, but did you have any dreams or aspirations? Do you remember wanting to be a doctor or something when you grew up?

TI: No, we had no dream—at least I didn't have any dreams. The only thing is sometimes I wished I was adopted because it's nice to be able to have change in your pocket, it's nice to have a bedroom of your own, and that kind of stuff. I used to see some people getting adopted or taken in by some other people. I actually wished that, but I didn't want to leave my brothers and sisters either.

LN: So, you wanted to be all adopted?

TI: Yeah, but it was impossible.

LN: The Shonien orphanage, they had adoption inspections. They would have days when couples would come in and view the orphans. Would you have those at the Salvation Army orphanage?

TI: No, I don't remember anything like that. The only thing they could have done is, say they pick on me and say, Hey, come on to the place. So, they dress them up probably and then take them and then try to impress those people. But we don't know about it. Nobody ever came to us, "Oh, somebody is trying to adopt you." You know? We never hear that. They would tell us if someone had to go, but I never heard it.

LN: While you were at the Salvation Army orphanage, did you have school while you were there?

TI: They had Japanese school, too. But I kept doing the book \_\_\_\_\_(inaudible) (laughs) because I didn't want to learn.

LN: Would you have school, actually, at the orphanage, or would you leave the orphanage—

TI: For Japanese school?

LN: No, for regular school.

TI: Oh, yes. We went to public school all the way through—do you remember I told you that I went to high school and junior high and grammar school at the same time?

LN: Oh, that's right. Go ahead and say the story, so we have it on tape.

TI: Okay. In 1941, in those days, there were winter graduates and summer graduates. I was a midterm, which was a winter graduate. When the war broke out, I was in junior high school in San Francisco. I was in the eighth grade, just about to go into ninth grade. When the war broke out, this orphanage in the city sent us to the country, to a Salvation Army orphanage near Healdsburg orphanage called Lytton. So, when I went there, I had to go back to grammar school because I was an eighth grader, and, in the country, they only had grammar school and high school. I should go into the ninth grade. And they said, You're right. They let me go to high school. They checked my records, and so I went to high school. Eventually, about a month later, they said, You're going back to the same orphanage you came from in San Francisco. So, I went back to junior high school again because junior high school is from the seventh to the ninth grade, and then we stayed there until school was out in June 1942. Then we went to Manzanar.

LN: So, you were saying that after the Salvation Army, you went to another orphanage in the country, and then you went back to the Salvation Army orphanage? Do you remember the name of the other orphanage?

TI: Lytton.

LN: Lytton. Okay, is that—

TI: The closest town is called Healdsburg.

LN: Okay. And why they move you?

TI: I don't know. I can't understand because they only sent some of us, and some of them still stayed there. So, it didn't make sense at all.

LN: Were any of your brothers and sisters, did they moved with you?

TI: Yeah.

LN: All of them, or not all of them?

TI: All my brothers and sisters went to—

LN: To the Lytton orphanage.

TI: Yeah, right.

LN: And then, did all of you end up going back to the Salvation Army as well?

TI: Right. Not only our family; some other families went, too. They went there [Lytton] and came back. But there were other families who still in stayed in the San Francisco Salvation Army; they didn't move.

LN: And you have no idea why?

TI: No, it didn't make sense at all. It made it difficult for us because now we were the minority over there because there was a mixture of other children there. Actually, that home was not really an orphanage home. It was kind of like the little bad boys, you know? They were little mischievous, the ones that were sent over there.

LN: Did you do something?

TI: No. In our case, it wasn't. They just moved us out. Of course, I can't say for everybody, but I know that by talking to them they had problems at home.

LN: What year was it that you went to Lytton, do you recall? Was it 1940?

TI: It was 1941, December, a little after Christmas, actually. Between Christmas and New Year's Eve, we left.

LN: So, it was already after Pearl Harbor?

TI: Pearl Harbor was December seventh, so within three weeks, we were moved out.

LN: And then, you went back to the Salvation Army when? Do you remember?

TI: The end of March or the first part of April.

LN: Of '42?

TI: Um-hm.

LN: Do you think the Pearl Harbor incident is the reason why they moved you back to the Salvation Army? Because you were saying—okay, at Lytton—

TI: No, no, no. When Pearl Harbor happened, December seventh, a little after Christmas, they sent us to Lytton. I stayed there for part of December, January, February, and March, and then we came back to San Francisco again.

LN: Okay, and the Lytton orphanage was—you were the minority? Japanese were the minority there?

TI: Yes.

LN: And so, it was mostly what, whites?

TI: Mexicans. That's when I learned about Mexicans. Whites, Mexicans, and blacks.

LN: Oh, so there were blacks there as well?

- TI: Not as much, but the majority was whites and Mexicans. Then the minority was black, and then we were next. Because there was enough of us going there so, compared to blacks, there was more Oriental, which is us.
- LN: Right. So, were there conflicts between the groups? How did they receive you?
- TI: We had more conflicts with the Mexicans, *Latin people*, because we don't know if they are Mexicans, could be. But, we had more conflict with the Latins than the other race.
- LN: Can you remember any specific incidents or name calling maybe? Was there name-calling?
- TI: Well, we used to fight. We fought each other.
- LN: Physically, you mean?
- [00:40:00]
- TI: Yeah, because we wanted to protect ourselves. We were like the intruders because they had been there, so they wanted to cover their territory. That's what happened there. Actually, it's slightly racial, but it was a man-to-man thing, so it wasn't so bad. It was not a whole Mexicans fighting Oriental. It wasn't that way. It was individuals fighting, so I wouldn't call it a real racial thing. But it is slightly because we were the minority and that kind of stuff, too. It's hard to explain, I guess, but you know it without explaining it. I mean, you feel it.
- But, there were some good points about the place. They used to give us an allowance if you did a job, so we used to take care of chickens. Every day, we'd go there and get the eggs and feed them twice a day, morning and evening, and pick up eggs. If we do that, we used to get something like seventy cents a week.
- LN: How would you send it? Could you go out anywhere?
- TI: We used to go to school, and then, at the home, there was a place that you could buy things, too. When I went to high school, there was a cafeteria and those stuff.
- LN: So, when you were in high school and junior high, were you the minority as well? Were there a lot of other Japanese there?
- TI: No, I don't remember any Japanese at all.
- LN: It was mostly whites?
- TI: By then, most of the Japanese were out of California anyway, so it would be whites and the kids from the orphanage going there, a lot. When I say *a lot*, it's just whoever when to high school at that time.

LN: Okay. So, you were at the Salvation Army orphanage, when the Pearl Harbor attack happened?

TI: Right.

LN: How and when did you learn about Pearl Harbor?

TI: That same day.

LN: And how did you find out?

TI: Through the radio.

LN: So, at the orphanage you had a radio that everyone shared?

TI: Yes, right. That's all we used to listen to, radios, the "Lone Ranger" and all that. I used to work for a short time delivering a Japanese paper.

LN: While you were at the Salvation Army Orphanage?

TI: Yes. That was maybe for three or four months. I used to carry the paper and deliver it, like the *Rafu Shimpo*. If you delivered so many, you got paid so much. I forgot how much it was a month. We used to get monthly paid. When the war broke out, the next day I went there. Pearl Harbor was on a Sunday, so Monday I went to the newspaper to see if I could keep working because I wanted the money they owed me, but it was boarded up already. We couldn't get in, so that was it.

LN: In terms of the orphanage, you could do what you wanted, right? You could go to school, and then you could get a job? You weren't confined?

TI: No, this was the tail end of it because the Caucasians started taking over it. Before then, when the Japanese were running it, they didn't want us to go running around doing things like that, like they think that we were kind of begging, see? And then, the Japanese community would say, "Well, why are these kids doing out there when we're supporting them?" They were donating money to the orphanage, and it looked like we were running around doing this kind of stuff. I think that's one of the reasons that they didn't want us to do it. Later on, when the heads passed away and left, the Caucasians took over. Then they got lenient. They started giving a little amounts, like fifty—

LN: Do you mean they took over the orphanage?

TI: Yes, so it was a Caucasian idea of doing things. We went to work, and they didn't mind.

[00:44:00; recording paused]

LN: So, when you heard on the radio about the Pearl Harbor attack, what was your reaction? What was the reaction of the other people around you?

TI: We really didn't like it because we knew what the problem is now going to be. We were going to be called Japs, and it came out that way, too. The Chinese right away put a badge on or a pin saying, I'm Chinese. There's no way we're going to put our name or *Chinese* on to protect ourselves. If they wanted to fight, we were going to fight. There was name-calling. What a lot of the *hakujins* would do is, when you walked by or passed them up, there might be four or five of them and one would say, "Jap," or something. You can't fight four of them, so you just keep walking. That's the kind of sneaky stuff they were doing to hurt our feelings. We weren't feeling good either because now, with the Japanese fighting the United States, it was not a good deal for us. From there, everything was looking behind your shoulders. I didn't think it was too many friends, too, you know? Like guys in sports, or something like that, didn't come say, "Hey, hey, I know you're American, and I'm with you." Instead, a lot of them kind of shied away from the Japanese.

LN: So kind of ignoring you?

TI: They'd kind of drift away from you. That's why you felt uncomfortable. They didn't say that, but they don't have to.

LN: Did you have any white friends before Pearl Harbor attack?

TI: Not real good, close friends. I think the only friend I remember other than Japanese was one colored guy. Even the Issei in the Japanese community weren't so fond of orphanage kids. I think they didn't care for their children to associate with us because they would never come to our orphanage or say, I want to come and see Tamo. He's my friend. They might see us, but then they don't come in and visit us. I think that's why the orphanage kids were pretty close to each other. It was like, if you fight him, you're fighting me, too, because he's my brother. It was that kind of attitude.

LN: So, even before the war, can you remember prejudice from the Japanese community against the orphans? You can remember that?

TI: Oh, yeah, I felt that. You know, at school, they'll play with you, but that's all. They'd never say, Hey, Tamo, why don't you come over my house? Hey, have some cookies at my place or something. We'd be happy to go get cookies at their house, you know? (chuckles) But, I can't remember anyone inviting me, or I don't remember anybody else being invited to their home, to their classmates' home. Japanese were prejudice, too. That's why I was always hoping my kids didn't feel that way. It doesn't mean I'm not prejudice. I'm prejudice, too. (chuckles) But, I try to set a little example of, hey, you know we're all human beings. You like a person because he's a good person; you don't like him because he's Japanese, you know? That's the way I look at it. So, we're kind of intermingling. When I started out, our kids all got to marry Japanese, but at the end, not all got married to Japanese.

It didn't matter because I think she's one of the better—(laughs) not better. They are all to me very nice. I don't have any hatred, you know? Because sometime—especially woman—they're conniving, kind of instigate, telling the son, “Hey, hey, this is not right,” if they are favoring someone and that kind of stuff. They know I can't stand that kind of stuff. I like every one of them and this baloney that I favor her and not her and that kind of stuff, I don't feel that way, so I don't want to hear that kind of talk, you know? So, it's been pretty good. Everybody's a human being. You could kind of feel it. Hey, somebody is crying about something, and then you just say what you want to say. “It's not true. You might feel that way. It's all right you feeling that way, but it isn't true.” So, they could talk to me, and I could talk to them, too. Now, they tell me off anyway. (laughs) You know? I used to be the boss. Father is not boss anymore. Kids are getting too old. Thirty-something, forty-something, and now they tell you. (laughs)

LN: Okay, in terms of the Pearl Harbor attack, do you remember, were you angry? Were you upset? Were you scared?

TI: Not so much scared. I was disappointed that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor not knowing what really happen. They caused a lot of problems for us, you know? Me personally, I think it hurt me because life changed completely, maybe to the better, I don't know.

LN: So, in terms to your loyalty, did you see yourself as one 100 percent American, or were you torn in a way because your ancestry was Japanese?

TI: Well, I kind of felt bad about it but there was no on that day says, “Okay, you got a choice to fight.” We are talking about December. “Would you fight for the United States, or would you fight for Japan?” It was automatically for the United States. But, when they send the people to relocation—us guys it wasn't so bad, they didn't take nothing from us because orphanage, we had nothing. But, when I hear about what happened to all these other people, I say, “Geez, why didn't they send Germans into camps? Or the Italians, you know?” But they didn't do that. They just pick on Japanese. That makes no sense at all.

And then, they say the thing about, We were thinking about your safety, this and that. So, you go to camp, and they got barbwire, which is all right. But, when you have the guards facing the machine gun in the side of the camp—now they have the machine gun facing the other way then I believe it. But when it's facing towards us, now you are talking like the Indians say, double talk, you know?

[00:52:00]

LN: In terms of the Executive Order 9066—okay, that was in February of 1942, so you would have been at Lytton at the time.

TI: Yeah, um-hm.

- LN: Were you affected by the curfew being in Lytton?
- TI: No, because we were curfewed from orphanage anyway. They just tell you, you can't go anyplace without permission.
- LN: So, you would have a curfew at the orphanage? You could on and play and stuff, but you would have to be in at a certain time.
- TI: Yes, right.
- LN: Do you remember how late that was?
- TI: By nine o'clock. When you go to high school, by nine o'clock you should be back.
- LN: Okay, so it depends on your age?
- TI: Yeah.
- LN: So when you went back to the Salvation Army orphanage—
- TI: Remember now, we're in the country, so you can't walk into town. There's no town close to walk to, you know? You started in the afternoon, by the time you eat, you have to come back. You're talking about at least twenty, twenty-five miles.
- LN: So, when you went back to the Salvation Army orphanage, you are saying in March, April, around that time, of '42, you would have been affected by the curfew, the Executive Order 9066?
- TI: Yeah, even at the orphanage we didn't stay out late anyway, so we didn't have to worry about that.
- LN: Do you remember how you felt when you found out about the executive order?
- TI: I really didn't know until they told us we have to evacuate to Manzanar.
- LN: Oh, you didn't know.
- TI: It's like we were in a different world. We are in a small world of our own. We were confined. We didn't know our neighbors were leaving.
- LN: Okay, being in Lytton—you were in Lytton after Pearl Harbor, and it was mixed, whites and Mexicans and blacks, you were saying—I would think that that would make it even harder, not just that you are Japanese but harder than now in a way you are associated with Japan because—
- TI: Yeah, yeah.

LN: Do you remember any incidents regarding that? Or any problems?

TI: If there was, I really can't remember. I think when we were in Lytton, basically, it was a child trying to survive. Not racial-wise, it's just your age surviving at that time. I can't remember too much. There probably was. You know, those small towns are not the healthiest place, so I can't remember if you say, "Did you mingle with anybody in the high school?" But if I mingled, I only mingled with the orphanage kids because they would see me like their half-brothers because no matter what color they are, when we get on the bus, we are going to the same place, same barrack and street. Cottages, they called them cottages in those days.

LN: So, you would feel that even among the white orphans then? Kind of a brotherhood?

TI: Oh, yeah. Any orphanage kids is still part of me because we belong to the same home. I would say, even at that time, if I was having trouble at school, the orphanage kids would help me out, too, because if they pick on me, they are actually picking on them, too. That's the way it feels.

LN: So, how did learn about own evacuation? At the Salvation Army—okay, you went in June to Manzanar, right? When did you find out?

TI: I really don't know. That's a tough one. I know that we were leaving because a lot of people, the Isseis, they were disappearing, leaving too. We know that eventually we would be leaving. I guess they must have mentioned it because eventually became *hakujins* taking over the whole orphanage. I guess we were too young—it's just—or I didn't think about it, maybe. Like Mary<sup>2</sup> remembers all these little details. Maybe woman thinks about details, but I don't. At least I didn't, so those things were not important for me to remember. Now, if you and I fought, then I'll remember that. (laughs) Certain things like that I really can't remember.

LN: So you can't remember when you found out or how?

TI: No.

LN: But, you kind of knew for yourself, that you too would be evacuating. How did you feel about that? I mean, were you excited or scared—

TI: I think I was more excited because we are going somewhere else. We are not going to stay here anymore; we are going somewhere new. And then, we got in the bus. We got in the train. You are still a young person so [it's] kind of a big deal, not knowing that you're really getting kicked out of San Francisco at that time. When we got into Manzanar, then there was more orphanage kids from different areas, so we had to get to know them. Now, there is another family you are getting together with.

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<sup>2</sup> Mary Matsuno Miya, O.H. 2489, Center for Oral and Public History.

LN: How old were you when—in June of 1942?

TI: Fifteen.

LN: Did you know that the place that you were going to was an internment camp?

[00:59:00]

TI: No, I did not know that. Yeah, we did not know that. We know we were going to another orphanage—

LN: So, you just looked at it in terms of going to another orphanage? That's the way you looked at it?

TI: Not as internment.

LN: So, you did not envision all these other Japanese that were not orphans? And you did not envision this camp at all? You just thought, We are going to another orphanage?

TI: But, when you come into camp and you see all the military there, the fences, barbed wire, now (laughs) you know you're coming into—they call it a relocation camp? That's a bunch of baloney to me. How anybody can mention it that way. It's a concentration camp. You're detained until they make their decision. It wasn't right, all along. You know, eventually you start seeing things. Before you're just a kid playing and trying to survive. Now, this is becoming to be emotional. We're getting thrown in camp, and I did not feel hurt too much for myself because I didn't lose anything. But these other people, when I hear they lost their whole house, all their goodies and everything, you know, personal belongings, kimonos, and all kinds of stuff. You know? You can't buy that every day. So, I know they must have been really hurt, and I felt for them, more than myself. I had nothing to lose.

LN: Did you feel that way at the time?

TI: No, little at that time, little at the time. You can't grasp that in one day. It takes time. That's why they have those people that said, "No, no."

LN: The loyalty—

TI: The reunion—did you hear about that?

LN: Oh, the reunion. No.

TI: Just recently, the people that said, "No, no," at a reunion, and they said a lot of Nisei didn't like it. To me, if I was older, maybe if I was in my twenties, and they took my house away or something like that and then they want me to go join the Army to take the United States, I probably would have said, "No." I don't feel like somebody is

- going to say, You're not American now. Now the Americans go to take your property and everything and destroy your life, and then say, "Now go and serve the country." And then the Nisei telling me that I'm wrong because I said, "No, no." No, to me *they're* wrong because this is the way I feel. He doesn't live my life, so he doesn't really know. That person doesn't know. Maybe they had it harder. They're so loyal to the government. That's all right, too. *That's his business!* But to tell me I should, you know?
- LN: What was your first impression of Manzanar? Okay, you went on a bus from San Francisco?
- TI: On a train.
- LN: And then on a train.
- TI: And then a bus, again.
- LN: So, you went bus, train, and then a bus?
- TI: Yeah.
- LN: Is that right?
- TI: Into camp, yeah.
- LN: Okay, while you were on the buses and the trains, you couldn't look out? Were the windows closed and they had the shades down?
- TI: Yeah, you didn't know where you were going. It was already military, so you—
- LN: So, did you already know at that time?
- TI: No.
- LN: Did you have a feeling of something is wrong or something is going on? You didn't feel that way yet? You didn't know?
- TI: It is hard for me to even say how I felt in that train, but I know we were going somewhere—new adventures. That's what I felt. Yeah, I can't remember it any other way.
- LN: Because weren't there any military there?
- TI: Oh, yeah, the military was with us.
- LN: And you didn't have that feeling of—

- TI: Well, see, I think one of the reasons, too, is they know they had orphanage kids—at least, that's what I felt—we are not going to be going out to sabotage anything. The only thing they might say, You can't go from this car to the next one. You just stay here and go to the bathroom. And that's it, Be a good little boy, and that's all you can remember anyways, see. Because I did not see them bullying anybody or anything like that. They have other adults in there to protect the orphanage kids, too, from the military, if there was any. So, I didn't see no bad thing happening in-between or hearing about anything happening.
- LN: So, when you were on the bus and the train and the bus again, it was all just kids from the orphanage?
- TI: Yeah. Um-hm.
- LN: And then, all your brothers and sisters from the Salvation Army orphanage were with you at that time?
- TI: The ones that were in there.
- LN: Right, the ones that were in there. Your sister—
- TI: My youngest sister and two brothers. Counting myself, there were four of us because three was not—
- LN: Right, right. The other two were already in Manzanar at that time, right? Because you arrived in June, right?
- TI: Geez, I think they came a little after. See, they were in Santa Anita. I guess they knew where we were going, so they asked to be sent to Manzanar. The other brother went straight to Amache because he was living with the family already. It's like being adopted, but he wasn't.
- LN: Is Amache in California?
- TI: Colorado.
- LN: It's in Colorado, okay. In terms of the name of Children's Village, do you have any idea how that name came about? Who chose that name or anything? Do you have any idea about that?
- TI: I have no idea.
- LN: But the name was already there, right? When you arrived?

- TI: Everybody understand it was Children's Village. Only one that might know is Lillian Matsumoto.<sup>3</sup> You should keep that question for her. I'm sure as soon as he sends me that letter, I'm going to make copies and send to each one of these people that I think you might make contact with, especially the ones that came to the reunion. I'll give you names that will know about Children's Village, will know about Shonien, too. Only people that I cannot probably give you information is the ones that went to Maryknoll because none of them came to the reunion.
- LN: Oh, really? None of them?
- TI: Yeah, which was very little, anyway.
- LN: Weren't there only seven or something from Maryknoll?
- TI: Yeah.
- LN: So, you don't know anything about the name of Children's Village?
- TI: No.
- LN: Do you think that maybe they chose the name, Children's Village—I mean, it's euphemistic, if you hear the name Children's Village, you wouldn't think of an orphanage at all. Do you think maybe the name was chosen so that the other internees maybe would not be as prejudiced against the orphans? You know have a better picture or—
- TI: Instead of saying orphanage.
- LN: Right. Exactly because they know that maybe that there is already internal prejudice maybe by giving a nicer name that might help the situation or—I mean, I'm just asking you to speculate.
- TI: Yeah, I know what you're saying. It's like saying, block 24, or certain block. Well, see, we didn't have a block, so I guess we have to call it something. So, they probably said, Hey, Children's Village might be a nice name. It a little area for the children. I really couldn't say why they—Matsumoto might know.
- LN: Okay. What was your reaction—first of all, Manzanar, the barbwire, and the guards and everything, you knew—
- TI: I was excited, actually.
- LN: You were still excited? (laughs)

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<sup>3</sup> Lillian Matsumoto, O.H. 2492, Center for Oral and Public History.

- TI: You see all Japanese, you know? And I'm more used to all Japanese. My life was around Japanese. Even now, my life is—I came and bought a home where there were Japanese people. I can't see living anywhere else. That's where I felt comfortable.
- LN: So, you weren't really scared? Initially, when you arrived at Manzanar, you were not scared?
- TI: No, because they have the same skin that I have, so I must be home.
- LN: Okay. So how about when you first saw the Children's Village area? What was your reaction? How did you feel about it?
- TI: Oh, the first one I saw was Takatow's<sup>4</sup> older brother [Isa]. He's sitting at the porch like this. (folds arms across chest) "Oh, here comes more orphaned kids and we're getting out." "Geez, I don't think I could beat him." (laughs) You know, that kind of thing. And then, we looked at the place. It's not bad, you know? Then we see across the street. Their barracks are poorly constructed compare to ours. It's like ours is A, and theirs like a D.
- LN: How did that make you feel at the time?
- TI: It was nice because when the wind blew the dust went everywhere—my brothers and sisters lived in the barracks—and then they started improving it so that the dust don't go in, and it helped a little more. But, our place was nice.
- [01:10:33]
- LN: I mean, because you could notice your barracks were nicer than the other internees, did you feel ashamed or embraced? Or did it make you feel lucky?
- TI: Oh, lucky, yeah. I would say that we felt we were taken care of much better than they were. We had the best cooks. There were Clifton's chef, so we ate good food. They got the same food that we did, but the preparation is much better.
- LN: Did you get enough food, or were you hungry?
- TI: Oh, yeah. You get enough food, but at our age, at that time, you're always hungry. So, if you find something, you were ready to—like they say—when we went to spend—"Not quality, quantity." (laughs)
- LN: (laughs) So, also, in addition to feeling lucky, did you maybe in a way feel special because, as we were saying before, orphans were looked down on in some ways, and then here, you come into a situation where you have something better than the other people. Did it make you feel more special?

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<sup>4</sup> Takato Matsumo, O.H. 2339, Center for Oral and Public History.

- TI: Well, you know, it's like if you go to Denny's all the time, you like to try something else, right? No matter what it is. Well, a lot of times I wanted to go to the other meal places to eat, but every meal they count the kids to make sure we were there. Of course, we could somewhere else, if we know where to go, but a lot of time they protect themselves, too. They don't want strangers coming in their block to eat because then you are taking away their food from somebody. They were kind of careful about that. I know my brothers, they used to drift over here and there because they had friends over there, so they go with their friends. You know? The block, they have a friend there so they go in there to eat. Nobody is going to say nothing because then they have to fight them, anyway.
- LN: When you first got to Manzanar, also then, did they do a health check—you had a physical?
- TI: Oh, yeah. They checked us out.
- LN: Was that in the hospital? Do you remember where it was done?
- TI: No, at the home. They just had the doctor—
- LN: You mean in the Children's Village?
- TI: Yeah, right. They had what they call a nursery room. That was actually the social hall they had. It's not that big. The doctor would come in. They don't do a complete examination, but a quickie type of check to see if we were in good health.
- LN: When you arrived there, you already said that at some other orphans were already there.
- TI: The other two were there already, from Maryknoll and Shonien was there. We were last.
- LN: So, do you remember how long it took? For instance, was it within a week all of the orphans came, or within—
- TI: Geez, I don't even know what day, but I'm sure it was within a week. I'm sure that they waited for all these orphanages to get out of school then we moved them.
- LN: Okay. In terms of playing and spending time with other people, did you go out and visit people in other barracks? Or would they ever come inside the Children's Village?
- TI: You see, I have a friend I golf with now. He was my classmate. He used to live close to me, so he used to play football and sports, but I don't remember him coming into the barracks. He would play outside, but I don't remember him coming inside the

- barracks, socializing. It was all outside, like sports. I can't remember anybody coming in our barracks.
- LN: You can't remember anyone at all? Any of the other kids?
- TI: I know they wouldn't have been restricted.
- LN: They would not have been restricted? So, you were kind of free to go to other people's barracks or for them to come—
- TI: We didn't, very seldom. Very seldom we went to people's barracks.
- LN: But you could, if you wanted to?
- TI: Yeah, we could but nobody ever invited us. You know, say, "Come over my place, let's have some cookies. We have some chocolate or something." Actually, if someone said, Food, we are going to be there. (laughs) I don't remember going to other people barracks.
- LN: Because you were saying this earlier, too, before the war, do you see this as a sign of prejudice, again, from the Japanese community?
- TI: Yeah, I think so. Because to me, if you're his friend then you go to their house. You don't come to your house and you don't go to their house, to me that's not a friend. It's kind of vise-versa.
- LN: When you first got to the camp, you were about fifteen years old.
- TI: Yeah.
- LN: Okay. How soon after arriving to Children's Village did it dawn on you what was actually happening? Because at first you said that you were excited and kind of looking forward to it, and then, when did it finally sink in? Or did it never sink in at the time when you were interned?
- TI: No, no, it sank in because we had a lot of Issei men working around our neighborhood, too. They made the garden pretty. They had a pond there and a little treehouse, so we used to talk to them. I used to talk to them, and they were thinking about Japan. They really thought Japan was going to win, and we kept saying to them, "You're not going to win." Pretty soon you stop talking with them, which is wrong. They believed that. So, me, I cut it down because I knew I couldn't win arguing with them knowing they had their certain, Japan is going to win. Plus, they had a hard time already, so why make it harder. Don't be a wise kid, you know? In the beginning I knew it all, but you kind of start talking to them and you get to know the person. You don't see them walking like *a man*. They're hunched-over like defeated or hurt. So then, I backed down. I had to. There's no choice.

LN: And you saw some of the Issei men?

TI: Issei men, yeah. A lot of time, in the wintertime, it is cold, so they make fire. We were near the orchards, so they pick up wood and set-up fire and keep themselves warm because that was their job. They get \$16 a month. Their job was to clean that area up. It was tough. I know a little bit about how Issei felt, and it wasn't pleasant because you couldn't see very few who felt proud and strong. They felt hurt and defeated.

LN: Did you get that feeling among the Issei women as well, or you weren't really around them enough to—

TI: Issei woman, I didn't notice it so much because they did their chores. They go to work every day. They didn't have time to be talking about who won the war, who's winning the war. They just went to do whatever job they had to do. They used to take care of the little kids, do the cleaning, that kind of stuff. The only thing I used to talk to Issei ladies about was, "How is the weather," and "how is everything?" Chitchat. But, men, I've talked to them. I feel for them.

LN: So, can you recall a certain time when you realized this wasn't an exciting trip that you were taking?

TI: Oh, yeah. There was a riot in camp, too. People got shot. And so, when the military shooting into camp—you know, this kind of stuff. I didn't see it because we were not allowed to go out there. I was able to talk to my older brothers about what happened. This guy got shot, and we know this guy who shot him. You start realizing, Hey, this is no picnic. Among themselves, the Kibeis were mad at the Nisei, and the Nisei were mad at the Kibeis. Issei have people that seemed like they were kind of catering to the white people to get their advantage. So, Kibei and Nisei would think they were spies, you know? They might have not been spies, but some of them were. You don't know which ones. So, some people knew. They keep running to the white men and telling this is happening. Pretty soon people pick it up. But, a lot of it is misunderstanding, too. Nothing comes out—what one guy thinks is not true, but he's shouting and making enough noise that pretty soon other people started to believe. It's not a fact, but he makes enough noise to make people think that. A lot of problems start happening that way.

LN: How did you find out about the riot?

TI: Oh, you heard rumble. You know it's happening, but we were not where the riot was. You know?

LN: But you could hear it as it was happening?

- TI: Oh, yeah. You could hear—so you say, “What’s happening?” Oh, you could hear the noise because that’s a lot of people making noise because there’s anger, too. The noise is anger, too.
- LN: Okay. We are taking a break now. It’s about five minutes till three.
- [01:22:30; recording paused]
- LN: It’s 3:20 p.m. on Saturday, March thirteenth, and we are starting the interview, again, with Tamo Isozaki. What was the last thing we were talking about? I can’t remember. Maybe it was the Manzanar riot. Was it the riot?
- TI: Yeah, we were talking about the riot.
- LN: Okay. When you came from the Salvation Army orphanage, three of the staff members from the—well, from what I’ve read the thesis written by Whitney, she says that three of the staff members from the Salvation Army orphanage also went to the Children’s Village. Do you recall?
- TI: No. Three of them? Only one I could remember, one from Salvation Army. It could be her husband—if you consider husband and wife then it might be. That’s all I could remember, but it doesn’t really matter, three or two.
- LN: I was going to ask you, did that help that you were familiar with that person and did it help your transition from—
- TI: We didn’t really didn’t associate—they weren’t with us. They were maybe with the Matsumotos explaining about our families, so they get to know our family, the Matsumotos. I forgot her name now. May Ichida or something like that, but she was a Salvation Army officer. And then, she came to Manzanar same time that we went.
- LN: On the bus, on the train with you?
- TI: Yeah. I think that she was giving Matsumotos all the information about each child because they know each one of the child there and their family backgrounds. But, that’s about all the people I know. Most of them come from Shonien, in Los Angeles.
- LN: In terms of, you were talking about the family information, did each child at the Children’s Village—would you have counseling with the Matsumotos or with another staff member? Would they discuss with you your case, or anything like that?
- TI: No, I don’t think that ever happened. We just survived, just you stay with the boys and the girls stay with the girls. They were old enough to stay with the boys in the older side or the younger side. So, they tell you were you’re going to sleep, and then after that we don’t really see them too often. I think the ones that needed more attention was the smaller kids. The older ones, they take care of themselves, anyhow.

- Unless they cause trouble. They didn't have trouble with the kids anyway that I know of. There was no bad boy. There was no bad girl to a point that they were smoking and causing trouble and that kind of stuff. They didn't have to send us somewhere else because we were naughty.
- LN: Okay, so you're not aware of any serious disciplinary problems or anything within the Children's Village?
- TI: No, I don't think I've seen it.
- LN: Okay. And no abuse, physical or mental or verbal from the staff members?
- TI: Staff members are strict, but I never heard of the abuse. They were stricter. They had authority, and then the kids knew who was the heavy. Boys side wasn't too much heavy stuff because the guys that came, I think they just wanted to just be—I can't use the word nice. They were able to show control without dictating, just a gentleman's way of doing things. I think they were pretty good leaders.
- LN: Can you compare for me the differences and the similarities between the Salvation Army orphanage and Children's Village? What stands-out in your mind as being the similarities and the differences?
- TI: Similarities, you have to go dinnertime, breakfast and all that. Otherwise, I think it was easier in Children's Village than Salvation Army. Physically, we took a beating at Salvation Army, whereas, Children's Village there was—I can't remember being harsh-type of—we gave a kid a spanking, and they go through the mill. You know what a mill is?
- LN: Unh-uh.
- TI: They go through each one of the guys legs they have spread apart to paddle, but it's not a heavy paddle. It's not the kind [where] the kid can't sit on his seat for a while because it's bruised. They go through the routine. It might sting a little bit but not black and blue. Like I got it in the Salvation Army, but I never seen it done in the Children's Village. No heavy beating at Children's Village that I know of. I can't speak for everything because you don't everything. I never heard of anybody saying that somebody got beaten up bad.
- LN: But, at the Salvation Army, from the staff members, you would actually physical—
- TI: The guy that was in charge of the boy, he had ways of doing things. It wasn't right.
- LN: And he was Japanese?
- TI: Yeah. Oh, yeah. That's why when we had our reunion in San Francisco—Salvation Army reunion—he wanted to come, but he wasn't invited. In fact, the whole family

was invited. His other brother and the father—the father passed away—but the brothers were never invited because memories, unhappy memories, so they didn't want him there.

LN: When was the Salvation Army reunion?

TI: Geez, how many years ago? Hey, Matsy ! Oh, god! At least ten years ago.

LN: At least ten years ago?

TI: Yeah.

LN: Sometime in the early eighties?

TI: Yeah.

LN: Do you remember the name of that man?

TI: What?

LN: That man that was in charge of the boys in the Salvation Army orphanage?

TI: Oh, the one that gave us a bad time?

LN: Right.

TI: Tadao Kamiya. He passed away, too.

LN: But, at the time of the reunion, he was alive, and he's passed away in between that time?

TI: Right.

LN: Okay. How many people show-up to that reunion? Most of the people that were invited—

TI: I think total between eighty and eighty-five, somewhere around there. That's including all the spouses.

LN: Were all of those people that were orphans, were they all interned or no? At the reunion, the ones that were invited, had they all been internees, or no?

MI: [Matsy Isozaki, wife of Tamotsu Isozaki] Eighty-four. It has all the information here, the chairman and whatever.

[01:31:00]

- TI: Why don't you let her—oh, that's the home right there.
- LN: Oh, this is the actual picture of the home?
- TI: Yeah.
- LN: Is this how it looked then? No? It looks different now?
- TI: It's the same building, but I don't know—I think Chinese consul was living there the last time I heard. That's right on Gary and Laguna.
- LN: Right now we are looking at the Salvation Army orphanage reunion—it's kind of a program from 1984.
- TI: See, she knows where everything is at. (chuckles) If you'd like, you can take that with you.
- LN: Okay, thank you. And this was handed to me by Tamo's wife, Matsy. Let's see. Okay, in terms of the Matsumotos, did you get to know them really well at the Children's Village? And how did you view them?
- TI: No, I don't say I really got to know them real well because they were responsible for the Children's Village, so anything that we went to see them, it was business. It wasn't because we wanted to hold hands, you know what I mean? Friendship—it is just strictly business. I guess they had a lot of worries about everybody else. All the burden was on them. So, he's never played baseball with us or sports. He played as an authority. You can't say they were like a father, mother to us.
- LN: So, they didn't get really involved in your activities? There wasn't much interaction with them. I mean, as authority figures, yes, but there was there any interaction just as people, as kind of role models?
- TI: Not even role models. Just authority; that's how I felt. I didn't have a chance to get to know them. I think, like you said, Taeko<sup>5</sup> and them were kind of close. They know each other.
- LN: Taeko. What's Taeko's last name?
- TI: I forgot her name. Her name right now is Nagayama, married name. I forgot. You see, age-wise, she was closer to their age anyways, so they're socializing—they must have, I'm sure they did that. We just wanted our orphanage kids. That's why I don't get too busy with—
- LN: So, they weren't really—they were physically present within the Children's Village, but did they have their own office and they would stay in their office?

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<sup>5</sup> Taeko Nagayama, O.H. 2492, Center for Oral and Public History.

- TI: Oh, they come and visit and check us out and come to the boys barracks. If it's kind of messy, they might tell the leaders. They don't tell us, they tell the leaders that they need to keep place clean. They come later on, let us know got to keep this area clean, especially where we play if we have stuff thrown all over or somebody don't make their bed or something. Because one reason too, you have to because they don't know when guest comes.
- LN: Guest meaning who?
- TI: Outsiders. Maybe from the government people or social workers or social workers to see how we are doing. Unless they know ahead of time then they notify us, too. Otherwise you don't know when some people break-in and they're there, and so they rush through the building.
- LN: So, they would come periodically and check-up on the conditions of the Children's Village?
- TI: They don't see how this was operating, you know? And then because our food is good—see, like ministers and some higher-ups, they come to Manzanar. They take us to our mess hall or dining room and eat. I say we have one of the better foods. They don't impress them by giving kid food, (laughs) instead of going to those other barracks.
- LN: How about Margaret D'Illel? Is that how you pronounce her last name? D'Illel? She was the head counselor of the welfare section at the Manzanar?
- TI: She was?
- LN: She's in the Eastern Sunday picture from 1944? She's the white woman in that picture.
- TI: She must have been the head of the Matsumotos then.
- LN: Right but you don't remember?
- TI: I've seen her, but I don't remember how she was involved. I really couldn't say that, "Oh, yeah, she's one of the ladies that's in charge." But she was a pleasant lady. As far as when I talked to her, she was pleasant. She wasn't demanding.
- LN: But, she would not interact with the children either?
- TI: No, no. She might—you know, like the little ones, her age lady is going to pick up little babies. Oh, how cute they are, but they ain't going to pick me up. Even conversing, I don't think she had time to be conversing. They might have time, but if they were going to be conversing it would be to little nursery kids. Two years old, three years old, five years old, something like that.

LN: How about any of the other white staff?

TI: They never came over to our place and socialized with us. We had music teacher, Louie Frizzel. He used to be in the movies, too. He was a friend of ours, my brother Aki and I. We used to do his report cards. We used to grade them.

LN: How old was he at that time?

TI: Oh, he was in his twenties, probably around twenty-seven. At least ten years older than me.

LN: How about in terms of facilities, how was the privacy? Did you have any?

TI: Well, the way we have it is, there's three barracks. The first barrack is the office and then a social [area] for kindergarten kids and the playroom or something and then the kitchen and the dining room. That was the first building. Second building, the middle building, was the girl's. The older girls were in the front part of the building, and then the smaller girls were in the second part of the building and then they had the infants in the back part of the building. I think you've seen—didn't you see a picture of the cribs? Then the third was the boy's, and the boys had—it was supposed to be a playroom in the front, and it eventually became a storage room. Oh, then, I forgot, in-between there's the bathroom, the shower, and the sinks. And then the smaller boys. And then in back of that there used to be laundry room where the girls and the ladies do their ironing and dry. They had those things they push out there, put your clothes put there and hang it.

[01:40:00]

LN: Clothesline?

TI: Clothesline!

LN: So, who would do your laundry? Did the boys do their own laundry, or who would do yours?

TI: The older ladies. They were hired.

LN: Oh, they were hired?

TI: Yeah.

LN: But they were Japanese?

TI: Yes.

LN: They were internees also?

- TI: They were all Japanese. That lady, the D'Illel was the only one the only *hakujin* that I've ever seen that was involved—because I didn't know that she was involved down there.
- LN: But then she's in that picture. (laughs)
- TI: I think what happened was the Matsumotos left, so she took over, something like that.
- LN: Yeah. I think there was a while a woman that took over after the Matsumotos left.
- TI: Yeah, I think she was the one. But you know, I can't remember because we really don't associate with the front office that much.
- LN: In terms of affection, you were saying that the Matsumotos didn't really interact with the orphans at the Children's Village. Was there any source to get affection, physical affection or attention or praise, or those things that a lot of children take for granted when they're growing up? Was there any source for the orphans for that?
- TI: No. Some workers, they like the cute little girls that come running to them and hugs them. They probably get to be friends with them. But, my age, who am I going to hug? And I don't need them. I don't need them to—I could live my life more or less. Go to school, if I fail, I fail. It's my own fault and nobody else's. I realize that, you know? I wish I studied more. I don't think we spent too much time thinking about being loved or being cared by somebody hugging me or that kind of stuff. We were too busy being mischievous. And sports, sports kept us busy. I think that if we didn't have sports, I think we would have been more mischievous.
- LN: What sports did you play?
- TI: Basketball, baseball, any kind of sports that kept us—that's why I never had girlfriends. (laughs) We were thinking constantly about sports. Don't get me wrong, there were girls that you see, but you don't have guts enough to say—where are you going to go in camp? Some guys know how to do it, but I couldn't. (laughs) Holding hands, I'd be embarrassed if I'm holding hands and my friends see me holding hands, so I never did. I never dated in camp because I was already senior. I don't think I even dated until I went in the Army. Almost a year after I went in the service, I started dating.
- LN: Did any of your friends in the village date?
- TI: Some of the girls had boyfriends. Not the village boyfriends, but they had the outside boyfriend.
- LN: So, the females in the village would have boyfriends that were outside the village?

- TI: Yeah. Not too many. But, the ones that had boyfriends were not boyfriends from the orphanage. I don't remember any of the guys that had girlfriends. They liked them, you know. I liked some of the girls from the orphanage, too, but that's all it was. It didn't go any further than that. I had no guts to say, "I like you." (laughs)
- LN: Since your sister and brother were in the outside barracks that weren't within the village, I mean, you had that connection that you would go over to their barracks, or did you visit them very often?
- TI: Not too often because we were too busy doing our own running around. We might walk down go visit them, but we have our baseball game or we have this, we have to do this. So not too much socializing, just talking. Me and my younger brother, Aki, the youngest brother, him and I were pretty close. We did a lot of things together, sports-wise. Whatever I did, he was with me, too, because we were kind of close in age, and he was a little better in sports than I was.
- LN: Were you closer to your siblings that were within the village than [the ones] that were outside of the village?
- TI: What was that again?
- LN: Were you closer to your siblings that were within the village rather than—
- TI: Oh, yeah. Definitely.
- LN: And then, were you closer to your brothers than your sisters, or was it about equal?
- TI: Brothers, yeah.
- LN: Do you think that's because of the fact that you were put with them and apart from your sister—
- TI: Right.
- LN: Okay.
- TI: But, we were protective of our younger sister. She has a problem, we were there saying, "What's happening?" "Who did this?" We were ready to challenge anything. But, she never come and said somebody picked on me, and we go beat them up. We didn't do it. We didn't have to because nobody ever did.
- LN: Being that you were one of the older children in the village, did you feel a sense of responsibility for the younger children there?

- TI: At the end. In fact, when I was in senior year, I got a part-time job taking care of the young kids, and they gave me \$8 a month. In those days, people who worked half a day got \$8. If they worked eight hours, they get \$16. Professionals got \$19.
- LN: How old were you at that time, when you were working part-time at the village?
- TI: Seventeen, pushing eighteen.
- LN: That was 1944?
- TI: Forty-four, yeah, the latter part of '44. Yeah, about half the part of '44. I left '44, December.
- LN: Is when you left Manzanar?
- TI: Children's Village in Manzanar.
- LN: Okay. Was there a title for your part-time job? I mean, did you have some name or something?
- TI: Well, not a title but I was in charge of the younger kids, grammar school age. When they're junior high school age, they were kind of taking care of themselves.
- LN: Was it only the boys you were in charge of?
- TI: Yeah. There was between eight and ten we were in charge of.
- LN: Do you feel that maybe having that job you were a role model for those boys? Or did you try to give them attention or affection?
- TI: I was their big brother, I was their protector, and I was their father too because I tell them when to go to sleep. Because they say eight o'clock the light goes off, eight o'clock the light goes off. You know, I am talking about five minutes or ten minutes, it doesn't matter. Around eight o'clock they'd already taken a shower and [were in] bed around eight o'clock. And then, I wake them up make sure they get ready and go to school, too.
- LN: So, who was kind of your boss?
- TI: The Matsumotos wasn't there anymore, so D'Illel was probably because Matsumotos left already.
- LN: So, you don't remember getting any orders from them, any instructions to do certain things? Did you kind of just—

- TI: Yeah, I was more or less on my own because I lived there long enough that they didn't have to tell me—
- LN: What to do.
- [01:49:00]
- TI: Yeah.
- LN: How did you get that job?
- TI: Well, there was nobody else to get cause the people that was the leaders, they left, and there was nobody else to find. So, they said, Well, you want the job for half price? "Sure, I'll take it."
- LN: So, they approached you about the job?
- TI: Um-hm.
- LN: But, you don't remember exactly who that was?
- TI: I think it was the head people. Got to be no one else.
- LN: But, you don't remember if they were Japanese or white?
- TI: *Hajukin*. Matsumoto is gone already. That was when things started to change. They were starting to push people out. In fact, some people were leaving already.
- LN: I also read about at the Children's Village there would be parties, or you would attend parties outside of the village. Is that true?
- TI: I think it had little parties with a lot of little kids. I can't remember having parties—oh, one time we were supposed to have a New Year's Eve party, so we would have noodles. That's one thing I remember. They asked me if I know how to make noodles, and I said, "Oh, yeah. It's easy. Just put in the water; cook the noodles." (laughs) But you have to boil the water first and then drop the noodles in, loosely. Because I just throw the whole thing so it looked like a ball of noodles. (chuckles) Nobody ate noodles that night.
- LN: What was it? *Udon* [noodles]?
- TI: *Udon*, yeah. Cause it was New Year's party.
- LN: How about—I also read that there were weekly movies?
- TI: At the Shonien?

LN: No, at the Children's Village.

TI: No.

LN: I mean, not at the Children's Village. There were movies within the camp and the Children's Village—the orphans would go and see those movies. Do you remember?

TI: Might have been [weekly], but I don't recall. I know there was movies. Yeah, the kids were—not the small ones because it's too late already. Sometimes it gets dark around 9:30 p.m., so they were sound asleep already. The older ones, twelve and fourteen, or something like that—be sometimes they start on the weekends, Friday night or Saturday night or something like that.

LN: What was your curfew when you—well, for you because you were one of the older children. What was your curfew?

TI: Usually about nine o'clock.

LN: In terms of religion, I was also reading that most of the Children's Village orphans would attend Protestant services and a few attended Catholic services.

TI: That would be right. Only ones that went to Catholic school was the ones that came from Maryknoll, so they used to go to Catholic services. The rest went to Protestant. Some did not go at all, and if they were old enough, they were not pushed to go. You didn't have to go.

LN: How about yourself?

TI: I got kind of religious for a while, so I carried a Bible quite a bit. That's why a lot of the time I didn't go to the movies. One guy really believed in, what do they call them? The Baptist or the Free Methodist? They're strict about lipstick and that kind of stuff. Free Methodist? Some of the Protestant are real strict. They don't like women wearing lipstick. They don't like people go see movies.

LN: It wasn't Mormons though.

TI: No, no, they were Protestant.

LN: And you would hang around this guy?

TI: Well, he was involved at the church, so he was really strict. In fact, it was Taeko's husband.

LN: Nagayama?

- TI: Yeah, John Nagayama. He was a very devout Christian. I had the tendency to go towards that way, but I didn't like it because people shouldn't tell me what I should do and shouldn't do. I got to think for myself. So, I kind of slowly drifted away, and when I went to the service I drifted away completely. (laughs) When I got married, I made sure my children went to church, and after their junior high school, I felt that they have to make-up their own mind.
- LN: How about, do you remember any of the Children's Village orphans going to the Buddhist services?
- TI: I never heard of any children going to the Buddhist [services] that I remember.
- LN: Do you feel that that could be a manifestation wanting to prove that you are American, to go to a Protestant church, rather than going to Buddhist?
- TI: Well, first of all, you think Shonien is more run by the Christian people, so it was push by Christian people.
- LN: And Maryknoll was Catholic.
- TI: Yeah. Salvation Army was Protestant, so that's why.
- LN: In terms of the clothing grants, the money that you would get for clothes and the allowance—
- TI: Very little. I told you about Sears catalog, remember? Looked at the catalog and bought it. That's the only thing I bought in my life, in camp anyway, but it was kind of the silk—I don't know, you can't say silk, but smooth, like satin-type of thing. I didn't want that. I wanted kind of like this type of material, but in the catalog it looks nice so that's what I ordered. I didn't know. That's the only thing I ever bought. Most of it they gave it to you. I guess they get your measurements. Here's your shirt, here's—like Salvation Army, we had about the same type of clothes. Jean pants with a white shirt to go to school.
- LN: But, was that different for the village children, that you would get clothes whereas—how about the internees that weren't in the village?
- TI: They were getting allowance, internees, and we were, too. Like I said, I can't remember how I got my clothing. I bought one clothing from Sears, so they must have gave me the money to pick whatever I wanted to and pay for it.
- LN: Did you feel safe at Manzanar? Or at the Children's Village?
- TI: Oh, yeah.
- LN: Did you feel protected?

- TI: Yeah, I felt safe. I felt like I had more brother and sisters. I have lots of brother and sisters, you know? I don't agree with everyone. I don't get along with everyone, but I don't have no enemies. Still my brothers and sisters, that's the way I look at it.
- LN: Do you think that that is a common feeling among everyone in the village, that they kind of all had this feeling that they were all brothers and sisters? Or do you think it's you personally?
- TI: No, I don't think so. Some wanted to forget about the past. I know brother and brother don't get along because they both think differently. That's a shame. I already plan on what I'm going to do at the first of the month. I'm going to a wedding, so I'm going to see part of the family there. The other side, they won't be there so I am going to go out to of the way to go see them for one day. So, see my younger sister, my younger brother, my older brother at the same time. Go out to eat, spend one day together.
- LN: So, you still have that strong sense of family even today?
- TI: Oh, yeah.
- LN: In terms of medical care during your time at Children's Village, would you have every half-year or every year, you know, a physical or exam, or anything like that? Or was it only when you were sick when you would go to the hospital?
- TI: Yeah. I was sick one time. I had appendicitis, and I had operation. So, I was in the hospital one time that I know. Other than that, I don't remember being sick.
- LN: Did you actually stay overnight in the hospital?
- TI: Well, appendicitis; in those days it's not like now, you're in and out. I was in there almost two weeks. My recovery was terrible. It took a long time. My classmate, he was out there playing basketball in three days, and I couldn't believe it. I think it was the spinal that the guy gave me.
- LN: Oh, the shot?
- TI: Yeah, the shot in the back. It weakened me. I used to get dizzy during the day. You know if you get the summer light into the house, it's dark, and you get dizzy. Or you go out from dark to the light, you still get kind of dizzy. So, it took me, oh, a good month before I recovered.
- LN: How did you find the hospital facilities? Was it clean?
- TI: Oh, very clean. Yeah, I think the hospital was excellent.
- LN: And your doctor was Japanese?

[02:00:00]

- TI: Um-hm. See, the way I understand, I didn't know myself the doctors they didn't pick where they wanted to go. So many doctors go to this camp, so many there so they have enough doctors at each camp. Probably teachers, too.
- LN: How about in terms of food? How was the food in the hospital as opposed to the food at Children's Village?
- TI: You know, I was so sick and weak that food was secondary to me, but the food was all right. I had no complaints because that is the first thing I would complain about because I used to live to eat. (laughs)
- LN: (laughs) And would they allow visitors so your brother and sisters could come visit you?
- TI: Visiting time, um-hm.
- LN: During the time you were at Children's Village and you were in Manzanar during World War II, did you ever think about wanting to be in Japan as opposed to the U.S.?
- TI: No, there was no second thought about going to Japan or wanting to go to Japan. I wanted to get out of camp really bad because my brothers and sisters were in Detroit, Molly and Sam and Tak.
- LN: When they got out—
- TI: They left camp.
- LN: Right, when they were able to leave.
- TI: Yeah.
- LN: Do you know when that was?
- TI: It would be '44. They were having a hard time, and they couldn't hardly make any money and get a job. But, I wanted to get out, too. They said, Don't come because we are struggling, and I don't know how we could take care of you. We advise you to stay in camp. I got nervous, so finally the Children's Village found out the Salvation Army people lived in Gardnerville, that's just below Carson City, and they must have wrote to them and said, "Yeah, if Tamo wants to come up, we'd be happy to take him in, give room and board." That's all they promise, which is good enough for me. So I left, and the last six months I went to the high school in Gardnerville.
- LN: And that's in Nevada, right?

TI: Yeah, just below Carson City.

LN: So, your brothers were in Detroit. They would write to you? In Manzanar, they would write?

TI: Very little cause we all did not write too much. (laughs)

LN: In a sense, when they left for Detroit, did they leave all together, to go to Detroit?

TI: Yeah.

LN: In a sense, did it feel like losing your family again because they're so far from you?

TI: Oh, yeah, definitely. They're still the oldest. A lot of time you kind of depend—sometimes you have a hard time. You want to talk to them and they give you facts, “Hey, don't worry about it.” We don't run to them because somebody is picking on you and other things. Then when they went on furlough—you know what furlough is?

LN: You leave from the Army?

TI: No, this one is when you leave from camp to go out in the farming area and go pick turnips or beets or something else. They call that furlough, too. They weren't making any money. The farmers were using them anyway. So, we are imagining they were bringing a lot of money home. Those days you made about \$50. That's a lot of money because when you're talking about \$8 a month, \$50 a month is a lot of money. My brother said, “Hey, I'm just coming home even.” You said, “You work all that time and you come out even?” Because they charge you for room and board, and a lot of time you don't work because it's cold and snow, rain or whatever. They still charge you so you need to make up for all that, so they don't make anything. So, actually, they were using them because if they paid them, they were paying them penny ante stuff, see.

LN: So, you had brothers that would go on furlough?

TI: Yeah. Tak and Sam used to go.

LN: But then the both of them went to Detroit, right?

TI: This was furlough before they went out of camp for good.

LN: So, when you said before that they would tell you from Detroit about not coming out there, they would actually say it's actually better to stay in camp because of the conditions?

- TI: Yeah. There's no place to stay. I'm still going to school, that's why. If I was out of school, then I probably could have stayed at a hostel or somewhere and try to look for a job. But, to take care of me while I am going to school, to finish up the last part of my school—, I guess they could see it. I wanted to get out so bad, I didn't think about it.
- LN: Do you think the conditions were bad because they were Japanese that they were being discriminated against or used—
- TI: They were used. Ninety percent of them were being used. They know they were being used.
- LN: But, was it because they were Japanese? Or was that kind of the common—
- TI: Because they were Japanese.
- LN: So, if they had been Caucasians, instead of Japanese, you think they would have been treated differently?
- TI: Oh, definitely, yeah. Even the blacks were given a bad time because I think the blacks thought the Japanese were taking their jobs, too. You know, Detroit is 90 percent blacks over there, anyways. I could understand them, too, how they felt. Really, all of them had a hard time. Some of them were very fortunate and found a good job. When you're just a common laborer, it's all muscle. Working for ice company and that kind of stuff.
- LN: And what would your sister do? Did she do housework again?
- TI: I'm not sure what she did. When the family started getting together, then she did all the cooking. The men went out to work—because she was married then. She would take care of the house and finances.
- LN: So, did she find a husband while she was in Manzanar?
- TI: Yeah.
- LN: She did. Okay.
- TI: He was a cop in Manzanar. He's a Kibei. After they got married they said, Hey, let's get out of camp. We are going to have to go. Sooner or later you have to go, so let's go to Detroit, because a lot of their friends went to Detroit.
- LN: Oh, so they had a choice as to where they went, and they wanted to go to Detroit?
- TI: Because their friends were there.

LN: Did they have an option to go wherever they wanted as long as it was out of the West Coast?

TI: Yeah, yeah. So, a lot of them went to Chicago, Detroit. You heard of Seabrook?

LN: No, where's that?

TI: Seabrook's in New Jersey, and it is basically a frozen food factory. A lot of people from camp went over there. They had places for them to stay. But, they get small wages, too, very low wages. At least the family was together and they had a place, like in a barrack or whatever it was. I've never been there so I don't know. The family is together, that's the main thing.

[02:08:32]

LN: In terms of the loyalty questionnaires, did you actually have to fill out one of those questioners?

TI: I don't think I had to because I was in the orphanage, so they didn't have to ask me. We had to prove nothing to nobody.

LN: So, you didn't have any questionnaire at all?

TI: If there was, I don't remember. If I went through what some of these other people did, I probably would have said, "No, no." But, at that time, I probably would have volunteered for service, too, because I had no trouble with anyone.

LN: Do you know anyone who volunteered for the service?

TI: My brother did. After he finished school, he went into the service.

LN: So, he got to finish high school then he went to the service?

TI: Yeah.

LN: And that was okay?

TI: There was another guy that lives around here, too. He went before he finished high school. That's when they were enlisting people for the 442.

LN: How old was your brother when he went?

TI: He was about eighteen.

LN: How long had he been living out of the village? Because he had lived—

- TI: No, no he wasn't—Kiyoshi was never in the village. Remember, he was with the foster parents in Amache.
- LN: Oh, that's right. Okay. How did you learn that he was going to fight?
- TI: Well, when he came to Manzanar on his furlough, the Army furlough then—
- LN: Oh, you found out right then and there.
- TI: Yeah. Then I knew he was going overseas. He said, "I have a short time to stay, then I gotta go." So, he wanted to come to Manzanar to see us knowing that he could die. So, he stopped then he went to see the people that he stayed and then he went back to camp. he went to the service overseas.
- LN: Did he stay overnight?
- TI: Oh, yeah. I think he stayed about two days.
- LN: Did he actually stay in Manzanar?
- TI: Camp? Yeah.
- LN: He did?
- TI: I think he stayed in the barracks with us, too.
- LN: In the village?
- TI: Um-hm.
- LN: Oh, so they would allow that?
- TI: Oh, yeah. Why?
- LN: Well, I didn't know that they would allow other people to sleep in the village or—
- TI: Well, probably just a special thing because how many brothers are to come that is in the service? He was the only one.
- LN: In terms of information, while you were at the village, how did you find out things? Did you read the newspaper at Manzanar, or did you have a radio and you listened to it?
- TI: Yeah, I had an old radio, but it's so hard to hear anything because there was so much static, especially a cheap radio, too. (laughs) Because in the high desert during the day, you could hardly get any [reception], but in the evening the weather was cooler

- and is less static so you pick up more sound waves. You could hear some of the stuff, but you still get static, you know?
- LN: Were you aware of the Endo Case in 1944?
- TI: What Endo?
- LN: It lifted the Executive Order 9066, the exclusion order?
- TI: Order of what?
- LN: You know how they were the exclusion? It excluded Japanese from being in the west [coast] and in certain areas.
- TI: Oh, yeah. That was for their benefit. They did that because they wanted them all out of camp, anyway. They forced them out of camp because they wanted to close it up.
- LN: But, were you aware of that person and also—
- TI: No, not until after I come back. Because I'm in the service, there's no letters. See, when I left camp, they want them out, but they weren't going to California at that time.
- LN: Were you friends with any of the quote unquote temporary orphans at the village, ones that maybe their parents were in the hospital and they were only living there for a short time?
- TI: Permanent? Yeah. The older ones, they weren't such a thing. They had to be small ones, the infants or something like that because I wouldn't know.
- LN: Do you have any idea about how the infants were cared for? Because I read that it was hardest on the infants because infants, you know how they need constant attention, so it was harder in a sense for the orphans that were infants, rather than the older ones because there really wasn't that many staff members, for instance, to take care of them. Do you have any idea of how their treatment was?
- TI: No. If anybody would know, Mary would because her youngest sister was an infant and was living in the same barrack. Like boys, they don't see little kids. We see them during the day, but at night after they cry, I don't know what's happening because we can't hear them anyway.
- LN: You mean Mary Matsuno [Miya]?
- TI: Yeah, I think she would be to answer it better. If I did, I'm just guessing.

LN: Uh-huh. Let's see, what was your most vivid memory of Children's Village, and why?

TI: Well, I think I would say I was proud that we were able to get together and have a basketball team, have a baseball team with the amount of people that was in the Children's Village and be able to make a team and was successful growing-up without any supervision. The little boys were in charge, and they kept things straight. So, we were independent from everybody. We were from the head people in the Children's Village. We picked our own teams to play, and we clicked together. There was no fighting amongst ourselves, who was better, who's lousy, and that kind of stuff. I like that. Sports was the most important thing to keep us from crying about every little thing.

And when you live in a barrack and you are only two feet away from the next person, you get to know each other pretty good. Sometime we don't like it. Sometime we get along, too. You can't say you like them *all*. You *don't hate them*, but you can't say you like them because his style is different from your style. It doesn't make me right, and he's wrong. That's his style of doing things. We weren't, probably, as close. The ones that played sports was closer than the ones that didn't play. Not all the kids played sports. They didn't care to. They were out doing something else like barbell or something. Kind of more introvert, they kept to themselves. So, we didn't know what they were thinking because we don't talk to them that often.

LN: Two things stuck out in what you just said, your answer about your most vivid memory of Children's Village. One was the independence. You said that you were able to have an independence from anyone else. And the second thing is, I guess, the camaraderie and the friendship in having that feeling of being a family. So, would you say that that maybe those are the two things that about experience that—

[02:20:00]

TI: Yeah. Mostly with the boys because the girls, we talked to them but just a short time. We don't talk about our personal life, really. We might talk about school or nonsense type stuff, but that deeper part about yourself you don't talk to girls about. You talk to your friends. That's the way I put it. But, I spent more time with my younger brother. We were close. We knew each other inside out the most. When he had a girlfriend—now he had a girlfriend! And he would do anything for making these things, and I said, "She doesn't like it that way, you out to give me that." (laughs) They make furniture out of apple boxes, put a little drawer in there so you put it next to the bed so you can make a nightstand. See, he got along with girls, and he had girlfriends. Why I didn't, I don't know. (laughs) I couldn't believe it; he was able to do it.

LN: (laughs) So, you left in December of 1944? You left Manzanar?

TI: Yeah, right.

LN: At that time you were already eighteen, right?

TI: Yeah, um-hm.

LN: Did someone tell you, “Okay, Tamo, you can leave now,” or was it your responsibility to find where you were going to go after?

TI: Oh, no. The family in Gardnerville had a laundry. Somebody at Children’s Village must have wrote to him and found out they were in the Salvation Army at one time, so, Would you like to take Tamo here because he really wants to get out of camp, too, this and that. They must have said, Okay. There’s only one bus in front of the Manzanar gate, so you jump on that bus. Plus it takes you right into town. You just get off the bus, you could walk to—because it two or three blocks away. And they took me in. In fact, *their son*, the youngest son, was the same age as me so we’re classmates, anyway.

LN: This family was a white family though?

TI: No, no. It was Japanese. She’s the Issei. The youngest daughter and the youngest son lived there. The other two, I don’t know where they were. The oldest ones, I don’t know where they were. So, I stayed with them, and I graduated. I went in the service, so I was there six months.

LN: Do you remember the name of that family?

TI: Nishikada. I don’t know her first name, but everybody knows who she is. They cooked in the orphanage, Salvation Army orphanage.

LN: At the San Francisco one you where you were at? So, you knew her from before?

TI: Yeah.

LN: It worked out that you would, what would you do? You would do chores around the house and they would pay for your room and board?

TI: Yeah, you know like when people bring laundry? You clean it out, sort it out which is going to be the whites, jeans, and that way, and put it in the washing machine. I worked on an average, maybe two hours a day. The rest of the time I was on my own.

LN: How did you go from that to the Army?

TI: I got drafted. Yeah, I had no choice. (laughs) So, two weeks after I graduated high school, I went into the service.

LN: What month was that?

TI: I graduated the latter part of May, and then I was in the middle of June.

LN: Where did you go from there?

TI: For the service?

LN: Yeah, for the service.

TI: Camp Robinson is in Arkansas, near Little Rock, Arkansas. Stayed there and then went to Fort Snelling, which was the MIS for Japanese Language School. I didn't qualify, (laughs) so I was shipped to Fort Ord in California. I guess they didn't know where to put me, so they sent me up to Fort Lawton in Seattle. They didn't know what to do, so they sent me to Fort Lewis in Tacoma, Washington. And then, I finished my year there and discharged over there.

LN: So, you were there until the end of the war?

TI: No, the war was over. When I went in, Germany surrendered already, but Japan didn't. When I was taking my basic training, Japan surrendered, so I didn't see no war at all.

LN: And the time that you were away, you had your younger siblings that were still at Manzanar?

TI: Oh, yeah. What happened is, as soon as I finished high school, I went down to Manzanar, same old bus go down there, and already agreed that my younger brother could come up with me.

LN: To Gardnerville?

TI: Yeah, then he was going to stay there for a while. They were going to take him in because their son already volunteered in the service so there was no boys there. They knew I was going in anyway, so he stayed for short time. And then, my sister came back from Detroit, and they were trying to get thing going. Finally, in Carson City they open a laundry. They bought out somebody and started laundry.

LN: Your sister or brother did?

TI: My brother-in-law, my older brother, Sam—so they took the younger brother, Aki, in there, too. Then they called my younger sister, Haru, and got her to Carson City, so they are all there.

LN: So, they were all together?

TI: Um-hm.

LN: Okay. So then after you were discharged, what did you do?

TI: I was discharged, and I stayed at my brother's place. He lived on a farm, and he said, "You can't stay too long." So, I was there about ten days.

LN: And what city was that?

TI: Livingston. You know where Livingston is? You know Turlock? Merced?

LN: Yeah, okay.

TI: Modesto?

LN: It's in-between Modesto and Merced. They have a grapevine—I was there about ten days. A guy I knew from way back—he's my brother-in-law now—he lives in Los Angeles. I didn't know what I was doing so, "I'm going to come down to L.A. How about take him in?" Because I don't have any money so if you don't do it that way they ain't going to do it, unless you live in the street. So, they took me in for about ten days. In the meantime, they got in contact with Nagayamas. Remember John Nagayama and Taeko? I moved in with their parents.

LN: In Los Angeles?

TI: Yeah, in West Los Angeles. And then, I stayed there about ten days. They are gardeners, so I used to help them out. I didn't get paid. Then they found me a schoolboy job. But *houseboy* job, not schoolboy, houseboy job in Los Feliz. You know where Los Feliz?

LN: Yeah.

TI: It used to be a nice, rich area, so I worked there.

LN: Was it for a white family?

TI: Yeah.

LN: But, you didn't actually live there?

TI: Oh, yeah. That's where I got my room and bored.

LN: And how were you treated there?

TI: Well, it was all right. She didn't pay me hardly anything. Sixty-five dollars a month isn't too much money. In those days when you get out of the Army, they call it the 52/20 club, which means for 52 weeks, if you are not working, they give you \$20 a week. And that was passable; you could live on \$20. You don't get rich on it, but you

can live on it. So, while I was collecting the \$65, I said, “Hell, I need the money bad,” so I collected the \$20, which you are not supposed to if you’re working, but I had no choice just to survive. So, I went and collected that so I’m getting \$80 a month from the government, plus the \$65. I don’t know if you should put this.  
(laughs)

LN: We can edit that later. (laughs)

TI: So, that’s what happened.

LN: Your brothers and sisters were still in Nevada? You still had brothers and sisters in Nevada, with the laundry? Where they still there?

TI: No, they just sold it. They were splitting up, so my brother, sister and them came to Los Angeles. You heard of Silver Lake?

LN: I think so. It’s more north, isn’t it?

TI: Past Chinatown, towards Hollywood. She got a housegirl job, and her husband lived there, too. He was working part-time here at whatever job he could get. I think my brother went to San Mateo. I can’t keep track of all my siblings. And my younger brother was with Rub, which is Kiyoshi—I can’t remember where Haru was, the youngest one. She must have had a schoolgirl’s job. A lot of the people in those days, they were young, and they still going to school so they got a job and getting room and board and maybe get \$10 a month. The people let them go to school, and then they do all the chores, whatever chores they were responsible for. I think that’s the way she survived.

[02:31:00]

LN: Going back to when you were in the Army with the other soldiers, was it mixed? You would sleep and live with white soldiers as well as Japanese soldiers?

TI: Yeah, uh-huh.

LN: Did you have any problems? Did they not like you?

TI: Oh, yeah. It was racial in there, and there was times when I was lucky enough to—they had the huts, four bunks, and they were all Japanese. They put us together, which for me, I was comfortable. And then, Fort Snelling, they were all Japanese Americans because Japanese language school so 99 percent of the Japanese Americans were comfortable there. Then we followed through with Fort Ord, all the Japanese American guys are going here, and then end up in Fort Lewis. I met a lot of Hawaiian guys. So, 90 percent of them were Japanese Americans. The other time I was with the *hakujins*.

LN: And then, how did you find-out about the atomic bomb, the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima?

TI: Geez, what year was that?

LN: Forty-five.

TI: What part of '45?

LN: Right when Japan surrendered.

TI: So, it had to be around August.

LN: Yeah, it was August, '45.

TI: Well, I was sick.

LN: But, you don't remember how you—

TI: No, no. Truman give the order [to] drop it, and that takes a lot because you're destroying a whole city. And the after effects, for Truman to live with that, to me, that's a lot of living to do. And if you forget about it and [think] like they're animals, there's something wrong in a person really.

And then, when I was in basic training, the part that I didn't like, too—but they said, It's for your own protection. You cannot get a pass to go out of town. because they think that you might be killed after because they are celebrating the V-J Day and you are Oriental. They might shoot you or hang you, so they didn't allow us out.

LN: So, you had to stay in the base?

TI: Yeah.

LN: Did you hear of any Japanese people getting hanged or killed or beaten up or anything like that?

TI: No, no, no. They said it was for our protection, and they might have been right. I can't say they were wrong or right. I don't think I would want to be out there anyway. I don't think I would have went, but it's just the idea they said, You can't go. It's up to us make the decision. They can talk to you and advise you not to go [because] people might be crazy out there.

LN: Did you ever go to college?

TI: The closest I got to it was UCLA. I was going to—what do you call it? X-Ray technician.

LN: When was this about?

TI: I can't remember. See, what happened was, I was working for Admiral. Have you heard of Admiral Television? It's like RCA. There was an ad for a television, and there's—and they recently closed-up because of foreign competition.

LN: Do you want me to pause it?

TI: It's my grandchildren. [recording paused] What happened was, when Admiral closed, we're able to get unemployment plus schooling for free. So, I went to this x-ray technician, but it's not the kind that just take pictures. It's kind of repair.

LN: The machines?

TI: Yeah, all these x-ray machines. But, one thing I lacked was mathematics; if you don't have the math, you can't do it. You had to figure out the frequencies and all that. I couldn't make the grade. We used to go four hours a class, four hours of practice, which was fair, but my class was terrible because you got to calculate everything. When you take the test and they give you exams, and you have to figure it out, as it should be, you've got to be exact. You can't be almost.

LN: If you would have passed, you would have got some type of certificate? Or is actually a degree?

TI: No, it's a technician type of thing. It would have taken two years so they were like going to a junior college, two years. I didn't make it. I start working banks. You know there's a security system? Putting security system in there, Diebold. I used to work at First Interstate Bank then Security Pacific putting security system. From there I shifted to called part components where I used to make parts for automatic teller machines. In order for the computer to work, you needed to have some kind of voltage to keep that machine going, so that's what our company use to make. I worked for them until I retired.

LN: And when was that? When did you start working for that company?

TI: About five years before I retired, so I was about fifty-seven. I retired at '62.

LN: And when did you get married?

TI: Nineteen fifty, so we've been married for forty-three years in May.

LN: And how did you meet your wife?

TI: Oh, my that's a—want to know the truth?

LN: Uh-huh, I want to know the truth.

TI: I met her in Chicago where I was getting room and bored—when I say *getting room and board*, I'm *paying* for room and bored. One of the daughters at that place wanted to throw a Christmas party. I says, "That's a good idea." So, she said she'd get all the girls, and I said, "I'll get all the boys, no problem." So, Christmas Eve, a lot of boys, and a lot of guys are socializing, small dance. We drank a little bit. So, that day I came from Stockton—I went from Stockton to Chicago in June.

LN: Of 1950? No, 1949.

TI: Forty-nine, yeah. So, the people I was hanging around with are all older people, so they didn't date too much. I was looking to take girls out to movies or something. So that night I decided I was going to make some dates. The first girl I talked to I said, "What are you doing next Saturday?" I made a date on the first Saturday, the next one the second Saturday, another one on the third Saturday, and she was the fourth Saturday. Once we went out, I did not go out with anybody else. We just got along. So, said she has to go talk to her parents. So, in March she came back and a few weeks later I came and went to the mother and let her know that I'd like to get married. So she wanted—the mother wanted a [go-between]. Do you know what is a \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible). Go in between the—

LN: Oh, yeah. Go in-between—

TI: Go in between so that person finds out my family side. We had a minister that knew our family so he explained everything, and that was fine. So, in May we got married. Six months later, we got married.

LN: And your wife is a Nisei?

TI: Yeah, she's a Nisei.

LN: We were talking before about prejudice against orphans among the Japanese community. Did you have any problem getting accepted within her family?

TI: No.

LN: And while you were dating—she was an internee at Heart Mountain during the war, right? During the war she was an internee at Heart Mountain?

TI: Yeah.

LN: While you were dating, did you discuss your experiences about being interned?

[02:41:00]

TI: No, just kind of a general type of thing. I didn't push too much about it because we were the same age, anyways. We were the same grade, graduated the same year.

- When she talks about how come she was in Heart Mountain—because a lot of the Los Angeles people were Manzanar. The way they were situated, it went that way. So, they're some other people from Los Angeles areas that went to Heart Mountain. We did not talk to heavy on it, that I remember. I guess we were in love so much.  
(laughs)
- LN: You have how many children? Five children?
- TI: Yeah. Three boys, two girls.
- LN: Okay. And how many grandchildren do you have?
- TI: Ten.
- LN: Ten.
- TI: Mm-hm.
- LN: As your children were growing-up, would you talk to them, or would you and your wife, talk to them about you experiences? Did you want them knowing about—
- TI: Yeah, we tried to.
- LN: Did you feel that was important?
- TI: Oh, yes. That's why I used to buy books about camps and relocation and put it out there underneath the coffee table so that they pick it up on their own, instead of nagging on them to read it. A lot of time they did not take that much interest in it, but it's there.
- LN: Over all, how was your adjustment to society after you left the camp? After you left Manzanar, was it easy for you to adjust back into American society?
- TI: Yeah, I think for me it was easy because when you go to the service, everybody is no better than you or worse than you. We were given about the same—we're talking about as far as rank-wise, so the guys that I was with most of the time were the same rank as me, so we got along. When you got \$75 dollars, I got \$75.
- LN: The thesis that Helen Elizabeth Whitney wrote is titled "Care of Homeless Children of Japanese Ancestry During Evacuation and Relocation." You know that thesis from Berkley?
- TI: Yeah, but I didn't read the whole thing.
- LN: On page thirty of the thesis, she's talking about—this is the quote: "It is believed that this," meaning staying in the orphanages—like for you, staying at the Salvation Army

Orphanage, “would create an extreme feeling of isolation and subject the children to considerable discrimination.” That was written in her thesis. Yet, here she is talking about if the orphans had *stayed* in their orphanages, rather than going to Manzanar, they would have felt isolated or they might have been discriminated against from the American community and society. Yet, the resettlement policy was to disburse the internees and have them in all this different areas that they weren’t familiar with. Looking back that, do you see any hypocrisy in the idea that the orphans should be interned to begin with and then afterwards they really didn’t want them going to California?

TI: I think some of the—at the reunion, I’ve seen some of the orphanage kids. To me the—I don’t want to use the word weak but timid, timid people. They were timid guys and timid girls; they had it hard. Just to survive there it was kind of hard, but I’ve been through quite a bit already, you know? And I was never timid. I might have been quite at times, but not timid. I didn’t feel that people could push me around without me pushing back. That’s why I talk to them and say, “My house is your house. You’re welcome to stay.” My wife won’t like it, but it’s my house, too. Somebody is in trouble, I’m going to help. That’s what I feel. I will always be that way because they are my brothers and sisters.

LN: Do you think that is kind of a common feeling among the people from Children’s Village?

TI: No, I don’t think so because they had enough problems of their own. I guess I’ve been in long enough—of course, there’s other people who have been in the home a long time, too. But I know by they talk, the way they mingle, or try to mingle with the other orphanage kids, they don’t even make an effort. So, they are just worried about their lives and the small shell they’re in. I don’t have nothing against them; that’s the way they live. I think some of them lived a tough life and no money, and so they can’t see them spend their money too loosely. They got to be very protective. Of course, I wasn’t as protective with of—I was loose. Even now I am loose with my money. That’s why my wife is a treasurer, not me. It’s the truth, you know? Even when I go out with the people, socializing, we go drink, Tamo loses a lot of money. Not loses, but spends it more. It should be equal. But, I’m not going to worry about it. If I’m going to worry about it, I won’t even go out. That’s the way I look at it. As long as I have a good companionship, money is secondary. If I don’t have money, I’m not going out anyway.

LN: If you could think of just one word to sum up your feelings about the internment experience for you, what word comes to mind?

TI: Sadness, being sad. Because so many things happened. Your sister moves out, your brother moves out, they come back, then they’re gone. The family is not really together because part is over there, part is over there, kind of mumble jumble. Then life’s tough already, and they make it a little tougher. I made life tougher for myself for not studying. I wish I studied better, you know? Got education, got a degree I

think I would have had a better job, better opportunity. When you don't have the education, you got to take what comes, but I'm not crying about it. If you asked me what would be good for me, those are the things that would have been good for me. Things happen. I'm enjoying my wife. We get along. She might not be happy with me all the time, but we get along. We understand each other. My children are good to me, and I think I am good to them. And my grandchildren the same thing. So, inside I'm a happy man. Not a rich man, but not a poor man, a happy man. And that's what I'm living, being a happy man. Would that be a good enough answer for the end?

[02:52:00; recording paused]

LN: Okay, in terms of the Reparations and Redress Movement, did you play any part in that at all?

TI: No, but I sure waited. (laughs) We gave a little to our children, but we have kept most of it to ourselves. We figure that we are going to go sooner or later, and whatever is remaining, we are going to split among—we have five children so it's going to be split five ways. Nobody gets more, nobody gets less. That's the way I see it.

LN: Do you think that it was good—the movement for reparations and redress?

TI: Oh, yes, definitely. Saying sorry means nothing as far as the government is concerned. That's the easy way out. But, when you put some money out, it hurts to them a little more, or the people, the people are the government. They have to realize that was a big wrong. If they don't feel like that was a big wrong, then, I don't need that money. It's got to be sincere that we know we are not giving you enough, but there is something. And I'm sorry, too, and that's good enough.

LN: Because some people argue that getting the reparations kind of clears the board. It's like if the government apologizes for the internment, in a way, they can also dismiss it. Would you agree with that?

TI: You cannot dismiss it. It's happened. You can never erase the history. That history is going to be there, not for Japanese only but any other people. Whether it be race or religion or whatever it is, they're going to pick on somebody next, and they cannot do that. The government made a big mistake. You can't afford the government making the same mistake twice, and I don't think it will ever happen again because there's too many people thinking different ways already. Before what the governor said, what the president says, they were gods in those days, but it isn't that way anymore so I don't think it will ever happen again.

LN: In terms of the evacuation, do you think that it was wrong just in general for the internment—but do you feel that it was more wrong in the case of the orphans of Japanese ancestry?

- TI: No, no. I think they put Japanese—not orphans—in the camp. Japanese orphans kids should go in camp, too, because they are still Japanese. *Not Japanese period* but it's Japanese American. They have to go, too.
- LN: Okay. The reunion was last year of May twenty-second through twenty-fourth, for the Children's Village, and you were a co-chair for that?
- TI: Yeah, with Takatow Matsuno.
- LN: What were your reasons for wanting to have a reunion?
- TI: I wanted to see as many orphanage kids that was in the Children's Village there so we could reunite after fifty years, at least see each other and talk about the past. It's like seeing your brothers and sisters one more time because we probably won't see each other anymore because you're so far away. This is only opportunity knowing that we are all about to retired age, most of us. That would be the main reason.
- LN: Do you ever keep in touch with any of them, the other people from the Children's Village? Do you write or phone call each other or go out?
- TI: I'm the worst person to write, so I try to see them. If I get a chance, I try to see them.
- LN: Have you been able to make peace with your camp experience?
- TI: Peace within myself?
- LN: Yeah, within yourself?
- TI: Oh, yeah. That's what I say, I don't hate anybody. I don't hate America, but I don't want them to make the same mistake again. You got to forgive. You got to let go. And the main thing I will say: I can forgive much easier because they didn't take that much away from me, except freedom. I didn't have no material thing they took away from me, really. The money that I lost was very little because the newspaper, they owed me some money, but that was very little, like cents. But, I was very angry inside. I think I'm old enough to just forget about it; you got to forget because why should something keep eating you up? You're not going to gain from it. And my friends, and my enemies—I don't feel like I have enemies. I have dislikes, but I don't hate anyone. It's not going to eat my stomach up. Some people don't talk nice. Their mouth is pretty bad, not complementary, uncalled for type of comments. If they like to live that type of life, that's their problem, but I can't talk bad about you, even though you could have faults, because I know I have faults, too. I forget about it; it doesn't bother me. If I don't like it, I'll let you know, period. And then forget about it, too. I don't live with it.
- LN: Looking at your life—taking into account your family, your job, retirement, everything in your life—how much of an impact would you say your camp

- experiences had on your life? Is it a big part of your life today, or is it just a minor part of your life?
- TI: Camp is a big part of my life, definitely, because when we talk, right away Manzanar—"Oh, you're from Manzanar?" Then you're curious. A part of that person fits in my life—someone did, "Oh, yeah, I remember you," this and that. Maybe I played sports with them or some other Sunday school, so it always comes back. I can't ever forget Manzanar. If I forget Manzanar, then I might as well forget everything else.
- LN: Are there certain things that you can be just walking around in your house and something will just remind of Manzanar?
- TI: Like I see this and that can remind me of Manzanar?
- LN: Yeah. Remind you of some incident or not really?
- TI: Well, you know, at my age, I don't do that much daydreaming. When I see old friends, or when I see somebody that was from Manzanar, then things will start coming to me. Other than that, my mind is pretty busy just trying to enjoy the last part of my life. I figured I earned—enjoy a little bit of it, instead of worrying about it or thinking about it, do something about it. So, I try to do certain things, be a good grandfather, be a good father, and try to be a good husband, but that's hard. (laughs) It is hard, you know? It's too close.
- LN: (laughs) Well, just a couple more. How are you enjoying your retirement?
- TI: Oh, I love it. I don't mind babysitting. The days that I am free, I do what I want to do. I try to make up for all the tough times I gave my wife; I try to make it a little more pleasant so maybe she'll forgive me about those tough times because it wasn't easy. I wasn't a good boy, you know? I drank a lot. I messed-up a lot. Only thing I didn't do is chase women; one was enough. What was the question?
- LN: How are you enjoying your retirement? What type of activities do you like to do?
- TI: Oh, I like golfing. I shoot pools with the friends, retired guys, go have breakfast with them, once a week or something like that. Right now I can't because I'm babysitting, but just talk, enjoy their company. We joke, tease each other. And my grandchildren, they are growing-up right in front of your face. We are babysitting, so it gets exciting. It's work. They tell you off.
- Oh, we are going to go on a lot of trips now. We are thinking of doing this and doing that. The Grand Canyon is coming up, then up north to see our daughter. A lot of things happening. We are thinking about a cruise; my daughter is thinking about going with us, so we'll have a group. Then we get together at Lawrence Welk Resort.

LN: In Palm Springs?

TI: No, no, the one here in Escondido. We stay there one week. The family comes. Some come two days, some in and out. It's enjoyable. They don't have to do anything. If we don't want to cook, we just go out and eat. The pool is right there, the golf course is there, and every night they have some type of entertainment you sign up for. It's nice. So, a lot of happiness more than sadness.

LN: Okay, thank you very much for taking this time out for the interview. It's going to be very helpful, not only for just my paper and stuff, but for myself as well. Thank you.

TI: You know somebody a little bit. You got the inside of me. I don't think we do this too often.

LN: Yeah, thank you.

TI: But, I think for you, for your thesis, I'd be happy to because I think you'll gain something out of it from this old man, and you probably help somebody else out by doing this, too. Then you have two good company come with you. They're pleasant, you know? Is this over?

LN: Um-hm. It's turned off.

END OF INTERVIEW