

CENTER FOR ORAL AND PUBLIC HISTORY
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Children's Village at Manzanar Oral History Project

An Oral History with HERBERT TAKASHI SUYEMATSU

Interviewed

By

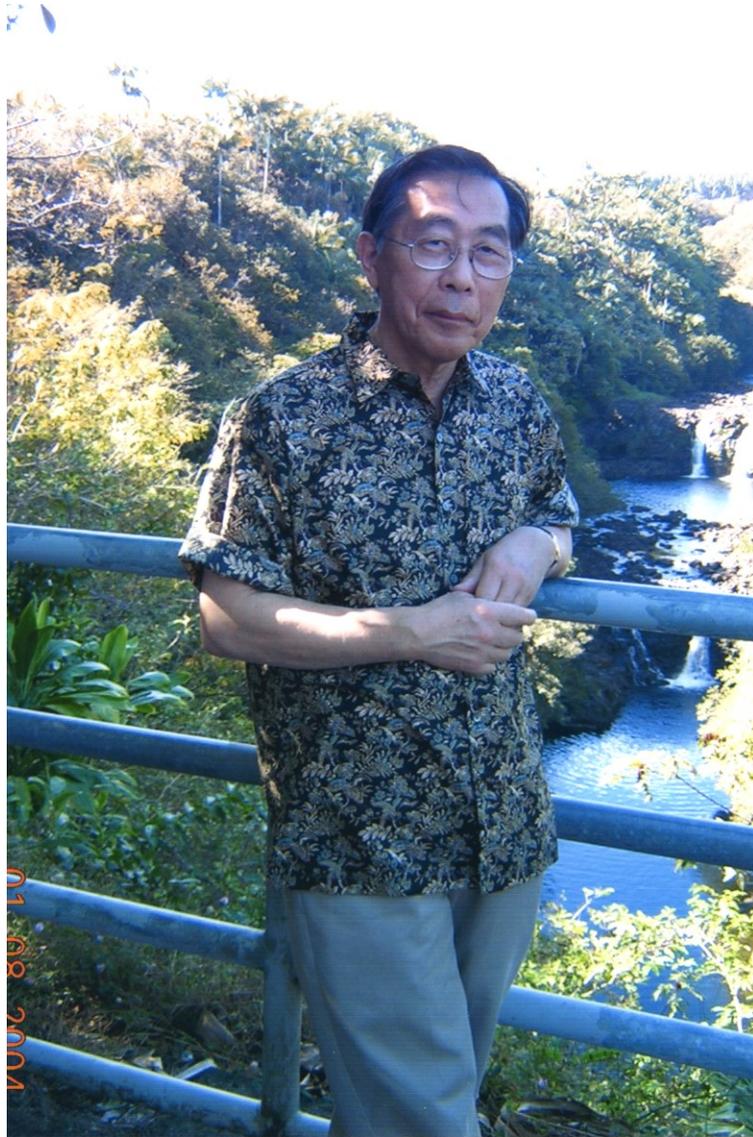
Reiko Katabami

On June 18, 1993

OH 2336

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Herbert Suyematsu.

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NARRATOR: HERBERT TAKASHI SUYEMATSU

INTERVIEWER: Reiko Katabami

DATE: June 18, 1993

LOCATION: Los Angeles, California

PROJECT: Children's Village at Manzanar

RK: This is an interview with Mr. Herbert Takashi Suyematsu by Reiko Katabami for the Japanese American project of the Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton. The interview is being held in Los Angeles on July 18, 1999 at approximately ten o'clock in the morning.

RK: To begin with, may I ask you about the date and birthplace?

HS: I was born January 26, 1936, in Brawley, California.

RK: And Brawley is located, what part of California?

HS: The southern part of the state, near the Mexican border.

RK: I will like to go chronologically, so I would first like to ask about Japanese—your parents' backgrounds in Japan.

HS: My father's family is from Gifu-ken; and my mother is from Yamaguchi-ken.

RK: And father came over to America?

HS: Since he was the second son, I guess he didn't have much future in Japan, so he went to Peru and was running a restaurant there that failed. And later, he and a group of other people entered the U.S. from Mexico. I think they climbed over the fence, they said.

RK: Your father ran the restaurant. It's a Japanese restaurant in Peru?

HS: Oh, I don't know what kind of restaurant. He just said it failed.

RK: From Peru, your father came over to the U.S.?

HS: Yes.

RK: Do you have idea how old he was at that time?

HS: I don't know but he came over sometime before World War I. He was born in 1888, so he came maybe 1911 or so.

RK: What about your mother?

HS: From what I gathered, the people in Gifu-ken and Yamaguchi-ken got together and arranged a marriage. There was a photograph of all of them together.

RK: So, your mother came from Yamaguchi-ken?

HS: Yes.

RK: After they got married in Japan?

HS: No, no. The father was here, and so the mother was sent over. I don't know how the marriage worked out. They must have married here, but she was sent over with the purpose of marriage.

RK: After your father came over from Peru to America, they got married?

HS: No, no, no. My father came over about 1911, and the marriage was sometime in 1932. So, it was all that time when he was single.

RK: Oh, I see. So, long after your father came to America, he was single?

HS: Apparently, yeah.

RK: Can I ask you, when did they get married?

HS: I think it was around 1932. My brother was born in 1934, and so sometime in that region.

RK: I mean, I asked you when your father and mother got married.

HS: Yeah, it was about that time, about 1932.

RK: I see. Your mother got married in 1932. So, she didn't live alone in the U.S.?

HS: No, because she was sent for the purpose of marriage.

RK: What happened to your mother? She was working after the marriage?

HS: No, no. Well, she was a farm housewife. My father was running a farm on a leased land, I think.

RK: In Brawley, California?

HS: Well, we moved various places. We were born and then for a time we were in the Coachella Valley, which is north of Salton Sea. Then we went to Santa Ana, then from Santa Ana, that's when the war started, and the other part was some other family from Gifu came to my father, pleading with him to use my mother's name for a lease, for land lease so they can run their farm.

RK: Oh, I see. So, your mother and father got married, and then after that, you were born. Can I ask about your background, about your brother and your sister? I know you have a brother and sister.

HS: Yeah.

RK: Do you know when your brother was born?

HS: Oh, my brother was born April 29, 1934, and my sister was born June 27, 1938.

RK: You were born in the—

HS: In the middle.

RK: —1936?

HS: Yeah.

RK: Then parents and the three children live together until—you told me your father was—

HS: Okay, after the war started, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] took my father, and then soon after that my mother was taken to Patton State Mental Hospital. And then someone else, I don't know who, drove us to Shonien, and then we were placed in that orphanage.

RK: Why was your father taken by the FBI?

HS: From what I gathered, there was a law saying that Japanese were not allowed to move more than five miles away from their normal place. And because of the wartime situation, then there was another law saying that aliens were not allowed to lease farmland. Well, that might not be exactly the wording. There were some other laws that said aliens that were not eligible for citizenship, were not allowed. So, that

meant that it was Japanese who were not allowed—and people got around that by putting the documents in the name of their children who were born here. There was a family living Laguna Beach area whose daughter left the household, so they didn't have anybody that they could place as the owner, as the legal name. That family came to my father because they were both from Gifu-ken. My mother was born in Hawaii, so she was officially a citizen. So then, after their pleading, my father agreed to go, and that also violated the five-mile rule.

[00:10:07]

RK: I see. You told me your mother was born in Hawaii.

HS: Yes.

RK: Really? I thought Japanese—your mother came from Yamaguchi?

HS: Oh, yes. During those times, people came to Hawaii to work, made money, and left. So, my mother was born there, but then, immediately after was taken back to Japan. So, she knew nothing about Hawaii.

RK: Do you have any idea where they took—

HS: I think I heard something about South Dakota, one time.

RK: Do you remember how old you were at that time?

HS: Well, what I have to figure is, if the war started in '41—let's see, close to January '42 so that's exactly six years after I was born. That must have been my age.

RK: After your father left mother and three children left behind?

HS: Yes.

RK: And, then, mother—at that time, what was she doing? Farming?

HS: Well, she wasn't doing the farming. Although, the father was doing the farming, or running the farm, and I remember my mother going out to help him with various duties. But, she, I don't think, knew anything about running the farm, so she must have been at a loss about what to do.

RK: You told me before the interview that your mother got sick.

HS: Yeah. I don't remember seeing her in any particular mental state. It's completely blank, but after the war, what I was told was she was in a state mental hospital. I was never any personal witness to her behavior, although, she had bouts of manic

- depressive behavior some years after, so I could see for myself. And then, my father indicated that she had various histories of mental imbalance from earlier times.
- RK: So, you told me, your mother or someone else drove you—
- HS: Definitely not my mother because she didn't know how to drive. Someone drove us to the orphanage, Shonien, and that's where we were probably soon after the war, or in January. I don't know exactly when.
- RK: You went to Shonien? Three brothers?
- HS: Yes.
- RK: I'm sorry, brothers and sister. Did I ask you your brother and sister's backgrounds? I think, no.
- HS: No. What sort of background?
- RK: Two years age difference. So, your youngest sister, Kazue, how old was she?
- HS: Well, we're two years apart, and I told you the dates, so one has to do a calculation.
- RK: You told me that you went almost six years you went to orphanage Shonien?
- HS: Yes.
- RK: Do you have any memory about the Shonien?
- HS: Yeah, various memories. Like we were first in the children's ward, because the very youngest ones were in the children's group, and then, later on we moved over to the little boys area. So, it was separated children: small girls and big girls, small boys and big boys.
- RK: That means that the girls section and the boys section was divided?
- HS: Oh, yeah.
- RK: Also the boy section was divided?
- HS: Yeah.
- RK: Older boy, younger boy.
- HS: Uh-huh.
- RK: You were in the younger boy section?

- HS: Later on but earlier we were in the children's section and that was, I think, both male and female children in the same area. And then, there was another room that was the sickroom.
- RK: Oh, so the six children.
- HS: No, no, sick—people who had like—I remember I had chicken pox when I was there.
- RK: So, the sick children is there?
- HS: Yeah.
- RK: It's like a hospital?
- HS: Well, I guess lots of children had childhood diseases so they were put aside. So many there that they had us roomed separately available.
- RK: Any memory about dormitory section you were put into?
- HS: Uh, what—well, I—what is it?
- RK: It's okay if you don't remember. Just simply say—
- HS: I have a picture in my mind roughly the way the rooms were arranged. There were bed spacing in a row and maybe two rows of beds on opposite sides of the room. In the little boys there was a leader who read stories to us. Let's see, meals, we were in a large dining hall. Shonien—the Village was separated into three barracks: two single barracks and then the main administration seems to be double-width barracks had the dining and sort of a group room and then the manager's office.
- RK: Okay, so the dining, everybody ate at the same time?
- HS: I think so, yeah. What I remember there was they emphasized eating everything on the plate. That's what I remember. (chuckles)
- RK: Do you have any memory about religious background? Shonien was a Christian institution.
- HS: It must have been. There didn't seem to be a strong influence of religion there. I remember there were some that were Catholics, and they went to Catholic church. So, there was nothing in the Village that seemed to empathize religion. Of course, if they did speak about religion, it was the Christian, but I don't think it was the kind that one would expect in a religious orphanage.

[00:20:00]

RK: I see. So, you don't have any memory about you being forced to go to church?

HS: No, I don't remember ever. Let's see, I remember being in a Christian service of some sort, but that didn't seem to be a weekly occurrence. There is very little memory of religion.

RK: Concerning the school, you went to school outside the Shonien?

HS: Well, the Shonien itself didn't have schools, so we left the Shonien area to go to various classes. I think that's the case because—yeah, these were just dormitories so, to get some school, one had to leave. And that was the situation before the war. In the Silver Lake area, we went from there to some local school, I remember, so that had to be the case.

RK: You went to school *within* Shonien?

HS: No, when I was living in Shonien, the location of the school was outside of the Shonien, just the public schools. Anybody going to first grade came from wherever they were. So, there was nothing special about the school.

RK: Did you walk to school?

HS: We must have. I don't remember. See, nobody was rich. (chuckles)

RK: Nobody?

HS: Nobody was rich, and they didn't have cars and so there was no other mode of transportation.

RK: So, you walked, probably. Can you tell me memories about school?

HS: School, yeah, well, I remember we were in the first grade, and the second grade was next door. And there was a Caucasian, or half Caucasian, in the second grade. People, I don't know for fun or what, but they attacked him. And a half Caucasian was one of the members of the Shonien. And, at that time, because he was different, I sort of remembered his name, and finally during the reunion, I finally met him and got some more of the story, background.

RK: Who was it?

HS: Ira¹, but I forgot his last name. He's not in the picture.

RK: I noticed from other interviews, the school is mixed with Jewish students. Do you have any memories?

¹ Ira Iwata, O.H. 3775, Center for Oral and Public History.

HS: Which school?

RK: The local school.

HS: Oh, yeah. Well, the other students were Caucasians, from what I remember. That's about it.

RK: Race-wise?

HS: Hm?

RK: Only Caucasian, Japanese American?

HS: I don't remember any black or other groups.

RK: So, you have no memories about the Jewish people?

HS: At that age, I couldn't tell the difference between Jewish and non-Jew.

RK: The teachers were also Caucasian teachers?

HS: I would gather so, but I don't remember what they were. Although in Manzanar our second grade teacher was a Chinese woman, but the first grade was probably Caucasian.

RK: Concerning the staff members at Shonien, do you have any memories about those staff members?

HS: Well, the one that I remember was a Caucasian woman, and the name that I remember started with—sounded, derr, so when we said, "Miss Drrr," it sounded like Mister. But then, the name, what was it? This one, forty-five. (looks at image)

RK: Forty-five?

HS: D'Ille.

RK: It's difficult.

HS: Yeah. So, Miss D'Ille.

RK: She was there?

HS: Well, I don't remember anything about her, except the way the name sounded a little bit. So that must have been Miss D'Ille, and it's almost like Mister, so that was probably the name.

- RK: So, she was not at Shonien as a staff member?
- HS: Oh, maybe she's there, but I don't know what function she had.
- RK: Well, this was Manzanar. We are talking about—
- HS: Silver Lake.
- RK: Yes, Shonien.
- HS: I don't have any memory of what kind of staff people they were.
- RK: So, you don't have any memory about Kusumoto?
- HS: No. (chuckles) Who's that? The manager?
- RK: Founder.
- HS: Oh.
- RK: Do you have any memory of friendship?
- HS: I don't remember anybody from there. And the only reason that we know of Matsuno is that after camp—well, we were in the same block, 18, in Manzanar. And then, after we left the camp, we were not too far away from each other. My sister played with their daughters, and so they're around. The memory is there mainly because of the after period; not during Manzanar.
- RK: During the Shonien time, do you have any experience of prejudice?
- HS: No.
- RK: How about in school?
- HS: Nothing, nothing from school that I remember.
- RK: During Shonien time, were you invited by Caucasian children to their home?
- HS: I never made friends with anybody, so I don't remember.
- RK: What was your relationship with your brother and sister?
- HS: During that time?
- RK: During Shonien.

HS: I don't remember much of anything that I did there with other kids or with brother and sister. I don't remember anything except that it was on a hill. That's pretty much all that I remember.

RK: So, you don't remember playing with them in the backyard? Shonien as a backyard, and they played.

HS: There is no memory of that.

RK: Do you have any memory about your first impression of Shonien after your mother—

HS: Not much. The only thing that I remember is that we were in a large room, sort of a playroom, going around in a circle dancing or something. I don't know. So, that's about it. I don't even remember any dining situation either.

[00:30:00]

RK: I see. So, just back and forth school and Shonien—there was no contact outside of school and Shonien?

HS: Um-hm.

RK: Because you were so young I guess you don't have any [memory] of reading newspaper or listening to the radio?

HS: No.

RK: Do you have any memory about toys around your bedroom?

HS: I don't remember—well, we weren't in a bedroom, except, there was a large room and a whole bunch of beds. So it's not a traditional bedroom; it's a ward. But, I don't remember any toys.

RK: Do you remember if a kid did not behave, if they were punished by staff member?

HS: Oh, I don't remember any of that.

RK: Do you remember about Shonien adoption inspection?

HS: I wasn't aware of anything of that sort.

RK: How did you find out about the Pearl Harbor attacks?

HS: Well, we were in Laguna Beach at that time.

RK: Laguna Beach?

HS: Laguna Beach.

RK: Because you were in Shonien?

HS: No, no, no. The war started, and Shonien was *after* the war started.

RK: After the war started?

HS: Well, there was no reason to do anything before the war started. Before any of this happened, I remember we were looking at highway, probably Pacific Coast Highway, and we were seeing military vehicles. That was unusual, something must be going on. But, the concept of was or something like that, I had no idea.

RK: Didn't you go to Manzanar from Shonien?

HS: Yes.

RK: Directly?

HS: Yes.

RK: What about Laguna Beach.

HS: Oh, Laguna Beach was before Shonien. See, we went to Shonien from Laguna Beach. That's where the people that were running the farm where.

RK: You moved to several places before. I understand. Do you have any memory about people's reactions, your reaction, about the Pearl Harbor attacks?

HS: I don't think I ever knew about Pearl Harbor, you now?

RK: But something is going on.

HS: Yeah. We were sort of in a farm country, and so not too many people around. So, I didn't see any sort of reaction.

RK: Do you have any memory about children's reaction? Or staff members' reaction?

HS: To the war? There was nothing unusual. The war was completely out of the mind of the kids. I don't remember any talk about the war.

RK: Do you remember—there was a range of kids, older kids and younger kids in the Shonien. Do you remember the older kids?

HS: Well, no. There was a bunch of older kids, but I don't remember any particular ones.

RK: Do you have any memories about the curfew?

HS: Curfew?

RK: Um-hm. Right after Pearl Harbor?

HS: What sort of curfew? Because, when you're a kid, it doesn't really apply because you're with your parents, and you are not likely to be alone.

RK: So, you went to Manzanar?

HS: Um-hm.

RK: So, I guess you didn't know about evacuation? Did staff members tell children, We are going to Manzanar?

HS: I don't remember being told. I just remember being put in buses, and we traveled to Manzanar.

RK: Was it like a picnic for you?

HS: Not a picnic, we didn't know why we were moving, but then I didn't question anybody.

RK: What did you bring with you to Manzanar?

HS: (chuckles) What did I have? We didn't have much of anything.

RK: How about toys?

HS: *No.* I don't remember any personal possession. We just boarded the buses. I don't remember having anything of my own.

RK: So, you took a bus?

HS: Yeah. I remember there being three buses or something like that. I don't think it was a single bus to carry all the kids.

RK: So, you went to Manzanar. You didn't take train?

HS: No.

RK: Oh, really? Okay. Do you have any memory on the bus?

HS: No, not at all. (chuckles)

RK: Do you remember who went from Shonien? Any members?

HS: Those kinds of things never entered into my mind. If there was a staff change, I wasn't aware of that. I guess, in the Shonien I wasn't aware of what the staff was. In the Manzanar, I guess, thinking back one would have realized that there was a difference. At that time, it was of little interest to me.

RK: What was your first impression of Manzanar?

HS: It was like a desert, like dust storms, and so that's pretty much what it was like when we got there.

RK: Do you remember what you saw there?

HS: What did I see there?

RK: Um-hm.

HS: Well, the barracks were already there. Most things were sort of in place by the time we got there, but that's the only impression that I have.

RK: Do you recall if there were other kids there? I think Salvation Army kids came later and Maryknoll and then Shonien?

[00:40:14]

HS: That kind of situation I had no knowledge of. When we went there, there were a lot of kids. And then, when we went to Manzanar, I wasn't keeping track of how many kids, so I didn't know if the population increased or decreased. It wasn't of interest to me.

RK: That's okay because you were so young. It's hard, I guess. It's called a Children's Village, but do you have any idea why it was called Children's Village orphanage?

HS: At that time I had no interest in what it was called.

RK: After did you think about that?

HS: Oh, euphemism, right?

RK: So, I'm asking you now, focusing on Children's Village, do you remember any prejudice from any Japanese internee in the camp life?

HS: What kind of prejudice? We were pretty much all the same, except there were a few half-Caucasian.

RK: I mean, from Children's Village, can you visit any other barracks?

- HS: I don't remember visiting other barracks. All my activities were within the Village. And then school—they were more common—there was no mention of background.
- RK: I should ask, first of all, Children's Village, Village life, comparing Shonien life, do you have any memory about Shonien life, Children's Village life was better or worse or something like that?
- HS: No, I don't remember anything seriously unpleasant nor particular happy, It was just social.
- RK: As a kid, it doesn't matter. This time you also had a big boys like a dormitory-type room with a bunch of beds?
- HS: Um-hm.
- RK: Do you have any memories about that boys' section, dormitory life?
- HS: Any memory?
- RK: This was on the wall or something like that.
- HS: Well, I don't remember anything in particular. The one thing I remember was one of the older kids told ghost stories, and so, I became afraid of ghost then.
- RK: So, you had a chance to mingle with the older kids?
- HS: Well, not much. The older kid, whoever that was, wanted to make us frightened, but we didn't normally play with each other.
- RK: How did you spend your time at the Children's Village?
- HS: Yeah, I don't remember.
- [recording paused]
- RK: We are talking about memories about playing.
- HS: Yeah. I don't know what happened all the time. I don't remember doing anything in particular, standing around or something. Yeah, that's sort of a blank. Some of the older kids, during the winter, made an igloo. And, of course, we didn't do anything, we were just watching.
- RK: Made what?
- HS: Igloo.

RK: Igloo.

HS: Igloo, you know like the Alaskan snow house. Doing things ourselves—I don't remember any particular activity.

RK: How about the dining practice at the Children's Village?

HS: Well, they seemed to have some discipline in the way you ate. I guess they emphasized posture when you were seated, and then I think emphasized eating everything on the plate. That's what I remember from there.

RK: As a child, do you have any complaints about Children's Village life?

HS: No, actually, I'm not the complaining sort. It did not enter my mind.

RK: Were you given pocket money or allowance?

HS: I don't think so. (chuckles) I don't remember any spending money.

RK: Do you have any memory about the foods you liked?

HS: No, but if there was something we didn't like it would be an awkward situation because you weren't supposed to leave anything.

RK: You were given clothes at the Children's Village.

HS: Apparently, yeah.

RK: Have memory?

HS: I wasn't fashion conscious.

RK: (laughs) So, you have no memory about visiting other barracks?

HS: There was very little outside of school.

RK: Can I ask you about school experience in Manzanar?

HS: Um-hm.

RK: You went to school in Manzanar in second grade?

HS: I think it was first and second. First and second, I remember. For four years, it must have been more than that. Third grade does not come into mind. Well, two grades—maybe the one I don't remember was the second one, and the one I remember is the

third grade. Or maybe I'm mixing them? It's sort of foggy there. One of the teachers was a Chinese woman. I think the first grade was Caucasian.

RK: In Shonien?

HS: No, this is in Manzanar.

[00:50:00]

RK: Cause first grade—

HS: First grade—maybe it was, no. It can't be. Maybe we were in there a short time. If it was May that we went there, maybe it was finishing up on the first grade. I'm not sure.

RK: So, the Chinese woman was teaching what?

HS: Either second or third grade.

RK: Any subject?

HS: Subject? One of the subjects I remember was concerning American Indians.

RK: Oh, tell me about that.

HS: There's nothing I remember. Except that was one of the subjects.

RK: So, mainly teachers are Caucasian teachers?

HS: Probably. I think that's the situation. Yeah, the fact that the one was a Chinese was an unusual thing.

RK: Did you study well there?

HS: I don't think so. Nothing special, there was no homework that I remember.

RK: Teachers were strict?

RK: No, nothing special.

RK: And all Japanese kids there?

HS: Yeah.

RK: Do you have any memories about textbooks?

HS: I don't remember very much about reading things. I don't remember anything much about any kids of lessons, so it's pretty much a blank.

RK: What did you do after school?

HS: I don't remember. Going to school, going back, nothing unusual.

RK: But, you played after school?

HS: I don't even remember that.

RK: How about before dinner, you had plenty of time?

HS: I don't know. I don't remember being short of time or having too much time.

RK: Did you see many people in the camp? Were there many children around you?

HS: Yeah. There were, there isn't anything to compare with. They were. That's it.

RK: Do you remember if the Children's Village had counseling or caseworkers? Were you counseled by the staff?

HS: No. There was nothing that I would call counseling.

RK: So, you didn't visit other Japanese barracks, people's barracks?

HS: No, I wasn't aware of anybody else visiting others either. Maybe they did, but I wasn't aware of that being a common occurrence.

RK: Do you have any memory about how the people treated you?

HS: Adults treated us?

RK: Um-hm. I mean, outside Children's Village, other barrack people.

HS: There was hardly any contact with other adults. The only adults we saw were teachers.

RK: How about teachers? Teachers are good?

HS: There was no complaint. I didn't have anything to compare, whether they were good teachers or bad teachers. Looking at it from here, I would say they were typical teachers.

RK: Since you were parted from your mother and also previously father, did you miss your parents frequently?

HS: Probably not. They didn't enter into my mind, at that time.

RK: Do you have any memories of the other kids?

HS: Of the other kids?

RK: Um-hm. Do you have any friendship or relationship?

HS: I was told that I was friendly with one of the kids, and sort of vaguely remember that I guess I must have spent time with one kid more than the others. But, there's been no contact, and it's a complete blank about who the kids are. So, there's been no contact.

RK: So, you don't have any complaints? Children's Village was much better than other barracks?

HS: Oh, I didn't know what was going on in the other barracks. I can't compare.

RK: How about Shonien and Children's Village? What was the difference between them?

HS: Well, I never thought about the differences, and, at that time, I didn't know why we were moved to Manzanar and what the situation was. But then, I never got curious to wonder why. What kid is philosophical about why are they here?

RK: Do you have any memories about parties, movies?

HS: Well, parties, they were maybe sort of Christmastime or something like that. When they had the Santa Claus there, I don't think I believed in a Santa Claus by that time. I think movies, that was after we left Children's Village. While we were in Children's Village, I don't think we ever saw a movie.

RK: I see. Since I'm completely an outsider, can you tell me what kind of facility Children's Village was?

HS: Well, what I remember, there were three barracks. One of them was double barracks that included the dining room that took maybe half the length of the building. And then, there was a sort of a group of parties, gatherings, and the administration was at one end. The middle building was the sickroom, at one end, and the children's room, and I don't remember whether there was a separate little girls' room or it was just a big girls' room. Because the children's room ended there, and then there was the bathroom facilities in the middle, big girls' room at the end. Maybe there was never little girls' separate room. And then, the third building was the little boys room and then bathroom facilities, and then it was the big boys' room.

[01:00:47]

- RK: Did you remember any infant kids separated? Do you have any memory about how they were treated?
- HS: No. I wasn't—the picture shows babies, but I don't know where they were kept, actually. Yeah, I don't remember any particular part of the facilities where they just had the babies.
- RK: I think you didn't care anything about your privacy?
- HS: (chuckles) Care? Those kinds of things are not in one's mind when you're in a place like that.
- RK: Do you know Mr. and Mrs. Matsumoto?²
- HS: I wasn't aware of who they were except recently.
- RK: So, you don't have no view about how they treated you?
- HS: Probably had no contact.
- RK: Do you have any memory about other Japanese or *hakujin* staff members?
- HS: No, nothing special.
- RK: Children's Village was a Christian institution?
- HS: That's what it seems to be. At the time, it didn't seem to be any special emphasis on religion. I don't remember lessons or people trying to convince me of any sort of god.
- RK: How about on Sundays? Did you attend Sunday service?
- HS: Well, I don't remember. If I did, nothing remains. There's a vague memory of a Christian service but that didn't seem to be like a regular occurrence.
- RK: Do you remember other kids attending Sunday service?
- HS: Well, I knew that there were a couple of kids that who were going to Catholic church. They were trying to memorize their catechism, I think, but that's the only memory I have about religion.
- RK: Do you have any memory—you speak Japanese—of the Sunday Japanese language Sunday school?

² Lillian Matsumoto, O.H. 2492, Center for Oral and Public History.

HS: Oh, no. Problem is it's the enemy language, so I don't think there was anything about teaching Japanese or anything there.

RK: So, how did you learn your Japanese?

HS: After marriage. (laughs)

RK: Your wife, I see. (chuckles) Do you have any memories about Manzanar hospital?

HS: Oh, I think I had the measles or something, so I was in the hospital there. I think I had the chicken pox, but I wasn't in the hospital, I was in the sickroom. That's about the only thing I remember.

RK: How was the hospital facility-wise?

HS: You know, as a kid, you don't look at those types of things.

RK: Doctors are Caucasian and Japanese doctors? That's what I noticed.

HS: Well, that's what I was told, but I wasn't looking at the doctors. I don't remember the nurses even.

RK: Do you remember if there were many people in the hospital? Was it crowded?

HS: I don't remember it being crowded as such.

RK: Do you have any memory—at Children's Village you must have had medical care of health check?

HS: No, I don't remember having anybody check us medically. When we had childhood diseases, we were in the sickroom, but I don't remember how it was determined we had a disease or anything. Maybe we were checked, but I don't remember that.

RK: Generally, did you feel safe at any moment at Children's Village?

HS: Safe? I wasn't aware of any violence or crime or anything so danger of that sort never came to mind.

RK: Do you remember, from the Shonien, many of the staff comes from children's Village?

HS: I wasn't keeping track of the staff, so I wasn't aware of any changes or if they were the same people or who came alone.

RK: Do you remember about the Manzanar riot?

HS: Oh, no. We never witnessed any of that sort.

RK: Did you hear about it right after that?

HS: No, no because those are adult subjects, and kids are concerned about those kinds of things.

RK: Since you were so young, I guess you were not asked about loyalty questions?

HS: (laughs) No.

RK: Did you know about that?

HS: No.

RK: Of course not! Did you know about *hapa* kids at Children's Village?

HS: Well, I never had direct contact. I was aware of one that was half Caucasian and being different, I happened to remember his first name. We never played together. Although, one picture that I remember seeing, I don't know if it's the same one, but there was a picture of a group of kids outside of school barracks. They all had their arms around each other, and they seemed to be friendly.

RK: Did you experience any physical or mental abuse at Children's Village?

[01:10:00]

HS: No, none. I don't remember anything of that sort.

RK: Do you have any vivid memory about school?

HS: School?

RK: School.

HS: Nothing special in school that I remember.

RK: Do you have any memory in general about Children's Village life?

HS: Well, during Christmastime, I think, there were a lot of gifts, toys at that time. That's what I remember thinking.

RK: Oh, so the toys were given to the children?

HS: Well, there were toys, or whatever, but then I don't remember what happened after that because I don't remember having any particular possessions.

- RK: So, the toys were everybody's possession? Not particular individual possession?
- HS: I don't know about others. I don't remember having any particular possessions of my own.
- RK: Do you remember bedtime? What time did you go to bedtime? Nine o'clock or something?
- HS: Everybody had to go to bed at the same time. Whatever the normal time was, we went to bed.
- RK: Did you have any memory about mischief?
- HS: No. I wasn't that sort. I'd just do ordinary things.
- RK: What about your brother and sister? In your case, Kazsui and Kenji?
- HS: During that time, they never came to mind.
- RK: But, you did see each other in the Children's Village?
- HS: I never remember making any effort to see them. If they were there, maybe then I knew that they were my brother and sister, but I don't remember any experience with them being around.
- RK: Do you remember interaction between boys and girls at the Children's Village? Were they separated?
- HS: Well, when I was in the children's ward, the children were together. We didn't have much contact with other groups, like older boys or the other boys. Then when we were in the boys' room, we didn't have much contact with the other children or anybody else. So, we were always in our own group. I thought that was the normal situation.
- RK: Did you know any children who come to the Children's Village from the outside?
- HS: I don't think any of that happened.
- RK: Before the interview, you told me [that] you had a memory about the ice cream.
- HS: No, my wife mentioned that. Because ice cream was rare around that time, I knew that there was long lines to buy ice cream. That was after the Children's Village because when I was in Children's Village, I wasn't going to go out and buy things so I don't special memory about ice cream. Maybe I did, but I don't remember now.
- RK: Did you experience fear and loneliness while you were in the Children's Village?

HS: No.

RK: Were you a carefree child?

HS: I guess so.

RK: Did you always have someone to talk to if something happened?

HS: No, there was no occasion where I needed to talk to anybody.

RK: During the winter season, was it warm enough inside the Children's Village?

HS: I don't remember feeling cold or anything, so I must have been okay.

RK: What about summertime? Was it hot?

HS: I don't remember being uncomfortable. That wasn't what remains.

RK: What was the climate like at Manzanar?

HS: We knew that it was snowing in winter, but we didn't suffer from the cold. If it was hot during summer, I don't remember suffering from the heat.

RK: But, you experienced the wind and dust?

HS: Oh, dust storms? This was after the Village, I was walking out in the open dust storms occurred. I remember the stinging effects of the small stones in your face, that's what I remember.

RK: So, after Children's Village, you told me you lived together with your father because father came back, so you went to another barrack?

HS: Yes.

RK: So, when your father was released from the FBI, father came back to Manzanar?

HS: Um-hm.

RK: And he lived where?

HS: In the bachelor's quarters. There was one corner of Manzanar where single male adults were assigned, so then he was in one of those barracks.

RK: Do you have any idea how many bachelors were living there?

HS: No.

RK: How long did your father live there, before you joined [him]?

HS: I don't know. He lived there, and then we got together. Then later, my mother was released, so the family was whole again. In that period, we moved to three different places.

RK: Do you remember your mother or father and Executive Order 9066?

HS: We never—the parents never talked about those things—about that—to us or to each other, apparently because the only information I got about that was from history.

RK: So, your mother was in the hospital when you were sent to Shonien? And when you departed Shonien for Manzanar? Your mother was still in the hospital?

HS: Yeah. See, she was in the hospital until she was released, but I don't remember exactly when. We moved three places, and the last barrack was in Block 18. That's when my mother came back.

RK: When you say mother was released, was she recovered from her disease?

HS: Well, probably, although whatever she suffered came back again. Throughout her life she wasn't normal. Sometimes it got worse. Other times, it was not so bad.

[01:20:10]

RK: So, she was maybe in much better condition in that time?

HS: Uh, probably.

RK: Was the hospital a private hospital?

HS: Oh, no. It was a state mental hospital.

RK: What was your mother's disease name?

HS: Well, I don't know what she had actually during the wartime, but then I did witness a manic-depressive situation. So, that's what she had at that time. There was an incidence of a manic-depressive condition, but the usual case was persecution. She was always hearing the neighbors plotting against her, or something like that. It seems like a mixture of various diseases.

RK: So, your mother was released from the hospital and came to Manzanar and then joined first to your father?

HS: No, no. We were with our father first, and then mother came.

- RK: And then, your whole family stayed at Manzanar?
- HS: Yes.
- RK: Until the end of the war?
- HS: Yes.
- RK: Before asking about life with your father, in Children's Village, do you have any memories with Issei men and Issei women working there?
- HS: No.
- RK: Later, during the end of the war? Do you have any memory?
- HS: Well, if it was during the end of the war, we were out of the Village. When we were in the Village, I don't remember anything about Issei men or women.
- RK: How did you view the Children's Village circumstances? Did you like the orchards?
- HS: There was a pear orchard next to the village. I don't know what you are asking.
- RK: I noticed that Children's Village is much better than other barracks, facilities-wise, and then gardens are beautiful.
- HS: Well, when we first got there, there was nothing, but I think some people got together and made some sort of park near the Village. But, we weren't comparing our facilities with other barracks or anything. That wasn't the thing that remained in my mind.
- RK: When you left the Children's Village, did you feel sentimental or anything?
- HS: I don't think so.
- RK: After Children's Village, you three kids joined your father. What was your reaction to join your father?
- HS: I don't remember any emotions. Something happens in your lifetime, and another thing happens in your lifetime. So, whatever happened wasn't painful, so there was no complaint.
- RK: Your elder brother had more of a reaction, do you think?
- HS: Probably, yeah.

- RK: How was living in the barracks after the Children's Village? Was it different where you lived?
- HS: Different? Well, it was just our group in one room, but other than that I don't know what to say. It was different, but it wasn't something so different that one complained about it.
- RK: So, the father, at the time father was taken by FBI, he didn't bring with him anything?
- HS: To take with him?
- RK: Um-hm.
- HS: I don't think so. I don't know what the situation—I wasn't there. They usually didn't take much of anything.
- RK: I'm just wondering, your mother was hospitalized, you went to the Shonien, and your father was with the FBI. So who took care of your family property?
- HS: Well, see, that's a complete blank for me. I don't know what happened after they both disappeared. So, who and what the situation was where someone took us to the Shonien, I don't know what happened or how long a period that was. It's a complete blank for me.
- RK: Really? After the war, did you contact the state or trace back any of your family property?
- HS: Well, there was no family property. Like the things that we owned? Well, maybe when my father was still there, the government confiscated radios and things, I think. I remember sometime after the war—we had a large console radio, and after the war, they were allowed to pick up the remnants and get it back the property. So, what was left of the property was a little piece from the big radio. That's the only thing—I don't know what other items we owned that disappeared.
- RK: So, when you were with your father, you went to the big dining room? Everybody has to queue to get meals?
- HS: Well, yeah. Outside the Children's Village, the situation was somewhat similar. There was a double-sized barrack for dining for the rest of the population. I don't remember having to stand in line. Well, in a normal situation, there was a short line, not having to wait a long time. I don't remember that happening.
- RK: Other informants mentioned that the Children's Village served much better food than the barracks. Did you—no?

HS: I didn't have any basis for comparison. Well, maybe—it wasn't too important to me. We had food in the Children's Village, and then we had food in the regular blocks outside. But, food wasn't a big part of my life, so it didn't seem to matter. I don't remember anything very tasteful, but then it was of little interest to me. I don't remember anything about that.

[01:30:34]

RK: Generally, after the Children's Village, you went to a much [more] open space, but you lived with your father. Did you have any contact with the other Japanese in the camp?

HS: Well, like the kids around the block?

RK: Um-hm.

HS: Some, but not that much, actually.

RK: We are going to change the tape. [recording paused] Okay, I was asking you about your experience after the Children's Village? The other barrack life with your father.

HS: Well, it's another phase. Normal kids go to school, play, but I don't remember anything special.

RK: Mealtime the whole family went to the dining hall?

HS: Yes.

RK: After meals, did you mingle with other families or their kids?

HS: I don't think so.

RK: So, after meal, you came back to your barracks?

HS: I think so.

RK: Do you remember your father having friends in there?

HS: Well, during the earlier periods, I don't remember, but in the last block, Block 18, in the next building, there was a person the family was close to. And they remained such after the war, so there was a long period of friendship, the parents with their parents. So that's what I remember. Some building, some spaces over, was the Matsuno^{3 4} family, and there was contact there.

³ Takatow Matsuno, O.H. 2339, Center for Oral and Public History.

⁴ Mary Matsuno Miya, O.H. 2489, Center for Oral and Public History.

RK: School-wise, the same school? Did you go in Manzanar?

HS: Well, the school changes in grades so—and there were various places.

RK Did you continue the same grade?

HS: Well, I remember when we were in, maybe, second grade, the Village manager had to sign the report card. In the middle of the school period, when we left the Village, then my father had to sign the rest of the reports. So there was a period where part of the school year I was living in the Children's Village, and then the other part I began to live with my father.

RK: But, school itself is the same school?

HS: Well, at the time, because each grade—the second grade was located in a different location from the others. It seems to be scattered about. It didn't seem to be where all the grades were located in one block or anything.

RK: My next question is you left Children's Village and started living with your father. Did you keep going to the same school in the Village?

HS: Same school. That had nothing to do with the Village; it was outside.

RK: Did you have any inconvenience or frustration at the time outside of Children's Village life?

HS: I don't remember anything especially unpleasant or pleasant. I just existed.
(chuckles)

RK: With your father, did you receive pocket money or something?

HS: No, I don't remember spending money or anything. Allowance for spending money? I don't remember that being in our family at all.

RK: When you were with your father, did you feel like a family like feeling? You don't remember?

HS: No. You know, you're born and then you exist and you don't question whether that's the situation or whether you have a better situation. There was no particular complaint, so then I wasn't hoping for any other kind of life.

RK: In the barracks after the Children's Village life, did you have any special memories with your father or with your siblings? Most vivid memories?

HS: Uh, no. (chuckles) Nothing special. Let's see, the faucet in the early morning, I guess, iced, so there was an icicle.

RK: Ice, what?

HS: You know? Water from the faucet makes ice. So, it must have been cold. There's nothing that I can remember special. It was just a normal life. Normal for the situation, I guess.

RK: So, you played mainly with your siblings?

HS: Played?

RK: You didn't play with anybody else?

HS: No.

RK: Oh, I see. And you stayed inside the barracks?

HS: Well, we must have gone outside. I don't remember playing or doing anything special. We must have been doing something outside. What did I like to do? I didn't remember any particular thing.

RK: Your father, at that time, was he working?

HS: There were a little bit of jobs available for people, and there was construction of a large auditorium there. I think he was part of that.

RK: He was part of what?

HS: Part of the workers. But, see, when you're behind barbed wire, you don't have to work. You're fed, and that's it. The jobs available were, I guess, for extra money.

RK: So, your father was working a little bit?

HS: Yes.

RK: What was he doing?

HS: Carpentry.

RK: So, he was mainly building—

HS: Well, he was part of the crew that built the auditorium is what I remember, but after that I don't think there was anything.

[01:40:00]

RK: He was mainly working inside the camp?

HS: Oh, yeah, never outside.

RK: I see. I guess you had more freedom outside of Children's Village? How was that?

HS: I didn't feel any restriction. I didn't feel restricted in the Children's Village. I don't know if there was a rule to keep us inside, but there was no urge to go outside either.

RK: So, your mother joined you?

HS: Yes.

RK: Do you have any memory how long you stayed with your father until your mother joined you?

HS: I don't know, maybe a year. I have no idea.

RK: You didn't contact the state?

HS: For what?

RK: For the record of when mother came back.

HS: No, I didn't see any need.

RK: I have no idea, but if you write to them, contact the state, maybe they will give you information.

HS: Well, that information isn't very useful to me. For historical purposes, maybe, but I have other interests. (chuckles)

RK: I see. Can you describe the memory when your mother joined you?

HS: Well, I sort of remember thinking that I don't know this woman because I guess I didn't remember exactly what she looked like. Like, if she were walking in the city, then I probably wouldn't have recognized her. But, I don't know, I was six years old, I should have remembered. My relationship with my mother wasn't that close to begin with, so probably there wasn't that normal child-mother relationship.

RK: When you were reunited with your mother, you were nine?

HS: Probably, probably nine.

RK: And you didn't remember her?

HS: When I last saw my mother I was six, so then—but a six-year-old child should be able to remember their parents, right? But I guess I didn't, yeah.

- RK: I guess children need parental care, parental love. When your mother joined you, did you feel like a family?
- HS: No, I don't think I was close to my mother emotionally. I don't know how my brother and sister, I don't know how they felt, but I don't feel that I was very close, so she was almost like a stranger when she came back.
- RK: Were you closer to your father compared to your mother?
- HS: Well, if it's just a comparison, probably, but I don't think I was that close to either one.
- RK: I see. You're a very independent child. (laughs) Did your mother join you at mealtime?
- HS: Probably.
- RK: Generally, did your family have contact with other people, other families?
- HS: Yeah. They had some friends next barracks. Then there was a family that lived in the next block, Block 17, and they continued contact long after the war.
- RK: Do you remember your mother or father was asked Executive Order 9066?
- HS: What about that? The parents never talked about those things—
- RK: It's about the evacuation.
- HS: The evacuation order. The parents never talked about that to us, or to each other because the only information I got about that was just history.
- RK: As a child, did you feel insecure about the future?
- HS: The future never occurred in my mind. You lived day-to-day.
- RK: Okay, so never specific—so you never had any difficulties there?
- HS: Apparently not. There was no special pain or painful memories.
- RK: That's good. Did you enjoy schooling?
- HS: Enjoy? That wouldn't be the word for me, but then I didn't find it unpleasant either. So that's—we all went to school, and it was a normal condition. I didn't feel any complaints.

RK: I'm asking you now about after camp. After the end of World War II, where did you go?

HS: My father got a job as a farm laborer. That was somewhere in Culver City. Then my father came down with rheumatism, so he wasn't able to work. So then, we moved to Los Angeles, and we were living on welfare.

RK: First of all, after the camp, where did you go?

HS: Culver City.

RK: It is located near where?

HS: You know where Gardena is?

RK: Yes.

HS: It says on the document, Culver City. Actually, it was in the Gardena region. It was all farm area then. Our family and another family were in that area as farm laborers. The other family, they were living in the barn, what used to be a barn. Then we were in the house. The house was for farm laborers, but we weren't there for very long.

[01:50:20]

RK: So, after a short period, you moved to another place?

HS: It was Toyo Hotel in East First Street, downtown L.A.

RK: You went to Toyo Hotel?

HS: Yeah, after we came back from Gardena.

RK: You stayed in hotel long?

HS: Yeah, but that was a hotel with all Japanese.

RK: Oh, Japanese community?

HS: Well, it's not a fancy hotel. All the rooms were single rooms, so the families were in single rooms.

RK: My understanding is that hotel means you just stay temporary, but you used the hotel like an—

HS: Like an apartment.

- RK: I see. And then your mother, at that time, did your mother work?
- HS: Well, she was working in a fish cannery, I think. From the hotel, I think she traveled to San Pedro.
- RK: So, much better condition for her? Because she was able to work.
- HS: Well, I don't know. I don't know the details there. She was working there, I gathered. Later on, she was working as a cleaning woman in various houses.
- RK: As a child, did you feel from your mother motherly love?
- HS: No, I don't think there was much of that there.
- RK: Was it because of her mental breakdown?
- HS: I don't think that's the reason. Some families are not that close. I don't think we were very close in that way.
- RK: How about your father? Did you feel fatherly love as a child?
- HS: Well, maybe, but then the concept of love was not within the realm of my childhood experience.
- RK: So, your mother supported the whole family?
- HS: We were on welfare, so welfare money came in. My mother, in addition to that, was working.
- RK: And was your father working?
- HS: No, he was always at home, I think.
- RK: So, you lived with your family until when? Did you become independent? Did you get married? Or did you get a job?
- HS: Oh, I went to school. I went to UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles].
- RK: After Manzanar, where did you go to school?
- HS: Grammar, junior high school, high school, all those regular public schools, then UCLA.
- RK: What grade were you in when you left Manzanar? Fourth or something?
- HS: I think it must have been third grade—

- RK: And then, after that you continued fourth grade?
- HS: Yeah.
- RK: You told me grammar school? What's that?
- HS: Grammar school goes up to the sixth grade. Then junior high school is seventh, eighth, ninth.
- RK: And your parents supported you, and then welfare.
- HS: Yeah.
- RK: And then you went to UCLA?
- HS: Yeah.
- RK: What did you study?
- HS: Engineering.
- RK: Can I ask right now, your occupation?
- HS: I'm an engineer.
- RK: Specifically, what kind of engineer?
- HS: Electronics. But the activities of microwave communication satellite.
- RK: I see. In Japanese it's *Jinkouisei* [manmade satellite].
- HS: Yeah.
- RK: Wow! Can you provide me your sibling's backgrounds after the camp? They also got schooling?
- HS: My sister, after high school, went to L.A. County Art Institute. Then after that she went to Berkley.
- RK: UC Berkley. What did she study?
- HS: Art.
- RK: What about Kenji-san?

HS: Right after high school, he went into the Army. And then I guess he studied optical things in the Army, so that's what he's doing now.

RK: So, they live near California?

HS: Well, my sister is in Berkley, and Kenji is in San Bernardino.

RK: How old you when you left camp.

HS: I must have been nine years old.

RK: Can you give me a background of your marriage? Who did you marry?

HS: I married in 1970.

RK: At the age of?

HS: I was old. Thirty-four.

RK: You married to a Japanese woman?

HS: Yes.

RK: And her name is Luna.

HS: Luna.

RK: When you left Children's Village, did you have any memory about it?

HS: Did I have what?

RK: Did you have any reaction when you left Manzanar camp? Was it exciting? Was it happier?

HS: No special emotions. As each change occurred in my life, it was something that occurred without any value attached to it. It was just the next phase of my life.

[02:00:10]

RK: So, you don't feel any impact of camp life on your life after you left?

HS: Impact? As a child, there wasn't much suffering, I think.

RK: I see. So, after camp, as you gradually became as adult, did you feel the impact of camp life?

- HS: I don't think so. For me, it wasn't a bad experience, so it's a different situation for adults. But for kids, it wasn't too bad.
- RK: The Japanese people lost their property before the evacuation. In your case, your family lost [property]. What was your reaction?
- HS: It's not emotional because I wasn't attached to the property emotionally. As a kid, I don't remember having any things of my own that I was attached to so they disappeared. I didn't feel a loss. I mean, I never thought about losing my own property, if I had any. I'm pretty sure that if I lost the property I have now, it would be a much stronger effect. So being a child, if I had toys, I wasn't even thinking about those kinds of things.
- RK: When your father was taken by FBI, did you know what happened to your father?
- HS: No.
- RK: Did you talk to father after the camp?
- HS: Well, a little bit, not much detail. He was saying the interrogation asked about—I guess, he didn't say much. He mentioned that there was an interrogation and then there was—I don't know how much that had to do with it but there's a symbol in Buddhism that looks like a swastika but in the opposite direction. So, I sort of think that was questioned about that, but any details about the interrogation, I don't think we got a clear picture. Our family didn't do too much talking, so we didn't get that much information.
- RK: From your perception, your father was angry about it? Or anything about your father's reaction can you mention?
- HS: He never expressed anger about the situation. Although it would be understandable one would be angry. So I guess that was unusual, he never expresses anger at what happened to him.
- RK: Was there physical abuse during interrogation?
- HS: He never mentioned anything.
- RK: Where was he taken?
- HS: I'm not sure, but I think he motioned something about South Dakota. I don't know if that is accurate or not.
- RK: Do you have any children?
- HS: No.

RK: Your siblings also got married?

HS: Yeah. My brother married, his wife died, and then he's married to a Caucasian, now. Then my sister married and then divorced.

RK: Sorry for the back and forth, your father had the sickness of rheumatism? And then, he stopped working. Is he alive?

HS: No, he died.

RK: When did he die?

HS: Nineteen sixty-eight.

RK: At the age of?

HS: About eighty.

RK: Did he do any working after that?

HS: He was a handyman at a mortuary.

RK: Your mother and father lived together?

HS: Yeah.

RK: And your mother also died?

HS: Yeah.

RK: Do you know when she died?

HS: She died when she was about seventy-five. So it was 1985, 1986.

RK: So, your mother and father almost died close—

HS: No, no because my father died in 1968, and my mother died in 1986, I think. There's a twenty-year age difference between the two so they never got along with each other.

RK: When you left mother and father, they separately supported themselves? I mean, children and parents separately.

HS: Once we had a job, we were sort of independent.

RK: You went to UCLA, and then you got a job?

HS: Um-hm.

RK: Still the same company?

HS: The company is Hughes Aircraft.

RK: So, there is no effect of internment camp on your present life?

HS: I don't think so.

RK: Did you go to the reunion in May 1992, in Los Angeles?

HS: Yes.

RK: Will you tell me about that reunion?

HS: All these people were completely new to me because I didn't remember anybody, except the one person whose name I remembered, I talked to him.

RK: Who?

HS: The half-Caucasian. It sort of satisfied my curiosity, mainly.

RK: What happened to them?

HS: Not really that, it's like a vague name in my memory. It just cleared that there was a person there. It sort of was satisfying my curiosity of what people were like. See, every single person in the picture, memory is zero for that time.

RK: So, you did not identify them?

[02:10:00]

HS: No. So, the only person that I remember is from after the Children's—the Matsuno family.

RK: Did you talk to the Matsuno family?

HS: Well, during the reunion, yeah, with the older sisters and Takatow. And there was some questions that I could ask them, too.

RK: Did you contact Matsuno family beforehand?

HS: *No.* See, the only relationship a long time ago was my sister played with their girls. I remember in junior high school, Takatow was in the same school but we never closed in.

RK: Did you experience any racism or prejudice?

HS: Experienced here and there, but not that much actually.

RK: So, it's not a problem for you.

HS: Well, it's not a pleasant feeling, but I don't experience it that often so it's not foremost in my mind.

RK: Do you think the orphanage and Children's Village was wrong? If the Children's Village wasn't provided, you didn't have any place to go as an orphan, do you think that it is wrong, especially since you are such a small age, to be interned?

HS: Well, the purpose of internment was racial. A two-year-old kid or a six-year-old kid is not going to be a military threat, so it's nonsense.

RK: You received \$20,000. Of course, it's not enough, but how did you feel about Redress redemption?

HS: Well, it's more than zero. Many people didn't have anything before they died. I never thought we would get anything, so something is better than nothing.

RK: So, do you perceive it's a good sign because American government apologized to people of Japanese ancestry?

HS: Well, apology is not meaningful, when it's not really meant. There's a law that says the president has to apologize; that's just following the rules. But what's the personal emotion of everybody who was to apologize? It's not there, so it's just a form.

RK: Again, back and forth, was the reunion very meaningful for you? And, if so, how?

HS: I don't think that meaningful. It was just more of curiosity satisfaction. I'm not a social person so it's not that meaningful.

RK: Did you attend party during the reunion?

HS: Party? There was a gathering, a dinner, so that's what I attended. Other than that, there wasn't much to talk about in terms of memory because I didn't have any. In terms of what people were like—the adult compare to the children, I didn't think much about it; I don't dwell on it.

RK: What reminds you of camp life in the present life?

HS: What reminds me?

RK: Um-hm.

HS: Well, on occasion when people talk about Manzanar that comes to mind. Most of my life is not looking back in Manzanar. Most of it had been consumed with work.

RK: Was Manzanar a minor event in your life?

HS: Yeah, pretty minor.

RK: And do you perceive it as positive?

HS: Positive?

RK: Positive.

HS: No, I wouldn't say positive. It just an experience; so as an individual, I didn't suffer. The concept behind that wrong.

RK: Would you be afraid if history repeats itself?

HS: Every time history repeats itself, it's not in the same form. You have people who think of other people as groups rather than individuals. That's the fault of the people who do these things, and that doesn't change.

RK: Do you feel it's important to tell your story to others?

[02:19:40]

HS: I don't think telling your story is going to change people much. If one is going to correct injustice, knowing about the history isn't going to have that much—because it's how people who stereotype people think. That mental process has to change. With those types of people, knowing the history of another group doesn't make any difference to them it seems. People who think in simple terms or stereotypically—plus, if they have power—then it becomes dangerous. Right? So, in order to correct the situation, first you have to teach people to think clearly or fairly. You can't treat people in terms of groups because that's not meaningful. And a dangerous thing is—keep those out of power, that is if you can't change their thinking. Like people say homosexuals, it's know it's based on hereditary and genetics so that should cure everything but it's completely false because blacks are born that way and that doesn't help them.

RK: Do you have any religion?

HS: No. (chuckles)

RK: I was just wondering, what has helped you from the camp experience?

HS: What has helped me?

- RK: Uh-huh, helped. Are you healed from the camp experience?
- HS: Well, I guess I'm not affected the same way others are. It's just history. I didn't feel the same type of lose as adults would. I guess I really didn't have property, but, as an adult, one thinks of about the stupidity, you know, the way people behave.
- RK: Can I ask, both Kenji and Kazue, what are they paying attention from their children?
- HS: Kazue doesn't have any children and Kenji had a daughter who died, so they don't have no children.
- RK: The daughter died? From disease?
- HS: Yeah. Let me see, what was it? Complications from asthma or something. I'm not sure.
- RK: For you, what is World War II?
- HS: What is World War II?
- RK: In general, what is World War II? Did it change your life completely or just minor things?
- HS: It's history. I mean, people behave stupidly. Imperialism, that started things going, but the way it was conducted, it seemed certain groups treated it as a race war.
- RK: Did you see the movie, *Come See the Paradise*?
- HS: No.
- RK: Why?
- HS: Why? They advertise things—it showed a white male and a Japanese female rolling in the beach, and I thought that was stupid. (chuckles) So, I probably didn't go—
- RK: I see. Have you visited Japan?
- HS: Yeah.
- RK: When?
- HS: Seventy-six or—let me see, '68, '69, a couple times.
- RK: By yourself?
- HS: With my sister and then with my wife.

RK: Did you see your ancestors?

HS: Oh, we went to my father's family's area, and also my mother's.

RK: What was the reaction?

HS: Reaction, there was some history there. It seems to be a long history. They are up in the mountains, so away from all the big towns.

RK: Did they know the Japanese American's experience during World War II?

HS: I don't know. We never talked about that when we were there.

RK: Is there anything you would like to add?

HS: Well, it is hard to understand how this is going to help history—

RK: Well, each person had a different perspective and perception. I appreciate you. Thank you very much for your information and patience. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW