[Begin George Nakano - File One]

Interviewer:
Okay, today is May 16, 2004. My name is Albert Muratsuchi and I will be interviewing George Nakano today as part of the South Bay Oral History Project. The audio equipment recording this interview is being monitored by Edwin Mitoma and the interview is being cataloged by Clarissa Park Muratsuchi. All rights, title, and any other rights arising out of this interview whether in its entirety, part, or derivative form and whether in audio, written, or any other format, shall belong to the South Bay Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. Copying of this interview recording, whether in its entirety or part, is strictly prohibited without a written authorization from the South Bay Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. This is the first CD of the interview of George Nakano being recorded on this date.

Thank you very much, George. Let me start by going through some of the basic questions that are listed in your pre-interview questionnaire. Is the sound okay? Okay, George, you are, of course, a long-time resident of Torrance. How long have you lived in Torrance?

Nakano:
Since 1965---December '65 is when we bought our house that we're residing in right now.

Interviewer:
Okay, and prior to your moving into the house that you're residing in right now, did you live anywhere in the South Bay?

Nakano:
Yes. We lived three years in Manhattan Beach prior to that, and we bought the house in Manhattan Beach in 1962. And you'd be shocked at the price that we paid, and the reason why we bought the house in Manhattan Beach is because it was cheaper than Gardena because we were living in an apartment in Gardena, and naturally because of the large Japanese-American population in Gardena, we looked in Gardena. Three bedroom homes in 1962 were going for like $21,000, and at that time we had our first child. And so you know you'd like to have a backyard and those kinds of things. And so we thought, "Well why don't we look in the rest of the South Bay area?" And so we... actually we looked in Manhattan Beach and bought that house for $18,500---a three-bedroom house.

Interviewer:
What year was that?

Nakano:
1962, and there was a part of a large tract of homes that were built in 1948. And so we lived there for three years. We remodeled the kitchen; but anyway the house was a little bit too small. We... you know and in '64, we had our second child. And so we thought, "Well why don't we look for a larger home," and in Manhattan Beach, a larger home was you know cost-prohibitive. So we looked in Torrance and that's when we bought this other house.

0:03:22.5

Interviewer:
Oh; so you were in Manhattan Beach from 1962 to 1965?

Nakano:
Correct.

Interviewer:
And you've been in Torrance ever since 1965?

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Prior to Manhattan Beach, did you live in the South Bay?

Nakano:
Yes, we lived in an apartment in Gardena. Although it has a Gardena mailing address, I think it's part of a County Strip, because it's just, I think, north of... 149th Street in (inaudible). So I think that's just north of El Camino College, I think.

Interviewer:
And when did you move into that apartment?

Nakano:
Nineteen sixty.

Interviewer:
And were you at that apartment from 1960 to the time that you moved to Manhattan Beach?

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:
So prior to moving in the apartment in Gardena or in the Gardena vicinity in 1960, did you live anywhere in the South Bay?

Nakano:
I lived in Gardena from 1956 to 1960 when I got married.

Interviewer:
Okay, so you were living as a bachelor in Gardena from 1956 to 1960?

Nakano:
Yeah, I was living with my parents then.

Interviewer:
Okay, so you actually... your history in the South Bay actually goes back to 1956 then?

Nakano:
Correct.

0:04:51.5

Interviewer:
Uh-huh. Any earlier than that?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Okay, let's start with your family background. You were born in 1935 in Los Angeles, California?

Nakano:
Correct.

Interviewer:
Could you describe the community that you were born in?

Nakano:
Well, I was born in the Boyle Heights area, delivered by a mid-wife, and we lived there probably about a year---up until about a year before the war broke out. And we moved to the so-called "uptown" area, which is very close to Koreatown today. Actually,

we lived on 11th Street, and I think it's west of Vermont, but near Fedora, I think. And while we were living there, World War II broke out. And I distinctly remember going to Santa Anita from a parking lot where all these buses were lined up -- motorcycle police officers -- but I didn't know where that was. And the interesting thing is that several years ago, there were -- there was an "uptown" reunion that took place, and so I went to it and they had a map of the "uptown" area in which all the people who resided within this boundary had to report to the St. Mary's Episcopal Church and it was at -- in that parking lot is where these buses were lined up.

Interviewer:
Okay, we're going to be going more into detail in your internment experience, but I'd like to try to get the basic family information now before we really get into that.

Nakano:
Uh-hm, sure.

Interviewer:
Your father's name is Shigeto Nakano?

Nakano:
Correct.

Interviewer:
And your mother is Sumie Nakano?

Nakano:
Uh-hm.

Interviewer:
And you have three siblings, Shigeko, Toshio, and Roy Yukio?

Nakano:
Correct.

Interviewer:
Okay; and your spouse is Helen... is this... how do you pronounce this, Unno?

Nakano:
Unno.

Interviewer:
Unno, okay, all right. And where is Helen originally from?

Nakano:
She was born in Seattle, Washington and then I think -- during the war she went to Minedoka, Idaho. That was the other camp that we just... and then from there she went to Hood River, Oregon, because that's where her grandparents and her uncle had an orchard. And so she lived there for a while, and then her family moved to Los Angeles.

Interviewer:
Now, in tracing your family's history in the United States, was it Shigeto Nakano, who was the Issei, first generation....

Nakano:
No, no, he's second generation.

Interviewer:
Okay, he's second generation?

Nakano:
In fact, both of my parents are second generation. They were both born in Hawaii.

Interviewer:
Okay, all right.

Nakano:
My grandfather went to Hawaii as a laborer, working in the cane field and my father was born in a place called Papaiko, which is about 15 miles from Hilo on the Big Island.

Interviewer:
Oh, okay.

Nakano:
And my mother was born in Waimanalo on---in Oahu.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
But in those days, they used to go to Hawaii, work for like a year, save money, and then they would return to Japan. And often they would come back to Hawaii again to earn some more money. And then so what happened then in my parents' cases is when they were very little, my parents returned to Japan and so they were educated in Japan. So they are the ones who are called Kibeis.

Interviewer:
Okay, now before we go into your parents' history, your---you say it was your grandfather who was the first immigrant from Japan to the United States?

Nakano:
Correct, uh-huh.

Interviewer:
And what was his name?

Nakano:
Gee; I don't know. **[Laughs]**

Interviewer:
Have to check the family history book for that.

Nakano:
Yeah; I have a family tree thing at home that somebody put together for me in Japan.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you know from what prefecture he came?

0:09:54.3

Nakano:
Yeah. Hiroshima.

Interviewer:
Hiroshima okay. And so he went from Hiroshima to Hawaii?

Nakano:
Yeah, correct.

Interviewer:
As a laborer working in the sugar cane fields?

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Okay. So your father---both your father and your mother were born in the Big Island of Hawaii?

Nakano:

No; my mom was born in Oahu.

Interviewer:
In Oahu. Okay, all right. And what did your father do in Hawaii as an occupation or for a living?

Nakano:
No. He was---when he was very little, they returned to Japan. And so he went to school in Japan. And I think what heard was he was about six years old when they went to---returned to Japan.

Interviewer:
And was he educated in Japan....

Nakano:
Both of them have a 9th grade education; that was the mandatory education that everyone I guess at that time.

Interviewer:
And this is in Hiroshima?

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Uh-huh. So at what point did your father return to the United States?

Nakano:
When he was 16 years old, he went to Hawaii, and worked as a carpenter over there. And I guess one of the things that he got involved with was building these troughs you might call it where the water would run from one place to another and was, I guess, did a lot of that kind of work.

Interviewer:
His first 16 of his.... Well you said that your father went to Japan---went back to Japan around when he was six years old, and then he came back to work in Hawaii when he was 16. Was there times when he would come back and forth between Japan and the United States?

Nakano:
I think what happened in this case is he worked in Hawaii for several years and then came to work on the mainland for a while, and then returned to Japan to get married. And then both of them came back to the mainland, U.S.

Interviewer:
So he met your mother in Japan then?

Nakano:
It was an arranged marriage.

Interviewer:
Uh-huh. But the arrangements were made in Japan?

Nakano:
Yeah, uh-huh.

Interviewer:
So your father then, after your mother and father got married, they returned to the United States?

Nakano:
Yeah, I think they came here around 1933.

Interviewer:
Okay. And where did they return to?

Nakano:
I know they worked in Marysville for a while.

Interviewer:
Where is that?

Nakano:
And then kind of worked their way down to Southern California eventually, because that's where I was born.

Interviewer:
Where were you born?

Nakano:
Los Angeles --- in the Boyle Heights area.

Interviewer:
So they were working in Marysville. Were they working in the farming industry?

Nakano:
I think initially he was working in the orchard... of course, you know, the farming industry.

Interviewer:
So your parents went to the Marysville community around 1933 and you were born in 1935. And so by that time you---they were back in Los Angeles?

0:13:36.0

Nakano:
Correct.

Interviewer:
Okay. Could you describe your childhood like where --- beginning with where you received your elementary, junior high, and high school education?

Nakano:
Well I went to... I don't remember at all about going to school when we were living in East L.A., but I do remember going to school when we were in the "uptown" area. And I remember one time I tripped over my little scooter and busted my lip inside and mom had to take me to the doctor to get stitches. And I still have a little scar inside because I remember they used some kind of wire at that time and I remember while I was eating it would come out, you know, because it healed. So I remember that; I think I also have a photograph from my first grade class I think. And actually beyond that, I don't remember a whole lot. I went to Hobart Avenue or Boulevard School; that's in Koreatown right now.

Interviewer:
And that was part of what you described as the "uptown" neighborhood?

Nakano:
Yes, uh-huh.

Interviewer:
What was your father's occupation during your childhood?

Nakano:
I know that my father and my father's older brother had a business in Hollywood where they had a produce section of the market --- a big market in Hollywood. I did some tracking of --- found the address and all that, but never have been back there to, you know, check out where it's at. But....

Interviewer:

So they were in the produce business?

Nakano:
Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:
And....

Nakano:
And there is a photograph of both of them working in the produce.

Interviewer:
And what was your mother's occupation?

Nakano:
I don't think she was working.

Interviewer:
She was taking care of you and your three siblings?

Nakano:
Yeah, and sister. My youngest... well, Tosh was born in Tule Lake and so there were just the two of us when we went to camp.

0:16:27.5

Interviewer:
Oh, okay. And that is you and...?

Nakano:
Shigeko

Interviewer:
And Shigeko. So Toshio and Roy are the youngest?

Nakano:
Correct.

Interviewer:
Okay; when you were growing up, did you move around a lot or was it pretty much Boyle Heights and then moving to the "uptown" area?

Nakano:
Well it was Boyle Heights, "uptown," and then from there we went to Santa Anita.

Interviewer:
Sure.

Nakano:
So we were in the "uptown" area for about a year, I believe.

Interviewer:
Okay. How old were you when you went to Santa Anita?

Nakano:
Six years old.

Interviewer:
Six years old, okay. I just want to make sure I have this chronology straight here. Okay, so you're six years old and you went to Santa Anita. Can you describe what you remember of your experience in going to Santa Anita?

Nakano:
What I remember about Santa Anita is I remember going to, you know, mess hall, and they had different shifts depending on what color badge you had. I don't remember my classroom experience there at all. And the part that I also remember was our last few days in camp. One day my sister and I went into an empty barrack and the bed cots were upright against the wall. And she started climbing one of them and then she fell. And she got a concussion. So we had to delay our departure from the camp because she ended up in the hospital. And then I remember going to Jerome, Arkansas from Santa Anita. We went on the train.

Interviewer:
Before we go into your experience at Jerome, how long were you at Santa Anita?

Nakano:
Six months.

0:18:38.4

Interviewer:
Six months. And so this is when you were six years old?

Nakano:
Uh-hm.

Interviewer:

Can you describe the living accommodations that you had at Santa Anita?

Nakano:
Well we were lucky in that we lived in the barrack, whereas people who went there earlier ended up in the horse stable.

Interviewer:
Okay. Can you describe the living arrangements in the barracks?

Nakano:
It's, you know, basically a one-room house. And so you have everything in one room, there is no partition at all.

Interviewer:
Did you share that one room with other families?

Nakano:
Yeah, the entire family is in this one big room.

Interviewer:
How many families were in the one room?

Nakano:
No; it's just one family.

Interviewer:
Oh, okay.

Nakano:
The only thing---that was the only separation was the family. But one family would be in one room.

Interviewer:
Can you describe the dimensions of the room?

Nakano:
You know, it's like the Army barracks... if you've ever been inside an Army barrack. And it would be, you know, without the walls except for the separation for each family. So you may have maybe four or five families in one barrack.

Interviewer:
Do you remember the approximate square footage of the room?

Nakano:

I don't... too small. I mean, too young to notice those kinds of things.

Interviewer:
Sure, sure. When you were at Santa Anita... well when... let's go back to when you reported at Santa Anita, do---can you describe anything and everything that you remember in terms of the first day that you reported to Santa Anita?

Nakano:
The only thing I remember is arriving to Santa Anita, but I can't remember the details beyond that. I was a little too young.

Interviewer:
What do you remember in terms of arriving there at Santa Anita?

Nakano:
Well it was, you know, fenced; you had MPs surrounding the camp.

0:20:56.5

Interviewer:
Were they armed?

Nakano:
Uh-hm.

Interviewer:
Where they---were there guard towers?

Nakano:
Santa Anita, I don't remember. I was too young to take notice of that.

Interviewer:
You indicated earlier that you remember going to a parking lot and from a parking lot you were taken to Santa Anita?

Nakano:
Correct. There was a parking lot at St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

Interviewer:
Uh-huh. In Little Tokyo?

Nakano:

No, that was also in the "uptown" area. It's still there.

Interviewer:
Okay. What do you remember of the parking lot there, if anything?

Nakano:
No particular thing.

Interviewer:
Do you remember many families being there?

Nakano:
Oh yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you remember...?

Nakano:
Because everybody, you know, were congregated there and with all the buses, you know, ready to take everybody. And you could only take with you what you could carry.

Interviewer:
Do you remember what you took?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Do you recall feeling that something was wrong?

Nakano:
It was different.

Interviewer:
Did you have... I mean did it feel different in a good way or a bad way or if you were---if you remember at all?

Nakano:
It's... you're at an age where you don't make those kinds of assessments. Maybe at that moment I did, but when I look back, I don't remember those things.

Interviewer:
Uh-hm.

Nakano:
But I do remember my time in, for example, in Tule Lake.

Interviewer:
Okay, before we get to that, I just want to try to make sure we have any details that you can remember as to Santa Anita. Do you remember your parents' reactions to their having to report to Santa Anita, if anything?

Nakano:
Well, the thing that I do remember is that we're being confined, you know, you're being taken out of your home, and the fact that they had brought all the, you know, Japanese-Americans into one particular area, because I do remember there was some people from Hawaii that were there. And....

Interviewer:
Do you remember your parents being upset?

0:23:28.5

Nakano:
I can't remember that kind of detail.

Interviewer:
Okay. So you went from the parking lot, taken by buses to Santa Anita, and you were put in a one-room barrack. And you were there for approximately six months?

Nakano:
Uh-hm.

Interviewer:
Can you describe what---how you were transferred from Santa Anita to... is it Jerome?

Nakano:
When a train... I remember being on the train.

Interviewer:
Okay. What do you remember about getting ready for that train ride? First, do you remember being---your family being told that you were going to be moving again---moving from Santa Anita to Jerome?

Nakano:

I don't remember that, but I do know that the camp was closing and so people -- many people had already departed from Santa Anita. And as I mentioned, you know, we were one of the few people that were still left there because my sister had been hospitalized.

Interviewer:
Can you describe what life was like at Santa Anita... like, as a six year old child, were you allowed to play with the other children at Santa Anita?

Nakano:
I can't remember those things.

Interviewer:
Do you remember --- do you have any recollection as to whether you --- whether it was a miserable experience or whether you were too small to really understand the significance of your being at Santa Anita?

Nakano:
I think too small to understand.

Interviewer:
Okay. Did you have...?

Nakano:
I mean as kids, you know you're going to naturally play baseball, football, whatever that's going on with other kids.

Interviewer:
Did you play football or baseball at Santa Anita?

Nakano:
Probably did, but I don't remember it. I remember those things in Tule Lake, but not in Santa Anita.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you remember how your family was --- how or when your family was notified that you were going to be transported from Santa Anita to Jerome?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Do you remember packing to move to Jerome?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Do you remember the train ride from Santa Anita to Jerome?

Nakano:
I remember the train ride.

Interviewer:
Where did you get on the train?

Nakano:
I don't remember.

Interviewer:
What can you describe of the train ride?

Nakano:
Well, I got motion sickness; so it was kind of miserable. So I remember that.

Interviewer:
Were you...?

Nakano:
And then the --- the thing that I always remember is that you couldn't use the restroom whenever the train came to a stop.

Interviewer:
What did you do when you had to use the restroom?

Nakano:
You just don't use it.

Interviewer:
Were you seated in regular passenger cabins? Can you describe the...?

Nakano:
I think it was, you know. It might have been like a Pullman, I don't know.

Interviewer:
How long was the train ride?

Nakano:
I thought it took several days. I mean it just seemed like a long time to get there.

Interviewer:
What was your sense of how your parents felt on the train ride, if you could tell as a six year-old child?

Nakano:
I don't remember that.

Interviewer:
Okay. So at that time, your oldest sister, Shigeko, was back with the family?

Nakano:
Yes, yes.

Interviewer:
Yes?

Nakano:
Because we waited until she was able to come out of the hospital before we departed.

Interviewer:
And so it's the two of you and your mother and father that went together?

Nakano:
Uh-huh.

Interviewer:
So it felt like the train ride was so long that it felt like it was a couple days, but in fact, do you know how long it took?

Nakano:
I don't know.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you remember the scenery as you were on the train ride from Santa Anita to Jerome?

Nakano:
I think we went through some, you know, some very scenic places. And other places we went through --- a lot of towns.

Interviewer:
Were there a lot of stops?

Nakano:
I think there were.

Interviewer:
Were you allowed to get off the train?

Nakano:
Oh, no, no. Not at all.

Interviewer:
Okay. Were there MPs or...?

Nakano:
No, there were MPs on the train.

Interviewer:
And was there an MP or were there MPs keeping --- supervising every passenger cabin?

Nakano:
I think they periodically would you know come around.

Interviewer:
Do you remember arriving in Jerome?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
What is your first memory of going from the train ride to Jerome?

0:29:20.9

Nakano:
The things that I remember were, I guess, some of the scenic places and **[Laughs]** and not being able to use the restroom when you came to a stop.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:

Because I think the way the system was that you know they didn't have a like a container. They just --- they would drop everything out and that's why you couldn't use it when the --- it came into a town where, you know, where it was stopped. I guess the old trains were like that, because in the old days, you know it was mostly, you know, out in the wilderness that the train would travel. So I guess it was okay in those days.

Interviewer:
Do you remember what time of the year this --- you were traveling on the train from Santa Anita to Jerome?

Nakano:
No, the only thing I know is I was able to get some dates as to when we departed and when we arrived and....

Interviewer:
And what were those dates; you don't remember at this time?

Nakano:
No, I think I have it in here. I had to use this a number of times, that's why I keep it with me. At least I have it in my other book if I don't have it in here, but I thought I did.

Interviewer:
Oh that's fine if you don't remember or if you don't have it.

Nakano:
Here it is. I have a date of April 29, 1942 as a beginning date for Santa Anita, and then I have a date for Jerome, Arkansas. The beginning date is October 30, 1942. And then the ending date there is September 25, 1943. And then the beginning date for Tule Lake is September 29, 1943. And then the ending date is February 24, 1946.

Interviewer:
Okay. So it looks like you were at Santa Anita from April 29, 1942 to October --- the end of October or approximately six months at Santa Anita. And then you were at Jerome for just under a year --- about 11 months, from October of 1942 to September of 1943. So at Jerome, you were about seven years old?

Nakano:
Uh-hm.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you... what is your first recollection of arriving in Jerome?

Nakano:
I don't have any recollection; I don't remember.

0:32:37.7

Interviewer:
Do you remember if it was cold or if it was hot?

Nakano:
I don't.

Interviewer:
Do you remember having... what is your general impression of Jerome?

Nakano:
Hot during the summer and cold during the winter.

Interviewer:
Hot... this is... being in Arkansas, is it humid?

Nakano:
Uh-hm. There were a lot of trees. They had guard towers. But you really couldn't escape to anyplace, so that it wasn't really guarded like Tule Lake was.

Interviewer:
How were the guard arrangements different between Jerome and Tule Lake?

Nakano:
It was fairly open. I remember going out of camp with my father because I think he was working with some of the lumber people where they would cut trees down to make lumber. Excuse me.

Interviewer:
So the Jerome camp --- the perimeter was surrounded by barbed wire fences or do you remember?

Nakano:
I don't remember.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
Tule Lake was, which I remember. Jerome I don't remember.

Interviewer:
Okay, we'll get to Tule Lake, but as for now---Jerome. Do you remember any guard towers?

Nakano:
Yeah. Jerome had guard towers.

Interviewer:
Okay. With guns and the guardness?

Nakano:
That I don't remember, but there were guard towers?

Interviewer:
Did you have any sense of the danger of --- or the potential danger posed by the guard towers or the guards as a child?

Nakano:
Not at Jerome.

Interviewer:
Did your parents warn you maybe to be careful not to go too close to this or that fence or don't do this or don't do that because...?

Nakano:
Well, not to go outside of the camp.

Interviewer:
Okay. How was the camp demarcated? How was the boundary of the camp identified, if you remember?

Nakano:
I think there was a fence, but whether there was barbed wire fence, I don't know, I don't remember.

Interviewer:
Okay. Could you describe your living accommodations at Jerome?

0:35:18.8

Nakano:
Very similar to Santa Anita.

Interviewer:
So you had your own room as a family?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
But the entire family shared one room?

Nakano:
Uh-hm.

Interviewer:
What were the accommodations made out of? Was it made out of wood or was it corrugated metal, do you remember?

Nakano:
No, it was... you had wood and then you had tar paper and then we had these little wooden slats that would cover the seam of the tar paper, and that's how the barracks were made.

Interviewer:
So the four of you --- you, your sister, and your mother, and your father, were all in the same room?

Nakano:
Correct.

Interviewer:
Did you---did your family set up any temporary partitions for any privacy?

Nakano:
Not that I remember.

Interviewer:
Were there four beds?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you have any memories of anything that you did at Jerome?

Nakano:

Yeah, my dad was working --- worked as a carpenter in camp. And so he had... in fact, he still has some drawings and he made these cabinets for the physicians so they could do surgery and keep medicine in the cabinet. And so he made those cabinets, as well. And so on his spare time, he got lumber and made like playground equipment for that block that we were in, so there were swings and see-saw that he made.

Interviewer:
Do you... at this time, I guess you were around seven years old. Did you at this time have any sense as to what this experience was like... well, first for you? Was it... do you have an impression of it being a positive experience, a negative experience, a miserable experience, or it didn't really feel that --- in those terms as a child?

Nakano:
Well I remember my parents saying, you know, this is---once we got to Tule Lake that the experience in Jerome was far better than Tule Lake.

Interviewer:
Okay; so it was really Tule Lake that really stood out in your memory?

Nakano:
Yeah, and then I was older, too; so.

Interviewer:
Sure.

Nakano:
So I saw---understood things a lot more.

Interviewer:
What was the community like at Jerome? Did you have interactions with other families, other children?

Nakano:
I still don't remember a whole lot of detail in Jerome. But I do remember, you know you have a community bathroom, community shower, and community you know laundry that's within the block. And I remember that.

Interviewer:
Do you remember where the meals and, like, community mess halls, or...?

Nakano:
Oh yeah, uh-huh.

Interviewer:
Okay, and....

Nakano:
And that was the other thing that my parents were saying... how the food was better, too, in Jerome compared to Tule Lake.

Interviewer:
What kind of food did you have at Jerome?

Nakano:
Well I remember, you know watermelon... that was in---you know very abundant, and you know they would make rice and tsukemono, I remember that, too.

Interviewer:
So provisions were made... was the rice Japanese rice?

Nakano:
Well I don't remember. **[Laughs]** Probably Arkansas rice. **[Laughs]**

Interviewer:
The---do you remember other than rice and tsukemono, what other types of foods did---were you served---more typical American foods, or...?

0:39:55.2

Nakano:
I think a combination, because the cook would, you know, make the food and so....

Interviewer:
And the cooks were other internees?

Nakano:
Yeah, uh-huh.

Interviewer:
Do you remember any... you were schooled while you were at Jerome?

Nakano:

Yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you remember what the schools were like?

Nakano:
I don't remember that either in Jerome.

Interviewer:
Do you---did you have to start every school day with the Pledge of Allegiance?

Nakano:
I don't remember that either in Jerome.

Interviewer:
Do you remember any of your school activities while you were at Jerome?

Nakano:
I don't.

Interviewer:
Do you remember playing with other children while, either as part of the school or outside of school, at Jerome?

0:40:55.4

Nakano:
I remember you know using the playground equipment that my father made.

Interviewer:
Was that something that your father made especially for you?

Nakano:
For the entire block.

Interviewer:
For the entire block?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay. Anything else that you remember from Jerome?

Nakano:
Not much.

Interviewer:
Okay. So your notes indicate that you--your stay in Jerome ended on or about September 25, 1943. Do you remember your family receiving notification as to being moved from Jerome to Tule Lake?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Do you remember any --- sensing any changes?

Nakano:
I've been able to retrieve some of those documents and made copies for Barbara Takei and you know the people who are working on the Tule Lake thing up north, and....

Interviewer:
Uh-hm, okay. Do you remember sensing any change, you know, as to your family being notified that they were going to be moving from---you were going to be moving from Jerome to Tule Lake?

Nakano:
I don't remember those things.

Interviewer:
Do you remember your parents having any reaction to the --- learning the news that they were going to be moved from Jerome to Tule Lake?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Do you know why your family was being moved from Jerome to Tule Lake?

Nakano:
Not at that time.

Interviewer:
At any point thereafter?

Nakano:

Yeah, in Tule Lake.

Interviewer:
You learned why?

Nakano:
Yeah, uh-huh.

Interviewer:
And why was that?

Nakano:
Because they -- both of them renounced their citizenship and they were going to return to Japan.

Interviewer:
Okay. Now did they renounce their citizenship while they were at Jerome?

Nakano:
I think they did. At least that's what the document seems to indicate.

Interviewer:
Uh-hm.

Nakano:
The letters that I was able to see.

0:43:10.7

Interviewer:
In the household at the time at Jerome, was it mostly English or Japanese that was spoken?

Nakano:
Japanese.

Interviewer:
Uh-hm. Did you --- do you recall at that time while you were at Jerome, your parents---any expressions of bitterness with the experience of being in the internment camp?

Nakano:
They were.

Interviewer:

What do you remember?

Nakano:
How unjust it was.

Interviewer:
Do you remember, were they complaining---did they complain about it?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
So as a child, did you know that they were complaining about it?

Nakano:
Yeah. And that's the difference between the Kibei and the regular Nisei. The Kibeis spoke up, whereas Nisei, a lot of them didn't.

Interviewer:
Uh-hm. Do you remember how they spoke up? Did they engage in any political activities?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Were there...?

Nakano:
Just within the family, you know.

Interviewer:
Were there formal or informal associations of Kibei Nisei at Jerome?

Nakano:
Jerome?

Interviewer:
Uh-hm.

Nakano:
Not that I know of.

Interviewer:

At Tule Lake?

Nakano:
I think there were, but I learned these things afterwards you know reading about it, it's not because of what I experienced or observed.

Interviewer:
Do you remember your parents being involved in any of these Kibei associations?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
That's the thing about, my parents they were not much of a community activist, whereas my grandfather was different. In fact, my grandfather in Hawaii negotiated with the landowner to establish a Buddhist temple at Papaiko. So that was the first temple that was in Papaiko. And I don't know... like even my kids, they're not involved at all. So I don't know if the grandkids are going to be more active, I don't know. But my parents weren't involved in anything.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
You know and there's a old photograph in Hawaii --- the community leaders in Hawaii in Papaiko and you know my grandfather's picture is in there. And... but my father never got involved in anything.

Interviewer:
What was your family religion?

Nakano:
Buddhist.

Interviewer:
Uh-huh. And did you attend Buddhist activities while you were either at Santa Anita or at Jerome?

Nakano:

Not --- I don't remember.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
But I do know that before the war, and I just kind of remember very --- not real clear, but I do remember going on a bus. I used to be picked up by a bus every Sunday to go to Nishihonganji, and then my mom told me years later that I used to create havoc on the bus.

Interviewer:
[Laughs] This is when you're living in "uptown?"

Nakano:
I think so.

Interviewer:
You're not sure?

Nakano:
I think when I was living in "uptown."

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
And can you imagine about... when was it. Helen was with me. I'd say about 20 years ago---maybe 25 years ago, we visited one of our relatives who were living in west L.A., and this mother that were our family friends from before the war happened to be there. And she points to me and says, "You used to beat up my son." **[Laughs]**

Interviewer:
[Laughs] Mothers never forget.

Nakano:
Oh yeah. But we had pictures of them and our family and other relatives you know at a picnic and all that. So there used to be you know family gatherings, but... I guess I used to be very aggressive in those days. **[Laughs]** But anyway, he didn't want to get back at me.

0:48:02.3

Interviewer:
All right, anything else you remember... I think I asked you that, so. Actually why don't we... at this time, anything else you remember from your time at Jerome?

Nakano:
I remember eating the soup that was supposed to have been made from rattlesnake. **[Laughs]**

Interviewer:
By one of the internee cooks?

Nakano:
Yeah. I mean I thought they were kidding around, and---because it was unusual. I remember that and I remember asking my mom later you know, "Was that really snake in there?" She said, "Yeah, it was."

Interviewer:
Do you remember what you did; how you played as a child at Jerome? I mean, other than you talked about playing on the playground equipment that your father built.

Nakano:
I don't, but I do remember distinctly in Tule Lake, you know, playing football and things---softball and those kinds of things.

Interviewer:
Okay, well we'll get to that. So Jerome, you're still a little too young to remember a lot of the activities then?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay, why don't we take a quick break?

[Break]

Interviewer:
Are you ready?

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay all right; so we are resuming with the interview. We left off with your experiences at the Jerome interment camp. Your notes indicated that you ended your---your family ended their stay, their internment at the Jerome camp around September 25, 1943, and that you arrived in Tule on or about September 29, 1943. So it appears that there are about four days.... Do you remember packing to go from Jerome to Tule?

Nakano:
My dad made some crates, and although I think my brother, youngest brother, may have taken one of the crates with him, but it was in the garage in Gardena where my parents were living. When my mom passed away, we kind of you know cleaned out the garage and the house and... but there was a crate that was used for shipping, you know, personal belongings.

Interviewer:
Uh-hm.

Nakano:
But I remember, we had those crates that my dad made and actually in Jerome because lumber were readily available in Jerome.

Interviewer:
Did --- when you were at Jerome, did you have interaction with the local people of Jerome? Do you remember the local people coming in or out of the Jerome camp?

0:51:11.5

Nakano:
I don't remember. I'm a little too young to remember those things, I guess.

Interviewer:
You're second in the order of your siblings?

Nakano:
But you're right though, because when I went to Jerome in '92, there was a Jerome Reunion Committee that organized and then I co-chair the fundraising committee to build a monument in Jerome, and when we went to Jerome, there were some teachers that taught in the school in Jerome and some of the older folks, you know they connected with them. So that was kind of a nice event. And then when we went back for the reunion... I'm trying to think of her first name.... Gould was her last name, G-o-u-l-

d. She was the Mayor of McGee, City of McGee, which is near Jerome and Rohwer, and she hosted a lunch for all of us. Catfish and french fries and there was a community house or building that---where we had this event. And I was on the city council then; and so I brought a proclamation for her thanking her. And then also, I had from the Jerome Committee, a plaque for her and a plaque for... what's his name? Was that Ettington or something like that---Fred Ettington, that allowed Jerome people---the Committee to erect the monument and actually it's his land that he's allowing us to put the monument, because it's---the camp is privately owned now---the land there in Jerome. And it's even located near the road so people can see it. So I prepared a plaque for him as well. But it... you know there were people like that really reached out to everybody. And then I saw her again, and where did I see her? That might... okay, I saw her again at the Museum because I'm on this Planning Committee for this Jerome... not Jerome---Arkansas event that is taking place in September.

Interviewer:
This coming September?

Nakano:
Yeah. The University of Arkansas at Little Rock got a huge grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to do this project. So they got scholars from the University of Arkansas doing all kinds of research about the camps and the 100th Battalion, the 442, MIS. And so they're having this big exhibit and like a big conference that's going to take place in September. And it's going to be one week before the Clinton Library opens and so.... Anyway, and then we helped... our office helped out getting some detailed information, as well as photographs and documents relative to Ted Tanouye, because when his scholar did the research on the 21 people who got the medal of honor from the 100th and the 442nd, the one person they said that stood out was Ted Tanouye, and so they're going to kind of focus on him as an individual in terms of the medal of honor recipient. And so that's how we got involved with sending him the information, photographs, and all that. But anyway, I'll be going on this trip.

Interviewer:
Okay. So you---there were some interactions like that with the local people at Jerome. And okay, so taking it back to where you recall your father building a crate as --- when you're moving from Jerome to Tule, do you remember anything else in terms of getting ready to move from Jerome to Tule?

Nakano:
No, but I found a lot of tools and things that my dad built, because lumber was, you know, readily available. He made hammer handles and a little thing that has string on it so that you want to cut something --- a piece of lumber... those things.... He's made also a tray --- serving tray, and I have that at home---that he made in camp. He made a lot of canes because a lot of the woods that they had they were made out of oak, and I guess the way they make it is they get a young tree and cut it at the root and what you do is---they heat it and take the bark off, and you can turn it upside down and the rootside, you make that into a handle, you know and you use it as a cane. So I have a couple of those at home that he made in Arkansas.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you remember how you were taken from the Jerome camp to... did you go---first did you go from Jerome to Tule Lake by train?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you remember being taken from the Jerome camp to the train?

0:57:44.0

Nakano:
I don't remember.

Interviewer:
At this time, how old would you have been in September of 1943? Let's see, it looks like you would have been about seven years old, going on eight.

Nakano:
I'd be seven, yeah. Close to eight, yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you remember anything about your train from Jerome to Tule Lake?

Nakano:
Again, there was a --- I remember a long train ride, getting motion sickness.

Interviewer:

So you're --- trains were not for you then in terms of getting motion sickness?

Nakano:
Well it seems like as I have gotten older, you know I'm less prone to get....

Interviewer:
Just as a child then?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Now you... Shigeko is your oldest sister and you're the second among the siblings?

Nakano:
No, I'm the oldest.

Interviewer:
Oh you're... okay; you're older than Shigeko, okay.

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Oh okay, and next is Toshio?

Nakano:
So it's Shigeko, Toshio, and Roy.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
So I did it in chronological order.

Interviewer:
Okay. When was Toshio born?

Nakano:
Forty-four in Tule Lake.

Interviewer:
Uh-hm in Tule Lake; and Roy?

Nakano:
Fifty-one. So we were out of camp when Roy was born.

0:59:06.8

Interviewer:
Okay, what do...?

Nakano:
Shigeko was born in '38.

Interviewer:
Do you remember what the scenery was like as you were going from Jerome to Tule Lake?

Nakano:
We went through a lot of mountainous area.

Interviewer:
Do you remember the time of the year?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
It appears to have been in September.

Nakano:
So before snow started coming down, because that --- they would be going you know close to the Pacific Northwest because Tule Lake is like what, 15 miles south of the Oregon border, so. My guess is that they---we probably went to Klamath Fall and probably was taken by bus or whatever from there to Tule Lake. That would be my guess.

Interviewer:
But you don't remember that?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Do you remember... you traveled for approximately four days? Would you sleep on the trains?

Nakano:
Oh yeah.

Interviewer:
And I gather the military police or security guards would be walking through the passenger...?

Nakano:
Uh-hm. Yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you remember anything else about the train rides, what it was like to be on the trains --- any thoughts or feelings that you had on the trains?

Nakano:
I don't remember.

Interviewer:
Okay. Do you remember... did your parents understand the significance of being transferred at Tule Lake prior to their ---your family moving there?

Nakano:
I think they did, but I mean I didn't know it at that time. It's something that I, you know, discovered later that they did know.

Interviewer:
Did they say or act in any way to show that --- how they felt about being transferred to Tule Lake?

Nakano:
That I don't remember.

Interviewer:
Okay. What is your first recollection of arriving at Tule Lake?

Nakano:
I don't have any recollection.

Interviewer:
Do you remember approaching the barbed wire fences at Tule Lake?

Nakano:
I don't remember those things --- not in the beginning. Once we were in camp, I remember a lot of things that went on.

Interviewer:

Do you remember the first time you arrived in your living accommodations at Tule Lake?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Do you have any recollection of any initial impressions of Tule Lake?

Nakano:
Not as a --- not when we first got there.

Interviewer:
Okay. Can you describe your living accommodations at Tule Lake?

Nakano:
Similar to, you know, Jerome, except you had the end-side of the barrack and so the door was on the end of the barrack as opposed to on the side.

Interviewer:
Okay. How many rooms would be on each unit --- barrack unit?

Nakano:
I think like four, maybe five.

Interviewer:
So again, you had one single room for your family?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Was it larger or smaller or about the same as your barrack room at Jerome?

Nakano:
Probably about the same.

Interviewer:
The same wood and tarp construction?

Nakano:
Uh-huh, yeah.

Interviewer:

This is in northern California, correct.

Nakano:
Right.

Interviewer:
Yeah, and so the winters would get cold?

Nakano:
Oh yeah; cold, windy, muddy.

Interviewer:
How much snow did you get at Jerome? Do you remember snow at Jerome?

Nakano:
Yeah. But unlike... it was nothing like Tule Lake. I mean Tule Lake, you'd get really snowed in.

Interviewer:
So snow falls a lot heavier at Tule Lake?

Nakano:
Oh yeah.

Interviewer:
Was snow in Jerome the first time in your life that you saw snow?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you remember that excitement?

Nakano:
Not really.

1:04:19.0

Interviewer:
So you arrived in Tule and you were seven going on eight years old in September of 1943. Do you remember... what do you remember of Tule Lake?

Nakano:

A number of things. As I mentioned earlier, I remember playing baseball and I remember playing football. I also remember going to Japanese school. That's one of the things that happened was because my parents intended at that time---were to return to Japan---they sent me to Japanese school rather than the American school. And so I learned Japanese during the time that I was in Tule Lake.

Interviewer:
So they had renounced their American citizenship? Your mother... when did she get her American citizenship, do you know? Or did she get an American citizenship?

Nakano:
Well, they are natural born U.S. citizens

Interviewer:
Oh that's right, your mother was born in Hawaii. That's right, okay.

Nakano:
Both of them were....

Interviewer:
So they renounced their citizenship while they were at Jerome?

Nakano:
Yeah, I didn't know it at that time. I found out later looking at the documents and you know.

Interviewer:
Okay, and this was the famous questionnaire---Questions 27 and 28?

Nakano:
Right, yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you remember any discussions in the household about that questionnaire?

Nakano:
Vaguely I think.

Interviewer:
What do you remember of it?

Nakano:
What, about the question?

Interviewer:
The questions or any discussion about the questions?

Nakano:
It's... I think it's a little too vague to try and remember the details. I thought I might have remembered that, but I don't know.

Interviewer:
So at Tule Lake, in addition to the individuals that refused to renounce allegiance to the Emperor of Japan... I don't remember how exactly the questions were phrased. Was it more a renouncing of United States citizenship or was it more---renounce...?

Nakano:
I don't think that was the question. The question has to do with being loyal to the....

Interviewer:
Loyal to the United States, okay.

Nakano:
Right.

Interviewer:
And so... and they answered, "No, no," okay. In addition to individuals that refused to pledge allegiance to the United States in those questionnaires, it's my understanding that there were other people at Tule Lake that were engaged in various political activities that the United States government felt as being...

Nakano:
Subversive.

Interviewer:
... subversive.

Nakano:
That I, you know, found out later after I started doing a lot of reading, but not when I was there.

1:07:44.5

Interviewer:
Okay. Was there any kind of awareness or consciousness among the Tule Lake internees that they were all there because of those reasons, that the United States government saw them as being particularly potentially subversive?

Nakano:
When I was there as a kid, that never....

Interviewer:
Registered?

Nakano:
Yeah. The only thing I---the thing that I remember is that---going to Japanese school and of course in the Japanese school they try to indoctrinate you to be pro-Japan. And even the textbooks that were used were pre-World War II textbooks.

Interviewer:
Okay. The occupation or the internment authorities, they didn't have any problems or any reservations with the---these pro-Japan lessons?

Nakano:
Well, the thing... the incidents that I remember taking place is that ---like early in the morning, they would ask all the ---you know, the young students to wear a headband and when the sun comes up, you know, bow toward the sun. And the War Relocation Authority car would come by and he would pick out the leaders and they will arrest them and take them away. And they ended up in Bismarck, North Dakota, which is probably the coldest place in the United States. So you try to escape from there, you're going to just freeze to death. But that's where they ended up. It was a segregation center. They had one in Bismarck, there was one in Texas---Crystal City. So that's where a lot of them were just taken. And so they could just take what they had on them and that's it. And... I remember that.

Interviewer:
So the Relocation Authority did try to discourage...?

Nakano:
Oh yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

But they... did you see any signs that they were trying to discourage...?

Nakano:
I mean that's what I observed as a kid, you know---incidents taking place. There could be other things taking place... well, there were other things that took place that I know based on my reading, you know way later. But those are some of the specific incidents that I observed as a kid.

Interviewer:
But the Relocation Authority was pretty hands-off in terms of what was taught at the Japanese schools . . . as far as you can tell?

Nakano:
I didn't observe anything where they came into the classroom. It appears like they had a pretty much free hand on what they taught.

1:10:52.8

Interviewer:
What were some of the pro-Japan lessons that you remember from Japanese school?

Nakano:
They would talk about some of the military heroes that did a heroic deed, you know those kinds of things.

Interviewer:
Japanese military heroes?

Nakano:
Yeah, yeah; that part is no different than what we learn you know in American schools, but....

Interviewer:
And these lessons were taught by Japanese Americans?

Nakano:
They were Kibeis. I think they were Kibeis. So they're Japanese Americans who were educated in Japan.

Interviewer:
And their lessons were conducted in Japanese?

Nakano:
Some of the other incidents I remember taking place... I was in an auditorium one night; I think they were showing a movie. And there was a knifing that took place. There was a lot of turmoil there, and also the camp wasn't all the people who were going to Japan. There were also a pro-American group that were physically located in another part of the camp so that you don't have the interaction and the problems you know between the two groups. So I knew that took place, even as a kid. I also remember an incident where the auditorium burned down. It was a big fire. There was also a time when they did a sweep of the camp. The military lined up from one side of the camp to the other side of the camp and just swept through the entire camp. They went to every barrack and searched inside the barrack, and whatever they thought that might be an illegal possession of something that you weren't supposed to have in camp, they would confiscate those things and just swept through the entire camp. So that... I remember that taking place.

Interviewer:
Do you remember that happening once?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Uh-huh. So it wasn't like a regular or frequent...?

Nakano:
No, I remember it happening once. Alan Nakanishi, who is in the State Assembly, mentioned that too---remembers that incident.

Interviewer:
Okay. Should we break it now or...? Yeah, why don't we just do that.

[End of George Nakano - File One]

[Begin George Nakano - File Two]

Interviewer:
Okay, it is approximately 1:40 p.m. on May 16, 2004. This is a continuation and the second CD of the interview of George Nakano on the same date, being conducted by me, Albert Muratsuchi, for the South Bay Oral History Project. The audio and catalog persons remain the same. All copyrights, title, and any other rights arising out of this interview, whether in its entirety,

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Okay, we were talking about some of your memorable experiences from Tule Lake. You talked about your playing football and baseball and also the -- some of the tensions between the -- the pro-Japan and pro-American elements in Tule Lake and also the security sweep at Tule Lake.

Nakano:
And Tule Lake is where I also observed the barbed wire fence, you know, on top facing inward and guards up in the guard tower with the rifle poking in --- inward.

Interviewer:
How did you feel seeing those guard towers with the guns pointed at you?

Nakano:
Well I mean it was real clear that we're confined, you know, within the camp, and that there is restriction in terms of being able to, you know, go out.

Interviewer:
Did you resent that?

Nakano:
I think I did as a kid, but also you kind of live with it.

Interviewer:
You were, according to your notes, at Tule Lake from approximately September of 1943 to February of 1946. So that would be from when you're seven years old to approximately when... what is that... eleven years old? Or not quite eleven years old --- ten years old.

Nakano:
Ten years old.

Interviewer:
Do you remember how your family dealt with the -- the fact of being interned at Tule Lake? Did they... you indicated earlier

that they compared their experience with Tule Lake to Jerome and what---what were some of their thoughts or feelings?

Nakano:
There was more conflict you know within the block even, the leadership ---and also the food was poor, and --- and I remember my dad complaining that there was black market going on with the food. Anyway, years later when I read some books on Tule Lake, you know there were indeed black market going on. And that's why you didn't --- the food didn't --- the food that were intended didn't trickle down to the inmates. The Arkansas scholars, they said, we should not be called internees, we should be called inmates by the true definition of what the camp was.

0:03:48.1

Interviewer:
How did you see that qualitative difference between being an internee versus being an inmate at Tule Lake?

Nakano:
No, no, all the camps --- all the people who were in the camps should be called inmates.

Interviewer:
Okay. What were the most memorable aspects of your being an inmate or an internee at Tule Lake?

Nakano:
That we were confined and --- and there were two parts to the camp. And --- and I guess because of my age, I just remember more consciously about the activities like you know playing baseball, playing football... also; the first time I saw somebody practicing kendo in camp. They must have snuck in the equipment and.... Let's see, what else? I guess the atmosphere wasn't like Jerome. It was much more... there was much more tension.

Interviewer:
Tension between the pro-Japan and pro-American...?

Nakano:
No, even within you know it just...

Interviewer:
General tension?

Nakano:
... yeah, just in general.

Interviewer:
Why do you think there was a heightened tension at Tule Lake?

Nakano:
It probably has to do with a whole host of things. It's --the camp was much more restricted. You have a larger group of people who are more willing to protest. You know, just like on a college campus.

Interviewer:
Did you see more protests at Tule Lake?

0:05:41.4

Nakano:
Well in terms of the questionnaires and their attitude toward the --- the administration.

Interviewer:
How did you see those attitudes?

Nakano:
And I, you know I... some of it is kind of, maybe as a result of my reading, you know, about Tule Lake later.

Interviewer:
But focusing on your personal experiences, what did you see or experience as a child at Tule Lake that were examples to you of that kind of tension?

Nakano:
There is a tension of the administration versus the so-called inmates being watched all the time. And then there is always that tension within the group that I guess some people feeling that the group leader is not responding adequately to a given situation. That became more clear when I started reading about Tule Lake -- some of the things that went on.

Interviewer:
But aside from....

Nakano:
But you know like... and then the food is not as good as you know people remember like in other camps. And so they suspect

something was going on and so there's this level of distrust because something like that is taking place.

Interviewer:
But, but focusing not on what you read later on, but what you experienced as a seven to ten year-old child... like, for example, do you remember the food not being as good at Tule Lake as it was at Jerome?

Nakano:
Part---probably part of it because my parents were saying that---the food it not good and they don't have certain kind of provisions like they used to have in Jerome and....

Interviewer:
So you remember them complaining about that?

0:07:45.3

Nakano:
Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:
Do you remember their feeling less happy or more frustrated at Tule Lake than they did at Jerome?

Nakano:
Oh, they clearly indicated that---their unhappiness at---at Tule Lake.

Interviewer:
And the --- the focus of their unhappiness at Tule Lake was... in addition to the food? What else did they complain about?

Nakano:
Well, you know when stuff like that is going on, there is --- it creates an atmosphere and distrust and when there is an atmosphere of distrust there is going to be greater tension among people.

Interviewer:
But did your parents complain about anything specific? Do you remember your parents complaining about things other than the food?

Nakano:

I remember my father talking about certain people taking a certain position on something and didn't want to get caught up, you know, in those kinds of things.

Interviewer:
Related to the pro-Japan versus pro-American type issues?

Nakano:
Yeah, I mean a whole host of issues. You know it could be a---just a general camp situation, I mean for a particular block.

Interviewer:
What were the ---you mentioned some of the experiences that you remember from Tule Lake, but how would you summarize overall your three years at Tule Lake?

Nakano:
Well, I was at the age where I could see what camp life is like, and I also realized you know later as I read more that Tule Lake was not like every other camp. It was a little different because of the groups ---the two groups that you had there.

Interviewer:
Do you remember hearing news about the war ending?

Nakano:
Uh-hm. I mean, I heard other people saying you know the war ended, and then the part of the camp that I was at, I heard also people saying that it's not true. Well, not so much the war ended---that Japan had surrendered. They're saying no, that they're just trying to deceive you ---that Japan had really won the war. And so this is the part that's kind of changes things. We have a lot of relatives in Hawaii and so my mom sent a letter to her older sister and asking her who won the war, and that you know they were planning on to returning to Japan. And at that point, we saw you know people get on the list to go to Japan and her sister wrote a letter back, "Don't be so foolish, Japan lost the war and the country is devastated. If you go to Japan, you're going to starve to death. It would foolish to go to Japan." And so my parents talked it over and decided not to go to Japan and so we were probably part of the last people that were still left in camp. And all these people had already left for Japan, even including some of our relatives. And so they had go before a hearing board and testify why they don't want to go to Japan, and their response was that their kids had never been to Japan and they don't want to go to Japan. And that was the excuse that was used, and so we stayed, and it was probably one

of the best decisions they made. And just for your information, there were 5,200 Japanese-Americans that renounced their citizenship and this attorney named Wayne Collins, took it upon himself to try and get the citizenship back and he did. He was very successful in doing that. And I don't think Wayne Collins had really been recognized for what he did. He also had some problems with the ACLU folks. I mean there were some differences that they had. And I pulled out a lot of correspondence from Wayne Collins that my dad had. I gave that to Barbara, you know, in Northern California because they are doing this thing about "renunciants." And I really want to recognize the guy, but you know he passed away. But his son, Wayne Collins, Jr., is an attorney right now in San Francisco.

Interviewer:
Oh, really.

Nakano:
So they communicated with him about the possibility of coming to the State Legislature and you know wanted to recognize the guy. But for whatever reason, he didn't want to do it. So there's this Tule Lake Pilgrimage that is taking place in July. So I put my deposit in for the registration anyway that, you know... if I can't go, I'll get most of it back. But it would be contingent on whether the Legislature will have a budget you know with the governor. It looks like we might; it's you know... the working relationship is such that both sides want to get something done. And it's easier, I think, with the Republican governor as opposed to the Democratic governor, because you could --- the Republican governor could pull in the Republican Legislature to vote on it, so you'd have two-thirds vote; whereas, the Democratic governor can't do that. So anyway; that's what --- they're talking about maybe I could do it at the Pilgrimage because he's going to go --- the last thing they heard.

Interviewer:
Okay.

0:14:34.5

Nakano:
And just on a side note, I was glad that I was able to recognize Senator Ralph Dills before he passed away and unfortunately, Kevin Shelley's father, John Shelley was a Senator, State Senator. The two of them were the only two who refused to support a Resolution in Support of Executive Order 9066 in the State Legislature, and you know that's like --- almost like

political suicide, you know and the atmosphere in which they did it. But the courage to stand up for something they felt was wrong, and so two --- a couple years ago, I was able to recognize.... So what happened was Kevin Shelley's mother came to the State Capitol and then we had the sergeant pick up Senator Dills and even at that point his age was advanced enough where he had a certain amount of loss of memory, and when he got to the Assembly floor, what happened was the Chief Sergeant came and got me and said, "Senator Dills doesn't know why he's here." And so I went up to him and grabbed his hand and I said, "Senator, the reason why you're here is that we want to honor you for the stand that you took during World War II in opposing the Executive Order, the Resolution," and then he started crying. And so anyway he --- you know at that moment, he knew why we brought him there. But I'm glad we did it because....

Interviewer:
Okay, let's take you back to Jerome... I mean to Tule Lake. You learned that the war had ended. You had some correspondence between your mother and her sister and you saw people leaving. The only way that... was the only way that people can leave was to go back to Japan?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
Because the other part of the camp, people you know they stayed, but there is the group of people who intended to go to Japan who are on the list to go to Japan. We were just a handful I think. Everybody---most---probably 95-98 percent probably went to Japan. We were one of those few that didn't.

Interviewer:
So was that the main reason why you remained in camp for so long after the war ended?

Nakano:
Yeah. Because there was a delay in the decision and you have to go before the hearing board, you know the process that takes time because a request was made that....

Interviewer:
Do you remember your parents being anxious to get out of camp?

Nakano:
I think they were because we were the few that were left.

Interviewer:
But you don't remember any conversations or any demonstration of emotions or anything like that?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Do you remember your parents talking at all about why it was taking so long for them to be released from camp?

Nakano:
No, they knew that it took time for that process you know to....

Interviewer:
By the time that you got out...?

Nakano:
Because they put in the request for not going to Japan and so they had to set up a hearing board for that, and then the decision as to you know we go to Japan or we get to stay.

Interviewer:
Do you remember whether they put in that request to stay in the United States before or after the war had ended?

Nakano:
After the war had ended because of the letter.

Interviewer:

Do you remember approximately how many weeks or months after the war had ended that they submitted that request?

Nakano:
That I don't know.

Interviewer:
Do you remember how long of a delay there was between the time they put in the request and the time that they got the hearing?

Nakano:
No.

0:19:09.6

Interviewer:
Okay, so at some point, you learned that you were being released from camp. Do you remember getting that news that you were being released from camp?

Nakano:
Uh-hm.

Interviewer:
Can you describe what you were...?

Nakano:
Well I think they were very happy. I mean they were elated.

Interviewer:
Uh-hm. Were you happy?

Nakano:
Yeah, yeah. But you know as a kid you don't really know the difference.

Interviewer:
You didn't pick up on the joys or frustrations of your parents?

Nakano:
Well, I think given the fact that they told us that, you know, if you go to Japan, people are starving and so I think you know that... I remember, you know, that comment. I mean you don't want to go to a place where you're going to have a hard time living.

Interviewer:
Uh...

Nakano:
Which is the other thing that I know you---further down you have that question is that my mom's side, the relatives, were fighting for the United States. My father's side was fighting for Japan. His two younger brothers were in the Japanese Army and then my mom's sister's husband was in Europe fighting for the 442.

Interviewer:

Did you have conversations about that in the household while they were fighting on both sides---on opposite sides?

Nakano:
I don't remember.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
Another interesting side note is my father's sister is married to a courier Japanese Army Officer and my grandfather sat down with him one time and told him that never abuse POWs, that the cultures are different, and how Japanese sees POW is different than what other nationalities see POW, and never to abuse POW. And that must have really stuck in his head, because at the end --- toward the end of the war, he was in charge of the POW camp in the Philippines, and when the war ended... Well he was---he had subsequently came to the United States in 1964 and he's telling me all of this. But he says that because of that, when he was in charge of the prison camp, he ordered all his subordinates not to abuse prisoners and the officers, he would invite him and eat the same food that he ate, and give him food, give him cigarettes, and when the war ended, he said he was the only one that was not ordered to go to prison and he was released. And he was ---he says he was shocked, because he thought everybody just went. But everybody else abused the POWs.

Interviewer:
Okay, it is a little past 2 o'clock. I don't know how strict your time limit is as to 3 o'clock.

Nakano:
We can go to maybe 3:30.

Interviewer:
Three thirty?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
But it will have to be sharp 3:30 because I have a plane to catch.

Interviewer:
Sure, okay, okay.

Nakano:
But if you have to continue this one some other... you can... I'd be happy to do it.

Interviewer:
Okay, yeah we just want to make sure we get all of your---you know your post-camp experiences. So you... can you describe how you left Tule Lake?

Nakano:
Well we---when we came out of camp, again we... yeah, we left on a train and I remember relatives picking us up at Union Station and we lived with our relatives for about three months on Mott Street in East L.A., across the street from Higashi Honganji. They were renting a house there. And so we lived with him for about three months. My dad worked as a carpenter and then he found a job with Southern Pacific Railroad and that is replacing you know railroad ties and railroad tracks... real back-breaking job. And we moved to Norwalk, and so we lived in Norwalk for about three years, but he worked at this railroad... so we had a place that the railroad company has a place to --- where you could live; they have the lodging. But then you also had a community bath and community bathroom and so we lived there for about a year. And it was a back-breaking job for him and so he wanted to change jobs. So after one year, he got a job as a tenant farmer at a flower farm. And they'll provide housing for you, but both spouses have to work. And so in [Norwalk] for two years, we lived in this house as tenant farmers. And my mom became ill and so she couldn't work. And so we had to leave that---he had to leave that job and so we had to move out of that house. And what we did is we moved back to East L.A. This time we moved into a dilapidated apartment eight houses from the Dolores Mission. And Dolores Mission is the poorest Catholic Church in L.A. County. And it's in the barrio, drug-ridden area, gang invested area, and the barrio. So that's where we moved into, and so while we lived there, I attended Hollenbeck Junior High School.

And so I went to Hollenbeck from the 7th grade and the thing that I remember distinctly is in the 8th grade I got an "A" in math and wanted to take Algebra in the 9th grade. And the only way you could do is upon the recommendation of your math teacher, and she wouldn't allow me to take Algebra. And here I

am, the oldest of four, both of my parents have a 9th grade education. I didn't have anyone to turn to, so that's the... so industrial arts was the direction I took, which is you know another name for vocational education.

So then I went to Roosevelt for a year and a half and our family was really poor. So I needed to really get a part-time job. I finally found one near Shrine Auditorium where they rebuild carburetors, fuel pump, and distributor, and my uncle who is an auto-mechanic was the one that found that job for me because he was working in the garage near that area and... but it would take me like 45 minutes on a streetcar to get to my job from Roosevelt to there. So I transferred high schools and went to John H. Francis Polytechnic High School and so that's where I graduated from.

And when I graduated high school, I went to trade tech, took up radio and TV servicing, and did that---it's a two-year curriculum, and after I completed that I went to work at a radio TV repairs shop for about six months. I didn't like it, and I heard about a job at Hughes Aircraft working in the R&D lab, and it sounded very exciting. And they don't make aircraft, but the do avionics. So I applied for that job and I got it. So now I was working side-by-side with graduate engineers and that's where I really learned about college education. So I worked full-time for one year, took a leave of absence and went to El Camino College to --- went there for one year to make up all my prerequisites that I missed in high school, and then went back to work during the summer and then took a leave again to try and complete my first year of lower-division class, and then went back to work in the summer again and so. But anyway, needless to say, I majored in mathematics.

0:28:40.5

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:
And there is an interesting sidenote about math and law. In law, you know you have a specific case that you try to apply to some general case; whereas in mathematics, you have a general case and you try to apply it to a specific case just in terms of the theory you know. This came from an engineer at Hughes that went to Loyola Law School, and this was the observation he made going through law school, and it was real interesting.

Interviewer:
Okay, you covered a lot there.

Nakano:
I didn't say anything about my days in Norwalk when I went to school there. One experience I had with this school bully... in the 7th grade in Norwalk, so you know you get to school early in the morning and there is a place where you could check out the balls. I was waiting in line to check out a basketball and this bully comes up to me and shoves me out of the line. And the guy is so big, I don't want to fight him. And so I back away and he started taking punches at me, but he would miss, you know, because I would dodge his punches. And so I keep backing away, and then all of a sudden a crowd started gathering. Well now I'm at a point, I can't run away. And so---and he keeps swinging at me, so I keep dodging his punches. And so it took---it seemed like it took, you know, such a long time, but he kept doing that. But then I noticed he's wide open after he takes his swing, so I decided to maybe take a shot at his---you know where he's open. So I would pop him and so scared you know about fighting this guy because he is so big, but he's a little bit slower. And I connect and so after a while he started slowing down, he wouldn't you know swing punches at me, but he tries to be aggressive. And then I would fake a punch and I could see his hand moving you know in a different direction, and so now I started popping him and he started going backwards and you know he's wide open. So I aim for his eyes and eventually he stopped fighting. And then all of the sudden, he grabbed me and I thought, "Oh God, you know, what I am going to do now?" But then the crowd broke it up because a teacher came. And I guess that was one experience with this person... and it's probably good for him that he wasn't a bully after that. But I just remember being scared, you know.

0:31:47.2

Interviewer:
How old were you?

Nakano:
I was in the 7th grade.

Interviewer:
So that was only 13?

Nakano:

And he came back... and then his sister got mad at me, but I you know ---I said, "You know he started the whole thing. I didn't even want to fight the guy." But anyway, because he got beat up at the end, and he came back to school about a week later, maybe about three days later, and he has a black eye --- both --- two eyes, black eye. And so you know the teacher sent him to the office and so then I called in. And I explained what happened, you know to the principal --- actually the assistant principal. And so he asked the other guy you know what happened, and he was honest to say that he started the fight and you know --- and so --- and I think you know... and so he was remorseful about what he did. And so he was never a bully after that to anybody. But that's a unique experience. **[Laughs]**

Interviewer:
But obviously one that was really --- stuck out---sticks out in your mind; yeah.

Nakano:
Oh yeah.

Interviewer:
But related to that, let me take you back a little bit. You --- before you went to Norwalk, you arrived at Union Station and then you stayed at the relative's place for about three months.

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:
And then your father took the backbreaking work with the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Nakano:
Southern Pacific Railroad, uh-huh.

Interviewer:
And because that was too difficult, he then chose to work as a tenant farmer and that was when you moved to Norwalk?

Nakano:
No. Southern Pacific Railroad is when we moved to Norwalk.

Interviewer:
Okay.

Nakano:

The tenant farmer, the farm was also in Norwalk.

Interviewer:
Okay. Did you stay at the same --- in the same neighborhood between the time that your father was working for the railroad versus the time...?

Nakano:
Completely different location than Norwalk.

Interviewer:
Different location, okay, all right. Why did you---when your father took the job with Southern Pacific, why did he move to Norwalk? Why did your father move to Norwalk?

Nakano:
Because that's where they had a facility available where someone could get a job and you could live in the company facility.

Interviewer:
Okay. What was the... so in terms of socio-economic characteristic of the neighborhood, it was a working class---low income to working class neighborhood in Norwalk?

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:
Were there other Japanese Americans in that neighborhood?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
So you were the only Japanese kid in school?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
And while....

Nakano:
No, in the school there were other Japanese Americans---not very many, but you know they had their... one I think had an egg farm and another one was a farmer.

Interviewer:
So let's say, you were in junior high school when you're at Norwalk?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
No, you were still... were you maybe 5th or 6th grade?

Nakano:
No, well, 7th grade would be junior high school in L.A. City, but I guess they had intermediate school there. In fact, they opened up a new school called Centennial Intermediate School and that's where I was going.

Interviewer:
Okay. But basically when you were growing up --- when you spent time first in Norwalk and then when you moved back to East L.A. to the apartment near Dolores Mission, you were one of just a handful of Japanese kids at school. Is that a fair characterization?

Nakano:
In Norwalk, just a handful; but at Hollenbeck in L.A., East L.A., there were a lot more Japanese Americans.

Interviewer:
What percentage of the student body would you estimate that Japanese Americans were at. . . .

0:35:59.1

Nakano:
Maybe about 15 percent.

Interviewer:
Fifteen?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay, so these were a lot of the Japanese kids that lived around in the Boyle Heights, East L.A. neighborhoods?

Nakano:

But nothing in the kind of place that I was living in. You know a lot of them were living in homes.

Interviewer:
So in the place that you were living in, was it... what was the racial composition?

Nakano:
Well predominantly Latino.

Interviewer:
Okay, okay. You went on to be somewhat directed into the vocational education direction because your math teacher did not encourage you to pursue a college education?

Nakano:
Uh-hm.

Interviewer:
Okay, and you graduated from... what is the name of your high school that you graduated from?

Nakano:
John H. Francis Polytechnic High School.

Interviewer:
Okay; Francis, F-r-a-n-c-i-s?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Something like that, okay.

Nakano:
It's the second oldest high school in the City of L.A. We just had our 50th reunion.

Interviewer:
So what class did you graduate?

Nakano:
Fifty-four.

Interviewer:
Class of '54.

Nakano:
And that was another thing is because I went to Japanese school in Tule Lake, I got behind two years and then when I went to Norwalk in the---when I was in the 3rd grade or was it the 4th grade, the teacher asked me, "Gee, how come you're so much older than the other students?" I said, "Well, I missed out two years of American school when I was in camp." And so... but except for maybe reading skills, my math skill was much higher. She said she was going to --- she would like to accelerate me at least one year and so sent a note home and said okay. So I... but I should have been accelerated two years.

Interviewer:
When you... taking you back a few steps, when you first relocated from the Tule Lake camp to East L.A., did you experience any discrimination in resettling?

Nakano:
When I first came out of camp?

Interviewer:
Uh-hm.

Nakano:
Yeah, kids calling me names and I would get into fights.

Interviewer:
What would they call you?

Nakano:
Jap.

Interviewer:
Anything else that was racially oriented?

Nakano:
No, basically at that age that's what they... you know.

Interviewer:
What did you do in response?

Nakano:
Oh, I'd punch them out. Or, I would get into a fight and maybe stand still or sometime if the guy is way bigger he might get more licks in, but the thing that I found is that if you get a couple good licks in, they won't say it anymore because it's not

worth it to them... even though you don't totally win the so-called fight.

Interviewer:
Did... how did you become such a feisty kid when other kids would call you Jap?

Nakano:
Probably because I had a fairly strong identity and the other thing is that I'm the oldest of four in my family. I didn't have anybody to turn to, I just had to learn how to fight and protect myself.

Interviewer:
Did your father or your parents ever encourage or discourage you to fight back?

Nakano:
No, they didn't know.

0:39:57.7

Interviewer:
You didn't come home with torn shirts or a black eye or anything like that? **[Laughs]**

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Okay. When you moved to Norwalk, did you continue to experience any discrimination?

Nakano:
I did.

Interviewer:
In what ways?

Nakano:
People using the same "J" word --- kids... not everybody, but certain, you know, home....

Interviewer:
When you came out of camp, did you have a hard time finding people that would rent to your family?

Nakano:
I have no idea about that.

Interviewer:
Your parents took care of all that?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Did you experience any discrimination from your teachers other than you talked about your math teacher, and perhaps that was part of her motivation. But did you have any specific experiences of teachers discriminating against you?

Nakano:
That's the only one that I could really remember... because I remember in Norwalk, when I got into the fight with this one guy and this teacher came to stop the fight and I explained why it happened and... so she chastised the other kid.

Interviewer:
Do you remember any of your teachers calling you a Jap?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
Do you remember other adults calling you or your family Japs?

Nakano:
Well I remember one incident in Norwalk, a friend that I had at the Southern Pacific Railroad, the Italian guy, he was---he got a part-time job delivering newspapers. And so one day, he told me, “Why don’t you come along with me?” And so I did, and we went into this like coffee shop and the guy behind the counter started yelling at me --- racial slur --- get out of here. I remember that incident.

0:42:14.5

Interviewer:
How old were you?

Nakano:
I guess I would be what... about eleven.

Interviewer:
Do you remember your parents telling you about any discrimination that they experienced after they relocated from camp?

Nakano:
Not that I remember.

Interviewer:
Either at the time or years after, did they ever tell you about how it was difficult for them to relocate or how they experienced any discrimination either in housing or employment?

Nakano:
I don't remember him---them saying anything.

Interviewer:
If they had, would they have told you?

Nakano:
Some times they did, sometimes they didn't. So....

Interviewer:
Okay, you graduated from John Francis Polytechnic High, and you started out as a radio technician and then you joined the...?

Nakano:
Radio TV.

Interviewer:
Radio TV?

Nakano:
Uh-huh.

Interviewer:
And then you joined the Hughes Research and Development Laboratory?

Nakano:
Uh-huh.

Interviewer:
And then at that time, you started to realize the value of getting a college education and so you started... how old were you when you first attended El Camino College?

Nakano:
Probably 21, my guess is.

Interviewer:
And....

Nakano:
Because I went two years to Trade Tech and then I worked for about six months. And right away, I started taking courses at night at El Camino.

Interviewer:
Okay. So around this time when you're about 21 years old... is this when you started living in Gardena?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
And this is when you and your family were living in an apartment in Gardena?

Nakano:
It started when I was living with my parents.

Interviewer:
And so did your parents move to Gardena around 1956?

Nakano:
Yeah. So that's when I went to work at Hughes, in '56, and I worked there until 1971.

0:44:54.8

Interviewer:
Where in Gardena did you live?

Nakano:
Right next to Amstoy School, on 149th Street.

Interviewer:
Do you know why your family moved to Gardena?

Nakano:
Oh yeah, because I helped them financially to move out of the area that we were living in, which was really you know a bad area. And homes in Gardena were a lot cheaper... we were---at

that time, we also looked at the possibility of moving to the Seinan area. But homes then were $21,000 in the Seinan area. Seinan is the Crenshaw you know area, and there was---there were a lot of J-As living there at that time. It seemed like a real nice area. But my parents bought the house in Gardena for $17,000 --- a three bedroom, one and three-quarter bath house.

Interviewer:
So homes in Gardena were still relatively more affordable than in the Seinan area?

Nakano:
Yes, uh-huh.

0:46:10.3

Interviewer:
Do you know why. . . .

Nakano:
And even less than like Monterey Park area, too. I think the Monterey Park area, a lot of J-As were you know moving there as well. But, I think it was more expensive than Gardena at that time.

Interviewer:
Do you know why there are J-As congregating or concentrating in Gardena?

Nakano:
For one thing, they were there before the war to the extent that we had the Gardena Buddhist Temple. You had also the Gardena Valley Japanese Culture Institute. Wherever you find there is a significant Japanese American population, you find two things. You'll find a Buddhist temple and a community center, because it takes a significant amount of private donation to build those things and so unless you have the population there, they are not going to build it. So when I did my redistricting... I got on a Redistricting Committee on 2001; because of my involvement with kendo I used to go practice at different places in Southern California. So I know where there is a community center because that's where I practice kendo. And so I made sure that we had---I had to increase my district by 40,000 people. And so I looked at my district and I said, "Well I got to make sure I get the rest of Venice because Venice, you have the Venice Japanese Community Center and you have the Venice Buddhist Temple, and then you go up north more, and then you have the West L.A.

Buddhist Temple and you have the---it's called the Sawtelle Japanese Institute.

Interviewer:
When was the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute founded?

Nakano:
About 1927.

Interviewer:
Nineteen twenty seven. Do you know why the Buddhist --- the Gardena Buddhist Church and the... do you know what preceded the location of Japanese Americans in the Gardena area that led to the establishment of the Community Center and the Buddhist Church?

Nakano:
Well, before the war, you had a lot of Japanese farmers. You had farmers in Torrance. You had farmers in Redondo Beach, farmers in Carson, farmers in Gardena, farmers in Compton, and that sort of was the central location for the Japanese American community.

Interviewer:
So somewhat related to the farming community in the Torrance neighborhood, I know that you often proclaim that Torrance is one of the few, if not the only city in the United States that passed a resolution during the war years. . . .

Nakano:
Yeah, we can't actually find a resolution, but you could --- you found the minutes that preceded that where they talked about passing the resolution to show the confidence in the Japanese American population in this area, of their loyalty to the United States. You ever --- do you have a copy of that --- the minutes?

Interviewer:
No, I don't.

Nakano:
Because I have a copy of that for you if you want it.

Interviewer:
Sure, but do you know anything...?

Nakano:
But we couldn't locate any actual resolution, so we don't know if there ever was a resolution. But we do know that the City

Council at that time discussed it, you know and they were all in favor of a resolution, and this was five days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Interviewer:
So to your understanding, the Council passed that resolution unanimously?

Nakano:
If they did, yeah.

Interviewer:
If they did, because you're not sure if they passed it---the resolution?

Nakano:
Yeah, we can't locate it.

Interviewer:
Do you have any you know background information beyond those minutes as to the nature of that resolution?

Nakano:
No, no.

0:50:33.3

Interviewer:
Do you have any sense, based on your experience of public service in Torrance, as to what some of the motivations might have been in passing or discussing such a resolution?

Nakano:
Well I think the relationship with the rest of the population in Torrance, I think was, you know, on the positive side at that time.

Interviewer:
Between the predominantly Japanese American farming---farmer---farming community and the general population in Torrance?

Nakano:
Yeah, yeah; even when you hear stories about Ted Tanouye and some of his friends you know today that are still living, it seemed like a very positive relationship.

Interviewer:

We should probably take a break.

[Break]

0:51:20.9

Interviewer:
So we would like to try to push it closer to 3:30 to try to get as much as possible.

Nakano:
Okay.

Interviewer:
Is that on? Okay, I don't have to review the statement again, right? Okay, we left off talking about your being in Gardena, moving --- your family moving to Gardena around 1956 and at that time you started working at Hughes and also attending El Camino College. Can you talk about where you went after you majored mathematics at El Camino? Did you receive an associate degree from El Camino College?

Nakano:
No, no.

Interviewer:
What happened after El Camino College?

Nakano:
I went to Cal State L.A. and once I got into upper division, I worked full-time at Hughes and I would take either two or three classes a quarter at Cal State L.A., and I would arrange my classes in such a way that I only need to leave work twice a week to attend classes. So if I lined up those two or three classes on Tuesday and Thursday then I would leave work early on Tuesday and Thursday and then make up my hours on the other days. But I'd only have to make two trips to the college campus.

Interviewer:
Okay. And so you...?

Nakano:
So I did that for I don't know how long, that's when I got my undergraduate degree. And then once I got my degree, I wanted to go into teaching. So now I had to do student teaching, but I couldn't do it working 40 hours a week. So I requested that I be allowed to work 32 hours a week and get paid for 32 hours, and

do my student teaching. And student teaching took one year you know to complete, and so that's what I did.

Interviewer:
When did you receive your degree?

Nakano:
Nineteen seventy.

Interviewer:
And this is in mathematics?

Nakano:
Yes.

0:53:53.4

Interviewer:
Now, okay, so 1970 was about the time when there was a growing ethnic studies movements and various student campus activities around minority consciousness and civil rights and so on. Were you involved in those types of activities?

Nakano:
I was.

Interviewer:
Can you describe some of the activities that you were in?

Nakano:
It was in 1969, there was a program that was being offered by Coro(?) Foundation, where one could get their Master's Degree and you would be teaching in an urban area and the degree you would get would ---you would get it at Occidental College. And so anyway, I applied for that and they make you go through a certain kind of oral examination so to speak. And they also experience that a lot of people, once they get their degree, they would not teach at those urban schools. And so they were making people sign a contract that they would at least teach one year in the urban school upon receiving the degree. And so I applied and when they went through the so-called oral examination, they wanted me to sing how I would teach in an urban school. And I thought that was absolutely ridiculous, so you know what I did? I just---I said---I did my *kiai* in kendo in front of all of them. But anyway, I didn't get it, you know.

Interviewer:

[Laughs]

Nakano:
But that's when I hooked up with Jim Matsuoka and some folks in J-Town that were involved in some of the activist things and so actually Jim Matsuoka was the one that put the letter together for me on how to respond to the denial and then also the JACL office got involved at that time, too. Because here, in my case, I grew up in a poor neighborhood and actually also went to high school in a so-called inner-city area, and you have these people coming from the white middle-class and getting into this program and not even teaching, you know. And the way they were handling it was by making them sign some kind of contract that they would teach. They don't look at the person's background, what kind of commitment they have relative to possibly teaching in the urban school. I wanted to teach in an urban school.

And so anyway, when that happened, actually Mo Nishida is my friend from high school at Poly, and he had been deeply involved in a lot of things in Little Tokyo, as well. So he kind of got me involved with some of the things and also was suggesting that Gardena needs a pioneer project for the older first generation and he encouraged me to get involved. And so at that time, Karen Chmori was interested in, you know, organizing a Pioneer Project, so I got involved with her on that. And so there were actually a couple other people---young people that got involved as well and we started that in 1969. So that was one of the things that I got involved.

The other thing I got involved was the creation of Asian American Studies Department or an office at Cal State L.A. So I got involved with that as well. But I did take an Asian American Studies class at Cal State L.A. And I got involved in some of the other activities that... there used to be a thing called “Cincip,” it's picnic spelled backward. I got involved with that. I also got involved with going to... it's at Chino, there's actually a prison for youth. I can't think of the name of it.

Interviewer:
Yellow Brotherhood?

Nakano:
No, no, the name of the facility.

0:59:26.3

Interviewer:
Oh.

Nakano:
So actually my whole family went on the bus with a whole group of other people to do a program over there in that facility there. It's a youth camp over there.

Interviewer:
Were you focusing on Asian American youth?

Nakano:
Yeah, so I did you know kendo demonstrations and my wife did her Naginata and actually our two kids went with us. They were really young yet, but you know they experienced that.

Interviewer:
This is while you're still...?

Nakano:
Oh, and then I also got involved with the JACL Education Committee as a result evaluating social science textbooks for Asian American perspective and... but we found out of like seven textbooks, only one book had anything about Asians in there, and then what happens is that here, again omission and then when they do talk about Asians, it's like they're exotic or mysterious, you know those kinds of things. So that's where I really got kind of involved from the academic perspective on a lot of textbooks.

Interviewer:
Now these---all of these activities, did they start while you were a student at Cal State L.A. or they kind of...?

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
You graduated from Cal State L.A. in 1970?

Nakano:
Seventy.

Interviewer:
And then you established the Gardena Pioneer Project around 1969?

Nakano:
Actually, we got started in '69, but I think it got established since 1970.

Interviewer:
And the---like the visit to Chino, the juvenile facility, that was while you were a student at Cal State L.A.?

1:01:25.8

Nakano:
Yeah.

Interviewer:
Okay, and so at this time, you were already living in Torrance then?

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:
At what point did you start getting involved in community activities in either the South Bay or specifically in Torrance?

Nakano:
It was around that time that I got involved with other groups as well.

Interviewer:
So what were some of the main groups that you started getting involved with?

Nakano:
Well, Pioneer Project was one, but I'm trying to think... there were different groups that were involved with different kinds of activities that I got involved with. But a lot of it came later, I think.

Interviewer:
Well, we can work backwards, but what were some of the ones that you remember? I know you talked, you had told me before that you started your political career through the Gardena JCI, the building of the JCI in North Torrance, and....

Nakano:

Yeah, that was the issue that popped up that prompted a couple of attorneys to contact me to possibly run for Torrance City Council.

Interviewer:
And could you talk about that?

1:03:19.0

Nakano:
Sure. That was in 1983. And by that time, I was already teaching kendo through the Parks and Rec Department, which I started in 1974. And so I was already nine years into it --- teaching that. But what happened was the Gardena Valley JCI acquired a piece of land where most of it is on --- is in Torrance, part of it is in Gardena, because it's right on the border over there. And the board of directors decided that--- they were debating whether to build a gymnasium or build senior housing. But they opted for senior housing. And so the process is that it has to go through the planning commission first and then to the city council if it gets appealed or whatever. So it went to the Gardena City Planning Commission, it was approved unanimously. So nobody appealed it, so it was not even an issue in Gardena. Some people in Torrance, in that neighborhood... that it is going to bring in traffic and undesirable people, and so when it went to the Torrance Planning Commission, it was turned down.

And so Vince Okamoto and Ron Wasserman, who were the legal counsel for the Gardena JCI, appealed the decision to the City Council of Torrance. And they lobbied them, the City Council Members. And the City Council overturned the Planning Commission decision unanimously and approved the project. And today, you know there is no traffic problem because seniors don't drive. There's no undesirable people there. But anyway, it also sent the signal to the board of directors of the JCI that at that point in time, Torrance has close to like 15 percent Asians and there is no Asian on the city council. And it may not be lucky time if there is an issue; they need to have a representative that they could you know go to.

And so what happened was, Vince Okamoto called me asking me if I would consider running for city council and this was 1983; so it's one year before the election. And I said, "I don't know the first thing about running for public office." And he said, "Don't worry." He says he and Ron ran Paul Bannai's first campaign for the State Assembly and Paul Bannai was the first

Japanese American to get elected to the State Assembly in California. And this was in '72 I think, and since that time, Vince ran for city council in Gardena in '76 and he was the top vote getter, and actually he unseated an incumbent in the process. And then in 1980, Ron ran his wife's campaign, Fumi for the Torrance school board and she unseated an incumbent and she was the top vote getter. And so he was telling me that you know other --- they're not pros at this, but they have the experience in running campaigns and they would help me with the brochure, all the things that I needed to do, precinct walking, coffee klatches, and... "But the only thing you have to do," he says, "You're going to have to raise the money." And so I said, "Well let me talk it over with Helen." And so we talked it over and... during that time, I had already been involved with, like AADAP, some other organizations, and I had been deeply involved with the kendo organizations as well. And I saw it as an opportunity to really broaden your scope of involvement and.... So anyway, we also realized that once we say, "Yes," you don't turn back. You got to go all out. And so I called him a week later and said, "You know, I would like to do it."

So the first thing they wanted me to do was try to get on the city commission, and there were only two Asians of all the City commissions in Torrance. There's 13 city commissions and each one has I think seven members, but there were only a total of two Asians at that time---city commissions.

1:08:29.8

Interviewer:
Of all the commissions?

Nakano:
Of all the commissions put together. And so anyway what happened was there was a vacancy on the Parks and Rec Commission and given that I have been teaching nine years kendo to the Parks and Rec Department, they thought that would be the---you know the one to get on. And so I applied and couldn't even get one vote. I didn't know the politics of it.

So in the meantime, the Torrance School District organized---created a committee to study the different facilities --- school facilities that had been closed as to what the future use should be. And so Fumi got me on that committee, which gave me city-wide visibility.

And so I never got on the city commission and so when '84 came around, or even before '84 came around, holding a whole lot of coffee klatches. Ron gave me guidance as to what are some of the City issues and the do's and don'ts and Vince brought in Toh Nojiri at that time, who did the brochure for me. And so that's what happened. So I ran in '84 and not one endorsement from a city council member---pure outsider. And as the counts were coming in, I'm in the lead. And when the last count came in... Okay, there were three seats open. Only one incumbent was running for re-election and that was Dan Walker... eleven candidates altogether. And one of my own strategies that I thought about was when you're --- when you have eleven candidates you don't want to wait to the last minute to send out your main brochure. I thought you should do it a little bit earlier, which was the right thing to do because when I was knocking on doors, I could see my brochures on the coffee table.

And, but anyway, when the last count came in, I missed first place by 135 votes, and so you know the top three gets elected. And so that's what happened. And so the big news was my election... first minority to get elected to the City Council, and to this day, Dan Walker says, "You know, he should have been in the news because he was the top vote getter." **[Laughs]** But I ended up getting in the news.

1:11:19.3

Interviewer:
So in 19...?

Nakano:
Eighty-four.

Interviewer:
It took until 1984 for the City of Torrance to elect its first minority to the City Council. Do you see that as... What social conditions in Torrance exist, do you attribute that fact, that it took until 1984 to elect the first minority to the Torrance City Council?

Nakano:
Well, I think on the positive side, a lot of people who reside in Torrance work with Japanese Americans, especially in like the aerospace industry so they know them. There isn't fear of this some unknown people. The other thing that when I look back, and this is based on a focus group that we had in 1998 when I ran for the State Assembly. What happened there was in a focus

group, all the things that I thought that I really had accomplished in Torrance and some major things, at least in my mind, and they were presented, and they wouldn't even register in the focus group. And they did the same thing of my Republican opponent and nothing would register either. And then you use also negative things and see if it would register that, and it wouldn't register either. So almost out of sheer frustration, right toward the end... they say well, "George, is a black belt in kendo," and then the darn thing goes off the chart. And so when I look back in my 1984 election to the City Council, one of the panel that we used was a photograph of mine teaching Gavin Wasserman kendo. And he looks Caucasian, you know. But anyway and it says in there you know, "George Nakano teaching kendo to South Bay youth." And so I think that kind of resonated... not knowing that it did you know at that time.

But what was interesting is Joe Greenwall, who teaches--- he's a business professor at Cal State Domingos Hills, who is a friend of Ron Wasserman, and I didn't really know Joe Greenwall, but I happen to be in Ron's office and Joe Greenwall comes walking in and he lives in Torrance. And so Ron asked him, "So did you get George Nakano's brochure?" He said, "Yeah." "Well what can you tell me about him; what do you remember about it?" "Oh that he's a black belt in kendo."

So and the other interesting thing is when I was precinct walking in Hermosa Beach in 1998... so we did a 30 second tape about my background, and then the last five or ten seconds, they did it like an after-thought because you don't want to make it too ethnic; it said, "Oh by the way, George has a black belt in kendo," and then it has a photograph of me holding the wooden sword. And so here I'm precinct walking in Hermosa Beach and this white couple is coming toward me. And the guy recognized me from the 30-second ads on TV. He said, "Hey Mr. Nakano, I saw you on TV." And he holds his hand like he's holding a sword. He said, "I'm going to vote for you." It doesn't talk to me about anything about any issues, you know.

But it's the perception the public has about someone who is engaged in something like that---integrity, you know power, you know it's those kinds of positive things you'd find about you know martial arts, and I think that's the same reason why Schwarzenegger got you elected like he did, because the film they've seen in him---the perception they have of that person from the film.

1:15:21.6

Interviewer:
Okay, let's take a break.

[End George Nakano - File Two]

[Begin George Nakano - File Three]

Interviewer:
It is approximately 3 o'clock, 3:00 p.m. on May 16, 2004. This is a continuation and the third CD of the interview of George Nakano on the same day being conducted by Albert Muratsuchi for the South Bay Oral History Project. The audio and catalog persons remain the same. All copyrights, title, and any other rights arising out of this interview, whether in its entirety, part, or derivative form, and whether in audio, written, or any other format, shall belong to the South Bay Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. Copying of this interview recording, whether in its entirety or part is strictly prohibited without a written authorization from the South Bay Chapter of the JACL.

Okay, George, you were talking about the impression --- the positive impression that your kendo black belt has made in your campaigns.

Nakano:
And that all came from the focus group, you know, because that was the only thing that really resonated **[Laughs]**, and so of course, my political consultant, you know, used that in the ads.

Interviewer:
Okay. I want to backtrack to where you started even before you're being asked to run for the City Council in 1983. You indicated that you --- your first like official relationship with the City was when you started the Torrance Kendo Club around 1974?

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:
And so in order to do that, you had to work with the Parks and Recreation Department.

Nakano:
Right, uh-huh.

Interviewer:
So prior to that, did you have any involvement or relationship with the City of Torrance?

Nakano:
No, I didn't.

Interviewer:
Were you involved in any...?

Nakano:
But as a result of my involvement with kendo, I also got involved with the Torrance Sister City Association, because the Bunkasai Festival that they would have and they wanted the kendo demonstration. So I got involved with the Sister City, not only in terms of kendo, but also the Sister City itself from 1976 as I remember.

Interviewer:
Did you serve on the Board of the Sister City Association?

Nakano:
No, I didn't.

0:02:13.0

Interviewer:
It was primarily through the Bunkasai and the...?

Nakano:
Yeah, membership.

Interviewer:
So were you involved with any of the other influential Torrance organizations, such as the Torrance Chamber of Commerce or the Torrance Historical Society or anything prior to --- prior to your running for City Council?

Nakano:
I think I was a member of the Torrance Historical Society.

Interviewer:
Okay. Now, this experience in 1983 that you described where at the time you indicated that it was maybe up to 15 percent Asian-American?

Nakano:
Yes.

Interviewer:
And of the 15 percent, what percentage of that would you say was Japanese American?

Nakano:
Primarily Japanese American.

Interviewer:
And did you have a sense back in 1984 as to what percentage of the total voting population was Japanese American or Asian-American?

Nakano:
I think it was about four percent.

Interviewer:
Okay, so only four percent of the voting population would be Japanese-American?

Nakano:
Four or five.

Interviewer:
Uh-huh.

Nakano:
I think it might have been six if you want to stretch it, but I don't think it was much higher than that.

Interviewer:
To what do you attribute, if anything, this smaller percentage of four to five percent of Asian-Americans being part of the voting population as opposed to 15 percent being of the Asian-American among the general population?

Nakano:
Probably percentage wise, less of them are registered to vote.

Interviewer:
And would this include...?

Nakano:
And then the other thing could be that most of them were younger families and so, you know, you include the children as part of

the total population. You're going to naturally find it to be less than the percentage in terms of the registered voters.

Interviewer:
At this time... well, when you say 15 percent Asian-American, are you distinguishing between Americans of Asian ancestry versus Asian residents of Torrance, including those of the Japanese business community?

Nakano:
No, those from the Japanese business community as well. That's the other factor.

Interviewer:
Okay, so it would be Asian and Asian-American, not just...?

Nakano:
See, 1980 Census had Asian as 11 percent in Torrance, and then in 1990 it went up to 22 percent.

0:05:19.1

Interviewer:
So, in that context, you had the experience where there were only two Asians on the City---all of the City commissions.

Nakano:
Commissions.

Interviewer:
At that point, was there any effort to include or try to get more Asians onto the City commissions?

Nakano:
Well, you know, I encouraged a lot of Asians to apply for City Commissions.

Interviewer:
I know you have George, but at this time when there were only two Asians, when you first tried to get on the Parks and Rec Commission... prior to and up until that time, were you aware of any efforts to...?

Nakano:
I don't think there were any efforts.

0:06:06.4

Interviewer:
The lack of Asian appointments on the City commissions, as well as the fact that there were no minorities elected to the City Council up until that time, to what extent do you attribute that to the lack of political participation by Asian-Americans? Well, let me rephrase that--- between the different possible explanations, including the lack of participation of---by Asian-Americans, discrimination by the Torrance residents, among all the different possibilities, what do you attribute the lack of presence and the lack of participation on the commissions and the City Council itself as being... you know, what were the reasons for the low level of participation?

Nakano:
Well, let's kind of answer it this way. Once I started encouraging Asians, helping them in terms of giving them guidance, then there were a whole lot of people that came on board. I think with Asians, for one thing, I think you need to kind of pull them up and help them, you know, get there. I think if they know that---that help is there, I think you encourage more to participate. I think, as it has been said in the past, which is a little bit different today, because you know, for example, you two are attorneys. It was very difficult to get Asians to become attorneys. I mean they always went into medicine or some technical field that you don't have to expose yourself publicly, your--- you know your personal belief or your position, and that's changing right now. And so I think you need to open the door and kind of pull them in.

Interviewer:
Did you... prior to your being elected to the City Council, did you see or hear of any obstacles to Asian-Americans either getting appointed to the City commissions or getting elected to the City Council that were posed by the predominantly Caucasian political establishment in the City of Torrance?

Nakano:
Not that I know of. I think the... for one thing, the knowledge that one needs to have to run for public office to get elected, the resources aren't, you know, there. It made it difficult---very difficult. I remember George Ogawa ran for City Council in 1976 and number one, he didn't know how to raise money, number two he didn't have a real good pulse of the community, and what he needed to do in order to get elected.

Interviewer:

Were you involved in George Ogawa’s campaign?

Nakano:
I walked precincts for him. That's about the extent I knew anything about running for office.

0:10:00.2

Interviewer:
It's my understanding that Kenny Uyeda was the first Torrance planning commissioner of Asian-American. . . .

Nakano:
And I think he was appointed in 1957.

Interviewer:
Fifty-seven?

Nakano:
Yeah and he's the one that kind of helped me along.

Interviewer:
Can you tell us more about Kenny Uyeda as his participation in the City of Torrance as a planning commissioner? Like, first of all, do you know anything as to the circumstances, which led to his appointment to the planning commission?

Nakano:
I think he became active in the Torrance Chamber of Commerce. There was a period of time where people who got elected to the City Council was those that had been anointed by the Chamber of Commerce, and which is no longer true today. There is a strong disconnect. And even the time that when I ran in '84, one of the things that did help me was there was a strong sentiment against growth in the City of Torrance and many of the homeowner association leaders wanted to see slower growth. And I happened to be one of the three candidates that a number of those people chose to support. And so there were three candidates at that time that were supported by many homeowner association leaders. And I was also one of the three candidates that was supported by the Friends of Madrona Marsh. And so I think I benefited from that.

Interviewer:
In your years of representing the City of Torrance, first as a City Councilman for... is it the three terms---four terms?

Nakano:
Four terms.

Interviewer:
Four terms, and then as a State Assemblyman, have you ever experienced any discrimination from members of the ---either the City of Torrance, the community of Torrance or the larger South Bay community?

Nakano:
I felt that when “O.J.'s Legal Pad” issue popped up that I felt that one staff member wouldn't have behaved the way he did if I weren't an Asian.

Interviewer:
A staff member?

Nakano:
Yeah. And I let him know later on that if he had behaved that way in the State Legislature, he would be out of a job.

Interviewer:
Can you discuss some more in detail... No, okay. Any other experiences?

0:13:14.6

Nakano:
Well, there's a former Mayor that described Asians by slanting her eyes, so. . . and did it on more than one occasion.

Interviewer:
And this is a former Mayor of the City of Torrance?

Nakano:
Correct.

Interviewer:
When---what year approximately did this happen?

Nakano:
It was when I was serving on the City Council back in the late '90s.

Interviewer:
Late '90s?

Nakano:
Uh-huh.

Interviewer:
So even to this day you've experienced racist gestures like that, even as a Torrance City Councilman?

Nakano:
Yeah, well it was very disappointing to see that side of this person since the person became Mayor of the City. I didn't see that prior to that, and....

Interviewer:
At that time, what was the estimated population of Asians in the City of Torrance?

Nakano:
It was least 22 percent because the 1990 census showed that there were 22 percent Asians in the City. But you don't describe Asians in that manner. It is a racist gesture. You don't describe African-Americans by puckering your lips. It's the same thing.

Interviewer:
So it sounds from your description of... at least your political career representing the City of Torrance that while there may be... you may have experienced some situations where people may have demonstrated racist or racially insensitive attitudes, that overall, you felt that the City of Torrance and the South Bay communities that you have represented have been very supportive of you as a---as an Asian-American and as a Japanese-American to represent them first on the City Council and on the State Legislature?

Nakano:
Yes.

0:15:49.3

Interviewer:
The... and to the....

Nakano:
And for many of them, they see me as a person that represents them who happens to be Asian-American. Okay, so there's a difference.

Interviewer:
Sure, and what is that difference?

Nakano:
Well because you made the statement as a Japanese-American elected official or representative, and when you phrase it that way, I don't think that's how they see me, because if they did I'm sure some---you know, many of them would have reservations. You happen to be a representative that happens to be an Asian-American or Japanese-American because if you're a Japanese-American representative then your primary concern would have to do with Japanese-Americans. Your a representative representing everybody.

Interviewer:
Aside from the isolated experiences of racial insensitivity that you described, during your years of representing the City of Torrance from 1984 to the present, have you seen any larger issues of racial discrimination or insensitivity experienced by Asian-Americans either in the City of Torrance or in the South Bay community?

Nakano:
I haven't, but the other... Things will happen that needs to be addressed. For example, there was a front page headline in the Daily Breeze that said, "Asian Invasion." And then when you read the article, it was a very positive human interest story and it didn't even... the headline didn't even coincide or agree with the article itself. And---but it had a very negative headline. And when that happened there were many Asians in the South Bay area that communicated with the Daily Breeze their displeasure and anger in seeing that kind of headline. So I also expressed it at the City Council meeting and we did have a meeting with the Daily Breeze at that time and what happened was that there was an apology made in the editorial page and also Charles Szu(?) and myself wrote an article in the editorial page related to this particular experience, which had a positive result. And so there are things like that---that will take place that one needs to you know make sure that it is corrected.

Interviewer:
So, that headline, the “Asian Invasion” headline, do you attribute that more to ignorance or to some type of negative or malicious intent toward the Asian-Americans?

0:19:28.2

Nakano:
Well, see, newspapers, they have a person that just does the headlines, so the lead line of any article, and I never did meet the person who did that. So I couldn't answer your question. But we met with the editorial staff and I'm sure they weren't happy about what happened.

Interviewer:
To summarize your interview, at least at this point, based on your experience first serving as a City Councilman for the City of Torrance for four terms and then representing the South Bay communities in the California State Assembly that you would say that your constituents have not held your racial and ethnic background against you?

Nakano:
No.

Interviewer:
I guess we will leave it at this point.

[End George Nakano - File Three]