[Begin CD Track One]

0:00:00.0

Satow:
We're going to start---going to start by saying, Good morning," or something like that?

Interviewer:
It is 10:15 a.m. on November 18, 2003. My name is Jeannne Tsujimoto and I will be interviewing Hideo (Jibo) Satow today as part of the South Bay Oral History Project. The audio equipment recording this interviewer is being monitored by Ernie Tsujimoto, and the interview is being cataloged by Richard Kawasaki.

 This is the first CD of the interview of Hideo (Jibo) Satow being recorded on this date. We will now begin the interview.

Good morning, Jibo; how are you today?

Satow:
Good morning; how are you? Fine.

Interviewer:
Thank you for consenting to do the interview for the South Bay JACL. We really appreciate you participating in this oral history project. Why don't we start with some easy questions and we'll get acquainted, and you'll be a little bit more familiar with the format of this interview? Please give me your full name and your address.

Satow:
Hideo Satow. My first name is Hideo Satow. They call me Jibo. That's a nickname picked up when I was about three years old. The next door neighbor was a---from a German family by the name of---name of Helen Higley, and she's the one that gave me that name for the reasons I don't know. But it stuck with me for nearly 90 years.

0:02:02.7

Interviewer:

And you're currently residing here in Torrance at 16815 Atkinson Avenue?

Satow:
That is correct.

Interviewer:
And how long have you lived here?

SATOW:
I'll be lived here---let's see, I'll be here six years December 10th.

INTERVIEWER:
And prior to that you were living. . . ?

SATOW:
In Hawthorne---I was born in Hawthorne July 23, 1914; delivered by a mid-wife and only weighed three pounds, four ounces. They told me that I wouldn't survive longer than 10 years.

INTERVIEWER:
Looks like you've done pretty well for yourself?

SATOW:
I beat the---beat the odds.

INTERVIEWER:
I think so. And, would you give me the names of your father and mother and your siblings, please?

SATOW:
My siblings?

INTERVIEWER:
Yes.

SATOW:
My father's name was Tomijiro Satow. My mother's name was Shiku Satow. A Satow married a Satow, and I am the oldest son. I was born in 1914. Next was a brother, Toshio Satow, but he only lived for one year. And he passed away in 1916. He was born in 1915, but passed away in 1916. Let's see, my mother was born . . . oh you didn’t want my mother's name. My sister was born in 1917 and passed away in 1997. My next brother was Henry Takeo Satow. And, he was born in 1918 and passed away in 1996.

Oh my God; I made a mistake along the line. My sister was born in 1917 and passed away in 1997, and the next brother was Takeo

Satow, and he was born in 19---well, 1918 and passed away in 1996. I have a brother that's the fourth one down the line and he was born in 1920. He is still alive and he's living in the Carpenteria, California. The next brother was Tadao Satow born in 1922 and passed away in 1998. Then I have a brother that was born in 1927 and passed away in 1979, but he lived at Pacific **?Calidades?**, which is a place for retarded children. And the next brother down is Tomio---no; Kunio Satow and he was born in 1924 and passed away in 1979. Then came Fumio Satow, who they called Chibi and he was born in 1930. And the---there's the list. Do you want my father's name?

0:05:19.9

INTERVIEWER:
Sure.

SATOW:
My father's name was Tomijiro Satow, born in 1879 and passed away in 1959. My mother's name was Shiku Satow and she was born in 1890 and passed away in 1984. That's the end of the family list.

INTERVIEWER:
Thanks, Jibo; you came from a large family and being the oldest, it must have been difficult for you to see some of your younger siblings pass before you.

We're going to start with your life before World War II. Can you tell me a little bit about how your parents came to the United States and their port of entry? What brought them here?

SATOW:
My father was---was born in Fukushima Japan and as a---well when he was drafted he was drafted in the Navy---spent a total of two terms or six years both participating in the China Japanese War and the---and the Russian Japanese War before he came to the United States. He came to the United States in the spring of 1907 and worked a short time on the railroad---got down to Livingston, California, and then onto Los Angeles, and lived at a boarding house at Hoover and Adams, and did gardening work along the Sepulveda---or not Sepulveda, but Figueroa and Adams. And then rode a motorcycle and came down to Gardena and worked in the strawberry park picking strawberries. After he had finished that term there, he went over to the Kobata Brothers' family and learned how to grow carnations. And he started his own business with a partner by the name of. . . gee whiz, I can't forget now. His last name was Sasamoto. And they started growing flowers, carnations in 1911 in Hawthorne until he passed away. And, I

forgot the date that he passed away. I think it was 1959 or something like that.

0:07:58.2

INTERVIEWER:
Well, were your parents married in Japan when your dad came over to the United States to California? Did he bring his wife or did he meet her here---your mother here?

SATOW:
[Laughter] My father was---went to Japan in 1913 on a tour sponsored by Rafu Shimpo, the second annual tour to Japan. And, he took a picture of---he had a picture of some young lady that he was supposed to get married by way of---Baishakunin I think. But he says, "I want to see the real young lady," and rejected her. And then he says, "I know a girl in same part of Japan." So then he went over and then she turned out to be a school---fat school teacher, which was according to the history there that they tell me that you're over hill if you're older than 22. That's where he met. . . and then they got married in Japan and landed in San Francisco December 31st, I think it is, 1913. And, I was born the following year---1914.

INTERVIEWER:
In Hawthorne, California?

SATOW:
In Hawthorne; yeah---delivered by a mid-wife.

INTERVIEWER:
So your parents---you can say that your mother wasn't actually a picture bride. She was one of the few probably in those days that was not a picture bride.

SATOW:
Yeah; my mother said that her older sister. . . their father was a doctor---her father was a doctor going from not the herb division, but then went to like a normal school for doctors and she was the second child, and she found out that the---when you're a doctor, you get sent---if you're the daughter of a doctor, you get sent to some family that's married to some rich family, and you know you get a choice, I guess. You don't get a choice. And then my---her older sister got married and then. . . but they got sent back for some---for a reason I understand that he had---the husband had a little girlfriend on the side. So, my mother said that she'd take a chance of going to the United States rather than being sent by somebody to some you know rich

family and then have---who has friends on the side---little girlfriends on the side.

INTERVIEWER:
[Laughter] Now once your parents married and got here to California, did your mother help your father in the flower business once you know he settled and started his own nursery?

SATOW:
Well my father---well I think all the wives worked in the fields someplace along the line. All---I know that in a book that the flower market is writing at the present time, it says that she was afraid of insects and things like that, so she used to pick insects off the carnation, flower, with a hashi.

0:11:31.8

INTERVIEWER:
[Laughter] That was practical.

SATOW:
Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:
Good for her. And, of course, she was kept busy with all the children that subsequently arrived.

SATOW:
Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER:
So, I know it was difficult in those days for the Issei ladies. They worked very hard raising their families and helping their husbands get started in you know business.

SATOW:
That's every family---every Issei family.

INTERVIEWER:
Yeah; that's true---that's true---that's true. Well, as you were growing up, what do you most remember about your early school years? Can you tell me where you attended school and how you were treated? Were there very many other Japanese American children attending school with you at that time in Hawthorne?

SATOW:
When I went to Hawthorne Grammar School in the early years, there wasn't only about a couple three Japanese families there until after I got out of grammar school. And, that's about in the 19---

the middle 20---middle and late 30---20s is when they started them---the farmers started to migrate into Johnson Ranch, which is Western Avenue and they El Segundo Boulevard. And then across the street there's a golf course now. In that field, there was over, I believe, pretty close to 100 families---Japanese families that lived in the area. So, but you only knew just a very few unless you went to a Japanese school. There's where you met a few people.

And, but my early friend was a girl next door, who was from a German family. And their daughter---during World War I, they lost their home and my father took them in for three years during war time and we learned a little bit about how to eat steak and potatoes and sour kraut and things like that. That is---that is where I picked up the name Jibo---nickname.

0:13:32.0

INTERVIEWER:
Oh, I see. Well now, it's---I understand that you attended grammar school of course in Hawthorne and you went to Leuzinger High School, which is now in Lawndale, I believe, but at that time was considered Hawthorne or Inglewood.

SATOW:
Well we went to---the first year and a half, freshman year, and beginning---the first half of the sophomore year, I went to Inglewood High School by way of bus or street car. And then, later on in 1930 when they built Leuzinger High School, I was one of the first Japanese students. As a matter of fact, there was only about three of us altogether going to Leuzinger in the 1930s. And, I graduated from there in 1932 from Leuzinger. So, we were a senior for two, two and a half years.

INTERVIEWER:
Well while you were in school, wasn't it during this time that there was a lot of anti-Japanese feeling or anti-Asian feeling? Did your parents or you feel any of this say during the '20s and the '30s?

SATOW:
Not that I remember.

INTERVIEWER:
You don't remember?

SATOW:
I don't remember. I---all I heard is in the city of Hawthorne and the city of Inglewood, it was anti-colored or any other

nationality other than if . . . in other words, it was literally white.

INTERVIEWER:
But you personally, or your family did not . . . ?

SATOW:
No; we did not experience.

INTERVIEWER:
. . . have any repercussions?

SATOW:
No, no, no, no problems there whether it be going to either stores or anything like that---not that I remember.

INTERVIEWER:
Well now, your parents being---your father being Issei, it was also during this time was it or was it earlier that the Issei were not allowed to buy land? So, when he started his nursery, did he lease land from . . . or how did this work with . . . ?

SATOW:
Well, the anti-what do you call it---not discrimination law, but---well it's discrimination . . .?

INTERVIEWER:
Anti-alien wasn't it?

SATOW:
Alien yeah; the aliens couldn't, but my father was lucky enough to buy property in 1911 before the Alien Land Law Act was put in place. I think that was in the '20s if I remember right.

INTERVIEWER:
I kind of remember it was around the '20s, too. Okay, so I thought maybe during this time your father had. . .

SATOW:
No.

INTERVIEWER:
. . . tried to buy. But, apparently he got in before, which is very. . .. So he bought the property on El Segundo Boulevard in Hawthorne in---around 1911?

SATOW:
That's correct.

INTERVIEWER:
All right, good; your family was very fortunate then.

SATOW:
You had to be lucky. But then the only that happened that when evacuation time came along, the other farmers had told my dad---well my dad was in internment camp, but then they says, "You guys are unlucky because you have a piece of property. You can't get rid of it or anything like that."

But then, fortunately we had a Dutchman that had a wholesale house in Los Angeles, which took over the lease of the land. He took---he leased the land from us. So he operated it for us . . . a fellow by the name of Jacob Decker at United Wholesale Florist. They took over the flower market, the San Pedro Firm Building, and two other flower growers here---one Kalioke and the other one was Goya. So in other words, we were lucky; so.

INTERVIEWER:
You were---you were; now going back to your school days, were you involved---able to get involved in school activities---sports, club activities, anything of that sort while you were attending Leuzinger High School?

0:17:34.2

SATOW:
Well, I was on the Student Council from the beginning because we had moved from Inglewood High School to Leuzinger High School in January of---no---January of 1930, and from that time I was on the Student Council, also the Yell Leader. I was a Yell Leader for a couple of years.

INTERVIEWER:
Oh, you were very active.

SATOW:
And then sports, well I was involved in Class D basketball, which is the same---with the same group as Yo Kobata and Sam Ishihara and let's see who else? There was another one---another fellow that went to Gardena High School and we used to play basketball between the schools and also with the Gardena Baptist Church.

INTERVIEWER:
And I understand you also ran track or you were a part of the track team?

SATOW:

Yeah; I was part of the track team---varsity track team, but Class D basketball.

INTERVIEWER:
And also during this time were you helping your dad in the nursery after school?

SATOW:
Well, we had to help cut flowers in the morning before we went to school and then after we came home from school, some of us---some of my other brothers went to Japanese School, but then I did---I had no pleasure---didn't care for it. So, we worked after school.

INTERVIEWER:
That was my next question; did you attend Japanese School and was Japanese the main language spoken in your home? Or, did your parents learn English while they were here?

SATOW:
Well, we had a---they learned a little English from the German family that was living with us. So, but at home, I think most of what was done spoken in Japanese. Now, reading and writing, they didn't do any teaching of that type, even though my mother was a school teacher.

INTERVIEWER:
And, you mentioned the Gardena Baptist Church; was that your family church where---did you attend church?

SATOW:
I'm trying to trace it down, but then I---I understand that the Kobata family and my dad were involved in the original Moneta Church---the Moneta Japanese Church before it became the Baptist Church. So, I asked the Gardena Baptist Church if they had any in their archives that would bring out who the original 20 people or 20 students that went to this Japanese church in Gardena.

0:20:18.2

INTERVIEWER:
So would you say that the church was a center of many say social activities for the Japanese American families in the area at that time?

SATOW:
Well, we had a Y club out of the---a Comrade Y Club and an all Boy Scout Club out of the---out of . . . I think, well Boy Scouts was sponsored by someone outside of---someone in Gardena, but we met at the auditorium at Gardena---old Gardena High School, which

is now Peary High---Peary Junior High or Peary Middle School. But, we had both. . . I was getting involved in Boy Scouts in Hawthorne and then the YMCA from Gardena Baptist Church. I don't remember much about that. You know, as you get older, you don't remember.

INTERVIEWER:
I would say your memory is pretty good---very good, better than a lot of people that I know, even 20 years younger. Give me---would you give me an idea of what the general community was like?

You've mentioned that even though you lived in Hawthorne, the Inglewood area, that you obviously had a lot of contact with you know friends---had friends in the Gardena area, and the surrounding South Bay area. Can you tell me a little bit of what the area and the community was like back in those days---obviously pre-war, say that you would remember from high school days in the late '20s, early '30s?

Well, obviously not as cosmopolitan as it is now, would you say it was more rural---lots of farmers, not only the Japanese community, but the Caucasian community as well? What other ethnic nationalities lived in the area? What kind of work the people did---just kind of give us a feeling of what the community was like as you were growing up.

0:22:31.2

SATOW:
Well, I know that there were a lot of Italian immigrants---families near me and German families. So, I. . . and it was hard for me to know which one was Irish dissent or German dissent or Greek dissent or anything like that. But, we all got along. In high school, I had no problems, and in grammar school, I didn't have any problems. But, we did have nearly, from what I understand from the old directories that we have around the house, that there must have been about 100 families living in our area---Japanese families. But then, we didn't socialize very much unless you went to Japanese School, which I did not like. So, I only went once a week, and ditched it every time I had a chance [Laughter].

INTERVIEWER:
What . . .?

SATOW:
Now, I've had to pay the penalty.

INTERVIEWER:

[Laughter] I agree; I have the same problem. I didn't go to Japanese School and I regret it a great deal. I believe the streets were even named differently.

SATOW:
That's correct.

INTERVIEWER:
You mentioned living in El Segundo, but it was called Route . . . ?

SATOW:
Well, our home address was Route 503, Inglewood, California; yet we lived on a street called, Harrison. And Harrison became Ballona Avenue. Then it became El Segundo Boulevard. So, at the present time it's El Segundo.

INTERVIEWER:
And I know that Marine Avenue. . .

SATOW:
It used to be Compton.

INTERVIEWER:
. . . used to be Compton.

SATOW:
Uh-hm; that's right.

INTERVIEWER:
And, about how far north and how far south would you say that you and your family ventured in those days either for business or social purposes?

SATOW:
Well, the whole territory around Torrance was mostly oil wells and things like that, and Columbia Steel and Signal Oil Company owned all of the land. So, before the war, there was very little farmers or Japanese farmers or anybody living in those areas. Because, I remember as a---going to Leuzinger High School, with after a football game, we'd go out to Torrance and Hawthorne Boulevard and steal watermelons and have a bonfire at the Prairie Avenue and Rosecrans. There was an open field and they always had crates of---crates and different boxes around. So we'd make a bonfire after a football game and stuff like that---eat, and had a lot of fun with the school kids.

INTERVIEWER:
Do you remember LAX---the airport being there at that time?

0:25:20.4

SATOW:
Oh yeah; L.A.---Los Angeles Airport was called Mines Field before. And, in 1930 or '32, they had a big auto races out there---dirt track auto-racing. And, let's see now; where---we also had . . . oh, auto-racing and air races and in 1932 they had the Olympic Games at the coliseum and the Japanese students that came from---I mean, the Japanese athletes that came from Japan stayed near Inglewood High School and they practiced at Inglewood High School during that '32 Olympics. But, let's see. . . well, where---I got off track already.

INTERVIEWER:
No; you're doing fine. Were you and your family or say you and your friends, especially, able to participate in---you said you participated in high school sports; but were you able to attend . . . did you have transportation? Were you financially able to attend things like football games outside of say. . . I don't know if they had professional teams in those days. . .

SATOW:
No.

INTERVIEWER:
. . . but anyway, activities that did not revolve just around your church and your immediate community? Did you have the means to go out of the community for events?

SATOW:
Well, we used our father's car.

INTERVIEWER:
You did have a car; your family had a car?

SATOW:
Father's car; dad had a car so we used that in the---like in 1930. I remember we had an old Chevrolet, but things like that. So, yeah; we traveled around. We were looking for girlfriends, too.

0:27:06.4

INTERVIEWER:
I was going to say [Laughter]; okay. How about meeting your wife, **Fumi**; how did you meet and when did you meet?

SATOW:

I met her on August 17, 1936 at the flower market.

INTERVIEWER:
You remember the date?

SATOW:
Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:
At the flower market?

SATOW:
Yes; that's right. I'm like Tuck's wife. Tuck's wife is from the flower market, too. She went one day to work at the flower market restaurant as a waitress because she had been in Japan for two and a half years from 1933 to 1936, and had just returned and her first job was---her job was to go to work for a gift shop---a Japanese gift shop on Hill Street. But she hadn't---she was doing nothing in between, so they needed a girl for a short time at the flower market in the restaurant and that's where I saw her. And, I mistook her for some other girl by the name of Fumi. And so I said, "Hey, Fumi, what are you doing here?" Wrong girl, but it turned out right for me; thank you.

INTERVIEWER:
And tell me a little bit about your children now. You obviously married Fumi. Tell me---give me your children's names and when they were born.

SATOW:
Well, after two and a half years of running around together and she, as a matter of fact, she came over to the house within the first couple of months after I met her, and she met my parents and things like that. And, later on, I know a neighbor came over and told my dad that, "Your son is running around with a city girl," which in those days was a no-no. Go ahead.

INTERVIEWER:
But, you were married and had . . . ?

SATOW:
Well, as a matter of fact, I had a shotgun marriage. There wasn't---in the olden days, from what I understand, if a family---if a person gets married, he's supposed to be a bishakunin for somebody before his life term. So, this man had an appliance store on First and San Pedro called . . . what was it---Mitsuba Trading Company?. And, it sold washing machines and things like furniture and stuff like that. And, he sold the business and had to go back---he's going back to Japan, but he said he had not

committed himself to being a bishakunin. So, they had---the picked on, and asked my dad---says, "How about telling you son to get married now so that we can---so he can go home with his face high?" That's how---that's why we got married in 1939, March the 25th.

INTERVIEWER:
And, did you have any children before World War II?

SATOW:
I had, well as a matter of fact, one child was two years old and the second was born in Santa Anita on Sea Biscuit Road. They had a hospital at Santa Anita, and Santa Anita some place, so my second daughter was born there---delivered by Doctor Shigekawa, which was a friend of my wife.

INTERVIEWER:
And then the other children were born---anyone born in camp or. . .?

SATOW:
No; just the one---the second daughter was born in camp. So her birth certificate is interesting. It has something Sea Biscuit Road Santa Anita Assembly Center, Arcadia, California. So every once in a while, she has to pull it out to show somebody because they say, "Hey; you were born in the horse stables?"

INTERVIEWER:
Why don't we take a break now, Jibo.

SATOW:
Okay.

0:31:32.2

[End CD Track One; Begin CD Track Two]

0:00:01.7

INTERVIEWER:
This is a continuation of the interview with Mr. Hideo Satow on November 18, 2003 on the first CD.

Jibo, continuing with our pre-war experiences and what the community was like, did you and your family have a chance to visit Little Tokyo very much, and can you tell me what Little Tokyo was like as you were growing up---your experiences?

SATOW:

All I know is we went to a Manju shop. That was the first thing we did when we got to Little Tokyo [Laughter]. I remember a lot of the clothing that the parents bought for us when we were young were bought in Little Tokyo. They had two big department stores, one called Hori and Company and the other one was Kotomio, and they carried a lot of merchandise. So, but primarily we---I went with my dad downtown is because dad had an interest in San Pedro Firm Building, which was built in 1923 by eight Japanese flower growers. They were the owners of it. And, next door they were building Union Church still. As a matter of fact, I think during the 1920s, I think late---middle 1920s, dad bought a taxi cab---second hand taxi cab. So, we had a big long Cadillac in our yard. It would hold seven passengers. But, I mostly remember is going down there to eat, like everybody else; huh.

INTERVIEWER:
Well, do you remember this as a teenager, when you were junior high---high school age or when you were younger?

0:02:01.1

SATOW:
Younger than that.

INTERVIEWER:
Younger than that.

SATOW:
Before---when I started driving myself, well at 14, you went anyplace---Palos Verdes Hills, San Pedro and Terminal Island, and went down to---was that---what was the Japanese beach down there. . . Brighton Beach---Brighton Beach where Jimmy **?Kalata?** had a boat. I think Jimmy had a boat and we used to have to go down there. As a matter of fact, there is a---one of the girls they had---was saved down there at the Brighton Beach by---with Jimmy and, I think, your father were involved in it. That's years ago though.

INTERVIEWER:
Well, I remember my parents telling me that for---between Gardena and Little Tokyo or downtown L.A., they remembered one traffic signal. What was the traffic like in those days for you?

SATOW:
What was that? [Laughter] I don't know.

INTERVIEWER:
You don't even know the word traffic in those days [Laughter]. Were there very---were there a lot of Japanese American families-

--Nisei families---Issei families settled around the Little Tokyo area?

SATOW:
Oh yeah; a lot of lived . . . as a matter of fact, there's a woman by the name of Mary Miho that was born on Central Avenue and Turner where they had a Japanese soda water company---Star Soda. Do you remember that? That may be your dad's period. That's---we used to go down there to buy soda pop. And, I think primarily we went to Jap---Little Tokyo to window shop and stuff like that---shoe stores. Asahi Shoe Store was there and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER:
What about the Chinese restaurants? I remember Far East and is it San Ko Low.

SATOW: San Ko Low? was there. Neekwo Low was there. It starts with---one that starts with---Man Shu Low was there. And, then we went to Far East and eat Chinese food. As a matter of fact, in the early days, one of the reasons we went down Tokyo is somebody got married and they had their reception down there.

0:04:17.3

INTERVIEWER:
I remember that, too, even into the '50s. I think we'll move on now into the years of 1941, after December 7th, during the war and how your family and you were affected. First of all, do you remember where you were on December 7, 1941?

SATOW:
Home---I was at home and about Noon dad was picked up because he was in the Navy for six years. And, when he came to the United States and landed in Seattle, he had to put what was his previous occupation, and said he was in the Navy.

And, being the second---being that he was the second son, he had to shift on his own. Most of the family, the oldest son had to watch out for the parents, and they got---they got the family property. So, then the second son or some of the younger family . . . my dad was 27 when he hit the United States, so he was one of the older people. But, most of the young ones that jumped draft at 18 came to the United States so they wouldn't have to serve in the service.

INTERVIEWER:
Was there any warning for you just living you know a quiet life in Hawthorne for you and your family? Were your parents aware or

were any of you aware that the problem---I mean, obviously . . . ?

SATOW:
Of probably the war?

INTERVIEWER:
Of course.

0:05:56.5

SATOW:
Of course, having a war?

INTERVIEWER:
Yes.

SATOW:
As a matter of fact, we. . . our attorney, F.D.R. Newt told us to switch over as San Pedro Farm Building to a Caucasian name or else one of the Niseis that was old enough. So they---we sold---we took 51 percent of the stocks---all of my dad's stock, and then another person's stock, which made up of . . . because some of the---some of the stockholders only had maybe 10 percent or something like that, and we made over 51 percent. We made it into a Nisei corporation. So therefore, when the Pearl Harbor hit, it was not confiscated by the Federal Government. It's the same way with the ranch. We turned it over into my name because I was old enough at that time. So that's how we were able to survive.

INTERVIEWER:
Well, with your father being picked up by the FBI and your mother, whom I'm assuming did not speak much English at this point.

SATOW:
That's correct.

INTERVIEWER:
But, you were about how old at this time---mid '20s?

SATOW:
I was born in 1914, so that would be what?

INTERVIEWER:
1914.

SATOW:
Twenty---I can't add. You'd have to put it down on paper.

INTERVIEWER:
About 27 or so, perhaps. Anyway, you became the head of the family?

SATOW:
I had my own family.

INTERVIEWER:
And so . . . .

SATOW:
I had my own family because I had two children and my third brother down---no second brother---second brother down, he became the head of the family where---when we went into camp. In other words . . . .

INTERVIEWER:
He was still living at home?

SATOW:
Yeah; all my brothers were living at home except the second---the second brother. My second brother was in . . . when World War II started, he was in Missouri chick sexing. So then they picked him up and held him for a few days. Then he went to Holland, Michigan where he stayed with one of his friends and did his chick sexing there.

INTERVIEWER:
So what happened to your mother and your younger brothers and sisters? Roughly how much time did they have before they were sent to Santa Anita?

0:08:25.9

SATOW:
Well, they first moved into the---the Western---west of Western Avenue was, I don't know, a danger zone. As a matter of fact, there was in Johnson---on Johnson Ranch on El Segundo Boulevard and that would be Arlington. In that area there used to be a big reservoir and a large piece of land where the National Guards were stationed. So once in a while we used to hear guns firing and things like that. But, then my mother had to move out of Hawthorne because that was a restricted area. So she rented an apartment on Western Avenue across straight---where Kaiser Permanente Medical Building is at the present time. She was living in an apartment over there with my sister and one of my brothers. Then later on they said that was a restricted area, so

she had to move to Venice and then from Venice she came back to Hawthorne and went to Santa Anita.

I have an interesting trip to Santa Anita. Instead of going by bus like the rest of the family, we took an old pickup truck because one of the fellows that called from Santa Anita says, "They tell you only to bring two suitcases---one suit piece a piece." He says, "Don't---don't believe them; just load up a truck or something like that and come into camp."

So we took sleeping bags and all of the food that we had left over---left over, and then also some baseball equipment from the Japanese School and rice maker---not a rice maker, but a little gas stove so we can cook rice. And, we used to eat food---Japanese food, rather than have to go to the music---I mean the mess hall.

But, I don't know; and going there, it happened to be a---I went by caravan by car and we put baby cribs in that and everything else. Got a flat tire on the road on the way, and was left there with a soldier guard. And, I don't think he was any older than I was, and had to fix the flat tire in the---in the rain---drizzle. That's my experience.

And afterwards, the friend that took over the---the garage that took over my car and---and things like that, well he brought the truck back and sold it for us. And, the car was sold to the local police department because it happened to be a new '41 Ford.

0:11:24.9

INTERVIEWER:
What happened to the property that your parents had bought in 1911, and also did you have time to, before you went to Santa Anita, to I don't know pay your bills, get to your bank accounts, attend to your accounts? In other words, not knowing what your future was going to be and how long you would be away, were you able---what did you do you know just to more or less close out what was happening in your Hawthorne home?

SATOW:
Well, we---our bank account was not frozen. About the only thing that was frozen, he had---my dad had an account with **Yokohama** Specie and that was frozen. But then he was in Missoula, Montana---Prisoner of War Camp---because he was in the Navy. He was picked up about Noon of Pearl Harbor---Noon hour into Pearl Harbor. That was a little scary incident, but people were all right afterwards. I have no qualms about it.

INTERVIEWER:
And your property---the nursery?

SATOW:
And the nursery was---the nursery was turned over to a fellow by the name of Jacob Decker, which also leased the Southern California Flower Market, Paul Goya's parent's farm in Sierra Madre, **?Yoki?** Greenhouses in Venice, and he took care of it. He paid for all the property tax until the day we came home. And, the day I came home, well he turned the keys back over to me. And, everything was in tact---furniture and everything. We were---in other words, we were the lucky ones.

INTERVIEWER:
So no one lived on your property while you were gone?

SATOW:
Oh yes; the---one of the salesman were---this United Wholesale Forest, which Jacob Decker was the main stockholder. He had one of his employees living at our home, and they had two children there during the time that we were gone. But, other than the wear and tear on the greenhouse, because you couldn't raise flowers during war time. You had raise vegetables and things like that because otherwise they wouldn't sell you fertilizer or anything like that. But, it was---other than that, well I think it was---we were lucky.

0:13:59.6

INTERVIEWER:
So you and Fumi had a child before the war and you had mentioned that one of your children was born in Santa Anita in a horse stall?

SATOW:
That's correct.

INTERVIEWER:
And then where---what camp did you finally end up staying in?

SATOW:
Rohwer, Arkansas is a camp that we finally ended up in. We were originally assigned to Block 15, but I don't know the reason why my dad wanted to move. So, we moved over to Block 5 and that's where they were for the term of the camp life. I went out of camp in February of---that would be 1943, I think is, wouldn't it---'42; yeah '43. February '42 I went to a place called Maywood, Illinois and worked in the greenhouses learning how to raise

roses, heat the greenhouses and things like that. I think your father went to Winnetka or North. . .

INTERVIEWER:
Evanston, Illinois.

SATOW:
Evanston, Illinois; as a matter of fact, his boss is one of the stockholders of Eric Johnson and Company, the wholesale house that originally hired us. Because, but they had some greenhouses in Maywood, Illinois and Des Plaines, Illinois and things like that.

INTERVIEWER:
Can you tell us a little bit about what you remember about camp just in general---your life there and maybe you can start with its location? Tell us a little bit about Rohwer, Arkansas---what the area was like.

SATOW:
Well, my---my first experience of working with a group of people was at Santa Anita; I was a timekeeper in a mess hall. So, that's when, and then after we transferred to Rohwer, Arkansas, I worked as a carpenter and . . . but, all I remember was a big open field and . . . but a lot of trees because it was near the Mississippi River. And, a lot of the boys would walk out of camp and go down to the river to go fishing and things like that. But, my stay in camp was only about---I think it was less than a half of year because you know we got there in September or October, and then I left in February.

INTERVIEWER:
To go to where?

0:16:36.3

SATOW:
To go to Chicago, Illinois and work at Premier Rose Garden.

INTERVIEWER:
So your family moved to Chicago?

SATOW:
No; I did.

INTERVIEWER:
Oh, just you did?

SATOW:

Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:
But your wife and children stayed in the camp?

SATOW:
Stayed in camp; right, stayed in camp until---I believe it's '44---winter of '44 they came out. No, yeah; because we came back here I think '45, if I remember right.

INTERVIEWER:
And were you able to visit your family during the time that you were in Chicago during the war?

SATOW:
Sure; at any time that you---just had to walk in and walk out.

INTERVIEWER:
Well, you had to have some kind of paperwork to let you return to Chicago?

SATOW:
As far as I remember. That's right; as far as I can remember.

INTERVIEWER:
That's interesting. And so, Fumi was alone with the children in camp, but she had your mother and father there to help her?

SATOW:
And one younger brother---one youngest brother because he was, I think, he was born in 19---what the heck was it? It's on that piece of paper there.

0:17:37.1

INTERVIEWER:
Well, which brother was this?

SATOW:
Thirty---1930 something.

INTERVIEWER:
Nineteen thirty he was born, so.

SATOW:
So, he'd only be 10, 12 years old. As a matter of fact, he went to a meeting the other day of Rohwer, ex-camp people that he---the setting up the program for next year's Rohwer get-together

and I think it's September of next year they're going to have a---the University of Arkansas is going to have a deal.

INTERVIEWER:
I got some paperwork on that and, in fact, the Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas happens to be Winthrop Rockefeller, and he and former President, Bill Clinton, will be attending and quite a number of dignitaries will be attending this, I believe, it's a four-day conference.

SATOW:
That's right.

INTERVIEWER:
Educating---doing education about the camp situation. So. . . .

SATOW:
As a matter of fact, I think there's an article in _____ this last week pertaining to that where.

INTERVIEWER:
Well now, during the war, and since you were working in Chicago, you were not part of the military at all?

SATOW:
No.

INTERVIEWER:
But did you have any other family members---were any of your brothers?

SATOW:
In the service?

INTERVIEWER:
In the service or relatives?

0:18:58.0

SATOW:
Yeah; they got---three of my brothers got drafted during war time, and my sister married the flower market's treasurer's son, and they---they were living in Battle Creek, Michigan where he went in---was in the service. And, then from there, he was sent to Germany, and---well across there anyway, to a European Theatre Operation.

Then, my other brother---my sister's husband was there, you know in the service. Tomio served as an interpreter in Japan; Tadao

was also an interpreter in Japan; and Kumio went to Germany to be a---well I don't know, an armored guard or whatever like this---security; he went for security. And Fumio stayed in the United States---he went to the service in the United States serving under some officer---secretary or something like that for one of the officers. So. . . .

INTERVIEWER:
And they all survived the war?

SATOW:
Huh?

INTERVIEWER:
They all survived?

SATOW:
They all survived.

INTERVIEWER:
No one was wounded or. . .?

SATOW:
Well, just the---my brother-in-law had a bad kidney, but that was from high school years. He got his stepped on so he had no military insurance. He couldn't get any military insurance. And, you couldn't go on the front lines unless you had military insurance. So he became a cook.

INTERVIEWER:
Well, even though you weren't in camp, I'm sure that Fumi has probably told you a little bit about what it was like for her and the children. Can you relate any of her personal experiences or how she felt? Was she able to adjust all right to camp life? Did she mention anything about you know any particular hardships even adjusting to the difference in climate? You know the winters and the summers must be a lot different than what she was used to here in Southern California. Anything that you might tell us about what---how she felt about the years that she spent in Rohwer, Arkansas?

SATOW:
The only thing she complained about, I wasn't there to wash the diapers [Laughter] when the second child was born. No; I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER:
She made friends or you knew people already that were in the same camp?

SATOW:
There were people there in the same camp, but same barracks, that she knew. A lot of them had children about the same age as she had. So she had no problems. I don't remember her telling of you know---complaining that, "You're on the outside and I'm on the inside," and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER:
No; my family went through the same experience where we remained in camp in Amache, Colorado, but my father went to work at a nursery not too far from you in Evanston, Illinois.

SATOW:
Yeah; as a matter of fact, I went to---I went to Evanston and to pick up a truck over there for---dump truck to haul coal. So I knew you---I think Bill Sado was there, too, if I remember right.

0:22:29.0

INTERVIEWER:
Well, now tell me a little bit about Chicago---the nursery. Who hired you and were there other Japanese Americans working there with you?

SATOW:
There was about approximately 15 Niseis were working for three greenhouses, operated by this Premier Rose Garden. And the plant number three that we were located were all Niseis, all. . . I think I was the only married person there, and all the rest were bachelors. So, we took turns cooking and washing and everything else. But, I don't know; my experience in Chicago was that I learned a lot about how to grow roses, how to operate steam boilers, and things like that---shovel coal. But, it was a nice experience; I think it was good.

INTERVIEWER:
How did you find this job? How were you able to get hired?

SATOW:
The reason we got hired is they had a recruit fellow by the name of Joe Wilson, and he---they are the corporation that owned these greenhouses and operating Rose Garden, were losing all their employees. And even though they consolidated some of their employees to the main plants, for each greenhouse they had, I think, 20 some odd greenhouses. Each one covered one acre. So it was **large** operation over there.

And, then they made rooms for the fellows---not individual, but like a bunkhouse like on the side of the house, and side of the office at one place and the side of the house at another place. And, they provided housing for the---on the property. But, how---how they got recruited is one of the northern flower growers knew the managers of this large rose operation, and his family was a rose and carnation operator in Mount Eden. So, then they came down to camp to recruit. So, that's how---my single brothers . . . I was the only married brother---one in the family, so therefore my single brothers went in January to start up this one greenhouse, which they were going to lose the whole crop. So, they were able to revive it and get enough money out of selling short-stem roses that it paid for all the losses that they had up until then. So as far as . . . and a job opportunity was there even though it was 60 cents an hour. But, that was good money in those days.

0:25:16.4

INTERVIEWER:
I was just going to ask you if you were paid for working there.

SATOW:
Yeah, oh yeah; we were paid. We were treated well. And, the neighbors happened to be mostly Germans or Italians. That's the funny part. And, even though they had---they probably won't want to put that in script is that they---the neighbors happen to be on the rationing board---food rationing board and the gas tanks and things like that. So, we were able to get around---go to Chicago to buy clothing for my children and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER:
How did . . . you say that you were able to get out into the city and all; how did the people in you know in the area up in Chicago feel about the Japanese? What was their feeling about the Japanese and the war---the Japanese incarceration and the war? Was it ever talked about or mentioned?

SATOW:
I personally did not have any bad experience at all any place I went. As a matter of fact, we were invited to a lot of the different ethnic group families. You know two or three of us would go over, and they'd want to know how we were raised as kids and things like that. But, I had no experience there where you know where I got refused fooding or anything like that---not in my experience anyway.

0:26:48.2

INTERVIEWER:
Well, you said you encountered a lot of German and Italians.

SATOW:
Well, they were on the same _____.

INTERVIEWER:
I was going to say, what . . .?

SATOW:
They were on the same side of the fence.

INTERVIEWER:
Were they sympathetic to the Japanese?

SATOW:
Oh yeah.

INTERVIEWER:
Did you find that perhaps you were, for many people, the first Asians that they had seen in the area, or . . . well, Chicago was fairly cosmopolitan. It was kind of a mix. So, the people there probably had had occasion to meet Asians and Japanese Americans before?

SATOW:
Well, when they said that there---they were going to bring in a group of Japanese fellows to operate a greenhouse---one greenhouse, there was a few protests by these other families outside of the---some of these German---even the German and some of the Italians growers, they didn't want the Japanese in the area. But once they---once we went there and they saw the results within less than a half year's time, they came to our manager and asked, "Where can we get some more recruits?" So, it was the other way around.

INTERVIEWER:
Well, they originally felt that you wouldn't know the business?

SATOW:
Yeah.

INTERVIEWER:
And would not be a help to their . . .?

SATOW:
For their cause.

INTERVIEWER:

For their cause; I see. That's interesting. Well, would you like to talk about anything else that happened to you and your family during World War II---during these years before the end---before the Peace Treaty was signed?

SATOW:
Not that I can remember that, you know where I had an unpleasant experience or anything like that. I had---I don't have no memory---no memory of that.

INTERVIEWER:
Good.

SATOW:
Even pre-war and post-war.

INTERVIEWER:
How about your parents; did they both survive the war?

SATOW:
Yes.

INTERVIEWER:
And they were able to return to Hawthorne after the war?

SATOW:
Uh-hm.

INTERVIEWER:
Oh that's good; and see that their home was still in tact?

SATOW:
Yeah; all you do is walk in and bring the clothing out of storage---it was in the garage, technically, or one of the rooms in the house that had . . . there was what we used to call the big house. So then, my---I had two sister-in-laws move in with us because their husbands were all overseas. You know so then after that one, we're up to date.

INTERVIEWER:
Good; let's take another break and we'll continue talking. . ..

0:29:22.2

[End CD Track Two; Begin CD Track Three]

0:00:00.0

INTERVIEWER:

This is a continuation of the first CD of the interview of Hideo Satow, recorded on November 18, 2003.

Okay; Jibo, we've covered the pre-war and the war years. So, now we'll move onto the post-war resettlement years. Can you tell me what your experience was like on getting resettled after the war back into Hawthorne?

SATOW:
I had---we had no problems as far as resettling and coming back to our own homestead. And, whether it be going to the hardware store, grocery store, bank, or getting our cars fixed or anything like that, I don't remember anything you know an ill experience or anything like that at the present time. Maybe something will pop up later, but doesn't---at the present time, I don't remember.

And then, I know that the city of Inglewood and Hawthorne was lily white and they would not sell homes to Niseis until 1957. And I think it was one of my---my brother is the one that broke the ice. They said, "What the heck; he was born in Hawthorne. Why can't you sell it to him?" They sold it anyway---the real estate agents. There was only one real estate agent that would sell at that time. So, that's the only thing I . . . .

Inglewood Park Cemetery was also lily white, and before the war, there was only one man that I remember hearing about. But his name, I believe it was Ohara, and his wife happened to be Caucasian. So they buried him with a closed casket.

0:02:02.4

INTERVIEWER:
Well what about your parents; when did they pass away? And where are they buried?

SATOW:
My parents are buried in Green Hills---what's that _____; is that what that is?

INTERVIEWER:
Yes.

SATOW:
I think 1950---1959 dad passed away and I think it was 1986 or '84 my mother passed away, which is right?

INTERVIEWER:
Nineteen eighty four you have.

SATOW:
Yeah; she was 90---I think she was 93 years old or something like that. You have a little booklet over here of the Satow clan. It's all through the United States. She happened to be the oldest living at the time of the---or she was the oldest one of the Satow with a "W" in it.

0:02:55.3

INTERVIEWER:
Well now, you mention that you were able to return to your Hawthorne nursery because a neighbor had leased the property and when you returned you found everything in tact?

SATOW:
In tact; uh-hm.

INTERVIEWER:
So you were one---do you feel that you were one of the more fortunate families to be able to return to your home---pre-war home?

SATOW:
That is correct.

INTERVIEWER:
What did you do after the war? You had your family; you had at this time how many children?

SATOW:
I had two children. I had two children. We came back to the nursery. We started from scratch. First. . . well you could---your supposed to grow vegetables, but we grew sweet peas and the snapdragons and things like that until we were able to buy carnation cuttings and then restock the ranch---the greenhouses. We had no problems. Selling was done by---through a co-op, which we formed at the flower market called, Firm Building, and there we took the flowers and sold them there until they---they leased between **Jacob Decker** and the flower market was closed. So, it took about a year before we got our own market back. But, other than that, I lived a flower market life.

0:04:21.5

INTERVIEWER:
And, how long did you and your brothers continue working the nursery?

SATOW:
We operated the nursery until year 1995; then we closed it down because of the imports and the high cost of taxes, labor, and plain getting tired, I guess [Laughter].

INTERVIEWER:
And so . . . .

SATOW:
No one would take it over.

INTERVIEWER:
And so, what has happened to the property now?

SATOW:
The property now is---was sold to the school district, which required us to remove all the toxic waste before we handed the property over to them. And at the present time, there is a small grammar school, K through 6th, which happened to open up with a student body of 2,000 students, which is . . . [Laughter] you can tell then that they needed a school bad. And it's named **?Cornwell?** Avenue School; thank you.

INTERVIEWER:
Tell me about your retirement now? Are you active in any Japanese American organizations and/or other community organizations?

SATOW:
Well, the only one that I pay dues to is the JACL of Torrance. I used to belong to Gardena Torrance---Gardena JACL, but then I transferred over to Torrance or South Bay, whichever one you call it. And, that's about the only major organization that I contributed to like the 1,000 Club, which was formed by George Inagaki back in the '30s.

0:06:14.4

INTERVIEWER:
But, you're also very active with the---still active with the Southern California Flower Growers Association. Tell us about your association with them.

SATOW:
My---the Southern California Flower Market is writing a book about the post-war, Niseis and Sanseis in the flower business, even though we're down to only about 15 to 20 growers, which pre-war days or right after the war had about 150 growers. It's now only down to about a half a dozen---I mean a dozen and a half.

INTERVIEWER:
Well now you go up there regularly do you?

SATOW:
Well, I go to a flower market every other week just to . . . well, it's like a second home to me because I---all my friends were up at the flower market. And even though the number of members are being diminished, I still enjoy going there and talking to some of the old flower growers that---or even retail florists that come around once a week.

INTERVIEWER:
Of course, and how has it changed since you were growing?

SATOW:
Well, when the flower market was in its peak production, we had about 157 or 147 memberships, which sold their flowers individually. Now, we have whole---now most of them are wholesalers that sell other people's flowers for them, and---and there are few flower growers. I believe, it's down to about 15 flower growers, which bring their own merchandise and sell it there at the market. I do not know what the future---I think the flower market will become a leasing agent or company. And, it was built in such a way that it can be turned over to any other major enterprise. Parking is available and everything.

I'm going---I still go to the market at the present time, and I'm on the committee where a professional writer is writing a book about Nisei flower growing from the '50s to the year 2000, which we hope to have out there at the end of this year or the first of next year. And, they---the writer for the book is called, Naomi Hirohara.

0:08:48.4

INTERVIEWER:
You mentioned that you had retired and sold your nursery because of competition. Can you tell us a little bit about the competition and how that has impacted the local nursery business?

SATOW:
Well, it first started out by---first started out going downhill was I believe in the '70s because carnations were being imported from Bogotá, Columbian and in lots of large scale, and they were selling---they were trying---they were undercutting us by nearly 50 percent.

And then, later on imports started coming in from Nicaragua, Mexico. And so at the present time, I believe about 80 percent of

the flowers that are sold at the flower market and their satellites is diminished. What was I supposed to say next? I don't know.

INTERVIEWER:
You said about 80 percent are being sold---are being brought in from other countries?

SATOW:
That is correct. And besides, the Niseis are getting older and the Sanseis are not taking over the---that type of a business.

INTERVIEWER:
Did you encourage any of your children to go into the business?

SATOW:
Well my children---two of my sons were in the business at peak---at the peak time, but then I think they got---they were too young to---did not feel that they wanted to stay in it so they branched out into other businesses.

One of my sons is working his own little, what he calls a screen machine---fixing window screens and things like that and putting in doors---screen doors and things. My oldest son is working for a flower grower as a supervisor, which has between 50 to 100 employees. He enjoys it; that's what he likes.

0:10:59.7

INTERVIEWER:
Okay; now have you told your children and grandchildren about any of your pre-war, post-war experiences? Are they aware of your history?

SATOW:
Well, my older two grandchildren, which is nearly up in the---close to 35 and 40; so they asked when they were younger. But, at the present time they're busy---too busy in their own little life so we don't talk very much about the flower market. When I was going to the flower market and selling myself, they'd ask me, "How was business," and things like that. But then, at the present time, they don't even ask about it.

INTERVIEWER:
Well, how do you feel about projects such as the Southern California Flower Market Oral History program and now our South Bay JACL? Do you feel that it has some importance and that we should carry it on?

SATOW:
I'm glad that you people have started this project because a lot of the things of what the Isseis and Niseis and ever the older Sanseis did would be lost in the shuffle, as far as I know.

INTERVIEWER:
Well, Jibo, thanks so much for participating in our program today and letting us come and interview you and hear your story. And, we hope that this program that will be recorded and maintained by the Cal State Long Beach Oral History Project will help to educate future generations about what all of you have gone through.

SATOW:
Thank you for letting me participate in your project.

INTERVIEWER:
Of course; thanks.

SATOW:
I think you're doing a good deal.

INTERVIEWER:
Good; thank you.

SATOW:
Good for the community.

0:12:53.1

[End CD Track Three]