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Answer: -- in Tumwater Middle School. They're studying about -- they heard about the evacuation deal and one of the teachers called me. She read my story in the Olympian. So she called me and wanted to know if I'd be interested in coming and talking to the class because they're studying this now. And I thought, well, what the heck.

Question: It's invaluable because, you know, I've read about it before. But to really try to get in and to understand the different perspectives is mind boggling. I mean, I just -- as I said, I come from a German heritage, so why -- why if I were in your shoes, why should it have been any different for me? Why didn't they say, you know, once a Kraut, always a Kraut. They didn't -- they didn't say that.

Answer: Well, Japan was the only one that bombed the United States. They attacked the United States. Not the Germans and Italians, they didn't know what they were doing anyway.

Question: (Laughs)

Answer: Really. They just followed, you know. So, thinking back now, I think that's the logical reason. German, Italians, they were pretty much melted in with the white community. We were not. We were Asians. And so the various -- it's very hard for the people at that time to understand that we are American citizens. And as far as Constitution is concerned; I don't think too many people understood the Constitution.

Question: Still don't. So when you got to Spokane, they sent you a card and said go ahead and stay, don't bother coming back to the --

Answer: Yeah, by that time they started to relax all the rules. And they were -- in fact the matter, I think they were under orders to do whatever was possible to close the camps. And so they started to push us out. And November they gave everybody a deadline to vacate the camp by November of '45. The war ended in August. The war with Japan was ended in August. I think it was June, wasn't it, with Europe?

Question: Yes.

Answer: And so by then the war's over, why have a concentration camp. In fact the matter, by then the wires -- they were still there but the guard tower was just about empty anyway. Everybody threw rocks at it and broke all the windows. And by November everybody had to leave, whether they wanted to or not. And there will be transportation in all parts of the country. You decide where you want to go and each of us were given \$25.00 to vacate.

Question: That was it?

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Twenty-five dollars.

Answer: Yeah, I got \$25.00 to stay -- stay out of camp. And so every -- everybody was given \$25.00 -- what I understand, okay. So we were pretty much disbursed throughout the country. Fact, most of the East Coast never saw an Oriental. I don't think they even knew what a Japanese looked like. Especially the Midwest. My mom went to Jerome, Arkansas. My dad came to Heart Mountain. So we were reunited there. My dad went back to Los Angeles; I stayed in Spokane. And so we've been separated since.

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Question: What about your grandpa?

Answer: Oh, he died in Spokane. He was 89 years old.

Question: So did he -- what happened when he left the camp, though?

Answer: They stayed back. And so my uncle -- but when we heard that they had to come back, they decided they were going to come to Spokane because that's where all their relatives were. So we bought a house in Spokane. And my uncle's working in the railroad at that time. He was out. And so he bought a house and Grandpa and Grandma came out -- came to the house. We had a house for them, anyway.

Question: So the farm that you had --

Answer: No, farm is gone. It's orchards now. We lost the farm. I mean, it was gone. We were there on the third year and the third year is always the best year for farming. And we had a crop you wouldn't believe. Everything was just lush. We left it all. I don't know what happened to it. I don't know if the Italian family made anything of it or not. I don't think they knew how to farm.

Question: And so your grandpa basically lost everything.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: No compensation --

Answer: No, no.

Question: It had to be -- and did you grandpa end up bitter?

Answer: He never -- he never said it. He was very deeply involved with church -- his Methodist Church, and he's very deep devout Methodist Christian. So I'm pretty sure that he didn't harbor any violent animosity.

At first during -- while the war was going on in the Pacific, he was gloating how the Japanese Army was doing. I was getting so sick and tired of it, I finally -- I remember telling Grandpa, I said, "Grandpa, I just don't want to hear it", you know. (laughs) But he died when he was 89 in Spokane, then Grandma died and my uncle and his wife stayed on at that house until about two years ago they finally sold. They moved into a mobile home, real nice little mobile home. I told him, I said, "Sell that house", you know "and buy yourself a nice little place and just finish out -- we don't need that old crappy house anymore." It's right by the -- all the hospitals. There's about five hospitals up in the south hills of Spokane. And so they finally decided, well, they'll sell and then they bought this little place down by -- are you familiar with Spokane?

Question: Yeah.

Answer: Natatorium Park.

Question: Yeah.

Answer: Yeah, well, that's where the house is right now. And so, well, that's it, I guess, as far as home is concerned.

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My wife and I got married in 1950 and we went down to Los Angeles and we raised five children in the San Fernando Valley and when I retired I decided I can't stand the place where I was because it was very, very depressed area of San Fernando. You've heard of South Central. Pacoima is another place. And we were right in the middle of Pacoima

Answer: And I said no, we can't stand this place. And my children had been telling us get out of there. So I told my wife, you know what, I want to get out of California and come up here. Two reasons. Clean air and clean water. That's it. So my kids says, well, we wanted you to move but we didn't expect you to get out of the state. Well, the third reason, we want to get away from you guys. We have six grandchildren; they're getting to be college age now.

Question: Do you hold any animosity for what happened in World War II?

Answer: No. That's history. That's yesterday. I don't look at yesterday. I don't look at tomorrow. I look at today. And that's how we live, you know. We -- as far as the children are concerned, they never went to Japanese school, they do not understand Japanese. We wanted them to grow up strictly American. No accent, no nothing. And so I -- I studied very hard to get rid of any accent out of my speech and I'm only a high school graduate. I didn't go to college. And my kids are all successful.

Question: Did you not want them to study Japanese --

Answer: If they wanted to, they can study on their own. I told them your life is here. My son is -- he's very deeply involved in a lot of -- a lot of political aspects. He's a general contractor. He's also into -- into small part of import and export so he's -- in fact of matter, at end of this month he's going back to Chin

Answer: He's been back to China, back and forth two or three times now, Russia

Answer: He's traveling all over and I figured, well, that's education enough. My second son is a head nurse in emergency at Kaiser Hospital in Los Angeles. My other son is a lay minister and he wants -- he's musical. He rights his own music and he's in religion and things like that.

Question: And you said Methodist?

Answer: No, he's -- fundamental.

Question: Oh, okay. The only reason I asked that is my mother, before she passed away, was very instrumental in organizing the lay professionals of the Episcopal Church and involved a lot of other churches, nationally, but fighting for their rights because they weren't being taken care of well in the church.

Answer: No, he belongs to a very large church in San Fernando Valley called The Grace Community Church.

Question: Oh, okay, yeah.

Answer: It's a fundamental church. They have over 3000 members.

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Question: You talked about -- you only look at the moment. So this next question might not be relevant. Do you think what happened to the Japanese American citizens, could happen again? Or did we learn a lesson?

Answer: Or do I what?

Question: Or did we learn a lesson.

Answer: With this '64 -- during that period with the civil rights movement, no. I don't think it would ever happen again unless -- this business of racism is beginning to grow again, unfortunately. And unless there's a very catastrophic event, I don't think it could happen. I think we'd fight. This time we would fight. It won't happen to us. I am seeing, well, how about this Palestinian situation. This could escalate. There are Palestinian communities that are really beginning to demonstrate now, which I think is wrong. If they're here, they abide by our rules. If they want to demonstrate, go home. It would be the same with me. If I wanted to demonstrate and didn't like what was happening, let's go home. And demonstrate there, not here. But as long as they're here, I think they should abide by our rules. And so again, no, I can't see America developing a concentration camp unless we want to develop a permanent concentration camp for the growing criminal population because we're being overrun. But no, as a civilian, something like that, I cannot see it happening again. What's happened in Europe, those concentration camps, horrible. I can't see that happening here. But again, I say 99% it won't happen, but you never know what that one percent can do.

Question: Do you think there's a message from this for the future generations -- your great grandchildren and great great grandchildren?

Answer: Well, during our last reunion, we -- our title was "Reunion Seven, The Next Generation." So what we're trying to do now is get the next generation involved. However, that's going to be a little bit difficult because the next generation; inter-marriage is pretty much the thing. And in fact, once in awhile I hear a Japanese marrying a Japanese. But that's rare. So today with the next generation, whether it's the third or fourth generation, I think our race will be so assimilated, you know, that I doubt if there's going to be enough interest to continue -- continue this program -- trying to revive. In fact the matter really, I don't want to revive it as much as I just want nobody to forget it. That -- that would be the thing that would be important to us. So there are probably -- the next generation, there might be enough to start another program to keep this going. Like the Heart Mountain, Wyoming Council -- they're trying to keep that going by -- by trying to develop a museum. And I told one of the leaders, I says, "Look, it's very noble and it's very nice of you people to want to do this to carry on remembrance of this. This is all fine. But you know, as the generation goes, we've got to forget." Maybe that might be the wrong thing is to forget. We should not forget. But at least it's there, you know. And I told them, "Let's not go overboard and bring up all this -- all this business. I don't want to revive the emotions." So basically I guess -- that's how I feel about it. So what happened back then, 50-some years ago, is something that happened and it's something that we can't un-do. People who are responsible are all dead. So what are we going to do? (laughs) I'm just hoping that this -- what's bothering me now is that racism is beginning to grow and not subside. I see it, I read about it, and in fact the matter, in some small, small way, sometimes I feel it. So, that's basically how I feel. So I tell my wife, I don't want to know what happened yesterday, and I don't want to know what's going to happen tomorrow. Today is the most important. So that's basically what it is. Questions. I did all the talking.

Question: I was just going to say thank you very much. I appreciate that you took this time.

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