

Lilly Kodama

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Question: The first thing I'd like to do, just so I have it on tape, is to get your first and last name.

Answer: Lilly Kodama.

Question: And is Lilly a nickname or full name.

Answer: I'm not sure which is my first name. My name is Yuriko, which also means Lilly. I think on my birth certificate it says Lilly Yuriko.

Question: I can't remember, I think it was Flo Koura that we talked to and she was telling me her real name and what it meant, and she says, but I, and it means like serene and peaceful, quiet, and she said, I never fit that name. Now you were, and I'll go over stuff. I know Frank's told me some things, but I'll go over like I've never heard any of these stories before. You're Nisei?

Answer: Sansei

Question: Sansei?

Answer: Yeah.

Question: So you're, your parents, your grandparents came over?

Answer: mmmm, hmmm. My grandfather was in San Francisco, and then he was expecting his war bride, not war bride, his picture bride, I guess. Anyway, I'm not sure, it must have been an arranged thing, and she was due to arrive in San Francisco, but the great earthquake and fire happened. It was 1906, and so then he, and the ship that she was on was diverted to Seattle, so he had to come up to Seattle to meet his bride-to-be, and so that's how they ended up in the Northwest, and so they stayed in Seattle, the two of them, and then the following, I think barely a year went by and had my mother, and so she was born in Seattle.

Question: So coincidence.

Answer: Coincidence. Right. And I'm not sure exactly how he ended on Bainbridge other than I think he heard there was good farmland, and so he came over to the island.

Question: Do you know what he was doing in the Bay area?

Answer: I'm not sure what he was doing in the Bay area, but he worked in a restaurant in Seattle, so I'm sure he was doing menial work of some sort there, so I have no idea, but we know that, well, see my mother has always said her birth date was 1906, and so we said, How can it be 1906 if the earthquake and fire was 1906, and so then we found that the Japanese consider that you're one year old the day you're born. That's how they age, I mean, designate age in Japan, I think. And so then when he needed birth certificates for all of them, then he went from my mother, so all of her siblings are actually one year younger than they, it designates on their birth certificate. So we got that all straightened out. We were talking among the aunts and my mother.

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Question: Most people would try to work the other way and try to make themselves

Answer: Right. So I think what they, he probably didn't speak English very well, and they asked how old she was, my mother was, and so he said, and so then whoever was taking down the statistics, said ok, she was born in 1906 then.

Question: What was your Mom's name?

Answer: Shigeko

Question: What was she like?

Answer: Oh, she was, what was she like? She, no one's ever asked me that point blank. I can't tell you.

Question: I mean, was she strong and outspoken or quiet?

Answer: She was quiet, but she was strong. The only example I could give you was, well, see she, when she was born. Let's see, this is going to be a long story. My parents, my grandparents. My grandfather's idea was to come to America and make lots of money and then go back to Japan. And I don't know why he got married, but anyway, why he asked for a bride. But anyway, here, they were both working in this restaurant, my mother says, and then when my mother was born, they realized she couldn't keep working. Mother couldn't keep working to add to the coffers, so then they sent my mother as a baby still in diapers and on breast milk I think. But anyway, she said they sent her back to Japan on a ship with two bachelors who were going back to Japan. She says her uncle tells her that she, well, that she was sent with both a flannel for her diapers and a case of canned milk, and you know, the ride takes 2 weeks, I think at the time to go across the ocean. Anyway, so here she was with these 2 men who probably never knew anything of, and then so she's to be met in Japan by her uncle who is now going to take care of her. So she was raised as a baby... until she was 12, no 6 or 7. She went through the 6th grade, maybe 10 in Japan. She really didn't know her parents at all. She was born in Seattle, but she was raised until she was in well into grade school in Japan. And then her parents came back to Japan and, by then they already had 3 other children, so my mother said, you know, my Aunt Arima(SP)... Fujio(SP) who was the next oldest, she was already pregnant with her, so she had to quit work anyway. But anyway, so then my mother was brought back to America, and then she said, see there, I'm losing my train of thought. You want to know what she was like. She had to

Question: No, this is fascinating.

Answer: ok. Well, then, anyway, in Japan, her uncle was a teacher and eventually a principal of this school, a grade school, and my mother was a star pupil, but she said she remembers being ostracized by the other kids. They would say, well, you got good grades because your uncle is the principal. Anyway, she really loved school, but then when her parents came... when my grandparents, brought her back to America, she had to quit school and then adjust to America then. By then they were on Bainbridge Island, and then she was considered the oldest. Here her sister, Fujio, thought she was the oldest all this, so there was all this rift and stuff. But anyway, my mother had to quit. She went to one year, I think, to 6th

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grade, at the old school on the island, 5th or 6th grade. That's the highest she went was 6th grade. And then they decided they needed more help on the farm and that Shigeko, since you're the oldest, you have to help. And so she had to quit school. And so then when I was going... I finished college and a friend and I decided we were going to go to college together and we had picked out, we looked at Lynnfield and all these other colleges, and my father saw how much tuition and going away to school to Lynnfield in Oregon would be, and he told my mother, No, we have to save money for Frank, 'cause our son has to go to college, and my mother said, and she told me she said that she always regretted not going to school, and so she said, Well, I'll find a way to send Lilly to school. So she's the one who planted all these raspberry plants and she ran the raspberry farm and that paid for my tuition, well, not to, I went to the "U" then. Anyway, that shows you what kind of strong person she is. And so she really was pretty enterprising. She had raspberries and I think she made more money than my father, actually. But anyway, that describes her, and she, and not only raspberries, 'cause raspberries were not the primary crop on the island. And I think she was one of the first to grow that. At least, as a commercial crop. And then when the raspberries, it got difficult to have pickers, and she got older, instead of having the land fallow, she planted Christmas tree seedlings, and she was the first to do that, too, and so we still have all those trees that are now 50 feet tall. So she was really a strong and entrepreneurial person, and the other thing I learned from her is to be tolerant and about. Well, she treated everyone the same. She was respectful, and so with the Native Americans who worked for her and the Filipino-Americans. I mean, I just never thought of them as different. They were all, and I think that's where our whole family gets, we're all, I mean we're not condescending. I don't want to be condescending, it's just that we feel it's a normal course of...

Question: It was never an issue.

Answer: It was never an issue, and yeah.

Question: What a fascinating lady your mom must have been.

Answer: Yeah, she was really, and she had to be strong when we were all taken away 'cause my father wasn't with us, 'cause he was, Frank probably told you....

Question: So now your Mom and Dad are running strawberries and raspberries.

Answer: Actually, my mother was, 'cause see my father had, he worked, he was a person who didn't have much schooling, but he did all kinds of work, but he eventually ended up working for Friedlander. Mr. Friedlander, the patriarch who started Friedlander and Sons Jewelry, and he worked as a salesman and by that he took his wares and went out to different Japanese communities and sold things. Anyway, so after the war, my Dad went to Mr. Friedlander and Mr. Friedlander loaned him enough money to open up his own jewelry store. OH, because my father went to Chicago, from Minedoka. I think you could leave to go to find work or take classes, and he went to Chicago and went to watch repair school. I guess 'cause he must have been thinking he's eventually going to work for Mr. Friedlander again. He must have, I have no idea, but anyway, he got money from Mr. Friedlander to open his own jewelry store, so after the war, he had his jewelry store and watch repair place on Faxon Street in international district in Seattle, and so he commuted back and forth to his store, and so then my mother, see that's why my mother said, Well, I'll find a way to make money, and that's the raspberries and.....so she was the

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farmer and he was the, that's what I meant, I thought she made more money than he did.

Question: Do you know, because your Mom was kind of ahead of her time.

Answer: Oh, she was that way. In fact, another thing I remember about her, she was out in the field and I would spend, I guess as the oldest daughter I always felt, well, guilt does wonders, but I felt responsible in helping her. There were times when she had all these children of friends staying at the house to help pick berries, and she needed someone to cook 'cause she couldn't do both, cook for them and watch the pickers out in the field, 'cause she had all these other pickers to oversee. Anyway, so I would spend summers, raspberry season here on the island with my 3 little kids, and do all this. But anyway, she was out in the field and she came back in just steaming mad. She was out there to meet some man who was going to do some work, some big job and she came in and she said, That man. He thought that I was a dumb woman, not only dumb woman, dumb farmer and dumb Japanese! I just remember that, and I always think, oh, yeah. She was ahead of her time, 'cause she was entrepreneurial and she was determined that we would go to school, that I would go to school. So all 4 of us went, not just Frank, 'cause there's 3 sisters and Frank. WE all graduated. Yeah.

Question: Gosh. Did, so now your Dad was taken away before.

Answer: Because the farm that we were running was originally my grandparents farm. That was the farm. Well, that was the thing. She was the oldest, my mother was the oldest, and what my grandfather did, and it happened to be maybe a year before Pearl Harbor when he said, Now it's time for me to go back to Japan, and by then his wife, my grandmother, did not want to go back to Japan, and so anyway, he took the two youngest. My mother was married then and my Aunt Fumi, whom you're going to talk to later, she was married and, well, everyone was married except the two youngest siblings of my mother, it was Aunt Midori and Uncle Tokeo. So he took the two of them and his wife, my grandma, back to Japan. And so that was in reverse for Aunt Midori, because she was born, she was actually born in the house that I live in now, because now we have...well, anyway, when they did, then they offered to sell my parents, he offered to sell my parents the farm. The house, and so that's how my mother was able to grow the raspberries and strawberries. Anyway, there's another story to that. So my mother said that faithfully she and my Dad would send a monthly payment to pay off the \$10,000 that her Dad offered to them. And so, one year, my cousin was visiting from Texas, and all the aunts, including my mother, they were all whisking around the table at our house, my house in Renton, and Natalie says, Ok, now that I've got all you aunts and sisters together, I've gotta get something straight, and so that's how we started talking about our past and how, well, anyway, so one of the things she asked was, Ok, Aunt Chigeko?, how did you end up with the property, because that was, and so that's what my mother's saying, and my Aunt Fujio, the one who was the oldest until my mother came along, well, anyway, my mother said, Well, my father said I could have, we could buy the farm, he would offer it to us, me first, 'cause I was the oldest, that I could buy, we could buy the place for what he paid for it. So for \$10,000 we got the farm. And so my Aunt Fugio, who was, knew about all these things said, \$10,000, he just paid \$5,000 for it. And that was the first time that my mother realized that her father, own father made money from the farm sale. And so that was a real hoot. We just all burst out laughing. Anyway, that's the story, and so...

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Question: So do you know, your grandfather must have gone back to

Answer: He went back to Wakiama?, where his family originally was, and in fact, I think it's too years ago, I went to Japan with my Aunt Fumi, and we're looking at old pictures, and I'm asking Aunt Midori, who I said it must have been hard for her to go back to Japan after she grew up in America, on Bainbridge Island, and she said Yeah, she had to wait a whole year before, I mean it took her at least a year to catch up with the schooling in Japan, because, but now she's very bilingual, and she comes and visits every other year about, and she always is surprised at how much Seattle has changed and the island has changed. You know, the usual stuff, but anyway, we're looking at old photos in her collection of photos and there's a picture of this huge house on a knoll, and she said, Oh, that was their family home. And see when my grandfather went back to Japan, the first you he did was built this huge house on the family property in Japan, and she said it was bombed during the war, during World War II, because she said she's sure that the enemy, by the enemy the United States forces, thought it must belong to some important person 'cause it was so big. That was Aunt Midori's attitude, and so then I thought Yes, and she said Yeah, he just wanted to show all the people in the countryside that he really did well in America. He built this big, huge house but it went up in flames, but no one was hurt, but anyway, so that's the big family story.

Question: It's interesting, 'cause I've talked to a lot of people and their grandparents had come over planning to do that, come over, generate some money and come back, where a lot of them didn't, so your grandpa actually succeeded in his dream, I guess.

Answer: Right. And he did, and he never did come back to America. In fact, he purposely didn't renew his passport, my mother says. But my grandmother, who didn't really want to leave, came back each time any of her daughters had children, had babies, and so in a way she was more here than there, cause there was a baby being born all the time.

Question: What, in separating your father from the family...

Answer: Oh, that's what I was leading to. Good thing...

Question: Which is fine, I

Answer: It wasn't because, ok, so then my parents lived in Seattle, and then my mother, I guess I'm trying to get to when they actually moved to the farm. Anyway, my mother kept having miscarriages, and so the doctor told her you just have to change, the city living must be too stressful. Anyway, they ended up then buying the farm and moving to the farm, which we live on now. Anyway, and so it was a farm, and so when the FBI came, there was dynamite in the barn, and rifles for hunting, and then my father could not prove his citizenship. He claims that his, he was born in California, and he claims that his proof of citizenship went up in smoke during the, I don't know, the fire, or something. Anyway, so he could never, he never had a birth certificate. And so then for that reason, no proof of citizen and dynamite and rifles, he was taken away with all these other heads of household to, I guess it was a jail in Montana.

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Question: Do you remember? Were you old enough to remember that happening?

Answer: I remember him leaving, but on the other hand, he commuted to Seattle. I remember saying Good-bye to him every morning, giving him a kiss, and he caught the ferry and then he'd come home, my mother would have the outside, the bath hot and ready for him to get in, but he wasn't home all day. I mean, it was just, and so I don't remember missing him. It was as if he went, oh, and I guess he did, you know, and he would go out of town travelling with his wares, and so I don't remember any kind of trauma because of that. But I remember him not being with us, and so then my mother by herself had to get ready to be taken away to Manzanar, the camp.

Question: It's interesting, 'cause again, you were, what, 7 years old?

Answer: 7

Question: So there's a 7-year-old perspective. Your Dad left and went to work.

Answer: Right. Right, and that's really the same. I feel, I mean I don't feel anything of great, I mean, nothing. I don't feel any bad memories about that whole time. It was just sort of a matter of course. Only has an adult looking back I think, Oh, how terrible, but as a child, it was like an adventure, like oh, because my mother, for one thing, said We're going on a special vacation. 'Cause in those days, for me, for us to, for my mother to say We're gonna go school shopping to Seattle, that was a special event, and I remember not sleeping that night because I was so excited about getting on that ferry to go to Seattle. And so we're going to take the ferry and probably going to get on a train. I'd never been on a train before, and it was a big adventure. I think as a credit to her, that's how she meant it to be for the children, I think. In those days, we were not as worldly, I think, as children are today.

Question: It's interesting, 'cause you see the perspective. I mean, like you said, going school shopping. That's a big adventure.

Answer: Oh, it was. To get new shoes. I mean, all that has changed, too, but no, this to take the ferry was a special day, to go to the big city.

Question: And it sounds like your Mom probably also was working to protect you.

Answer: Yes, she was. In hindsight, I know she was, but you know. And then, as I said, I don't think we were, I don't know, I think maybe 7-year-olds nowadays would be more aware of world situations, but I don't think, I think, I mean, there wasn't TV and there wasn't instant news. I mean, we did go to the movies and we so RKO news, I mean, ta tat a ta ta. And then that could be months old. You know, the news reel, and even then I think it went over my head.

Question: It's funny the stuff you remember, you remember the RKO.

Answer: Right, and the rooster, yeah. I remember that, but I don't remember the NEWS.

Question: Do you remember the day that you walked down and got on the...

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Answer: I, you know, it's hard to distinguish what I remember and what the pictures I've seen and what people have related to me, or my mother said, or what I've heard, but I remember more the train, more my first, I remember the soldiers, because that was impressive. I mean, I never saw a real soldier, I never saw a real gun with a bayonet at the end. And I thought that was kind of exciting, and I barely remember the ferry boat ride. Interesting, but I remember the train and the part I remember about the train is that it must have been an overnight train ride, because there were Pullmans, and I remember arguing over who gets to sleep on the top one. See, and those are the things I remember. And then I remember, well, I remember my mother saying, I mean, she said this is a vacation, and I remember getting the first glimpse of those barracks, and I remember saying, Oh, look at the rhubarb huts, because my uncle grew rhubarb, and they were in, they were in tar paper buildings that were long and that looked just like those barracks did. And so and I thought, Oh, there's lots of rhubarb huts, and then that's where we ended up and my mother said to me that I said, Well, what kind of vacation is this. But once there, that was another thing. You went to play with my cousins who lived a mile and a half away. I mean, that wasn't something that happened daily. We just didn't see each other or had playmates except our siblings unless it was a special family occasion or a gathering, but here there were playmates and cousins every day. And so for that, what I remember it was sort of a fun thing.

Question: And that is where it becomes interesting, because from a child's eye, because you're so protected,

Answer: Right, and you don't, you really, I mean as a small child I don't think, it's like you adapt to camping, I mean, you don't think about the luxuries of overstuffed furniture, and nice bedding. I don't remember it bothering me, except that I think the other thing I remember was eating lunch once, and we were served cottage cheese, and there was a dietician, and I don't know she was there especially for the children or what, but all I remember I did not like cottage cheese and she would not, and I don't think most of us did, and she would not let any of leave until we finished it. And I was the last one, 'cause I was just not going to eat that, and my mother finally came looking for me, but I remember that. But other than that it was not a bad experience from a child's point of view. I just look back and think, Oh, it must have been really hard for my mother and for teenagers or, older, yeah.

Question: That's where it sounds like the parents and what it did to the family.

Answer: mmm, hmmm. Mmmm, hmmm. See, I'm not a very good. Some people are looking for the dramatic in something that I'm not a good interview.

Question: But you know that's what's interesting, because history does, history books do one thing. They just give us the names and dates and places. Hollywood dramatizes it, glorifies it, and it's funny, 'cause I've talked to people and that's what they've said is, Oh, we want dramatic, and I'm saying, No, I want to know what it was really like, because we're trying to tell about, and so, from a 7-year-old child, that was your view.

Answer: Right. Mmmm, hmmm. We had playmates and we had school, and there were traumatic incidents, childhood incidents, I suppose, but that would

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happen no matter where. There were bullies. The same kind, it's the same no matter where or what environment, I think.

Question: Because it's interesting to look at the book and to learn more about it. It became a city.

Answer: It did. It did. I always think of Lord of the Flies, you know, where the young kids become isolated in one place. I can't remember the name of the story, but anyway, they

Question: Oh, Lord of the Flies, yes.

Answer: Isn't that the one where they, you just tend to do that, I think. Yeah.

Question: That's what's interesting, 'cause in juxtaposition, we've talked to people that have been in German prison camps and Japanese prison camps, you know, even some of the people that were in these tragic situations, to hear them talk, they still talk like you. They found pieces of normalcy, you know. They went on with life.

Answer: Yeah. You do. I think you have to. Yeah, that's part of survival.

Question: I think that's the big thing is survival. Do you remember any holidays, like birthday or Christmas?

Answer: I remember they had. See that's what's interesting. I really, it must have gone on just as usual, 'cause we used to have stockings that we hung before the war. I mean, we did all the things that, and so it must have happened then, too, but I remember there was someone dressed up as Santa Claus, and then the rec hall, the mess hall, to me it was the same building, but I remember a fake fireplace, and there was a tree and that kind of thing, so it seems like that went on, but I do remember always, there were movies shown, and so I had, I do have autographed photographs from movie stars 'cause we could send letters out and I wrote Dear Mr. Ladd, please send me an autographed photograph. And I would sign my name and address, and by golly, I'd get this autographed photograph from Alan Ladd I still have. I got ones from Lana Turner and yeah, I got quite a few, and so, the holidays went on, I think. It must have been, for me, a normal course of events, 'cause nothing sticks out in my mind.

Question: School?

Answer: School. We had to walk several blocks away to school, and I was just telling Frank last night that I remember, somehow we got on this subject, but that I was the oldest and I always had to be taking care of one or the other of them, and oh, and Frank, we were walking home either from school or somewhere and it was after a storm. It rained, and you know, it's just sand, and he got stuck in the mud. I mean, he stepped in and I couldn't get him out, and so finally I left him there and ran back up to our barrack and got someone to come and pull him out of there. And Frank said he remembers being lifted out and his boots staying in the mud. And then another time I had to be sure to wait for my sister, Fatis?, who is 2 years younger than me, and she had, for some reason, she had to stay after school a lot of times, so I had to wait for her, and then I'd be mad because all my friends had gone on ahead without me and here I'm waiting for my little sister, but see I remember

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that, but I do remember two of my teachers' names. I remember their faces and everything. One was Miss Schmidt and another was Miss Dubois. Anyway, Miss Dubois was really young and pretty and Miss Schmidt was tall and slender and if I look back and I can see her face, she looked like a typical old maid. You know, what we considered an old maid. They were my first and second grade teachers. I remember that.

Question: It's always interesting those little things that

Answer: mmmm, hmmm, that you remember.

Question: You know, some people remember all sorts of things, and

Answer: I know, I think about all my college courses and college classes and the funny things you remember are really mundane stuff that a teacher just threw out just off, you know, over here and then here you're studying all these things and I can remember them for the test and I've completely forgotten them.

Question: Did you Dad then meet up with you?

Answer: He met up with us. They were released and he met up with us, and then, I can't remember if it was in Minedoka? Or Manzanar, but anyway, he did come back and then it was after that, I may be wrong how it goes, but where the government gave families or heads of households a chance to say they would rather go back to Japan, and my father, who was so ticked and he had a temper about being taken away in the first place. He didn't want to stay in a country that treated him that way. And my mother said, No, all of our children were born here, we were both born here, you don't want to do that, and he was so mad, he just said, Yes, he would go. And so then they gave him a second chance, I think, 'cause they thought there were many other people who felt like my Dad. Anyway, my mother said that was the one time, the first time, maybe she hadn't, but anyway, that she really literally said, I think she told him she would kill herself if he, yeah, she made him change his mind, 'cause she knew he was really mad, but anyway, she said that was the first time she ever went against what he said. And so, but then soon after, as I said, I think from Minedoka, he went to Chicago, and went to watch making school.

Question: But the family didn't go with him.

Answer: No.

Question: He went by him...

Answer: Right.

Question: So you went from Minedoka to Manzanar?

Answer: no, from Manzanar to Minedoka, mm, hmmm, and then from Minedoka, and then when the war ended, my Dad came to the island first. He said I'm going to go back to Bainbridge to see what it's like before I bring the family back. So he came, took a trip here and then he came home and he said, he came back to Minedoka and told us that, Now we could go home and everything's fine. The neighbors were happy to see him, and oh, and then while we were gone, the Filipino men who had worked for my grandparents had continued to work around the

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farm for my parents, even if my Dad was going into town, they moved into the house and took care of everything, and so when we came back from camp, my Mom and Dad gave Felix a corner of their property, and so his wife lives there now still. Because everything was intact and everything was fine. Taxes were paid and they kept the farm going, and by farm, it was strawberries and it was left over from what my grandparents had begun.

Question: And then to have the two families grow up side by side.

Answer: Yeah. We did.

Question: Did, do you remember, again you were a 7-year-old, do you remember facing prejudice after Pearl Harbor happened?

Answer: Not, I don't remember any of that immediately after. We faced prejudice after I grew up, but not on the island at all. In fact, after the war, well, we were school shopping again, I was 12 and we went to, I can't remember, the Bon Marche, or one of the department stores, and we were sitting in the shoe department and we waited a long time, and I noticed other people being waited on. My mother finally said, Well, ok let's, we're going to go. We're not going to find anything here, and so we got up and we left. And then, I was sort of mad about that, but I did as my mother said. As we were walking back to the ferry, then this man came up behind us. It's just my mother and I, and he said Why don't you go back where you came from, you blankety-blank Japs, and I was ready to turn around and say, I was born, I mean I was 12 years old, I was ready to spout, and my mother grabbed my arm and said Don't say a word, just keep walking, and so we just walked down to the ferry and I remember that. I remember how angry I was, and so I remember that feeling when the civil rights affairs began and people were, well, they became violent and burning things, and I thought I could relate to that. If my mother weren't there with me saying, and I were with, you know, teenagers or young college kids, I could see getting caught up in that just by the sheer anger you feel. But anyway, I thought, That's what I remember, and even as adults when Joe and I were married and we went, which was 40-some years ago now, but it's hard to imagine but there were times when you were hesitant about stopping for a motel, 'cause you didn't know whether you were going to be turned away or not, and those kind of things, too, I can relate to the blacks, 'cause I think, oh, you know, that's a horrible feeling. We would drive up to a café and, it was in Eastern Washington I think, and they would ignore. There wasn't room at the booth, so we're at the counter and nobody would wait on us even at the counter, so we'd leave. And then when we were looking for a house, people, our real estate agent finally told us, Well, you know I'm sorry but the neighbors, the people don't feel they could sell to you because they're concerned about their neighbors. We were told point blank that. That was 45, 42 years ago. Renting for an apartment we were turned down and we were told to our face this because we can't rent to minorities is what they said, Asians or Japanese. So it wasn't really that long ago, so it's just recently that I feel comfortable. I mean, I forget that and don't think about it anymore, but back then it wasn't unusual.

Question: I wonder if your parents had those feelings during the evacuation, and

Answer: Well, see that's the other thing. As a teenager, see as a child there I didn't feel anything, but afterwards, as a teenager, I think, for example, for home-ec or one of the classes we were to keep track of what we ate, our meals, and I would

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make up. I didn't write rice and sukioki, or seaweed and. I made up things like roast beef and potatoes, bacon and eggs. I mean, I just wrote down what I thought was American, be more acceptable. I mean, it's sort of laughable now when you think that sushi is so ubiquitous it's everywhere. And see eating seaweed is nothing or even octopus, but those are things that we did eat. I mean, we went hunting for octopus and prepared it at home, but I was not going to let anybody else know that. So those are the kinds of things that are ramifications from, because you want to be so accepted and I wanted just for a man to say Go back to Japan, you blah, blah, blah. Well, for a teenager, you just don't want to be ostracized, or an enemy or different, and I think those are. So I think my parents, too, the Nisei, they probably did try really hard to do away with their culture. I think it's just recently that people feel comfortable enough to say, oh, here we're unique and this is not something to be ashamed of or that it's not wrong.

Question: It's an interesting perspective you just gave on it, because you talked about being a little girl in the camp and it not really having an effect on you at that time, but yet later in life the psychological warfare basically

Answer: Right. The ramifications were not till later. Yeah, when you're a child,

Question: How old did your Mom, did your Mom live for a long time?

Answer: She was 89 when she passed away. 88 really, but 89

Question: Yeah, depending on whose calendar.

Answer: Whose calendar, yeah.

Question: Did you ever have a chance to talk to her about camp, or was that just a thing that

Answer: I guess we really didn't talk about it. It would come up in conversation. It wasn't as if she was keeping anything from us. I guess. That's one of the things we didn't specifically, see, that was another thing. I think we just put that all out of our, yeah, get on with it and if we talked, it was, it's more recently that we're all talking more.

Question: Yeah. Well, I think again when you look back at that, 'cause that would be my parents generation, and there was a lot of stuff they did, just the generation as a whole, didn't talk about it.

Answer: Right. And I think, I should probably be telling my children more, but you know we all have our own little, and I guess we're all busy. We shouldn't be too busy, but we are. WE seem to be, yeah.

Question: The carpenter's house is never finished.

Answer: Right.

Question: Have your children. How many children do you have?

Answer: We have 4.

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Question: Have they asked? I mean, are they aware?

Answer: Oh, they're aware. And they've come and gone to Uncle Frank's presentations and that sort of thing and they're more aware I think of what we've gone through than I was of what my parents have, I think. But never really sitting down and for them to specifically ask, Ok, now tell me all about it. That kind of thing. Doesn't come up.

Question: Do you have grandchildren yet?

Answer: We do. We have 3 granddaughters.

Question: Are they old enough to

Answer: um, Alisa, maybe, is 7 or 8. I think she's 7, gonna be 8.

Question: Getting that age.

Answer: Getting that age, yeah.

Question: 'Cause a lot of times, it seems like things skip a generation.

Answer: Yeah, they do, don't they.

Question: They've always said that children and grandparents have one common enemy. The parents. They kind of gang up on each other.

Answer: That's a good observation, 'cause I think that's why all this has come out is because the younger, that 3rd generation has been questioning and publicly coming out about the Japanese experience, etc. And then they've gotten upset enough about the whole thing to make it be known.

Question: 'Cause I would assume, and it's a big assumption I'm making, but to some of today's generation would look back and be frustrated and say, Why didn't you riot against it?

Answer: Right. I've said that, too. I think I did say that and my mother said, Well, you just didn't do that kind of thing, and looking back I know I wouldn't. Even now, it takes a certain character to be able to go against the mass. Even if you're right or feel you're right, to stand up and go public about it. I mean, we talk about it individually, but yeah

Question: 'Cause look at your Mom who was this strong-willed person and everything, but yet even the time you told two times, telling your Dad, No, we were born here and don't want to go back, I'll kill myself, and telling you, Don't argue with that man, but yet she for some reason chose not to

Answer: Right. She wasn't going to, yeah, see there were what hiribioshi?, and I can't think of, there were just very few who did protest the whole thing, and then looking back I think, Oh, that's a terrible thing, and would I have gone along with it if I were my mother at that time, and I can't say. I've thought that, because I realize my mother was only 35. I mean, all these, I thought, Oh, she was an old person, but she was only 35 when she had 4 children to gather together and decide

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what to take and do all that sort of thing. And so, that's when I really admire Mr. Woodward. He was all along voicing what was really right, but all alone doing that, and Mr. Helobioshi?

Question: Helobioshi? I haven't heard.

Answer: Oh, I think he's a professor at some. I think he was jailed because he protested the whole relocation idea. And it's just not, it's just been in the recent past that he's been exonerated of that. He could be someone you could interview. Find out about him.

Question: It's interesting, 'cause again you put in some very interesting perspective. You talked about, if you were in that situation of your mother, what would you have done. So now, looking ahead, or today, could it happen again?

Answer: um, by that, you think there'll be enough people protesting?

Question: No, I think, could the government come in and do what they did before?

Answer: I think so. I think it's, in fact, it might well be happening now where you have prisoners of Muslim or Arabian background and that they've got, they're holding without due process. It could very well be happening right now. I think. Just recently, I read where there, for even this young American kid who, I really question whether he's going to get a fair shake. And that's without due process. That's, yeah, I think that can easily happen. Well, during the Iranian conflict, was it the Iranian conflict, they really were ready to round everyone up at that time. Because I think fear, and it's really fear I think more than hate as the basis for a lot of action. We're all human and that really was all of our gut feelings when the twin towers went down. I think everybody was ready to do anything about that. But then you sort of lean back and think more.

Question: As long as that frenzy doesn't get.

Answer: Right.

Question: I mean you look at how powers that get, look at Hitler, how he controlled masses, and you get the...

Answer: Right. Right. Well, and you think about just even slavery and, I mean, it's just recently that people are seeing that Black Americans are just as intelligent and have the same span of mental abilities or whatever, I mean, that we're all the same human race, but it's amazing how we can pigeonhole and get caught up in stereotypes and propaganda, but that's human nature, and human nature being the way it is, yeah, I think it could happen again, but I think there's a funny story. My daughter-in-law's niece. She's Mexican-American, and her niece was going to the University of Washington during the Iranian conflict, and she was registering, and so she was waiting in line. When they got to the window, they asked to see her visa, and so then she whips out her visa card, and they're looking for her visa visa, 'cause she looked like she could be Iranian, and so she came back with that story. We all just laughed, but at the same time, it's sort of sad, because they were really looking well, I'm sure they're doing the same now with the Muslims. I mean, with the

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students, especially with people here on their student visas. Some things don't change. Human nature is one of them, I think.

Question: And it became easy to identify, just like with the Muslims, because they look different, so the assumptions on anything that looks different.

Answer: Right. Right. And that's what's so, well, I've heard this comparison before with the Oklahoma bombing. I mean, here was this white male and you don't go around rounding up all white males because, well, it's just not as easy to do

Question: And it was quite awhile before they came to the assumption that it was a white male.

Answer: Right. Right.

Question: Because the first assumption is that it had to be a Middle East terrorist, or it was

Answer: Right. Exactly. Exactly.

Question: And then when it was a white male, it was real hard to accept, and especially one that had been in the Marines or whatever.

Answer: Yes. Yeah, so it's yeah.

Question: So you're grandparents were back in Japan during World War II.

Answer: mmm,hmmmmm.

Question: And you saw your grandma afterwards, but not your grandpa? Or did you ever go over and

Answer: No, I never did, but my grandma seemed to be at our house a lot and the reason I know that is because I could understand some Japanese and until I went to kindergarten I think I spoke mostly Japanese. I spoke English, too, but I could understand and I could blab it back, but it's all 5-year-old Japanese. I don't feel comfortable using it in Japan, but

Question: So you never got, were old enough to get a perspective to hear her view from Japan looking back?

Answer: No. No, but I did ask my Aunt Midori, and she said, well, because see her brother, my Uncle Tokayo?, he ended up in the Japanese Army, and so then I asked about that, and she said, Oh, yeah, her mother used to bring special foods to him at, when he was in training, and finally he told his mother, Don't bring me any more things 'cause he's already being ostracized because he was born in America, and so she was giving him special. It must have been a place close to their home, 'cause she was able to go there and deliver homemade food and, I don't know, goodies, anyway, and so he finally told her, so Midori said she remembers that. And so then I said, well, asked her if she felt any prejudice, and she said, well, this is a small town and everybody knew everyone and her family was an old family there 'cause her uncles and everyone were still around there, and so she said, No, she didn't feel any of that, but they did use her, I think she did do some interpreting

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because she could understand, she could read and write English. But I don't know if it was for the government or what. She said no, she didn't feel any of that prejudice that she felt we felt. Not on Bainbridge. I can honestly say I never felt that on the island. It was only in the big city.

Question: That's the one thing that, again, as we started these stories unfolding in front of us, at least from the perspective that's been given us, Bainbridge was a very unique situation.

Answer: Yeah. And I think it still is. It's very liberal.

Question: Do you think that there's a message that needs to be left from this for generations you and I'll never meet?

Answer: Yeah, the message is judge not so quickly, no matter what, whether it's you know. I guess we should stand up and speak out, I think, against prejudice and intolerance, and you know.

Question: As a young child, were you aware of the war?

Answer: I must have been aware, I knew there was a war, but I look back and I think I didn't think of it as, I mean, not as a child, it wasn't anything, I guess that bothered me. I mean, enough to get upset about. But I know there was a war, well, because I remember little things. Like the banners hung in the windows of the barracks of families where they had sons in service, and I remember seeing one star, and I remember passing one that had 4 stars in it. And so I remember, and my mother must have told me that stands for a son in the Army or the Navy or service, and so I remember thinking, Wow, they have 4. I remember things like that, so I know there was a war, but other than as being, as a child I didn't think it, it was a matter of course.

Question: Going through history class growing up and studying, you think, everybody must know at any age, but then I think of myself growing up, and I grew up and was young in the Vietnam War. You know, I knew there was a war, but I didn't know what it was as a kid.

Answer: Oh, yes, right, as a child you wouldn't. I remember the Vietnam War because our son was born, or he was just born one or two years old. Anyway, he's 44. Anyway, I remember thinking, Oh, good. I mean, the war will be well over by the time he's eligible. I mean, by the time he could be draft age. Well, he was draft age before then. SO he must have been a young kid then, but I remember thinking, ok, I won't have to worry about that. That war lasted a long time.

Question: Yes it did.

Answer: And so I remember that.

Question: Well, thank you very much. I'll get you unmiced.