James I. Matsudaira

Tape 1 of 1

Question: First thing that I'd like to do is just get your name on videotape. First and last name.

Answer: James, middle name?

Question: First and last.

Answer: James Iwao Matsudaira.

Question: Thank you. Now you grew up on, you grew up in Seattle or Bainbridge?

Answer: Yes, Seattle.

Question: In Seattle, oh, you're one of those Seattle people!

Answer: Yeah.

Question: How can you lower yourself to marry a Seattle person?

Answer: (Hisa) I dragged him over and made him a Bainbridge person.

Question: What, was, what did you Dad do?

Answer: My Dad was a salmon cannery foreman before the war.

Question: In Seattle?

Answer: They went up to Alaska, Ketchikan.

Question: So would he go back and forth through the seasons?

Answer: Season, yeah. And the other times I think he shucked oysters for a friend of his.

Question: That's a tough; a good oyster shucker is amazing to watch.

Answer: Yeah. He was good.

Question: So was he Nisei?

Answer: No, he was Issei

Question: So did he come to Washington to start?

Answer: He came as, to represent his father's company peddling the pottery for the Alaskan Expedition.

Question: Oh, really? Oh, wow.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: And then just decided to stay?

Answer: And never did go back, except for one time. But he decided to stay, and he started playing semi-pro baseball against the, like with the Seattle Rainiers and things.

Question: At that time, did they rotate positions or did they have position players?

Answer: I think they had position players, I think. He never did talk about it too much. We have pictures of him, but…

Question: Oh, is that right? So I guess, was it as unique, 'cause they'd had the race barrier before in baseball. Do you if that was, were there other Japanese players with them?

Answer: Yeah. It was an all-Japanese team.

Question: Oh, it was all-Japanese. Oh, ok.

Answer: Yeah. But he was a pitcher.

Question: Pitcher. DO you know the name of the team?

Answer: I don't recall what it is now.

Question: What about your Mom?

Answer: My mother was a homemaker.

Question: And how many….

Answer: She had 14 children altogether, so, and then when we for camp, I think there were 10 of us, and she had one in Camp Harmony, then one in Minedoka, then two others after we came home.

Question: Wow. Your Dad needed to be in farming with that many children. 14 kids total!

Answer: 14, yeah.

Question: So when, how old were you when you went to camp?

Answer: I was just in the 5th grade, so that was 10, yeah, 10 years old.

Question: Were you old enough to remember Pearl Harbor, I mean, to conceive what was going on, or was that…

Answer: I don't recall reacting to it at all. I guess it was just not part of my world at that time.

Question: That's, you know, kids…

Answer: Yeah. But we were, ok, we lived right across the street Providence Hospital, up in that area, 17th, 16th and James, Jefferson, and I don't remember reacting, you know, because I didn't listen to the radio, I guess, at that time, so I wasn't really. It was the next day or something when my Dad brought it up or something.

Question: So do you remember your Dad bringing it up?

Answer: Yeah. He was kind of sad, saying, that was kind of a dumb thing to do.

Question: So that was his feeling. Did, when you left for camp, so again, history books, things get misconstrued. People think, oh, well, Pearl Harbor happened and people went to camp the next day. There was a period of time…

Answer: Yeah, I remember having to go down, I think it was l9th and Madison, in that area, to register with my Dad as a family. We were assigned Family Number 12099, was our Family Number, and then –1 indicated father, -2 indicated mother, and then the siblings were in order by dash number, so I think I was –7 or something like that.

Question: So when you went to register, was it, did you just go to an office to register?

Answer: It was in the street, I recall. I thought it was down right there in the sidewalk. Each family had to register, and Seattle had 4 zones, I guess, for evacuation. First zone being in that Japanese town area, and then Zone 4 was the outlying areas, like where we were.

Question: So you were Zone 4.

Answer: Yeah. We were Zone 4.

Question: And did that mean, is that Zone 1 would leave at a certain time, and Zone 4 would…

Answer: Yeah. Yeah. So I think we were about the last ones to be evacuated, and that's why we ended up in the fairgrounds proper, Camp D, in Harmony. The others were ended up in the parking lots.

Question: So you ended up in what is now today

Answer: Yeah. The Puyallup Fairgrounds, and then we were assigned barracks or rooms underneath the grandstand. And my father complained about that, so we were moved over to where the octopus ride is located, right there in that area. Right near the dipper and the funhouse and the mystery house.

Question: Again, that kind of creates some of the irony of what happened back then and what's there now to think of

Answer: Well, I remember going into, sneaking into the funhouses and playing around on the slides and the real big huge roll barrel that they had. And the camp

police would come after us and they would leave me alone because I was too small. They'd go after my brother, though.

Question: So it was,

Answer: It was a fun time for us, you know.

Question: And it really was the fairgrounds?

Answer: It was the fairgrounds, yeah. So, like we had the, one of the display houses today was our main cafeteria, and it was a building next to it that was a children's cafeteria. Each of the areas within Camp D were assigned lunch and dinner hours that they had to go to, and they'd ring this bell to start the lunch sessions, or the meal sessions, and then we were separated because we were children. We were separated into the children's mess hall.

Question: So the family didn't get to eat together.

Answer: Not at that time, no. That was true of Camp Minedoka also.

Question: Oh, really.

Answer: Yeah. Kids tended to eat with their friends sometimes, you know.

Question: 'Cause I heard that that was, I talked to some people and that was what was hard on the parents, 'cause now you're starting to break the family apart, whether planned or unplanned, I don't know which.

Answer: I know my mother mentioned sometimes that she felt so sad that when she'd go in the meal line, they'd slosh the food down, you know, and it brought tears to her eyes, being treated that way, as prisoners like. To this day, I won't eat mutton.

Question: Is that what…

Answer: I think we had a lot of mutton.

Question: I've heard of a couple, mutton and there was…

Answer: Hard pancakes.

Question: Oh, is that right? So you remember the meals.

Answer: Yeah. I remember the meals, yeah.

Question: So, now your Dad didn't. When you went your Dad and your Mom and all the children went together?

Answer: Yes, Yeah, we were not separated like Hisa's Dad was.

Question: I was going to say, you were at least fortunate, being a relative term, but I know that some of the farmers out there, the FBI came, and you had a gun or blasting caps.

Answer: That's right. But there were in Seattle that that happened to also, but they were more the leaders of the community and things.

Question: It's funny when you hear, Leaders of the community. Today if they came and did it, Oh, you're the head of Rotary, which is, or a community…

Answer: Yeah. I think the impact was since the leaders were all interned, it left the second generation to make the decisions. The JACL, you know, and some of those decisions that they made, not having the experience, may have caused some confusion, whatever.

Question: huh. I hadn't heard that before. I did, can't imagine your Mom and Dad with 10 kids.. bus? Did they bus you down there?

Answer: Yeah, they bussed us down from, kitty-corner from Providence Hospital, l7th and Jefferson, and I don't remember seeing soldiers there with bayonets, but we did go in busses, and were bussed to Puyallup Fairgrounds.

Question: What school had you been going to?

Answer: Maryknoll, which was right across the street from Providence Hospital there. Run by the Maryknoll Fathers and Sisters.

Question: So is that a pretty international school?

Answer: Well, it was primarily built to house or to baby-sit type, day nursery and kindergarten, but it gradually grew up to be day nursery through 8th grade. It was a private Catholic School.

Question: Was there Caucasian and Japanese-American and

Answer: Mostly Japanese at that time, 'cause it was a Japanese parish. Then during the war, the Filipinos came, more and more, Filipinos came and it became, mixed and, after the war, we used to have a Japanese mass and a Filipino mass.

Question: Were the priests and brothers, were they Caucasian?

Answer: Caucasians, yeah.

Question: Do you remember, did you have a connection with any of the teachers, saying Good-bye or anything?

Answer: No. I don't remember. I only remember on the bus, one of my friends had come up and waved good-bye to us. He's the only guy that I remember. Name was Billy. But the others stayed home, I guess.

Question: I would guess, and again I'm making big assumptions, but with some of the kids, their parents probably, the kids probably would have done it on their own, 'cause kids are kids, and you know, nobody, but parents probably also…

Answer: Yeah. I don't remember seeing that at all with the rest of the family.

Question: Was it hard on your Mom and Dad?

Answer: I think it was, yes. They really didn't talk about it. It took its toll on my Dad, I know. Discipline-wise and things.

Question: Yeah, because now head of the household, now you're put into this conglomeration management, family management, and

Answer: That's the first time I've seen so many Japanese at one time.

Question: That's what I've heard a couple people say, which is an interesting experience in one way, but yet, and then I assume, or do you know, do you feel that your parents tried to protect you and shield you from knowing what was …

Answer: Yeah. I think they did.

Question: How long did you stay at Camp Harmony?

Answer: I think from May through September or August. Then we were shipped to Minedoka.

Question: While you were at Camp Harmony, what, I mean, did you just have free time all the time, or did they school, or organize you?

Answer: Well, it was during the summertime, so we didn't have school at that time. But I remember they had baseball games going, then underneath the grandstand they had a sumo rink, and I used to go play sumo all the time, as small as I was. I used to come back with a lot of candy and gum, 'cause I would not force the guys out of the ring, but I would grab their legs and down them that way.

Question: So they did, since there was this big fear going on of, Oh, Japanese, but here was some more traditional Japanese activities being allowed, so

Answer: mmm, hmmmm. I think they must have had clubs and things, especially in Minedoka?, but we didn't stay in Camp Harmony that long. I do remember the camp police, though.

Question: Were they like guards?

Answer: Oh, they, I think they had uniforms, too, but they were the internal guardians. Those are the ones that used to chase us out of the mystery house and the funhouses.

Question: So were they scary to you or were they kind of more like…

Answer: The chief was. He was a big guy. Terrible, and, yeah.. he was daunting.

Question: Do you remember, did they have, was it like a true prison, I mean lights out at a certain time, and

Answer: Not at that time. I don't remember. I remember watching the P-38s dog fight all the time over our area. That was really run to watch.

Question: So that was at Puyallup?

Answer: Puyallup. Yeah.

Question: Really? So training from…

Answer: I think it must have been McChord, huh?

Question: Yeah. So as a kid,

Answer: But they used to dog fight all the time over there. Right above us. We used to just watch that, but other than that, I don't remember any formal activities. We were too young to participate in the baseball, 'cause the older generation were doing that. But they'd play right there right between the main dining hall and the main bathrooms. At least we had flushing toilets, where as the rest of the camps had semi-flushing. It was more like an outhouse.

Question: So do you remember leaving Camp Harmony and going to Minedoka?

Answer: Yeah, I remember that, 'cause my Mother wasn't with us. She was expecting her 9th or 10th baby at the time, so she had to stay back. We were loaded on trains, and the shades were pulled, and but I, it wasn't Pullman type. It was regular coach types, and we had to sit most of the time. And then my mother had to stay back and they induced her child by giving her castor oil and some other mixtures and then making her walk, take hot and cold showers, you know. The day after she gave birth, they loaded her onto the train in a stretcher and she came and joined us in Idaho after that. That must have been a week before she came and joined us.

Question: So she had to travel all by herself with the newborn.

Answer: Yeah. Well, I remember one thing about Camp Harmony was the straw mattresses, and then having to change, once a week I think it was, the straw. But those that wet the beds were at the mercy of whoever. They couldn't change their mattresses and things.

Question: Oh, boy, the smell. I mean, I used to do summer camps, and beds had been wet, but now add straw to the…

Answer: Yeah. And I remember the construction of the barracks were such that the sloping ceiling. There was a gap between our next door neighbors, you know, a triangular gap between the top of the wall and the top of the roof there, so you could hear everything your next door neighbor was saying. Or sometimes we'd knock the knotholes out of the pine boards so we can peek in. I remember that, yeah.

Question: Do you remember who your neighbors were?

Answer: I remember their faces. I can't remember their names now.

Question: So it wasn't somebody that you knew ended up next to you.

Answer: No, 'cause we were. In our neighborhood I think we were one of two. The other family was married to a Filipino. They came to camp but they left fairly early. They didn't stay the whole time we were there.

Question: What was Minedoka like?

Answer: It was arid, dusty. Everything looked the same. I don't know, I think the older people felt it was just terrible conditions. We moved into Block 6 initially. There were no plumbing, and we had to go to outhouses that were around the perimeter, and then sometimes the women would get, that were near the men's head, would write w-o in front and so we'd have fights, 'cause their latrine would be on the other side of the block then, see, so. I remember doing that.

Question: 'Cause I assume as a child at night if you had to go to the bathroom.

Answer: Oh, they had potties, you know. Port-a-potties, so every morning you'd watch all these women with their port-a-potties going to the bathroom to dump their stuff.

Question: So as a child you didn't have to face that scary, dark run to the…

Answer: No, I. You'd get in the morning, you'd see rattlesnakes, you know, trails and scorpion little tracks and things. You knew they were underneath the crawl space there.

Question: Seems like that would be scary as a child.

Answer: We used to go over to Block 5 I think it was and take baths there in the laundry tubs before our plumbing were connected, and chase the women out and we'd take baths there, or we'd go down to Block 2 and take Japanese baths there. I know one time we came out and couldn't find our home because everything looked the same. We were just wandering around there at nighttime. My Dad finally had to come and look for us.

Question: Most of the people I've talked to had families of 4 or 5.

Answer: Yeah, we had to have 2 rooms, and then we took the partition between the 2 rooms and made a doorway, and so we were interconnected.

Question: Kids on one side, parents on the other or boys and girls?

Answer: Well, I think it was, initially we had a 5-person and a 4-person room. After my brothers left, we had a 3 and a 6, I think.

Question: Where'd your brothers go?

Answer: One went into the service and one went back East, to Michigan. Detroit. When he was 18, I think.

Question: So did your brother go in the 442nd?

Answer: Yes. He was wounded in Anzio I think it was.

Question: Do you remember that? Him leaving and

Answer: Yes. Yeah, I remember that. I remember him leaving. I remember him coming back home for a visit and getting sick because he was shot in the, wounded in the abdomen and it was infecting on him, so he had to make an emergency trip to Salt Lake City, I think it was. He told the doctors what to do, but they were too scared to do it. All they had to do was puncture the incision area, or whatever, and let it drain, but. He was in Illinois recovering there. He came back for about a week, I think it was to visit during the war. We were still in camp.

Question: So how old were you, roughly, at this time when he came back?

Answer: I must have been a 6th grader, so 11, 12.

Question: So did he come back in uniform?

Answer: Yes. He would not salute the officers, 'cause he was so, I shouldn't say this.

Question: No, this is….

Answer: He was so peeved at some of the officers that they had. Most of them were Caucasians, that they would bark out the orders and then run back to the back, so they didn't have to face the firing.

Question: When he was overseas, he wouldn't?

Answer: No, no, when he came back home. When he came for a visit, you know, to Idaho. Yeah, he wouldn't salute the officers at the station and things.

Question: That had to be, 'cause again, it was…

Answer: That kinda hit me hard. Why act that way? But I understand his feelings.

Question: So even as a 5-year-old or 6-year-old you could see and question why he did what he did.

Answer: Yes, at that time. I knew why he did it later on.

Question: Do you remember what your parents thought about him getting into the service?

Answer: I don't think my Dad really wanted him to go, but then he said, Well, there are others going, too, so why not?

Question: I think that

Answer: In fact in our block there was a blind man that also volunteered, and he volunteered to be a clerk, but they rejected him.

Question: I'm always amazed at the, I don't think I would have been so humble. I mean, having…

Answer: That's part of Japanese culture, you know. Don't complain. Make the best of it.

Question: Now, your Mom had another child in camp.

Answer: She had one in Camp Harmony and then one, a boy, in Minedoka?, then two others were born after we came back to Seattle.

Question: That answers the question that there are certain aspects of normal life that continue on in camp.

Answer: Yep.

Question: So you were there how long, at Minedoka?

Answer: I think we were there from September to March or April, 'cause we were the third family back to Seattle from Minedoka, then the WRA tried to set up my Dad's employment as an example for the rest of the camp's personnel to see that there were jobs available in the Seattle area. But he kind of fooled them and he was very picky about the kind of jobs and it kind of frustrated the authorities, and then the history, the classified histories from Washington, D.C. I had a copy of it. I think my son has it now, but there was a derogatory type letter that criticized my Dad, written by the Catholic priest that brought us back to Seattle saying that he's kind of taking his time about finding a job, whatever, and it kind of frustrated the WRA because they couldn't say, Hey, he's working now right away quick.

Question: So why would be priest write the letter to?

Answer: The WRA authorities. And it was a letter written so it was part of the record of his history.

Question: Now before your Dad went, before he left, he was, he'd been working in the canneries?

Answer: mmm, hmmmm

Question: So when he came back…

Answer: He had to look for a completely new job. He ended up being a furrier, cleaning fur coats at a shop near where Nordstrom used to be.

Question: So he basically had to start his life over again.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Did

Answer: We left our house completely finished to a family that was recommended to us and was $19 a month I think. 5-bedroom house. When we came back, nothing was left if the house except for one light bulb and one hot plate. The hot water heater and the kitchen stove was gone, too. That's why the dish that we have there. The priest went over to Ft. Lawton and got a whole set of dishes for

us. So my sisters and my younger brothers, I think, stayed at the Maryknoll Convent for x number of days, and we slept on the floor of the house, my Dad and older brother.

Question: This empty house?

Answer: We came back around 9 o'clock at night, I remember, and were greeted by the Filipino family, one of our neighbors, but not so enthusiastically, the neighbor right across the street from us, who was a sergeant in the Army at Ft. Lewis. He was very belligerent about us. But the rest of the neighborhood was.. treated us ok, except our next-door neighbor who lost, who was Japanese owners at the time, lost their house 'cause the renters weren't paying rent, so they lost their house and they never did come back to Seattle. They relocated to Cleveland. I remember that house was a mess. It was really filthy.

Question: so the sergeant across the street

Answer: I remember him, because he got in a fight with my brother that was in the Army that went to Detroit, he was drafted into the Army, and was a staff sergeant at that time, and the Filipino guy was a staff sergeant also, and they got into a big brawl, 'cause he was making some derogatory remarks about him, my brother, or the family. And I remember a chief petty officer who was Filipino coming to intervene and stop the fighting. So that was probably a month or so after we came back.

Question: The sergeant was Caucasian?

Answer: No, Filipino.

Question: Filipino.

Answer: Yeah. So the house your father didn't lose, though, is that right?

Question: But everything. It was gutted, I mean.

Answer: Yeah, it was completely furnished when we left. Came back there was nothing left except one light bulb and the hot plate.

Question: And how did you find the family that was supposed to take care of it?

Answer: Well, I think the Maryknoll fathers knew who they were, or we knew the family name anyway, and, in fact, they moved to a house about a block away from us. We were able to get a lot of the stuff back, but not all of it. Like the china, the silverware, things, they were all gone.

Question: So when you came home, in a car or truck together and the family pulls up, was it that type of scene. I mean, do you remember, and so

Answer: I don't remember how we got from the train station. Oh, I remember the train stopping in Portland. My brother and I took a walk out of the station, and the first thing we see was, No Japs! Big signs.

Question: In Portland?

Answer: Yeah. Scared the living daylights out of me. So we hustled back to the station.

Question: After the war.

Answer: This was during the war, 'cause we were back in '45 I think is when we came back. Just before the war ended. I think we came back in March or April of '45.

Question: Do you remember your mother and father's attitude or feelings?

Answer: My Dad was just a beaten man. He never did discipline us like he used to. That really got to me. Later on I kept thinking how did this happen? Why was he so disheartened? That was, along with the house being ransacked like. It kind of really shook them up, and it shook my mother's religion, you know. The belief in God and goodness. Kinda took, made a test for her. She became a stronger Catholic as a result of that. They took it in stride pretty well.

Question: But you, even from your perspective as a child, and again, looking back, saw the difference from your father prior to

Answer: Oh, yes. Yes, I remember.

Question: So it took his spirit away.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: How did it affect the rest of the siblings? Were you just kids and

Answer: My sister, my younger sister, I was the 4th, or the 4th living sibling. My sister was the 5th, and she remembers parts of camp life and things, but my other brothers below her don't remember, 'cause they were too young. They were almost like Hisa's age, I guess. But I do remember the first days being very dusty, very dusty. Having to.. trying to seat the house without the proper tools, and until they finally got sidewalks in, we were walking in mud a lot of times, and eventually during our stay there they had victory gardens in front of the houses and things and they had irrigation ditches to help water the plants and things. Pretty well coordinated. They did the best they could. Like I told Adolph, we went back there last year to see what it was like, and it was just all green. Farmlands, oh, just lush with vegetation. It wasn't like that when we were there, when we first moved in.

Question: Is there any, is it just gone, or is there still…

Answer: There's a structure of the guard gate there. We didn't go down far enough to see where the foundations of the water tower used to be. I remember seeing a barrack right across the street that one of the farmers were using as storage or whatever. That kind of. It seems smaller than I remember, though.

Question: Did it bring back any emotion in you?

Answer: Yes, it did.

Question: What was that like?

Answer: um, thinking back, what 60 years is it? 40, 50, 60 years. I was saying, Gee, if it wasn't for the war and the Japanese farmers that land would never have been irrigated and cultivated as it is today, if it hadn't been for them during the wartime. Right now it's become a national monument, but there's no real signs playing to it. We were fortunately to stay at a motel that had a map of the area, and they gave us directions to finding Camp Minedoka. I think eventually they're going to start building up that place, but I don't think it's going to be as extensive as Manzanar's exhibit will be. There are some plaques describing, you know, like the layout of the barracks, the camps, and the dedications of the populace within the Idaho area. That kind of kept up the memorial there.

Question: Is it a piece of history that's going to be forgotten, or is there enough there that…

Answer: Eventually I think if they build up like they think they want to in the national parks, it'll be there permanently as a reminder.

Question: I talked to somebody over a year ago, and they've gone back to whichever camp they were at, and there's nothing left. And the fact of asking around town, people wouldn't tell them and got irritated that they were asking about it.

Answer: Oh, is that right?

Question: Yeah. And I was relaying this story. There's a teacher that was there, and I said, You know, to me the fact that it was being left out of history is no different than the Germans saying, The concentration camps never happened. This teacher got mad at me, and said, It's different than that. Nobody was killed!

Answer: Yeah. I remember going to school one day and not, in California, and mentioning the interment, and there was a kid back from back East somewhere. He had never heard of it. Never heard of internment. He was very surprised. There's a lot of people that still don't realize that it had happened before.

Question: I grew up here and went to a private prep school and never heard of it. I mean, I'm a supposedly educated person. And it was not a part of history that was taught. For a long time, I think it was…

Answer: Pushed aside, and then the older generation, my Dad's generation, didn't really talk about. Until the 3rd or 4th generations came up and said, Why didn't you act. Why did you let that happen? Then they started talking about it. So it's not too long ago that it was still kept a secret, or not talked about.

Question: You have children.

Answer: mmmmm, hmmmmm.

Question: Did they learn about it in school?

Answer: Yes, 'cause my daughter wrote a couple of essays about her mother's life and my recollections Puyallup and Idaho.

Question: So she was actually helping…

Answer: Yeah, well, it was part of their class project, too, so.

Question: Have they ever asked you, I mean, do they, did they growing up ask you and want to know about it?

Answer: My daughter. I think they did. They would ask my wife more than me, 'cause I usually kept it to myself.

Question: When you look back in retrospect to what happened, does it create emotions in your mind, or is it

Answer: The 911 date really brought back the fears that it could happen again, because of how they were treating the Muslim community, and it could have happened, I guess if there was such a bigger movement around, but, there's nothing that's stopping them from doing it again, I guess. There's no constitutional law or whatever that prevents it again.

Question: That's the scary part.

Answer: That was scary to me, yes. 'Cause it did bring back those memories during World War II.

Question: I, somebody was saying that it's interesting because when they were there as a young child, it didn't affect them as much, and then they discovered that later in their life, I guess, post-traumatic is the word they use nowadays, but affected them because it created a fear that was in the back of their mind that they didn't realize. Some would deal with prejudice and things of that sort. Is there a message that needs to be left for the generations that…

Answer: Future? Yeah. Don't let it happen again. We are all citizens and we should be treated like citizens and not randomly picked because of our color, because of our religion, because of our stature, whatever.

Question: That made me think…it was interesting, 'cause you described Minedoka as it developed. You talked about victory gardens being planted. I begin to think of, here as a country, that for the people that were citizens said, You're no longer citizens. Some that before they'd be saying, you can't be citizens and we're going to put you away because we're afraid of you. But yet when they came and asked for people to volunteer to defend our country, they volunteered, the victory gardens, and not a protest against the country at that time.

Answer: There were some that said, you know, the so-called No-no boys, refused because their principles, and I don't blame them, that they said our civil rights were being violated, and until you correct it, that they shouldn't be forced to, be in the service. They were ostracized by the rest of the Japanese community for that for a long, long time. It was just recently that the JACL did apologize for their behavior, for the JACL's position up to that time of ostracizing those people that said, No, no. And No, no was the two questions, Where you pledge allegiance to the United States, or whatever.

Question: And the second was…

Answer: Do you

Question: Denounce Japan?

Answer: Yeah. Yeah.

Question: Or you wouldn't take arms against

Answer: My father had trouble with that question, too. I remember that.

Question: Did he?

Answer: He raised some questions about it and kind of prolonged the interview. I don't remember exactly what he said and what he felt at that time.

Question: You know, it's interesting again, because you were going to mess halls to eat and things of that sort, there wasn't the time where a family sat down around the table and

Answer: Well, actually, toward the end, each of the families were able to bring home food from the mess halls and serve food at home, but we didn't have refrigeration. They cut holes in the floor, and like a cooler with a lid on it, but there was no refrigeration at all, so it was kind of limited on what you could. In fact, I don't remember how they got the dishes, either.

Question: Do you remember any holidays, birthdays or Christmas or anything like that?

Answer: Christmastime was very fun in camp. Each of the blocks had a contest on who could decorate the mess halls the prettiest and best, and some of the stuff that came out of that thing was just unbelievable, and we used to walk through all of the blocks just to watch the displays.

Question: So I assume they had to get pretty creative, because it wasn't

Answer: Oh, yeah. Lotta crepe paper. They had dances for the high school kids in the mess halls. We had a softball field right in the lot next to us in a big gravel pit that they dumped all the gravel on and we used to look for agates there. We used to play football in the same open field and there was oh, lava rocks, oofffff. We learned how to tackle, though. Then there was the rec hall in our block that had the house of movies for the people. I remember going to those.

Question: Did you have to pay?

Answer: I don't remember. WE must have had to pay, but I don't remember. There was a canteen right across the street from us that sold, you know, candies and things. I don't know how the kids got their clothes as they were growing up. There was no army clothes that would fit them. I don't know how they got their clothes. I think each family was given x number of dollars to provide for clothing through the catalogs and things.

Question: Mail order?

Answer: Yeah.

Question: 'Cause I did notice, looking at some of the pictures, I did notice that as people grew up

Answer: Yeah. In 4 years you'd probably outgrow the pants and things, so, but the older people were given army clothing. I remember some of them having the old-style hats and things, so they made out as best they could with them.

Question: So was it army surplus clothing, basically.

Answer: mmm, hmmmm.

Question: It's funny. That's stuff you don't think about, how did they get clothing.

Answer: Yeah. How did they get clothing, how did they get lunches at school when we had to walk a mile to go to school? Did we come back to the barracks to eat lunch at our barracks? Or did we pack lunches? I don't remember now.

Question: Do you remember any of your teachers?

Answer: Yes. Can't think of their names right how, but I remember they were mostly Quakers.

Question: Oh, is that right.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: doing their good deed?

Answer: Yeah.

Question: The, so you must have been some of the first families out of camp then?

Answer: Yeah, we were the 3rd family back to the Seattle area.

Question: Now I understand what you're, so going back, they wanted to use your Dad as a poster child, basically.

Answer: mmmmm, hmmmm. Propaganda, to say, Hey, there's plenty of available jobs. Good jobs. At least that's what I got from the letter that was written by this priest to the authorities back there at that time, when my Dad was still he-hawing about which jobs to take and whatever.

Question: It's interesting because my understanding is that Bainbridge was also supposed to be a poster child. The government filmed it and documented it well to show other Japanese families and say, Oh, look how well-behaved everybody was on Bainbridge and so go about doing what we want you to do.

Answer: I think the culture here was different, too. They were more closely related to their community, whereas in Seattle, it was too vast. There was a Japanese community, but it was all so splintered, not everybody lived in the same section of town. I remember my Chinese friend still mentions every once in awhile that he still has that badge that said, I'm Chinese he had to wear, 'cause they had curfew after 6, I think it was.

Question: Which is, again, so funny, 'cause I mean, it's that broad brush stroke. Anyone that's even Asian looking, they're all the same. Well, no, that's not true. SO they have this button that says, but if you had a button that says I'm Chinese, you probably could have worn it around and gone wherever. We interviewed one person that their teacher said when the kids came in with those, she said Take them all off, because my kids are all my children. This (inaudible) schools, and I will not tolerate this type of discrimination.

Answer: I remember before we were interned going to the baseball game at Seattle Rainiers Sicks Stadium, walk in there and throwing pots for the scrap iron, you know, Beat the Japs. Think nothing of it, at that time.

Question: Yeah. It's that perception. I guess the thing from, that you tell that sticks in my mind is that vision is imagine your parents coming home with the family to the house and having everything they'd worked so hard for, that they trusted.

Answer: Yeah. We were really popular with the neighbors afterwards, because we had all these rations for sugar and all these, butter. We used to give them to the neighbors, 'cause we didn't use that much sugar and flour. Kind of made the neighbors happy.

Question: Did you get old enough to be able to. I might have asked you this already. I can't remember, but old enough to have a conversation with your Dad in later years about looking back?

Answer: He never did really talk about camp.

Question: Never did.

Answer: No. How he felt and how it affected him, mainly 'cause I don't think we really asked, and my mother during her later years probably came out and said things 'cause she was one of the interviewees at the restitution hearings, and she described the pregnancy at camp, and so she came out and was more verbal afterwards, but until that time they kept it to themselves. I guess the way I thought of it, it was a fact of life, you know. We went through it, but I'm not going to make a big deal out of it.

Question: What did you think about the apology and restitution started by Reagan and signed by Bush?

Answer: Well, it was a start. Most people I think feel that the monetary portion of it was insufficient, but it was a start as far as having the government apologize for an act that was really, really not American at all.

Question: Do you think they might have been better had they even not have brought a money aspect into it, but kept it honor?

Answer: um, I think the money portion had to come in as part of the society that says, I'm going to sue you no matter how much. It's just a matter of suing the wrong, or testifying, not testifying, but correcting the wrong that was done to them. Physically or mentally. So I think there was some value in the monetary reconciliation, restitution, I mean, but I think that's part of American society is to sue.

Question: It's one of those ones when you think about apologizing and making good for it now that, you know, it's a tough one.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: I would compare it to the Native Americans, what happened and continues to happen. How do we bring it back into balance? How do you do it? I guess some of it is, at least in my mind, is the moving forward. What can you do to prevent, we're never going to undo it, but hopefully, the other extreme.

Answer: Yeah. I think all my life I've always felt that I was different as far as being an American because of my color, because of my race. In fact, in the end, my work and my school, I felt inferior at times, I think. That's just the way society made me feel, I think.

Question: Which is interesting, as I've done this project more and I've looked at this in other ways and never thought about it this way. In fact, when I was talking to Frank I talked about this. I said, You know, it's interesting. My perception that was given to me of the Japanese of that generation, was not a, you know, through history books, and whether it was planned or not planned, I don't know how it came there, but not of business people owning businesses and American citizens and all that, there was this different view, and to go back now and look at pictures and say, They're family. They're business men and mothers and children and all that, but there is or was a vision created, I think, in our historical portrayal, whether it came from the World War II propaganda or whatever, and went on and on. Hopefully, our society with media and information exposes more of that.

Answer: There will always be people that will say it never really happened yet. It was just a figment of their imagination. I think t here's going to still be that doubt, no matter how accurate the documentation becomes. There's going to be people who still want to push it aside, 'cause it's not American.

Question: And that might be part of the key right there, 'cause it's not American.

Answer: Or perceived American.

Question: Yeah. America wouldn't do that.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Well, some people think we didn't walk on the moon, so… Well, thank you very much.