

Richard R. "Rikusu" Okada

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Question: Your name is?

Answer: Richard Okada.

Question: Okay. And is Richard your full name? Was that when you were born Richard or did you take Richard later or?

Answer: I think my aunt gave me that name. I was born in Lima, Peru and at that time on my Peruvian birth certificate I was listed down as Rikusu which is my Japanese name, so I think I picked up the name Richard when I went to Hawaii so now it's Richard Rikusu Okada or Richard R.

Question: So you ended up going from Peru to Hawaii, is that?

Answer: Correct.

Question: And so how did you end up in Hawaii? What was..?

Answer: Well, my Mother's parent, her Mother and sisters and brother were all in Hawaii and so they immigrated back to Hawaii. Both my parents were born in Hawaii. My Dad is what you call a Kibei. He was born in Hawaii but he was raised in Japan and he served... he was drafted into the Japanese Army when he was about twenty. When he got out his whole family immigrated to Lima, Peru. So my Father side is all over in Peru; my Mother's side are all in Hawaii.

Question: So your formative years for you, was Hawaii?

Answer: Correct.

Question: That's where you grew up?

Answer: From age two... age two until the war and we were interned in Jerome, Arkansas, and then to Tulelake California.

Question: Do you remember, now, so growing up, Hawaii was pretty much a Japanese community?

Answer: I would say about half of the population was Japanese... I could be mistaken but close to half of the population was Japanese.

Question: Let's put it this way: You weren't a minority.

Answer: We were not.. I don't think a minority.

Question: I mean, when you looked around, Japanese, French, Japanese, yeah.

Answer: Right.

Question: So, do you remember Pearl Harbor? Were you old enough?

Answer: I was eleven or twelve so I remember. I remember quite a bit.

Question: Wow. What's, what was that like, what was that day like for you?

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Answer: Well, my Dad and his friends were all playing Mahjong, which is about seven or eight o'clock in the morning. And I know the attack started earlier but when they were playing Mahjong planes flew over, they were flying over and my Dad could see the black puffs from anti-aircraft... and when he saw that he said.. Oh this is the real thing because if it's not the real thing, it's just white puffs I think. But he saw the black puffs and so he said, well this is the real thing. And.. well they claimed that those planes bombed the city of Honolulu but from the way that the shells came down I could hear it whistling over us, you know, if it's a bomb coming down from a plane it would just come straight down, it wouldn't be going over us and two of them landed I would say about two miles from where we lived. And anyway, that night my Dad said, I think we should get everything prepared to evacuate in case anything happens, just go to the mountains or something like that. We didn't have a car at that time. My Dad didn't drive and so I didn't really know how we were gonna get up to the mountains but I think we were all prepared for something.

Question: Do you know if he was thinking that it would be retaliation against being Japanese or just war..?

Answer: Well, he didn't know whether it was going to be... there was going to be a landing following the bombing or what. And so just to make sure that we would be safe he thought it'd be, you know, be prepared to just take off someplace where he thought it was safe you know.

Question: Do you remember as a child what your, I mean, was there reality that this was war and you had fear or was it...?

Answer: Well, you know, at the age of eleven or twelve I don't the think the fear factor was in there. I don't think I would have been afraid until I actually came upon a dead body or getting fired on or whatever. But at that time I didn't feel anything.

Question: So how, after Pearl Harbor happened and your Father's prepared to go up in the mountains or whatever, did you get out enough to see a change in the society in Hawaii do you remember?

Answer: I think the Japanese community was afraid. I think they were afraid of retaliation by other nationalities and I think they were afraid of the FBI because soon after the attack I know they started rounding up people of Japanese ancestry, people who they thought had any kind of connection with the Japanese government.

Question: Was your Dad one of them... cause you said your Dad had been..?

Answer: Right. My Dad was interviewed by the FBI and I don't know after how many interviews they pulled him in and interned him into what they called Sand Island. That's where they put all the internees and years later, you know, with the Congress passed the law where you can ask for information. I can't remember..

Question: Freedom of Information Act.

Answer: Yeah. And I looked at the FBI Report and I thought, Oh these guys are just, they don't really know what they're doing. They interned my Dad; I read

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the report... they'd blacked out quite a few things but they said he was guilty of I don't know what but because he wouldn't look directly into the interviewer's eyes and so he's guilty. I couldn't understand that and that's the mentality of the FBI. I still think they're, even now, I think they don't know what they're doing.

Question: So that became this paranoia and so then weird things like, your Father won't look in the eye..

Answer: Right, so he's guilty.

Question: Yeah.

Answer: Right.

Question: So now did they take your Father away then or did he come back to... Oh you said he was interned?

Answer: After about five or six interviews they said they were going to intern him into Sand Island. And so he took a few of his possessions and he was locked up.

Question: But not you.

Answer: No, not the rest of us.

Question: They just took your Dad away.

Answer: Right.

Question: What was.. Do you remember what that was like as a..?

Answer: Well, you know, he was a breadwinner and when you lose a breadwinner my Mom was the housewife and the only kind of work she could get at that time was cleaning house or taking in the laundry or something like that. It was really rough.

Question: How many other, how big was your family, have brothers and sisters?

Answer: I have, I had two sisters above me and one below. I have just two sisters now. The one below me just passed away two years ago.

Question: So you were the male of the family at that time?

Answer: Right.

Question: So did your Mother kind of or did you yourself expect to take on that role of?

Answer: No. It never entered my mind.

Question: You were an eleven year old kid and..

Answer: Right.

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Question: So how long, cause then, now you then got sent to where was it? Arkansas?

Answer: Well, we were sent to Jerome, Arkansas. At that time we were able to get together with my Dad and we were sent over in October of '43.

Question: So two years later.

Answer: Not quite two years... I would say he was...no, no. He was taken in October of '42 and we were sent to Jerome in December of '43, right, so it wasn't quite a year.

Question: So what was that like? How did they get you there and what could you take with you and..

Answer: Just what we could take with us. So we left... well it's a good thing we had relatives in Hawaii, my Mom's sisters. So we left some things with them, some of the bigger things and we took what we thought we would be needing, like clothes and we really didn't have anything warm, living in Hawaii. But we took whatever jackets and things that we had with us.

Question: Now why wasn't your Mom's sister going, if you were leaving stuff with them, they didn't get?

Answer: You know, I was reading a report once and they even thought of interning all the Japanese in Hawaii but then they started thinking, what's going to happen to the economy when you lock up half of the people? And that's when they decided they can't do that so I think from Hawaii I think there was a total of 5,000 of us were sent to camps.

Question: Out of?

Answer: Out of 150,000 or so.

Question: That's where some of the absurdity of war comes in.

Answer: Oh yeah, yeah.

Question: I mean what was their reasoning and..?

Answer: Actually what they did, they took Buddhist Priests, Japanese schoolteachers, fishermen and people like my Dad, Kibe Nisei, born in Hawaii but raised in Japan, educated in Japan and also if anybody served in the Japanese Army.

Question: What was the camp like?

Answer: Well, you know, being young at that time... at that time I thought oh, this is fun, you know, just play. But as I grew older and I started thinking about what they did to us, I started getting mad. But at that time like I said, it was all play. My sister who was a senior who was planning on going to college after she graduated, I mean, it was really difficult for her to be just taken and sent to camp. And till this day I think she really, it's inside of her just kind of like going on.

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Question: How many years... how long were you in the camp?

Answer: We... about two years, I think cause when the war ended, we were, my two sisters, the one above me and the one below me and I, we went back to Hawaii. My oldest sister and my parents renounced their citizenship so they were sent back to Japan. And, let's see, December of '45 we went back to Hawaii. January of '46, about a month and a half or so later, my parents and my oldest sister were sent to Japan but then in '51 they got their citizenship back and they were able to go back to Hawaii.

Question: So did they actually, your Mother and Father, did they choose to give up their citizenship or was that something that...

Answer: They were, I believe they were sort of discouraged with what was happening and I believe that's one of the reasons why they renounced their citizenship. I know my Dad was a little worried about his Dad who's in Japan and he thought maybe the only way he could go back to see him was by renouncing his citizenship, I don't know. I don't know what their thought was. But when they went back they found that he died during the war and so I guess they were wondering well do they have to live in Japan the rest of their life or.. and the opportunity came when they were able to get their citizenship back so they did and they were able to get back to Hawaii.

Question: So were you separated from your Dad for all that time?

Answer: I don't, well you see, in '48 I joined the service and I was stationed in Hawaii. Then when the Korean War broke out I was sent to Korea and at that time I thought, Wow, if I got what they call R & R in Korea, I would probably be able to go to Japan and see them. And when I finally got my R & R, I think it was in April or May of '51, I guess; and when I went to Japan, I found out that they were back in Hawaii so couldn't meet.

Question: Wow... Do you remember the living quarters or much about the camp?

Answer: It's a tarpaper shack; it's barracks. There's no siding, just tarpaper and like Tulalake, I don't know if you're familiar with that area there. It's in, south of Klamath Falls, but it was right smack in the dessert and so it got pretty dusty and dust would come into the house, into our unit; and the only heating element we had was a charcoal burner and we did whatever cooking that we wanted to do on that. We had a mess hall but, you know, sometimes we had something extra that we could probably cook in our unit and we did it on that pot-bellied stove.

Question: Did the family get to stay together?

Answer: The family stayed together but actually there was no privacy; if you wanted privacy I know my Dad built some partitions for, to separate my Mom and his place and our place, the kids' place, but that was it.

Question: Were there other families within that?

Answer: Well in each barrack I think there were like six units in each barracks... the two end units were the big ones and the ones in between were a little smaller.

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Question: Do you remember what you did during the day, I mean did you go to school or..?

Answer: We had school, we had school.

Question: Was that run by Japanese people within the camp or did they..?

Answer: They had some Caucasian teachers but I think these were teachers that couldn't get jobs outside. We didn't think much of them. I know that we used to argue with the teachers about certain points in our math and they couldn't answer. We had some Japanese teachers and I, I believe these were, they were teaching outside before the war started and since they were short of teachers, they were hired for \$15 a month. Doctors were like \$16 or \$18 a month. These were professional doctors.

Question: And that's while they were in camp what they were given?

Answer: That's the pay scale.

Question: Was it a, is it like a city within a wall? I mean, do you have a store or..?

Answer: They had commissary. Now you asked, is it a city? I'll say it was more like a big prison city. I remember reading an article... I can't remember whether it was an article out of the San Francisco Times or whatever, but it says here's this big city north of San Francisco, whatever... supposed to be one of the largest cities, all blackheads (Japanese), whatever, you know, we had 18,000 in camp in Tulelake at that time.

Question: Wow. Huh. So see that's where it gets, again gets confusing cause as a child again you're, you know, you're what, probably about twelve, thirteen at this point?

Answer: Well, when I was at Tule I was about fourteen.

Question: Fourteen.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: So you're becoming a young man at this point..

Answer: Yeah.

Question: I mean you're, you know, want to do all the things that kids do but yet here you are in this situation. Do you remember, were there guard towers?

Answer: Oh yeah. They were supposed to protect us but everything's pointing in so I don't think they were protecting us... barbwire all around camp. I remember when we had a, they called it a riot, but it was a protest, more of a protest; and something happened and a couple guys got shot.

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Question: It's interesting how the words get used. I mean, like you said, riot... it was a protest. Internment camp... prisoner camp.

Answer: Well, citizens like us instead of saying citizens were also in camp, we are non-aliens who were in camp. Can you believe that? Non-aliens rather than saying citizens which I think was against... I guess they couldn't use the word citizens locked up. So they'd say non-citizen, I mean, non-aliens, aliens and non-aliens.

Question: It's that again, the war of words, the choice of words.

Answer: That's right, that's right, the choice of words.

Question: Cause then again, the things that were taken away and then how as time went by, all of a sudden they decided they needed soldiers so well I'll tell you what, we'll make you a deal. You get your citizenship back if you sign up and go in the service. You can go out and work if you do this, you know, we need you now.

Answer: That's right.

Question: We're afraid of you here; we're... wow..

Answer: Well, I don't think they put this kind of pressure on any other group. What they did was to say if you're loyal, prove you're loyalty. That's what they were saying. In other words, you know, otherwise you'll be locked up in camp. Your parents would be in camp but you can serve in the service, you know, just prove your loyalty.

Question: Because you, didn't they ask people to denounce the Emperor? Wasn't that part of it?

Answer: That's right. That's where they got the phrase, "no no boys". You had to answer yes, yes to both. There was no way you can answer to one part and no to the other part and I know when I was in Tule we had a lot of "no no boys". And they were looked down on by the rest of the Japanese community because they said they were not loyal to the U.S. but I think they were also trying to prove a point that what happened to their rights, you know. And so I think they were trying to, that was their way of showing, I don't know exactly how to put it, but I think they were just as brave as those who went into the service. Like Gordon Hirabayashi who was in prison for a while because he was against the evacuation or internment and he refused to go.

Question: And so they put him in prison-prison?

Answer: Right.

Question: Yeah. It's interesting cause I always ask, do you think it could happen again?

Answer: I think it could. I mean they say well... You know, I hope they learn from all of this but after 911 and you look at some of the things that they're saying and how they rounded up some of these people, I think it could happen, you know. It was much easier with the Japanese community because there was only about

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150,000 or 180,000 Japanese and we looked like the enemy. And as far as the Muslims are concerned, there are more than 180,000... how're you gonna round everybody up, but if they could I think they would.

Question: And that's where this became interesting because I had asked that question a lot before 911 and a lot of people said, Oh no, it could never happen again. But yet 911, and you had anybody that looked of eastern descent, I mean you had the gentleman down in Texas that was beat up by the..

Answer: That's right.

Question: The people just because, you know, it was their vision of somebody from the Middle East.

Answer: Uh huh, uh huh.

Question: That's the scary part.

Answer: It is.

Question: I mean where, whether it paranoia or whatever that fear is that creates two people that could have lived side by side, worked side by side, gone to school side by side; but then all of a sudden... you know, Pearl Harbor was a good example. The next day, phshht that's what Flo that was just in, Flo Koura was talking about how this friend of hers right after Pearl Harbor she just, they'd gone to school together, they'd been friends together but that was... wouldn't talk to her. You know, it just, it's hard to understand but it, but there is that fear that it could happen again.

Answer: That's right, that's right. I hope it never happens but it could.

Question: Did your Dad, as you grew up, did you ever get to talk to your Dad about his memories of this event or did you never get a chance to have..?

Answer: I don't think I ever had a chance. I think when I really started thinking about the war we got separated. I mean, he was in Japan; I was in Hawaii. And I remember when I came back from Korea in '50, '51 when I came back, it was really, really, not, not funny but we sat down and he offered me beer, you know, because the last time, last time we were together I was fifteen and he would never do that. Then when I came back from Korea in '51 we sat down and he offered me a bottle of beer, I thought Wow; things have changed!

Question: It's amazing what the war did to your family, I mean, all the things, your Dad being back, being... the FBI coming after, being sent back to Japan, separation of siblings and your, did your sister ever go to college? Did she get..?

Answer: No, no, she never did.

Question: She never got a chance. So that two-year period destroyed that dream that she had.

Answer: Uh huh.

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Question: You know, being an American citizen, having, being looked at as not an American citizen and..

Answer: Well you know it still happens to this day. I mean, we go someplace and someone will come up to us and the first thing they would say is, Ohayou gozai masu...you know, like, I'm carrying a camera and they'll say something like that. And so we respond and say Yeah, how are you, you know. And they say, Oh you speak English, or whatever. And, yeah. And or sometimes they'll say, Where are you from? We say, Oh we're from the Seattle area. No, no, where are you from? Way back, where are you from? And when something like that happens I feel like saying, Where are you from?... You know, really, where are you from? I could toss that question right back to them.

Question: And that's the, one of the hardest things, I never get that. I mean I'm German descent... nobody comes and asks me that. I don't, I... the Caucasians wouldn't ask me that. I look..

Answer: Right. Well, you say you're of German descent. How long have your parents been here?

Question: My parents, I'm fourth generation.

Answer: Fourth generation.

Question: Yeah.

Answer: Okay, my kids are fourth generation too because I'm third generation. But now were your parents, were your grandparents interviewed by the FBI during the Second World War?

Question: Well, actually, a funny story. None of my relatives except my Grandfather was, and the only reason being is... is that he was German, was a businessman in Olympia. He'd had a boat and he'd bought a new radio for it and the government, he turned the boat over to the government but he took the radio off. And he took it home with him and he was upstairs and he had headphones on and he was, right by the capitol and he was testing his radio out. Well, one of the neighbors saw this and thought that German, so they called the FBI so he, somebody started following him and he called a friend of his in Seattle who was with the FBI and said, I think I'm being followed. So the Seattle FBI sent somebody down so the FBI was following the FBI following my Grandfather. But that was, that was the only reason why is because some neighbor had seen something suspicious and it wasn't just, oh it's a German over there so we'll turn it.. Where being of Japanese descent, oh, because they looked different, you know.

Answer: They'll haul him off. Well was he hauled off into a camp?

Question: No.

Answer: See.

Question: Yeah.

Answer: That's the difference.

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Question: Yeah, it's, it gets even more confusing when you start looking at all, the same thing if my relatives had have gone in the service and been over in Europe, they could have been fighting against a brother or cousin or something like that. But again, they don't get asked that; that's not a common question. But I know a lot of people that ended up in the 442nd get asked, you know, and they were over in Europe; but we've talked to some that were interrogators and things like that, Well what did you think about fighting against your brother? But for some reason again there's this separation in there.

Answer: Well, you know when Pearl Harbor was bombed the 100th Battalion was formed before the war and these were all draftees but when on December 7, when they attacked Hawaii they took all the rifles away from the members of the 100th Battalion because they were afraid that these guys were going to turn on them.

Question: And the 100th eventually became the 442nd, right? They were kind of the founding..

Answer: Right, right.

Question: And they had raised their right hand, they had..

Answer: Right.

Question: They had sworn their allegiance to the country; they'd been training and everything like that and..

Answer: Uh huh.

Question: Again, it's interesting too to talk to different people over the years how it hangs on or doesn't hang on and was it right, was it wrong? Did the American government ever apologize to the internees?

Answer: They did. I know we got a letter from, was it Reagan, apologizing and we got... \$20,000 reparation... that's it.

Question: Do you think, does that, it doesn't make it go away, it doesn't make it not happen but was that cleansing or I mean was that in your mind, from your personal view, was that a deserved response?

Answer: Well, for some people, I think they felt that that was okay but there were others who lost a fortune... \$20,000 was really nothing.

Question: That, you know, again, this is where concepts and the way things we get taught in our history classes..

Answer: Uh huh.

Question: Perceptions again because of propaganda that came...

Answer: Right.

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Question: On at that time and how Japanese people were put forth in the American society and all that, I think growing up post-war in that era, what we were taught, you know, I wouldn't think, Oh well, there were Japanese doctors and Japanese businessmen and all that. It was, that wasn't the image that was portrayed so people say, Well they lost a business. Oh well, it must have been some small business or something. No, they were American citizens. They were like everybody else but yet you know I hear of people that went away and came back and it was totally gone... that never ever climbed back out of that..

Answer: Uh huh.

Question: For a lot of the people, you know. And to turn those and some of what we're doing in schools is turning the question around and saying okay if this class, if we were to, everybody go through and pick an M&M and they get a color and say, Okay everybody with blue M&M's sit over there. And you were the ones that we just took everything away from, and isolate them and use this as a lesson to teach, Well, how do you feel about it? You know, Well, none of you other students stood up for them. Why didn't you stand up? Did you feel this was fair? Because there was some of that too... is who was there standing up you know and saying, This is, this is wrong. After the war everybody says, Oh it was, it was wrong, you know. So, was there a point where they said, Everybody go home from the camp or how did..?

Answer: Oh, I left camp before everybody cleared out. I mean people going back to Hawaii, they had to get a ship ready to send us back so, actually what happened was the, we went back to Hawaii with a whole group of 442 vets... they were on a ship going back to Hawaii. They put us on that boat with them.

Question: And, but, when that happened it was like, go back and figure out how to put your life back together..

Answer: That's right, that's right. With us we were lucky because my aunt, my sister, my Mom had three sisters and a brother. And one of them said that they'll take care of us and so we were able to go back, pick up our lives from there so.

Question: But your parents went back to Japan?

Answer: Uh huh.

Question: Yeah, so here you are this young, fairly young child still.

Answer: Uh huh.

Question: From the camp, are there friends that you have today that you met at camp and still..?

Answer: We have one in Sacramento and well, it's been awhile since we've talked to them, but there are a couple here in Seattle that... I know there's one guy that I played football with that I met again in Seattle. And there's a woman, I would say she's about three or four years older than me... I used to see her at baseball games and football games that we used to play. And she used to go and watch us play.. so I remember her.

Question: So within the camp you had football and baseball and...?

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Answer: Yeah.

Question: Did the government organize that or was it everybody saying, Hey let's..?

Answer: We had in camp people who organized games and as far as football goes, we had to look around for a coach. It was usually someone who was older like eighteen or nineteen who would you know coach the younger kids to play.

Question: And did you play, create a number of teams, well..?

Answer: Right, right.

Question: There's, what did you say, 18,000 people there, is that right?

Answer: Right, yeah.

Question: So you could have a couple of..

Answer: Yeah, we had some leagues, but football... it was just so, we got a team, you guys have a team... we'll play you guys, you know and just go around looking for people to play.

Question: That's the hard thing to conceive of is the fact that there was some normal life within this prison.

Answer: Uh huh.

Question: You know, that you still had holidays... do you remember any Christmases or anything like that in there? Did you do anything, did you..?

Answer: We exchanged presents and things like that but usually not much... we didn't have the money. We couldn't go out shopping so a lot of things... just something that we made, or something cheap that we bought at the store.

Question: Could you leave the camp? Could you go and come back? Did they allow that or were you confined to..?

Answer: I, I remember going to Klamath Falls. There was a Catholic Father who took about six of us to Klamath Falls and I remember just going to a restaurant. We sat by the window and here was some kids on the outside who was just spittin' at the window that they saw us. But that's the only time I remember going out of camp, going to Klamath Falls.

Question: I would think with an experience like that it wouldn't encourage you to want to go out with the prejudice and...

Answer: Well, I think I had more fun in there than going out.

Question: Well, do you remember in Klamath Falls, was it a segregated community, I mean, do you remember any signs around saying, you know, won't serve you or?

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Answer: No, I didn't see any signs.

Question: Was the priest Caucasian or Japanese?

Answer: Caucasian.

Question: Caucasian. Girlfriends in camp?

Answer: No, I think I was too young and too shy.

Question: At least you're sticking with that while your wife's in the room, huh?

Answer: Laughter...

Question: Cause again that's the interesting is, you know, you were teenage boys growing there and, but.. Did you, were there groups, clicks of, your buddies that you hung out with?

Answer: Well, when we were in Jerome kids from Hawaii stuck together; and one reason we stuck together was because coming from Hawaii we speak a little different. We have our own way of speaking, Pigeon English. And I remember going to school and the teacher asked me to stand up and say where I was from, give my name and all those. I started talking and the kids all started laughing. And I said, Oh, I'm not gonna stand up in front of the class and say anything. I knew I spoke Pigeon English and it was funny to the rest of the kids...

Question: So even within that there was some segregation?

Answer: Right, right, right.

Question: Huh. So all the Hawaii kids..

Answer: Yeah, we stuck together. Then when we the segregated moved to Tule then we were, there were only about, there were another Hawaiian family I think in our block, like in Tule I think we had something like sixty some odd blocks. And each block I think must have had about two or three hundred people in it. I'm not sure.

Question: This is a hard one for you to answer but I mean just from your perception, how hard was it on your Mom?

Answer: I think it was... she never showed her emotions. My Dad never showed his emotions either. So it's hard to read... I know it was hard for them, but it was hard to read what they were thinking. And I'm sure they'd discuss a lot of things with my older sister who was what, about eighteen, but never, I don't think they'd discuss anything serious with the rest of us so we didn't really know, you know, what they were thinking. Even, the part where they renounced their citizenship I didn't really know that happened until after it happened.

Question: Do you remember when they left for Japan and you got separated?

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Answer: No, we left for Hawaii before they left for Japan. We left for Hawaii in December; they left for Japan in January.

Question: Did you know that was gonna happen? Did you know they weren't gonna come meet up with you or did they say, Go to Hawaii; everything will be okay?

Answer: Well, you know, I'm glad they gave me a choice. They said, you know, they asked if we wanted to go back to Japan with them or if I wanted to go to Hawaii to live with my aunt or go to Lima, Peru to live with my Dad's folks? Right away I eliminated two, two places. I couldn't speak Spanish so I didn't want to go to Peru. I couldn't speak Japanese so I didn't want to go to Japan and start from first grade. So I said, you know, I would rather go to Hawaii and in about a year or two I'd graduate you know so..

Question: So you didn't grow up speaking Japanese then?

Answer: We went, I went to Japanese school till the seventh grade when, until the war started, and that was it. And, you know, you would speak Japanese... I would speak Japanese to my Dad; I would speak some English to him. And with my Mom, I communicated mostly in English because she went through the eighth grade, seventh or eighth grade in Hawaii so..

Question: Huh. Do you think from your perspective that there's a message that should be left with generations to come that you and I'll never meet, from World War II, from what happened with the internment, the..?

Answer: The only thing I could think of is, look at everybody for what they are, not what they look like but for what they are. It doesn't matter whether you're yellow, red or black or white. I know, a lot of people say I'm colorblind but how you can be colorblind when the color is right there, you know? But treat the person equally.

Question: Did you have relatives that were in Japan fighting that you know of?

Answer: Relatives in Japan who were..?

Question: Who were fighting for the Japanese?

Answer: I think we may have had one or two.

Question: But nobody that you knew or encountered (Inaudible)?

Answer: No. First cousins or anything like that. So right now we, I have a half-uncle I would call it who's younger than me and his family and that's about it... nobody else.

Question: Do you think that World War II left artifacts, societal artifacts on the way that you're treated today from World War II... is there still discrimination based on World War II or do you think that over time that's..?

Answer: I think there's still discrimination. First of all I think there's still discrimination about from those who served in the Second World War. They still do

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not look at us as Americans. They still they can look at us and say well you guys got reparation. I wasn't a Japanese person, you know, and I didn't get any reparation. I think they're talking about two different things, but they can't see that. And I think the younger ones, I think a lot of them cannot remember the Second World War, but they hear things and they hear things from either their Godparents or from their parents and they carry this through. Oh, I can't remember that one incident. Well, anyway, getting back to the original question, I think there's still some discrimination there, even among the young.

Question: Do you remember when you first experienced prejudice?

Answer: Yes.

Question: And if so, was it before the war or after Pearl Harbor... we'll use Pearl Harbor as the..?

Answer: Well you know, after Pearl Harbor I remember I was about twelve and we used to go and caddy at the public golf course and some Hawaiian kids would come after us... No Japs allowed. I remember that. Then during the Korean War I got, I don't know whether I was talking to Adolph or to you, but I got Jaundice and this was on the front lines. I was sick for about ten days. I couldn't eat. I was sent back to headquarters and they had a medical team back there and there were two other guys from my platoon who went back with the same thing that I had. The doctor looked at those two and said, Well we're gonna send you back to Japan to the hospital; and he looked at me and he says, All Orientals have yellow eyes and he sent me back to the front lines with no medication, nothing. He sent me back. At that time I didn't think anything about it, but when I look back at it I think, God this guy was really discriminatory. Then another was after I got out of the service, I was in L.A., was going to the University, I was working down in L.A. but I didn't know they had a dividing line in L.A. where I think it was Vermont Street was the dividing line where west of Vermont Asians and all minorities could stay but east of Vermont you couldn't. I was looking for a place to stay and I called and I asked this woman if she had a room for one person. She says, Oh yeah, we have. So I said okay... I'll be over and I went over to look at the place, and she looked at me and I asked her if she had a room. She said, No, it's taken. I said I just called you. She said, No, but it's taken. And later on is when I found out I believe it was Vermont, west of Vermont, whatever, no minorities allowed east of that so.

Question: Did you see that in the service too? I mean was the service unofficially segregated?

Answer: '48 when I joined, there were no blacks in our unit but we had Asians and Caucasians together. And the regimental team that I was in we had no blacks until it was time to go to Korea. Then they put a memo, we had one black Captain and that was it. In fact when we first landed there, there was a whole regiment of blacks, the whole regiment was black and eventually they, our unit got racially mixed so before I left we had blacks in our units.

Question: Wow. Do you have children?

Answer: Do I have children?

Question: Yeah.

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Answer: I have three, two boys and a girl.

Question: Have they ever asked about, do they know what happened in Hawaii and..?

Answer: Once in a while they would ask and I would tell them.

Question: Well thank you very much.