

>> John Tinker: Today is Friday, April 1st, 2016 and this is the start of an interview with Alan Hirasuna in Fresno California. My name is John Tinker and I will be the interviewer. Alan is Fred and Setsu Hirasuna's oldest son and we will be talking about their history and their experiences in order to provide a background for the Hirasuna collection of papers which the family has donated to the president state library's special collections. In this interview, we'll explore several topics. The history of a Hirasuna and Saiki families, the formation of Sunnyside packing and some of the historic issues that Fred was involved in because of his role in Sunnyside packing. And finally, Fred and Setsu's long history with the Japanese American Citizens league, the JAACL. Let's start with your father's background. What do you know about where he was born and where his family came from?

>> Alan Hirasuna: My father's family, ah, came from the Hiroshima, the Hiroshima Prefecture and his father came in 1892 to Hawaii. This was in-- if you know a little about Japanese history, 1868, is a very critical year and, and in 1868, Japan went from military samurai rule to modern Japan as it is today. And at that time, there were a lot of people, the economy was not good and from what I understand from relatives, ah, people were offered a 100 yen to an arrangements that's been made with America to go to Hawaii with Brazil, to go to Brazil and to Peru to go to Peru.

>> John Tinker: [Inaudible] immigration?

>> Alan Hirasuna: They-- Not immigration, but, but, but, ah, tenant workers are, you know, doing, doing works spends in these countries--

>> John Tinker: Japan was encouraging--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, because they have-- just like Mexico--

>> John Tinker: I didn't know that.

>> Alan Hirasuna: They need a-- They need a jobs for their people and they need an income for their people and so--

>> John Tinker: I didn't know that.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- that occurred I think around the 1890s or so. And so in 1892, my grandfather who was Mitsugi [assumed spelling] went to Oahu and worked on a sugar plantation at the EWA, Eva plantation, and he was the first of-- later two brothers came and three cousins came and they-- and they all ultimately stayed in America migra-- our family and the-- and the two brothers came to California and the other cousin stayed in Hawaii.

>> John Tinker: Oh.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And so anyway, in 1892, he came and when he went through immigration, ah, our name is really Hirasago [assumed spelling] and-- and what happen was the-- the character for Sago and Suna is the same and so when these interpreters change to the Roman characters, they made us Hirasuna instead of Hirasago. And so, all the Hirasuna's stem from these first immigrants that came to-- through Hawaii. And so--

>> John Tinker: Pretty easy to tract your relatives.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah. And, and, and so whenever I hear Hirasuna, I know they're related. And, and I-- when we visit Japan, we visit our Hirasago relatives. And so my grandfather came and I think he went back to Japan, he married my grandmother, they had a child in Japan and-- and they left that child. He grew up until he was 15 or so in Japan and they came back to California and George Teraoka [assumed spelling] in Fowler who has, ah, written a history about the Buddhist population in Fowler. He told me that he found a newspaper article that said that my grandfather was one of the first Japanese in Fowler in 1902. So, he had a restaurant apparently in Fowler and then later, ah, ah, they moved to San Francisco and Sacramento and they ended up in Lodi and, ah, from number 3 child through 7, they were born in Lodi. My father was born in Lodi and grew up in Lodi and in 1922, they came to-- back to Fowler and they-- my grandfather had these visions of having a garage with the two oldest brothers running the garage and so he sent them to

mechanic school and they had Hirasuna brother's Fowler garage in Fowler and that building is still there today, at least part of it is.

>> John Tinker: How old was your father then?

>> Alan Hirasuna: When they came to Fowler, 1922, he was-- he was born in '08, so that's 12, 14 years old.

>> John Tinker: So, did he go to school in Fowler?

>> Alan Hirasuna: He went to high school in Fowler, he then went to Fresno State, ah, ah, ah, on a sporadic basis and what-- he run out of money and he go down to Southern California and make money and come back and I think he finally graduated, I don't know, 32 or 33 something like that.

>> John Tinker: So, that-- that was really early to-- to go to college. Not very many people went to college.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, that's true. That's true. That he was-- he was always the student. I mean, there's a picture of-- a family picture he must have been 9 years old and-- and-- and here's the family and he's in the front row, he's got book in his hand and he and the cousin who is fathered to, you may have heard of her, Delphine Hirasuna?

>> John Tinker: Uh-hmm.

>> Alan Hirasuna: They were very close and, and, and Delphine's father was also a kind of a student and so, they, they had a-- they had a special connection and that they maintain-- Delphine told me that my father and your father will sit there and they may not say a word, but they're communicating.

>> John Tinker: What does that say, your father's other young brothers and was there a sister too?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. There were seven.

>> John Tinker: Did they go to school too or did they're interested in school?

>> Alan Hirasuna: My father was the only one in his family that went to college. Not no-- different story my mother side, but he was the only and he was-- he was valedictorian of his high school and he was top 5% of Fresno State, and he wanted to become a teacher and--

>> John Tinker: What's the story there?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well doctor--

>> John Tinker: So obviously, they didn't become a teacher.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Dr. Thomas, I think who was president of Fresno State at that time, called him in and he said, "You know, you're not going to be able to get a job as a teacher. They won't hire Japanese as teachers." And so, he went off and became a businessman and I don't know how far you want to take me his side of his story, but I'll take it up to where he and my mom got together.

>> John Tinker: Well, yeah. That's-- that's a good place.

>> Alan Hirasuna: OK. So, anyway, ah, ah, he-- once he got his degree, he went to Delano and worked in the produce business and, and there's another story there, I'll get into later after we talk about-- after they get together.

>> John Tinker: I, I was going to ask what-- if, if he founded that he wasn't going to be a teacher, he's going to go out and work, why did he chose the produce business?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Because this is 1935.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: No jobs.

>> John Tinker: Yeah, that was hard at the time.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And so, he, he went to where there was work. He became a bookkeeper, have no business background. His degree was in sociology I think and, and he had no background in business, no background in accounting and so he taught himself how to be an accountant and he worked for a produce factor shipper in Delano. Yeah. Yeah. And so-- well then-- you know then I don't know whether I have to continue on and tell you-- at that point, he and my mom got together.

>> John Tinker: That's what I'm going to ask you about. Where did they meet? Did they know each other when they were young?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, my dad was in Fowler, my mother grew up in near Cedar and McKinley. Ah, at first when she was born, they was on the west side, my grandfather had a bicycle shop and then I had to go back and-- and tell you about my mother's history, does that makes sense or--

>> John Tinker: Well, sure. Yeah. What's-- what's your--

>> Alan Hirasuna: OK.

>> John Tinker: -- mother like?

>> Alan Hirasuna: My mother-- my mother came from a family of six kids. Her mother was-- came from a samurai family in Japan and they were under, ah, well, let me explain more about how Japan worked at least my understanding. Ah, before 1868, it was under military samurai rule. After 1868, the last Shogun, Tokugawa was over thrown and-- and-- ah, it was turned over to-- thrown was given back to emperor and it became, ah, democratic rule that it is today. And in the 1600s, we have family documents that go back to the 1500s and-- and in that period, my mother's family was under this one of the most powerful daimyo. There's the Shogun who is the top military guy that rule all of Japan. Under the Shogun, there are daimyo, they're kind of governors that-- that control geography and they'd kill each other in order to increase their possessions and, and, and so anyway, ah, she was-- her family was under this ah, Mori, Motonari Mori. And he was one of the most powerful daimyos and-- but after the Battle of Sekigahara Tokugawa defeated him. He had control most of Southern Honshu and he-- and Tokugawa took everything away from him. Their wealth is measured by koku of rice. One koku of rice is enough rice to feed a man for a year and he was-- he control-- like over a million koku of rice and that Tokugawa shoved him over to the western and of, of Honshu and, and he then controlled maybe 200 or 300,000 koku of rice.

>> John Tinker: So-- So, when did your mother's parents come to the United States, what were those--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, OK. So, ah, they are from Hagi and that was hot bed area, the one of the-- one of two areas that overthrew Tokugawa, but, ah, my mother and grandfather were-- who have come from Hagi. My grandfather, ah, came-- he was a merchant marine and it's I think my uncle Beck tells me when he was about 15, he came to San Francisco, he was sick, the captain of the ship set him up with a bicycle shop owner in San Francisco and-- and left him to be cared for by this bicycle shop owner and this is--

>> John Tinker: Was this the Japanese bicycle shop?

>> Alan Hirasuna: No. No, it was a white guy and-- and so anyway, this guy took him under his wing and my grandfather learned the bicycle business and-- and I see two dates, 1894 and 1898, I'm not sure which is right, he came to Fresno and this guy set him up with the bicycle shop in Fresno and it was at the corner of current and F--

>> John Tinker: [Inaudible].

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. And, and, and he had a bicy-- a very prosperous bicycle business because remember, 1890s there were no cars.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Bicycles were the transportation. And so, he had a thriving bicycle shop business, he was married and they had a baby and the baby died like two months after childbirth from, I think.

>> John Tinker: And this woman is not your grandmother?

>> Alan Hirasuna: No, no, no. And then, um, 1908 I think, his first wife died and there's, I don't know if you want to see it, I got-- I've got a church thing that shows that funeral procession. I mean, white horses and white wagon. They went from the church at Belmont Memorial to bury her and it was an elegant funeral procession and-- and-- and then his--

>> John Tinker: -- have your wife at young [inaudible]?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. She was a charter member of the Japanese congregational church. I mean, they both very, very strong, ah, supporters of the Japanese congregational church and my mother's family throughout their lives, always supported that. The Japanese congregational church, ah, ah, united with the Japanese Methodist Church and became United Japanese Christian Churches at UJCC out in [inaudible] today and--

>> John Tinker: I'm surprised they weren't Buddhist. What-- what--

>> Alan Hirasuna: You know, I, I don't know if they were Buddhist in Japan because my mother's family they were Buddhist priest and they-- they established the temple in Hagi for-- for their lowered Mori and they were strong Buddhist priest and, and I don't know when they can-- whether-- well, my grandfather was Christian when he was married to his first wife in the 1890s. And so, I think naturally when my grandmoth-- my grandfather was arranged to-- well, he met my-- he was fixed up with my grandmother in Japan by his sister and my grandmother's sister and their stories had go with that. And so in 8-- 8-- in 1908-- '09, he went to Japan and married my grandmother and-- and brought her back to America and I think she has visions of living an easy life with this rich man and turns out by 1910 or so, the [inaudible] came in and they struggled financially for all their married life. And so, my grandmoth-- mother didn't quite, ah, live the life she have, but she was-- she came from a educated family. Uh, she-- after the emperor's government was setup, they established the University in Tokyo called Ochanomizu and that's Ocha tea, ah, and Mizu was water Ochanomizu and, and, and they were-- this was a university of samurai daughters. And each year, they would select one woman from each prefecture, which is like a state here, one woman from each prefecture to attend Ochanomizu and my grandmother was a first from Yamaguchi and, and--

>> John Tinker: That was be very unusual to--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. I mean this was-- This was in the 1890s.

>> John Tinker: It must be very rare

>> Alan Hirasuna: And-- and uncle Beck would always say, I don't know why and how she did it, but we have a relative who was into Japanese, he was a [inaudible] in the emperor's government and he-- the speculation is that, he influenced her getting in because they were something like, there was I said that Hagi was one of the hot spots of over throwing the Shogun. There was this school that are run by a man named Yoshida Showin [assumed spelling] and, and, and he had snuck a board perished ship and he had-- he-- he was learning about the western world and he had visions of opening up Japan to western ways. And so, this was one-- I call it, it was like a madrassa, you know. They have the school in Hagi right near where my grandmother's family live and that-- and they were teaching about the western world and western ways and they overthrew, you know, this was-- they were the key group of people that over threw Tokugawa. And, and,

and-- but anyway, ah, this-- the man, the relative that was [inaudible], he was Goromira. He got my mother into this-- my grandmother into this Ochanomizu and so, she graduated-- she was graduated there from around 1902 or something.

>> John Tinker: That's not going to [inaudible] early.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: So she came to the United States, she married your-- your grandfather and they had, I've already lost track, build large family.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Six kids. Six kids. And my grandmother-- my grandmother also talked, you know, as I say, they struggle financially. And so, upon 1930 after the kids were of age and my mother was taking care of the little kids, ah, they, they-- she run a Japanese school in Sanger and in Sunnyside. At that time, people-- I think people still have visions of the ev-- at least the Issei, the generation had immigrated. The Isseis still have visions of maybe they would return to Japan, but like everybody else that comes to America, once the American born kids get a foothold, no way they're going to go back to, to the old country, but anyway they have these schools where they taught Japanese after school and on weekends and my grandmother was-- I mean, I see weathers where people would say what a, you know, what a-- what a magnificent teacher she was.

>> John Tinker: Yeah. There's ethnic schools where common to lots of immigrant--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: Ah, where did you mother go to school here?

>> Alan Hirasuna: To Fresno High.

>> John Tinker: Who did she with?

>> Alan Hirasuna: She went to Fresno high and, and then, and then the Fresno state and--

>> John Tinker: Was she a Fresno state the same time your father was?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. And I think that's really-- they, you know, my father was in Fowler. That was the question that we started with.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: My father was in Fowler. Your mo-- my mother was in Fresno and by Cedar and McKinley. I mean, they live right at the north end of 9th street where-- where a dead ends against the ditch there. And so, that's where they grew up. There was a colony of Japanese families in that area and, and that's where my mother grew up and-- and so, she went-- they met at Fresno state and--

>> John Tinker: Did they ever talk about what-- what it was like when they met or with that part of their life?

>> Alan Hirasuna: You know, they were never very open about that and-- and I've got-- ah, I've heard several stories and Joanne and things that my mo--

>> John Tinker: Joanne is your sister?

>> Alan Hirasuna: My, my sister Joanne, ah, she heard things from my mother and, and because, ah, my-- on the grandmother's side and on the Saiki side, beca--

>> John Tinker: That's-- that's your mother's--

>> Alan Hirasuna: My mother's side.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Because they were samurai and apparently-- now, there was kind of a hierarchal informal culture in Fresno--

>> John Tinker: So, how did your mother's parents look at you five?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, let me get to that a little before. Let me set this up. And so-- And so, at that time in Fresno, ah, you know, a lot of people came from Yamagutchi and a lot of people came from Hiroshima--

>> John Tinker: Now, those are provinces [inaudible] in Japan.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Prefectures in Japan and Yamagutchi is where Hagi is and so, there were a lot of, of, of samurai of our families, people who came from samurai families from Yamagutchi. And, and, and, and I think there was unsaid, but it think there was a special level of respect that they have in the Fresno culture. And-- And Frank Nisho [assumed spelling], I don't know if you Frank Nisho, he was an optometrist in Clovis and, and my cousins are--a re Nishos and my-- my mother's younger sister married a Nisho. And Frank Nisho-- Frank Nisho was the Kibbeh. A Kibbeh is a person that was born in America, educated in Japan and then back in America. And so, my, my-- ah, ah, ah, Frank told me one time, he kind of quietly tell me, he says, you know, his family was samurai too and I was asking about his family and, you know, not knowing one samurai from another and-- and Frank told me. He says, you know what, he said, you're the Saiki family was really from a high level of samurai. And so, there's this culture and, and, and apparently when my mother became of age, there were suitors, samurais-- I mean, suitors from samurai families that would come and, and, and try to win my mother.

>> John Tinker: Your family is involved in, in this-- that is-- was there as sort of--

>> Alan Hirasuna: I--

>> John Tinker: -- family arrangement?

>> Alan Hirasuna: There-- there were-- yeah, arrange marriages. There were not real formally and strictly, but I think they, they kind of de-- decided, well, maybe my daughter out to meet your, your son. And so, apparently, she had a few suitors that came over and my mother was in America and she, she wasn't going for that and Joanne says that, that my sister, she says that-- that grandma told mom, you know, you don't have to feel pressured. I-- I was my own person. I came to America, it was an-- and, and, and you should feel the same freedom. And so, my mother-- and so I think essentially she was telling my mother, it's OK to-- to say no to these guys coming from Japan.

>> John Tinker: [Inaudible] generous.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And, and, and, and, and I think my grandmother probably expected her to marry an American Japanese that came from a samurai family. But I think my mother had different ideas.

>> John Tinker: Did they ever talk about this-- what their other family saw her marriage?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Not really. No-- so, this is all speculation, my part and, and of my-- within my siblings part just from what we know and what was not said.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: But my-- my parents are there's-- there's a-- there's a photograph here of my dad and mom when they eloped to Yuma Arizona to get married.

>> John Tinker: So, they eloped?

>> Alan Hirasuna: They eloped.

>> John Tinker: That's very--

>> Alan Hirasuna: And this picture was taken in San Diego, ah, ah, walking on the street after they married in, in Yuma, Arizona because apparently you could go like Reno and you can go get married quickly.

>> John Tinker: What year was that?

>> Alan Hirasuna: This was 1935.

>> John Tinker: Those were hard times.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah.

>> John Tinker: That was the depth of the depression.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: They're been talking about what their early married life was like?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, they did but, but let me back up some more. Ah, ah, you know, my-- jobs were hard to find.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Apparently, my mother had lined up a job with a family person in the Delano. If she--

>> John Tinker: Your mother lined up job for herself?

>> Alan Hirasuna: For herself.

>> John Tinker: What was she going to do?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Ah, she was probably a secretary or ah, ah, ah gopher in some company.

>> John Tinker: She was a college graduate.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Her major was French. There's words that-- she graduated from Fresno state and I've heard that she had visions of maybe marrying a diplomat one day. So she-- she said, I've never used much French. Why I got a degree in French, I don't know. But, yeah. And so anyway, her degree is in French and she's going to go work as a-- you know, an assistant in some company in Delano and she whispers to my father, you know, you might want to go talk to so and so about a job in Delano and that's where he got the bookkeeping job.

>> John Tinker: Oh.

>> Alan Hirasuna: I think--

>> John Tinker: OK.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- my speculation, I think my mother had her eyes on my father and I think, you know, that's where they really got together and they run off and they went to Yuma and got married. They kept their marriage a secret, ah,

and so, she became pregnant with Joanne.

>> John Tinker: That's a very romantic story.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And one day we're in San Diego, I don't-- Masako Inada [assumed spelling] who-- her family is the Fresno fish store family for a generations and she was good friends with my mother. And Masako was the town crier or was a town crier. Masako knew everybody's business and she, she-- you know, she would talk and keep everybody informed about everybody else and, and, and when they got pregnant, my father tells my mother, you better tell Masako we're married. And when they were in San Diego, Masako told me, you know, Masako was working at the YWCA in San Diego, when they went down and my mother stayed at YWCA and my father I don't know where he stayed, and she says, "every morning, your father would come and pick up your mother, they would disappear for the day and then she would come back at night." And so, anyway, and so, I think and again, speculation on my part, I think that my mother felt-- didn't feel free to marry father because he was not samurai, but she liked my father and so they got married and they kept it a secret and I think that's why there were all these secrecy about their marriage.

>> John Tinker: That's, that's, that's a very romantic story.

>> Alan Hirasuna: But-- And-- and so-- and then when they lived in Delano, my mother would say dad made a \$100 a month, there was a \$30 payment for the car, there was a \$30rent payment, we have to do with the rest, you know, for everything else." And my mother was always a very frugal woman. She could scratch off a nickel, ah, ah, ah forever and, and--

>> John Tinker: Those were hard times.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah.

>> John Tinker: Your mother [inaudible] came out of depression marked by that experience.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. And then, you know, they worked and lived there and then back to my mother's side of the family, they were financially struggling and my uncle Tai [assumed spelling], who-- my mother was the oldest of six children, Tai was the second and oldest boy and Tai was a supreme athlete. I mean, he was-- his, his sport was baseball. He played for Fresno state.

>> John Tinker: So he went to Fresno state also?

>> Alan Hirasuna: My grandmother was insistent that all the kids be college educated.

>> John Tinker: So all--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Because she was educated--

>> John Tinker: So all the children in your--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Mother's family.

>> John Tinker: -- mother's family--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: They all go to Fresno State?

>> Alan Hirasuna: No. Beck went to Davis I think. The-- but Fresno state for the most part, yeah. And so--

>> John Tinker: That was very unusual.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah and French. But anyway, Tai was a supreme baseball player. And at that time, they had a league of Nisei ah-- ah baseball player and Tai was, ah, ah, ah, you know, he was doing well with them. I don't know quite how it worked, but they would have Japanese pro teams come in and they would have a league of competition, there were also American pro-baseball players that would come play these, these Japanese players in the central valley and--

>> John Tinker: They were touring teams--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah.

>> John Tinker: -- in the off season--

>> Alan Hirasuna: And-- And the story goes uncle Tai struck out [inaudible]. And so-- And he was being asked to join a pro team in Japan. And my-- you know, my mother's family are struggling financially. My grandmother so the story goes will get mad at Tai. You know, you got to quit playing baseball and you got to help support the family and she-- she burned his bat.

>> John Tinker: Yeah, and this is-- this is-- really?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: This is right in the middle of depression.

>> Alan Hirasuna: This is 1935 or so, yeah.

>> John Tinker: That goes--

>> Alan Hirasuna: And so, Tai-- another part of the Saiki family story. Just at the end of 9th Street, they lived at the second house in from the ditch at the end of high, ah, ah, 9th Street was a hatchery and a mister Hattori [assumed spelling] had a hatchery where he hatched eggs to chickens, he raised chickens to make the fertilized eggs, he also had other coats for laying the eggs. But mister Hattori was a-- pion-- pioneer in America in chick sexing and chick sexing, you know, is sound-- sound sexy, but chick sexing is-- it's more of an art than a science. They would take day old chicks and separate pullets, the female from the cockerels, the males because a chicken-- an farmer doesn't want to spend all that feed and expense of raising ah, cockerels that they're going to have to kill and get rid of later. So a day old chicks just hatched, there was a Japanese art developed where they would separate cockerels and my uncle pullets, and my uncle Kit, number 3 Saiki, he started working for mister Hattori and learned how to sex chicks and mister Hattori sent him to Nagoya, Japan where he went to a chick sexing school and the whole vision was to-- for Kit come back and teach American how to sex chicks. And so, ah, he was doing that and they make good money because they got grueling schedule, they would go from hatchery to hatchery and-- and as they had a crop of eggs coming up they would sex the chicks and then they would go under the next hatchery. And so, I think Tai get into the sexing business after grandma finally convinced him to quit playing baseball. And, and, and he-- he makes some money and he ended up in 1939 buying the whole hatchery and chick sexing business. The hatchery was golden rule hatchery. The chick sexing business was international chick sexing association.

>> John Tinker: Now, is that the only chick sexing operation around at that time?

>> Alan Hirasuna: At that time, I think so. I mean, there were-- because it was so lucrative--

>> John Tinker: Now, did they do that? I mean, there would be chicken hatcheries in [inaudible] where Nebraska and Pennsylvania or whatever, did they-- did they provide chick sexers for those hatcheries?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, my uncle Tai, he was kind of a entrepreneurial type, I think. He went back to the Midwest and he started organizing team of sexers in Minnesota, I think Illinois, ah, I don't know what the other key states where.

>> John Tinker: Were these chick sexers all Japanese?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah. I mean at the top by my uncle Kit.

>> John Tinker: OK.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And, and, and there would be this-- that this guys would, you know, they-- I don't know, four people or five people are getting one car and they drive all night to the hatchery that sex all day and then they drive to the-- I mean, this was a winter time occupation and I-- I've had my uncle Herb [assumed spelling] used to go back every year. He had his family here. He would-- get go back during sexing season.

>> John Tinker: Why is it winter?

>> Alan Hirasuna: That's when the-- That's when the eggs hatch, I don't know. That's when the-- that's when the roosters got together, the hens to make eggs to-- I don't know.

>> John Tinker: I don't know either.

>> Alan Hirasuna: But anyway, it was winter and summer time Herb would be here and work here in the summer time.

>> John Tinker: So these were all these big guys?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah.

>> John Tinker: -- doing sexing.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, and then-- and so, well, during the war, ah, we opted to volun--

>> John Tinker: Let's not get ahead of it so much.

>> Alan Hirasuna: OK. Well--

>> John Tinker: I'm still trying to learn about it. Now, did your father work in this operation?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, in 1939 when-- when Tai bought the business from mister Hattori, he asked my father to manage the hatchery and the chick sexing business.

>> John Tinker: Now, let me get this straight. Your father went to Fresno state, was some-- a social science graduate--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Right.

>> John Tinker: -- then he was a bookkeeper in a produce firm?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: Now, he's running a hatchery?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Right.

>> John Tinker: How's all that-- where did you get this information?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well my father was always one that would, you know, like bookkeeping. He knew nothing about it. he-- he dig into the-- he self-teach himself. He would talk about how-- you know, at that time my grandfather on my

mother's side, my mother's father was still learning and leaving at the house next door and Tai took over the hatchery and the chick sexing business, and my father said, he and my grandfather would get into arguments about how to run the hatchery, how to raise the chickens and my father is reading the books-- he had books through the University of California Davis and trying to learn about-- about chickens and hatching and the whole business. Yeah.

>> John Tinker: So, your mother's brother has got involved in this chick sexing business and then brought your father into it?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. I mean, my father was always the businessman.

>> John Tinker: OK.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And a bookkeeper. Yeah. And so, Tai asked him to run the business part. Tai was out sexing and making money and organizing teams of sexers and so he would go back in the winter time to Minnesota and, and, and run these teams, these sexing teams through the hatchers--

>> John Tinker: So there's a headquarters in Minnesota?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Not really. My uncle and when we first moved back to Minnesota, he was looming at the Ben pay hotel in Mankato.

>> John Tinker: Oh, OK.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And so he was running it out of the Ben pay hotel.

>> John Tinker: Well that's-- that's getting ahead of ourselves a little bit though because, ah, we're at the end of the 1930s, your father and mother are living in Fresno?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Right, at the hatchery.

>> John Tinker: At-- At the hatchery. And then, the attack on Pearl Harbor?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: And then, all these business about relocation that is the governance-- the United States governance decision to forcibly remove all people of Japanese ancestry from the west coast. Ah, how many children were in your family at that time?

>> Alan Hirasuna: At that time, there were three of us. It was Joanne--

>> John Tinker: OK. So, when was Joanne born?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Joanne was born in '36. I was born in '39. Stew was born in February of '42 after Pearl-- just after Pearl Harbor.

>> John Tinker: Oh, OK.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah.

>> John Tinker: So that-- that must have left your parents with some really difficult decisions. Did they ever talk about-- about that time?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

>> John Tinker: What did they--

>> Alan Hirasuna: And-- And both my mother and father were very active and involved with the JACL and prior to that the Fresno ALL. JACL stands for Japanese American Citizens League that was formed in 1930. ALL stands for American Loyalty League that was formed by a group of San Francisco professionals probably around 1920 or so and-- and, there were-- the ones that came to Fresno there was a Dr. Tom Yotabe [assumed spelling] who is a dentist, who came to Fresno from San Francisco and Tom Okawara [assumed spelling], who is the lawyer, who was part of that group. They would meet informally in San Francisco. And then I think they got busy and that kind of met a hiatus. And then when they came to Fresno, Dr. Yotabe worked real hard to try to get a-- a civil rights group called the American loyalty league going in Fresno and he did. And-- and doctor-- and Tom Okawara, just for reference, is Idith Saiki's [assumed spelling] father. So, ah, Idith Saiki is married to my mother's middle brother, Beck. And there-- then they ended up farming in Sanger. And anyway, her father was a lawyer in Fresno and part of this original group and-- and they-- they-- he-- Dr. Yotabe was getting the ALL going, my mother joined the ALL I think in '29, ah, before my father did, then my father joined. And-- And they probably have, ah-- they were getting connected about that time in 1929. And then in 1930, there was a first-- there were-- you know, there was the ALL in Fresno, there were groups in Los Angeles, there were groups in Seattle, all worried about, ah, assimilating with the American population--

>> John Tinker: These were all first generation Nisei ever born here?

>> Alan Hirasuna: These are Nisei, yeah. Yeah. They-- and-- and so the Issei were born in Japan, immigrated. The Nisei were born in Ja-- in an America were American. And so anyway, they would-- they started getting concerned about discrimination and all these things that were going on that were unfair to the Japanese. And so in 1930, they form the JACL, the Japanese American Citizens League. And Dr. Yotabe and the Fresno people who were ar-- arguing for the name ALL for this national-- new national organization. There was a several Kito who became the president of JACL who was Hawaiian and a lawyer and he felt stronger that Japanese out to be in the name somehow. And so, that's why it became the JACL. They went-- they had their first national convention in Seattle. And my father-- Yoshonda [assumed spelling] and there was a third were delegates from Fresno to Seattle to represent Fresno. My father went-- he was only 23 at that time or something like that-- 22, yeah. And so anyway, he went because Dr. Yotabe's who wife is having a baby and he couldn't go so he replaced Dr. Yotabe and--

>> John Tinker: And so, your father was involved pretty earlier?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. And there are photographs that he have that are at the library now that-- that show pictures of meetings around the table and big pictures of all the attendees to the convention and also informal pictures, but they had two-- two significant resolutions. They went-- They went-- They went for the-- you know, they went for the big time right from the beginning. There was a man named Toki Slocum. Toki Slocum was mer-- was adopted into this Slocum family who were not Japanese, he married Sally Slocum who was a librarian at Fresno state for years and born in Texas. My father would call her Texas south and they had two children, Ted Slocum who I think you know was pres-- a student body, president of Fresno High and Josephine Slocum--

>> John Tinker: I know her.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- who is her younger, ah, ah, ah, who was the younger child. And so anyway, ah, Toki Slocum fought for American World War I. And traditionally, aliens that fought for America would gain citizenship by virtue of having fought for America, but not Japanese. And so, at this first 1930 convention, they sent Toki Slocum to Washington, DC to lobby for that-- that right of citizenship. They expanded to Japanese. And there was also woman from Los Angeles named Suma Sugi [assumed spelling] and she was Nesei. She was American citizen, she married a Nisei, an alien, by virtue of marrying this Issei, she was stripped over citizenship. Yeah.

>> John Tinker: I didn't know that.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And-- And so, if they were-- if he were to die or if they were to divorce and she could not become-- regain her citizenship because at that time, Japanese were not allowed to become American citizens. And so, they sent her to Washington to get that straightened out and they were successful on both accounts. And so from the beginning,

the JACL took on some pretty major, ah, civil rights issues so for the Japanese.

>> John Tinker: This is getting away from, from your family [inaudible] curious. I-- you say they were successful. Did Toki Slocum become citizen?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, by virtue of that law being changed, he must have automatically become a citizen. Yeah.

>> John Tinker: Oh. Let's get back to your family though because they must have had some really awful decisions to make at the time of relocation.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah, I assume.

>> John Tinker: Did they ever talk about that? I mean--

>> Alan Hirasuna: They did.

>> John Tinker: We're they, they-- Well, I shouldn't go ahead. Did they go to camp?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, you know, when my mom passed, ah, I started going through my dad had tons of files and this is what was donated--

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- to special collections at Fresno state and I found some personal notes that he had written to himself about what was going through his head after Pearl Harbor and before Roosevelt signed executive orders--

>> John Tinker: Fascinating.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- 9066--

>> John Tinker: But he never talked to you about this?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, he did. But I-- I never got to the intimate insight into what he's thinking was until I read those notes. And he's-- you know, maybe I'm wondering if I should go back and-- and-- and talk about what some of the circumstance especially with the JACL that lead up to--

>> John Tinker: Just, you know, what were-- we can talk about the JACL--

>> Alan Hirasuna: OK.

>> John Tinker: -- in a bit, but--

>> Alan Hirasuna: OK. Well, so his thoughts were, you know, things are looking-- I mean, they were just short notes. Things are looking bad. I think we're going to be evacuated. And then ah, prof-- and so-- they were getting letters back from people that were already in the assembly at Fresno fairgrounds assembly center about how bad conditions were and how, how-- there was a lack of medical care. Stew was born February '42, he was anemic. And so, they were concerned about medical care for him. And, ah, there were four children, they had a-- a surgeon and probably an anesthesiologist that put ether on your nose. That they came to our home at the hatchery on 9th Street and-- and four of us had our tonsils taken out on the dining room table and, and--

>> John Tinker: How old were you at the time?

>> Alan Hirasuna: I had to be, '42, I was ah, 2-1/2 years old.

>> John Tinker: Do you remember that?

>> Alan Hirasuna: No. No. But anyway, ah, you know, they wanted to prophylactically take out the tonsils of these kids. So that when they went to camp and there was questionable medical care that was already taken care of. And-- And the other thing that happened was because of Stew, ah, my folks applied for voluntary evacuation. Now, the evac--

>> John Tinker: What is that mean?

>> Alan Hirasuna: OK. The evacuation after Executive Order 9066, it was-- all-- anyone but more than 1/16 Japanese blood was required to be removed-- the coast of Washington, Oregon, California and parts of Arizona which meant mainly, you have to be on the other side of the Sierras in California. And so, ah-- and, and when this first started in order to make less of a load on the army and, and, and the expense to the government, they allowed people to voluntarily evacuate out of the so-called restricted zone. And-- And-- And, ah, few people did it because they didn't have a place to go. So, they stopped that program. It was not very successful. And so by this time, the program has stopped. My father applied with the army for us to voluntarily evacuate because they wanted us to be in a place where there were doctors should Stew need a doctor. So fortunately, my father had this, ah, job he could go to by moving the office of international chick sexing association to Mankato. And so, we, ah-- two days before we were about to be shipped off, we got permission to go to Minnesota and that was quite a stir. I mean, I got-- I still got the letter.

>> John Tinker: Can you imagine what that was must been like for your parents?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, awful.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Awful. And-- And-- And I-- I still got the letter where the army instructed us precisely the rot we have to take in. I have to be within the certain couple of days and we-- there were-- it was our family with three young kids, Stew being an infant, there was-- there was my mother's sister Mitch, my father's sister Mary, they were in their early 20's, and then my grandparents, my father's parents who are in their 60's.

>> John Tinker: What about your mother's parents?

>> Alan Hirasuna: They were dead. My mother's parents-- when my, my, my, my, my grandmother was going to go back to a reunion at Ochanomizu, they had gone down to LA to get some-- to the consulate office to get some paper work, they were coming back to Fresno and just as they were in Fresno, somebody T-boned them and they were killed that was 1940.

>> John Tinker: Oh.

>> Alan Hirasuna: So anyway, they were gone, and so, two cars, we were forced to drive over Tioga Pass in 1942, which is not much more in a cop trail at that time. And-- and Joanne remembers looking down the side, I mean, there was a big drop offs at the side of the road. You would be driving off the road if there's a car going-- coming the other way. The uphill car would have to back down and move aside for the downhill car--

>> John Tinker: I remember that.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- to get by. And so, at by-- my father had all the office equipment, the files, no way that that was going over Tioga Pass. So, ironically, you know, we, the Japanese had to go over Tioga Pass. We might sabotage Highway 99 and [inaudible], but our German friends drove the stuff over up 99 and over [inaudible].

>> John Tinker: These were [inaudible] Germans from Fresno?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, yeah. Then Vokes and in fact today, one of the descendant Vokes is a judge about Michael Voke [assumed spelling] and Henry Voke [assumed spelling], they were good friends of, of, of my dad's and-- and they

took the pickup with a trailer and drove over Madison-Reno. And Henry Voke and the parents I think took care of the hatchery, farm area during the war.

>> John Tinker: Oh, did they?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. And I mean, they were so good, I mean--

>> John Tinker: Well, that's a good start.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. They were so helpful. And a lot of it, I think the Germans were highly discriminated against during World War I and they remembered that and I think they were empathetic and-- and they, ah, ah, they were helpful and-- and, yeah. And so they-- and then my-- the story goes in Carson City. We try to get a hotel and my father would tell the stories and we decided we would go to, you know, in less than first class hotels because they were more likely to let us stay there, rejected by everyone. He said, finally, we went to a good place and they let us in. And then, they were going to help--

>> John Tinker: Also interested in [inaudible].

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. They went through Elko Nevada. We went through Elko Nevada. There were people throwing rocks at the car and chasing go back home and then, ah, we stayed at a hotel in Elko that was owned by some Japanese family and my father said-- and they had a bar and pool hole down below and we stayed and my father said he stayed up all night.

>> John Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: You know, worried about what was going to happen.

>> John Tinker: That must have been a harrowing trip.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. But then we ended up in Mankato. We lived on a-- on a house on the street like everybody, we're the only Japanese family in town. My uncle and his-- and my aunties Sue were at the Ben pay hotel. There was a Chinese family next to the Presbyterian Church but, you know that was-- My father--

>> John Tinker: Well you must do-- you must have started school in Mankato.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I was in kindergarten Aunty Mitch lived with us at that time. She put me in the wagon and took me to school. We got to school and I wouldn't go so she turned around and took me home. And then--

>> John Tinker: Is that a confession you never went to school?

>> Alan Hirasuna: And then in kindergarten, we would salute the flag and here was a little Japanese kid who was, you know, I was shy and whatever, I wouldn't salute the flag. But we, you know, there was-- there was-- there was on or two incidences that I remember and one goes by a kid that was from the wrong side of the river from some poor family, but other than that, you know, we-- we lived like everybody else. I mean, we were in and out of the neighbor's houses and, you know, we had-- we were friends with the neighbor kid. One other story that happened, ah, you know, you may not rem-- ah, well, you probably remember. During the war, there were block outs--

>> John Tinker: How old are you Alan?

>> Alan Hirasuna: That's right. And there were block outs and then you know at that time you cut both ends out of the can and took the leads in and squash them down to recycle them. But anyway, and in Minnesota, there was no-- there weren't going to be any air attacks in Minnesota, but there were black captains and when there were block outs, you pull the shades and make sure that, you know, the light wasn't shining up and, and, and the black captain, if anybody forgot to do it he'd come around and hey you got a-- it's a block out. But here we are, the only Japanese family in one block

out, we didn't pull the shed. And so-- and that, you know, and-- but there were-- there were twin girls, they were high school at that time. They were always over [inaudible] Aunty Mitch was friends with them and, and, and-- but there was-- really, we grew up with virtually no discrimination and-- and we lived a pretty normal life in Minnesota.

>> John Tinker: Do you have any memories in--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah.

>> John Tinker: -- worth well through for your family?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, for the kids, my mother hated it.

>> John Tinker: What about your grandparents?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Ah, that's another story. Ah, you know, here we are, and it's like, ah, ah, a lot of families do when there isn't a lot of money, but we're in this house that's probably 2000 square feet, a two-story house, three bedrooms, my two aunts, my grandparents and a family with three little kids.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And so, and--

>> John Tinker: That's a big family.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, all in this little house. It snowed in in the winter time, cooped up. And my grandparents have nobody to talk to, nobody their age to socialize with. My grandfather was going stir crazy.

>> John Tinker: That must have been really hard for them?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. And my grandfather's threatened to move and go to Denver or something. And so my father, ah, my father-- I don't know how it came about, but my father went to Chicago and talk to the WRA, War Relocation Authority.

>> John Tinker: They were the people who managed the relocation--

>> Alan Hirasuna: That's right. Ah, and the full relocation of Japanese. And my father went to talk to some official there and-- and gave him the situations, I would really like to get my parents into Roark, where my brother is.

>> John Tinker: That-- that means [inaudible] relocation--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. At Roark, Arkansas. And-- and the guy tells my father, what do you mean? People want to get out of there. They want to go into the camp.

>> John Tinker: That is a wonderful story.

>> Alan Hirasuna: They went in and my aunty Mary went with him to take care of him and so they spent the war in Roark.

>> John Tinker: What was their experience in camp like?

>> Alan Hirasuna: For older people, it was a cast-me-out. You know, after the early days when things were so bad, ah, and I live, I mean, you see pictures of toilets that are-- one toilet here, another toilet here, a string of toilets. No partitions and people, men, women, children, they would have to use these military type toilets. And-- and-- but after, you know, probably six months or a year, the people worked to make their places more livable. And so by the time my

grandparents got there, things were halfway home-- homelike. And my grandfather was a fisherman. He could go fishing every day. He built himself a Japanese bath. I think he worked in the shoe repair shop as a shoe repairman and he was always kind of handy. And-- And they loved it. And I think when-- when the war was over and the camp ended, they were sad and they have to go back to Fresno. I mean, my father built them a little-- a little tiny house on the lot that he had bought and-- and they-- you know, they came back to Fresno and things weren't that friendly in 1946, ah. You know, people didn't want us back in California.

>> John Tinker: That's-- That's an interesting story.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: So, why did your parents come back from Minnesota, I mean--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well--

>> John Tinker: You were having a good time, right?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. The kids-- it was fine for the kids, but I don't know what my father was not making a lot of money and my father was always ambitious. And my father told uncle Tai, you know, I can't raise my kids on what you pay me. And so, he resigned and my uncle understood and he resigned and-- and-- and he had some fillers out in the produce business in California and he was going to go work for a cooperative I think in Delano and he came back and, ah, kind of a-- ah, a relative Min Omara [assumed spelling] and he were talking and they were romancing each other about possibly going into some business--

>> John Tinker: You say he was a relative.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, [inaudible] Omara's wife was-- was Kay whose sister was Sue who was the wife of my uncle Tai.

>> John Tinker: I'm sorry I asked.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And they were in Minnesota-- Min was in farming in Minnesota in the Mankato area for awhile.

>> John Tinker: Oh, OK.

>> Alan Hirasuna: So they live in Mankato and my father and Min, ah, were pretty good, pretty close and so they had talked about, you know, opportunities that maybe starting something in Fresno. So we came back in 19-- I'll never forget it, my dad bought a--

>> John Tinker: That's right. You're old enough to have that memory?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, I remember Mankato, yeah, yeah. And my father bought this truck I think from union oil company a used truck and, and we had a car and they-- I meant the piano went in first and all the furniture and we had this open bobtail truck that he put a tarp over the top and, and, and there was no-- I don't think there was a heater in that truck. And so, he bought this army fur line pants and, you know, whoever drove the truck had to wear all this-- this cloth-- these clothes and I can remember we went the Southern route, you know, down across to Highway 66 and across and I can remember stopping, I think in New Mexico and we were trading drivers or something and so my uncle went to drive the truck.

>> John Tinker: Your uncle what with you?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Uncle Beck. Yeah. It's my Uncle Beck who was-- who married Inid, whose father was Tom Okawara. And so anyway, ah, ah, it was kind of snowy I can remember and-- and my uncle Beck took off from the truck and then unset the emergency break.

>> John Tinker: Oh, my.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And pretty soon we're following the truck and we see this fire.

>> John Tinker: Yeah. I was going to ask you when the smoke started.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And then it was flames. And I'm-- you know, I'm 7 years old at that time and I can remember being just-- I mean, I was screaming at my uncle and my father says, shut up. And he's trying to get my uncle's attention speed up and get my uncle's attention and pull over and all the family possessions are in the back of that truck. And so, my uncle finally pulled over and-- and they got slashed and they threw it on the fire and put out the fire but-- yeah. It was pretty harrowing and then we came back to Fresno and then the old Saiki house, the second one, you know, down from the hatchery, ah, there was an upstairs and then kind of a half floor down and a downstairs that they had add it on later.

>> John Tinker: It's really fortunate that-- and your parents didn't have to lose their property when--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah. Well actually that belonged to Beck at that time. So, when Tai bought the business from Hattori, Hattori owned I think, ah, from 9th Street to Cedar and then about 1, 2, 3, 4 lots, 4 acre lots, ah, away from the ditch. So he owned a lot of property. And so I think originally, my grandparents bought about 2 acres from mister Hattori and then when Tai bought the business, he bought all of that property. And then so-- so-- and Beck inherited the old Saiki residence that they lived on and grew up in. My father bought an acre behind on 11th Street from Tai. My-- The Nisho's, you know, my mother's youngest sister Mitch married to a Nisho, they bought an acre a lot away from us on 11th Street. And so, there was, you know, a lot-- we were all right in that's-- that's-- that scenario and I forgot why we-- I got--

>> John Tinker: Well, I was just saying that lots of folks, at relocations basically sold their property for--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, oh, yeah. And-- and the Vokes took care of all that property for us--

>> John Tinker: Yeah--

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- while we were gone.

>> John Tinker: That was--

>> Alan Hirasuna: And they took good care of--

>> John Tinker: That's a wonderful story.

>> Alan Hirasuna: They took good care of them. Yeah. And-- And you know when we came back, they moved out and we moved in and then when we came to-- when we came to Fresno, there was this whole upper part of it Saiki residence that wasn't being lived in because the Nishos-- Mitch-- my Aunt Mitch and Uncle George lived in the lower part because that was a later addition. It had a bathroom. The upper part before that was built, they had bath house in the back and then out house farther back and so it didn't have-- so my dad put an indoor plumbing and made it livable for us and I mean, it was far from fancy and we live in the upper part while Mitch and family lived in the lower part. And-- And-- And my parents came to Fresno with virtually not very much money at all.

>> John Tinker: Is that why your father gotten-- or started Sunnyside packing?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, he was trying to figure out what to do while we're-- while he's fixing up the house for us to live in. And-- and-- and finally he have then decided to start Sunnyside packing. And so in 1948, Min Omata, Morris Cocola, you see his name out on-- on [inaudible] and they're on that warehouse Gerry Cocola. His son I don't know if he still has it some kind of TV business with-- ah, Min Omata, Morris Cocola and my father started Sunnyside packing--

>> John Tinker: Now, I understand that Min Omata was-- was somehow was-- was a friend of your father's, how Morris Cocola get involved in this?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well--

>> John Tinker: He's a new name.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Ah, I really don't know but they probably just, they needed-- they've needed enough money to get the business going and they probably brought them in as-- [inaudible] my fam-- well, whatever savings my folks have, they probably invest it in Sunnyside and so, you know, nobody all this people that were evacuated, I mean, they came back and have to start life with virtually nothing. And so, Morris Cocola probably brought some money into the business and they struggle, I mean, they real-- well, first of all, the-- the-- the whole thing-- the whole concept to Sunnyside packing company was you have a lot of this Japanese growers who would pack their own produce and as individuals, they really, ah, didn't have a name and they would probably-- probably just sell their produce to the open, ah, produce market. So, their whole idea was to start a company that would establish a brand name and establish quality produ-- in a-- become known to quality produce and be kind of a place where this indi-- individual farmers could bring things and for a commission, ah, they would provide services to these farmers, they-- they would-- they would sell it. Min was a super sales. My dad always said, Min could sell an ice box to an Eskamo, and-- and he worked for Union Oil for years as salesman. Min was a super salesman.

>> John Tinker: Were the growers-- Were the growers all Japanese growers?

>> Alan Hirasuna: When they started, yeah. These are all people coming back trying to figure out how to make a living and, and a lot of them-- and, and I guess maybe a lot had family property, I don't know. And so, they became farmers and they would bring, ah, fruit and vegetables into Sunnyside. Ah, they would be cooled and sold and, and loaded onto trucks and, and shipped out, yeah.

>> John Tinker: What did-- Now, did your-- did Sunnyside pack everything? Do they pack tree fruits and--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Sunnyside Packing didn't pack except for some short period of time in the '50s.

>> John Tinker: So the growers packed?

>> Alan Hirasuna: The growers packed their own. They would bring packed produce to Sunnyside. Sunnyside would cool it, sell it, and ship it.

>> John Tinker: OK. But in all sorts of produce?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well--

>> John Tinker: Sunnyside was involved in strawberries a lot, wasn't it?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Well, the kind of produce-- to begin with, mostly tree fruit.

>> John Tinker: Mm-hmm.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Ah, mostly stone fruit. Ah, ah, some vegetables on the side and, and that was proba-- I would say at-- in the early days, probably vegetables were a third of the business and, and the fruit was probably two-thirds of the biz. And, and then, in those days, this was in the late '50s, mid '50s, there were three distinct strawberry seasons in California. It was Southern California, Central California, Northern California around Watsonville. And so, when one crop would tail off, the other would take-- one region to tail, and each region would take over. And so my father was instrumental in organizing a strawberry coop in Fresno, a cooperative of the strawberry farmers.

>> John Tinker: And these were Japanese strawberry farmers?

>> Alan Hirasuna: To begin with, yeah, I think all were. And, and strawberries were a, a labor-intensive crop. And so, a lot of pe-- a lot of farmers didn't get into it because there was the labor and stoop labor and, and the whole thing. It was a difficult crop to-- and perishable and difficult crop to grow. But, ah, under my father's support, Strawberry Exchange Cooperative was formed and, and their brand was Essex, and they became one with the largest, ah, ah-- you know, Sunnyside became one of, one of the largest shipper of strawberries in the country. And, and so, from Fresno, my father helped to organize this similar cooperative in Oxnard, and then in Watsonville. And so during the peak days--

>> John Tinker: Was he packing or not packing, the shipping goes--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, internationally. Internationally. And, and so, anyway, along with this, my father became a member of the California Strawberry Advisory Board, ah, a state advisory board. And they-- And I think it was most-- I'd remember, my father was always want to go to the books and learn new things and innovate. And so, ah, I think it was probably mostly under his influence, the Strawberry Calif-- the California Strawberry Advisory Board contracted UC Davis to do development of farming technology and new hybrids of strawberries. And so, ah, Calif-- ah, UC Davis had a field station at El Toro, and a man Victor Voth was a gifted, a gifted guy with strawberries, and a lot of innovation, you know, the summer planting, putting, ah, plastic down on the beds to strawberry, all that was done by Victor Voth and--

>> John Tinker: I have a bone to pick with him. The strawberries look better and taste worse.

>> Alan Hirasuna: That's exactly-- You know, that's exactly what happened, because the early strawberries tasted like candy, but they wouldn't ship. And so, the first thing they did was try to make a harder strawberry and along-- that the downside was they didn't-- they taste like cucumbers. And so-- But they've-- they progressed more and more to better tasting, but they're big, beautiful, and not as they taste better but you'd buy the old-- you go out to the stands and buy the old strawberries, you can't beat those.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: Sunnyside was involved or got your father involved to somehow in the UFW organizing, wasn't there something--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well--

>> John Tinker: -- because of, because of Sunnyside's involvement with the farmers?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Sunnyside, you know, always-- part of their role was to look out for and to support the farmers and help solve farming problems. At that time, my father was district governor of CCDC, Central California District Council. This is a, a, a, a council of several of the JCL chapters in the, in the Central Valley. And so he was governor of that. And as governor of the Central California District Council, and as Sunnyside, as Sunnyside Packing Company, and when the United Farm workers wanted to unionize the farm workers, my dad got involved.

>> John Tinker: And this was, you know, they're very famous, you know, Cesar Chavez.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: This was in '60s, wasn't it?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, I guess. You probably know better than I do. Yeah, but, but-- Yeah, and there were-- I think my father was instrumental in creating this Nisei Farmers League.

[Inaudible Remark]

Yeah. Which was their not room by Nisei, no. And, and, and, and, and their main role was, ah, to fight the unions. And my, my cousin Barbara, was working at Sunnyside at the time, and she said they just-- they set me off with some fear because my father would go out when they would have demonstrations and picket lines, and Cesar Chavez would be on the other side, and the farmers would be arm in arm, and, and, and, you know, and Anne Loftus is an author who came and interviewed my father about, about, ah, the farmer's side of the story of this UFW. And she did a-- you know, she probably spent a couple of days with my father and take had to take the interview, wrote up a section for a book that was being, ah, put to composites that were being put together. And I, I-- again, when I went through my father's record life, I saw this correspondence between, between him and, ah, Anne Loftus. And she-- after the book came out, she apologetically said that they used very little of what I wrote, and she said I donated the interview and I think probably what she wrote to the Bancroft Library at UC Berkley. And, you know, I-- I've not seen the book, but apparently it was a pro-UFW book, and so they weren't real interested in--

>> John Tinker: Those were emotional.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, in the farmer's side of the story. And, and my father would-- he told me about-- well, no, I read this in his notes, but there was a, a UFW office in Soma. Well, first of all, let me back off and give more of where the farmers are coming from. At that time, the farmers, you know, these, these migrant workers would come, and they would establish relationships with the farmers, and they became more like family. I mean, these guys did good work for the farmers and, and, and the farmers, you know, ah, took care of the workers, then provided them housing and, and they would do piece work. So, they would pick by the whatever, and they could make pretty good money. And it was good for the farmers because, you know, they got highly productive dependable workers. And, and, and the union came in. They wanted to put the people in the union hall. Piece work was a no-no and they want to do, you know, they wanted the farm workers, ah, hired by the hour. And, and, and, you know, the farmers with these established relationships, they had no choice, they had to get-- take whoever came from the union hall. And so, this farmer in Soma went into the union office, and my father had the name of the guy's name-- ah, of the union guy there-- and the farmers said, you're going to drive us broke. And, and so, this union guy told me, says, we don't care. Since, this is our land, we want our land back.

>> John Tinker: Lewis? Lewis, I remember this time--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

[Inaudible Remark]

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, yeah.

>> John Tinker: So, your father was, was in the midst of that?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. And, and Barbara. And then I guess that some demonstrations over guns and, and Barbara, they were, they were-- every time my dad went out, they were afraid he'd get hurt, yeah. And my father, you know, there's one thing about my father, there was never a doubt how he thought.

>> John Tinker: Well, that's a good thing. But you come back several times in the story to the JAACL by-- and that-- I mean, you talked about how that was begun by a handful of me saying, you know, way back in, in the 1920s and 1930s. And your mother and father involved in that from the very beginning.

>> Alan Hirasuna: No. From 1929.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: In the 1920s, there were a group of these professionals that would meet and discuss the problems with, the discriminatory things that we're going on. And, and it was informal and then they would meet at the YMCA in San Francisco and then that, I guess, since I got busier supporting families and these-- these Nisei were probably my

father was old for a Nisei. These people were probably 5 to 10 years older than him, but they were, you know, well-educated, well-spoken Nisei, and, and they would meet in San Francisco and then-- and they named it American Loyalty League what they were doing. And then, Dr. Yotabe and Tom Okowara, they, they came to Fresno and Dr. Yotabe mainly. My father spoke so, so respectfully of Dr. Yotabe. And, and, and I, I met him when we were back in Mankato. And, and anyway, ah, Dr. Yotabe was a spark plug. You know, he was-- he can-- he spoke publicly well. I mean, in those days, a lot of Japanese had a, had a, ah, ah, [inaudible] accent to their-- their English wasn't, ah, good commercial English, but Dr. Yotabe wasn't-- my father was. And so, that's why my father was always out in front in these things and Dr. Yotabe would go out to the community and, and try to, you know, establish relationships with a, with a larger community and, and--

>> John Tinker: What about the JACL's place within the Japanese community? Because, one, one thing that interest me is the Japanese community or Japanese society in general has, has honored the elders and the elders in this case were the Issei.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Right.

>> John Tinker: So, was there any-- where did JACL fit into that because--

>> Alan Hirasuna: You know, it's interesting because-- and a lot of this I, I realized after reading all these different things, there were Issei that were-- there were some that were very strong people that had significant businesses that were wealthy and, and then all of a sudden, these Nisei start taking over. And one of the things about citizens league--

>> John Tinker: Mm-hmm.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- you have to be an American citizen that belong to the JACL.

>> John Tinker: Which means that you have to be Nisei?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah. Well, there are some Issei that were-- I guess, no Issei were citizens. They couldn't become citizens. So yeah, they have to be Nisei. And so, these old-- older stronger Issei, probably there was some resentment there. But at the same time, I res-- I think they respected what these people were doing to try to ah, ah, go out into the community and to try to assimilate. So, I think, though, there may have been some resentment, I think there was also respect both ways. And, and, and I think that prevailed but, you know, talk about JACL and during the warriors, ah, during-- before Pearl Harbor-- I mean, 1930, the national organization was established. So, 1941, they had a headquarters in San Francisco, the president was Saburo Kido who my father also spoke of with great respect, who was Hawaiian and a lawyer and he was the president and he served for a no compensation. And then, the first paid, uh, uh, employee of JACL was Mike Masaoka. Mike Masaoka grew up in Utah. Mike Masaoka comfortably, ah, ah, ah, fit in with the, with the, with the general population in, in, ah, ah, ah, the Salt Lake City area. And, and he was, ah, tremendous narrator. Mike Masaoka would give long speeches without a note and he was on a debate team with University of Utah, his debate partner-- I, I forgotten the family name-- was the son of I-- ah, Utah senator. And another Utah senator kind of took Mike under his, his wing because he saw the potential in Mike. So, Mike really didn't understand discrimination because, he really wasn't suffering that. It-- I think he really didn't understand a lot of the, the Japanese thinking of the Japanese culture of being ravisant and being quiet and being-- he was, you know, he was fully integrated. And, and he came to the JACL meetings and he was a narrator. And I think he was resented by a lot of the Japanese being kind of brush and kind of-- ah, just not typical Japanese. But, ah, I think Saburo Kido saw, ah, the need for somebody like that. And so, he was hired as the first employee of the JACL.

>> John Tinker: How did JACL respond to, to relocation?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Ah, in 1941, August, Pearl Harbor was December, in August, ah, Saburo Kido and Mike Masaoka in this little office in San Francisco were visited by a na-- a man named Curtis Munson [assumed spelling]. This Curtis Munson said he was from the state department. Curtis Munson's spent three days with them. And this is in August. And he's, and he's asked-- and I think they had already vetted out JACL mainly Mike Masaoka by that time already had a reputation. He knew these senators. And so, they knew that these were loyal Americans. And so, Munson asked them,

you know, should Japan go to-- should America go to war with Japan, what, ah, what does America need to do to protect the Japanese citizens and what does-- or Japanese population and what does American to-- need to do to protect the Japanese businesses? And he told them and said you cannot take a no, you cannot tell anybody we met and, and you know, it was a completely secret meeting and, and, ah, ah this was kind of the background before Pearl Harbor. And Pearl Harbor happened. And then, you know, the JACL-- and, and the-- the JACL was reluctant. They said we only can represent our membership. We can't represent the full Japanese population, but they became that. And, and, and, and so, they started-- they had conversations with people in Washington and officials kept reassuring them, you know, and then in all these, the media, there was this constant beat about get those guys out of California and also west coast and, and, you know, Walter Bateman [assumed spelling], Warren-- Earl Warren, many powerful people wanted to get-- get us out, out of the west coast.

>> John Tinker: How did the JACL respond when the relocation order came?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well--

>> John Tinker: And was your father involved in that? Where your parent-- I know they were involved in the JACL, where they involved in this response?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

>> John Tinker: Can-- What do you remember about or what can you tell about it?

>> Alan Hirasuna: You know, leading up to 9066, so, I think that's kind of where we left there--

>> John Tinker: And 9066 is the number of the executive order that, that the federal government promulgated to require relocation?

>> Alan Hirasuna: And, and anyway, ah, ah, Kido and Masaoka had been visited by this--

>> John Tinker: Mm-hmm.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- Curtis Munson. And, and then once Pearl Harbor, ah, occurred, then, you know, all hell broke loose but they were being reassured by high officials in the government that, you know, even though there was all this clamor about get him out of the west coast that evacu-- evacuation would not occur. And so, JACL kept pushing, you know, trying to, ah, fight the boss and then the people that want to do evacuate the Japanese, and thinking that, you know, evacuation would not occur. And then all of a sudden, ah, ah, there-- it became real. At first, General DeWitt says, he wanted to evacuate all alien nationals.

>> John Tinker: And General DeWitt was the military commander in the west coast?

>> Alan Hirasuna: That's correct. And that meant Japanese aliens, German aliens, Italian aliens. And that was the first, first proposal. And then there were discussions in Congress and-- and this is all in the-- in the book, I mean, there's all in the-- you can read about it in the history books. But the congressman started discu-- what do you mean? We're going to evacuate Joe DiMaggio's parents? And, you know, this kind of discussion went on and then pretty soon it wasn't, you know, the, the Italian aliens and the German aliens dropped off, the Japanese, you know, we can't, we can't tell how they think, you know, we can't, we can't trust our judgment on how they think. And then not only did it reduced down the Japanese but then they added citizen, American citizens with Japanese-- with as little as 1/16 Japanese blood. And so then, ah, they-- there was an announcement that there would be these hearings. A repre-- Congressman Tolan, T-O-L-A-N, held hearings, and there are going to be throughout the west coast and the-- they advertise reasons for the hearings was that both sides of the story could be told and then a decision would be made whether it was right to evacuate or not to evacuate the Japanese. And so, Mike Masaoka, tremendous [inaudible], he prepared speech of his life to give at the first hearing Tolan committee hearing in San Francisco and he was the first to speak. It turns out that executive order 9066 was signed before that first hearing. So, it was a foregone conclusion and it was-- and these hearings are window dressing and they turned out be mainly a platform for the pro-evacuation people. And so, when, you know, the-- um,

Kido and Maso, they were, you know, they were devastated by all of this.

>> John Tinker: Did your parents talk about what was going on in Fresno at that time?

>> Alan Hirasuna: They did. They did. But first, I want to tell you about-- continue a little bit about Masaoka and Kido. I mean, these guys, here they are, they got egg on their face. They had been-- I think they probably alluded and, you know, evacuation probably won't happen, but General DeWitt called them to the Presidio and they came-- those two came-- went to the Presidio, they were put in a room to, DeWitt said, you're here to hear what we have to say. There are not to be any questions or, or, or discussions. And so then DeWitt left. And then there's this Karl Bendetsen. And I've talked to people who know a lot about the interment history. Some think that Bendetsen was kind of psycho, but he was [inaudible] to get the Japanese out of the west coast. And he was a Stanford law graduate and he was-- his title was historian, but he was clearly in, in charge of planning and, and, and carrying out the evacuation. And I think he prob-- this is my personal opinion that I think he probably had-- he was very influential with DeWitt and probably, you know, a lot of people think that DeWitt was-- and I'm sure he was, but, but-- that he was the one that was the spark plug behind all that, but I really think it was Bendetson. And who am I to say, though. But anyway, that's just a personal opinion. And, and so anyway, ah, ah, Bendetsen proceeded to tell these two people. He said, we have two plans, one plan is if, if, if it all goes on peacefully, we will be as humane as possible. If not, we have a second plan. We'll bring in the army with riffles and bayonets. And, and we have-- people will be moved out either in 24 hours, 48 hours, or I don't know, longer I guess if they had businesses and that kind of thing. And I mean, he had this planned out to [inaudible] and Kido and Masaoka are walking away from this meeting, and the way that they tell it, they were just silent when they left. They were astounded. And, and, and, and, and they knew that, you know, the blood of women and children and the whole population was potentially on their hands. And so, they sought the advice of many different people in the Japanese community and outside of the Japanese community. And, and they knew that-- you know, what was going on in Washington and there was no way that evacuation was it-- Well, first of all, 9066, you read that, and that could have been interpreted in many different ways, but the way it was interpreted, I think, by Bendetson, was get the Japanese out. And, and I think it could have been interpreted in, in, in less drastic ways because by that time, ah, I don't know what it is, FBI or naval intelligence had determined there was no threat on the west coast of, of, of attack and, and no reason to evacuate Japanese. And that came out-- I'm trying to remember. I think like two days before 9066 was, was signed and, and, and-- but that, that report never got to Roosevelt. So anyway, where was I? So then-- you know, they-- after consulting with all these people, they decided, you know, we've got to recommend cooperation and we got to demonstrate loyalty to America, and that will be the best for the community and then especially for the later generations of kids. At the same time, you got these people that are hearing the JACL and saying nothing but bad coming out of it and beginning to wonder about, you know, who are these guys. They're, they're completely non-effective and here we are, our, our civil rights are being violated and we're being sent off to these camps and, ah, ah, anti-JACL resentment began.

>> John Tinker: This was within the Japanese--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: -- community?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Begun to build. And, and--

>> John Tinker: Did your father feel like very strongly because your family was in Minnesota.

>> Alan Hirasuna: No, no. We're so--

>> John Tinker: You're still in Fresno?

>> Alan Hirasuna: We are in Fresno until July.

>> John Tinker: OK.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And, and so my father, ah, we-- there were, there are two areas of evacuation. Area 1 was Fresno city, on 9th street, we're in the county, and so we're in Area 2. So all these people went to camp.

>> John Tinker: And, and Area 1 had to go to the assem-- people in Area 1 had to go to the assembly center before people in Area 2?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah.

>> John Tinker: OK.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. And, and there were-- there was some kind of, of, of speculation that Area 2 might not be evacuated. But anyway, if you would like, I've got a letter that Masako Inada [assumed spelling] wrote to my parents from the, from the Fresno assembly Center and kind of, ah, of describing firsthand what was going there. And if we got time, I'd like to read a couple of ex, excerpts from that letter and--

>> John Tinker: Go ahead because this was something your father got it at that time?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. My father and what went to, what went to Fresno state special collections, my-- we were on the outside and it turned out we were on the outside during the entire war and my father was an official representative of the JACL. So, there was communication between him and many people and he offered advice and help and bought things for them that they couldn't-- yeah, but mostly early on because after-- after it, it wasn't long before they figured it out that the Japanese were not a threat. And so-- then they freely began to be able to go into town and buy things and whatever, but--

>> Before I do that, I need to make my [inaudible].

>> John Tinker: Oh, class, class, class, class.

>> Yeah, I have a [inaudible] students.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Alan Hirasuna: So anyway, this is-- this is from inside the assembly center. Do I have the date? I don't know. But this must-- I think this is around June of 1942.

>> John Tinker: And the assembly centers were set up before the camps were built?

>> Alan Hirasuna: That they-- their purpose was to bring people together in one place so that they could wait there while the camps are being built.

>> John Tinker: The assembly centers were usually [inaudible] places like fairgrounds and such like--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Race tracks.

>> John Tinker: Yes.

>> Alan Hirasuna: My, my, my father's, in fact, one of the letters my father wrote-- I mean, my uncle George wrote my father-- his brother wrote my father. They went into Santa Anita and he talks about how-- there were two kids, so a family of four. Ah, there are family of four and two guys were housed in a horse stable in Santa Anita. Then that happened at [inaudible] Fresno in the assembly center, I don't know if they stayed in the, in the horse stalls or not. They built tarpaper barracks there, a black tar-- tarpaper in June in Fresno and it was awful. I mean, so hot and awful. And then let me read this. Let me read some excerpts. And this is from Masako Inada who was married to Fuzzy [assumed

spelling] Inada who is a Fresno and their son is Luzami [assumed spelling] Inada who is--

>> John Tinker: Poet.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- poet, and, and from Oregon. It says, "Life here isn't a bowl of cherries. Stay out as long as you can. There's no place like home when you can do as you please. Eat whatever you want and have all the comforts even though your own home is just a dump to others. Your baby is too small to come in here. It is so dusty and, and hot, although, we're--" Let me sit up. "Although we had rain several days ago, that certainly helps settle the dirty dust for a while. My sister in law--" dah, dah, dah, dah "-- is having an awful time sterilizing her bottles. Since there's no water faucets in or near the barracks, we have to get the hot water from the shower house." And then she says, ah, there was, ah, one of the mess halls, there were food poisoning. That's a terrible time there. But I mean-- And then it says, ah, ah, "Mr. Polack [assumed spelling], assistant manager will not allow newspaper publishers in here-- newspaper public-- ah, in here to use the word camp." So he disallowed them to use the word camp. It has to be is called a center. But the truth is it's really a concentration camp. And she also says, "I get the biggest--" ah, "I get the biggest kick out of teasing Mary. I told her the only ready to wear thing that's available at the commissary-- commissary is Cotex. And she laughed, but that's the fact." Ah, "We can't get everything through the gate." Ah, they wouldn't, they wouldn't allow them to bring things through the gate because they're afraid of mowing and things. I won a 5-pound bag of Craft and Swiss-- or Swift cheese-- or Swiss or American that comes in a wooden box. So, just little thing, they, they-- the comforts of life were just not there. I mean, it was-- And this was at the assembly center and at the fairgrounds. And, and, I, I think that was probably typical of all the assemblies. And at that time, in, in the early part of the evacuation, um, Japanese were, were under severe suspicion. And so, I mean the rifles are pointed inward at them and, and, and they were not trusted and-- but at the same time, you know, I-- there were some people that began to know the Japanese--

>> John Tinker: I was going to ask you--

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- and trust-- but--

>> John Tinker: Were there a non-Japanese who, who, who resisted the idea of relocation?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, there are a lot of friends and supporters, but one thing about the Fresno Assembly Center, I've got a good friend I've known since the fifth grade, Sam Nansky [assumed spelling]. His father and mother, were immigrant, ah, Russian Germans from the Volga River Valley and Sam's father somehow was connected with farming or produce. Every day, he would bring leftover [inaudible] or something fresh produce and put them over the fence to the-- at the assembly center, but then there were-- you know, you mentioned organizations. Ah, there were few that spoke out, most people, ah, there're stories my father told about in Soma how, how, how George Abe who is a businessman and well-known-- he was mayor of Soma, I think before the war. And, and how his good white friends all of a sudden avoided him. And most people avoided the Japanese at that time, but there were a few people and my father always, always talked about, ah, Mary Baker who is women's councilor at Fresno State.

>> John Tinker: And she was dean of women I think in--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Dean of, dean of women. And Hubert Philips who is a professor. I mean, those people, I mean, they would give speeches, I mean, they risk their lives and their well-being by speaking out against evacuation, but those people did. And there was an organization that they were a part of. It was a Methodist minister who chaired this committee and, and they openly express their, their sympathy through the Japanese and, and their sentiments against the evacuation. The secretary to this-- I don't remember his name-- this press-- ah, this Methodist minister was Margaret Zohart [assumed spelling] who is a neighbor of ours. And in Minnesota, I can remember, she would send this official looking Christmas cards with their daughter and where height dah, dah, dah, dah weight-- you know, look like, ah, some-- And I always wondered, who is that? And then I read my father's notes and then understood. And Margaret Zohart took-- when out of her way to send my parents some kind of a letter from the Fresno State Alumni Association or some, something in Fresno state, ah, to them while we were in Minnesota. There were some people that-- And the Quakers, that was another organization. The Quakers were very, ah, ah, vocal about-- against the, the evacuation. The Quakers-- ah, you've heard of Gordon Hirabayashi.

>> John Tinker: Mm-hmm.

>> Alan Hirasuna: He was a professor, I think, in Canada.

>> John Tinker: I knew Gordon Hirabayashi.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, you do? But he was a Quaker and he had many very close Quaker acquaintances. And when he got put in jail, all these white Quakers had come visit him and they would wonder, "Who is this guy?" you know? But, you know, speaking of those people that, that, that demonstrated against the evacuation, my father most always mostly revered Min Yasui and then Gordon Hirabayashi, and he would not speak good words about, about, ah, what's his name? Starting with a K? Ah--

>> John Tinker: Oh, I know the--

>> Alan Hirasuna: The one that, the one that--

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: -- got all the publicity.

>> John Tinker: Yes.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And, you know, his reasons for protesting were not good reasons.

>> John Tinker: Yeah. Well, there was an issue, the camps, of course, that's a, that's a terrible interlude. Ah, there was an issue about drafting people out of the camps--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah.

>> John Tinker: Strange irony.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah.

>> John Tinker: That there were, you know, Japanese [inaudible] who fought in World War II.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah.

>> John Tinker: Not only the 442nd but there were, there were others-- what, what's-- where did your parents fit into this draft controversy? What, what was that?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, my parents didn't directly fit in. My, my father did volunteer three kids and 35 years old and, and they found him 4-F because of flat feet but-- and, and I don't think they wanted to take, ah, you know, a family man in. But everybody felt compelled to volunteer but, ah, you know, when in the early part of the internment, Masaoka, Masaoka specially fought for equal rights. You know, Japanese citizenship-- citizens need to be treated, ah, like in the other citizen and have those same rights. And he said, you know, there are good rights and there are not so good rights. And one of the not so good rights is being drafted into the mi, military and risking your life and whatever, and, and, and he said, we need to take the good along with the bad. And so, at this-- since Pearl Harbor hit, the draft-- the door slammed on, on any new enlistees of Japanese blood into the army. And so, Masaoka fought for the reinstatement of, of enlistment. You know, he says, that-- that's as much of a right and as much of a duty for us as American citizens as all these other benefits. And so he fought for re, reinstatement of enlistment of, ah, enlistment into the army, and he also fought for a special Japanese, ah, combat organization who would be able to demonstrate Japanese loyalty to America. And so, this went on, I think, over a several-month period. And at the same time, you've got this anti-Japanese faction that are wondering about JACL. Here we are, we're [inaudible], were being sent to camps, what, what's the JACL done for us? Nothing. I mean, seemingly so, the results were nothing. Ah, only the worse was happening. And so, then-- I

think this is in '43, is that right? I think '43. Ah, their dra-- enlistment was-- Japanese were reinstated via eligible for the draft and enlistment and also, ah, ah, one of the Department of Defense officials at that time was Department of War. When the Department of War officials spoke to Maso and said, you know, at first he was told that we can't have a Japanese combat group. Well, they do that for the-- at that time they call them Negros. We only do that for the Negros. And, and he said-- And so, you know, we can't do that. And then after these negotiations went on for several months, they said, we've agreed to ha-- to form a Japanese combat group. He says [inaudible] is to have a Japanese combat group but all the offices are white [inaudible]. And so, they-- Masaoka's, you know, they're looking for equal rights. And so they, they pushed back on that family. They got it so that, you know, there could be Japanese officers as well as white officers that were in charge of this 44-- and the 442 was formed. Now, ah, the hundredths, this was a reserved unit from Hawaii that was formed before Pearl Harbor. They were joined with-- And they were at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin and, and currently performing very well in the training camps. And so, they were, ah, they-- the 442 was joined with them. And, and so, it was announced that, that people in the camps, ah, or anywhere in America, could volunteer for the army. And so, these people that are feeling wrong by the United-- and rightfully so, wronged by the United States, are saying, "What? After you do that to us, then you want us to come, fight for the country?" And, and they have a legitimate argument. And, and, and so, what the army did-- what the-- yeah, what the army did, they wanted to make sure that anybody that was going to enlist in the army was a loyal American. So they made up this questionnaire. And somebody in the WRA got a hold of that questionnaire, they re-titled it something like, ah, application to leave the camp or something. And, and, and they-- you know, it was intended for draft age mails, they distributed to everybody over the age of 17 whether they were citizen, non-citizen, female, 70 years old, or what, they all got it. And so they get this loyalty questionnaire and this is this famous questionnaire with 27-- 27 and question 28 asking, you know, asking whether they were loyal to the United States. And these guys that are feeling burned already, see that, they don't understand-- I mean, it was then unclear what the purpose of that application was. It was like for anybody, if you wanted to--

>> John Tinker: If you want terrible questions, ask the Issei?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And, and after what have been done with, with American citizens along with the Issei. And so anyway, this is where everything exploded. And I've got another couple of letters if I have the time, I'd like to read excerpts from it regarding that. But anyway, this whole situation exploded over that, 27 and 28 que-- you know, these people that were-- they become stronger anti-JACL, stronger anti-American and, and they answered 27 and 28 [inaudible].

>> John Tinker: Those are the two questions they asked about loyalty to the United States, as I remember, the other one for swearing any allegiance to any other country. The hard question is somebody who's only got Japanese citizenship and those be the--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, and not allowed to have American citizenship.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, yeah. And, and then being treated by American as they were. And so, a lot of these people ask for repatriation. A lot of, a lot of Nisei asked for patriation. And so, they, they were so ticked off in America that they wanted to go to Japan. But anyway-- ah, and that caused a lot of ani-- animosity. I mean, there was, there was violence and people were beat up, people were, you know, threatened.

>> John Tinker: Yeah. Your parents, ah, must have avoided some of that because they weren't in the camps.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, we avoided all of that.

>> John Tinker: Yeah. Did your father get involved in this controversy later? Because I know the controversy continued.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, my father is on the outside. He's getting letters from people on the inside describing what's going on. And, and-- So he-- these letters that I have are, are firsthand descriptions of what's going on with these-- these

are all from Jerome.

>> John Tinker: And these are written to your father?

>> Alan Hirasuna: To my father.

>> John Tinker: Mm-hmm.

>> Alan Hirasuna: These are all from Jerome, the letters that I have.

>> John Tinker: Jerome was one of the camps. It was in Arkansas--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Arkansas.

>> John Tinker: -- wasn't it?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Right. It was in Arkansas. And I think another, ah, another hotbed was, ah, in, in Wyoming, ah, ah--

>> John Tinker: It's going to be Heart Mountain.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Heart Mountain, that was another hotbed for this. And, you know, this people rightfully saw, ah, ah, resented what was going on and they blamed the JACL, you know, you guys saw this down the river. And, and so, a lot of JACL officials were-- I mean, there was physical violence. And, and to me, that, that scenario that was I think everybody can agree, was very wrong. And also, you know, the JACL guys had a secret information, the meeting with Munson before the war, the meeting at the Presidio after a 9066, the JACL guys knew, ah, what was going on and knew that if, if there was demonstration against the evacuation, there would be blood on their hands. And so, therefore, they recommend, you know, that we cooperate, we show-- then we will show loyalty to America. And when-- the war time, I heard my father said this so many times. And he said that in an interview when he was questioned about this, ah, ah, draft resistor controversy. And, and, and he said, war time is not the time to protest. You know, there were things going on, there was hysteria and passion. That was not the time to protest. And so the JACL took the position, now is the time to cooperate and, and show our loyalty to America, and these people that were felt burden. I think, you know, that's BS, you know? And so, they became anti-- and here's, here's some excerpts and some letter. This is a letter from Bob Itinaga [assumed spelling] at Jerome and it's-- I don't, I don't have a date on this. Ah, it says Fred, ah, from indications it seems as if nobody is going to leave the relocation center unless they have answered the question on loyalty in the affirmative. As I presume, it must be a test of loyalty, although, I think it's a poor one. Things have been happening since the registration begun. It was quite a bit a feeling against registering, the fault I believe, is due to the fact that the whole thing was not carefully explained. So this is somebody who wasn't in on, on the background so much as Masaoka was. And they're saying it from, ah, ah, more-- less informed point of view, and this is what he's concluding. Being a big thing and the people not grasping the idea of registration, the real purpose was pretty much distorted. The reaction was a poor response. The registration was continued until the end of the month resulting in about 80% registration. Taylor sent personal letters and he must have been the head of the camp, I guess. Personal letters is also had not signed with a proviso that since the registration was compulsory, those who did not sign was subject to arrest in 90 days sentence in jail. Today was the last day, and I understand that most of them sign but the actual results will be, will be known well, in a day or so. Those who withheld from registering turned out to be mostly kibbehs if you radical Niseis and the strong pro-alien. Now, what I gather from reading these things, there were kibbehs in Hawaii and as you know, Hawaiians were not put into, ah, internment camps because it was such a large population of Japanese in Hawaii, the whole economy would collapse if they incarcerated them. But those suspicious-- or not suspicious, the ones who might have connection with Japan and mainly this-- a kibbeh is a person, I think I explained earlier that was born in America, American citizen but educated in Japan. So, these kibbeh in Hawaii, ah, had con-- you know, connections with Japan. So apparently, they were sent to these stateside internment camps. And so these people, rightfully so, I mean they see their friends and relatives free in Hawaii and here they are in prison. And so, they were especially resentful, I think. And they were, they were-- they caused a-- they were-- a lot of the people stirring up the anger in the people. This thing is really boils into something, undoubtedly, you already heard about this. Last Saturday morning, Reverent Yamasaki, a Santa Anita minister was interpret-- who interpret the registration form into Japanese was beaten up in his own block.

And a little before beating, Dr. Yotabe-- and Dr. Yotabe was the one from Fresno that started the ALL. Dr. Yotabe was beaten up, went at the hospital, both in broad daylight. Fortunately, neither were hurt very badly, just bruised and scratched, this is from somebody who didn't get beaten. Ah, they and their families are confi-- and I'm sure, they wanted to minimize what happen. I mean, that was the advertised story. They and their family are confined in the hospital under guard. You need a permit to go to see them. At present, their administration doesn't-- made no arrest or conviction, only making statements that the guilty will be punished. We have been trying to hasten the investigation and bring the guilty party to the right. No-- We can't figure out why we should have attack the rev-- why they should attack the reverent who was an old man other than he cooperated in the registration only by translating the forms into Japanese. As for doc's case, it seems like [inaudible], he can-- ah, ah, his active participation of JACL. Poor doc, trying everything he can for the people and being beat up for. Sometimes, I think it's useless to try to do anything for these Japanese. I'm getting, I'm getting to lose faith-- faith in them. The kibbehs on this camp are getting to be considered a bad faction here. They have been holding several meetings lately. Their meetings have been held under guard-- under guard recently. I've heard that they go to the extent of singing, ah "Kimigayo", I don't know if that's a Japanese national anthem or what, and occasionally raising [inaudible]. Last two meetings held yesterday, is reported to have had as much as 800 in attendance. It looks bad, but it wouldn't-- I wouldn't be surprised if the leaders were nabbed very soon. Reports have been flooding all over the camp that there are about 20 more persons on the list to be taken care of. Jonson Kibo [assumed spelling], he's from Fresno. Bill Ishida [assumed spelling], I think these are Fresno people. Sam Nakano [assumed spelling], Dr. Yota-- Dr. Tyra [assumed spelling] and myself, were on the list. So it looks like we're getting-- we're sitting on a keg of dynamite. That's your-- When coring around this afternoon, I don't think anything will come out of this. Nevertheless, the first good job that comes along, I'm taking it. Tomorrow, I'm going to find out just where we stand. Frank Ishi and James Yoshinobo, two of the delegs who went to Salt Lake City with doc are leaving tonight for Chicago. Tom Shim-- Shimasake, sure don't look too calm, but he's, he's still here. Bill Ishida is ready to fly to [inaudible] Ohio. Personally, I think they are jumping to conclusions. I may be wrong but I don't know. Ah, this is a letter to my mom and dad from Chiko Tyra, Dr. Tyra's wife, and they were at Jerome as well. As you have probably already heard-- and this is-- she gives a kind of an overview of what was going on. Ah, as you probably have already heard, the campus is in a state of turmoil, the climax of the, of the [inaudible] feelings, the people so carefully guarded until none is-- until now has gradually but definitely beginning to come to ahead. And as a proof, it was-- was the attack of both Dr. Yotabe and Reverent Yamasaki of LA. So unreasonable and unexplainable. The demonstrations of the pro-Japan group are very bold, and the leader of the group are becoming conspicuously. The obvious leaders are Reverent Kai and other Hawaiian Reverends. The followers mostly kibbehs but also main-- men-- many Nisei. There are rumors now that there are eight more JACL leaders that will be victims of the attack soon. That's-- ah, the names-- those names is-- well, I think that's probably good for that. It goes to much of the same. Ah, but anyway, that's from Dr. Chikotaro, Dr. Yotabe-- I mean and Dr. Tyra's wife. And this letter is a letter from Dr. Yotabe to my father wanting to assure my father that he's OK. And he says-- Oh, I wrote it up. I typed it up. Saturday, I was called a lot of the clinic by a person unknown to me telling me there was someone waiting to see me. I stepped out in the corner. Just at the turn, this fellow shoved me into a waiting gang who are kneeling down to keep out of sight. Not a word was said and they began mowing me. Had my glasses on, so I tried to protect myself, but before I knew it, they had me on the floor beating and kicking me. My face is battered up, cut and bleeding. I tried my [inaudible] as a slug but was overpowered. My head and body felt like a caterpillar drove over me for a few days. However, there was no internal injuries and placed-- was placed in the hospital with military guards. At present, have been moved to the doctor's qua-- quarter's with military guard day-- day and night, my family is with me for you never know what a bunch of rest like that would do. Along with me and at the same time, an Episcopal minister was also beat though not as bad as myself. All this came with a registration in voluntary enlistment. The Isseis were opposing their registration and demanded repatriation while the Nisei cusp the voluntary enlistment and draft and up and down, and also the JACL and-- demanded expatriation. It was a big surprise to me to see some of these Niseis act as they did. No doubt in majority then were influenced by their parents to force swear allegiance to this country. With Hawaiian kibbeh, evacuees, evacuees behind this current agitation, they found up, ah, the center to historical pitch. Reverent Kai of Fresno was one of the leaders, even to the extent of having kibbeh guards. It's really disgusting. I'm disgusted with the people and truly am ashamed. This Nisei haven't an ounce of guts and I can't even look ahead to the future. Well, I'm stranded now. I've got to get out of the center but for what, I don't know. It's not too healthy for me here. Sooner or later, segregation in the center will take place and I'm afraid some more trouble will arise. Furthermore, I think of [inaudible], his, his child son, I've made up my mind to leave this hell hole." Do you need a janitor there? Well, Fred, keep up your good work. Hope your family is OK. He-- I think shortly after that moved to Chicago and opened a practice in Chicago.

>> John Tinker: When your parents came back to Fresno, was there any leftover resentment in the community--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well--

>> John Tinker: -- feeling by that time?

>> Alan Hirasuna: No, we came back in '47. So the early people came back, what, in '45, '46. I mean, there were people demonstrating against the--

>> John Tinker: I'm not talking about, ah, people here resenting the Japanese in general, but about this, ah, conflict-- this resentment against the JACL by, by--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh.

>> John Tinker: -- by the Japanese.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, you know, that under current listed A.

>> John Tinker: Does it?

>> Alan Hirasuna: And under-- I mean, there's a-- there's a fellow in Dana Point. I was out at 9066 thing. He and I were spe-- on the panel there. He-- I mean, he carries Mitchy Weiglein's [assumed spelling] book.

>> John Tinker: Oh.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And he-- I mean, he-- And he's younger than I am so he probably wasn't even born at the time in the war. And, and he-- I mean, he speaks so-- he leads groups that-- kids to the, to the Japanese national museum in LA and shows them how terrible things were. And, and, and-- But anyway, yeah, there is. And in 19-- around 1989-- Ah, no, 1999, the late '90s and 2000, there was movement within the JACL. The younger people that, ah, really have no personal experiences with the war, and were sent-- they were hearing stories from these no, no voice, from these draft resistor people. And, and, you know, they, they have a legitimate story. And, and they sympathize with them and, you know, these establishment JACL people, ah, treating these, these, these people badly during the war. And so, there was a lot of emotion involved. My father was interviewed by Frank Abe and Frank Shin-- Chin who I have little respect for. Ah, and they were in this room. And, and, I mean, Frank Chin was hollering at my father. It was terrible and my father, you know, they-- Frank Abe was granted, I don't know, \$100, 000 or something to document this draft resistor issue. Ah, his charter was to gather facts on both sides and, and in an unbiased manner present, present the story. My father accused him of being anti-JACL. And Frank Chin came up, and so and so came up to our side. They were far from unbiased. And, and, and, and anyway, so this was a hot topic over years and my father by that time he was 90 years old. And he-- And my father was always very vocal. He always wrote a lot to the Pacific Citizen and to editor. The Pacific Citizen is the JACL newspaper. And so, anyway, and to other Japanese papers. And, and he was well-known for the-- well, these, these people were saying that the JACL needs to make an official apology to the draft resisters. And so, there were the older JACL people who had experience the war time who said, we don't, we don't owe an apology. And these younger people that had, ah, sympathized with the draft resisters that were insisting on it. And so, this went back and forth and back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. And, you know, I understand where the draft resisters are coming from. I, I would have-- ah, well, had I been an adult at that time, I probably would had some of the same feelings. But at the same time, my father's contention was, at the time of war is not the time to protest. And for the childrens and the future generation said, it was important to-- to, ah, ah, ah, show our loyalty to America. And my father, you know, 442, did so much for the-- well, 100 442 and the MIS did so much for, ah, ah, the attitude of the Japanese of the parent-- the parent-- the population's attitudes towards the Japanese. And there was a lady, I was working in Uncle Beck's boysenberry filled-- selling boysenberries in 1948, I guess it was, some lady stopped and she's went out of her way [inaudible] people-- you people really did a good thing for America. And this is all 442 and, you know, what Truman said about. You fought your-- Not only did you fight the enemy but you fought your own warrior. And, and there was a lot of good and-- but my father brought that out to Chin, Chin said, the 442 did nothing. It was-- these feelings are very strong. There was at the 2000 national convention at the JACL, this issue of apology came before

the, the general [inaudible]. And, you know, there were these younger people that were pushing, yeah, we need to give an official apology. I was standing in line with my father, he was 90 at the time and so holding his plate. It was a long line of, of anti-apology people, veterans, older people waiting to speak against it. And these pro-apology people, ah, probably lawyers amongst them, they started, you know, pressing script adherence to Robert's rule of order. With this long [inaudible] line of people waiting to be heard, they shut down the discussion and called for the vote. And so it passed and, and-- I mean, there was-- Frank Mischio, you know, he quite his membership after decades with the JACL. There were so many people that were hurt by them. And that, that feeling exists today. As my personal-- my personal, if there's anything I would like to see before I die is that the JACL, the 442, the 100, the MIS, that those people be shown the respect after beating up this people in the camps, that there would be an apology that come from the other side, too. And I think there would be closure maybe then. But I consult with apology just going one way, you know, that resemblance is still this.

>> John Tinker: That's amazing how long they [inaudible].

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

>> John Tinker: I have a-- I have a kind of concluding question that, that who was away from the JACL back to your family in a way. Your father started Sunnyside Packing, what's going on with it now?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, my nephew Todd is pretty much running the business and he stresses the family-owned business.

>> John Tinker: Yeah. Thank you. Is that--

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, that's Stu, my-- you know, there's Joanne, me, Stu--

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Stuart and John. John was quite a bit younger than the first three, but Stuart took over the business. Well, first of all, my dad bought out Min Omata. And so then, it just became Hirasuna's and Sunnyside. Stu took over the business and now his son Todd has taken over the business, and he's got a website and all of that and he stresses this family business that was started in 1948. They are doing a lot of farming today.

>> John Tinker: Are they?

>> Alan Hirasuna: I mean, they got I guess thousands of acres, they're farming. Ah, when Sunnyside first started, it was farmers bringing in packed produce for them to cool and ship and sell and ship. Ah, today, much of the business is done with large farming operations and Todd is, ah, AD graduate from San Luis and, and doing a good job of, of taking over the rents.

>> John Tinker: Oh, I guess we have to get some final family closure here. What happen to the other kids? Here you are, Stuart went to run Sunnyside Packing, what about the other kids?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, Joanne married a minister, Dave Kagiwata. She spent many years as a minister's wife. After her kids were, I guess pretty independent, she went to both law school and she got a degree from both. Ah, she worked for, ah, she worked with a Namib-- Namibian, ah, ah, embassy, I think in New York. She's now retired in Auckland. Ah, I'm retired-- I've been retired for over 10 years. I-- ah, in 1971, there were five of us that founded an aerospace company in, in Orange county. Ah, that company still exists today. We specialize in lightweight space structures for our research company doing mostly government business. Ah, Stu, of course, stepped in the Sunnyside and we talked about Sunnyside, and then John who is-- was born in 1948, he was my mother's [inaudible] when we came back from, from, from Minnesota. And, ah, he became a doctor and he was professor with UC San Francisco in Fresno for all of his professional career, ah, he worked for the VA, he-- you know, John is a pretty altruistic kind of a guy and, and he, he committed to give back rather than go after the money. I'm not so sure he felt that was the right decision he made, but that's what he did and, and he was-- it's kind of interesting. Whenever my folks would go to the hospital, John as a

professor at UC San Francisco in Fresno, he, he was teacher to, ah, ah, internal medicine residence. So, [inaudible] every doctor in Fresno has been a student of John's. My folks have gone to a hospital and every one of them would know that my folks got such good treatment when they went into any hospital because John was their teacher.

>> John Tinker: With your medical problems, maybe you want to come back to Fresno?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

>> John Tinker: Well, that, that pretty much wraps up your, your family story.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, you know, let me continue.

>> John Tinker: OK.

>> Alan Hirasuna: So Joanne had three kids, ah, Stephanie, Scott, and Stacy, and Stephanie has two kids and, and Stephanie is married to, to [inaudible] a white guy. And so-- And then, and then I've got-- I was married and divorced and I have a son from that marriage. I married Terry who is here, you've met her today. And, and she has a daughter and, and, Ryan, my son, has a son who just grad-- is graduating high school and a computer expert, and then, ah, Wendy had-- has Owen who is 7 years old and the star of his first grade class. And then Stu has two kids, Brad-- Brad was student body president at [inaudible] and, and he's now working in the aerospace business in Los Angeles. Todd, ah, went to [inaudible] and, and San Luis Obispo when he's-- with his IT background is running Sunnyside. And then John has a significant other partner, I guess you call her, and Glen has a son and grandson that's, ah, just graduated college and as much, ah, John's grandson as any grandson could be.

>> John Tinker: Well, so the end of the story is there're still more family reunions?

>> Alan Hirasuna: Oh, yeah. But you know what I really miss? When my mom was alive and Mitch was alive, you know, they were-- though my mom was the oldest and Mitch was the second to the youngest, they were really tight. They live next door to us on 11th street and every thanksgiving we would get together. The whole clan. And that was such a joyful event. And since they've died, that, that hasn't happen. So I really miss that.

>> John Tinker: Yeah. Well, maybe you want to reinstitute. Thank you, Alan. This I think would be a, a wonderful accompaniment to the, the donation of documentary materials to the school.

>> Alan Hirasuna: Well, thank you very much, John. And I know that you had to do a lot of work to do-- didn't have to do, and I appreciate it.

>> John Tinker: Yeah.

>> Alan Hirasuna: And my family-- And my family appreciates it.

>> Anyway, thank you.