

>> Carlene Tinker: Good morning Mr. Saito, welcome to Special Collections Research Center. My name is Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker. And I'm the volunteer coordinator and the first interviewer for the Issei to Gosei Project, interview project. It's a new oral history project that we're starting, although we have others that have already been in existence, but this is focusing a little bit differently on some of the people who are being interviewed. So welcome as one of the first interviewees for this project.

>> Paul Saito: It's a pleasure to be here.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. The focus of the project is to look at individuals who have lived in the San Joaquin Valley or have-- are currently living here. And we want to find out what it's been like for them as a Japanese-American to have lived in the valley. And whether or not they have experienced any racism, prejudice or discrimination. Before we start let me explain how we arrived at the name for Issei to Gosei interview project.

>> Paul Saito: Okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: There are five generations of Japanese Americans currently in the United States, and probably more than that are being born at the very moment. There are five that we included in this name and we started out with the Isseis. The Isseis were the first to come to the United States, they came from Japan. Second were the Niseis who they were children of Isseis, first-generation born in the United States so that will be the second part of our project. The third one, the third-generation, are the Sanseis, they're the children of the Niseis, the second-generation to be born in the United States. Fourth are the Yonseis, children of Sanseis, the third-generation to be born in the United States. And fifth are the Goseis, children of the Yonseis and I believe there are a quite few of them now, the fourth-generation born in the United States. That instead of having all of those names in the title of our project we just said Issei to Gosei.

>> Paul Saito: Okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's the reason why it's called that.

>> Paul Saito: I see.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. The first Isseis as you know, generally emigrated to the United States in the late 1800's or early

1900's. Most of these people are deceased, however there are still people coming from Japan so technically they are Isseis as well.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. And may I ask what generation you belong to?

>> Paul Saito: I'm a sansei.

>> Carlene Tinker: What does that mean?

>> Paul Saito: Well I'm the—I'm sansei, I'm the third-generation in the United States.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right and then your parents were Nisei?

>> Paul Saito: Nisei yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that correct?

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: I happen also to be a sansei.

>> Paul Saito: Okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: As well. As I said our focus is to look at your experiences, to tell your story to everybody who might look at your interview. We are—we are heavily researched by scholars but also, it's an opportunity for you to share your story with your family, it's a permanent record of your own history.

>> Paul Saito: Oh okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: So hopefully we achieve that—get that goal or that aim today. As I said, my name is Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker and you are Paul Saito. Today is Friday, December 7th, 2018 and coincidentally that is the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: The time is 10:28 a.m. So for identification purposes before we start could you give me your full name?

>> Paul Saito: It's Paul Makoto Saito.

>> Carlene Tinker: Its Makoto?

>> Paul Saito: It's my.

>> Carlene Tinker: A family name?

>> Paul Saito: I don't know where it came from but my parents must've stuck it in there just to make sure I'm the Japanese heritage.

>> Carlene Tinker: Actually they didn't do that to me I was named after Caucasian people. So I don't have a -- unless I, well I did adopt my maiden name so technically now I have a Japanese name.

>> Paul Saito: Yes you do.

>> Carlene Tinker: What is your birthdate and how old are you?

>> Paul Saito: My birthday is October 2nd, 1936, that makes me 82 years old.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh wonderful, so you just recently had a birthday?

>> Paul Saito: Yes, in October.

>> Carlene Tinker: October yeah. And may I ask what your current address is or where you usually get your mail?

>> Paul Saito: I usually get my mail at my office which is in the Tower District and it's 1295 North Wishon Avenue in Suite 201, in Fresno, 93728.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay and what is the addressee or does it, what is the name of your company?

>> Paul Saito: It's called Saito Associates Landscape Architects, that's the full name.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. And right away we've identified what your career is.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And it sounds like you're still working is that correct?

>> Paul Saito: Absolutely.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So basically, you're a landscape architect designer?

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that true?

>> Paul Saito: Exactly.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Okay to make your story complete we're going to start with your grandparents. Your grandparents on both sides came from Japan, right?

>> Paul Saito: Yes, they did.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay on your mom—on your dad's side where did they come from and why did they come to the United States?

>> Paul Saito: Well I don't know too much about my grandparents because they were all deceased by the time I was born.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh okay.

>> Paul Saito: So there's only one grandparent that was alive and that was in my father's side, so I had a grandmother but I never had a grandfather on either side.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Paul Saito: Because I know my mother's side grandparents they died in their 40's.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh wow.

>> Paul Saito: So she was the eldest girl in the family so she had to raise her younger, there was 10 children in the family.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh wow.

>> Paul Saito: And so she was the oldest of the, of the girls so she was kind of put in charge of the family. So a lot of the

younger ones were put in an orphanage and then she kind of went back and forth bringing them home on weekends and so forth so.

>> Carlene Tinker: And these were your grandparents, right?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, these were my grandparents had passed away so my mother was taking care of the, the younger kids. And then my father's side of course I never knew my grandparents because he was deceased by the time I was born. And all I know is that when he came to the United States he was a tailor.

>> Carlene Tinker: A tailor?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: And is that what he had done in Japan?

>> Paul Saito: I don't know, I don't know much about -- my parents never told me much about like where they came from.

>> Carlene Tinker: But that's what he did when he came here?

>> Paul Saito: When he came here, he was a tailor I understand yes, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay so what do you know what islands they came from or what cities they came from?

>> Paul Saito: Well I know my father's side came from the Fukushima area in Japan and then my mother's side was in the island of Kyushu and Kagoshima.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: So they're kind of far apart as far as two different cities, they're pretty far apart.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: Different islands in fact.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Okay so Fukushima is on the main island of Honshu.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And Kagoshima is on the smaller island just south right?

>> Paul Saito: It's on the southern tip of.

>> Carlene Tinker: Kyushu.

>> Paul Saito: Kyushu.

>> Carlene Tinker: How did - do--do you have any idea how they got together?

>> Paul Saito: I have no idea.

>> Carlene Tinker: isn't that something, well that's something that you'll have to look into.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: What did your mom's side, your grandmother's side do, were they in agriculture because?

>> Paul Saito: I'm not sure what my mother's side I don't know hardly any because both of them--both of them are deceased.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Paul Saito: And so my mother never talked about her parents.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'm the same way. My grandpa, my dad's side died when he was 53 before I was even born, like 10 years before I was born.

>> Paul Saito: Wow.

>> Carlene Tinker: So I never found out about that side.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, so I have a similar absence of information just like you so. Anyway, then your mom was she, no was your mom in this family of 10?

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Now where was she born?

>> Paul Saito: She was born in, I believe in I think it was Berkeley.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Okay.

>> Paul Saito: I think they were in Northern California then they moved to Southern California. But I know the first two older boys were sent to Japan to have schooling by the grandparents in Japan. And so my mother was the next eldest and so she took care of the rest of the kids below her. And so they, I think she lived in Gardena when they lived in Southern California because one of the—one of the boys was named Jack Gardena Ono. In fact the second eldest boy was born in Berkeley his name was Ray Berkeley Ono so I don't know I guess the parents wanted to identify that they were born in the United States, I guess.

>> Carlene Tinker: Now interestingly you brought up the fact that a couple of the kids were sent to Japan to be educated, is that correct?

>> Paul Saito: By the grandparents.

>> Carlene Tinker: The two eldest children?

>> Paul Saito: Two elder boys yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. And I think there's a special name given to that kind of person?

>> Paul Saito: Kibeis. Yeah, what are they called?

>> Carlene Tinker: I think kibeis they were called yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Kibeis right. Now did they come back to the United States?

>> Paul Saito: Oh yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Or did they stay in Japan?

>> Paul Saito: No, they came back here. Yeah, they [inaudible]. Yeah, before the war they came back yeah. I don't know where

they lived, I think they lived in Southern California after that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, very often I have met people who were kibeis went over to Japan and then the war broke out and they got stuck there.

>> Paul Saito: Oh okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: You know so in their case or their cases they were able to come back.

>> Paul Saito: Right, they were able to come back.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So okay, so your mom was the one who was in an orphanage?

>> Paul Saito: No, she was the one that.

>> Carlene Tinker: That took care of them?

>> Paul Saito: That took care of the ones that were in the orphanage so she and her, the next sister below her were kind of the ones that took care of the kids. The younger mostly were boys and I think there was, I think about four boys and one girl.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: That they took care of and then. So they, there's a shonien I think orphanage in Southern California, Los Angeles area where they were put into. So my mother kind of raised two families you know her.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my goodness.

>> Paul Saito: Her brothers and sisters and my sisters and myself.

>> Carlene Tinker: Until they were old enough to go on, on their own.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Now your father, okay your mother's name was Ono?

>> Paul Saito: Ono yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay your dad, the Saitos what did they do, what did your dad do, how did he get?

>> Paul Saito: My dad was a nurseryman, he worked for a nursery in Montebello, they grew indoor plants like philodendrons and things. And he was in charge of selling that at the market, at the farm market downtown that was his job. And he worked for a Japanese gentleman called Uyematsu, Mr. Uyematsu was the owner of Star Nurseries and so my dad worked for Star Nurseries in Montebello. But he was the person that sold at the flower market. They had a place in the flower market where they sold directly to the florist so.

>> Carlene Tinker: Where was that flower market, was that on 7th and San Pedro by any chance?

>> Paul Saito: No, that was a vegetable market but this was on Wall Street.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wall Street.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, Wall Street, I can't remember what streets but I think between Olympic and something. But it was.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, is that close to 7th and San Pedro I can't, I don't remember?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, it's not too far away.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: In fact there was, I think one side of the street was the Japanese growers, on the north -- on the east side was the American growers. I don't know if it's by design or what but that's how it worked out. All the Japanese flower growers were on the west side and the American growers are on the north--on the east side.

>> Carlene Tinker: Was there a lot of competition between them, the American and the Japanese growers? Was there any animosity?

>> Paul Saito: I don't think there was that. The Japanese, one of the biggest florists was San Lorenzo Florists and I think eventually they moved to Texas but they were one of the big. In

fact my Uncle Jack Ono worked for San Lorenzo Florists on Wall Street.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'll be darned.

>> Paul Saito: Yes, so.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'll be darned. So your parents I don't remember if I asked you this, how did they get together? Do you have any idea how mom and dad got together?

>> Paul Saito: Well my dad was, I think he was born in San Francisco and raised in Oakland.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: And of course my mother was in Berkeley but I don't, I'm not sure when they met, if they met up there or when they were down here.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, were they about the same age?

>> Paul Saito: I think my dad was about five years, five or six years older than my mother.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay and then how many children did they have, how many siblings do you have, if any?

>> Paul Saito: I just have two twin, I have twin sisters and myself that's it.

>> Carlene Tinker: Are they younger or older?

>> Paul Saito: They're a year and a half younger than I am.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Are they still alive?

>> Paul Saito: Oh yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, they were schoolteachers.

>> Carlene Tinker: Schoolteachers okay. Okay so then since your dad worked for the nursery in Montebello that's where you were born?

>> Paul Saito: I was born in Los Angeles.

>> Carlene Tinker: Los Angeles.

>> Paul Saito: But we were raised in Montebello.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's not too far?

>> Paul Saito: No, it's only less than 10 miles away.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay Montebello as I recall is next to Monterey Park or no?

>> Paul Saito: Whittier.

>> Carlene Tinker: Monterey Park.

>> Paul Saito: Whittier. Yeah, Monterey Park and Whittier, it's Monterey Park to the north and Whittier to the east.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Yeah, well right now Monterey Park is an enclave of a lot of Japanese Americans right.

>> Paul Saito: All the way along the Pomona freeway, all the way to Diamond Bar is all Oriental, either Chinese or Korean or not too many Japanese but mostly Chinese.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right?

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So they sort of took a foothold in that community?

>> Paul Saito: Oh yes and Diamond Bar in fact Diamond Bar is split into two school districts and one is the Pomona district where my niece taught and then the Walnut school district where the junior high and high school is, is I'd say 70% Asian.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right?

>> Paul Saito: It's the highest school in the state of California.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Paul Saito: They got the highest. My sister said I don't know how many had perfect scores on their SATs.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh wow. That would be pretty challenging if you were the teacher.

>> Paul Saito: I know.

>> Carlene Tinker: You have to face these really brilliant children.

>> Paul Saito: I know.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So anyway, you grew up in Montebello and with your sisters, what did you say they're four years younger?

>> Paul Saito: A year and a half.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh a year and a half.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And so you guys basically stayed in Montebello until you went to college I presume?

>> Paul Saito: Yes, well of course we were away for three and a half years during the war.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Well let's talk about that. When the war broke out you were probably what seven?

>> Paul Saito: Five, five years old.

>> Carlene Tinker: Only five okay, that's right okay. So do you have any recollection of that day that Pearl Harbor was bombed?

>> Paul Saito: Well I don't remember the day Pearl Harbor but I remember the day they evacuated us out of our homes. And I remember my dad had to stay behind to sell the car and sell the bikes and everything else. And my uncle came and picked us up in his car and took us to Santa Anita racetrack where we stayed and there for what six months in horse stables. So I know that once the car was driven to Santa Anita, they auctioned off the cars.

And then my dad stayed back to sell and then he came later to the Santa Anita track where we stayed for I think around six months or so while they were building the permanent facilities back east.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right. Well that's pretty vivid, those are vivid recollections for a five-year-old I'm pretty impressed with that.

>> Paul Saito: Well I remember Santa Anita very well.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right? And the reason you got sent to the assembly center and ultimately to the relocation camp was because of the executive order that Franklin Delano Roosevelt, our president at the time signed.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, 9066.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, what was that called?

>> Paul Saito: Executive Order 9066.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right which meant that the West Coast, California, Washington.

>> Paul Saito: Oregon.

>> Carlene Tinker: Were designated as a military zone and then because of military necessity certain peoples had to be removed. They didn't mention Japanese, is that right?

>> Paul Saito: Well there's 120,000 of us that were evacuated.

>> Carlene Tinker: And so it was inferred.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: It wasn't actually blatantly stated that we were the ones that they were getting rid of?

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay so you were five years old at the time and when did, let's see you went to Santa Anita and you said you were in the barns.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, the horse stables. Yes, I remember living in the horse stables and I remember some of the events going on in the camp. Yeah, I remember young -- there was not much for us to do but they had I remember a kite flying contest and my neighbor across the way made this kite and I thought it was huge because of course I'm little and the kite was as high as I was. And I remember he had two of these kites and we won the kite contest, that's all I remember.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Well now did you go to school, let's see you were five, could you have gone to kindergarten there or?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, I was in kindergarten at the time so I don't remember going to school there but I remember some things happening like one night there was sirens and searchlights outside the camp and all these I guess the army tanks and everything were outside. I didn't know what was going on but evidently one of the gentlemen was kind of inebriated or was drunk. And I guess he caused a little commotion so they brought the whole National Guard out.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh [inaudible].

>> Paul Saito: But I remember that one time where there were all the searchlights and sirens and everything going on. But then I remember getting on the train and then some of the people that were behind I remember these ticker tapes where you held on to it and you throw out when the train left Santa Anita. And I remember the train ride back to Arkansas, and it was a long trip.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'll bet.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Probably several days.

>> Paul Saito: I think four or five days it took us to get back to Arkansas.

>> Carlene Tinker: Let's back up to life in Santa Anita. As I recall not only did some of you stay in horse barns or corrals.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: But did they build barracks as well?

>> Paul Saito: I believe there was some barracks also but we lived in the horse stables.

>> Carlene Tinker: So very much did you have a mess hall where people ate?

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay and then did they have church activities or do you know anything about that?

>> Paul Saito: I don't know about that but I know living in horse stables we had to go to a latrine, I mean there was no running water or anything in the barns. So I just remember the way the barns were our neighbors were, the way the stalls were hauled they're back-to-back. And so there's an open, I remember an open so you can look over into your neighbor's room yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: So no privacy?

>> Paul Saito: No privacy at all.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah. Were you treated badly by, I assume there were guards, is that true?

>> Paul Saito: Oh, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Armed guards?

>> Paul Saito: Outside of the fence yeah. Of course we're little so we, you know, we didn't, we weren't too observant as our parents were.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Were you allowed to have any visitors from the outside?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, I think my mother, we had some real nice neighbors that lived behind us and she would come to the fence and talk through the fence and visit us. And she tried to bring us some things and but I don't, my sisters don't remember nothing at all hardly you know.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, right.

>> Paul Saito: In Santa Anita but I can remember some of those things.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So was life really brutal or was it pretty comfortable, the people who were in charge try to make you as comfortable as possible?

>> Paul Saito: I don't know.

>> Carlene Tinker: What was your impression?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, I guess I mean we're all Japanese and we're all you know kids who just, you know how kids are we just all played together and all that. So but I don't think we were treated any badly.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay and then just maybe four or five months later you guys were evacuated right?

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Now I happen to have been in Santa Anita myself, we got sent to Colorado but you got sent to Arkansas.

>> Paul Saito: Rohwer Arkansas.

>> Carlene Tinker: Rohwer Arkansas.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: How many days did it take you on that train to go?

>> Paul Saito: It seemed like a long, like four or five days. It seems like it took us two days to get through Texas alone. I think it was but I remember it was a long ride though.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Did you have a compartment or did you have to set up in like a where they had seats and benches or do you remember any of that?

>> Paul Saito: No, I think we were all in, I don't know if they were pullman cars or not but I remember there was, I remember one thing my sisters had never seen a black man before and the porters were black. And I remember my sister saying something about how come your face is black because she had never seen a black person.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right. I hadn't thought about that because the blacks hadn't really migrated from the south at that early-right?.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, but they were working on the trains as porters I guess.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Now did they have the shades pulled down? I remember stories about you couldn't have the shades up.

>> Paul Saito: Oh when we went through the cities.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, when you went through the cities.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did they have armed guards on the train?

>> Paul Saito: I don't remember if there was, there might have been.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. What did you do for the bathroom, did they have on the train?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, they had bathrooms on the train yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: But basically, you couldn't take a shower?

>> Paul Saito: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: No.

>> Paul Saito: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: You don't. But your family was together?

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: You didn't have to get separated?

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay so let's see [inaudible] about that. And I know when you go through this, when you went through the cities for people have told me that people would kind of lift the blinds up to see where they were.

>> Paul Saito: I've heard that before yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: But I guess I wasn't aware of it being a kid.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. But you were supposed to keep the blinds down?

>> Paul Saito: I see, I heard about that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So anyway you ultimately ended up in Rohwer. Isn't there another relocation camp in Arkansas?

>> Paul Saito: Yes, Jerome.

>> Carlene Tinker: Jerome.

>> Paul Saito: In fact the Fresno people went to Jerome.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: And then eventually when they closed Jerome, they came into Rohwer. Because I know the Masada, well Mr. Masada was in Jerome and then when they closed Jerome and they moved them into Rohwer because they made Jerome into a POW camp for German prisoners. So that's why they moved them into Rohwer.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. And Mr. Masada is a very prominent Japanese American here, I'm glad you brought his name up because he has lots of stories to tell as well.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, he's one of the stars of Silent Sacrifices that you saw that video.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Paul Saito: That they made here.

>> Carlene Tinker: Absolutely, that was amazing, amazing. What was the camp actually like, do you have any recollection of the area in which it was, like the geography, the plants, the animals? Do you have any?

>> Paul Saito: Well we had I know on one, on two sides of the camp, the north and west sides were all forest. And so and then of course the east side was open and the south side was kind of open. But I know there was, we were -- I guess there was cotton fields to the east in the open fields. And I think they allowed some of our men to go outside and farm out there because I remember they came in and I know they grew watermelon because they came into the camps and I remember those huge watermelons that they're selling off the trucks. And there was a country store that was outside of the camps and we used to sneak out of the camps and go there buy a soda because they didn't have soda in camps so we used to buy the RC Colas and bring it into the camps. But that was just across the street from the camp.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: So maybe they were, maybe the guards didn't really think the kids were going to harmful just going across the street and get some soda and come back right. But I remember we went fishing to one of the tributaries of the Mississippi River. I remember going fishing and then camping in the forest out there, we used to go camping. They used to take us out and instead of having regular tents they had mosquito tents. Because I mean that was terrible, they had mosquitoes and [inaudible] and I mean all these kinds of things that would.

>> Carlene Tinker: And probably deadly snakes like cotton moccasins and is that true?

>> Paul Saito: I guess there were snakes too but I think they were closer to the river part you know.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: But we were in the forest you know I remember going out camping.

>> Carlene Tinker: Do you?

>> Carlene Tinker: Happen to know what's -- what kind of trees they were in the forest?

>> Paul Saito: No, I -- my background now, I should know, but at that time, I don't -- I know there just is a big forest around us, and in fact, the biggest job for the men in the camp were lumberjacks.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Paul Saito: They used to cut down the lumber, and my dad -- I know he was a fireman in the camp.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, your dad was?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, and he was a block manager of our camp. We were block 13, and he was the block manager.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, what did the block managers -- what were they responsible for?

>> Paul Saito: Well, they kept track of all their families, and I guess they were the person that had to give all the information to the people living in the camps and in the block -- was just responsible for the block, making sure that everything was okay. Between the WRA, the War Relocation Authority -- so he was -- I guess the intermediary between the WRA and the camp -- I mean, our camp, our block that we were in.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Paul Saito: So, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, each of the camps, I understand, were divided into blocks.

>> Paul Saito: Yes, right, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Do you happen to know how many blocks you had in--in Rohwer?

>> Paul Saito: I'm not sure how many, but we were block 13, I remember, and then --

>> Carlene Tinker: -- block 13.

>> Paul Saito: -- and our address was 13-4F.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, and the 4F referred to your little apartment? Is that right?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, the -- there was essentially two, four, six -- yeah, there was, like, six rows, two, two, and two, and then -- so we're the fourth -- the fourth barracks. So that's why we were 13-4, and then we were the last apartment, and were F. So that's how we got our address, of 13-4F.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right. And then, as I recall -- I don't know if your camp was like this, but the barracks had apartments that were of varying size, depending on the number of people who were going to live in those little apartments. Is that kind of what you remember? Like, if you had a family of six people --

>> Paul Saito: Oh, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- you'd have a bigger apartment.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, I guess so, yeah. We had one apartment, I know, but yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And then, your sisters were alive at that time, weren't they?

>> Paul Saito: Yes, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: So you had your sisters. That's two, and you -- that's three, and your dad and mom -- that's five people.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, so you probably had a larger one.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, and then we had the -- and then, across -- in the center of the block was the latrines, and the laundry rooms that were back-to-back. Latrines were on one side, and then the washroom was there. And then two -- just across the way from that was the mess hall, where we had our meals. So --

>> Carlene Tinker: It sounds like -- very much like ours, in Amache in southeastern Colorado. So imagine they didn't have a lot of time to plan these out.

>> Paul Saito: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: So maybe they used the same --

>> Paul Saito: Same plan, yes, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- to set these up. And getting back to your dad, you said he was the fireman as well.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Did he stay in camp a long time with your mom, or did he ever leave?

>> Paul Saito: No, he left. He left -- I can't remember -- after we were in a year or two. And then they allowed them to go back to work, because, you know, he was only making \$18 a month as a fireman. So he left, and he left back to New Jersey at Seabrook Farms. So he was working at Seabrook Farms for -- I don't know how long, and then he came back. Then he left again and went to Evanston, Illinois, where he worked at a nursery in Evanston, Illinois. So he left twice.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, but your mom and your sisters and you stayed.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, we -- right, exactly.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. What did he do at Seabrook? I don't remember what Seabrook does.

>> Paul Saito: I think they're -- they package foods and stuff like that. I think they're -- in fact, a lot of -- I've heard of other people that worked at Seabrook Farms from the camps. So they must've hired a lot of Japanese-Americans in Seabrook.

>> Carlene Tinker: That went there.

>> Paul Saito: Yes, mm-hmm.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. I've heard of other people as well, and I don't know if they're still in existence.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, you mean the -- Seabrook Farms? I don't know if they are or not.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, and that'd be interesting to find out.

>> Paul Saito: Mm-hmm.

>> Carlene Tinker: Now, when you were in camp, you would've been about --

>> Paul Saito: Five.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- five, six. Okay, so you were there three years?

>> Paul Saito: Yes, I was in from kindergarten, first, second, and third grades.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, so basically, you and your mom and your sisters stayed there.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Your dad came back.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And then you came back to California.

>> Paul Saito: Right, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Let's get back to Rohwer. What was school like for you? Do you remember anything about school?

>> Paul Saito: I just remember going to school, and I don't remember much -- learning much in -- but I'm -- we must've learned a lot more than we -- when we came back, because it was kind of an adjustment to get acclimated to California once we got back from the schools back there. But a lot of the teachers were Hakujin teachers, too.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, what does that mean, Hakujin?

>> Paul Saito: That means Caucasian.

>> Carlene Tinker: Caucasian? Okay.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And they probably -- from what I've read, they probably made a lot more money than the people in the camps. They probably made --

>> Paul Saito: Yes, I'm sure they did, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- yeah, because the maximum you could earn in camp, if you were, like, Japanese, Japanese-Americans, only \$19, if you were professional.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, is that right?

>> Carlene Tinker: And much less if you were, say, a ditch digger or whatever.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: But the maximum was only \$19.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, I know the fire chief was Chief Mails . I remember his name, and he was a really nice man, because he let me get onto the fire engine, and -- and, yeah, he was really nice to the Japanese.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. What was the climate like in -- at Rohwer?

>> Paul Saito: Humid.

>> Carlene Tinker: Humid?

>> Paul Saito: Humid, and it rained sometimes -- sometimes, it was flooded. You know, the barracks are on piers, so when it flooded, it was -- water was underneath the -- I mean, it was --

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, your barracks were on piers?

>> Paul Saito: -- yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, so water could go --

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, it could, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- yeah. Because in ours, we had cement floors, or brick floors.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, you did?

>> Carlene Tinker: We had concrete perimeters -- foundations.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, you did?

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, so water would not have been able to do that.

>> Paul Saito: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Of course, it also wasn't that humid in Amache, because we were in the high plains.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, sure, yeah, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: A lot different --

>> Paul Saito: It was terrible. I mean, the weather was humid, and, I mean, we're used to dry heat here. And being in that humid conditions, and then -- and all the bugs, you know, the triggers, and the chiggers, and the mosquitoes, and all that -- it was very prevalent over there, compared to here.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- but it wasn't like that all year long. Didn't you get snow sometimes, or --

>> Paul Saito: It snowed once. I think it snowed --

>> Carlene Tinker: -- oh, was that all?

>> Paul Saito: -- yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, that's right. You were pretty south, weren't you?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, we were south.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, in Arkansas. So during camp, your dad was a block manager.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: So he probably was sort of supportive of the government. Is that true, or could you say that?

>> Paul Saito: Well, I don't know. I don't think --

>> Carlene Tinker: In other words, how did he feel about being there, and being incarcerated?

>> Paul Saito: -- well, I knew he -- I know he didn't like Santa Anita, because he says, "I wish that place burned down," after the war.

>> Carlene Tinker: He said what?

>> Paul Saito: He mentioned after the war, about Santa Anita -- he said, "I wish that place burned down," because he -- I guess he had some pretty bad memories of Santa Anita. And then, of course, back in Arkansas -- of course, we were -- we couldn't get out, because you had -- we had those guard towers, and barbed wire fence around. And -- but we didn't have barbed wire fence on the east --no, on the west and the north, because it was all forest. You had nowhere to go. I mean, it was just -- it's -- it was pretty well controlled there.

>> Carlene Tinker: I see.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: I see. Now, at one point, sort of I guess '43, '44, there were these loyalty questions that were administered. I think that was the intention of the government to actually -- originally, Japanese couldn't go into the military.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, but then that changed.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: They probably needed people to go in the --

>> Paul Saito: That's true.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- running out of people. And then, also, there was some intent to allow people to leave and -- I think

the government actually realized that camps were a bad idea. They had made a mistake.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: So first, these questions came out. They were called loyalty questions, and they are referred to as 27 and 28. Do you have any recollection of what those are?

>> Paul Saito: No, but I remember this group called The No-No Families, which didn't sign the petition or whatever it was, and they were sent to Tule Lake because they were -- figured as they're enemy aliens, I guess. They were considered that. And I remember some of the -- I remember one gentleman that was sent to Tule Lake. I guess he was one of that -- where he wanted to go back to Japan. So they sent those kind of people back to Tule Lake, too, and they were all -- in fact, my friend George Takei, the actor --

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Paul Saito: -- his parents were No-Nos.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, were they?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, and in fact, he went to -- he was sent to Santa Anita, and also to Rohwer, Arkansas. So when he came here, and when I invited him to speak to the group here in Fresno, we found that we were about the same age, and we went to the same places. He went to Santa Anita, and he went to Rohwer, Arkansas, but the only thing -- difference was we stayed in Rohwer, and his parents were sent to Tule Lake.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'll be darned. I didn't remember that. Let me briefly read those questions for you.

>> Paul Saito: Okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: Number 27, "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty or wherever ordered?" That's 27. Twenty-eight, "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America, and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance to the Japanese Emperor, to any other foreign government, power, or organization?" Well, you can see the people -- the Isseis who were not allowed to be citizens.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, we -- we forgot to mention that early on, or I forgot to mention that. What did they do? You know, if they said yes to this, they would be without a country.

>> Paul Saito: That's true.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, and then the other one --if they said yes to that, you know, maybe the young men were probably trying to protect their parents and so forth. You know, they were really caught in a bind, you know.

>> Paul Saito: Yes, that's true.

>> Carlene Tinker: So -- and some people just, you know, didn't answer at all, but the No-Nos --

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- they're the ones, as you very carefully and very correctly identified -- they were labeled as enemies, people to be sent away, and then some people actually wanted to expatriate.

>> Paul Saito: Right, to go back to Japan.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, and Tule Lake -- let's just kind of talk about that for a second. Tule Lake was kind of a segregation camp. They actually had a prison there, yeah, and some of the people who wanted to go back to Japan became very militant and very public. And there was a lot of brutality, and a lot of brawls and so forth. That was a very tough, tough camp to --

>> Paul Saito: I bet.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- yeah, yeah.

>> Paul Saito: Mm-hmm.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, fortunately, neither you or I were able -  
- I mean, had that experience.

>> Paul Saito: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, anyway, let's get back to coming back to California. When did your parents come back to California?

>> Paul Saito: It must've been right after the war -- 1945, was it? Yeah, and we -- I remember leaving Little Rock. We took the train from Little Rock, Arkansas. We were going to Denver, because my relatives were there. You know, the Onos and Yorimotos [assumed spellings] were in Denver, so we had planned to go from Rohwer to Denver, and then back to California. But I remember on the train ride from Little Rock to St. Louis, Missouri, the train was packed, and we were sitting on suitcases, because there was no more seats. And that -- but the car behind us was a black car, and so my father had asked the conductor if we could -- because it was almost half-empty. So there was just -- well, you know, we don't mind going back, and we don't -- better than sitting on the suitcases in the -- and so, my dad asked the conductor, and they wouldn't let us go back there to sit with the black in the black car, even though it was half-empty. So that's when segregation was really heavy.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my gosh.

>> Paul Saito: So I remember that so clearly.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my goodness. Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: Yes. So -- well, one thing living in Rohwer, Arkansas, and -- we knew what real segregation was, because I remember there was separate bathrooms and everything. And it just was a different world down there, compared to where we lived in California.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Paul Saito: So we learned about segregation.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Were you often off of camp, or were you -- no?

>> Paul Saito: Well, just when we snuck out to go get some soda pop, but that was --

>> Carlene Tinker: But that's -- [laughter] --

>> Paul Saito: -- we were kids, yeah [laughter].

>> Carlene Tinker: -- okay, so when you were -- when you came back to California, you returned to Montebello.

>> Paul Saito: Yes, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, so you grew up there, and you went to school there.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And how were your experiences in school?

>> Paul Saito: Well, when I first came back, I was going to be in the fourth grade, and I had problems with the teacher. And I don't know what I did, but I was sent to the cloakroom. And I remember -- I don't know. I guess my folks were out of town or something, and my aunt and uncle had to come pick me up at school. And this -- I really -- I thought this teacher was really a you-know-what. I could have her name -- I could call her a name, but anyway, I had a rough time in the fourth grade adjusting to --

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: -- the new environment.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Paul Saito: So fortunately -- and during the war, my dad -- I told you he worked at Star Nurseries, and Uyematsu's , but the person that took over the Star Nurseries was a gentleman named Wally Naphus . And he was a young man at the time, and he was just married. And so, at that time, they moved into our home in Montebello. And so, they kept up the FHA payments and everything while we were gone.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Paul Saito: And so, we were lucky that that -- and then, their daughter was born while they were in our -- in our home in Montebello.

>> Carlene Tinker: Mm-hmm.

>> Paul Saito: So my dad wrote a letter to Mr. Naphus and said we were coming back, and so Mr. Naphus -- they were -- they're really nice people. And so, he was -- he had taken over as

running Star Nurseries for Mr. Uyematsu. And so, when he -- when we came back, he had moved into an apartment, and let us come back into our home. And so, we got to know them very well. Of course, my dad didn't have a job, and so he became a gardener. And so, he's done gardening for years until we went back to work when Uyematsu came back to take over Star Nurseries. Then my dad came back to Star Nurseries.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, okay.

>> Paul Saito: But anyway, Mr. Naphus -- they built a home on the bluffs in Montebello, and his wife was a schoolteacher. And so, my mother had asked Mrs. Naphus if she would work with me, tutor me during the summer months. So I used to ride my bike all the way to -- it was a couple miles away. I used my -- to their home, and she used to tutor me during the summer months. So when I went to the fifth grade, I had this real nice teacher, Mrs. Oliver . I remember her, and so I -- my grades picked up, and I was doing real well. So I'm walking down the hall, and this old lady that was in the fourth -- teacher comes up. She says, "Let me see your report card, you know [laughter]." And when she saw it, she was shocked to see my grades were different than when it was her [laughter]. But anyway, that was -- I remember that so well, just [laughter] --

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, and then you went to high school there, and --

>> Paul Saito: -- junior high and high school.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- yeah. What kind of things did you do in high school? Were you one of several Japanese-Americans, or were there very few?

>> Paul Saito: My class, there was only one other girl that was Japanese.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, really?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, in my sister's class, I think there was maybe half a dozen.

>> Carlene Tinker: Was that to your advantage or disadvantage, do you think?

>> Paul Saito: I'm not sure. Kind of hold up. I'm going to need some water [laughter].

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, go ahead. You okay?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah. Little dry there.

>> Carlene Tinker: So anyway, was that to your advantage or disadvantage, do you think, being one of the few Japanese students?

>> Paul Saito: Well, fortunately, our neighbors in Montebello were from Kansas. So they weren't used to the -- all the prejudice that was going on on the west coast. So they had -- one boy was my age, and one was my sister's age. And so, they used to -- we used to go to school together. So they were kind of protective whenever I was maybe called names and things. They were there beside me, and so I was lucky that we had real good neighbors. And we still -- well, I don't know them -- I think they passed on by now, but anyway, there was some times they would want to pick fights with you and things. But they were always there, and then I made some good friends in school. And I remember there was still some prejudice. Because I was walking down the street with one of my friends on another street, and this lady comes out of her house and says, "Hey, Jim." He says, "I'm going to tell your mother you're walking around with that Jap, you know."

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Paul Saito: And so Jim went back and told his mother, and she says, "That woman -- she really -- that woman didn't know what she's talking about." And so, you know, we had some good protection there at school.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. But that didn't happen very often?

>> Paul Saito: No, not that often.

>> Carlene Tinker: Fortunately.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Fortunately. Okay, then what kind of activities were you in in high school?

>> Paul Saito: Well, I --

>> Carlene Tinker: Did you play sports, or were you in the --

>> Paul Saito: -- yes. I was in --

>> Carlene Tinker: -- were you a good student by this time [laughter]?

>> Paul Saito: -- well, I was into music and sports.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: From junior high, I -- well, when I was going to -- I guess when I was in elementary school, my mother sent me to a guitar teacher. So I learned how to play a guitar, but it was the wrong kind of guitar. it was a steel guitar, and all you do is play cowboy music [laughter] or Hawaiian music, you know. And so, I dropped -- when I got to junior high -- my uncle had left a coronet, which was a trumpet, and so I took that. And I saw a -- I joined the orchestra in junior high. So I -- my -- I played in orchestra -- the trumpet. I learned how to play the trumpet and E-flat horn, but when I got to high school -- but also, when I was there, I played sports. I played, you know, football, basketball, and baseball, just common in junior high. Then, when I got to high school, I only decided to play football, but then I joined the band, the marching band. And so, we -- so I played in the marching band in high school, and then I played football -- what they called B-football, which is -- I wasn't big enough to play on the varsity, so I --

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, that was, yeah, according to size.

>> Paul Saito: -- size, yeah. They have A, B, and C. I wasn't big enough for varsity, so I played B football for three years, and their -- Kobayashi was my coach. And he was a very stern person, and he fought in the war. And he was in the 442nd.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Paul Saito: And you remember the picture they made, "Go For Broke"?

>> Carlene Tinker: Yes.

>> Paul Saito: He was in that picture. He had a small part of it [laughter]. But anyway, he was my football coach, and he was very good. And he really put out good teams. So between that, high school, and then -- in my senior year, I was able to join the -- they had a dance band called The Esquires. So I joined --

so I played in The Esquires, but we also had to play -- if I belonged to that, I also had to be in the marching band. So football games, at halftime, we had to, you know, play. And then I was also a member of the East Los Angeles Lions' Club Band, and we marched in parades, and we marched in, like, Santa Claus Lane Parade in Hollywood, and the Armistice Day Parade in Los Angeles. And so I got a lot of marching in, which came in handy later when I went to basic training [laughter]. That's when -- so you learn how to march.

>> Carlene Tinker: You were in [laughter] --

>> Paul Saito: Yeah [laughter].

>> Carlene Tinker: -- so you went to high school, and then did you go to college at all?

>> Paul Saito: I went to -- yes, I went to community college. It was Pierce -- it was called Pierce School of Agriculture in Canoga Park, and then they changed it to Pierce JC , and now it's a -- it's community college.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, and you went there for two years?

>> Paul Saito: I went there for two years, and because it's so far from Montebello, I stayed in the dormitory there. And then, the thing is, when I went to register during the summer months before school started, my friend who was on the varsity football team went with me. And so, I went to the dean, and I said, "Since I'm going to go to school here, I'd like to register. I need to register for one of the dormitories." There was nine dorms, and he says, "Well, you have to put your name on the writing list." I says, "Okay." So I put name -- and he says, "By the way, do you play football?" And I said -- and my buddy, who played on the varsity, says, "Oh, yeah, he plays football," but he didn't know I played on the B team. I didn't play on the varsity team. He said, "Well, why don't you go up, talk to the coach? He's up there at the gym." So we went up, talked to the coach, and he was small like me. And he says, "My name is Tex Chasson . I just came from L.A. High School, and I'm the new coach here at Pierce College. We're going to start a new football team, and we could use all the men we can to recruit for this team." And I says, "Well, you know, I only played B football." And then he says, "Well, at least you played B football," and then my -- of course, my buddy here, he got a scholarship to USC as a -- you know [laughter], as a -- so he said, "Yeah, he plays football." And so, he says, "Well --" he

says -- so I signed up for the football. So I went back to Dean Kersey , and I said, "Well, I guess I signed up for the team." And he says, "Well, in that case, you're going to have to come two weeks before school starts for spring practice, and so you're going to have to have some -- you're going to have to have a dorm. So why don't you go up and pick yourself a --" so I got to pick the best dorm I wanted [laughter] just because I played football. I got to pick the dormitory that I wanted.

>> Carlene Tinker: You had no idea it was going to come in handy.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, so that -- so I was able to play two years of college football at Pierce.

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, did you stay -- did you go straight on to another four-year school, or --

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- did you have a -- did you go into the service at any time?

>> Paul Saito: Well, yeah, when I was in -- oh, okay, when I was at Pierce, it's a two-year college, and then I signed up for ornamental horticulture, because my dad was a nurseryman. And so, while I was there, I liked the landscape design class. And so, I kind of switched to -- I -- since I don't want to be a nurseryman, I want to be a landscape architect. But the only school that taught landscape architecture in California -- accredited school was UC Berkeley. So I was scheduled to go to UC Berkeley upon graduation, but my senior year at Pierce, I understand that Cal Poly was going to have an accredited course in landscape architecture in Pomona. So that gave me the opportunity to stay in southern California, live at home, and go to school at Cal Poly Pomona. So that's what I did. I transferred to Cal Poly, and I could live at home, and -- rather than going to Berkeley, where I'd had to live up there. So I decided to stay three years at Cal Poly, so I -- because I -- if I graduated in two years, I would've missed my sophomore and freshman courses, which I would like to have, like history, and perspective drawings, and things like that I would've missed. So I decided to stay for three years, and the other thing was -- because they needed football players, I signed up for the football team. So I was able to play -- they allowed me to play three years of college football. So I played actually five years of college football.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, for heaven's sakes [laughter].

>> Paul Saito: Well, I was going to only play for two years, and -- but the senior -- my senior year, they said that the team was going to go to Mexico City to play two games. I said, "Well, I'm staying another year, so I can go to Mexico [laughter]." So I stayed an extra year to play my senior year. We went to -- played two games in Mexico City.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'll be darned.

>> Paul Saito: So 10 days in Mexico -- while, that's -- so that's a free ride down there, you know. It's all expenses paid [laughter], room and board.

>> Carlene Tinker: So you graduated, then, from Cal Poly Pomona.

>> Paul Saito: Pomona, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, and with a landscape --

>> Paul Saito: Architecture degree.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- architect major, okay.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did you immediately get a job as a landscape architect, or did you -- at some time or another, I recall you went into the service.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, yes. My senior year at Cal Poly, I signed up with the -- I joined the Air National Guard in Ontario. So while I was in school, my -- before I graduated, I was going to reserve meetings. It's one week in a month. And so, when I graduated from Poly, I had to go to basic training down in San Antonio, Texas. So I had to spend 10 weeks in -- In San Antonio at Lackland Air Force Base to take my basic training, so I was there for 10 weeks. And like I said, the marching came in handy because that's all you do is you're marching, and you march through dinner, you march through the bivouac, you march, everywhere you march. And so the way, because of my marching skills, after the first week, they, you know, what they try to do is they try to tear you down. I mean, they want this one and that, and you've got to say yes, sir or no, sir, or, I mean, if you don't, you're and here I'm a

college graduate, and most of these young guys are high school graduates. So you're among all these kids and you're taking all these orders from this, this sergeant that's calling you names and calling you "nip" and everything else, just to get your, get your goat. So when you take it then, so it was a first week, they have a, they have the you have four columns, and they go by height, and then you go down like this. That's how they're so the tallest guys are in the front row, and they're called the element leaders. And then there's a right guard, and he's the one that takes you around, you know, when the sergeant is there, he's the one that takes you everywhere, the right guard. And he's the best marcher. And so after the first week, he fired him and made me the right guard. So I had to take, I had to take him to all the meals, you know, like on weekends when the sergeants aren't there or what they call "TIs," the training instructors, when they're not there, then I'm in charge. Then also, we have a barracks. There's like 72 men I think per barracks, and 36 upstairs and 36 downstairs. And so the right guard also becomes the barracks chief, so I'm in charge of the barracks also. So you assign all your troops to latrine duty or whatever. And so that's, that's one advantage, that you're in charge.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Paul Saito: So, but, anyway, so you had to take them to meals, or you had to take them to bivouac. Now, bivouac is where you take your, you go through the obstacle course.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Paul Saito: Then we had to go through that thing I think three or four times. And, of course, the weather there was so hot, the red flag was up almost every day we were there, when it's over 95 degrees and the humidity is up in the 100%. And so they take us out to bivouac like 6:00 in the morning. So you get through the obstacle course by 8:00, you know, before it gets hot.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, so that was quite an experience, being in the Air Force training down there.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, basically that's how you served your [military experience] you [were a] volunteer.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, I volunteer.

>> Carlene Tinker: And how long were you there?

>> Paul Saito: Six years. I served six years in the Reserve.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, but then in the meantime, you were pursuing your profession, is that correct?

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: So you started, you started in southern California as a landscape architect.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, when I graduated from Cal Poly, I got a job with the City of Los Angeles, Recreation and Parks Department.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, that's right.

>> Paul Saito: As a landscape architectural assistant at the time. And then, but when I graduated, you know, I applied for the job, but I had to take a test, a test. The city gives you a civil service test. So they sent a test down to the testing officer in San Antonio at Lackland Air Force. So I took my test in San Antonio at the Lackland Air Force Base. And when I came back, then I took the oral interview for the job at, for Los Angeles. So I worked there for five years as a landscape architectural assistant. And at the same time, I was going to Reserve one weekend a month and a two week summer camp.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: For six years. But the city, the government, they allowed me to go to a two week summer camp. And they paid me. They paid me a salary even though I was gone for two weeks.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: And then when I after five years, I got a job with the City of Anaheim, and I became their landscape architect, and they and I was still going to Reserves. So they did the same thing. They allowed me to go to summer camp for two weeks.

>> Carlene Tinker: How accommodating.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: And then I was still getting my pay.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Paul Saito: So, it was the good thing about working for civil service, at least you were getting paid even though you were serving your country. So, anyway, and Anaheim was

>> Carlene Tinker: It was a "twofer."

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, exactly.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, right. And so my recollection from our previous conversation is that you gradually became an architect of your own. I mean, you had your own company. And I think just to summe-, very quickly, bring you up to where you became a transplant to Fresno, when did you actually come to Fresno as an architect? And how did you get here?

>> Paul Saito: I worked for the City of Anaheim for eight years as a landscape architect. And then I left in 1972 to form my private practice in Orange County. And then 1972 is when I left the City of Anaheim, was the year that the City of Fresno hired us to do the Japanese Garden in Fresno. And that's where I first became familiar with Fresno. I had never been to Fresno. And we came up for the interview, and then we got the job to do the garden.

>> Carlene Tinker: Who actually initiated the idea of the Japanese Garden? It's now called the Shinzen Garden, right?

>> Paul Saito: Right, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Who actually came up with that idea?

>> Paul Saito: Well, there was a group of Japanese citizens in Fresno, Issei and Nisei, that formed this committee called the Japanese Garden Committee.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: And they were trying to get a Japanese Garden. Before the war, there was a Japanese Garden in Roeding Park.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: And so after the war, of course, everything disappeared. The lantern and everything disappeared in the parks, because they wanted to have a garden in Woodward Park, which was a brand new park.

>> Carlene Tinker: I see.

>> Paul Saito: So this committee was formed for a couple of years, and I guess they got enough backing to get the city to come up with some money to do a park. And so they went out, there was a gentleman here, a local person, landscape contractor named Kodo Matsubara, who was a landscape designer and designed private Japanese Gardens privately. And this ISSEI wanted him to design the garden. But this City of Anaheim, I mean the City of Fresno, the Parks and Recreation director Howard Holman says, we need to have a licensed landscape architect to design this garden.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Paul Saito: So since Mr. Matsubara was unlicensed, he was just a contractor.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Paul Saito: So they went out with a request for a proposal throughout the State of California to different firms that had Japanese surnames. And so we got one of those.

>> Carlene Tinker: I see. So that's actually how you got here.

>> Paul Saito: That's how we got the, we got the letter proposal, and we sent in our proposal, and then we were asked to come for an interview. And so I, a friend of mine I had never. I had been to Japan a couple of times, but never designed a Japanese Garden. But my friend, there was a Japanese Deer Park in Buena Park, and a friend of mine, Shiro Nakagawa was the curator for that park. And he was a friend of mine. And I said, and he was trained in Japan and graduated from Tokyo Agricultural University in landscape architecture. So I asked Shiro, I said, would you be interested in helping me design this garden in Fresno? So he said yes. So he came up with the interview with me. And we had to interview two nights in a row. Once, the Japanese Garden Committee. And next to the Parks and Recreation Committee. So the first night, I gave the presentation in English and he gave it in Japanese so that the ISSEI could understand what we were going to do. And so the next

night, we had to stay overnight and give a presentation at the Parks and Recreation. So, when we got back to, back to Orange County, we got a call that we had gotten the job. So that's how we started in 1972, designed the Shinzen Garden in 1972, when we started the design, and we finished in, I think in 1975, we finished designing. The construction started in '75, and they opened the garden in 1981.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, wow. Yeah, now, that is one of your major contributions to Fresno. I know you've done other projects, as well. What are the other ones like?

>> Paul Saito: Well, like I say, when I left the City of Anaheim, I didn't have a good health plan, health. And so I went to the architects, the building architects, and I asked them, I said, can we can the landscape architects piggyback on your plan, which was called the AIA Trustees? So they said, yeah, why don't you come up to San Francisco and talk to our board, our trustee? So I went to San Francisco and I made my pitch for the landscape architects, California Council of Landscape Architects. They said, yeah, we'd welcome you to become part of our plan. So we joined their plan. So at that time, they said, we need a representation. So they asked me to be on that trustee board. I couldn't vote that I would represent the Landscape of Architects on this trustee. So, what I'm getting to is because I joined that plan, one of the trustees up there was from Fresno. His name was Edward Darden . He was an architect from Fresno. And so he said, he says, you know, I have an architect, he's retiring. He said, would you be interested in designing some schools? I'm doing work for the Clovis School District. And would you come up and design some schools, and I'll introduce you to Dr. Buchanan ? And so he says, I said, yeah, I'd be happy to, because I'm the-- we did the Japanese Garden there. And so, so I opened an office that year.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Paul Saito: And then, so we started working for the Clovis School District. So we started designing schools for the Clovis. So that's how I

>> Carlene Tinker: That's how you got [here]

>> Paul Saito: Opened an office in Fresno, because

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, that's how you got here.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, that's how I [got here]

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, that was probably a big adjustment too.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Because you were coming from Montebello, which is in a very densely populated, very urban area.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And at the time, probably Fresno was not very urban.

>> Paul Saito: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: No. So, you had a, I think a culture shock probably.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, because Herndon avenue was out on the tules at that time. And Woodward Park was way out there.

>> Carlene Tinker: So then you went to work for when did you physically move to Fresno?

>> Paul Saito: Well, yeah, like I say, we opened an office in '70, a private practice. And then, so I opened a branch office in Fresno, and I opened a branch another partner was in San Jose. So we had three offices; in San Jose, in Fresno, and in Brea, California. And so in 1978, I think it was, oh, 1981, I split with my partners, and I opened an office in '81 just as Saito Associates, landscape. Because the name of our firm in Orange County was Recreational Land Planners, because we were doing, 90% of our work, we're doing work for cities doing parks. So that's where we came up with the name. And I had two other partners. But then that kind of fell apart when I was up in Fresno. So I decided to just become myself and open Saito Associates in 1981. And that's when I started some urban planning jobs. And then I moved up here right after that.

>> Carlene Tinker: And so basically you've been here since '81.

>> Paul Saito: '81, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Now, as I recall, don't you have didn't you have a part in the assembly centers, Pinedale and the

Fairgrounds, is that correct? Do you want to describe briefly what those are?

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, well, you know, when they started giving these memorial sites these plaques out, and this was back, what, 14, 15 years ago, the Fairgrounds wanted to put a memorial there because that was the internment there, I think. So they asked, at that time, Sharon Levy was on the Board of Supervisors, and they and the fair manager contacted a few of the Japanese community here and Dale Ikeda was there at the time, and he that's when I first met him, and that was like 14 years ago, to do a little memorial there. So we didn't have any money, and so we wanted to we had this bronze plaque, but what are we going to do, so they were going to just put it on the wall of the building, and so we decided to do a little landscaped area. So I think we only had a couple thousand dollars to work with. So I was able to get some I knew the Bomanite people that do that, stamp concrete. And then I designed a little fountain with a rock. So we wanted to get a symbolic rock. So Sharon Levy says, well, I have a place up on the way to Shaver Lake, and I have these boulders on there I'd be glad to donate. So I met her and her father up there, and we got a truck and we got this boulder and we brought it to the fairgrounds, and we stuck that in the fountain and that made that up in the middle of this fountain. That was our, that was our symbol. Then I got Belmont Nursery to donate these trees. So that's all, that's all we had. And that was for years until, until later when Dale was asked to do the Pinedale one. So, because he had worked with me on that many years ago, he asked me if I would be willing to design the one at Pinedale, so I designed the Remembrance Plaza in Pinedale. And when we finished that, then the Fairgrounds, I said, we need to upgrade that one, because that's kind of a it was really nothing, you know, compared. So he was able to generate all this money. I think he raised over a couple hundred thousand dollars.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my gosh.

>> Paul Saito: To do one at the fairgrounds.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Paul Saito: In fact, the NISSEI farmers came up with the ones for all the bronze plaque. So, we said, we don't want to do it in plastic. We want to do it in so they came up with I don't know how many thousands of dollars they came up with. I think like \$5-6,000 dollars just to do the bronze plaques. And so we spend a lot of money there. So, that one turned out to be and

then Pinedale, I think he was raised, he must have raised at least \$80,000 for that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my gosh.

>> Paul Saito: Because we had to get that sculpture.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: And the sculpture alone was I think like \$20,000 for the sculpture.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Paul Saito: And we hired Gerald Tsutakawa out of Seattle, because his father donated had designed two of the fountains on the Fulton Mall. So we decided that he would be the person. So he came down. I got to meet him. And he's designed that sculpture that we have there in Pinedale. And it's ironic because the people from Seattle were interned in Pinedale. So the Seattle people, the Portland people, Sacramento people were in Pinedale, so Fresno people had nothing to do with Pinedale, but where they still came up with these internment and wanted to honor the people. So, was it two years ago or a year ago, there's a contingent came down from Seattle, and they saw that this is where their parents were, where they were interned.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my gosh. That is an amazing story. I had no idea. Just for the viewer, I want to stress, or bring out the fact that Fresno was the site of two assembly centers for the people who were going to be evacuated.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: I can't remember. I think there were 16 all totaled. But Fresno had two of them.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: As Mr. Saito just pointed out, Fresno Fairgrounds was one, and Pinedale, which is over on Alluvial, and it's on the grounds of what, a lumber company?

>> Paul Saito: It was all the Pinedale Lumber Company, yes, uh huh.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, it's an amazing history that Fresno has.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, you know, if you really think about it.

>> Paul Saito: But it's you have to give credit to the Fresno people. They had nothing to do with Pinedale, but yet they felt that there should be a place where history should be told. And like my daughter, who's Yonsei, and she doesn't know anything about what happened during the internment period. If she comes here and sees Pinedale, the whole history of what happened here from the day they were evacuated.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, with the storyboards.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, with the storyboards.

>> Carlene Tinker: Both of them, which are incredible. And then now, with the Fresno Historical Museum at the Fairgrounds, we have our part in history there as well, that wonderful exhibit that tells a lot about our history.

>> Paul Saito: And what you're doing here at Madden Library is also continuing on with the internment project.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, exactly. So generally, the emphasis today is to talk about your experiences living as a Japanese American altogether, but particularly in the valley here. So, since you've moved here, what has your life been like compared to being in Southern California?

>> Paul Saito: Well, I Southern California is although I lived in Yorba Linda, which is outside of Anaheim, the congestion of the traffic and everything is it just got to be too congested, and you're just, you're just a number. But when we came up to Fresno, they appreciate your talents, you know, and put you to work, so to speak, and you integrate into the Japanese community here. And so since I was an internee and I thought it was my duty to participate in the story of the internment. So that's why I got involved with Dale in both projects, because I thought it was so important for my daughter and people in her age group and beyond her age group will know that something happened during World War II. It shouldn't be forgotten. And we were lucky to have Pete Mehas on our committee for Pinedale, and he made he was a superintendent of schools for the County of Fresno, and he made sure that this internment story was in all the history books in Fresno County, and I think throughout the

United States. So, and my history books never said a thing about internment. But now we have, we have assembly center projects in Merced, and two in Fresno, and I'm ashamed that we don't have one in Santa Anita because that's where the largest community of Japanese were put. I think there's like 20,000 people were put in.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right.

>> Paul Saito: In Santa Anita. And they don't have nothing but a plaque there. And I think and I just learned last night, after talking with, or yesterday, I was talking with my friend, Gray Anderson, at Nee Hai Bonsai Nursery, that there's a project like that's called a Tokyo craft or something like that. They have this big show at Santa Anita Race Track where they have all these different Japanese groups that have a booth there. And, in fact, he was invited. So he had a booth, Nee Hai Bonsai had a booth in Los Angeles at Santa Anita Race Track. And I'm going to look into that to see if maybe we can start something down there with an internment project. Because if they have that, this Tokyo craft thing, maybe they seem to be all for it. He said that thing has really grown since he went down there. So I plan to go there and take a look at it this spring and see if I can get George Takei involved, and some of the Japanese museum people down in Los Angeles, if I can get them interested in doing it. I'd be happy to do the design work, just like I did up here. And I think we need to, because that's where the bulk of the people in Los Angeles went to was Santa Anita.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right. That's right. I think that's wonderful. And you're right. Each of the sites, each of the relocation camps, each of the assembly centers should have something so people will know. It's still amazing to me that there are so many people that don't know about our history.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Especially if you go to the Midwest or the East. I've met somebody from the faculty here at Fresno State, the wife, she came from Illinois, and she said she had no idea when I talked about this to her. So even now, we need to educate these people. And so with your efforts and other people's efforts, I think we're doing a good job. In general, has your life been sort of free of prejudice would you say?

>> Paul Saito: Oh, yes. In Fresno, I mean, people here have been so friendly. Of course, a lot of farmers and people, there's a

larger Japanese community. In Montebello, we didn't have maybe we had maybe half a dozen families that we didn't have that many Japanese families after the war.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Paul Saito: And we didn't have any blacks in Montebello at the time. And we had mostly, mostly Hispanics.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, is that right?

>> Paul Saito: If you go back to Montebello now, it's probably about 80% Hispanic.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right?

>> Paul Saito: Yes. And, but, as far as Japanese go, the most, the largest Asian population, these are Chinese and Koreans in Southern California now, so it's kind of depleting, as far as the Japanese population.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right. Now, the idea of relocation incarceration, as some people call it, and, you know, in World War II, there was this mass hysteria and a lot of competition between the farmers, the white farmers and the Japanese farmers because the Japanese were very successful.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And that was one of the impetus to make the government think that we were, you know, a threat, and we had to get rid of them and get rid of us and that kind of thing. Unfortunately, we have, in today's society, we have similar feelings, right? Some of our government people are treating immigrants.

>> Paul Saito: Like the Muslims, for example, are being treated like we were.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, and so it's very important that we tell our story so this doesn't happen again.

>> Paul Saito: That's true.

>> Carlene Tinker: And the current treatment of people coming from Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala, and so forth, and building the wall.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: I mean, it's very frightening.

>> Paul Saito: It is.

>> Carlene Tinker: It's very frightening.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: You know? I think with the right people in charge, like DeWitt was in World War II.

>> Paul Saito: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my goodness, this could happen again.

>> Paul Saito: I know.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, so the fact that relocation happened, it's unfortunate, but I think many of us were able to bounce back. Some of us, unfortunately, are not able to tell their story. But by interviewing people like you, I think it's opening up the dialogue.

>> Paul Saito: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Among the older folks.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, I was just remembering. I know Ronald Reagan signed the redress that allowed us to have the letters of apology and the \$20,000 repayment. And, but I just remember that George W. Bush just passed away here a couple days ago, a few days ago. And I have a letter, a personal letter of apology from H. W. Bush.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my gosh.

>> Paul Saito: In my, in my office. And now that I see it, I think I should frame it and stick it up on the wall.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wait, how did you happen to get that?

>> Paul Saito: Well, as an internee, I was I had gotten a letter of apology, and my sister did too, and \$20,000.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, I don't remember getting that letter.

>> Paul Saito: You don't? No, I have this letter.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'll be darned.

>> Paul Saito: And it's signed by H. W. Bush. So, I bring it up because he just passed away.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, I don't think my parents kept any of that.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, yeah?

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, because he, he was Reagan went out, and then Bush became president. So actually the letter, the Redress Movement didn't go in effect until when Bush was president. And so I still have that letter of apology. I just looked at it the other day.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right.

>> Paul Saito: And some of my friends said, yeah, you ought to frame it and put it up on your wall.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah, well, the obviously that was a momentous occasion, to get the apology, first of all, and, of course, the \$20,000 that each of us got just was, you know, certainly didn't repay. Your, your family was lucky that people took care of you.

>> Paul Saito: No, my dad didn't get it because he died.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. But, I mean, somebody took care of your property.

>> Paul Saito: That's true.

>> Carlene Tinker: So you didn't lose anything.

>> Paul Saito: No, we were lucky. We were lucky.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, it was symbolic, I guess you want to say.

>> Paul Saito: Absolutely. Yes, it was symbolic, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, so, so, in general, growing up as a Japanese American, would you have rather been somebody else?

>> Paul Saito: No, I don't think so. I mean, it was quite an interesting experience, going through this whole from childhood all the way through evacuation and the internment, then coming back and trying to adjust to this society again, and then coming up to Fresno was really, really a change.

>> Carlene Tinker: And a positive change.

>> Paul Saito: Yeah, a positive change, because people appreciated what you did, when in Southern California, it was just a number, because, you know, everybody does the same thing you do, but you come up here and what you do a lot of people don't do. And so it turned out to be good.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right.

>> Paul Saito: And they appreciate what you do.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, what I'm thinking of, our conversation today was really just a summary of your history as an individual. We didn't spend a lot of time on your work because that wasn't the intent of the interview.

>> Paul Saito: Sure.

>> Carlene Tinker: However, how would you like to be remembered to your family, to your daughter, to everybody? How would you like to be remembered?

>> Paul Saito: Well, I just remember that we lived in a time of, an interesting time of life where, you know, from childhood to adulthood, you had quite a different experience. It's throughout your life and your career, I think that's most important, you know. Once you study for what you want it to be, and you love what you do, and even at my age I would probably never retire because I love what I do and like the Japanese Garden Of Order park would be probably my legacy because I -- even though we designed it nice [inaudible] too, we've made several additions to the garden, and I've been involved in being able to do the additions to the garden and seeing my reward is It's not just the money. It's -- actually the reward is seeing people enjoying the park when you sit there and you see thousands of people go through the park and know that it's there for people to really

understand the Japanese culture. And my ultimate aim is to have this Japanese Cultural Center built and that will be the culmination of my plans for that garden, like a Japanese village.

>> Carlene Tinker: How wonderful.

>> Paul Saito: And where we can actually bring in Japanese culture into Fresno. And we'll have a Japanese restaurant to go along with the Japanese Museum, Cultural Museum we'll have. We'll have also be able to have weddings in the garden. We have weddings now, but we -- people have to go to one of the local restaurants like Pardini's or Nikola's for the reception. Where, when we build the Cultural Center, we'll have a banquet facility that can accommodate about 300 people for weddings.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, wow.

>> Paul Saito: So we can have the wedding in the garden, we can have the reception here in our banquet facilities, and then have a Japanese restaurant to cater it. So we can have a package deal. So, like last year, we had over 40 weddings in the garden. And I think we can have more because I've designed a wedding area in the garden so during the day, like on weekends, you can have weddings where they're not interfering with the public viewing the garden. So they can have weddings going on, so we can have -- probably double the amount of weddings, and we can double the amount of the receptions in the garden. And that's good revenue. And we need a revenue where we need full-time gardeners. Right now we have volunteers coming in once a month to supplement the one man that tries to maintain six areas of the Japanese garden which is a specialty garden. You have to prune these monsters, these pine trees, and the Japanese Maples, and all these other things have to be pruned like they do in Japan. And you can't do it with volunteers. So we have volunteers that do it now, but we need to have permanent gardeners that will be able to -- are trained to do this and not volunteers that are -- maybe they'll work for maybe a year or two and they get tired, and you have to train new people. So we'll have full-time gardeners. And then we'll have a full-time staff that will be able to -- like an Executive Director and a Secretary and a person, a Marketing and Promotion person, and then we'll have a person that will -- an Events person that will plan all the events and weddings and banquets and all the events going on in the garden. And so we'll have a full-time staff that will operate this, and we'll be generating a lot of money to staff a 10-person staff. And I know we're going to have -- we'll

have an outdoor eating area besides the restaurant, so people that don't want to go have lunch or dinner, they can have a serving of food outside, fast food or like a bento or a bento box or they can have Japanese Green tea or whatever they want as -- they can come through the garden and just sit out there and have something to eat or drink. So it's going to be an overall place to come. And then our gardens are going to be open seven days a week once the garden is -- the cultural center is completed. Right now we're able to open the garden from Wednesday through Sunday from 10 o'clock to dusk, to 7 o'clock. And before it was closed, we're missing all the 4 million people that went to Yosemite. They come by Fresno, they come through Fresno and they go to the garden, it's closed. It doesn't open until 4 o'clock in the evening. By that time, they've --

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, right.

>> Paul Saito: -- gone to Yosemite or gone to San Francisco. So now that it's open, we're going to generate probably -- I estimate we're going to generate over half a million dollars in gate fees by opening the garden fulltime, seven days a week. And so that will generate a lot of income for the garden and it could be self-sustaining and we don't have to be putting on all these fundraisers all the time because we'll have -- we won't have to do these fundraisers because we'll be generating enough income to be self-sustaining in the garden. And that's my overall goal is to make this a self-sustaining garden.

>> Carlene Tinker: Well --

>> Paul Saito: -- And we'll have to work on volunteers for that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Well, with your energy and enthusiasm I think you're going to be able to realize that. But I certainly hope that that does come to fruition. Certainly your contributions to Fresno already are amazing with the Shinzen Gardens initially, and then also the two Assembly Centers. So, obviously, we are very grateful for that. I certainly appreciate your participating in our newly-formed Issei to Gosei Interview Project. And is there anything I might have left out that you want to say as a closing statement?

>> Paul Saito: Well, I commend you for coming up with a project like this because I think it's much needed, especially for the generations beyond Gosei because it's -- in fact, there's going to be -- like my -- just an example. My sister's married to a Caucasian person and his name is Sweredoski, so she's a

"Pollock," you know [laughter]. And so she -- and I have a niece that's married to a Caucasian. So pretty soon you're going to have a mixture in races and you're not going to see a pure Japanese anymore. So -- but they're going to forget about what's going on, what's gone on during the internment period. And I think it's so important with your project and the projects that's being done like Nancy from Ukai from the Bay area. She's doing 50 objects, 50 objects that were made in Japan. And so that's another project. And then, of course, some of the videos like Silent Sacrifices that was done here with the Masadas and Elizabeth Laval and her group that put on this for the Channel -- was it --

>> Carlene Tinker: That's PBS.

>> Paul Saito: The PBS Channel. And so -- and I understand they're going to do a follow-up on that on the Nisei veterans, I think they're -- so there's a lot of projects going on that -- like the two Assembly Centers that we have here and hopefully others that will be done. And I think -- Fresno, I think, is kind of the leader of all of this, all these projects, because we've done two internment projects.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right.

>> Paul Saito: We did a Fresno Museum at the Fairgrounds --

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Paul Saito: -- and, you know, I commended people in Fresno, and I'm glad to be part of them --

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Paul Saito: -- and not part of L.A. anymore, you know?

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. So many people think of Fresno as being still out in the boonies, but --

>> Paul Saito: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- it's no longer, and we have a lot to be proud of.

>> Paul Saito: Absolutely.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Well, thank you so much, Paul, Paul Saito, for your participation. Obviously you have made a very good impression for me, on me, and I loved listening to your story. Thank you again.

>> Paul Saito: Oh, thank you for having me.