

>> Carlene Tinker: [audio issues] Good morning Mr. Tsudama.

>> Gary Tsudama: Good morning.

>> Carlene Tinker: Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in our Oral History Project. The Oral History Project, as you know, is for the Special Collections Research Center at the Henry Madden Library at Fresno State, and principally, it focuses on people who were in relocation camps during World War II. So, basically, all of those of us who are Japanese Americans, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Correct.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, my name is Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker and I'm a volunteer for Special Collections and I will be the interviewer today and we are meeting today on Thursday, August 17th, 2017, at my home.

>> Gary Tsudama: Correct.

>> Carlene Tinker: My home is located at 4553 East Alamos, Fresno 93726. Just to give you a little background, Dr. Howard Ono and I are actually doing the interviewing, because, not only are we volunteers, but we also are former internees; although, we were young. We still have some memories and some experiences that we'd like to share with others and that was how we got interested in this project. The particular relocation camp that we were in was Amache in Southeastern Colorado. It was formerly known as Granada Relocation Center, but because they were in it the town[of Granada] was inundated with so much mail from the nearby camp, they decided that maybe the relocation camp had to be renamed. So, that's how; and what they did was they actually got ideas for a new name and they decided to name it after the wife, long deceased, but wife of a local cattle baron and his name was John Prowers and her name was Amache, her first name was Amache and they were Cheyenne Indians. So, that's how that name came about.

>> Gary Tsudama: Alright. That's good to know.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. It's interesting isn't it?

>> Gary Tsudama: It is.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. And so, today, [I will be] interviewing you to get your ideas and your memories, as well as, the experiences to compare with ours and these will be online. They will be part of an electronic E-collection and people will be able to research, hear your story as a former internee.

>> Gary Tsudama: Okay. Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, basically the format will be, I will be looking or I will be asking you questions about your history, your family history and your life, early life in California and then relocation camp, and then after you came back.

>> Gary Tsudama: Okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, so that's how we're going to do.

>> Gary Tsudama: Okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: Do you have any questions?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, no questions.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Okay, so first of all I want you to give me your full name, your birthdate, your place of birth, and the place where you lived the longest.

>> Gary Tsudama: Okay. My name is Gary Shigeru Tsudama. I was born in Stockton, California, St. Joseph Hospital in April 13, 1925. I lived at 321 South Commerce Street in Stockton for most of [phone ringing] and my family had a grocery store just a block away. It was a pop and mom store, but then it was big enough to hire some people and I as a teenager, went to help there too. Right across the street was uh, Franklin School that I attended until they transferred myself and my friend Sei Hattori. I lived right next door to the school and they transferred me and we had to bike a mile-and-a-half to Lafayette School, and there from the 3rd grade to 6th grade, I went to Lafayette School and from 7th grade I went to Washington School. And while I was at Lafayette School I met a German friend and we became buddies and at high school we met every morning before we went to school, I mean, before we went to classes and then we met together for lunch and then that went on for 4—3-and-a-half years. When December 7th came along, which was Sunday, Monday morning I saw him and he called me a "dirty Jap." And I went to slug him, but my friend held me back because if I slugged him, I would [have] had to go see the principal, not this fella. Anyway, that was the first discrimination that I felt.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Okay, now okay you were in Stockton basically from the time you born until through high school?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And then you went to camp and then when you came back from camp where did you end up? In other words, did you, when did you come back to Fresno or come to Fresno?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, we evac—we were evacuated to the Stockton Assembly Center at the fairgrounds in Stockton and we stayed there 6 months and then we were sent to Gila Rivers in Arizona. And from there, my dad was 55 years old; I thought he was such an old man [brief laughter]. But then, he got tired and he got bored and said "we got to get out of here", and this was in '44, 1944. And then we moved to, relocated to Alamosa, Colorado where a friend wrote him and we were there for 8 years.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, we farmed.

>> Carlene Tinker: I didn't realize that.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. We farmed there. We were laborer for 2 years and then said, "This isn't good." So, we found a farmer who would share crop with us and we did that in Alamosa and then we finally bought a plot area, 160-acres which was 40-acres of good, but the rest of it was alkali.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: But we were able to farm. And from there, we came; I was inducted into the service and served my time in Korea and when I was discharged, I came back to Alamosa and I

told my folks I want to go to college and my brother was living in Fresno and he was married. So, I wrote to him and he said, "Sure, come on back." So, I went from Alamosa to Fresno.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, what year was that then? Probably?

>> Gary Tsudama: Nineteen fifty-two.

>> Carlene Tinker: Fifty-two, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then I came to Fresno and I started part-time job and then uh, so when school started I signed up to go to Fresno State and I was there for 3-and-a-half years again.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, so that would be 1955-56.

>> Gary Tsudama: Five uh-hum. And then I got married; which I got married a little bit early. Not early, because I was 31 and 32 then, so that's late actually [brief laughter]. But, since I was going to school that was early. And then, naturally what happens is kids come; kids are born, so I dropped out and then I started working fulltime and I was working as a, I tried to get into my major of BusAG, but at that time no one looked at us when we applied for a job for office. So, my second minor was accounting, so I went into the accounting field now. So, which was that panned out alright and so I was accounting clerk for a while and then accounting for several years. And then my brother, 2 of my brother[s] were working at the Post Office and they were getting \$1.55 an hour and they told me to come to work for the Post Office because of benefits. I says, "Heck I'm getting \$5.50 outside of Post Office." I couldn't make that change. Then I realized the benefits was greater.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, that is important, isn't it?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, I applied for a job at the Post Office and I was able to get in. So, I worked at the Post Office for 20 years and I got my pension there which I was glad and I also have my healthcare there.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, right. So, you worked at the Post Office for only 20, years is that what you're saying? And then how old were you when you retired then?

>> Gary Tsudama: I retired at 67.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my goodness and so what did you do from 67 until your present age of 92?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, I retired and then just then my—there was a church group that, my church group, Buddhist Church started a senior club. So I changed—I joined it and then we went on tours and went to casinos and went to Wyoming and Grand Canyon and things and then my wife says, "You're having too much fun." So she retired from the IRS after she worked there for 26 years.

>> Carlene Tinker: Uh-hum.

>> Gary Tsudama: [brief laughter] So, then she started having fun with me which was good.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, that's great. Then you had time together.

>> Gary Tsudama: Uh-hum.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Okay, well let's stop here and go back a little bit, because we'll come back to your experiences here in--

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: --Fresno. I want to talk about your family background, you know, your parents, your grandparents. I assume it was just your parents who came to the United States?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, where did they come from? What part of Japan?

>> Gary Tsudama: My father, when he was 16, he came from Hiroshima, Japan to the Stockton Delta area, because that's where a lot of Hiroshima people went to.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, is that right? Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, that's where he met a lot of people and then after working several years, my father—uh, my grandfather wrote to him and said, "It's about time you got married."

>> Carlene Tinker: A little family pressure [brief laughter].

>> Gary Tsudama: So, my grandfather sent my father a picture, so it was a picture of wedding which was good. So, my father figured "if my wife is going to come, I can't have her working out in the field." So, he quit that farming and came into Stockton and opened up a grocery store. And then when my mother came to San Francisco, he went and met her there with the picture and then they went to the City Hall in San Francisco and got married and drove back to Stockton and their life began, and...

>> Carlene Tinker: Now was your mother quite a bit younger than your dad or were they--

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: --About the same?

>> Gary Tsudama: Nine years younger.

>> Carlene Tinker: Nine years. Well, that's, that's not very much. I've heard of maybe 15 or 20 years, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah so then they came back to, I mean he brought her to Stockton.

>> Gary Tsudama: Stockton.

>> Carlene Tinker: And then what happened? They ran a grocery store?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes and we had the grocery store, and then dad worked at it; and mom working at the store too until the kids start coming.

>> Carlene Tinker: Hmm. How many kids?

>> Gary Tsudama: We had 7.

>> Carlene Tinker: Seven. And where are you in that birth order?

>> Gary Tsudama: Six.

>> Carlene Tinker: Six. Okay, and then who was the 7th one?

>> Gary Tsudama: My sister.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Was it; as I remember you told me that there were all boys and then one girl is that correct?

>> Gary Tsudama: That's right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Are you all close; were they spaced about like once every 2 years or something?

>> Gary Tsudama: That's right. Every 2 years.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my gosh. Your mom was really busy.

>> Gary Tsudama: That's right. So, during that time she didn't come to the store.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Stayed at home, took care of the kids.

>> Carlene Tinker: Who helped in the store? Did he hire people from--

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: The outside?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, he hired people, one elderly gentleman that he stayed with us. And then naturally when my oldest brother was able to, because when they're a teenager they start helping at the store.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, I see.

>> Gary Tsudama: So that was good.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. And did you also help in the store--

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: --When you got old enough?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: In fact, on Saturdays, my job at home was to chop wood for the stove.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, after that I was free. So I used to play baseball and football and--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: --Did that. So, I had a easy life [brief laughter] before the evacuation.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. What kind of groceries did they carry? Was, or did they have a meat department as well?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And veggies?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: You had vegetables?

>> Gary Tsudama: We had the vegetables up in the front and then canned goods on the side and produce and then, then my dad opened up a meat corner which was good, because during that time it was Depression time.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, I guess we didn't suffer too bad because we just went to the store and got the food and came home and ate it.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, you were one of the fortunate ones.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, we were lucky that way.

>> Carlene Tinker: What was I going to , um? So, it sounds like your parents had, or your dad had a very successful business. As I recall when we talked earlier, you said it was good enough that he made enough money to go back to Japan to help out his family. Was that true?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did I remember that correctly?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, that's he stayed in the states all the time.

>> Carlene Tinker: But I mean he just went to visit.

>> Gary Tsudama: To visit, visit, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And was able to help them financially...

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that correct?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: What did your grandparents do in Japan? I forgot to ask that.

>> Gary Tsudama: I really don't know.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: I can't remember. I think my grandfather came from Hiroshima also.

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. But I think, if I remember from reading a lot of people were in farming.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And you know things were really-- taxation was high and that was why a lot of people left like your father left.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: My grandfather came when he was 14?

>> Gary Tsudama: Fourteen.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: See, my dad was 16.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: When he came here.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So, Depression here in California or the United States is just like what was happening there, so.

>> Gary Tsudama: Is that right?

>> Carlene Tinker: That motivated a lot of people to do different things.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: and I think, at least in my grandpa's case, I think he had intended like a lot of them to go back to Japan, but he ended up getting married and staying in the United States.

>> Gary Tsudama: See, my father believed in Japan.

>> Carlene Tinker: He, I'm sorry?

>> Gary Tsudama: He believed in Japan. So, when he had extra money he bought stocks in Japan.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh!

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. Whereas, other Issei people bought stock in American stock, you know, which was good. So, when the [alarm sound] war broke out, it was nothing.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So he lost all that money.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: So that was a bad mistake he made.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. And earlier, you talked about going to school, grammar school, junior high and finishing high school in Stockton and you intimated that this German friend of yours was probably your first experience with discrimination.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: When he called you a—

>> Gary Tsudama: “Jap”

>> Carlene Tinker: --“dirty Jap” or something like that.

>> Gary Tsudama: Hmm, that’s right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, you know, that really hurt I'm sure.

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh, yes it hurt because from 3rd grade all the way up to senior we were buddies.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Then the war broke out, next day he called me a dirty Jap--

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: You know? So, it had to be the parents telling them.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: But, what I can't figure out is why the parents did that, because they were Germans.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, they weren't--

>> Gary Tsudama: German, Italy and Japan were allies you know?

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right. They were enemies too.

>> Gary Tsudama: That's right. So.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. You know, um, prejudice and discrimination are just amazing. You know, like my parents when they came back to California after the war, they tried to move in to North Long Beach and people were signing a petition to get rid of them and, you know, and fortunately, that wasn't successful and those people who circulated the petition became their closest friend. [brief Laughter] You know, so, you know, you just kind of wonder what goes through people's minds.

>> Gary Tsudama: Mind, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. When you growing up in Stockton did you speak Japanese?

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh, yes. In fact...

>> Carlene Tinker: Did you go to a Japanese school?

>> Gary Tsudama: We spoke Japanese until I started kindergarten. So I had to learn English starting in kindergarten.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, you didn't speak English until then.

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: All the kids that we played with spoke Japanese.

>> Carlene Tinker: Uh-huh.

>> Gary Tsudama: So we started to talk[english] in kindergarten, that's where we started.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, wow, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So it was— that was bad I thought, but.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. How did you learn English? Was it easy or was it sink or swim, you know?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, no. I guess it came on easy.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. I think when you're younger.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. It--my brain absorbed it quick—quicker not like now.

>> Carlene Tinker: Speaking for those of us who are now having difficulties remembering things.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right [brief laughter].

>> Carlene Tinker: Isn't that amazing too?

>> Gary Tsudama: It sure is.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did you go to Japanese school after school?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: On Saturdays?

>> Gary Tsudama: No. Went to school, English school for 5 days and then I got out that school at 3 O'clock and we came home, picked up our books and went to Japanese school.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, you did.

>> Gary Tsudama: From 3:30 to 6.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Every day.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: Five days a week, so.

>> Carlene Tinker: What did you learn in the Japanese school after school?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, we learned how to read, but boy[s] being boys they never studied at home, but girls being girls they studied at home, they spoke perfect Japanese and boys are really slow [brief laughter].

>> Carlene Tinker: I never did that. We lived in an area where there were; I mean I was 1 of 2 families as I was growing up. So we didn't have that opportunity. And I think Dr. Ono the other volunteer who is interviewing people, he did go to Japanese school.

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh, great.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. What religion are you? What religion do you have?

>> Gary Tsudama: I'm a Buddhist.

>> Carlene Tinker: And so, were you a Buddha—were there a lot of Buddhists, were there many Christians in Stockton?

>> Gary Tsudama: Hmm, Yes. There are Christians and Buddhists. And in those days naturally their rivalry between the Buddhists and Christians, so even playing sports there were rivalry.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. It's sad to say, but then now in Fresno I was happy because the Boy Scouts at the Christian church and the Buddhist church joined together and they made one troop.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Which is good.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: The Girl Scouts did that too.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, so.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: They're together.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right. That's the way it should be.

>> Gary Tsudama: It should be, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Definitely. Yeah, I know that you currently go to the Buddhist Temple here.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right? And you sing in the choir right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Did you always like to sing?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. In fact, in my high school the last year, I was finished with all my requirements, I took Acapella choir there. And then I was singing in a big group and then the teacher came behind me and tapped me and said, "You're not a bass. You're a tenor." [brief laughter] So, for me the tenor section.

>> Carlene Tinker: Are you still a tenor?

>> Gary Tsudama: No. I'm bass now.

>> Carlene Tinker: You are bass now. I can tell that right there, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So.

>> Carlene Tinker: Getting back to the store, were your customers most; that was what I was trying to remember, were your customers mostly Japanese Americans?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Or were there Caucasians as well?

>> Gary Tsudama: There were Hispanics.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, Hispanics.

>> Gary Tsudama: Because in our area was Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, Italians and Blacks.

>> Carlene Tinker: No kidding?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Not very many if, very few Caucasian? Is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right, so.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did your father have any difficulties collecting money, getting money from any group?

>> Gary Tsudama: That's the thing. He had no problem except he--he had a charge account for the people out on the farms, because when we went to sell food out there, once or twice a week we used to take our truck, take the truck out to the farmers and the Japanese farmers sell them bread, milk, and whatever they wanted. They order it and we take them. So, they would sign a

ticket, but when the evacuation came, that stopped naturally and then the, they forgot about the bills.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. So they never made good on their, on what they owed. Are you talking about all of the people that were on--

>> Gary Tsudama: Uh-hum.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, so it's alright. They had a hard time; we had hard times, so. That's the way it goes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Yeah, let's see. Okay, let's talk about what happened when Pearl Harbor hit. As I recall when we talked earlier, you were a teenager, 17 I think right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Had you graduated from high school already?

>> Gary Tsudama: No yet. Not yet.

>> Carlene Tinker: No you were still in, in high school.

>> Gary Tsudama: Still a senior, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And so when you heard about Pearl Harbor what were you doing at that very moment?

>> Gary Tsudama: Okay. That was a Sunday. I was at Sunday School, Buddhist Sunday School, and then we came home just about a 11 O'clock and then the radio blasting "Pearl Harbor was attacked." And we said, "Where's Pearl Harbor?" No one knew where Pearl Harbor was.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, then at that time my uncle from Terminal Island was visiting us for the first time and that morning, like every morning, he would go out and walk. That morning he was walking downtown and all the radio was on. He didn't even come home, he went straight to Grey Hound and bought a ticket and went home.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: The reason for that is, he didn't believe in banks and he had money buried in the backyard.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. [brief laughter] That's the reason he went home. After he got home, we called him because we figured he didn't come home so he must have gone home to his home. So we called him much later and he's just at home on Terminal Island. He left all his clothes there and he just went home.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did he retrieve his money?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes he did. But he carried it with him.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. And after evacuation, my both my parents and my brother and go down to L.A. to find him and we did find him and then he says, "Let's go out to eat to a restaurant." I says, "Okay." So he told us where to go. He was sitting in the backseat. then he was going, he was unbuckling his belt.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my.

>> Gary Tsudama: And I said, "What are you doing?" Then he unbuckled he had a sack, he pulled out the money and gave us the money to pay for the--

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: He was carrying all of that money.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. Did he ever get robbed or?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, thank goodness.

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, that's amazing.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then he was able to go back to Japan, he did. I don't know how he did it, but he did and then when he back to Hiroshima he looked around and bought a side of a mountain in Hiroshima and he built homes.

>> Carlene Tinker: He built homes? Whoa.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: He sounds like a very successful, smart businessman.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes he did.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, he knew what he was doing.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right. So, but when he went home he kept to himself. He didn't let anybody else know who was building it or why.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, is that right? So, he stayed in Japan?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. Did he ever marry? Was he married?

>> Gary Tsudama: Not that I know of.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So, he stayed there and, for the rest of his life I'll be darned.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, he sounds like a very candid guy.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, but I wish that he had told us about it.

>> Carlene Tinker: Maybe you could have been involved in that.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: During the time that you heard about Pearl Harbor, then I'm sure curfew was imposed is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And what time did you have to be off the streets?

>> Gary Tsudama: Six O'clock.

>> Carlene Tinker: How much?

>> Gary Tsudama: Six O'clock I think.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, 6 O'clock not 8 O'clock? Six O'clock.

>> Gary Tsudama: No, 6 O'clock I believe.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow, and then when could you get out, I mean come out of your house?

>> Gary Tsudama: In the morning at, was it 6 I guess? Six to 6 I think.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow. Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: What happened if you were caught on-- out on the streets?

>> Gary Tsudama: I guess we would have got picked up and thrown in jail.

>> Carlene Tinker: Really? Did anybody ever have that happen?

>> Gary Tsudama: Not that I know of.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow. That's one thing Japanese are very obedient.

>> Gary Tsudama: Obedient. [brief laughter]

>> Carlene Tinker: I'd be the first one into my house at 6 O'clock. When you were in Stockton, were you able to travel at all? You had to stay in Stockton? You didn't—you couldn't go out, to and in?

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: I think we had a 7 mile limit.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, is that what it was?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, something like that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Seven mile.

>> Gary Tsudama: There was a mileage limit that you couldn't go out of.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, did they have soldiers posted around to enforce this or police or?

>> Gary Tsudama: No one.

>> Carlene Tinker: No one?

>> Gary Tsudama: Not that I know of.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. At that, as soon as the war broke out or as soon as Pearl Harbor occurred, how did the community start treating you and your family? Did all of a sudden they have a different opinion?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes they did, because a lot of them was Japan backer supporters, because that's their home you know? And they couldn't figure why they did that, but they were supporting them, but my family said we're in America, we are citizens, so we're going to stay in America which I'm glad they did, because I heard story that people in camp when they answered those questions; "yes, no, no" they were sent to Tule Lake and some of them were sent back to Japan. And there was nothing but problem over there; no food and then the people that you went there couldn't help you, because they had to ration for just for the family, they couldn't feed them. So, I think I'm glad we stayed here.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Now, did, were your parents ever, did they ever become citizens?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Or they were able to do that before the anti-citizenship [inaudible]? Wow, yeah. I guess my grandpa did too. So, on February 19th, the infamous day of the signing of or the proclamation of the Executive Order 9066, what did that mean to you and your family? What did that do to the Japanese-Americans?

>> Gary Tsudama: At that time when it came up, I was 16, I didn't think much of it. But when they put that sign up, "Evacuation Notice", then I got mad.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: But you can't do anything about it, because that was a law that came up. Pack-up and leave in 7 days, you know? So, I was turning against the U.S. at that time.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Myself.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. I'm a citizen and why are they pushing us around like that?

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: But then there's that Fred Korematsu...up north I guess he was, he fought that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: But he was in jail.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right?

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: And he did a good thing and.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: He brought to the public's eye, but it was much after the war was over he was released, right?

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right. The signs that you are talking about as I recall are these big posters that would put-- be put on lamp posts and.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: I think just lamp posts, right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Mostly lamp posts.

>> Carlene Tinker: And it told about where you had to go; evacuation was in effect.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right, correct.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. And you had only a few days or a week to.

>> Gary Tsudama: Seven days.

>> Carlene Tinker: To get ready is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, how many days did you guys have to get ready to be evacuated? You had to go to the Stockton Fresno, I mean the Stockton--

>> Gary Tsudama: Stockton.

>> Carlene Tinker: Fair grounds is that correct?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right, but during that time my dad had to go around Stockton to sell his products. I mean, inventory from the store. He couldn't just leave it in there.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, he went around and he was able to find a grocers and they agreed on 60 cents-80 cents on the dollar. So, my, I think it was 60 cents on a dollar that my dad said okay. But when the time came closer and closer for us to leave, they didn't come in and pick it up and then my dad called them and then they said "Oh, yes we'll come pick it up tomorrow." That was the last day, tomorrow at 20--25 cents a dollar.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: My dad couldn't say no.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. He had his hands tied.

>> Gary Tsudama: Tied, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, that's... that's American people I guess.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. So, were you able to return any of the canned goods to the vendors or did you have to?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. If it was in a food case.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: The warehouse took it back.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, well.

>> Gary Tsudama: What was up on the shelf, they won't take it back.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: So that's what we had to get rid of.

>> Carlene Tinker: What about your house and your, your pets and cars and?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, we didn't have a dogs or pets at that time. We had an Italian lady that was a notary public and my dad was good friends with, she says I'll take care of your house. So, we emptied out the house and then she rented out the house to a Chinese family and we were getting money, rent and then she was sending the rent to camp, that's what we survived on.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, wow. Is that right? Well, at least you had an honest person.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, yes thank goodness.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, when you came back were you able to retrieve your house?

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Gary Tsudama: When we were in camp, we were in there too long.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, money was running out, so my dad said "sell the house."

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, I see.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, I don't know how much he sold the house. And then he got the money and then about that time we moved to Colorado.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, you were able to subsist on that.

>> Gary Tsudama: On that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Well, things sounded like they were falling in place for, in your favor.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, so you had only a few days to evacuate, I mean to clear out your house and belongings and take care of the groceries, and so then you had to move to the fairgrounds in Stockton is that correct?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: What were the conditions like there?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, you know to get there we had to go to the Armory.

>> Carlene Tinker: To the where?

>> Gary Tsudama: Armory.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then how are we going to get there? Our cars are gone. We sold the car.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: There was no street car going there. But my family had a friend out in the country, Tsushima, their evacuation notice is later than ours, so they said we'll pick you up and take you there; I said, "thank goodness."

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, he came with a truck and load us, all us up, all of us up and took us to the Armory and that's where we registered and we got our family number 26058, and then.

>> Carlene Tinker: Three 6058?

>> Gary Tsudama: Two 6-- 26058.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then all of us got a tag on our clothes and then we're put on a bus and taken to the Assembly Center, which was the Fairground.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah. So, we were, my family was sent to Santa Anita so I imagine your accommodations were very much like ours.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Were you happened to be in a barrack or were you in the stalls?

>> Gary Tsudama: We were in the barracks.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, you were lucky. I think my family was in a horse stall.

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh, God.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Which was probably really awful.

>> Gary Tsudama: Awful, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: And they had to clean it out and.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah. So, how long were you in the Assembly Center?

>> Gary Tsudama: About 5 or 6 months.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. So, what was life there [phone ringing]? Did you? Okay, so Gary what was life like in the Assembly Center? Did you try to keep on living normally or?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes, we did. Well, being a 16-year-old at that time, we had fun. They organized a baseball team and basketball, well no baseball team. They didn't know that basketball season was later, so just the baseball team. We had block baseball team we played, so that was good and that was it. And then, all the, they had schools there too.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then ah, so there was 5 of us in my group who went up there. They were teaching foreign language, Germany, German. "Let's go in that class." So, we signed up for that and 3 days later they cancelled it [brief laughter]. But, we did go to school.

>> Carlene Tinker: So you were probably a junior at that time?

>> Gary Tsudama: No a senior.

>> Carlene Tinker: No a senior, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: First semester senior.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then we had a Japanese club in Stockton High and the advisor was Elizabeth Humbargar and she was nice enough to visit us at the camp.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then she brought assignments to all the kids.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh!

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: So you were able to keep up with your studies.

>> Gary Tsudama: Keep up, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then she would pick-up our homework and take it back the next week and bring us some more.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: She was--She was so nice, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, we.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, you were able to continue.

>> Gary Tsudama: Able to pass.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, of course the choir, acapella choir, Mr. Smith was so nice that he says, "You guys are going through too much hell." He says, "All you guys got As." [laughter]

>> Carlene Tinker: Keep on going.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, that's the way we were able to pass and we passed the first semester of senior.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So in the meantime, what did your parents do? Did they have any kind of jobs or?

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Or they just sat idly or?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, idly, talking with people.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: That's where the boredom began.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Yeah, yeah well if you don't have anything to do I can imagine that it kind of eats away at you, right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, so then when did you guys actually leave for Gila? When was your uh...

>> Gary Tsudama: October.

>> Carlene Tinker: When?

>> Gary Tsudama: October.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, not until October.

>> Gary Tsudama: October, yes it was a cold day.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, the friends came. The reason we went to Gila is that we were supposed to go to Rohwer, Arkansas.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh were you?

>> Gary Tsudama: Mmhhh, The whole camp but, but they noticed that we had a sibling that had TB and he was in Murphy, California in a sanitarium, so they said if you go to Gila where it's dry air, we will send your brothers or siblings down there. So there was a whole group of people signed up and then there was in Gila there was one whole block of us Stockton French camp [inaudible] people in one block. Each one of us had a brother or sister that had TB.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh for heaven's sakes.

>> Gary Tsudama: But, true to life, the government didn't send them.

>> Carlene Tinker: What's that?

>> Gary Tsudama: True to life, they didn't send them.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: So we're just stuck there.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. What happened to the ones that had TB? Did they stay in a sanitarium here in California?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did they ever get released from there?

>> Gary Tsudama: No. Not until we came back.

>> Carlene Tinker: Was TB a real problem at that time? Epidemic?

>> Gary Tsudama: Epidemic, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: And so people they didn't have antibiotics at that point, right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, they were just sent away to the sanitarium.

>> Gary Tsudama: Sanitariums.

>> Carlene Tinker: And supposedly rested and had.

>> Gary Tsudama: Rested and.

>> Carlene Tinker: Clear air.

>> Gary Tsudama: Clear air up in the mountains.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: It was a beautiful place that Murphy's.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So that when did you see that brother again?

>> Gary Tsudama: When we went to Colorado in '44 and then later that year they sent him there.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. Had he been cured at that point?

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: No. He still had it.

>> Gary Tsudama: He had it. When he came, we had to build, add an addition to the house so he can live. We had to keep him separate.

>> Carlene Tinker: Was he at that point contagious?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. Did any other of your family get it?

>> Gary Tsudama: No. thank goodness.

>> Carlene Tinker: Isn't that something.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: How old was he?

>> Gary Tsudama: He was the oldest.

>> Carlene Tinker: The oldest, then?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: But then getting back to the people who ended up in this block, all of you people had somebody in your family who had TB?

>> Gary Tsudama: TB, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh for heavens sakes isn't that interesting? Okay, so when you got to camp, what was camp like? What were the conditions there? Or wait a minute, before we do that, what was the travel [like] from Stockton to Gila?

>> Gary Tsudama: Stockton, it was horrible. We got on the train in October. It was a cold morning and all of our friends that came to us to meet us send us off, because we didn't know where we were going. They didn't know where they were going. We didn't know if we would ever see them again and then we got on the train, waved goodbye, hugged each other and we went. But when we came to Fresno, the train stopped and my car stopped right on Kern Street.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, for heavens sakes.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, all the shades were down. The uniform soldier came out, "Keep your shades down!" They went through; I was peeking out and I saw that building on Kern and G Street, Komoto's Building.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah. Across from Central Fish.

>> Gary Tsudama: But it wasn't Central Fish at that time and it was Komoto at that time, but I recognize the building and then we went on and then people from Fresno got on and they got on

what part of the train I don't know, but we went and it was a slow train. So, I don't know. I guess we went through Bakersfield, [inaudible] that way, because we didn't change train.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, it was a straight shot?

>> Gary Tsudama: Straight shot.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: But every time an oncoming train came we had to be pulled off to the side and let them pass.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah and you had to keep the shades down at that point. Yeah. What were the conditions like on the train? Was it hot and sweaty?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Or no you said it was cold and--

>> Gary Tsudama: Cold, yeah. It was cold, so.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: It wasn't too bad. We slept most of the way. Thank goodness.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: But I talked to my girlfriend, they went from Fresno to Rohwer. When they got on the desert the train stopped. They let them get off, but there was soldiers all the way around with a rifle. What would you--What are you're going do out in the desert? You're not going to run away. You're going to die as soon as you get out. [laughter]

>> Carlene Tinker: [inaudible] Well, now your girlfriend, where was she? Was she from Fresno?

>> Gary Tsudama: Fresno.

>> Carlene Tinker: But that group went to Rohwer?

>> Gary Tsudama: Rohwer.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: I mean Jerome.

>> Carlene Tinker: I mean, Jer—

>> Gary Tsudama: Jerome.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh yeah that's right Jerome. Yeah. So, anyway you finally got to camp and what was camp like? Ooh--

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh, boy.

>> Carlene Tinker: Was it desert or?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes it was desert, hot. In fact, when we drove up to the—uh, headquarters of that administration building I guess and they looked us-- looked at the list and then they told

us we're going to Block 30, so the bus went and took us down to Block 30 wherever it was and we got off the bus and then we stepped down and then the sand, the dust was up to my thigh. I mean my calf.

>> Carlene Tinker: The sand was?

>> Gary Tsudama: The dust, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my. Ooh...

>> Gary Tsudama: It was, I said "Holy Toledo" what is this you know? So, we easily stepped and all the dust coming up and we got to our barracks and then we had one light and we had 6 cots; 6 of us, my dad, mom, [Mas, Minky, Gary, Kiyoko] 6 of us.

>> Carlene Tinker: What—Well, now that's not all your family.

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Where they in another apartment?

>> Gary Tsudama: No. My oldest—uh, my older brother was in a sanitarium.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh that's right.

>> Gary Tsudama: Ben was married, so he had another apartment.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh I see.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right next to us. And then that fellow that my dad hired at the store, he brought him with us.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: As a family, because he had no family.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, he, so they had the room next to us.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: Apartment. And then Jack was in the service already. He got drafted in October—

>> Carlene Tinker: Mhmm.

>> Gary Tsudama: of '41.

>> Carlene Tinker: He was probably about 20. Was he about 20?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, I was 16, no 23-24.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh that, okay. Okay. Yeah, because you were 17, okay. Okay, so was there any privacy or were the cots just out in the open?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. Well, say that room and this room was it, nothing. Just the 4 walls and the cots, but we had mattress.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh you had mattress.

>> Gary Tsudama: Mattress. A regular mattress.

>> Carlene Tinker: Ooh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Thank goodness for that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. So, we were lucky. So, we got our— all our stuff and went to bed. The bathroom was over there, but we didn't go that night.

>> Carlene Tinker: Hmm, you mean the bathroom was in your apartment or?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, no, no, no.

>> Carlene Tinker: No, it was outside.

>> Gary Tsudama: Outside.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: But, like our block building was barrack 12, so right across in the middle of the block was the bathroom; girls, men and then a laundry room and uh— ironing room.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, all of that.

>> Carlene Tinker: I—I, from what I gather it sounds very much like the camp that I was in that, they were mostly constructed the same way or into the same way.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: However, [alarm sound] our particular barracks were on cement walls and Manzanar or, I don't know what Gila was like, Manzanar doesn't have any cement footings for the barracks. They had just little pieces of concrete that...

>> Gary Tsudama: Concrete, yeah. That's way ours was.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's how yours were? Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, we were and then as time went on we able to dig a hole under the barracks for a basement where it's cooler.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah. Well, in our camp we discovered though some archaeology digs, they think that they found some sake areas of things to hide the sake under the floors.[laughter] When there's a will, there's a way.

>> Gary Tsudama: That's right.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, you were 16 as I recall when you finally got to camp. Were you able to continue with school?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, they provided school. Was that the War Relocation Authority?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, that was the Civil Organization.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. It was a teacher that came from the outside to teach and there a few teachers that were teachers themselves Japanese so they talk also, so which was nice. And like I told you, I plan my classes so the senior year that was the second semester I would just take it easy, but Arizona had different laws.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: You had to have 4 years of English; history, Arizona history. So, I had 6 solids. It didn't work out for me. [laughter]

>> Carlene Tinker: And that plan backfired.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes it sure did.

>> Carlene Tinker: But on the other hand, think of all the new things you were learning. [laughter]

>> Gary Tsudama: So, then I wrote to Miss Humbargar. "So since I had qualified I had all my requirements in Stockton can I get a Stockton high diploma?" So she went and talked to the principal and they had a meeting, they said yes. So, then she wrote back and then I said "there you get Stockton [inaudible]". So, I wrote to my friends in Rohwer to write to Stockton too and I hoped they did.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Yeah, because many of you who were in school at that time didn't get your diplomas or until, you know, even 2000.

>> Gary Tsudama: Into the '50s yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, 2000 you know, so you were very; that was very ambitious of you. No, that was good. No, I tried to teach my children to do you know, you have to be forceful.

>> Gary Tsudama: Forceful, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, otherwise you don't, you know, people will walk all over you.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So, okay so you were in school. What did your, your dad wasn't doing anything; what did he do every day?

>> Gary Tsudama: They just gathered with the other Isseis and just talked and.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. So that's why he got bored naturally. He says, "I'm going to die here if we stay here."

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, we had to move. I told dad then; "this is '44, the war is slowing down and it may end pretty soon." He said, "No I got to get out of here."

>> Carlene Tinker: So, at that time was it sort of easy to get out of camp if you?

>> Gary Tsudama: mmmm.

>> Carlene Tinker: Because right at the beginning they were actually starting to encourage people to leave is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: So, at that time, I don't know how but that friend that he made in Stockton Delta found our address and wrote my dad a letter, "Why don't you come up to Alamosa, Colorado? " And dad says "Oh boy, we got a place to go. He says he got a house for us and everything." So we packed up and left. When we left, each one of us got 25 dollars.

>> Carlene Tinker: Ooh, big sum.

>> Gary Tsudama: Plus the ticket to Alamosa. So, my sister was scared stiff. Then we went to the station then the bus that took us there just dropped us off and took off.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: So we didn't know where we went. We got to the station and we got there, we had our tickets so they told us where to go and there was no discrimination at that time.

>> Carlene Tinker: Well partly I think a lot of us were able to avoid discrimination because people didn't know who— much about—

>> Gary Tsudama: Who we were.

>> Carlene Tinker: Japanese.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right? We were unfamiliar.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right. And then, so we got on the train and bump, bump, bump, bump, bump we went. And then we went to Alamosa and we got off and the folks met us and they took us to our home. No electricity. No running water.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Outhouse. We should have stayed in camp [brief laughter].

>> Carlene Tinker: And life was a lot better.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Let's go back to camp for a little bit.

>> Gary Tsudama: Okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, so how many blocks were; you in Block 30 right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Thirty.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, the group from Stockton and then some surrounding areas. How many blocks were there?

>> Gary Tsudama: Seventy-six I believe.

>> Carlene Tinker: How many?

>> Gary Tsudama: Seventy-six.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my gosh. What was the total population of Gila? Are you, but is that because there were 2 Gilas; Gila 1 and?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, 1 and 2.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Block 1 to 27 was camp one Canal.

>> Carlene Tinker: Was that the one you were in?

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: I was on Block, camp 2 from 28 to 76.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow. So what was the population at the maximum? Probably about...

>> Gary Tsudama: There was, it was one of biggest city in Arizona next to Phoenix.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. I can imagine and like over 14,000.

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh yes. Oh yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Something, 17 [17, 000] I believe it was.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah something like that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow. Okay, so they had these blocks setup and you described a little bit about how they were oriented and in between the blocks you had the bathrooms and the laundry, the mess hall, and then the did you have a rec hall?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. A rec hall.

>> Gary Tsudama: The first building was a rec hall.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then barrack 1, 2, 3.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: All the way up to 14 and then the mess hall.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then the bathrooms are in between.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. I know that because these were communal bathrooms and so forth, there was very little privacy.

>> Gary Tsudama: Privacy; no privacy.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah. And so.

>> Gary Tsudama: In fact, the ladies poor thing, no curtains or nothing, just open. Yeah, the men folks didn't give a darn, you know. [laughter]

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, so it was horrible.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Was that ever an issue with your mom and your sister? Did they ever complain about that?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes they did, right away.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: As soon as they went in and came back and they said; see each barrack, I mean, each block had a block manager but when we first got there, there was no manager because no one was appointed yet. So, they start talking about themselves and they said, well we got to put up some kind of a partition. So the men folks went up and got scraps and built a thing to hang cloth, you know?

>> Carlene Tinker: So they could be separated.

>> Gary Tsudama: With the cloth this way, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. A little bit of privacy.

>> Gary Tsudama: Privacy, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: [alarm sound] I know I've read about women who would wait until very late at night.

>> Gary Tsudama: Night. Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: So that they could go shower.

>> Gary Tsudama: Shower.

>> Carlene Tinker: And go do their things then, yeah. I just can't imagine that. Of course, I was such a young person it probably didn't even occur to me it was a problem. But for people like teenagers and adults obviously that would be a problem.

>> Gary Tsudama: See, like in Stockton High School, the ladies had stalls in the shower. You know, but men folks was just an open place.

>> Carlene Tinker: Open, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: To shower and.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Now, what about meals? What was mealtime like? Did you have certain meals and you had to eat with your block or could you go to other blocks?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, you couldn't. You were supposed to eat within your block, but as time went on, you could sneak over to your friend's place and they recognize you, you say oh I'm from 30. It's alright.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right? What was the food like? [brief laughter] Is that another story?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. It was saltpeter.

>> Carlene Tinker: What's saltpeter?

>> Gary Tsudama: That puts your desire down.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: They put that in the food? How do you know that?

>> Gary Tsudama: Umm, It tastes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Really?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. So, but then that didn't do it so people did have babies in the camp, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. And then I know we ate horse meat. We had ribs that big.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, I remember my mom talking about that.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: But then when you're hungry it's cooked so you eat, you know.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did they try to provide food that you were used to eating or did, like rice and?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, they had rice yes; different meals they had rice.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, but initially I remember reading people, reading about people saying oh my gosh we had rice with fruit on top of it and obviously that just wouldn't be satisfactory.

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah. So, so food was a problem and you had to eat with your block supposedly.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right. But that thing, that's what broke up the family. When we—at home we used to eat with the family. In the camp we ate with our friends.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. So that, that is an impact or an effect that probably people didn't realize. Of course, the people in charge didn't care about a lot of things right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: But, yes that was the breakdown of the family was in the beginning.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, family right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did that ever get—regained? I mean, when you got out of camp.

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh yes we start eating together.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So, tha—that's a big thing.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Okay, did you have church—

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: in camp?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. In fact, one of our reverend that was here, was in Gila. In fact, he's the one that married my brother and my sister-in-law right in our barracks.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Because uh— my brother was stationed and he was on the East Coast and he came home and he says, I'm going overseas. So he went to talk to the family, because they're, my brother's fiancée was same block with us, so he went and talked to them and they said, yeah okay. So they got married. It was the same reverend that was here. [in fresno]

>> Carlene Tinker: [inaudible].

>> Gary Tsudama: That was nice, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Yeah, but you were not, you didn't get married until you came back here?

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: So were there Christian churches as well? Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yes. So, it sounds like from what I gather or from what you're saying and other people have said, they tried, the War Relocation Authority, not the War Department, but the War—

>> Gary Tsudama: War Relocation.

>> Carlene Tinker: Relocation Authority tried to make life as comfortable as possible.

>> Gary Tsudama: Comfortable as possible, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that true?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes, I believe so.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did you ever feel like you— obviously with guards around, yeah, did you ever feel like you were in prison?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. Because Block 30 was the edge of the camp and out there was desert all the way around and there was a fence with barbwire on top. And in the corner, the corner one in between there was a guard tower and they had machine guns facing in.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Did they ever shoot anybody?

>> Gary Tsudama: Not that I know of. Not at.

>> Carlene Tinker: Not at your camp. There have been a; there were incidents at other camps.

>> Gary Tsudama: Incidents, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right? Yeah. Now did you ever try to challenge any of the guards? I know some, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: No. When we were in Stockton Assembly Center like our group went up to the fence and right across the street was a defense manufacturing, you know, so they're working 24-hours and we're in there, the guard tower is right up there and we're talking oh how nice it is to be out there driving on that car and go to movie— this and that. Finally, the guard got tired. And you hear a “click—click” on his rifle.

>> Carlene Tinker: Whoa.

>> Gary Tsudama: And so we.

>> Carlene Tinker: You hightailed it out.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. We were ornery that way you know [brief laughter].

>> Carlene Tinker: um—Getting back to Gila. You were in Gila 2 is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: The people who were in Gila 1. Where did they come from? Were they from Los Angeles primarily or?

>> Gary Tsudama: No. I think they were all Central Cal.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Some of my friends were in camp 1.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, but that friends, I didn't know they were there until after we came back to Fresno. Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, uh— what about sports? Was sports a big thing at camp?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. Big thing.

>> Carlene Tinker: What kinds of sports?

>> Gary Tsudama: Baseball.

>> Carlene Tinker: Baseball.

>> Gary Tsudama: Basketball.

>> Carlene Tinker: Basketball.

>> Gary Tsudama: In fact, see this is Block 28, 9 and then goes on and Mr. Zenimura. Have you heard of Zenimura? He was in Block 28.

>> Carlene Tinker: What's his first name?

>> Gary Tsudama: Zenimura, Ken.

>> Carlene Tinker: Kenji?[phonetic]

>> Gary Tsudama: Ken-something yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And he went out there and cleared a baseball field.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: He went out and bunch of kids went out there picked up the rocks and the pebbles; they cleaned it all up. And then he got, I don't where he got the garden hose, but it was a long garden hose he got out there and watered it down and made it a baseball park. And that small grandstand there on the eastside and he was really like a—there's a book about him [audio issues]. That he was the Mr. Baseball of America.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. As I recall, I think he was the one who played in the—in Japan didn't he also? But he was amazing athlete is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, he was.

>> Carlene Tinker: And then also when; didn't he have his picture taken with Babe Ruth when Babe Ruth came?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that the one?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: That's the one.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: In fact, both of his son was in Tokyo, I mean, Hiroshima playing for the Hiroshima Carps professional team.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then so that was after the war naturally.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, right. I kind of remember he was in Japan in the '20s or something.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Like that, is that about right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, so sports was a big thing. You had church, you had schools. So it sounds like they were trying to; they, the War Relocation Authority was trying to make camp reasonably comfortable.

>> Gary Tsudama: Comfortable, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: You know? I think a lot of the directors, in fact in our camp, they were very supportive of the relo—re—internees I should say. They didn't want them to stay in camp and they wanted— I remember that they tried to get people to move as quickly as they, out of camp is that true in your camp?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. Just so long as they had a job out there.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, right.

>> Gary Tsudama: Or if you went to school.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, they let you out.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. You know, it's interesting some people think it was just horrible, but depending on the director [of each relocation camp] and the atmosphere could have been very nice, you know.

>> Gary Tsudama: Nice, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And our camp was like that. So, let's see. What else can I ask you about camp? Um, Now, what did the women do? I haven't asked much about your mother and what she just kind of sat around too?

>> Gary Tsudama: She, yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. That's where the boredom began. So, naturally both the parents said, "We got to go."

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, right, right. And what about your—your siblings? Well some of them were already out.

>> Gary Tsudama: Out, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Married or in the service, but some of you were still in camp, you were going to school.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: What about your sister was she going to school?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: She was.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, okay. Okay, toward the end of camp then the loyalty question came up. How did you respond to that? Do want to explain what the loyalty question was?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. The first question, not the first, the 20.

>> Carlene Tinker: Twenty-seven, 28.

>> Gary Tsudama: Twenty-eight; 27 was, "would you, is your loyalty towards Japan?" And then the second section question is, "are your loyalty to U.S.?" So, I said "no and yes." And people said "no, no.". They went to Tule Lake and there were, some of them were eventually sent to Japan.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: And some of them, they want to go, so they stayed in Tule Lake. So that became one of the biggest camps.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Right now. What was the intent of the loyalty question? It really wasn't supposed to be administered to everybody as I recall, but by mistake it was.

>> Gary Tsudama: It was.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wasn't it supposed to be?

>> Gary Tsudama: Sixteen [years old] and above.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, something.

>> Gary Tsudama: Something like that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, weren't they trying to separate out those who would be eligible for the draft?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, people that said “yes, yes” they volunteered right away. I don't know if they made them volunteer or did they go on their own.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: But most of them went on their own I believe.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, so from camp your parents went to Alamosa. When did you get into the military? Was that a result of this no, yes or?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, no, no.

>> Carlene Tinker: No.

>> Gary Tsudama: I was in Colorado.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then I got my draft notice. Ah, [brief pause] In '45 I got a draft notice and so my brother and I went to, they sent us up to Denver to get our physical and we both came out 4F.

>> Carlene Tinker: In '45 you were?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Why do you think that was the case?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, I had flatfoot. So, I said thank you very much. And my brother came back and schizo—schizophrenia. We didn't know what that was at that time. We came home, read it in the dictionary. Got a laugh.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wait a minute. They said both of you had were schizophrenic?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, no my brother.

>> Carlene Tinker: Your brother had?

>> Gary Tsudama: [brief laughter] So, I didn't know how they found out or the way he talk to them, but then they put classified as schizophrenic.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wait a minute, I have to explore that a little bit more.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: What exactly did he say? Do you [know]?

>> Gary Tsudama: I don't know.

>> Carlene Tinker: Isn't that something?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Now that's curious. Both of you came out 4F and I think my dad came out 4F. Do you think that they classified you 4F because they didn't want you in the service?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, see because if you got flatfeet you're going to cause a lot of problem in the service, because it would hurt.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, then you go to medics.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, I see.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, it.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, that was the reason.

>> Gary Tsudama: I think so.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Did you have flatfeet?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. I have flatfeet.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: But it didn't bother me at all.

>> Carlene Tinker: You were still able to walk and carry a gun.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, so I told them “thank you” because this was World War II. I had 3 brothers in the service already. So, I said “thank you”. So, my brother then went to University of—in Utah, LSD University; Latter Day Saints.

>> Carlene Tinker: What was the name of it?

>> Gary Tsudama: Latter Day Saints.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, Latter Day Saints, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: He went there. Take up accounting and I stayed on the farm, and my other brother got drafted. He went to 442 and Jack went to 442, and as soon as he went to 442 my brother Jack the one that was drafted in October, they formed a company and they said, there's 4 squads. One is a recruits, veterans, veterans, veterans. So the captain came out and says, I need volunteer for tonight's patrol. The 2, 3 and 4 squad stepped backwards, that left the recruits standing there by themselves. Thank you [bell sound]. So, they got—they got sent on the patrol and that's when my brother they were going out on patrol and they got bomb coming in so they, there was 3 of them that jumped into a bomb hole.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: There [inaudible] and then my brother, a bomb exploded right above them. He got a concussion in his eye, it busted his eye.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. Then but the fellow next to him got killed. And then the other fellow was injured too. So, their term on the combat was short.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, they were all sent back home, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: But he lost his eye, so he was sad.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: But the one that died, he was worse yet you know.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Let's stop right... [audio stopped and starts again]

>> Gary Tsudama: So my brother Jack got that concussion and lost his eye. My other brother was in Italy assigned to 442, but they got a weekend pass

>> Carlene Tinker: Ooh, lucky.

>> Gary Tsudama: So they went up into Northern Italy skiing.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: He'd never skied before. So, he was going down the slope and a guy came across him in order to avoid him and he went this way and he fell and he got a scratch or something, so the [brief pause] so army people there so "medic!", so they sent him to the medics. They patched him up and then the nurse says, "I'll see you in here tomorrow again." He said, "No you won't" my brother says. Well, the next day same thing happened. Going down the slope a guy cuts across. This time here, hit a tree. He wrapped himself around a tree and then there was a leg down here and his body is there, oh he said, "There must be another guy there." So, he touched it and that was his own leg. He had a cracked leg. So, he got sent home. [brief laughter]

>> Carlene Tinker: Boy. Sometimes, you know, luck has you in mind.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's amazing. So, when did you actually; let's see you got drafted later though.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: When was that?

>> Gary Tsudama: When the Korean War came out.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, the Korean War.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then they short of manpower. So they reclassified me, sent me to Denver again. This time, the captain looked and said "yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. You're 1A."

>> Carlene Tinker: All of a sudden [brief laughter]. What year was that, Gary?

>> Gary Tsudama: That was '50.

>> Carlene Tinker: Fifty, okay. Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: It's about October '50.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, they needed guys so that's all of what—

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: All that needed to get you reclassified.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, the draft board sent me a notice and I got drafted. Then we went—went to Fort Leonard Wood Kansas [city], Missouri for processing.

>> Carlene Tinker: What was the name of the fort?

>> Gary Tsudama: Fort Leonard Wood.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: In Missouri. Then we were processing, we were there a week and then we're just lying around just waiting for the orders to come. They didn't let us go outside. Then they came in, "Anybody with the last name starting from A to M go to Camp Polk Louisiana; from N to Z go to Camp Cooke California; Hey! [brief laughter]. So, we were lucky.

>> Carlene Tinker: Where was Camp Cooke?

>> Gary Tsudama: You know where Vandenberg Air Base is?

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah. Is that?

>> Gary Tsudama: That was Camp Cooke before.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh!

>> Gary Tsudama: They change it to Camp Vandenberg.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, I didn't know that.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: So we were there training up and down the hills, up and down the hill and then finally we got the order. We were going to march from Camp Cooke all the way up to King City.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow, that's quite a distance.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes, with a food pack and a rifle, we were going to march. So that night we were packing away and then then the order came down, there's been a change of orders. So we waited and we waited, we got on the train. We didn't know where we were going. We got up to I forgot that Port of Embarkation in the Bay area. We were there and we got loaded onto the ship and then we still didn't know where we were going, but when they went out of to the San Francisco Bay, I said well we're going far East we knew that for sure and halfway over the

captain says, "Here it is. Here it is. We are going to far East." That was something new. You know? So, we went on and on and on and we landed and then they were supposed to get in Class A uniform. So we got dressed and then my friend and I were looking over there, but this is 3 AM; we're looking over the ship and they were all people bustling around with forklifts and everything, went to the other side, there are people fishing there on the boat. And then we listened, hey my broter—my buddy Jim, "Listen to that. They're speaking Japanese." So, we said "Where are we?" Yokohama [brief laughter]. So, we boarded the train and went up to a small Japanese army camp, Jinmachi. That was north of Tokyo. So we stayed there 3 months and then we got sent over to Camp Sendai.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh that, you mean still in Japan?

>> Gary Tsudama: Japan.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah on the coast, north coast.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. So, from Camp Sendai we got words and then, uh— just before we got shipped out my captain got; we were on the Line Company. The Line Company were the first defense and we were, my captain got sent out to battalion. The Line Company is up on the hill, battalion is down the hill.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, I see.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then, "Hey Toose" [assumed spelling]; he used to call me Toose; "Hey Toose why don't you come with me?" "You know, captain I got 31 points the rumor is if you get 32 points you were going back to state." "Don't believe that BS" he says. "Come with me." "Let me think about it." But that let commander came down, "Tsudama." I said, "Yes, sir." "Captain Bridge wants you down there." "Yes sir." And I went to battalion. We got on the ship. We went all the way around and we got to, ah— what's that, Seoul?

>> Carlene Tinker: Seoul, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Landing. And then we parked, boat stopped in the middle of the bay; "How come we're stopping in the middle of the bay?" We found out that tide goes 30 feet down.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Thirty feet down. So if you're on the dock, 30 feet down the boat is going to capsize.

>> Carlene Tinker: Whoa.

>> Gary Tsudama: So we had to go down there and get a paddleboat and go to...

>> Carlene Tinker: Be tendered in.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. I'll be darned. [brief laughter]

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. I said, "Holy Toledo" you know. So, were in Seoul and got on the train there and then we got shipped up north and then, uh— this sergeant— Master Sergeant, somehow or other he didn't like me because I was going up the ranks too fast. See, the division

that that Camp Cooke was 40th division, it's California National Guard. They were building that up. It was nothing there, so they were building it up and when we went to Camp Cooke, there was nothing but 16-year-old kids running the camp.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: And they were the sergeant telling us what to do, so we did whatever they said because they had the stripes. So, when we were shipping out they cried to their mother and their mother wrote "my son lied about his age", so—so they got knocked down. So all the opening was open. So as long as you're in a position, any position, if you whatever that rank is at the time when you got that rank. So I was assigned to squad 2, that's a sergeant stripe, but naturally you can't get from recruit to sergeant you just take your time. So I got a PFC and then corporal and then sergeant. This was in Camp Cooke and when we went to Port of Embarkation I was a sergeant and we went across and when they sent me down to battalion, that thing was the master sergeants.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. [brief laughter] So I got 3 stripes and 1 stripe on there and then 2 stripe[s] and then 3 stripe[s] by the time I got out. So, people say after I got out, say "What was your rank?" I said, "ah—Master Sergeant." "Master Sergeant? Two years you're BSing me" he said. So, I told him the story, they were building up the division, so they had to give ranks to some place. So, that's where it was, so. So, when we to Camp Sendai we were going down the ship. We got into Seoul, this major first what do they call him? Major sergeant or something, it's a top and he put me on duty watching the train so they assigned me to a boxcar watching it and then I was in there by myself and then when I got in there there was nothing but a duffle bag and I had to watch it and I was a sergeant.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. Way below your rank.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. And then when they went to Kumsan [Phonetic] on the east coast of Korea on the, about—about the 39th parallel my captain was a major, by that time he was a major and he was looking for me "Where in the hell is Sergeant Tsudama?" He couldn't find me. He finally found me. "Where the hell have you been?" he says. I was assigned to guard the boxcar. Oh he blew his stack. He went right up to that first sergeant and told him off and that's the last I saw of him. I never saw him again.

>> Carlene Tinker: Last of "who" did you see?

>> Gary Tsudama: That first sergeant.

>> Carlene Tinker: No, the one who assigned you to watch the boxcar. Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So he got me off and then I went to, but on the way it was cold. This is in December, New Year's Eve. It was cold. So I was freezing so I opened up the duffle bag and there was a blanket, I took it out and covered, it was a cold year so I opened up another duffle bag and got the blanket and put it on me. It was cold. So, when I stopped then I put the blanket back in, you know. And then we went up to Kumsan[Phonetic] and then we were stationed there on the frontline, but we were on the bottom so that was good.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So, now that wasn't the extent of your military experience right? What did; did you actually go to combat and?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, our frontline boys were in combat.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then I was the one, my job was to write the orders.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Which company goes out on patrol.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. So you didn't actually have to go out and—

>> Gary Tsudama: No, thank goodness.

>> Carlene Tinker: Physically fight, okay? So, when was your tour of duty over? When did you get out?

>> Gary Tsudama: October '52.

>> Carlene Tinker: October '52.

>> Gary Tsudama: Two years I was in.

>> Carlene Tinker: Two years there. Okay, at that point then you were released and then you could come back to California? Is that what you did?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And then that's when you came back to Fresno because you had a brother living here is that correct?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: But— I had a friend in Tokyo.

>> Carlene Tinker: In where?

>> Gary Tsudama: In Tokyo.

>> Carlene Tinker: In Tokyo.

>> Gary Tsudama: We were buddies in Stockton. But he went to, in the service he went to Tokyo.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And he got discharged in Tokyo. I says, "How did you do that?" So I applied for it. He said, "Well you can get discharged if you have a job." So I wrote to him and he says, "I'm trying to build a bowling alley" he said. "Then you got a job." Well, that was months ahead you know, so I couldn't stay. So I was put on the ship to come back. But before I did that, we landed from Korea and we landed in Sasebo the tip of Japan, southern tip and then I got a pass to

go to Hiroshima and visit my relatives. And then I came back and when he gave me the pass, the sergeant says, "Oh Hiroshima you're closer to Tokyo. Go to Tokyo and get on the airplane and go home." I said, "Thank you sir." I knew he was, so he signed it and gave it to me and I'm smiling going out the gate. Some guy running up, "Sergeant Tsudama." "Yes sir." "They made a mistake." I knew right away what it was.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. So what happened? Did they take that back?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, and they said to me, "You come back here and you're going to go on the ship."

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. But you still could come back to California?

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. Yeah, yeah. So that's when you got back to Fresno because of your brother being here is that correct? Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, I went back to Alamosa, Colorado.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, oh I'm sorry.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then from there I came back.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: But, so your parents were still there at that point? So that would be 52?

>> Gary Tsudama: Two right. We came home and the next year the whole family came.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So, your dad at that point was still sharecropping?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, okay and then mom came back and so how many were still in the family; let's see, I can't remember how many were still at home?

>> Gary Tsudama: Okay, my brother, Min [assumed spelling] and my sister.

>> Carlene Tinker: Just 3 of you?

>> Gary Tsudama: Just 4 of them.

>> Carlene Tinker: Four of them.

>> Gary Tsudama: My mom.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Yeah, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: They were all.

>> Carlene Tinker: So you came back and where did you reside and where did you live here in [bell sound] in Fresno?

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh, I was in E Street.

>> Carlene Tinker: E Street?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right across from the church.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, my brother had a house there.

>> Carlene Tinker: And then what did your dad do? Did he start another grocery store or what?

>> Gary Tsudama: No. He came back, by that time he was, well I guess he was.

>> Carlene Tinker: Probably in his 60s [years old].

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh above that, yeah, '55. Yeah, he wasn't ready to open up a store.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: But he came back they got a farmhouse, they rented a farmhouse and he went out to work in the field again.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Pruning and this and that.

>> Carlene Tinker: Where was the farmhouse located?

>> Gary Tsudama: On American Avenue off of 99.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: But they had, they still had their house across from the Buddhist Church on E Street?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, that was my brother, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, now let's jump ahead and so let's resume what happened to you. You came back to Fresno and you, at the beginning of our interview, you talked about getting, uh, going back to school, on the GI Bill.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And you successfully completed a course in AG Business is that right? And you tried to get a job in that, so what happened on that?

>> Gary Tsudama: I couldn't get a job, so then my second major— minor was accounting. So I went into accounting. I got a job right away. So which was good.

>> Carlene Tinker: And who were you working for when you were an accountant?

>> Gary Tsudama: Better Buy—

>> Carlene Tinker: Better Buy?

>> Gary Tsudama: Grocer.

>> Carlene Tinker: What was that?

>> Gary Tsudama: A grocery wholesaler.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right on Ventura and what's that— H Street.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. They had a warehouse.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, so how long did you work there?

>> Gary Tsudama: I worked there 4 or 5 years.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, and that's when your buddy called you and said, oh they're opening up these positions at the.

>> Gary Tsudama: The Post Office.

>> Carlene Tinker: Post Office.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, and you were making 5-something an hour which was a lot of money.

>> Gary Tsudama: A lot of money, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: A lot of money at that time. I, that's the late '50s right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. I remember I was going to school, high school and I was making 80 cents an hour in the '50s. So, 5 dollars an hour that was huge.

>> Gary Tsudama: That's a big yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, so I could see why you wanted to stay with that.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes, stay with that, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: But then, why did you join the Post Office? Why did you finally decide to do that?

>> Gary Tsudama: The benefits.

>> Carlene Tinker: The benefits.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: You didn't get that with your accounting—

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Job?

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, benefits are a huge thing.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes, it is.

>> Carlene Tinker: Definitely. Definitely. It's worth even taking a lesser amount of money like you did.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: See, because my wife was working. She was working at the Fresno Bee at that time and then she went; and then she got a job at the IRS.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Which was better 'cause she got better benefits.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Gary Tsudama: Fresno Bee had benefits, but it wasn't as good as a—

>> Carlene Tinker: As the IRS, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: National [inaudible]

>> Carlene Tinker: I haven't really asked much about your wife. How did you meet her? You married in 1957 as I recall.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right. Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And how did you meet her?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, my brother— my sister and brother-in-law living in Fres—Reedley and he says "Gary", my sister says, "I know a girl just for you." [Brief laughter] So, I accepted a blind date because it was sister and then they came and picked me up and we went to pick up this girl and we went to her brother's place to pick up the girl and they were having a party in there. It was her birthday party and I went in there and I took her out of it.

>> Carlene Tinker: [laughter]Oh, dear.

>> Gary Tsudama: But at least she said it was alright, you know, so. Yeah, but then I didn't feel right taking her out of her birthday party.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, no.

>> Gary Tsudama: At that time, I met her whole family because they were all there. Oh my god.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, how long did you date though before you got married?

>> Gary Tsudama: Five years.

>> Carlene Tinker: Five years!

>> Gary Tsudama: [brief laughter] Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. So, you were in your mid 20s when you met her?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay, and then you didn't get married 'til you were around 30. [background noises]

>> Gary Tsudama: Thirty-one.

>> Carlene Tinker: Thirty-one.

>> Gary Tsudama: 33—Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Then you started having children, yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes. See, cause we as all couples when we get in an argument we breakup and then we get together and makeup and then I wasn't ready to get married because I was financially not able to. So, she understood that which was good.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. But she was, she was working at the Bee at that time is that right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, but then she went to the IRS.

>> Carlene Tinker: When did she go to the IRS? After you were married?

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Before you?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, before. And then how many children did you have?

>> Gary Tsudama: We had 3.

>> Carlene Tinker: Three?

>> Gary Tsudama: Mhmm, two boys and a girl.

>> Carlene Tinker: And wha—what do they do?

>> Gary Tsudama: My oldest son worked for the Post Office and then he quit and started to open—do his own business somewhere with his cousin, but that didn't pan out. So he went to work for IRS and now he's in a good position. He's a manager of one department.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh very good.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, so he's doing...

>> Carlene Tinker: How old is that young man?

>> Gary Tsudama: He's getting close to 60 now.

>> Carlene Tinker: And his name is?

>> Gary Tsudama: Greg.

>> Carlene Tinker: Rick?

>> Gary Tsudama: Greg.

>> Carlene Tinker: Greg, okay. And then the other boy?

>> Gary Tsudama: Other boy, my, he's the third one. He's in San Jose and he worked for uh—Hewlett Packard for 10 years. And then he's switched over to Cisco and he worked there and he worked his way up to become assistant to the vice-president of manufacturing.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Gary Tsudama: So he had a good deal.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Is that what he's doing right now?

>> Gary Tsudama: No. He worked there for another 10 odd years and then he says, the boss told him “we're going to give you a pass. You're going to get away from work for one year with pay and after one year if you want to come back you got the same job, or if you want to go someplace else it's okay.” Well, that was 3 years ago. He still hasn't worked yet.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh and how old is that young man?

>> Gary Tsudama: He's 53.

>> Carlene Tinker: And what is his name?

>> Gary Tsudama: Todd.

>> Carlene Tinker: Don.

>> Gary Tsudama: Todd. Todd.

>> Carlene Tinker: Todd. T-o-d-d.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Well, it sounds like he's, he made a terrific expression—impression and also a very good decision.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Are they all married?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: What about your daughter. I didn't ask about her?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. Daughter is in Sacramento, and uh—she was working for Intel—

>> Carlene Tinker: uh-huh

>> Gary Tsudama: —and then she realized the kids were growing up, and soon they're going to go to college so she retired from there and stayed home and watched—stayed with the kids and have the kids [brief pause] closeness with them and then they went on to college and then another 2 kids; the 2 granddaughters are working for the state now.

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, it sounds like everybody did very well.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. mhmm

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, so they're doing good.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. I think that kind of covers, um— you know, your experiences in camp, in the military which is interesting.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: And guarding the boxcar, a very important job.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, right [brief laughter].

>> Carlene Tinker: But let's talk about, in summary, how did you feel about being relocated? I know at the time you said “it didn't mean much”, but then when you say those signs posted on the lamp posts, that you had to be evacuated then you became very bitter.

>> Gary Tsudama: Bitter, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that true?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah. So, how do you feel now about it?

>> Gary Tsudama: Now, I guess time heals everything.

>> Carlene Tinker: Pardon me?

>> Gary Tsudama: Time heals everything. So I look at it that I had a great time in camp. I met a lot of new friends that scattered all over California and the states. So, I look at that brighter side.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Otherwise, if you don't, that can be self-destructive.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right? Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: I think so.

>> Carlene Tinker: And again, that loyalty question, that was an interesting thing that you said yes, I mean no-yes and you avoided being repatriated.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah. What about the JACL? The Japanese-American Citizen's League? Do, how do you feel about that organization?

>> Gary Tsudama: Well, right at the beginning, I hated them.

>> Carlene Tinker: Why is that?

>> Gary Tsudama: Right when the war broke out, to my understanding they were the one that said "This person is a community leader; this person is a minister; this person is a bigshot; these persons were picked up and put to camp."

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. They were actually responsible for identifying people that the government picked up.

>> Gary Tsudama: That's—

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that what you're saying?

>> Gary Tsudama: That's right. That's the way I thought. That—So I never joined the JACL. I support them when they have programs going on, but a...

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, I, from what I read or heard about the JACL, they thought going to camp was our way of demonstrating our loyalty. Is that true?

>> Gary Tsudama: That's [multiple speakers].

>> Carlene Tinker: Isn't that what?

>> Gary Tsudama: That's what they said.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah— but to uproot us from our life.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: I don't think that's right.

>> Carlene Tinker: No.

>> Gary Tsudama: And that may happen again.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah that's the scary part.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: You know, with the current government and their opinions—its opinions about immigrants and—

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And different religions and so forth.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Uh, and people talking about, uh— we have references. People even now are talking about, you know, the FDR was right. You know, he put us in, put these people in camp

and or camps, you know, maybe that's a good idea. That's really scary. That's really scary. You know, because they're violating our civil rights.

>> Gary Tsudama: Rights. Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Let's see.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then they didn't really get into the [brief pause] finding out why we were put in camp. They thought we were spies. [brief pause] So, but there was no espionage at all, not one and yet we were put in a camp and one general knew; one general I forgot his name, he knew that we weren't uh, we were just like any other person. He got, but he got outvoted.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Yeah, you— yeah a lot of those things are coming out now. They, they were hidden for so long. They were not, they were overruled but...

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: People like Dewitt, you know, and those people and there was no evidence of sabotage or spies and so forth. Yeah, it is amazing what how just so few people will influence the government to do such a dastardly thing.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: As relocation, you know? Because, you know, and also the people in Peru, you know.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: The government in Peru was trying to get rid of their Japanese.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And they had this deal with FDR.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that, but that's what I remember.

>> Gary Tsudama: That's what I hear.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that correct? Yeah, do you remember that too?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes and they got sent up to U.S. and they were supposed to be the pawns to get shipped to Japan in exchange of prisoners or whatever and that was wrong too. Now they're fighting to get, uh... what do you call it... [redress]

>> Carlene Tinker: Reparation? Yeah. Oh, and I didn't think about that, yeah. That brings up the reparations, uh, uh. In the '80s, President Reagan and a group of people were responsible for the reparations which was a financial payment right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Payment right.

>> Carlene Tinker: How much was that?

>> Gary Tsudama: Twenty thousand.

>> Carlene Tinker: Twenty thousand and you had to have been in camp, right?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yes.

>> Gary Tsudama: No, no.

>> Carlene Tinker: You didn't?

>> Gary Tsudama: Just so long as you moved out of California and went to some other place on your own. Like my brother-in-law in Reedley they were farm labor or contractor. They went from Reedley to Idaho. They didn't go to camp.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh and they got the money?

>> Gary Tsudama: Uh-hum.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, I thought you had to be actually in—

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: —camp.

>> Gary Tsudama: no.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'll be darned. Huh.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah. Just so long as you voluntarily went out of California.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that right? Okay, now some people were, even the Japanese people; Japanese Americans who were affected by relocation, they refused the money. Yeah, I've heard that. Isn't that amazing?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes, it is.

>> Carlene Tinker: I mean with my way of thinking I think that's amazing. It may have been the influence of the JACL, you know, who said that you know the government did the right thing to us and I'm not sure. I may be mixing up the facts.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, I never heard of that, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: But I know some people refused it. Yeah, so. When you came back to Fresno was there a lot of outward discrimination or—

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: —Prejudice like down...?

>> Gary Tsudama: No. When I came back to Fresno, my brother was working for Earl Hill in Fowler, Ford sales and my brother was working there also and then he asked them if I can work there part-time. They said, "Sure." And I went to work for them part-time before I went to school. So, he was a nice man.

>> Carlene Tinker: Mhmm, so you didn't, see when I was growing up and coming back to California, like I told you my parents had a petition signed to trying to get us out of the

neighborhood. Even when I, right after camp I moved to Denver before we came back to California. Kids would throw stones at us and all that kind of stuff.

>> Gary Tsudama: In Denver?

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, I lived in Denver right after camp. Yeah, and so when we came back to California, even when I was going to college I was still feeling discrimination. So, you are, that's an—that's an, a very nice story to hear that you didn't have any problems here in Fresno.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: When I was going to college at UCLA, we would try to eat at local restaurants and they wouldn't serve us and this was in the late '50s.

>> Gary Tsudama: The late '50s.

>> Carlene Tinker: Late '50s, so my experiences are a lot different.

>> Gary Tsudama: Different from mine.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. You couldn't rush for a sorority unless you were going to rush for a Japanese or an Asian sorority. You know, that kind of thing.

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh my gosh.

>> Carlene Tinker: So my experiences are a lot different [brief laughter] Okay, so in general, you went from being very bitter about relocation, I hope I'm saying this correctly, but now you said time heals and you know you did the best you could. You made the best of what it was like and so, is that, am I...

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Paraphrasing that correctly?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes, very good.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. So, a lot of us had that experience. It's something that has scarred a lot of people, you know. I have an aunt who is very bitter and her brother on the other hand a few years younger, he was not as influenced or impacted like she and he's not as bitter as she. Yeah, so it's interesting to compare our stories and this is why we're doing the Oral History Project.

>> Gary Tsudama: Right, mmmm.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay. Do you have any other things to add that I may not have covered that you would like to say at this time?

>> Gary Tsudama: Did I tell you about my brother Jack? He was in the service in October '41 when the war broke out. He was at Fort Ord. When the war broke out, they segregated all the Japanese soldiers and then they put them into dorms at Santa Clara University.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then they were going through training on the field there and then they got shipped to—uh, Texas. It was, there was 2 camps [phone ringing]. And then they got shipped

to Fort Hood or Camp Walters in Texas; one of those 2 places. And when they were there, they were given a white uniform, coveralls with a letter "P" on their back.

>> Carlene Tinker: P? What was that for?

>> Gary Tsudama: Prisoners.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. This was in '41?

>> Gary Tsudama: No, this is, it was in '42.

>> Carlene Tinker: Forty-two after the war broke out.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: And then they were doing odd jobs; landscaping, pushing gardening of mowers, and this and that. And then when they were sent, when their time came to go to the rifle field, you know, to shoot? They were given wooden rifles.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. How...

>> Gary Tsudama: That's how much they didn't trust them.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: If they didn't trust them that much, get them out of the service.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So anyway, things like that went on. And then there was a time that there was a change of a general at that base, so this master sergeant went to the airport and picked him up and when he brought him back to the headquarters, it just happened that there was somebody Nisei in white coveralls. "Oh you got prisoners here." Master sergeant, "No sir." "Who are they?" "Japanese American soldiers." And he blew his stack. So as soon as he went in the office and when he took over the base, all the white uniforms came off.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Gary Tsudama: It went back to normal.

>> Carlene Tinker: Good for him.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Good for him. Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: So, that was, that was horrible in the service.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. That's like treating them like slaves or.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah you're right.

>> Carlene Tinker: You know, just like a slave would be treated. Oh my gosh that's terrible.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, my brother told me that and I couldn't believe it.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, now are your siblings still alive or are you and your sister or who?

>> Gary Tsudama: The only one left.

>> Carlene Tinker: The only ones left. Where does your sister live?

>> Gary Tsudama: Reedley.

>> Carlene Tinker: Reedley. What does she do? Or what did she do?

>> Gary Tsudama: What did she do? I forgot what she did.

>> Carlene Tinker: But she, did she marry and have a family?

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh, yes. Yeah, she had a 3 girls and a boy. Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah, all the girls are doing fine. The boy is doing fine, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Okay and then is her husband still alive?

>> Gary Tsudama: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: No.

>> Gary Tsudama: He died 2 years ago.

>> Carlene Tinker: Two years ago. Oh, okay. Well, let's see. How old are you again?

>> Gary Tsudama: Ninety-two.

>> Carlene Tinker: Ninety-two and still going strong.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's great. I think that's amazing. Well, I think this concludes our interview.

>> Gary Tsudama: Okay.

>> Carlene Tinker: I hope I've covered enough of the highpoints of your past. How would you like to be remembered?

>> Gary Tsudama: How would I like to be remembered? I'm a socializing guy [brief laughter], because that's what keeps me going.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Yeah, as I recall your wife past away several years ago and now you have a girlfriend.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: And what is her name?

>> Gary Tsudama: Judy Masada [assumed spelling].

>> Carlene Tinker: What's that?

>> Gary Tsudama: Masada.

>> Carlene Tinker: Masada. Okay, is she related to Sab? No, she must not.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes, no they are. Because Judy's husband and Sab's parents are connected.

>> Carlene Tinker: I see. And her husband past away?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, does she go to the Buddhist Church also?

>> Gary Tsudama: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Gary Tsudama: She doesn't go as often [brief laughter].

>> Carlene Tinker: Well you need to get her going.

>> Gary Tsudama: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: [laughter] Okay, again, thank you so much Mr. Tsudama and um, this concludes the interview. I find your story really very informative and very interesting.

>> Gary Tsudama: I hope so.

>> Carlene Tinker: I really appreciate your agreeing to be an interviewer— interviewee and I definitely think people will enjoy reading your story.

>> Gary Tsudama: I hope so.

>> Carlene Tinker: It will be an important contribution to the special collections, electronic collection. As you know we have a 146 oral histories already.

>> Gary Tsudama: Oh, good.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, this will be 147, and a wonderful one. Anyway, thank you so much and good luck to you. Hopefully we continue our relationship. Okay.

>> Gary Tsudama: I brought— I brought a [yearbook from Gila] [audio cuts off]