>> Carlene Tinker: Good morning, Mr. Nakagawa.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Good morning, Carlene.

>> Carlene Tinker: How are you doing today?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, I'm doing great. Thank you.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Well, I want to welcome you to the Special Collections Research Center. My name is Carlene Tanigoshi Tinker. And I'm actually the volunteer coordinator for this new project which we've called Issei to Gosei interview project. It actually was an idea that our head of Special Collections, Tammy Lau and I came up with a couple years ago and we started looking at the Japanese-Americans who had been in internment camp. However, some of these people are no longer alive or maybe their memories have faded too much. And so, we thought, OK, maybe we want to extend it to people who have not been only in internment camps. We wanted to find out what it was like for you like-- people like you who are Japanese-Americans to have lived in the San Joaquin Valley. OK. And Ms. Lau is actually from Hawaii. So her experiences with Japanese-Americans is totally different from ours. And she was astounded to find out some of the stories that we have to share with her, you know, about racism and discrimination. So that's how they-- the project evolved, the seed was planted. Before I start talking to you about your life, I want to tell you or tell the readers or the viewers of this interview how we came up with the name Issei to Gosei just in case they're not familiar with the names of the generations of Japanese-Americans. Isseis are the ones who came from Japan, the first generation of Japanese, who came from Japan to the United States. Most of them in the late 1800s, however, there are still a few still coming. So technically, they're Isseis as well. But the first ones came in the late 1800s. Then their children who were born in the United States were called-- are called the Niseis, the second generation of Japanese-Americans, but the first ones born in the United States. The third generation are the-- I mean the Sanseis, the children of Niseis. And I think you and I are Sanseis. Is that correct?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: That's right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. And so we're the second generation born here in United States. Our children, our Yonsei, and they're the fourth generation and the third generation born here. And hopefully, we're actually reaching out to the fifth generation, the Gosei. And after that, who knows? OK. And if this project goes and I'm hoping it will, then we'll probably go on to the

sixth generation and so forth. As I said, I'm interviewing Mr Nakagawa. And briefly before I start, I want to tell you a little bit about him as I know him and his-- some of his major accomplishments. He has written and produced books and DVDs about the history of Japanese-Americans and baseball. He's provided curricula for schools about Japanese-American history and those curricula have been adopted by several schools in California. Also, he has participated as an actor and as a producer of movies and then involved in television. And most importantly, which is most relevant for this project, he was born in Fowler, which is just a little town just south of Fresno. And his story is actually fitting our focus just what has it been like to be a Japanese-American growing up in the San Joaquin Valley. And so, I'm going to start-- Well, first of all, today-- I should say today is Tuesday, January 15th and it is 9:55 am. And as you recall, the interview will be videotaped and will sound and will become a permanent part of the digital collection at Special Collections. So anything that you might want to donate to as part of it, it would be really welcome. Not only as this is going to be important for historians, scholars and so forth, but most importantly for you, it will be a permanent record of your family's history and also give your family members more insight if not, if they haven't got it already into your family's history. OK. Are you ready to begin?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yup, I'm ready.

>> Carlene Tinker: All right. So for your identification purposes, can you give me your full name?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes. It's Kerry Yo Nakagawa.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. And is Yo an abbreviation for another name or is that what your given name?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: No, that was my given name. It's on my license. My mom-- there was nothing short. It's not like Yoshiyo or short for-- I think she just named me Kerry Yo Nakagawa. I have a feeling I come 14 years after my sister, so I think she was thinking she was going to have girl in our family or she would explain I'm the menopause baby. And-- but-- so when I was born instead of a C-A-R-Y, it's K-E-R-R-Y.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And the Yo just kind of-- she just like the Yo and so do I. So I'm very proud of my middle name. So, that's why It go by Kerry Yo Nakagawa.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. And what is your current mailing address?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: It's 4728 North Glenn Avenue in the Fig Garden District of Fresno, California.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK, OK. Your educational background?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: My educational background. I was born and raised in a small farm town, as you mentioned Fowler, which I'm very proud of because our town was just a salad bowl of cultures, very diverse. It was-- more so than any other town in this whole valley. You name the ethnicity, we had it. So I went through a grade school. We really didn't have a junior high. We just had kind of a middle school--

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- then high school. And then from high school as a proud Fowler Redcat, I went to Reedley College. And then I got my AS degree in Landscape Horticulture then transferred to Fresno State for a year. And at that time, my girlfriend/partner was accepted to UCSF in San Francisco, Pharmacy School. So I tagged along with her and go-- I went one semester at San Francisco State and was, you know, just a couple of semesters from graduating, but we ran out of money, so I had to go work which PG&E gave me an opportunity to be in the gas department as a helper and dig out in the streets for two and a half years. Then I advanced myself through the transmission and regulation, mapping. And eventually became an engineer and estimator with a company car and would take job orders out to the same guys that I would jack hammer and dig out in the streets with. So unfortunately, I never got my college degree other than junior college--

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, you don't have the paper but you certainly have the background.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, yeah. Well--

>> Carlene Tinker: Do you still have that education that you did absorb?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes, absolutely.

>> Carlene Tinker: Absolutely. What is your marital status right now?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: I've been married to Jeri Lee, formerly Suzuki, for 43 years now.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, my goodness.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. So I'm very proud that she hung in there this long with me.

>> Carlene Tinker: She is proud, I'm sure to him-- with you. And then you have children?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: We have two children, Kale Nakagawa, Kalerin, R-I-N Nakagawa which means diamond thunderbolt and Jenna Toki Nakagawa. Jenna was named after we found out later Toki was my mother's mother's name.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'll be darn.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And we didn't find this out--

>> Carlene Tinker: What a coincidence.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, a way later. Because we absolutely took the To from Toshiyo, my father, and Ki from Yuki, Jeri's mom and combined them and made her Toki. But later we find out that my mom-- my grandfather had-- was born and raised in Auburn, Washington on a dairy farm. And now, that house is a historical home which will never be torn down. So we went for a family reunion and lo and behold my mother's-- father's name was Matsutake [Matasuke Fukuda] and his wife was Toki.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'll be darn.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so we saw that one. Wow. So my son is 35. He's a senior manager for Google in San Francisco. Our daughter is a chief resident at SUNY Hospital in Brooklyn, New York.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow, a very accomplished family, all of you.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Thank you.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's wonderful. Now your occupation has been really varied so you can't just say, oh, I've been a producer, I've been an actor, blah, blah, blah. It's amazing what you have done and what you have accomplished.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Thank you.

>> Carlene Tinker: I asked you the other day if you were retired and you said, oh, heavens no. So what are you currently working on? We'll talk about your accomplishments in a little bit later here, but what are you currently working on and what do see as a future occupation?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, currently I consider myself a multimedia person. By multimedia, I think I'm involved with-- as

an author, filmmaker, historian, as you mentioned actor. So, multimedia kind of covers a lot of a different dynamics, you know, as a writer, as a filmmaker, as an actor, where basically I'm a storyteller. And so, that's what all actors, directors, producers, writers in that industry are we're storytellers. So, I don't think I'll ever run out stories and experiences and the journeys and past that I've been involved with. So that's why retirement, I can't ever see in myself really retiring--

>> Carlene Tinker: Right

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- because I don't have a straight job, an 8 to 5 situation. I'm very proud that I could, as I tell friends I get to commute down my hallway and-- because I work out of my office, out of our home. And it covers a lot of areas, I mean I do things locally, I do things on a national level, international level. So currently I'm also involved 22 years ago, we start a nonprofit called the Nisei Baseball Research Project. And the whole goal for our nonprofit was to bring awareness and education about Japanese-Americans that were in the Concentration Camps during World War II, but through the prism of baseball and our multimedia projects. So the multimedia projects really started with an exhibit that started at the Fresno Art Museum in 1996, it morphed into international exhibit when it went to the Japan Hall of Fame, Baseball Hall of Fame in Tokyo. It also has been to temporarily the baseball Hall of Fame and Cooperstown, the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wonderful, wonderful.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And just about every state in the--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- in the nation--

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, I must say personally I have gained so much from looking at your things and looking at your exhibits, it's-- you are a wonderful storyteller. And, of course, everybody else will agree with me. OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Thank you.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. Let's just start kind of where your story began with your grandparents, your great grandparents, OK?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: OK.

>> Carlene Tinker: So let's look at your father's side.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: OK

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. Now, I think you told me the other day that both your mom and your dad's side were descent-- had samurai, is that right?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Can you tell the viewers what a samurai is and what their responsibilities were?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, back in the feudal days in Japan, as my mom would preach to me that you-- when she was told us by her parents and it goes down the line generation to generation that you were born of a royal family, you were born samurai. But we will see in the coming years how weak or how strong our family's genes have gotten through you. And so as a little 10-year-old kid, I didn't want to, in the future, have our genes become weak. I didn't want to be that weak link in the chain as she pointed out. And so, of course, because I've always loved history and I'm a historian, I wanted to dive a lot deeper into our family's history especially the samurai aspect. And so one story I love to tell through mountains of research through our own families, our cousins that we're able to document and research is that back in the early days of Japan, there were the feudal lords of each region. And Lord Asano was a very famous lord that governed over the Hiroshima. Lord Kira governed over Edo or Tokyo. And so, all the different lords were under the umbrella of the Shogun, Tokugawa Shogun at the time. And so the famous story of Lord Asano which has been recorded in movies and plays in Japan is the story of Chushingura which means the story of Lord Asano and his 47 Ronin, which basically they became masterless samurai without a lord. And how that happens--

>> Carlene Tinker: Excuse me. What is a Ronin? Was that a--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, they became basically a samurai warriors without a lord.

>> Carlene Tinker: I have forgotten that. OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And Lord Asano who on a-- once they were-- all the lords were summoned to the Shogun castle, they-- and it happens even in today in Japanese culture, you like to bring gifts to your visiting host, house or in their case it was a castle and they call it omiyage. And so, the Lord Kira of Edo and Lord Asano of Hiroshima really there was a tremendous friction between the two of them. And it all came to a head one day when all the lords got together and Lord Asano presented Lord Kira with gifts. And Lord Kira refused them because he didn't feel it was worthy enough of his status. And it incensed Lord Asano so much that he pulled out his short sword because

most samurai have the long sword and the short sword, long one for a long range battling and short sword for short range. And since it was a short range but in front of all the royal families he slashed Lord Kira--

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- but didn't kill him. And so in front of the Shogun, it was in their estimations very disgraceful. So lord-- The Tokunaga--

>> Carlene Tinker: The Shogun.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- Shogun commanded Lord Asano to commit seppuku in front of all the royal families--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. And that's hard--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So he took the short sword and went two inches below his navel and thrust it in upside, it's an x to basically open up your life force or your intestines, which is two inches below your belly and in martial arts which I was involved with quite a long time is your life force. So you spill out your life force. And so the 47 Ronin, the samurai that now had no lord because he committed seppuku took him back and buried him and vowed to seek revenge at some point. So Lord Kira knowing this had the 47 Ronin followed for two years almost and they become vagrants, laborers, drunken people that Lord Asano's people felt after two years of watching them, they were no threat to Lord Kira. So almost on the anniversary, the 47 Ronin gathered back together again in Ako and went back to Lord Kira's castle in Edo storm the walls, cornered Lord Kira and his bedroom and he had a false closet where he hid but they discovered it and decapitated him, took him back to Lord Asano's grave side, they called it Sengakuji, it's in the outskirts of Tokyo, and presented Lord Kira's head to Lord Asano and to show that they--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, retribution and--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Exactly. And what's amazing is that all the 47 Ronin all committed seppuku to join their lord. And to me, it's the most amazing story of loyalty--

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- to their lord--

>> Carlene Tinker: Absolutely.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- and to get retribution but at the same time, so I have back up and tell you quick story in 1999 when our “Diamonds in the Rough,” Japanese-Americans baseball exhibit opened at the Japan Baseball Hall of Fame. We took 15 prewar Nisei ballplayers with us on a tour to Japan and to especially open up and have a special grand opening of our exhibit. And it was November 2nd, which was in Japan it's a very special holiday to celebrate the birthday of—basically of the imperial castle and the emperor. So the day after we're going to take a tour of Hakone, which is at the base of the famous Mt. Fuji, and that's-- has special family connections because my mom's oldest brother, Uncle Sam in 1991 at the age of 94, he became the oldest American ever to climb Mt. Fuji.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my goodness.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And until this day, he's still the oldest American in '94 to accomplish that, because it's a 13,000 feet up in the air. And most get elevation sickness. So, the morning, we were headed after our wonderful exhibit at the Japan Hall of Fame, I was jogging from our hotel, the Kanagawa Prince Hotel in Tokyo, and once I started running, I never stop till I get back. And I'll never forget as I was running by this shrine-- and there are many shrines in Japan and It's like cold world and the future world when you go to Japan. I felt this as they called it in Japan, a divine wind. And so I circle back and I saw this cemetery and it pull me really, this divine wind pulled me into this cemetery. And it was 6 o'clock in the morning and I remember seeing a sign with gravestones and I didn't exactly know what the cemetery meant. So, as I was leaving because all the signs were in Nihongo and Japanese, I turn to leave but I saw a sign in the distance that was in English. So, I walked over to it and it said Sengakuji, the burial arresting grounds of Lord Asano and his 47 Ronin.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So for me to haku mai dei (Take flowers to relatives grave site) they call in Japan to put my hands together and pray and thank Lord Asano and his 47 Ronin for our family's history.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Because my grandfather-- great grandfather was a Naval general for Lord Asano.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so, they protected the waterways around Hiroshima. So when he passed away-- well, not when he passed away but when he retired as a naval general, he was given land from Lord Asano. And instead of him just keeping it, he gave it back to the community and the community was so appreciative. When he passed away, they buried him in a sacred burial site called Ikari-jinja which means anchor shrine in Hakushima, Hiroshima. And so he became a deity, a godlike person in Hakushima, Japan for his generosity. And to this day, our family home is still there but looked over by the Yushida family who have generations living in that same house.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Now did he himself have a families and then that's how your mom got--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes, he's the son with Matsutake--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- Fukuda. And he started dairy farm in Auburn, Washington.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wait, this is the one who started the dairy farm?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: No. His son.

>> Carlene Tinker: His son did. Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. And his son is--

>> Carlene Tinker: Let's see.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And if I could find it real quickly.

>> Carlene Tinker: Let's see. Do I have a picture of the--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well-- this is Matsutake with-- He had 11 kids. My mom was number eight in the family of 11. And this is the dairy farm. This the panoramic. I don't know if you're going to be able to see this. But it shows the Auburn, Washington house, farm. He was very proud of everything that he had. So, you'll see here his car, his milk truck, the tractor, all the dairy cows, the home, there's a railroad trestle there that's about an eighth of the mile away where they would catch fresh salmon, drag it across to the house and they even had a smoke house to smoke the fish. So, again--

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, is Auburn on the coast or it’s inland isn’t it--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: It's about 20 miles south of Seattle.

>> Carlene Tinker: And I was going to ask you about that. How was that they went to Washington? I thought most of the immigrants came through San Francisco, is that true or am I mistaken?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, they usually did come through to San Francisco but Seattle was another port.

>> Carlene Tinker: Was that another entrance?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. And of course, you know, having so many children, you know, the dairy farm is 24/7, 365 days a year. So my mom would tell me how they would have to milk the cows, make cheese. Even into her 90s most of our sister hated cheese, hated milk. They did like ice cream, no? But it's because of--

>> Carlene Tinker: Maybe they were lactose intolerant or something.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. Yeah, I think it was--

>> Carlene Tinker: It's not a typical Japanese thing?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, she always remembered how smell-- the smell--

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh I see.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- of the cheese and the milk and having to milk the cows. And her job was to wash the mud off the salmon that came out of the green river because our uncles, her brothers would catch such huge fish that they would have to drag it all the way home about an eighth of a mile away. And then her job was to take all the mud off, scale it and put it in the smoke house.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, I know. I remember as a kid, I used to have to wash the rice from my aunt and I hated it because I never could get all the talc, you know, how you're supposed to wash it, so all the white stuff, talc powder, that. And I mean that's one of the-- And it's not anything like washing the mud off of anything but that just brought up that memory. Some--some chore you had and you just got to, oh gosh.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. So we've had a number, a couple family reunions at the Neely mansion. Mr. Neely built it and I think 1894. And then my, you know, Matsutake Fukuda got in it and about to turn of the century and had it till about the Depression Era. And because of the racism and discrimination of the times, they cut his fertilizer and have-- and it killed all

the corn which, of course, was the food for the cows. And so, the cows died and so like the Grapes of Wrath, he had to pack all his kids up. And this photo kind of tells the story and they had to caravan and a number of cars to California. And all the families pretty much got split up. And in the Neely mansion at one point I did an oral history with my mother and she was born in this one room on the second floor and she talks about how when her mother died when she was only seven years old. She was so happy to see all the people come to visit her, pay respects to her mother because they never really got a lot of visitors other than their huge family. And so she was adopted by her natural mother's sister, who was Setsu Fujimura and Kunihei Fujimura. So they adopted her, took her to Seattle where they lived and then eventually they migrated to California and my grandmother, you know, on my mom's side, the family she open up a restaurant called Matsuno Zushi on Kern and E in Fresno. And across the street Kunihei Fujimura opened up the general store.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. Now that area that you're alluding to right now, that is what we call Japantown or Chinatown. Is that correct?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Exactly, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Where exactly is that in Fresno?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, it's the Kern and E streets and I have, I think, a photo.

>> Carlene Tinker: Do you want pictures of the store?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. I think I have a little bit and I know we're jumping around a lot but-- I just had it right here.

>> Carlene Tinker: Now, one thing I was curious about Kerry. Is that OK if you call you Kerry not--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Absolutely.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- Mr. Nakagawa?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, please.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Your mom's family was in Auburn, were there a lot of other Japanese there at that time?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes. There was a huge amount of--

>> Carlene Tinker: Were there--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- the Japanese in Auburn, Washington. And yeah there were Japanese-Americans that had-- were involved

with—oh here they are, with farming, with-- This is a photo of my mom as a seven-year-old with Kunihei and Setsu Fujimura who adopt-- basically adopted her.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right. And those people didn't have any other children, is that correct?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: She was the only one?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And once they got to Fresno on Kern and E Street--

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- this was the restaurant called Matsuno Zushi that--

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- she opened. And then across the street, Kunihei had the general store.

>> Carlene Tinker: Was that near Kogetsu-Do by any chance?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes, right across the street.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh it is right across the street?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. And here's a photo that I like to talk about. And it--

>> Carlene Tinker: Incidentally for the readers Kogetsu-Do is a wonderful place to go for Japanese confections.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. It's--

>> Carlene Tinker: And in fact I was there Sunday. It's just wonderful.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: It's been there since the '20s.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: This is my father-- grandfather's general store and if you see the little parrot on his shoulder my--

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- mom below. I-- my mom was in her late 90s. Here's some more photos of the store.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So beautiful general store and many goods for the Issei. I would ask my mom. I said, you know, see this photo mom? I said, there's a parrot there. I said, did it have a name? And she goes, no. And I said, well, most parrots talk, did it say anything? And, you know, my mom was 98 at that time. And she's, oh, yeah. And I said, oh, really? I said, what did it say? She goes, it would say, haro, haro, haro. So it spoke like my grandfather. And she says-- and it said a lot of cuss words too. But--

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. Yeah, we've talked about your mom and her family side. Let's talk about your dad. You said he was also part of a samurai family, is that correct? Do you know very much about that?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes. Well, in Hiroshima-- and I'm trying to find the, excuse me, some of the photos of the Nakagawa side. This is my dad, my Uncle Johnny, my grandma, Sasayo and Hisataro.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. All right. Name them left to right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So left to right is Johnny Nakagawa.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's your Uncle?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. There's Toshio "Dyna" Nakagawa.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's your dad?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: My dad. Johnny was born in 1900. My dad was born in 1905.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Sasayo was actually my-- Hisataro's third wife. So that's the grandmother that I grew up with.

>> Carlene Tinker: That you grew up with?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: His first wife-- she-- there's a photo of the Fresno Betsuin which is on Kern and E.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And if you notice, here is Hisataro's wife, her name was Toyo Nakagawa. She passed away when my dad was just an infant. Here's my Uncle Johnny as a toddler and they

had a baby sister, Shizuko. And this is my grandfather's wife's sister.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So he married her and then she died in Japan.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so his third wife was the grandmother that I grew up with.

>> Carlene Tinker: And what was her name again?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Sasayo Nakagawa.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So from the Nakagawa point of view, you know, we have-- I have some photos here that I want to share. This was the-- he went from Hiroshima, Japan.

>> Carlene Tinker: Your dad did.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: Or your grandfather.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Grandfather. To the big island of O La' A it's called, near Hilo. And he worked at the Puna Cane plantation and was-- Basically his job was to put wood into the boiler room so they can melt it down for sugar.

>> Carlene Tinker: Was that a frequent path for immigrants to come from Japan through Hawaii and then to the United States?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, exactly.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So his boss who was-- they call Haole or he was Caucasian--

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- couldn't believe that Hisataro wanted to leave supposedly a good job, seven days a week. And for him, it was like slave-labor. So his dream was to come to California and become a farmer, a great farmer.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. What year was this--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, so his boss told him like, if you're going to be stubborn, let me at least teach you how to read and speak English. So when he came, in 1886, he was one of the first wave of immigrants from Hawaii to come to the main land. He said, OK, since there's anti-miscegenation law forbidding interracial relationships, Alien Land Law forbidding Issei to purchase land and even anti-immigration laws forbidding them to immigrate here, I'm going to put the land, the 40 acres-- and this is a beautiful picture of the young grape vines with my grandfather and the buggy with my dad and my Uncle Johnny.

>> Carlene Tinker: And that's where that's in Bowles.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: This is in Bowles--

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- on Floral and Willow.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. Now, where is Bowles in relationship to Fowler and Fresno?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, Bowles is-- really doesn't exist anymore. There is really an old town. So the closest town would be Caruthers.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And Bowles was about 15 miles southeast of Fresno.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so, in this photo here, you see a cousin with a-- on a disk that's being pulled by a horse. So he was one of first to figure out the loophole mainly saying that I'm going to put the land under my boy's name that were born here. Although my uncle was born in O'La'A, the big island, but my dad was born in Caruthers, California in 1905.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So he was able to put the land under their names and then he recruited many other families from Hawaii to do the same. If you want the land then here-- we can put it under my kids names and then when you're able to pay me back, here's your deed to your farm.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: My grandfather started with 40 acres, ended up with 20 at the end because he-- 20 of it went to a

cousin and other families that they sponsored went on to Leighton and Caruthers, went on to amass, hundreds and thousands of acres. So I wish he would have done the same. But I'm very proud that, you know, he helped other families get a lot of acreage. And it wasn't-- like a family friend told me, a seventh generation farmer say it's not how much land he accumulated, it was what it was in his heart and, you know, how he helped others.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Now, did your grandfather actually farm all the way till World War II and then after World War II, did he come back to it?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, that's another great story. We have across the street from the Nakagawa farm or the Raven Family and Jepp Raven and his wife were very close to my mom-- grandfather and grandmother. And the story I heard from Irving Raven, Jepp's son was that when World War II came and your family have to go to Arkansas, because the line of demarcation at that time during World War II was the 99 Highway. If you lived on the west side, you went to Arkansas. If you are a Japanese-American and lived on the east side at 99, you went to Arizona. So Jepp Raven took care of our family farm and Irving said that when your families have to go into the camps first to Fresno Assembly Center and then Jerome or Rohwer, Arkansas, our dad went to the local feed store and I'm-- I was tagging along with him. And all the farmers said, you know, Jepp, you shouldn't take care of the Nakagawa farm because they're enemy aliens. And he goes, you know, Kerry, he goes-- and that was farthest from the truth because my dad and your grandfather were best of friends and neighbors, they could hardly speak English because your grandfather coming from Japan to Hawaii and then here didn't speak much. My dad was from Denmark and he came here, he couldn't speak hardly in English but they almost communicated in sign language but-- So my father told them, the feed owner and the rest of the farmers--

>> Carlene Tinker: You mean your grandfather or your--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: My grandfather.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: You know, enemy aliens, you know, do you all feel that way? And they said, oh, yeah. There's a lot of hostility now after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and you should give up that farm and not take care of it anymore. And it wasn't just the Ravens, the other neighbors were the McClurgs and they were very good to our family too. So Mr. Raven said that well

you don't think the Nakagawas have a heart in their bodies and love their children like you love your kids. Well, I guess if that's the way you guys feel, then you don't need my business anymore. And he walked out with his son Irving. And so, on their return back after three and a half, almost four years, the Ravens and McClurgs picked up our family at the Sacramento Train Station. And I remember my mom telling me that as soon as she got off the train, a Caucasian woman told her, how dare you come back to California? They had been egged and spit on by the racists and bigots of the time because they were friends to our family. Picked them up, caravanned them back to Bowles. And grandpa Raven gave my grandfather a cigar box which they thought were cigars to celebrate their return home. But as he opened it up, it was full of cash. So the Ravens and McClurgs not only watched our family farm for three and half years, Mr. Raven gave us back the profits it made.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh. What an amazing story.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: It is a, you know, only 1% can tell that story because 99% of Japanese-Americans lost everything.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Their homes, their business, their college educations.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Not to mention their dignity and pride.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: But--

>> Carlene Tinker: And so--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So that's why we really-- the Ravens are very sacred to our family.

>> Carlene Tinker: Are they-- any of their relative or descendants still alive?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Erma Mae, Irving's wife is still with us and Cheryl and Marvin Raven. And we still get together with them.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh that's-- oh gosh.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And, you know, cherish that--

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: In fact, just recently Sheryl gave the original baby blanket that my grandmother knitted for her when she was born with a sign that says "Nakagawa Brothers" that was a metal stenciled sign they found in the barn when they tore the barn down. And this was in the dirt and she pulled it up out of the ground and said, you know, your family would love these two things.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my god.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so, yeah, they were there, a very treasured part of our family's legacy.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right. Yeah, yeah. They-- The hostility and the racism during that time, you know, the people-- and like you said that it's just a very small percentage of people who were sympathetic, you know, realizing their own history and discrimination that they faced, that they were willing to help you. But, you know, there were-- I have a friend from Cortez and her father was farming in Firebaugh. And when he came back, he lost everything and had to start all over. So, I mean, that story goes on and on and repeated often, often. OK. So your grandpa had this farm in Bowles but then you were raised in Caruthers, where did Johnny and your dad, Dyna, where did they get they born-- where were they born? Were they--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, my grand-- my uncle Johnny was born in O La' A on the big island of Hawaii--

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

>>Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- near Hilo. And then my father was born in 1905 in Bowles.

>> Carlene Tinker: In Bowles? OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: But how did they get to Fowler? How did you-- your family end up with a house?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, actually it went from the Nakagawa farm in Bowles but my-- Uncle Johnny, he went to Fresno Tech High School. My dad went to Caruthers.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And we've been-- how they-- they lived on the family farm basically.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And then when the war came, they come back, you know, to the family farm and still had the family farm up into the late '60s and probably realized that I wasn't going to be a farmer and neither was my sister because my sister was born--

>> Carlene Tinker: She was born in camp, wasn't she?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: No. She was actually two and half years old. So she was born basically in-- oh Bowles didn't even have a hospital, so closer than Caruthers was Fowler.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh I see.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So she was born in a Fowler and so was I in 1954.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh on some reason I thought she was born in camp. OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, she was a small toddler. Remembers very little but she remembers a lot of the obachans, the grandmothers who would pass her around, take care of her and have--

>> Carlene Tinker: How many years difference is there between you and her?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: There's a 14 years difference between us and--

>> Carlene Tinker: And I remember you said you were a menopause baby.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: That's right. I'm lucky to be here, Carlene. I think I have some camp photos.

>> Carlene Tinker: Let's see.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, this is my sister and my dad, and my mom at Block 41-40-A was their apartment number and--

>> Carlene Tinker: But she was in camp. She was in--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Oh yeah, she's-- as you can see her here she's about two and a half years old.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, she would be my age then because I was three--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: OK.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- when I went into camp.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Right, right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, so, Is she still alive?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Sorry. Yeah, oh yeah, she's still living in Fowler.

>> Carlene Tinker: And what does she do?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: She works for the-- she was an administrator for the Fremont School for 40 years. And retired now, busy, taking care her granddaughters. So they had one son, Damon, you know, and she married Ken Yun Chinese-American and he's lived in Fowler his whole life too. He was-- he run a couple gas stations and worked at a manufacturing company in Sanger and he's long been retired as well.

>> Carlene Tinker: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. So--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Is this OK because I knocked the camera level?

>> Carlene Tinker: I think it's OK. Is it--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: You can't see?

>> Carlene Tinker: I can see and I think it's working.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, OK. Yeah, the red light is blinking

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh that's good.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: OK.

>> Carlene Tinker: I'm not confident. OK. So World War II comes and the Ravens and the McClurgs, blessed their hearts, they—they are willing to take care of your grandpa's farm. People went to Fresno Assembly Center from your family, is that correct?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Five thousand, I think, Japanese-Americans ended up at the--

>> Carlene Tinker: And where is the Fresno Assembly Center?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, it's at the Fresno Fair Grounds.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Many had to live in the actual animal stalls that are across the street on Butler.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Were--still there.

>> Carlene Tinker: Which is like animal stalls is still there.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, still there. In fact my grand-- I mean my dad on the dedication in the '80s of the Fresno Assembly Center, we were walking towards the dedication area and he pointed at some of the animal barracks and said that's where we had to live. And here he was 88 years old and he still remembered the pain of having to take his family and, you know, imagine having to live in an animal stall and from August to December.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh and the snow.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And they took a fire hoses to try and wash the manure out of the wood floors. But as you both-- as we both know in the hot scorching summers of Fresno, you know, that smell is not going to go away.

>> Carlene Tinker: No, no. No, it's deep--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And then having to deal with the coldness of the winter before you boarded that train to go to Arkansas on a four-day train ride, blinders on both sides was probably pretty devastating.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, and very demeaning. I remember you said your mother and father were married at that time, weren't they?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes. They were born in-- I mean married in 1936.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. And where did they meet their spouses?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, two brothers--

>> Carlene Tinker: Two brothers--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- married two sisters.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so, my mom was at the restaurant, you know, the Matsuno Zushi and across the street there, step dad had the general store. And at some point, probably my dad and my uncle and my grandfather paternally and grandmother went to eat at that Matsuno Zushi and my dad probably noticed, you know--

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh these two gals.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. And so my mom and dad and her sister, Alice, married Johnny and my mom married Dyna. And he

got the name Dyna because he was a pre-war Nisei semi-pro football player as well as a great sumo wrestler. And my uncle Johnny was known as the Nisei Babe Ruth. He pitched and he hit home runs. And even my grandfather played on Puna [Plantation] baseball team in O La'A. So baseball has been in our family for four generations.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. And baseball-- Japanese baseball had been segregated on-- up until when? The '40s, is that—is that too late? Japanese had separate league. Japanese met--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, all the other Americans, I don't like to use the word minority, had to play a league of their own whether you're Latino, Black, Asian, you couldn't play in Major leagues because there was a absolute color line. Unless you are White, you aren’t going to play at the Major league level. So they had to play within leagues of their own. So, here in Fresno in particular, they had a Twilight League, they call it, where semi-pro and Major leaguers would play in the same league. So the Fresno Athletic Club which is an all Japanese-American Nisei team played. You know, they were the combine teams that were all blacks that played for these cotton gin combine teams. Latinos had their teams. But in our particular case, my uncle Johnny in 1924 who went with Kenichi Zenimura, who I consider like the father, a Japanese-American baseball in California, took tours to Japan as early as 1924, 1927, 1937 on these—I really consider them our American Ambassadors for baseball.

>> Carlene Tinker: It sounds like it, yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so-- And then even in the northwest Seattle, Frank Fukuda took early tours with Nisei team as early as 1914 and 1917.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So these were our early ambassadors. You know, today's world, you know, in Major League Baseball, there's an Asian player just about on every roster. So I like in-- Ichiro and Shohei Otani, the big and huge phenom that's a pitcher and a home run hitter for the Angels, Anaheim Angels as the-- they are the Godsons to my uncle and these Issei and Nisei pre-war ball players because they introduced baseball to Japan in the early era and help make it become popular. So in 1936, it became professional in Japan, in the professional leagues. So-- But if it wasn't for these Issei and Nisei that made these early tours as well as blacks that were there pre-war, baseball wouldn't have started as early as 1936 in Japan. But, you know, somehow, our Issei and Nisei ball players got marginalized and--

especially during World War II. You know, here, they kept baseball alive. Even from behind America's concentration camps. And I think our story especially with the Issei and Nisei ball players have been marginalized and are sitting at the back of the history bus for too long. They need to be recognized. They need to have their own permanent exhibit at Coopers Town, much like the blacks and the All-American girls and the Latinos in baseball. But for whatever reason it is, we're still having to crusade and lobby to get their stories to surface in. So that's why through our multimedia exhibit, our documentary, I was able to do with Noriyuki Pat Morita. Our books, our curriculum, our movie "American Pastime", hopefully, all these and future books and films will bring this light to the surface so that they can get recognized and their story could be told.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. You've done a wonderful job, fabulous job.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Thank you.

>> Carlene Tinker: Let's go back a little bit to World War II. I wanted to talk a little bit. I don't know how much you know about your family's life in camps but there's a very poignant story about your grandmother dying in camp. Can you tell us a little bit about that? I know it's very sad but it also reflects the status of the Japanese-Americans at that time. We were obviously outcast, OK, had no identity. Could you share that with us?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well my dad-- Luckily my parent shared every question I asked because I would always ask and very curios kid. I'm the pool hall kid as you know. But they really shared where a lot of other families, the shame and the humiliation, the loss of everything was so, I think, traumatizing that they didn't want to burden the Sansei, third generation with their stories. My parents always shared the pain and the suffering and the happy times. So my dad was sent on the advance team to Jerome, Arkansas because he was the town plumber in our little town in Fowler as well as helping run the ranch with my uncle Johnny and my grandfather. So he was sent earlier like Dr. Taira was sent early. And they were-- They were there to kind of help set the camp up. My dad was a pluming expert, so he help get all the bathrooms and anything had to do with water and plumbing. My grandmother on the train ride over as I mentioned, you know, the racist of Fresno at the time had signs outside the train station saying get out of Fresno, never come back to California. And so my mom was concerned because she would peek under the bottom part of the blinders and it said, you know, she asked my grandmother, you know, what's going to

happen to us? Are we going to be treated like the Jews in Germany? And so, my grandmother told my mom that, you know, here she was a very progressive owner of a restaurant and she says, oh, we're, you know, this is the greatest country in the world. All immigrants have to pay a price. We'll go to these camps and prove how loyal we are and then we'll come back. And so, my mom that speech really resonated with her when my grandmother had basically terminal cancer and it's probably from smoking. She used to greet her customers at her restaurant with a long stem cigarette holder with a cigarette smoking. And, you know, for a woman in the 20s and 30s to smoke, that was pretty taboo, but, you know, she owned a restaurant, her husband had the general store across the street, I don't think she cared about what people thought. And unfortunately health issues came about and she had cancer. Well, a hospital is in the Jerome, Arkansas weren't sufficient enough. I heard that in the beginning, all they had was hydrogen peroxide and band aids.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So imagine having to deliver a baby or take care of person with cancer. So they sent her to Jerome, Arkansas. I mean to Little Rock, Arkansas to the hospital and my mom got to visit her a few times. And it was her chance to, you know, go to get her hair done. She said that she'd never seen southern hospitality like that in her life where after getting her hair done, after visiting her mother in the hospital because, of course, they didn't any beauticians or beauty salons in the camps, they thanked her for five minutes, you know. Well, thank you, Rose for visiting us and, you know, thank you for coming and, you know, we appreciate your business and on and on and on. That's southern hospitality. And another irony was that she got on a city bus and the-- at that time because of the racism, they had these turnstiles that said “colored only.” So all the blacks would sit at the back of the bus and all the Whites in the front section, so my mom thinking she was considered an enemy alien went to the back of the bus to sit. Went through the turnstiles and sat with the blacks. And in the middle of the street in Little Rock, the bus came to a screeching hall, the white bus driver got up went through the turnstiles right to my mom and offer his hand and said, ma'am, I'm sorry, you have to sit up front with the White people.

>> Carlene Tinker: something.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And this was an era where there was colored fountains, colored bathrooms.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So, the irony of having to, you know, deal with that situation. And then, of course, my grandmother passed away in the camp. We have a photo of her coffin and all the internees. And so in our culture, the Buddhist culture where I'm a third generation Jodo Shinshu Buddhist, we cremate our love ones. And they didn't have a crematory in the camp, so they sent her body to Hattiesburg, Mississippi. And a few months later in a Folgers coffee can, my mother got her mother's ashes sent to her barrack and she opened it up. And on top on my grandmother's ashes was a piece of paper. And so, my mom thought it was her name and so she opened up the paper and all that it indicated was the words on the piece of paper that said "Jap woman". So, you know, the inhumanities, they didn't even stop with her death, they had to just label her a Jap woman. And when my mom saw that label, that hurt, speech came flooding back into her mind saying, this is the greatest country in the world. All immigrants have to pay a price will prove how loyal you are. So unfortunately my grandmother never got to come back to her restaurant, for--got to come back to Fresno. So it was quite moving. In 1983, I went back for a pilgrimage and we went to the Rohwer Cemetery, we went to the Jerome soybean field. There's a smokestack there that still exist. But at the Rohwer Camp, we had affiliates of MBC, ABC, CBS, Jennifer Ferrar who was a protege of Walter Cronkite, was there covering it. And she-- it was the-- Ironically, the 48th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima where all our families came from. And her mother married an American GI. But when she was born here in the States, she called herself a triple handicap because one leg was shorter than the other from the radiation and the aftermath of the bomb. And she was a woman in the media which she felt was kind of a handicap. And she was in journalism, which is another in a way handicap because not too many women journalist then.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right, right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So she was intrigued by us taking a pilgrimage. So I like to always hold hands, so we made a big circle around one of the monuments. And I think I told you the story on the way over from Little Rock, it's a three-hour ride and not knowing that there were 23 graves at the site as I was being told when we were on our journey there. I said, I wish would have known that. Normally we like to take flowers in if we're going to a cemetery. I didn't know that were actual 23-- 20 Issei and three babies that were born at Rohwer where my grandparents were at. And so on the way over, I see this man on the side of this country road with a bucket of flowers. So I told our car to stop so I could run back. So I got off the car and ran over to him. And I said, are you selling the flowers? He

goes, yeah. I said, how much? He goes $5. I said, here's $10, can I keep the bucket? And he goes, yeah. So I put it in the car with me and we got to the Rohwer site. And as I was laying the flowers that this man randomly, out of nowhere was selling, ended up having 23 flowers for the 23 graves that, were there. So I remember we locked hands and did a huge circle with the governor-- mayor of McGehee County, the governor, I mean, the mayor of Denison County. All these ABC, CBS, affiliates, Stephanie Ferrar , my godmother Maria Elena Cellino was with me. And we-- I said a dedication speech basically in dedication to my grandma's spirit who never got to come back to California. And as we were ending it, this old man comes over like-- look like he just got off the tractor and broke into our circle and listened to the rest of dedication. And then as soon as it was over, we all went in every direction, you know. And yet this man took off, back away from where we were. And, Carlene, I was so curious I had to find out why he was there, so I caught up with him and I said, excuse me sir, I said, you know, thank you for breaking into our circle. I said, my grandmother died here in Arkansas. She never was able to come back to California so really a speech in her behalf, in her tribute. I said, are you representing McGehee County or Denison County? He goes, no son. He goes, I was a little kid when this camp was here. And my parents lived on the other side of this barbed wire fence. And we were so jealous of all the internees that lived in this camp because we could see that they had electricity, they had running water, they had fresh fruits coming in and out of the camp for the trucks that would go to the farms that they were raising them. And he goes, so we would throw rocks at the trucks and if any internee was close to the fence, we would throw rocks at them in jealousy. He goes-- But he goes, I'm in my 80s now and I'm a Christian and I know God forgives, so that's why I wanted to be part of your circle.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. Yeah, that's--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: To see that sincerity was super moving for me.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh yes, absolutely.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And for him, I think it was redemptive because he felt that, you know. In his early life, he was jealous and angry but now in his 80s, he wanted to get redemption maybe.

>> Carlene Tinker: Absolutely. And also this whole situation that you just described provided closure for your family and also honored your grandma.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Exactly.

>> Carlene Tinker: Really honored your grandma.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And her spirit. Oh my gosh. OK, so the war ends, everybody comes back to California. And then in 1954, you get-- you're born, all right?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And so let's-- we've been talking a lot about your family and bringing in a lot of your own things, but let's now start concentrating on you as Kerry Yo Nakagawa. OK. So you are born in 1954 in Caruthers--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: No, no, in Fowler.

>> Carlene Tinker: In Fowler, I'm sorry.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: And your father was born in Caruthers, is that?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Correct.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK, all right. So then you were born in Fowler and then you talked about yourself being a pool hall kid. What did that mean?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, when my-- after the war, my-- our folks in Fowler, we had pre-war kind of a little Japan town, there was Kamikawa grocery store.

>> Carlene Tinker: A what?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Kamikawa family--

>> Carlene Tinker: OK

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- own the grocery store. Next to them was the Tofu-ya. And Tokubos family had-- they made homemade Tofu.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Then there was the Nisei parlor which was the pool hall that my mom and dad purchased. And then next to there was my Uncle Johnny along with Shirakawa, Mr. Shirakawa

who bought the store. There were so much discrimination once they came back and hostility, again, because they were considered enemy aliens. They didn't want them back in their communities. So the Nisei farmers had no place to buy their paper trades, their sulfur, their supplies. So in that desperation, the Nisei Co-op was started which is next to the pool hall. So my Uncle Johnny ran the farm equipment and supply co-op, Nisei Co-op. My mom and dad bought the Nisei parlor and they changed it to Tom and Rosie's pool hall across the street was the Shimoda Auto Body and Fender Shop. And in front of that shop on the corner was the Fujiwara Auto Shop, you know, auto repair. So that was kind of our little J-town basically. And across the street was the train depot and north of the train depot was the Fowler Lumberyard. So I'm a Sansei, you know, third generation. I was born on July 17, 1954, so I'm 64 today. And most of the Sansei are practically around my age. And the reason why I justified that is that, you know, Nisei had to come back to so much hatred and hostility. It almost took them 10 years, a decade to get through that hostility and hatred for them to feel comfortable enough to want to start a family again. So that's why most Sanseis are, you know, my age. And most Sansei don't speak any Japanese because I think they were so traumatized and had so much of not wanting to burden our generation with the hostility and hatred that they had to feel and felt, that they wanted to raise us as American as possible. So, you know, they didn't speak Japanese to us when we are growing up. So we lost a lot of our culture that way and that we lost a lot of our heritage because they don't want to seeing a lot of Japanese things. In fact, you know, coming from a Samurai family, we have two sets of the Hina-Ningyo, royal family dolls that were made out of, not porcelain, clay which was much more valuable to this day. And because of World War II and the hatred for anything Japanese during that period, my Uncle Johnny burned our royal family's collection.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my gosh.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Luckily we had two. And my mom's collection was saved which my sister still has to this day. But-- So I really consider myself an American-- Japanese-American-Japanese. Back in the early tours that my Uncle Johnny went on in Japan, you know, there was a saying that you were either-- they wanted to learn the Japanese pre-war, would ask, why are you coming here on this baseball tours? And Frank Fukuda and Mr. Nakamura, the Seattle Asahi said, it's recorded in my book, made a great statement saying that, "We're here to learn about Japanese culture and heritage and to find our Yamato-damashii, our samurai roots because we want to prove that we're Japanese-

American-Japanese not just Americanized Japanese-Americans who could care less about their heritage, their culture. But by being Japanese-American-Japanese, we will really find out about our heritage, our culture and show that if we combine our Japanese-American culture with Japanese customs and heritage, we can produce a real superior blend of these two cultures."

>> Carlene Tinker: Absolutely.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: I feel I can identify what Mr. Nakamura and Fukuda identified with because I love our heritage. I love our culture. I want our kids and grand kids to appreciate the wonderful culture and sacrifices in the heritage and many of the-- and hopefully language, you know, that we have within our two cultures. So me growing up in Fowler, I was the pool hall kid. And growing up in a salad bowl of cultures, I mean, there was no other town, Carlene, in this valley that had this amazing, you know, kind of-- as I mentioned salad bowl of cultures every ethnic heritage that was in our town, you know, my mom that had the pool hall. Up the street was the five and dime store. Across the street was Lowe’s market, Chinese-Americans. Next to them was Sig's clothing, Sig Lehman was Jewish. The other town market was Pollock's market with neighbor Polish, the Pollock family. But we had Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Latinos, Blacks. So, I mean to this day, I don't see another town like it.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, you know that, Kerry is really fascinating. I met Mrs. Shirakawa who is almost a hundred years old now and she grew up in Fowler. And I kept saying, what, you never experienced any racism? You never experienced it. Oh no, it's just the greatest place to live. And I said, well, you know, my mom was part of a truck farming family and they move to Exeter and Visalia, and they would come to Fresno on the weekends and they would see these signs, "No Japs allowed" and so forth. And this was in the '20s. I said, when you were here in Fowler in the '20s, you didn't have many of that? And she said no. And talking to you, I'm just so impressed that-- and you said that you-- to your knowledge, no other little town in the valley is like that, is that what you're saying?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Oh, absolutely not, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. And this concept of salad bowl is a new one to me because as I grew up and so many of us thought that United States-- America was supposed to be a melting pot--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Exactly.

>> Carlene Tinker: -- that everybody would merge and become one. OK. And maybe as a child growing up during World War II and being incarcerated, I always felt that I should try to be like everybody. I didn't want to be different, right, because I was being treated differently and not in a good way. OK. So that was the melting pot concept. And as I grew up and to my days now, I'm almost 80 years old. OK. I think, oh, yeah, we should be like that. But no, I think just like you're saying, we want to recognize our heritage. We want to be like Mr. Fukuda and the other fellow you talked about. We want to find our roots and bring those to the foreground. OK. And Fowler recognizes you were growing up the salad bowl mentality which is completely opposite of melting pot. You wanted to maintain-- retain your separate identities. That's wonderful because then you're bringing your roots to you and everybody is recognized for what they are, not trying to make them like everybody else.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that-- am I--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Oh, absolutely.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. And the thing about Fowler too that always-- it says, it's so sacred to me is that because there were so many of us that were of every ethnic group, we would go to each other's homes and get to taste the ethnic foods of, you know, Armenian, Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, you know, Polish, whatever. I mean-- And that follows me today. You know, to me, music and food brings back immediate memories. And there's a common denominator and a commonality when I meet somebody that's Armenian, especially if he's an elder and ask where I'm from. And I said, well, I grew up in Fowler. I said, I grew up with many Armenians, you know, and I got to eat sujuk and eggs, basturma, sarma, kufta, my sister makes lahmajoun, and gata. And their faces light up because these are dishes, old school dishes that they grew up with.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so I know that because of that food element, because of the shared pride of our ethnic culture and heritage, it gives us a segue to find a common ground and bond with each other. No matter what, you know, our faith is in. You know I come from the belief that, you know, we all come from Saharan African roots anyway. So everybody, no matter whatever ethnic color of your skin is, your faith, we're connected somehow through humanity. And I think it's all more important

today in today's world because when our political leaders want to divide and build bridges and separate our immigrant, you know, peoples, to me is so hypocritical because the only true Americans are native and American Indians, and Native Americans. Everyone else immigrated here.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So for us now to also want to keep other immigrants out, you know, to me that's so hypocritical and the xenophobia that put all our families into the camps during World War II, the fear of foreign people, places, and things. To me, it's just, you know, you would think 76 years later, we would have learned from our past mistakes, we're repeating them again. And as I always mentioned on presentations, you know, Japanese-Americans control 48% of the cash crops in California, Oregon, and Washington. Yet the government said, no, we're putting you in these camps where you're protective custody and military necessity. Well, isn't it ironic that all the machine guns and all the camps were pointed inward, never outward for a protective custody theory that is blown there? For military necessity, I think, Carlene, it was a land grab.

>> Carlene Tinker: Of course.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Of the biggest scale and proportion.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And even in today's world era, if you follow the money, you'll usually find out the roots of why things were being done. And so, you know, the follow the money theory during Wold War II, follow the money in today's era, 2019, a xenophobia in World War-- during World War II existed. Xenophobia is happening at its worst even in 2019.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. And that's what so discouraging. Yeah, I keep thinking as I get older, things are going to get better, but they're getting worse. They're getting worse. Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. So, I'm hopeful that that with the new generations, the progressive millennials coming out, the more educated people, they don't blindly follow certain leaders like our in 1942 that, you know, thank goodness for the Ravens' and McClurgs' mentality. And thank goodness for others that step up even to this-- today's world to say, no, this isn't right. You got to--

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- you know, xenophobia is wrong.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. Well, getting back to your own history, we kind of diverged a little bit here. So you grew up in Fowler, you were pool-house kid. You-- I remember your little story about climbing up on the bar and you actually were pool shark as a little kid.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, you know, growing up in a pool hall, right? I-- There's a kind of a cute picture when I was five years old. This was my best friend Karen Lambdon that lived in the train depot across the street. And we had the pool hall. Well, I could go over to her house and play in the train depot all day. And I remember as the trains would come by, it would almost be like an earthquake because they lived so close to the river trucks. And I'd asked her, how do you sleep, you know, and she would tell me, oh, you get used to it. But she could never come and play in the pool hall because obviously minors weren't allowed where they sell beer. Although we did-- My mom and dad made hamburgers, I had a milk, you know, milk shakes, but primarily it was a pool hall. So in the back we had about eight pool tables and then three pinball machines. And so I would stack the little wooden coke bottle cases up on top of each other so I could reach on top of the table. Yeah. To shoot pool and I was so good. I was a pool shark. I would beat even high school kids. So that's how I grew up in there. And I was the Bart Simpson or the Dennis the Menace of our town. Across the street was a telephone pole. And I remember climbing it all the way to the top. And we were talking 40 feet up in the air and I was sitting at the base of it looking down watching all the people going in and out of the stores.

>> Carlene Tinker: How old were you at time?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: I was probably eight years old.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And Clark Hudspeth was our town constable and he had to come up, help me get down. And then later that summer I climbed to the top of the packing shed which was down the street from us. And he had to climb up there, get me down and, you know, as I was an adult later, I would see him and he'd always remember. He just, man, I thought I was going to not only lose your life, I was going to lose mine trying to get you down from there. But even in kindergarten, the principal would have to follow me in her car all the way back to the pool hall just to make sure I didn't get sidetracked.

>> Carlene Tinker: Sidetracked. OK. So, previously I asked you about your education and you talked about meeting your now wife

Jeri. And then you got married and you-- and she went to school. Let's talk about when you left Fowler, were you married at that time when you left Fowler?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: No. We lived in sin for eight years.

>> Carlene Tinker: But, I mean, how did you meet Jeri?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: We met at a dance.

>> Carlene Tinker: At a dance?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, in Fresno.

>> Carlene Tinker: And how old were you guys at the time?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, I was going to Reedley College, just out of high school.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And she was just going to city college. And so once we danced once, I knew--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- I want to be around her.

>> Carlene Tinker: She's Japanese-American also?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. She's a Sansei.

>> Carlene Tinker: Sansei.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Her-- She's a Suzuki George and Yuki Suzuki. George was the produce manager at McLane Market. And my mother-in-law was a seamstress for Gottschalks.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh. Are they related any to Pat Suzuki, the entertainer. Do you know?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: The singer? No.

>> Carlene Tinker: No.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: No.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, because I've met several of their-- her relatives.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Oh really?

>> Carlene Tinker: She's still alive.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. Yeah. Pat Suzuki, ironically her agent was Fred Ishimoto in LA. And Fred Ishimoto at that time was the agent for Poncie Ponce. Remember "77 Sunset Strip"?

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah, yeah, you're right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Toshiro Mifune, the most famous actor in Japan for the great Kurosawa films. And so, he took me on as a young actor. And so, to have Pat Suzuki, George Takei, Poncie Ponce, Toshio Mifune, I felt honored that he would take me on as a young actor.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. OK. So you guys, you and-- yeah, we're doing fine. Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: I just want to bring up a picture that I know is not in here.

>> Carlene Tinker: Of what?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Photo.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, OK. So anyway, you met Jeri and you started dating. You were going to Reedley at that time and she was-- was she going to Reedley school?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: She was at Fresno City College.

>> Carlene Tinker: In Fresno City?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: But then she-- Did she go to Fresno State then after that?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: One year.

>> Carlene Tinker: And then?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And then she applied to UCSF's Pharmacy Program and got accepted.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh she didn't have to have a four-year degree?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes, she did.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, she did?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. She did graduate from Fresno State.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. So then she got accepted at UCSF Pharmacy School?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes.

>> Carlene Tinker: So you guys decided to be a pair.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: A couple.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: And you moved to San Francisco at that time. So you were-- And I remember you said earlier that you were going to school but you ran out of money, you were just short of getting your degree.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: My degree.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Exactly.

>> Carlene Tinker: So, do you want to tell us what happened after that? You kind of got sidetracked. You went to work for PG&E.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yes. So I elevated myself from a helper. Digging in the streets and working in the gas department. And I-- Jeri graduated with her Pharm D from UCSF Pharmacy School and worked at various retail pharmacies. She worked at Joe's Pharmacy. She worked at another pharmacy and then ended up working at Kaiser Hospital. And I was an engineer and estimator. And again, just like-- I call it kind of a synergistic moment or epiphany, right? The light bulb goes on. A friend of mine was casting, a casting coordinator for, it was called VCS video casting service. Kurt Anderson was wanting to round up extras to be in a movie called "Rocky II". And the year before I was in San Francisco and I saw Rocky downtown, and I've never been in a theater where at the end of a movie, the whole audience jumps up and gets a standing ovation. That was the kind of film. And in fact it even won the best picture at that year. And so, the following era when I'm-- you know, my dad was the town plumber in Fowler and he worked with a lot of PG&E workers and he knew that once you get in with the company, that's pretty much a lifetime job because it's so secure and such a stable job, good paying job, great benefits. And when I got asked to be in "Rocky II" to be sent to the Los Angeles Sports Arena and it cost-- I was only-- and make $40 that day to be an extra and it cost $40 to fly from San Francisco to LA. To be at the Los Angeles Sports Arena and I was there from 7:30 in the morning as a background extra in their ring side. And around maybe 12:30 in the morning, that same day, Sylvester Stallone asked that he released

everybody and there were hundreds, hundreds of extras. He says, I'm going to keep about 10 of you to do some close-ups at ring side. And he picked me. So I got to intimately talk with Sylvester Stallone, Talia Shire, Burgess Meredith, Carl Weathers, and Rocky too. And they even fed me some lines. My line as a reporter at ring side was to ask Mrs. Balboa, what's it feel like to be the world champion's wife? And this and that. And so, I thought, man, I'm a-- I got lines. In fact they bunk me for extra money because I spoke lines. And then I found out the hardships of an actor that, you know, sometimes your stuff gets ended up on the editing floor. And sure enough when you see "Rocky II", Adrian Balboa is at home watching Rocky win the championship, very pregnant in front of her TV. So that's why my lines were cut out. She's not even in the ring side in the film. But what it did for me, Carlene, was to see how the film business works. And all I wanted to do after that was be in that business. So because of my knowledge as an engineer and estimator, working in the streets, digging in the streets for five years, I was probably one of a handful of guys that knew San Francisco on top of the ground with the streets and below. What every region has: sand in the avenues, clay in the financial district, red rock in Diamond Heights. And so I became an asset for-- as a location scout. And again, through a mutual friend, Jim Aubrey who was head of Paramount was casting-- doing a film called "Shannon" and wanted a great location scout. So Universal hired me-- studios to be their location scout for their pilot and this TV series. So I was moonlighting doing my PG&E work and being a location scout. And so, I got to a point with other films coming in to town, I had to make a decision. So basically I took a leave of my absence from PG&E, it was in six months time. I ended up, you know, quitting to become a person in this. I went from the most secured business in the world company to the most unsecured in film business and left and became a location scout. I was a casting coordinator, I was an actor. I did camera work, I did editing, so I pretty much immersed myself in everything. And then with Jeri's approval, we left San Francisco and we moved down to LA so that I could pursue the film business on a more permanent serious level. And that's how that happened. And then six months later, my son is born in the Hollywood Kaiser and four years later Jenna is born on an emergency in San Francisco.

>> Carlene Tinker: And so then did that work out or did you feel that, you know, this wasn't really going anywhere, I've got two kids now.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, that's where-- it finally came down to a head where I remember working on a film called "A Thousand

Pieces of Gold" and I was a Mongolian general in Montana. They chose Montana because there's no-- it looks like Mongolia, China. And after that week experience, I came back home and I have to immerse myself and learn a lot of Mongolian and say the speech. And I told Jeri and my daughter was only, maybe three or four at the time, Kale was like eight. And I told Jeri, I said, you know what, you know, our parents are both in Fresno and Fowler, I said, I got to get off this acting train. You know, I was supporting our family basically as a waiter and bartender. And I got my share of acting jobs as, you know, soap operas, young and restless, bunch of karate films. I had some positive ones, "Hill Street Blues", I was a rookie cop. On "Matlock", I was a district attorney assistant for Andy Griffith. I worked with Dennis Weaver as a vascular surgeon, Paul Sorvino as a Korean detective. But you know, I just didn't want to keep pursuing this dream and having our small children to sacrifice because for 14 years we've been living in apartments and, you know, we can't afford a home in LA. So I decided to get off that train and we move back to the valley. And Jeri was-- ended up working for a clinical care pharmacy. This is when we were in LA and then worked at a hematology, oncology cancer-- for cancer patients here in the valley. I ended up working with a friend of mine on Heirloom Quality Wooden Toys. We would make piggy banks and rocking horses and then wooden wonders had to fold up because the desert storm war started here in the US. And so people really weren't wanting to buy heirloom quality toys during war time. So, I took my multimedia skills and ended up producing a entertainment talk show called "The Chris Terrence Show" where we have celebrities, artists, musicians, come on the show that we produced here at Fresno State. And then I ended up, once that folded up, I ended up working at Channel 30, ABC as a producer for the idea factory, and show kind of a precursor to "Bill Nye the Science Guy". I produced a couple other Christmas shows. And then with a kind of a light bulb moment again, as I was coaching my son's 10-year-old all- star baseball team, got the idea to-- I saw Zenimura and Nakagawa on the back of their jerseys when they had won a championship in Kingsburg and thought, you know what, these kids who-- can I show that one too? This was kind of the epiphany moment seeing Nakagawa and Zenimura together on the same baseball field. I look back at this photo that was as a kid in our hallway and my Uncle Johnny was there with Kenichi Zenimura and I thought these kids, you know, have no clue about the four generations they're involved with and how their ancestors played with Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth, and Tony Lazzeri, and Lefty O'Doul and Jackie Robinson. So I didn't want that history to get lost, so I told my wife, I said, you know, I can't-- and I was working 14, 15 hours a day

at channel 30, I said, I can't keep this up and do-- I wanted to do a documentary. And so I said, you think we can make it with one income? And she goes, yeah, we can do it. And if you feel you have to do it, then do it. So on her approval, I tried to get funding to do a documentary and because of my inability to get funding, it went on another direction as an exhibit. And so, I was able to convince the Fresno Art Museum to put up an exhibit on Japanese-American Baseball.

>> Carlene Tinker: And where was that one?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: This was at the National Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown--

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- later. But I'll never forget Jacqueline Pilar over the phone disagreed, she goes We're doing an exhibit, a month exhibit on Japanese culture and she goes, I don't see how baseball is part of Japanese-American baseball culture or Japanese culture. I said, well, if I bring you some photos, I think I can convince you that it was part-- that it is part of our culture. So the next day I got to the museum, and her attitude was totally different, she was, oh, Kerry come on in, she goes, hey, she goes, you didn't tell me you were from Fowler, do you know that your brother in law, Ken Yuen and I were in kindergarten together and I had a crush on him. And I said, oh really? She was-- She goes well-- And she goes, so where do you want your exhibit? So, she changed her tune and I picked the space that was about the size of a little league dugout and my first experience of being a curator of an exhibit, but I had photos from the Zenimura family, the Nakagawa family, uniforms, I had artifacts. So, I set this exhibit up and the first day of our exhibit, The Fresno Bee covered it, and we had over a thousand people come through this exhibit. And that's when I knew that this was way bigger than just two family stories. So at the same time during the exhibit run, the National Japanese American Historical Society in San Francisco, Rosalyn Tonai, came down, toured the exhibit and said, would you consider having a co-production and, you know, your Nisei Baseball Research Project and NJAHS will combine and we'll make it much bigger? So I agreed and we took it up to San Francisco and I remember we worked on it till 2 in the morning till the day before it was going to open. And the first person at 10 o'clock that morning that came through and it was the Japanese Culture and Community Center at San Francisco that let us use the venue and site. Rusty Dornan of CNN came in and covered it. And I remember in her closing statement, she says, you know,

when you think about Japanese-American's legacy, she goes, you have a tendency that the legacy started after the-- red light.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. OK. I can't remember where we were, Kerry, do you-- we stopped-- our camera stopped, OK. Oh, we were talking about the-- how you got inspired to-- for your Japanese-American or Japanese Baseball Research Project, OK, Nisei. OK. And that was standing from having seen your son and one of the Zenimura kids playing baseball they-- their juries there and you had thought, oh my god, we have to-- they have to know their story. OK. And that started your interest in the research into Japanese-American history, and through the prism of baseball. Is that correct?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Correct.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. So why don't we continue with that. Tell us-- you talked about the exhibits, I'm trying to remember where we got a cut off. This lady--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So yeah, we were, Rusty Dornan at CNN said that, Till I saw this exhibit I never would think about the pre-war, always thought of post-war, the Japanese-American legacy, but she was, now, that I see these photos of Horace Wilson going to Japan in 1872 and then how it took off like wildfire in Japan. So most of the Issei when they came to the mainland, they were-- you know, because 30 years isn't a much longer, you know, when you think about Abner Doubleday starting baseball on the cow pasture in Cooperstown. Then 1872-- 1839 was in Cooperstown, 1872, an American goes to Japan, introduces it. Then as early as 1899 was our first Japanese-American baseball team and--

>> Carlene Tinker: What year was that?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: 1899--

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- in Honolulu, Hawaii.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: The Makiki Christian Church started a baseball team. Then at 1903, we have the Fuji Athletic Club in San Francisco. And then the tours start to begin, going to Japan as early as 1914 with the Seattle Cherry, Asahi Team, the Fresno Athletic Club in 1924, LA Nippons in the early '30s, Alameda Kono All Stars in '37, Stockton Yamato's. So you see this nice synergy of this bridge across the Pacific.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow. I had no idea.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So, yeah, so all these, I felt needed to be told and these Yonseis, 4th generation absolutely have to be educated on it. So I thought well to start this exhibit, which started to really take off. And then to make the exhibit more multimedia, I felt that we needed to have a coffee table book. So, in 2000, we started this-- I—took two and a half years to make this book, a year and a half past my deadline, but it was called "Through a Diamond: 100 years of Japanese-American Baseball". And we had a local legend Tom Seaver write the foreword. The introduction is written is by my god papa Noriyuki "Pat" Morita. So went from the book, exhibit to the book and then I knew we needed to do a documentary. So, through NHK in Japan and our NBRP and getting my god papa Noriyuki "Pat" Morita to help me write it, he was our on camera host, narrator. We did "Diamonds in the Rough" the same title of our exhibit. And, you know, again, the same famous photo with my Uncle Johnny, Lou Gehrig. And this is a famous photo because the Nisei and my Uncle Johnny were on Lou Gehrig's team. And on October 29, 1927 here in Fresno at Fireman's Ballpark, they beat Babe Ruth 13 to 3.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh my.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And it was a huge, you know-- like much like the Negro league ball players, the Nisei ball players, when they got to play with major leaguers, they wanted to prove to them they were as good and could hang and compete at their level.

>> Carlene Tinker: Now, where was that park where they were playing?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: This was called Fireman's Ballpark at the-- where the northeast corner of the Fresno fairgrounds is today.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. Yeah, I wonder-- I thought maybe-- yeah. OK. I thought it was the race track, but it's no. OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: But being how humble, even this photo was in our family hallway, I'd ask my Uncle Johnny here you are, you're on Lou Gehrig's team, you beat Babe Ruth 13 to 3. What was it like to play with him? And, you know, that Nisei generation very modest, very humble just kind of downplayed it.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh did he? Now both of them are gone, right?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, yeah.

>>Carlene Tinker: Your dad and your uncle.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. My Uncle Johnny was born in 1900s, so, you know, he'd be 119, right?

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh god. Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So then from the exhibit, it went to a book, then to a documentary. I knew the fourth wheel was going to be a movie. And so, in 2002, a Hollywood producer Barry Rosenbush who just produced a hit film called "High School Musical" was listening to The World, a radio station and heard me talk about a Nisei ballplayer. And he had always wanted to do a film about baseball in the camps but didn't realize there was so much history behind it. So he contacted me, we got a hold of probably the most famous writer and director, that was Japanese-American, at that time, Desmond Nakano and convinced him to do a film. And we got David Skinner and Tom Gorai with ShadowCatcher to take a book. They took a rights option on my book and five years later with 65 cast and crew members we are able to produce "American Pastime". And it went from not only a Warner Brother's distribution but they even picked it up in Japan. So this is the cover of our "American Pastime" in Japan and the cover that was here locally. And we're very appreciative of Kevin Tsujihara, Bill Ireton of Japan to take that leap and distribute it for us. When it did come out in 2007, Warner Brothers produced "Shrek" and "Pirates of the Caribbean". So, you know, our film maybe got a week or two in the theaters and then it was gone.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is there any chance that you might want to bring them back, do you think?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, we're always hopeful, you know?

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Because truly our film, because it's about baseball, jazz music and a love story told in the Topaz Utah concentration camp during World War II. But we wanted to honor the internees of the Camp Life, we wanted to honor my uncle and his peers that fought for the 442. Here they volunteered out of the camps to fight for our country even though their own families were being imprisoned. And then they go on to become the most decorated in the history of World War II, which is an amazing story. So that's why we were very proud to bring this film to life and try and tell the best story about the incarceration that there was. Later, I became a board member with the National Japanese-American Historical site to patriotism which is at Washington DC. And so, as a documentary filmmaker, we recorded the site and we won two more awards, one Telly and one Communicator award for education. And so, I was

very proud that, you know, we are able to win a Telly's for a documentary filmmaker, it's like winning an Oscar. So I was very proud that we had an award-winning documentary. This, by the way, our documentary that I did with Pat Morita, "Diamonds in the Rough", we were the finalist at the Palm Springs International Film Festival. We didn't win it, "Beautiful America" did from Germany, but just the fact that we were finalists--

>> Carlene Tinker: Absolutely.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- was quite an accomplishment. And then it morphed into two curriculums that we produced with Stanford University, SPICE Organization. Dr. Gary Mukai has organization on campus at Stanford called SPICE. It's the Stanford Program of International and Cross-Cultural Education. So now, teachers throughout the United States can use our curriculum, our documentary and film and book as an educational component to teach about the incarceration. And then specifically for our movie "Americans Pastime", Dr. Mukai developed this curriculum to go specifically for our film for teachers.

>> Carlene Tinker: Awesome.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so now we disseminated the curriculums, the films to all Fresno County libraries, parts of San Jose Library system, parts of Arizona and Las Vegas. And what I love is that our curriculum are history standardized so that any teacher that wants to teach a portion of it to their classes will get credit basically for-- because anybody can write a curriculum but Stanford University writes the standards for teaching about the incarceration. Junior Scholastic did a scope for their grade school and junior high students. So they did an eight-page read-aloud play based on our film that students can learn about the incarceration but through the prism of this play. And this is recently, my Uncle Johnny was featured in a magazine called Out of Bounds and it talks about how Johnny Nakagawa hit like 377--

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- against the Negro League All-Stars. And because of current internet and because of technology, we've been able to find out that when Nisei all-stars played against black all-stars, the 12 black scorers that we have pre-war, the Nisei won eight out of the 12 games.

>> Carlene Tinker: Is that-- Right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So the story here is talking about how Johnny was a pitcher and home run hitter, hit 377 against the Negro League All-Stars. He certainly, if he couldn't play Major League Baseball, he could have played in the Negro Leagues.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And they would have considered him ironically as a Nisei person, colored, right?

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, now, how big was Johnny?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Johnny was about 5'10", 160 pounds.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh not-- well, I mean--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, he was big for--

>> Carlene Tinker: Big for that generation.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: For his era.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. How tall are you?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: I'm 5'9", 150 pounds.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: My dad was about 5'7".

>> Carlene Tinker: 5'7".

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh he's short.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah, yeah.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: But he was--

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, he also was an accomplished--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: He was semi-pro football player and a sumo champion.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. Yeah. Well--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So baseball and sports really runs pretty deep into our family. And even our-- some of our roots come into

play because I remember our grandfather telling us that physical conditioning is a spirit. So, if your physical condition spirit is strong, then mentally you're strong, spiritually you're strong and physically you're strong. So those four temples will always be strong. And so always remember that, you know, as kind of a shining beacon for our family too.

>> Carlene Tinker: Now, we've talked a lot about how your interest involved watching your children. How much are the children learning-- or how much have they learn or how much have they bought into it? Because like I'm-- my kids don't seem to really pursue anything about their history. Maybe they will when they get older. How do your kids look at all of those?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, I remember when my daughter was at Bullard Talent and she was probably only 5th grade, 4th grade and I went in and they asked me to come and speak about the famous Babe Ruth photo and my Uncle Johnny was Lou Gehrig. And Jenna was very quiet. And I remember she was standing next to me and I held up the picture and immediately she went oh, this is our Uncle Johnny and he was on Lou Gehrig's team and they beat Babe Ruth 13 to 3, right? And I was in shock and very emotional because part of me was I'm so proud of her that she knew the story, but at the same time I was thinking, man, I tell the story so much. It's like osmosis and it's already fused into them. And so, I was kind of sad too because I think, you know, I'm bombarding too much with this history. But, you know, Jenna and Kale both are very proud of their heritage, the customs, they love, you know, now with, you know, my son he has two kids, Olivia Rose, we call her Rossie, is 4 now, and William Henry, he's 1. And I think they really appreciate their Japanese-American roots. And even Katie who's Caucasian-- I don't know if you could see this, but--

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- you know, she loves Japanese food and Rossie loves rice and shrimp, tempura and, you know, their-- as Japanese-- as any Japanese, American Japanese would be. And so, I'm very proud that, you know, this fifth generation Gosei now will go on to hopefully appreciate, you know, their roots and their heritage and continue telling our stories as storytellers and share it with their sixth generation, you know. My goal is to be healthy enough to see our four-year-old granddaughter have kids. Yeah. I don't know if I'll make it but I'm going to give it a shot.

>> Carlene Tinker: OK. I think basically I covered everything. Is there anything that I have overlooked that you might want to

bring up right now? I see you have some other photos that maybe you want to share with us?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, I love this one here.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: This is me and--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. When was that taken?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: This was taken over Christmas.

>> Carlene Tinker: Over Christmas.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Just recently. And, you know, I love this one of course with my wife and our tati. They call me G-pa and she's tati. I just-- you know, I think we covered everything, Carlene. I just think a couple of things that personally that I'll never forget like the covering the sports angle. In 1993, I got two quarterback sacks in the semi-pro all-star game with the Fresno Band. It's-- Some players never got a sack the whole season. I got two in one game against other all-stars. The following year, I swam from Alcatraz to San Francisco.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh I forgot about that.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And that to me was a testament and tribute to my dad who used to fish in that Alcatraz, San Francisco Bay and he was battling cancer at that time. And they gave him, six months, he lasted 10. And during that six-month period--

>> Carlene Tinker: You mean six months or 10 years you said?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: No, 10 months.

>> Carlene Tinker: Ten months.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: They only gave him six months but he lasted 10--

>> Carlene Tinker: He lasted 10 months.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Ten months. But during that period, I swam from San Francisco to Alcatraz.

>> Carlene Tinker: Wow.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And what made me do it was-- I've always been a strong swimmer. I was on the Fowler flippers as a little kid on our swim team. And I remember as an actor, I worked on a TV series called "Escape from Alcatraz". And they allowed us to get in a cell for 45-minute lunch break. And I remember looking

out that little square hole and seen San Francisco which is a mile and a half away. And so I said, you know what, I'm going to dedicate the swim to my dad because they had a swim called SharkFest. So I asked my dad, do you think I have any problems with sharks and he was, oh no, he goes, you know, when the cold water from the Pacific comes in and the delta freshwater goes out, it creates those two currents and the sharks get disoriented. They get drunk. So they don't-- I never-- nobody ever catches any sharks in the bay. And so I thought, OK, he goes but the cold water its cold, it's 56 degrees.

>> Carlene Tinker: Cool.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So I trained in my backyard pool every day for six months. Swimming 50 laps a day. You know, freshwater swim at Millerton, but nothing can prepare you for 56 degrees. It's like jumping in to needles. It's so cold.

>> Carlene Tinker: You didn't wear a wetsuit then?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Yeah. I had a triathlete suit on. And sure enough, halfway through, I started cramping out, my calf would give out. I just kick with one leg and the other leg gave out but-- as a swimmer you know you could swim with both arms. And I overshot my-- because they want you to use arc like a banana because if you try and swim from point A to P-- B straight across, the current will pull you so far away from the inlet part of aquatic bay, you'll never make it. But I went way too far outside and I remember they had kayakers on the perimeter of us and I heard a guy say, swimmer, here to your right, we spotted a dorsal fin. And I knew there wasn't dolphins, so it was a shark. And so, I swim inside and got inside and finally made it in. And then we got-- had to get out, swim and run to the Golden Gate Bridge and come back which is a 10K. But taking that medal and giving it to my dad and seeing him accept it because I told him, I swam this for you, and he goes, you know, nobody can ever take away what you accomplished and take away this medal. And we did a Lake Tahoe trip. And I remember it was-- we knew it was going to be his last gambling trip because he like to play the machines. And we're at Cal Neva Casino and I remember my mom and dad's favorite song was "Tennessee Waltz". And there was a two-man band playing that song in the middle of the afternoon and to see my mom and dad dance the "Tennessee Waltz" the last time, I'll never forget that because it was just so special. A couple other moments I wanted to mention but I can't think of them right now but--

>> Carlene Tinker: OK.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- you know, it's just very proud, you know, of our family's heritage and legacy. And so I thank you for giving me the opportunity.

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, let me summarize, Kerry. I've learned a fantastic amount from you. OK. First of all, the salad bowl concept is-- as I've said is so important and so relevant in today's life, you know. We need to recognize other people for what they represent and not try to make them like us-- OK. We have to recognize that they come from different cultures and they-- all wonderful cultures as well, there's just not one. I've learned also that Fowler, and this is something also I had no idea, that it's so atypical that you guys were able to experience life without racism and/or discrimination.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Right.

>> Carlene Tinker: Not to say that your relatives didn't experience any racism or discrimination, there was certainly a lot of that, you know, your dad couldn't buy property and--

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: My grandfather--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, my dad, remembers coming back and the so called friends that owned the gas station wouldn't serve him gas.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: He pulled the guy over the bar one day because he call him a "Dirty Jap" and dragged them out of the bar and onto the street. He was so upset. You know, my mom having that woman in Sacramento tell her, how dare you come back to California?

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: You know, and as I tell people, you know, my grandparents were here in 1886, much earlier than many other--

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: -- immigrant grandparents.

>> Carlene Tinker: Right.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: So if we talk about Americana, you know, we have, you know, way more rights to be here than any others that feel they have a, you know, superiority situation. But

again, you know, I'm growing up in Fowler-- unless you grew up there, you can't really relate because no other town was like ours.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah. That is a true story in itself. It's just amazing. And what you have done to bring to light about our history not only to your family but to everyone, it's been so significant and so important. You are going to-- your work will contribute so greatly to our own history as a minority, well, as an ethnic group. I don't want to say minority.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And so as other American.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yes, yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Well, what I'm proud of, Carlene, is long after I'm gone, hopefully these, the films, the documentaries, the books, the curriculums will continue to educate and hopefully inspire and entertain diverse audiences of the-- these new millennials coming up that I have a lot of faith and hope in because I know they'll be much more progressive than the generations of today. And I hope from their aspect politically, from recreationally, emotionally, mentally, they will, you know, carry on the torches of our great history and legacy, very ethic origin. And hopefully be inspired to tell their stories of their own families and as I encourage others to make sure you get your grandparents oral history and have it either right write down or on camera like we're doing. And so that future generations could look back on it and learn and--

>> Carlene Tinker: Right. Well, and for so long, many of us who have grown up, you know, in World War II being incarcerated, for so long, we have denied our heritage and to rediscover it as I am myself. Is just momentous, OK. It's something I never expected because I always thought I should be like everybody else but now I want to recognize my heritage.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: You know, real quick, we just lost a dear family friend and it was a tremendous resource, as I mentioned Zenimura.

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: And, of course, you know Shelly and this would be her Uncle but Howard Kenso Zenimura just passed away. And there was a beautiful article written by the Pima Indians. And I remember taking Howard and Pat back to their home in 1997. We-- Our exhibit was at the Phoenix Hall of Fame Museum. We did a symposium. And on the next day, we took Howard and Pat for the first time back to the Gila River Reservation where the Pima

Indians were in-- where they were housed during World War II. And Governor Mary Thomas, who recently passed away a year ago, she was a spiritual leader or the chief of the Pima Indians. And asked us that day when they greeted us, she kept calling Pat Mr. Miyagi and he goes, well, Governor Thomas, Pat Morita. She says, OK, Mr. Miyagi. She goes, come in to our tribal council room. And she sat us all down and very sternly says why did you pick today to be here? And Pat goes, well, Kerry's exhibit was at the Phoenix Hall of Fame and Howard and I were-- I was 11 and Howard was 14 when we were here last. And we wanted to see our old home. And she goes, well, I was a young girl when this camp was here and our parents never let us get by the barbed wire even though we wanted to see the baseball games being played. And she goes, but we knew that babies were being born on our sacred land and we knew our-- your elders were dying on our sacred land. And on behalf of the Pima Indians, and she started to shake and tears stream down her checks. She goes, we wanted to tell you today you and Howard how sorry we are from the Pima Indians that you suffered so much on our sacred land. And Pat goes, whoa, whoa, whoa, Governor Thomas, you don't have to apologize. Our government forced us on your land. You had no choice. And she goes, no, Pat. She goes, but for 55 years, we've carried the Pima Indian burden that we should have told the government, no, and we didn't. Well, you and I both know that if they would've refused, the government would have put the reserv--

>> Carlene Tinker: Oh, yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: --put the internees on another reservation somewhere else, another Native American sacred land.

>> Carlene Tinker: Yeah.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: But to see that sincerity, I never saw a connection between Japanese-Americans and Pima Indians, but at that moment, I saw how connected we are through humanity and from that moment on, you know, I look at every ethnic group as part of humanity. And we're connected somehow. You know, maybe not by faith or by color of our skin but we're still all connected. And that to me is the true line that I hope others will take from this and realize that, you know, we should embrace all the beauties of the immigrants, their culture, their customs, their food, their music, their art and realize we are somehow connected.

>> Carlene Tinker: That's right. OK. Well, my final question is how would you like to be remembered as a person, as a male, as a father, as an American citizen, as a Japanese-American? What is your legacy?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Wow.

>> Carlene Tinker: Or what do you want your legacy to be?

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: I would love just to have a legacy that he was a very proud-- he comes from the roots of a very proud royal family that were samurai, that he never wanted to weaken the family chain as my mother told me and her grand-- her father told her and, you know, your samurai bloodlines. You-- we will see in the coming years how weak or how strong our family's genes have gotten. I hope that every chain the generations ahead of in the future keep that chain as strong or stronger. I hope that, you know, all these stories that I've been able to share get passed on and more stories are created, you know, yeah, I'll never get-- had a dedication, had a kiosk in Chandler, Arizona to recognize the play that Japanese-Americans that were incarcerated. Paul Short Hair, a Pima Indian, said that you know, we wish you well with much peace and posterity on the path and journeys that your destiny has in front of you. And so, that's what I want to pass on is to-- from a great Pima Indian that everybody's path and journeys, you know, has much peace and posterity and has, you know, as much of a great journey and destiny that everyone has in front of them and that we, you know, acknowledge our elders and the ones that went before us. This story kind of tells the story too, Carlene, when, you know, for five years I was out at the Mountain View Cemetery in Fresno where my grandparents are, my parents, my-- our baby sister who only lived 30 days. I was, for five years, taking flowers out there and hoping and wishing and praying that this project, our film, gets to come to fruition much like any of my projects, my dreams, my goals, my ideas. When I go out to the Mountain View Cemetery that's like others going to church. In fact I put probably more emphasis on that cemetery than I do our church. But-- So how powerful was it to go back five years later. Two hours before I'm going to catch the plane to go to Utah to join 65 casting crew members to make this film and to not go there to wish and hope and dream, but to go there to thank them for allowing it to happen. And so, that's my wish too is to always-- you have to think anyway to think and dream big to follow your passion no matter what it is and to really give emphasis to the ones that went before us and to open up the universe and let the universe know verbally or on paper your wishes, your goals, your dreams, your ideas because they're definitely listening and they'll help make it come to fruition that if you truly believe in it.

>> Carlene Tinker: Well, thank you so much. This has been a delightful conversation. I love your stories. You are a great storyteller.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Thank you.

>> Carlene Tinker: Thank you a lot.

>> Kerry Yo Nakagawa: Thank you for having me. Yeah.