

NARRATOR: FRED AND SETSU HIRASUNA

INTERVIEWER: IZUMI TANIGUCHI

DATE: January 19, 1999

IT: Okay it's recording now. We can play it back and see if it works.

FH: My dad went to Hawaii in the 1890's and served out his labor contract there and then he went back to Japan and got married to my mother and had their first child there. He came to the mainland in 1900 and my mother came to the mainland in 1903. They left my oldest brother whose name is Kaname in Japan. And their history is I think he worked on the railroad and worked in San Francisco and finally he came to Fowler and that's near Fresno and he started a restaurant. From Fowler he went to Lodi and in Lodi he had a bicycle job and he would farm on the side. That's my latest recollection. I was born in Lodi.

IT: Give me—let me play that back. Okay—

FH: Now where was I?

IT: You were in Lodi. You arrived in Lodi.

FH: Oh yeah.

IT: At the bicycle shop.

FH: My dad had a bicycle shop in Lodi but he would farm on the side. No matter what the business, he had a bicycle shop the whole time I was there. And I was born in 1908 and we moved to Fowler, to Fowler in 1922 so that was fourteen years in Lodi and all that time he had a bicycle shop and he would farm on the side. My dad was never too successful but I mean he was not an outstanding success at making money. And he moved to—he moved the family to Fowler and he started a garage and in Fowler there

were already two other Japanese garages in a small town. And he sent my two oldest brothers, Kaname was born in Japan and came to this country and Takume was born in this country but he was sent back to Japan for part of his education so he was a Kibei. And he sent those two to mechanics school and they were supposed to run the garage. And I guess we stumbled along in that garage and then my oldest brother got into some kind of a hassle with my father and he left and my second oldest brother Takume also got into some kind of a hassle with my father and he left and that left the family with a garage and no mechanics.

IT: Oh.

FH: And during that time in the garage I picked up a little mechanical knowledge but I was never a real mechanic and for a year or so I stumbled around along running the garage. Finally, we closed the garage and in the meantime I graduated high school in 1926, Fowler High School and then I went to Fresno State for a year or a year and a half or so. And then I stopped going because in spite of the low tuitions and all that, our family didn't have any money. I went to Los Angeles to work and in Los Angeles, I drove a truck, I hand-nailed boxes, and loaded cars and all the things all connected with produce. I finally came back and went back to school and finally graduated in 1932, I was supposed to graduate in 1930. But in 1932 I had a degree in social sciences and a Japanese-American with a degree in social sciences, there was no job for him. The President of the college, his name was Frank Thomas told me one time "You have no chance of getting a teacher's job because you are Japanese." And there I was with a degree in Social Sciences and no job so I floated around for about a year and finally got into produce. Setsu, in fact, told me about a man that was looking for a person to work

with him and his name was George Matsuoka and he needed a bookkeeper and I didn't know beans about bookkeeping and I hadn't taken bookkeeping or anything at the time or a course like that but never the less, I went to Imperial Valley and worked as a bookkeeper. And the way I picked up bookkeeping, I made some friends with other people who kept books for other sheds and they told me what to do. So I learned enough to keep a set of books. But after and this George Matsuoka, he was a crudest man from way back. One time he had a union fruit company but he went broke.

SH: You mean Union Brokerage or something?

IT: Later it became the Union Brokerage.

FH: Anyway he would in Imperial Valley he would go out and buy a field of lettuce that wasn't ready to be harvested again but he would buy it and then he would, the lettuce got ready he'd send his crew in there to cut it, and pack the lettuce and send it to market. In those days they used to ice pack lettuce in the sheds, but Matsuoka and a man by the name of Osuda and some others, they dry-packed it. They would cut the lettuce and pack it in the field and send it into Los Angeles, Oakland as dry-packed lettuce and when that season in Imperial Valley was finished, we would go to Delano. And in Delano he handled the vegetable crop there so we'd go back and forth Delano and Imperial Valley. And I wasn't making too much money. In fact when I started, I was making I think a hundred dollars.

SH: A hundred dollars a month.

FH: Yeah. And when I ended up with everything, I wasn't making much more than that, a hundred and a quarter and in the meantime Setsu and I got married and we had a baby and—

IT: What year was it that you got married?

FH: Nineteen thirty-six, no, nineteen-thirty five.

SH: We got married in thirty-five.

FH: In thirty-five.

SH: August.

FH: And well it was just we were getting by—I remember at the last rent we were paying I think thirty dollars a month for house rent and twenty-five.

SH: Twenty-five dollars on a car.

FH: My payment on the car and we had the baby-baby girl so we were eating a lot of soup. But a, in 1939 Setsu's brother, Ty, bought a chick-sexing business, International Chick-Sexing Association from a man by the name of Hatoru, who owned the hatchery and chicken ranch in Fresno and I think he was pioneer in chick-sexing in this country.

IT: Was he an Issei?

FH: Issei and he did that for a couple of years and then he decided he was going to sell the business and her brother Ty bought the business from him. Then he asked me to come back and run the business for him. I knew nothing about hatcheries, nothing about raising chickens, nothing about chick-sexing. But I came back and my first problem was how to run a chicken ranch and I was going around with a University of California book in my hand (laughing) trying to figure out how to raise these darn chickens. The Chick Association we had sexers oh about thirty or forty of them, out in the field we'd find hatcheries that would hire them at a certain price and we would contract the work and we'd send the chick-sexers there to do the work and we were taking a percentage of the chick-sexers earnings that was our income. So we did that—

SH: Different parts of the country.

FH: Oh yeah. Like Ty would be running around Minnesota and we had chick-sexers all over. New York State, Ohio, Iowa, the Dakota's, Missouri.

IT: Was that transportation by train then to go to all these places?

FH: Car.

IT: Car.

FH: Yeah, because in chick-sexing you may go to the hatchery at six o'clock in the morning and be there until midnight sexing the chicks. At first, in the business we were getting one cent a chick and the chick-sexers were making good money. The competition came in—remember John Nitta? He was a chick-sexer that started his own school in Pennsylvania, John Nitta and he called it The American Chick-Sexing Association. Later he claimed he pioneered chick-sexing but that's not true. Hatoru pioneered it...

IT: And that was right here in Fresno.

FH: Hatoru was in Fresno. But Ty was in Mankato, Minnesota learning that end of the business. So we were doing that until evacuation time came.

When evacuation came I was in kind of a spot because I had my father, my mother, my sister to look after you know for evacuation and we had her younger sister so that year, at first, we decided we'd go to camp. We got our duffle bags and everything and got all ready to go to camp. But our third child Stewart was born in February of forty-two. And he was not—he was a little bit sickly I think and there were all these rumors about these camps no hospitals, no doctors, and no medicines and I got real worried and I decided I was going to try to go out, not go to camp. For a time there, there was a volunteering period where you could go without but I think about the end of March

they stopped that voluntary evacuation. So here it was June or so and in order to evacuate now, I had to get permission from the Western Defense Command. So I got in touch with the Western Defense Command and I told them that I had a job in Mankato, Minnesota running chick-sexing out of there and I had these dependents and I wanted a permit to go back there, voluntary. This is in July now. In July this area was going to go to camp. Area Two, Area One had already gone to Arkansas.

SH: Yeah, we were supposed to leave in just a few days.

FH: Yeah Area Two I think it was headed for Arizona in about ten days I guess before our deadline came for us to go to camp, I got this permit from the Western Defense Command to take our family with three little kids, her sister, my sister and my father and mother, I got a permit for them to go with me to Minnesota. So we went there in two cars. In the meantime the office stuff—we put into a trailer and pick up and we couldn't go up ninety-nine.

IT: Not with a heavy car.

FH: Yeah and so they made us—

SH: Through Yosemite, Tioga Pass.

FH: That was pretty rough.

SH: Oh it was awful, I mean just –

FH: And friends of our Russian-German friends, Mike Boog and his brother, they took the trailer and the pick up and they went up ninety-nine to Reno. We went over the Tioga to Carson City and we tried to get a place to stay and the first motel refused us, you know, Japs from California. So then I decided I went to the best motel in Carson City and they took us and so we got rooms there and the next day we went to Reno and we met the

Boog two who brought our trailer and pick-up to Reno and we had a couple of guys come from Minnesota to Reno to take over the pick up. So, and from then on, why we were stopped by the Nevada Highway Patrol and asked all kinds of questions and wanted to see our papers and we showed them our papers and so they let us go on. And the first night we stopped at a place called Winnemucca in Nevada and we knew that there was a Japanese in Winnemucca with the hotel rooming house because (inaudible) so we went there and he gave us a room and this is—this is where we are driving into Winnemucca and a truck load of white guys passed by “Go back to California, you damn Japs.” And I didn’t know what to expect but his rooms were above a, some kind of saloon or something.

SH: And lots of noise.

FH: Noise

IT: Must have been a casino down there.

FH: I don’t know.

SH: But anyway.

FH: They were making a lot of noise and I didn’t know what to expect. There I am with these woman and kids and oh, I expected trouble but fortunately we didn’t have any. And from there went to Salt Lake City, Des Moines and finally Minnesota. And that’s how we got to Minnesota so what an experience that was.

IT: Now in Minnesota did you get involved in any, JACL was in Salt Lake. Did you have any contact with JACL?

FH: Yeah, I was an associate member all through the war and in Mankato itself. The women, they went to church. She was Christian. So they went to Presbyterian Churches I think

but I wouldn't go because I'm not Christian, I'm not Buddhist, I'm not anything. But I was asked to go before different groups to explain about evacuation so I was making the rounds doing that and trying to fill up a favorable atmosphere for our group. Fortunately or unfortunately, I think we were about the only Japanese family in Mankato. There were some chick-sexers there. It was the first time a lot of these Mankato people saw Japanese and they didn't know what to make of us.

SH: And one of our neighbor girls later on when we got acquainted with them, she says "We thought you were real Japs." So I didn't know what—

IT: So you didn't insist on being American then?

FH: A couple of the neighbor girls, one of them especially used to be at our house all the time. She was—

SH: Twins, twelve.

FH: Twelve years old.

SH: All those years.

FH: She ate Japanese food and took care of our kids. As a matter of fact, we still talk to her. She is still in Mankato and we talk to her on the phone once or twice or three times a year.

IT: You say Japanese food, were you able to get Japanese food?

SH: Well, you know Japanese food, why usually it's the "okazu" kind of thing, meat and vegetables usually.

IT: But did you ever get "shiyoyu" (soy sauce)?

FH: Oh yeah.

SH: We got shiyoyu.

FH: There was a place in Ohio where Japanese made shiyoyu.

SH: Yeah we got shiyoyu so.

IT: And then you mentioned something about taking your parents to Jerome—

FH: Yeah I took, we took my parents to Mankato, the first morning it was minus twenty-six, twenty-eight. Storm windows, snow and my dad and my mother, they had no peers to talk to, you know. The family there but nobody their own age and my father especially just begged me to get him to camp. And so I said all right I'll try. There is a Thomas Howland who belonged to the WRA I guess. War Relocation Authority and I read or heard that he was going to be in Chicago so I took the train from Mankato to Chicago and I got an appointment with him and explained what the situation was and I want permission to take my parents to a camp. And after he heard my story, he was very sympathetic and said he'd see what he could do. And I think about ten days later he sent me a permit to take my folks to camp and my sister, I don't know whether she wanted to or not, but she consented to go with them, to camp with them. So I took my father and mother and sister this is in the winter time from Minnesota to Arkansas and put them I think it was Rohwer camp but I had a brother who was in Rohwer.

IT: The other Fresno people were in Jerome.

FH: Yeah, I think so. They were in Jerome. But very truthfully I think my parents had a good time in camp. My father liked to fish. He could fish all he wanted and he didn't have to worry about making money for the next meal. And I think when camp closed, they were really kind of sorry that it closed.

IT: When did they leave camp?

FH: Oh, that was in 1945.

IT: Where did they go from camp?

FH: Well, that was after the West Coast was open?

IT: Uh-huh.

FH: In 1946, a group of us including Dr. Yatabe, Kikuo Taira, anyway, we got a group and came to California, so scouting party to see how it was. Well we were on Eleventh Street her brother owned an acre lot there and during the war he wanted to sell it and I told him I'll buy it and I bought that lot for (inaudible) so when I came back in forty-six and saw the situation, I decided I would build a house for my folks and send them back to California even though we weren't there. I had a brother, two brothers here already and they would kind of look after them. So we built that little house and they lived in that.

IT: Now did they come directly here from camp?

FH: No, they came to Chicago first where I had a brother, then from Chicago they came to Fresno.

SH: They didn't stay very long in Chicago.

FH: No they didn't.

SH: It was just a stop.

FH: Enough for my dad to get his wallet stolen.

IT: Then shortly after that did you move back?

FH: We moved back in the winter of forty-seven. By that time they had that little house built and they were living in it. We lived—when we came back we lived in her folks' old home which is still there. And—

IT: Now did you continue with the chick-sexing business here?

FH: No, when I left in forty-seven I told my brother-in-law that I've got three little kids and I can't do it on the kind of wages I'm getting, I think it was a hundred and fifty a month or something so I told him I was going to quit and go back to California and see if I can start something. So that's why I came back to California and fooled around a while trying to find something to do. And I landed back in produce so that's how we started 1948—Min Nomada and a fellow by the name of Morris Accola who died recently.

IT: Just this weekend.

FH: Yeah. We founded a partnership and started Sunnyside Packing.

IT: And where were you located, your first packing house?

FH: In Fresno.

IT: Where in Fresno?

FH: Oh Ventura and the railroad tracks there. There was a sort of a big warehouse there and we started there and after that we moved to—

SH: To G Street?

FH: No, we moved to, I guess so, and on G Street we built—see we really didn't pack—well we packed tomatoes. But other things, the growers packed and brought it into us and we sold it for them.

IT: What kinds of produce did you start out in?

FH: I guess it was tomatoes and all the spring vegetables and finally we got into fruits.

IT: Where was the market?

FH: Markets were in Oakland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

SH: And we were the strawberry exchange for a while we were—

FH: (inaudible) yeah the Strawberry exchange started in 1948 or forty-nine. After we came back, we were looking for people to come to us to sell for them and at that time there was a group of strawberry growers. Strawberry growing was very prominent before the war. It was a big association, and then after the war, why they started with strawberries again and there was a fellow by the name of Eddie. Well, anyway, he had a group of strawberry growers that he sold for but then we got them all together and they gave us the whole deal to sell for them, the strawberry exchange. Strawberries was one of our big commodities by that time. It really—we sold the strawberry exchange until they closed their doors. The reason they closed their doors was because strawberry growers became fewer and fewer and volume became less and less and there was no longer enough volume to keep a separate strawberry exchange so we more or less took that over.

IT: Now when you—the market was San Francisco, Los Angeles and so on, did you sell to stores or did you go through another—

FH: Through distributors.

IT: Through distributors?

FH: (inaudible) oh we sold to Safeway to Safeway, Lucky Stores so it was a combination.

IT: Back then Safeway and A & P?

FH: A & P was in the Midwest and Safeway was in—

IT: There was an A & P in Los Angeles so—

FH: Yeah we might of, but I can't remember. We sold to people in Canada and for a period, we shipped strawberries to Europe. So—

IT: To Europe—how did it go by?

FH: It couldn't have been by plane. It must have been by ship.

SH: It couldn't last that long.

IT: In the forties and fifties?

FH: I can't remember. I remember we shipped strawberries to Hawaii and they went in boats. There would be a van or trailer we'd load and pre-cool in the van and then transfer the van to the ship.

IT: When did you start pre-cooling?

FH: It must have been in the forties or early fifties because you had to have the facility to— well when we built our packing house on G Street, we had a small pre-cooling plant there but the volume was so large that we went to Midland, called Midland Cold Storage which was on Ventura near the Santa Fe track, the Santa Fe track and they had a pretty big deal and we'd pre-cool there, we'd rent there. We did that until we built our place in Selma. In the meantime, Minamara, Morris Accola dropped out, Minamara dropped out and I was left with some long time employees and I gave these employees a share in the business so that they would stay with me and keep the business going.

IT: Now I understand you got into JACL in 1929.

FH: Yeah.

IT: And then you are gone from Fresno in the thirties for a while and you came back out.

Who were some of the people that were active in JACL in the thirties?

FH: In the thirties? Oh, let's see, Dr. Yatabe of course, Fred Yoshikawa, Bobby Tanaga, who are some of the others?

SH: Hiro Yamamisa very early.

IT: That would be in the thirties?

FH: The thirties.

SH: Well the very first President was a woman, Lillian Tomida, wasn't she?

FH: She was the President even before twenty-nine.

SH: Yeah.

FH: The Fresno JACL was founded in twenty-three and I didn't get in until twenty-nine so between twenty-three and twenty-nine, the chapter had a regular President and officers and everything and that's why we always claimed we were the oldest because the other chapters around San Jose they all died so they quit and—yeah so there is a period—in one sense, there is a period they can't account for because they weren't there.

IT: And then after coming back from camp and so on when was the JACL again reactivated?

FH: Oh it was reactivated I think in forty-seven and the person most responsible for that was Johnson Kebo, yeah. He was very active and that is when we had that big gathering of veterans. It was a big deal but Johnson Kebo, I think, should be given the greatest credit for restarting JACL.

IT: Now who else was active in the forties, late forties and early fifties?

SH: Tom Nakamura?

FH: Oh yeah. Tom Nakamura.

IT: What about George Abe?

SH: George Abe.

IT: When did Ben Nakamura come in?

SH: A little bit later.

FH: A little bit later yeah.

IT: There is a list somewhere, a list of the Presidents. (inaudible) Among those would you say Johnson Kebo and Nakamura?

FH: Yeah. The greatest credit should be given to Johnson Kebo, of course his weakness was that he was an alcoholic.

IT: Oh, is that true?

FH: But, nevertheless, he was a great deal. I remember one time we went to Los Angeles for some kind of conference of something and I got a ride from him coming back and he had a pint bottle of whiskey and it took it just like you or I would drink soda water. It didn't seem to affect his driving though. I got home safely.

IT: Now on Sunnyside Packing I've come across a lot of people who you employed, I mean kids.

SH: Yeah it seems that way, like Ken Yokota.

IT: Ken Yokota, Bob Ishikawa.

SH: Oh yeah?

FH: They were looking for summer work and we had the work so they came to work for us.

IT: Did you have a particular plan or program to give them jobs or anything like that?

FH: No, they just came and applied for work and I gave them work.

IT: Oh. But they all didn't you feel that it was a good job for them since they couldn't get anything else?

FH: Yeah. Those were very hectic times sometimes because our business was up and down. One year we would do all right and the next year it would be really rough, breaking and now after we moved to Selma, my son Stewart took over, and you ought to see that place now. It's huge. Yeah it's huge.

IT: Now back when in the fifties for example how many growers were, did you do supply for?

SH: I thought we had some older books there is the history here.

IT: Is there any estimate about how many acres of farming was involved from the growers?

FH: It might be in the office some place. I can't recall. Just the strawberry growers alone I think one time we had, must be over I don't know—anyway this is a bad time to interview because my memory is not that good.

IT: If we waited longer—

FH: Sometimes I wonder, of course, in this business a lot of it is business sense but a lot of it is luck, too.

IT: Okay, so besides JACL you had affiliations with the business, was any other kind of organizations that you belonged to, Chamber of Commerce?

FH: No, I guess we were members of Chambers of Commerce but never did much.

IT: Were there any other organizations?

FH: Oh yeah.

IT: Farm Bureau, Grange, or—

FH: Yeah, there is Western Grower's Association and also the industry connected associations. We all belonged to them.

IT: Were you active at all in those organizations?

FH: I was active in strawberries. They have what they called a Strawberry Advisory Board.

IT: Uh-huh.

FH: And I was in it for a long, long time. And there was some very prominent people in that. There was a Tad Tomita, there was a (inaudible)

IT: I knew Tad.

FH: Yeah, he was the chairman of the Strawberry Advisory Board for a year or two. You know with—

IT: Tad was the Business Manager for my father's association before the war.

FH: And he was connected with the Japanese strawberry growers.

IT: Oh.

FH: Now they call it Nature Ripe, (clock ringing in the background) yes, strawberries became a very important part of our business because we had a fellow by the name of Buzz Noda who worked for us in Fresno. We sent him into Watsonville and we were able to organize a co-op over there. And then we had a group of growers around Oxnard that we shipped strawberries for and we even shipped strawberries out of Mexico.

IT: Oh.

FH: Yeah. A couple of season and at one time I think we were about our group was about the third largest shippers of strawberries in California. And now today I think there is only one strawberry, Japanese strawberry grower, Bob Okamura. In my day Hmongs have taken over strawberries.

IT: Yeah, I guess so.

FH: Our largest acreage in the past was about less than three hundred acres and now there is over six hundred acres.

IT: Did you have any ties with Nisei Farmers League when they organized?

FH: Oh yeah. Yeah, I was in there, I think I can claim that I was just as active as Harry Kubo, the organizer.

IT: Was there any movement to organize before Chavez or was it after Chavez started organizing the unions?

FH: Chavez?

IT: After Chavez, did you have any problems in organizing the league?

SH: Do you (inaudible)

FH: A big fight with Chavez?

IT: No among the farmers? Did they all come together pretty fast?

FH: I think you know it's like a lot of things. When you have a common enemy you find a lot of people—just like evacuation time before evacuation nobody wanted to join JACL. But when evacuation started, they started to come in because they figured JACL could do something and the same way with the Cesar Chavez union situation. Japanese farmers thought they were being picked on because I guess Chavez figured we were the easiest targets and so the Nisei got together and formed this organization.

IT: Do you have any thoughts on what impact the organization of farm workers had on agriculture here in central valley? Did it—

FH: I think there is good and bad about it. It was good in that the farm workers got recognition, but you know during that time, all farm workers didn't want to join Chavez because those close ties with the growers they worked for and the growers treated them well. And Chavez at one time why he had to threaten. You need to have a farm or a field non-union and you had workers in the field and Chavez men would come in and try to persuade those workers to strike and they'd even go to their homes at night and threaten them if they didn't strike. And so I don't know. I don't think the Mexican growers were as in bad condition that Chavez would like to say that they were. I walked picket lines and I talked to Mexican picketers and I said what do you do? Oh I have some kids they are going to college and he was very satisfied there but they were on the picket line. You

know one time it was called White River Farms and it was down south towards Visalia and Chavez struck that farm and the workers were not to leave the farm and Nisei growers and I went, too, and went to that farm and picked grapes and the opposition was the union.

IT: Now on the—before the union came in, there were more probably illegals working on the farms right?

FH: I wonder.

IT: Did the unionization change the supply of labor like this past year, they are talking about they didn't have enough pickers for grapes. Is the labor supply more stable or more variable?

FH: I can't recall.

IT: Because before you had the Bracero program.

FH: Yeah.

IT: And different things but then when the unions came in, they eliminated most of those kinds of programs and kind of jobs for the locals.

FH: I think it's true too that at the peak of the harvest, there weren't enough local workers to take care of the harvest and you offered jobs to people and they don't want them. They don't want to work on the farms. They would rather draw welfare. Like today, why most of the farm workers are doing pretty well. A combination of piece work and everything? They make so much more money than people think.

IT: Over time I've been in the packing shed business and on the farm and there is much more automation.

FH: Oh, yes. Like cotton for instance you don't find any hand picking of cotton, they use all farm machines. And even wine grapes why they pick them more and more by machine rather than by hand.

IT: Now do you think the machines came in because of the labor shortage? Or did they—

FH: I think they were just trying to reduce the cost of picking.

IT: Or is it because of the rising wages that bring about?

FH: I think the machines would have come in anyway.

IT: Would come in anyway?

FH: Yeah.

IT: The curiosity of the scientists.

FH: They are always looking for means to do the work cheaper and if it's by machine, they will do it by machine.

IT: Now in your time here, there used to be a lot of—well there were Japanese laborers right?

FH: Uh-huh.

IT: Talking about (inaudible) and all that. And then you had Filipino laborers?

FH: Uh-huh.

IT: The Mexicans were always here. How do you interpret, you know, the change in conditions by different groups coming in?

FH: Well—

IT: Were there a lot of Filipino's here at one time?

SH: When we were—let's see. When we were going to like high school that age, there were a lot of young Filipinos that used to come into town. We were afraid of them. Well, I

mean I shouldn't say that. But there were a lot of young Filipinos in town and you don't see that anymore.

IT: Especially after the Philippines got their independence. I mean now, they can't come here as freely.

FH: When we were in produce and like the lettuce, dry-pack lettuce, our crews were all Filipino. Yeah. And we got along very well with them and they made good money.

IT: But was there competition between the Mexicans and the Filipinos or—

FH: Not in that particular branch of the business. See we all—around here oh, I don't think we ever had Filipino grape pickers.

IT: Then, what did the Depression year when the Texans and Oklahomas, the Okie's and so on came in? What affect did that have? Did Japanese growers hire them or—?

FH: Well I don't think so around here. I don't remember. I think they were stronger in areas like Bakersfield.

IT: I remember—

FH: How about you in your area?

IT: We had a lot of them come to pick fruit, but then I used to hear about the pea pickers, pea pickers and in the Earlimart and Delano area.

SH: Yeah.

FH: And winter peas.

IT: And so they apparently quite a few of them were into pea picking during the season already.

FH: When we were in Delano we shipped winter peas but I didn't have much to do with peas.

SH: Well I just wonder now who picked them? I remember peas.

FH: Yeah winter peas used to be a big business around here.

IT: There isn't anymore now?

FH: Things have changed so much. I don't think I'm a very good person for you to interview because my memory is not good anymore.

IT: I try to piece things together and thoughts in my head.

SH: That was a long time ago.

IT: When—when did the switch over from the Issei working as farm labor, the worker, and they diminished. Did that come out before WWII or a result of evacuation? Let me say that they saved their money and became farmers and so on. But in the early thirties there were quite a few that were migrating.

FH: So called blanket boys?

IT: Yeah, and you know they used to be a hotel that accommodated them.

SH: There used to be camps.

IT: Labor camps, I remember Paul Kawasaki?

SH: Yeah.

IT: His father was a contract—labor contractor in Delano.

SH: Yeah.

FH: Most of the young Nisei used to go into those camps.

IT: I think I need to interview Eddie Nagatani, he probably has some thoughts of the labor contractors.

FH: Which one is Eddie?

IT: He's the older one.

SH: Uh, the oldest was—

FH: Jim.

SH: No, George.

FH: Oh George.

SH: But somebody died?

IT: Must have been George.

FH: George died, I think.

IT: Jim, Eddie and Ben is who I had.

FH: And the Nagatanis used to be big farmers. Around Terra Bella, successful farmers. See in Delano there were farmer's associations in Delano and the Delano Grower's Exchange was composed of Japanese farmers from labor camps. That's a good camera.

SH: I'm sure it must be.

IT: Well it's amazing how they are so compact now and all kinds of (inaudible).

FH: You can go direct from that into a larger tape.

IT: Yeah I can put this tape into the adapter and play it in the VCR.

FH: Yeah. That's better than mine.

IT: I can bring—I have a VCR in the car and I have a 9-inch one and I can plug it into this and play it directly off of this. But I bought this so I can copy this tape onto the VCR tape.

SH: Amazing.

FH: And then I can store the VCR tape and use these little tapes over. Yeah, I can go from the camera to the TV and from the TV into the VCR. That is a little more complicated.

IT: When were you on the grand jury?

SH: That was quite a few years back.

FH: I can't remember that. That is quite a few years back. The year I was on there why
(Inaudible) was on there and one other guy.

SH: Three of you?

FH: And Cuomo was he?

SH: (inaudible)

IT: Okay, I'll turn this off now.