NARRATOR: ROBERT YANO

INTERVIEWERS: GRACE KIMOTO (main interviewer) and RALPH KUMANO

DATE: January 21, 2004

GK: This is an interview with Robert Lee Yano, a Nisei man of seventy-nine years old. We are in Kingsburg, California. Today is January 21, 2004. The interviewers are going to be Grace Kimoto and Ralph Kumono. This is an oral history project of the Central California District Japanese-American Citizens League and to be part of the Special Collection at the Madden Library at Cal State University in Fresno, California. Okay, shall we call you Bob or should we call you Robert?

RY: It doesn't make any difference. Whatever you want.

GK: We are very curious of how you got the middle name, Lee?

RY: Lee, that's because when I was born, I had a godmother that was a, name of Mrs. Marshall and she raised us I guess when we were babies and took care of us and being from the south that's why we have the southern name. Robert Lee Yano and we don't have no Japanese name so and my other brother who was just above me, his name was Max William Yano so she was from the south and that's the way she named us. My oldest brother had a Japanese name, his was Eddie Matsuo Yano but he is the only one. Of the three of us, he's the only one that has a Japanese name. So a lot of the times, I used to wonder how come he had a Japanese name and we didn't. And that was the reason and a lot of times when we were in school, Japanese school and you know everybody had Japanese names and when we were in high school whatever, grammar school, they all had Japanese names but for me I mean I really didn't think about it but later on I found out that was the reason us two didn't have it. That is why everybody

asked us and we explained that our godmother was from the south. That is how we happened to be.

GK: So your parents were very aware of the southern generals and?

RY: Yeah, I guess, I really never asked my mom and dad or anything but. That is how it was explained to us when we grew up and (inaudible) crazy for this area right here because I was born right here and so—

GK: You were born in Kingsburg?

RY: Right here.

GK: Oh right here at this—.

RY: There's an old house in back.

GK: Oh I see.

RY: This is where I was born so I lived here all my life except for internment. (coughing in background) That is where I grew up here and neighbors are haku-jin so I can tell you about being with neighbors and raised by them, too. We ate together in fact we slept together with neighbors right next door and it was very unfortunate that I think it was ten in the family and they are all gone. They are all gone.

GK: They are all passed away?

RY: They are all passed away. There were some that were younger than me and they are gone. But you know their grandkids and those are still left but the real Westland family, they are all gone.

GK: Caucasian.

RY: Caucasian-Swedish people.

GK: And Swedish, okay.

RY: And Swedish people and we were just like a family actually. It was—I can recall they would come over and borrow a couple of eggs, a cup of sugar. I remember those days.

GK: You were neighbors.

RY: Yeah. And this is what we did as neighbors so we were very, very close with them, very, very close.

GK: Tell us what is the date of your birth?

RY: I was born on February the fourth, 1924.

GK: And what was your family's line of work then?

RY: They basically farm labor.

GK: Farm labor? What did they farm?

RY: It was grapes and basically in those days it was grapes and cutting peaches yeah. And cutting peaches and on this farm it was grapes and cutting peaches and cutting apricots on this forty acres around here. And I can remember very, very clearly just a few my mom and my dad and we'd pick the fruit and they'd put us under the tree you know with (inaudible) I don't know if you'd call it a canvas but the canvas in those days they couldn't afford canvas so what they done was got these sulfur bags. In those days all the sulfur came in cloth bags, canvas bags like, and mom would take and bleach those and take all the color out of it and sew it together so we'd have a blanket on us.

GK: And so your mother worked right along with your dad.

RY: Oh yeah.

GK: Like all the Issei.

RY: Yeah, Issei I think they are all like that. Most of them worked hard. I mean.

GK: And the children worked right along with them?

RY: Well as we grew up we worked along with them you know. But basically when we were still young, they did it all.

GK: And then your mother had to do the cooking?

RY: The cooking, oh yeah. The basic things— cooking, washing and all that and the work in the fields so it was hard, it was tough.

GK: So what place are you in the family, sibling line-up?

RY: You mean as far as?

GK: Are you the oldest?

RY: No, no, I had an older brother, Eddie.

GK: Eddie?

RY: And then I had a brother right below him, Max William and the three of us. And we came on this place, dad and mom came on this place, they came in 1921 and they worked for the people that owned it was Neilsons. And they worked for them for eight years and in 1929 in the depression, Mr. Neilson told my dad—well my dad and mom and said, "Why don't you buy this place?" And dad and mom said, "We don't have the money. We can't afford it." And they said, "No, we can make it." In those days they called it what's called crop payment. You harvest the crop and after all the deductions and whatever was left, you paid them so much and you keep it and that is a crop payment.

GK: It's called sharecropping too?

RY: Yeah, that's share cropping, yeah exactly and of course that is how my mom and dad bought it and I still have the original contract.

GK: Wow!

RY: I'll show you.

GK: And that is how many of the Issei did it, sharecropping.

RY: In fact I was just looking at it before you people came over. I was looking at the contract.

GK: What year was that?

RY: 1929.

GK: Wow!

RY: Depression time. I have some of the cancelled checks my dad you know had PG&E bill and in those days, a dollar fifty-eight and PG&E bill in those days, you just can't believe it. I didn't keep them all. I used to show them to the grandkids. But Rick was like look what they used to do and they just can't believe it. They just can't believe it. Well, I just kept a few of those things that would scratch your eye, you know.

GK: Okay, well tell us about your family life from as far back as you can remember?

RY: You mean from grade school?

GK: Uh-huh.

RY: Grammar school?

GK: Even before. You said you were out in the field.

RY: Well in my life as I grew up as a youngster we being small we still associated with a lot of the neighbors, Caucasian because we were their age and we did things together you know and it wasn't so much while a youngster. It was probably more them than anyone else. There was a (inaudible) so that is why we played with them and we were real close, we were close. And so of course after we started grammar school and it was still limited and we didn't have all the luxuries and so you know it was hard. But going to grammar school, I can remember things were—I know it was tough because we didn't wear shoes, we went bare foot. And if we did have to go some place, we had a pair of tennis shoes

and that tennis shoe was our dress shoe and other than that, going to school. Basically in the winter time, we wore our tennis shoes.

GK: Is that right? All of the children too, they went barefoot to school?

RY: Oh yeah, I have pictures taking class pictures and if you look down on our feet, we all have bare feet. We didn't have no shoes on.

GK: How large was this school?

RY: Huh?

GK: How close is it and how—how many students?

RY: I don't know. Looking at the pictures I don't know what grade it went to when we started wearing shoes. As we got older, maybe we had shoes but youngsters everyone was barefoot and we were all barefoot and by the end of the year and you got a little older we had neck ties but neck ties have long been over and I don't know where they got them but everything wasn't perfect over all.

GK: So are you describing your life in the Southern state or here?

RY: Right here.

GK: Right here, you went barefoot.

RY: Oh yeah, oh yeah this is high school.

RK: This is country school, right?

RY: Yeah right here there was a country school about half a mile up the road here. They called it Clay school.

GK: Clay school.

RY: Clay school is right—they moved it from here, they moved to the Kingsburg Historical Society Site. It is there. So anybody can go see it and they have lots of oleanders, it is something. If you want to see something, go over there.

GK: What street is it on?

RY: I think that is on—I call it Canal but it is 210, Highway 210 right by the Kingsburg High School.

GK: High School.

RY: So it's open to the public and if you want to go in they have certain days and if you have a group that wants to go you can contact somebody and they will take you a tour right through that place but that is the school that we went to. I think it was one of the first schools that was built in this area at that time. I don't remember the exact date whether it was eighteen something or 1903 but it goes back and they kept that school and moved it from here and built a new one for here in this and this is where all my kids went through and all my grandkids. I still have one there.

GK: How many grandchildren do you have?

RY: I have five.

GK: Well you had how many children?

RY: I have two.

GK: Two?

RY: Two, a boy and a girl, the girl is older than the boy.

GK: And do they live around here?

RY: They both live here and they live on this ranch.

GK: They do? And your children and your grandchildren went to this.

RY: They all live here, right. Yeah, but my son lives on the corner, I gave him an acre or something and he built a home there.

GK: What is your son's name?

RY: Randall.

GK: Randall?

RY: Randall Yano and he is a chiropractor and he has an office in Selma. And my daughter and son-in-law, they live where we used to be and I deeded them next to us the same as my son and (inaudible) this coming spring. And so we've been here all our life. Our grandkids are all here and we see them every day and we go to all their activities. The piano recitals and whatever and now we're the oldest is twenty-two and going away to college here and he's coaching basketball and water polo and a lot of things like that and the oldest grand-daughter is going to Cedar Woods. This is her second year here and she likes to play basketball and so—

GK: What are their names?

RY: Huh?

GK: What are their names? Can you tell us about them?

RY: Sure the oldest grandson is Kyle Mikio Yano-Gos.

GK: Gos.

RY: It's from the scriptures.

GK: Okay.

RY: And the second one a grandson is Jordan and that is Egi is his Japanese name. And the oldest granddaughter is Fugi, well Erin Fugi and of course she's from my son so she

carries the Yano and my second one is what? Whitney Kubi, well we call her Kubi (inaudible) and then the third one is Shaynee. (telephone ringing)

GK: That is wonderful. Your children really kept your heritage.

RY: Yeah. But they are all pretty much active organization like swim clubs and my daughter and daughter-in-law, they are all active and really put a lot of effort into the school's booster, basketball booster club and they do a lot of things and they kept them pretty busy.

GK: Okay, let's get back to your growing up days, okay?

RY: Okay.

GK: So what other—you know everybody was not very rich.

RY: Yeah, yeah.

GK: What are the hardships you remember? Do you remember?

RY: It wasn't a hardship, though clothes and stuff like that just the basic clothes you know, just basic clothes. But I think some of the highlights and tough time is no bicycle. So I never did get a bicycle, you know. In those days we just go to dump and junk and wherever you could find anything, you know and put a bicycle together.

GK: So you made your own bicycle?

RY: I tell I made a bicycle yeah but I had no regular bike. For the wheel on the front I had a tricycle wheel you know. Just a little wheel and that was my bicycle and I was happy and that was it. And later on, of course, I got a normal bicycle but in and things like trying to make extra money and things. Well, one thing for example when we got into upper grades say junior high, we needed money for Christmas or something. Well, we'd go over to the neighbors around here and say "Hey can we have your grapes?" What we

called second crop or whatever was left, you know and go ask around you know and they'd say, "Yeah, go ahead and pick it." And so we would pick it and we'd take it to the winery you know and there was an old winery over here by Selma and used to be but it's not there not more. But there was a little winery there and they'd take it in boxes and get paid and another things is olives you know. You notice a lot of places around they have two trees of olives by their driveway you know and so they go to the ground and we'd go and ask, "Can we have your olives?" "Oh yeah take them." And we'd pick those. And those are the things you know for extra money during school time you know because our parents couldn't afford because there was no money. So that is how we went out and some of the friends I had and not me particular but Japanese friends raised vegetables you know, vegetables and as we got a little older we'd go and peddle those. Vegetables and that would be something we did basically and for extra money and but there was no luxury. There was no luxury at all. Swimming pool was out of the question, we learned to swim in the canal. That was our swimming pool, yeah. So I think a lot of probably our age Nisei they all did that—the canal, you know, that is our swimming pool.

GK: They did. And did you sense any expectation that what you parent's expected you to become or did you—

RY: Well I think that in those days I think I can remember that you have to be honest, do it right, obey the law, you know, and those things and as we grew up not only in junior high but when we rode our bicycle, they would always say be careful you know. Drive on the right side because there is a certain side you are supposed to ride on a bicycle you know and obey, respect and obey. And I think that is the life in my mind especially my mom. You want to do things as a youngster, you know, you have in your mind and you get

crazy ideas. But, I've always come to my mind and mom said, "Don't do that." And not so much my dad but my mom and that would always come into my mind and I don't care what when you go to do something that thing would pop in my head and my mom wouldn't like that and I'd back off. I think you know as later in life, I could tell you one thing for example. After being in the service and this interracial marriage, you think about that that I'm overseas and there are a lot of girls there you know and pretty ones too but you get attached and for me I hesitated because my mom wouldn't like it. So that popped back up in the head again so you know it's not that—but there were a lot of Nisei that got married overseas but this is one thing for me. You know—I'm not denying that I had girlfriends or whatever, you know, but I always thought, mom wouldn't like it. Not so much my dad, but mom.

GK: So you knew the value system?

RY: That is something we were taught as youngsters and not to steal anything but and those were all basic things we were taught. Don't bring shame. Don't bring shame.

RK: Now did you got to high school in Kingsburg?

RY: Kingsburg High School, yeah.

RK: And were you in any activities and clubs and sports?

RY: Basically sports. I played basketball and I played football. I went out for track and I think all of us were kind of and my brothers were basically in the same and there were activities and extra activities say like on Saturdays and Sundays, we were there for what they call YMA, young, it's a Christian thing but everybody joined and we had a basketball club and we had leagues play different cities. That was one of the activities plus your Japanese school was on Saturdays which I didn't like attending. (laughing)

GK: So this was within the Selma community?

RY: This was more in this community.

GK: Or the Kingsburg community?

RY: Yeah, yeah it would go as far as to (inaudible) city or Lindsay and different clubs.

GK: I see.

RY: Basketball club.

GK: I know you had family picnics right?

RY: Yeah.

GK: The community picnic?

RY: Yeah the community picnic and those used to be in the mountains up in going up to Auberry there is still a spot up there where we used to go. Yeah we used to go up there. And every time we got up that way I say, "Oh there is where we used to go." There is a Y there now. And I remember those family picnics then. Those were back in those days I kind of looked forward to that.

GK: You mentioned you didn't like your Japanese school?

RY: No.

GK: Tell us why?

RY: I just didn't like it. Probably I was—I couldn't see going, maybe I was more Americanized because of my association and I just couldn't see going to Japanese school. And I used to tell them, I used to tell them I said, "You are wasting your money. You are wasting your tuition because all I do there is eat my lunch." You know and that is not right but they wanted me to go so I would go. But I wasn't—I didn't study. I know I didn't study.

GK: I know you were not alone.

RY: Yeah but me, I just hated it yeah.

RK: At the time did you consider yourself Japanese or Japanese-American or American?

RY: I would say American, yeah at that time yeah. In fact all the way through you know although you had that little racial thing but I never thought—I just felt I was American.

RK: Right, right.

GK: Well you kind of told us you know your experience with Caucasians and they were part of you and your community and your life, right? That is very interesting because some persons were really segregated within themselves so that is really amazing.

RY: No we really amongst ourselves here with the Caucasian people, especially them. I mean we'd eat together and everything. We even slept together over there you know. And it's something, yeah.

GK: What about the teenage years that you were growing up?

RY: Teenage years, probably when you got into high school, you might see kind of separated there. I don't know for what reason but I always blame it on, I don't know if it's the right way but all this stuff comes from home, you know. A child doesn't know this child is no good or bad because he's black or white or pink, you know. They don't know. It comes from home. It comes from home. The parents have to tell these kids; don't play with that or he's so and so. So you know, I think the child doesn't know no difference. I didn't know no difference so why should another child know any difference?

GK: So looking back, you think it might have been a little bit of racism?

RY: Oh sure, oh sure definitely. As you get up into the teenage by the high school level it makes a little bit of difference you know. But that is the way I feel.

GK: Do you remember any incidents or experiences?

RY: Well, I wouldn't say so much as you know. I would say maybe after Pearl Harbor now you really now this is the point that really affected me as a senior in high school, it really affected me.

GK: Can you share any actual incident?

RY: Well sure, you know up to that point your association with all your friends is pretty much normal regardless whether they are white or whatever but after that, turn around they were just—they just didn't even associate. They kind of walked away from you and it became a real problem for me and I went to a class over there and had a history class and they called it at that time—they called it "Problems in Democracy" that is the history class and I had a teacher by the name of Mr. Dodson. And being alphabetically I was Yano, so I was way in the back and I was worried after that the treatment you were getting and it was building up inside. So one day, the last day I had it and I took that book and it was a big history book, you know, and I stood up in the back and I threw it all the way to the front and it was quite a ways. I just threw it up and turned around and I walked out and I never went to school after that. I just walked out and I didn't go to school then but I don't know. Maybe because it was just me. It burned me up.

GK: Can you orally say what you felt at that time?

RY: Well I felt that—I felt that it wasn't right. Where is our—you know when you go through those years and study the Constitution and you study all these things and the Supreme Court and you study about it and justice for everybody and you salute the flag and that, you know, to me it was just totally wrong. How can they do that? How can

they, you know, just turn away from you? For me it just burned me up. It just burned me up.

GK: How about with girls during your teenage years? How did you relate to other girls?

RY: You mean—

GK: Teenage you know?

RY: You mean haku-jins or?

GK: Any you know?

RY: I think overall, it was still turn around. Overall, it was still turn around. They would just kind of walk away from you. Not that want to say anything to you but the expression that they gave you and that is something. We didn't do anything. We might look like so and the enemy or whatever but actually I didn't do nothing. If you want to say something to me, I'd answer them. But when they walk away from me you know that was kind of.

GK: But you dated Japanese people, the girls?

RY: No. No, I don't think so. I don't think I had that much love for them girls.

GK: You were busy in sports?

RY: Yeah.

GK: Well what about your first job? Did you have any besides you worked on the farm?

RY: Yeah, I worked on the farm. That is probably about the extent of it because I was in high school and most of it was farm work you know. Well, my senior year of course and I didn't get to graduate, I graduated but I didn't get to graduate because of the curfew we had a six o'clock curfew and graduation at the bowl was seven, you see. So we you know the Japanese weren't able to go at Kingsburg High School.

GK: It was the city or the nation?

RY: They had like the football stadium. That is where they had it.

GK: What year is this?

RY: Nineteen forty-two.

GK: Nineteen forty-two okay.

RY: June 7, 1942 was the graduation and—

GK: You were a forty-two graduate?

RY: I was a forty-two graduate and yeah and so the curfew was six o'clock. So I wasn't able to go, so I didn't go. Yeah, but they did send the diploma to me.

GK: You know there is a law now that in California that we must get our diplomas from graduations.

RY: Well yeah.

GK: From our school.

RY: I think a lot of them got theirs' later you know, some of them had ceremonies performed later in the years. In fact Lisa, my wife got hers, on the regular ceremony. They made a special one for that group of people that graduated from Edison High School in Fresno.

GK: That's right. Many of them are doing that you know. So did you have the opportunity to go to college?

RY: No.

GK: You did not?

RY: Because I went from high school and then I went into camp it was forty-two so we went in August and so there was no opportunity to go to college.

GK: I see, so how did you hear about Pearl Harbor?

RY: Pearl Harbor? We came back from a basketball game playing in Lindsay and we were playing in Lindsay and we came back to Parlier and they said hey Pearl Harbor, they said Pearl Harbor and I don't think actually any of us knew Pearl Harbor or where was Pearl Harbor you know and they said, "Well, the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor." And we came home and separated and came home.

GK: Do you remember the feeling at that time?

RY: There was no for me it was really—you just think oh Pearl Harbor bombed and that was about it other than I didn't have any feelings just hey Pearl Harbor was bombed you know and that was about it for me.

GK: Do you remember any person calling you Jap or anything?

RY: Not at the time?

GK: Not at the time?

RY: Not at the time. We came home after that and there were probably somebody but I really didn't encounter anything like that because from that day actually, we went into camp and from there myself stayed in there for probably what a year and a half or something. And then I went into the service and—

GK: How about your parents? How did they—?

RY: Well my—that again—my dad—see my mom, my mom went to Japan in July of forty-one, yeah. And then she went on to see her sisters at that time and my mom was the younger sister and the older sister, the two of them and she lived in San Fernando my auntie, and they went back in July to visit. And visit was probably due to some of the property my dad had because he was the only son and so dad had property there. And to get the papers straight, my mom went, well the two of them went. Well from what we

gather later they came back on a ship through Seattle and the boat turned around that is in July now see. And of course December 7th Pearl Harbor so there must have been some kind of indication something was cooking up happening so the boat turned around and went back to Japan instead of going to Seattle. So my mom didn't come back.

GK: She was caught?

RY: She was caught.

GK: Like many Nisei were.

RY: Yeah. So we lost all contact at that time because you know—

GK: The war.

RY: I think I don't remember exactly what year but we got word through Red Cross and we found out later that she had died there. She had some sickness surgery and didn't recover from that. She had to have another surgery so she passed away in Japan during that time. So after she left here it is kind of hard to even believe for this day for me to believe that she is gone. She is gone but you don't have—you didn't view her body.

RK: You weren't there.

GK: When did your auntie get back?

RY: She came back. She stayed there—

GK: What year did she?

RY: Here from Hiroshima but they weren't there, they were in Kyoto so they survived, both of them survived as far as that goes, the atomic bomb, they survived that.

GK: Oh my.

RY: But Auntie came back later and then I had getting back to camp, there were cousins that lived with us. They, Auntie's two, three boys and they stayed with us in camp and we were all, men folk.

GK: This is what camp?

RY: Gila, Camp One.

GK: Okay.

RY: And being we were all men folks, boys and men, they put us in bachelors quarters and then my oldest brother went to administration and said no, we don't like that because we have, because my cousins were younger. I think they were probably twelve, they were twins and they were younger. All of us others were eighteen and above but the two of them were younger and so she says that is not right putting them into the bachelor quarters so they did change it so we got a regular apartment. But it was all men folks. My mom wasn't there now, she was dead so. Those three, the oldest one was a little bit older than me so he was probably about and at that time, I was eighteen and he was probably maybe twenty but he has lived in Japan before. They had been in Japan before so he was familiar so he said, "I'll go back." So he went to Tule and from there up to Bismarck and he took the two twins because the two twins didn't want to stay with the sister in law here so the three went back and they made contact with mother and everything and that's how they stayed together and eventually they all came back. And they are here and they live downtown.

GK: We didn't really cover too much about what you know about Japan.

RY: Japan?

GK: And your family.

RY: Japan—I didn't know too much.

GK: Didn't know too much?

RY: Because I went back, my wife and I went back in 1991 and I didn't have no contact, you know, because my dad and everybody was gone from my side.

GK: Is this Hiroshima-ken?

RY: Hiroshima but we were both fortunate because my wife, my father-in-law was still living. He was ninety, about ninety-one or two or somewhere around there. He was in upper nineties and he lived in Fresno and he was still mentally sharp and everything and he still had contact back there. The Issei still had contact so through that way when we went back in ninety-one I had no contact, but my wife did. And she's pretty much bilingual.

GK: She's Hiroshima?

RY: Huh?

GK: She was Hiroshima, too?

RY: But she is bilingual. She can speak it and write it you know because she kind of lived with her grandparents and thank goodness because otherwise I would have been lost you know, being back there and I know a little bit but when you start going hey, hey a little bit too fast for me. It is just hard for me to keep it going. But she's a—she can keep on going so that was very lucky. So in that way we were able to find my side, my cousins and my first cousins and stuff like that.

GK: Okay, let's hear about your camp experiences?

RY: I'll tell you what. Let me—I'll tell you what when I graduated high school okay you are eighteen so you have to register for the draft right? So you have to—I registered when I was eighteen. I registered at local board 124 in Fresno and it wasn't too long, right away

the sent me a classification 1A which is eligible for draft, okay? And when I went to camp, as soon as I got into camp, they sent me a reclassification right away and they classed me at 4C. "Enemy alien" and so those are the things for me that really ticked me off, I am American. I am not an alien. There again it is really for me, it was a brutal reason, anyway that is how it happened there you know. To me, it just wasn't right. I just couldn't see why, why? You know because there are days and I probably told some of the kids in high school, we didn't have no help you know. You have to battle it out yourself. You have to figure these things out yourself. Nowadays they have somebody to come in and go through those things.

GK: You need to clarify what camp you are talking about?

RY: This is Camp One in Gila, Arizona yeah. And of course after that of course there are a lot of things that happened in there. If you want to know the work I did in camp or you know those things I can tell you that.

GK: Sure, that would be interesting and then we will get to the loyalty questions.

RY: Yeah. In camp I stayed there for a while maybe six eight months, I didn't do nothing. (telephone rings) Finally, I decided well and I got to do something so I got a job as a janitor and it paid you know sixteen dollars a month. And I worked it a while and pretty soon the manager you know of course he got me that job and he said you got to do this, you got to do that, you got to do this, you got to do that and there was two of us. And I said, "No for sixteen dollars I ain't going to do this and that and there. I said you can have the broom. I am not fired, I quit." And I don't want to work, I quit but I was still hostile. I was still mad. I shouldn't do that but if you think about it now.

GK: Of course you could.

RY: It was just being that mad. No, no, no you do it and walked out and that's it. So I hung around some more and finally I got a job, because of the opportunity to be on this was swamping on the truck and I knew some friends. I knew one friend from Fresno that was driving a truck, semi. And a big semi and they go get rice and shoyu and grapefruit and everything. And this is a big convoy. This is not just one truck. There are nine or ten trucks and they all go out at one time. Go out to Phoenix and Glendale, Arizona, that's free, you are free. Hey drive out there and you see Japanese gardeners out there raising vegetables and they are free. You know in Glendale, Arizona they are free and they are out there and here we are confined how many miles away and we are in the dog house out there.

GK: And isn't Gila the one that is in an Indian Reservation.

RY: Yeah, yeah, you are in an Indian Reservation and these people in Glendale, Arizona out there are raising and growing crops and you go out and you see that you know, but anyway I got a job there as a swamper knowing that if I got on that job I get to go out. You know and you got out as a group. You go out after you do your job and load up and go to a China-meshi; they are a hole in the wall. It got to a point later on when they got lax, that I would go to the movie. I would take in a movie and then go back to—

GK: All right.

RY: But at first the MP was with us but later on when it got lax.

GK: So you went out several times, once a month or—

RY: Oh sure. After that it just got to be a routine you know.

GK: This is 1942?

RY: Forty-two, it would probably be like forty-three or somewhere around there but a, it is a convoy so a lot of us would go out to there and eat there and in a little hole in the wall Chinese place and we had a ball but that was the thing I enjoyed. And then later on I went into the service and those were probably the only things that I worked at and janitorial and for myself that is what I did.

GK: So what did you do about the loyalty questions, 27 and 28?

RY: Yes, yes. I answered yes to it.

GK: Yes to it.

RY: There was no question about it for me.

GK: Why? There was no question?

RY: No question.

GK: Okay.

RY: For me, I felt that hey I'll go regardless there is no and I didn't hesitate and my dad didn't say anything. He said you are old enough, you make up your mind, you were born here. So this is your country, so but there again, probably some of the parents had a little different say so but my dad didn't. Probably if my mom was there probably, she would have said don't go. You know mom?

RK: Yeah.

RY: Thinking I would go overseas and die which a lot of them did you know. But I—

GK: And that is the time, you had no communications with your mom?

RY: No.

GK: That's right.

RY: No.

GK: So your camp experience after your job, you don't have too many negative times.

RY: No I don't because those are probably the basic things and recreation in camp probably the only thing I really did in camp was Sumo. I did Sumo. I had a fellow from Fresno that was driving a truck and he was involved in Sumo and said, "Oh come on, come on." And I was more heavy at that time and I still have a medal that I got and I still wear it on my dog tag you know. Yeah. And overseas I put it on my dog tag and I still have it on.

RK: Did you date in camp?

RY: No.

RK: Okay.

RY: No dating and every now and I'm probably not the dating type.

GK: Were you still in touch with your neighbors the Neilson's? Were you in touch with any of your friends, your Caucasian friends outside?

RY: When I got out of camp?

GK: In camp, when you were in camp?

RY: The only one is the doctor, Dr. Larson in Kingsburg. He had his own sanitarium, doctor. He had his own hospital and the reason for that is in 1942 I was playing basketball and got a cold just before camp and I got a cold and got pneumonia so I was laid up in the hospital, this was before camp. And so he took care of me and when I went into camp he said, he told me don't forget to let me know where you are at. So I did write a letter to him and he wrote me back and asked me how I am doing and everything. And he was a real nice doctor, real nice doctor. Dr. Larson was his name. He was a real family doctor.

GK: Are you in touch with him now?

RY: He's gone.

GK: He's gone.

RY: Oh he's deceased.

GK: So tell about your marriage?

RY: Marriage well.

GK: How did you meet her and this is Pat?

RY: I would say how I met her is I used to bowl in Fresno and we all used to bowl in those days. And she had a sister that was bowling quite a bit and my wife at that time I think she was in sewing school in San Francisco. And—

GK: Her last name is? Her maiden name is?

RY: Takemoto.

GK: Takemoto? Pat Takemoto.

RY: Takemoto and she happened to be home that day I guess. And her father had a small restaurant in Fresno and I went to eat one time and we got to talking and he asked if I had peaches. Well, I did have peaches and he said he'd like a couple boxes of peaches. So I took it to him and I took it to the house and I got to the house and dog gone, not the sister but she came out and I said "Gee this isn't the one, you know." It was her, she came out and so later on when I saw the sister, I said, "Hey, you got—you didn't tell me you had a sister?" That was her younger sister, see my wife's younger sister, which I knew very well because we used to bowl. And then that's how we met and of course, we got to talking and that is how I met. That is actually how I met her is through these peach deal and stuff. And later on—

RK: Now what year was this?

RY: Probably have to be around—

RK: This is after camp?

RY: Somewhere in forty-nine, yeah this is after camp.

RK: Yeah.

RY: Probably in the eight, forty-seven or somewhere in there. Nineteen forty-seven or forty-eight.

RK: So after camp you resettled in this area again?

RY: Yeah. After camp I came back and well I—when I was overseas not knowing that my mom had passed away. The war ended over there in Italy at the time and I wrote to my dad and my brother now he was the oldest because they were back here and I was still over there.

GK: That is forty-five.

RY: And I told them I was going to go from there, I was going to volunteer and hook up for another three years and go to Japan but in Japan, the war was still going on. So I said, it is over here, it is VE Day and I'm going to hook up three more years and I am going to Japan because not knowing my mom. I figured my mom was still alive over there. And so no, dad and my brother wrote a letter and said you had better come home because they knew that my mom had died. They knew she had passed away but they didn't want to tell me, see. So I wrote another letter and said no, I am going. I am going to hook up another three years and they said no and they insisted that I come home. So that is why I came back. But I had already hitched up for three years. And I told dad and the told me that for years, mom is gone. She's gone. Well, she's gone okay so there was nothing so I just missed the Korean War. I just missed it. I hitched up for three years so my three

years would have been due in September of forty-nine and the Korean War was fifty right?

GK: Right.

RY: So I just missed it.

GK: You need to back up your experience at the beginning of the military was in Europe?

RY: Yeah.

GK: Where in Europe?

RY: I went from Italy, to France and back to Italy.

GK: And what corps?

RY: I was in 100th, 442.

GK: One hundredth and four forty-two.

RY: I was in E company.

GK: Can you tell us any experience of your military?

RK: Did you get drafted or join up right in camp? And where is the first place they shipped you?

RY: Camp and then went to Camp Shelby.

RK: Oh Shelby okay, Louisiana?

RY: Yeah. The thing that I'll never forget is Congressman Inouye, he was my platoon sergeant.

GK: He was.

RY: And I was on the hill when he lost his arm. So I and that's why whenever, I don't get to go to reunions because I wasn't—I'm not completely retired, you know. When they have a reunion, it is in June, you know and that is harvest time for me so I went to one reunion

and that was in 1988, they came to Reno. We had the whole reunion in Reno and I did go there and took pictures and talked to him. The original reunion, I mean the original time that I had met Senator Inouye was in 1947. He came to JACL in Fresno as a guest speaker and I wasn't going to go because you know, a little guy like me and look at him, you know? Look at him you know. And dad said you had better go and I said I didn't want to go but they kept insisting that I go. So I did go. I did go and when he came to the airport there he came off the plane and I hollered to him, maybe I shouldn't have but I said, "Danny." And he looked at me and he came and put his arms around me.

GK: Oh fabulous.

RY: So that was touching. (crying)

GK: Yeah, yeah that is okay, wonderful time he was there.

RY: He was with our platoon and we were on a hill and the enemy was dug in there and I guess he was going to take charge and he went up and a guy popped up and threw a grenade and it blew his arm clear off and of course, he took a sub machine gun and—

GK: Mowed them down?

RY: Mowed them down, yeah.

GK: And how—

RY: He was quite a leader. Very good.

GK: In which way?

RY: Always, I mean he a good leader. He was just a good leader.

GK: How is he good?

RY: In other words, in the command if you say "Hey let's go." A lot of times people will say, no, I don't want to go.

RK: So you trusted him?

RY: Yeah, he's the kind of a guy that is always felt that if he said, "Let's go." He was like a magnet. And you can see today, look at him.

RK: Sure.

RY: Look at how many times he's been in there because he's a real good leader. He's a good leader yeah. But he's always—I mean to me, he's tops. He's tops.

GK: I was at the gala event and he was honored.

RY: Right, right.

GK: And he—he is one of the convention, JACL Convention leaders. It is going to be in Hawaii so.

RY: Hawaii.

GK: He is one of the chairman leaders.

RY: He was always, he's a good man. He's a good man. Yeah.

GK: And so okay you were telling me about your wife but you didn't tell us how you got married then.

RY: Well, it was—I think that we went to movies and I took her out and we used to go to movies and finally one day I said, it wasn't too long after that maybe one or two times and I said, "Hey, do you want to marry me?" And I hear you are infatuated she tells me you know, and I said infatuated you know. That was a big word for me. You know infatuated, I was infatuated. So I came home and I got the Webster Dictionary and she laughs about but I come home and I looked up infatuated and opened the book and oh that is what it means. So next time I said "You want to marry me?" And she said, "No you are infatuated." I said, yeah I'm in love with you. And I said, "I know what that

word is." I know what you—but at first, I didn't know what it meant. And we always laugh about it now. (laughing)

GK: So where did you marry?

RY: In Fresno.

GK: In Fresno?

RY: And we married in Fresno yeah.

GK: At the Buddhist Temple?

RY: Yeah at the Buddhist Temple.

GK: Oh how wonderful.

RY: In 1949 I think it was and that is how I met her. But we didn't court too long, yeah. I met her and I felt that she was the one and we kind of kicked off and we did, yeah.

GK: So what year is this?

RY: Forty-nine.

GK: Forty-nine? So we need to get to the resettlement when your family came back. You were not married yet?

RY: No, no. I think like when dad came back. Dad and my oldest brother came back here. They came back; I don't remember exactly whether it was forty-five right? Or some where along there, they came back. We had a little old house here, single oh big single gable house, a big one. A real big one and it was a three bedroom home but it was big but it was an old home and it was big. But they came back and it was all beat up. I guess people had broken—

GK: Trashed it?

RY: Windows and everything else in other words, it wasn't livable. So they tore it down completely and they applied for OPS Office of something which was a government okay to get lumber and material to build. And they applied and they said no because it was right after the war and right after the war they didn't have enough materials. So they re—so they didn't okay the permit so dad and my brother and I think they had one more fellow and I don't remember his name but they tore the barn down. We had an old barn back there and they had this old house and they tore everything out. Everything and took it all apart and took all the one by twelve's you know of the siding and in those days the house and the barns all had one by twelve's and the houses were all single, single walls and they took it all apart and they took all the material and they built the garage back here and thinking well they would be able to get a permit to build the home but it didn't plan out. So they built the garage and they turned that into the living quarters. And they lived in that and then later after I got married, then of course my brother was, had just got married. And so I told my brother I said, "You know Japanese custom now is the oldest son looks after the family, the parents. So I said you live here and I'm young yet and I can go. It doesn't matter. I can go any place because I am still young." And I said, "You look after dad and take care and you can have everything." But he said and he just got married I don't think the wife wanted to do that you know how it goes. So he said, "You stay and help dad." So I said, "Well okay, but I don't want. You are the oldest. You can have it and I'll go." But no you stay, you stay and help dad and so that is how it happened. I stayed and after I got married and my wife and I looked after him for we lived together for about seventeen or eighteen years we lived together. And it's hard on my wife. It's hard. It's hard, but she we did live for seventeen years together and of

course later on, it got where medical reasons for her you know. Because it was too much on her so too much pressure. So I told my dad I think, we have to kind of separate and he got a room on the side and we made a room for him separate, yeah. And that is where he stayed. And then of course later on, we made two visits to Japan. And of course we were in Japan and (inaudible) and that's was something that, well I didn't approve of going back and getting married you know because first of all, she was young, much, much younger. My age and there was quite an age difference and I knew it wasn't for love. It wasn't for—it was for money and she wanted to get his money and come here and get his money. And I didn't go for it. I opposed it all the way.

GK: But he married in Japan?

RY: He married yeah and he brought her back here. But he never came to my house. I said if you want to get married—Dad, you are welcome any time, I don't mind that, but your wife no, so only my dad came. He came by himself.

GK: I see.

RY: So there was—

GK: I'm sure you were still feeling for your mom that you lost.

RY: And mine is a little bit different because being I had two brothers. A lot of people don't really understand and I know because being the youngest, you know, they think that I got the, the ranch, you know because we looked after dad but that's not it, see. You have to remember this place when dad and mom bought this place, it was three names. There were three of us you see and if you were dad's age you couldn't buy land but we were all natural-born citizens. So they put it—so dad put it in three boy's names. Thanks to the advice of haku-jin friend, they put it in. I'll be the guardian and they put it in but dad

bought this place in 1929 in our name that we were buying it so that's how and people don't understand that and they thought that you know that I got it for nothing but that wasn't it. When we became of age, we reversed everything and dad got it see. We signed over everything over to him. And when I got out of the service, I bought Cal Vet and I bought it. So there was never no friction between the brothers. They couldn't say well, you got it free. You know, I paid Cal Vet and my payment ended in 1990, Cal Vet, and that is not too long ago.

RK: No fifteen years.

RY: But then again you see Cal Vet and I was paying only one hundred and nine dollars a month. Where else can you make a payment of a hundred and nine dollars a month?

RK: Right.

RY: And you get full coverage from fire, you name it. So I just took over it so my boy, he is crazy that you paid a hundred and nine, he just couldn't believe it and I hated to lose it because coverage was cheap.

RK: Now when you were in camp, you still had the property so—

RY: Yes.

RK: They just, did anyone take care of it?

GK: Right.

RY: Before we went to camp we had a neighbor right here Warkinton, Pete Warkinton and had twenty acres right across well about a mile away and he came over and he said he would take care of it. He would rent it.

GK: Oh wow.

RY: And that is okay and we had such a short—we had no choice because time was limited. It was just short. So we did lease it to him and the thing is he was a very religious man we thought you know and then we found out as time went now how can you have forty-two tons of raisins and then the first year you had it, it went down to nineteen tons.

RK: Oh.

RY: And this is what happened.

RK: Yeah.

RY: And we had every year dad and mom had forty, forty-one, forty-two you know every year, every year consistently. And then boom one year and the three years that he had it, it went down. And the first year I came back out and took over, I thought my God. See these are the things that happened.

RK: Sure.

RY: You know it happened.

GK: Were you able to discuss this with him?

RY: I did approach him one time. Like I said I'm (inaudible) so much—

GK: And how did he react?

RY: He didn't say nothing. Because I put it to him like I said you know Pete I knew you. I was young yet but I knew you were a religious man and you go to church two or three times a week and can you really say and can you really be honest about it and still say you did the right thing? And you know after that I saw him in Reedley and he never faces me. I seen him going right down G Street, Main Street. He'd see me.

GK: Today?

RY: He's gone now.

GK: He's gone now but that—

RY: He moved, he moved.

GK: Oh he moved away.

RY: When we came back he moved. He sold his ranch and moved way up on the mountain.

GK: How convenient. So he knows what he did.

RY: Yeah, these are things that you know. But definitely we know but what can you do?

GK: But you still had the title to—

RY: Yeah, oh yeah. So we came back and dad and my brother took over and kept going. And when I came back from the service that is when I started with my dad and everything. My oldest brother, he didn't come.

GK: How about—so your war experience. Does your parents or do your children know that you were close to Inouye at that time?

RY: Oh yeah.

GK: You discussed things.

RY: Oh yeah. We always, my wife and I we always discussed our camps experiences. They have known ever since they were small and we keep telling them what happened, what happened, what happened. And so they know what we went through. They know what most of the Japanese went through, yeah. Because we've always and my brother was just the opposite. I was the one, him and Virginia, he never said too much about the kids. So when my nieces and nephews would come over, they used to come over and then I'd tell them about it. How come dad? He didn't tell us these things. They knew nothing. They knew a little bit but not too much. But our kids, we kept telling them.

GK: And they are in the middle of the Japanese-American community now with you said they are active at school?

RY: Oh yes. Oh yes. My daughter, she is coaching basketball.

GK: Oh gee.

RY: Freshman, JV basketball at Kingsburg High School and they work on the Boosters, my daughter-in-law, she is the head of the Booster Club.

GK: Fabulous.

RY: And they work in the high school. They volunteer to work in the office I think it is once or twice a week, they work in the office to help. You know and they are very active.

GK: Wonderful.

RY: Very active. In fact my daughter-in-law that one year, she had the woman of the year but she likes to help them.

GK: That is very good.

RY: And my grandkids is the same thing. They go over to Kingsburg and they know who they are because they are active. And my oldest grandson like I say, he coaches Freshman basketball and this will be his second or third year of high school. Now the youngest grandson is helping him coach. And then they go to Dinuba High School has water polo and because they are both water polo or he is coaching the Varsity boys over there at Dinuba High School. Plus he is going to school there, so they are very active.

GK: That is wonderful. So your time now—what is the biggest worry that you have in front of you? Do you have any worries?

RY: I don't worry too much about them you know.

GK: For yourself?

RY: For ourself? For us I think probably the worse is our health plan. That is my biggest worry. So what do we do? So we got Medicare and so we got JACL Blue Shield but that is pretty expensive you know seven hundred and ninety two dollars a month for just the two of us and that is pretty expensive.

GK: It sure is, Medicare is.

RY: But it's something that you need.

GK: I know.

RY: But it's something you need and that is probably my worst worries, how are we going to maintain this coverage? Yeah.

GK: You are so lucky because many Niseis that live to this age, they move to where the children are. They'll move to like Walnut Creek like if their children live there and you don't have to do that. Your family is right here.

RY: They are all here.

RK: You are the one that came back here. That is good yeah.

GK: So you really do not have that worry that most of the Nisei have today.

RY: So in that way, it was best because my son-in-law he is a PA. And he works in Fresno Community Hospital and he works there in emergency and he works for Dr. Dady I think he is a hand specialist. So in that way it is nice because is sometimes you feel sickly you say hey Steve come over and check us out. So in that way—

GK: You are awfully lucky. There aren't too many families that can say that, you know.

RY: Yeah. And so I have a little problem that came up. I have skin cancer right here. So I went to the doctor and he said oh, we have to cut that out. And so I said okay. And so for me it is no problem because they are all around here, you know. What's your

schedule and my wife don't drive anymore, you know, and ah, don't worry we will find somebody to pick you up or bring you or whatever. So in that way it is—I don't have to worry.

GK: That is marvelous.

RY: But I think the biggest worry is keeping and maintaining that.

GK: Health.

RY: The insurance.

RK: Now are you in any of the JACL's locally?

RY: Parlier.

RK: Parlier? Okay.

RY: Tad Kozuki, he's the president.

RK: Right he's the president because Kingsburg doesn't have a JACL.

RY: No. I've always belonged to Parlier.

RK: Okay.

RY: Even the health plan when it was—what was that one? I don't remember the name of it but before Blue Shield.

RK: Before Blue Shield.

RY: I carried that through. I think that is the biggest worry don't you?

GK: That makes sense. So what is the biggest happiness that you have today?

RY: Watching my grandkids.

GK: Yeah.

RY: I think the greatest thing is watching and looking forward to like tonight they are looking forward to the oldest one playing in Porterville tonight. She plays basketball. She plays for College of Sequoia.

GK: Oh wow.

RY: And last night I went to Kingsburg to watch my grandson and he coaches the freshmen so. We go over there and tonight is down there.

GK: So you have a lot of happiness.

RY: I look forward and go down and watch them and of course one of them is playing at Yosemite, one of the granddaughters. The second one is playing up there. But we can't be in two places so my daughter-in-law is going that way and my son is going this way.

GK: What a happy life. You have a wonderful time. So that is kind of how you are spending your time today?

RY: Yeah, yeah.

GK: That is one of your questions. Okay and what else we should close it up pretty soon. So can you imagine if there were no WWII, what would life have been for you, do you think?

RY: That's really, if there was no war? I'd still be farming, that's all I know.

GK: Okay.

RY: I'd still be farming. Because that was probably something that dad said that one of us had to be a farmer and that was me. Because my oldest brother, he was more mechanically inclined.

GK: I see.

RY: He's like his Uncle Tom down there, he is more mechanical. And the middle one above me he was more the school. So he went on from camp he went to the University of Utah and came back and went to SC and got a government job so he's always been, you know. So it was me I'd be back here on the farm.

GK: So let me ask you about the redress. Then you are glad we did get redress?

RY: Yeah.

GK: And how did you feel about it?

RY: Well, I got the redress right and I didn't think it was enough but okay I'll take whatever they give me.

GK: It never pays for it all?

RY: Yeah, and sometimes you know you hear comments well you got paid for it, you know. And I've heard that and I've heard that in school, high school when I would go to high school and speak to the kids and they said, "Well you got twenty thousand." So you know what I told them, you think about it. Think real hard and would you spend three and a half years behind and get twenty thousand? Would you? Would you?

RK: Exactly.

RY: Give up everything.

GK: How much an hour I wonder what that is?

RY: I said you think about well and my dad didn't get it. All of the deceased didn't get it.

RK: Right because they were deceased.

RY: Think about it and in the first place they had no business putting us there. And the second place, I said you think money, money doesn't buy and in the sixth place it is wrong.

GK: That is right.

RY: It is totally wrong.

GK: Unconstitutional.

RY: It is totally wrong. I said what do you the Supreme Court is for, I tell them. Think about the Supreme Court, turned them away. That is why I say the Supreme Court is just a piece of paper. It is just a piece of paper as far as I'm concerned. It's just a piece of paper. It's good yes it's good. They always think they can do that and it is wrong.

RK: Right.

RY: It is wrong, wrong, wrong I tell the kids.

GK: So you do share. That is good.

RY: Yeah.

GK: I used to go in the classroom and share too. We do live in the best country.

RY: That's right.

GK: But it's the youngest country in the world and it has made mistakes.

RY: And sometimes they do make mistakes and sometimes they apologize for it but it is still wrong.

GK: That is right and I still tell the kids, did you ask to be born here? No, you are lucky then. You are American. How many of you are proud to be American?

RY: Right.

GK: So yeah that is good.

RY: And I tell them you know. You think about it. I sacrificed my life so you people can sit there.

RK: That's right.

RY: Think about that too. I was just as young as you were.

GK: That is right.

RY: You think real hard about that. Would you sacrifice your life and go thousands and thousands of miles away and leave your family? Think real hard. Think real hard.

GK: That is right. So, what do you think is our greatest contribution to society as Nisei?

RY: I think you know I always feel being honest about it. I think this is the way we were brought up to be proud but to be honest about it. I mean it's like the old saying you know. If you do something wrong, it is going to reflect on all of us.

RK: Exactly.

RY: And these are the way we were brought up and they say we are quiet Americans. Yeah we are quiet Americans but we gave—we were brought up right. Don't bring shame on the family. I can remember always that. Don't bring shame on the family. If you do something and do bad, it is going to shame us and bad for the family. That is everybody for Japanese-Americans to me, it's bad. So that is the way I feel. Like I told you before there are things that you want to do but like the old saying, mom said. Clean fun is different but there are some things that you just don't do. It's wrong.

RK: Right, you don't go over the line.

RY: That is right. Exactly right. And I always tell my grandkids that. We always—we always—

GK: And so what do you feel is your greatest achievement? What have you felt as a person?

RY: Well I think as far as—we got two great kids. I think we did pretty good job of it. We worked hard and we help the community and we always volunteering no matter what organizations, it doesn't make any difference. They need you and they are highly

respected in the community very much so. I don't think I hear more comments of oh your kids, they are always involved in things and it makes us feel good.

RK: Sure. Yeah that is very important.

RY: I had one last night at the basketball game sitting right next to me and I didn't recognize her but she's my neighbor. And she's probably in her maybe mid sixties or early sixties. She come up and told me your kids are always involved in everything and they were down there doing something. But you know those comments like that make you feel good. They make you feel good that you really did accomplish something. That is what my wife and I talk about.

GK: We are ending our interview and is there something that we left out or anything?

RK: I think we covered most of it pretty good.

GK: Is there something that you want to say? You already kind of expressed what you felt we should say to our young people. And—

RY: I think I pretty much covered it yeah. But I think it's— let's not lose what our Isseis, our parents have taught us. Let's try to hang on to that.

GK: If your mom was here, what would she say?

RY: She'd probably be smart—she was kind of quiet anyway.

GK: Oh she was a quiet person?

RY: She was a quiet person but—

GK: Probably hard working though.

RY: Hard working yeah and even when I was a young kid you know she used to play the koto.

GK: Wow!

RY: And I used to tell my wife, "You know when I was younger I used to see in the closet she had it covered with white cloth and I used to think I wonder what that is? And it was a beautiful one." Kind of that color and I used to think I wonder what that is? But that was what that is. She never uncovered it. She never played it.

GK: Not even for a meeting?

RY: Because you know I think she took it back to Japan. And then you know what do they call those adding things you know?

RK: Abacus?

RY: Yeah, she always had that and I thought that was cards or something.

GK: And you would play with them?

RY: She always used to use that, too. And I used to watch her.

RK: Yeah, that's what they used.

RY: But my mom I give her a lot of credit you know. She was able to write English and speak pretty good and it was all on her own.

GK: So how old was she when you lost her? When she went back?

RY: She was probably in her early forties.

GK: Oh—

RY: Probably forty-seven, forty-eight somewhere around there.

GK: I think she would be very proud of you.

RY: Yeah, I think so.

GK: And your dad?

RY: An Issei, you know, independent.

GK: I know.

RY: They have their own way. (telephone ringing) Dad was dad and that is Issei and that is the way that I look at it you know. They were the head of the family and they had their own ways.

GK: Which took them a long ways in a difficult life.

RY: But thanks to them you know I say mom more but thanks to my dad too. We are living here today.

GK: That's right and you have to remember that.

RY: And I always tell my grandkids, the ground you walk on is through them and that is us. That is average Nisei whatever they have today, property or whatever, is thanks to the parents, Isseis' hard work.

GK: And now the Nisei are getting them to think about the Nisei.

RY: Right.

GK: Because they are really went ahead and did a lot of things.

RY: And right and were rather successful.

GK: The parents wanted.

RY: And that was Nisei were pretty successful. Prime rate is down.

GK: That is right.

RY: And (inaudible)

GK: And they are aging and we are losing a lot of them.

RY: Yeah, we are losing a lot. So how much more the next generation or the third and fourth will continue, yeah. And that is—I always tell my grandkids hang in there, hang in there. So, keep pushing.

RK: Sure.

RY: But it's hard to say because from here on you have interracial marriages and—

GK: Things always change.

RY: And religion is the same thing. If you are Buddhist you are Buddhist, but then if you have intermarriage you may—which is okay. It doesn't matter.

GK: Yeah, yeah.

RY: It doesn't matter.

GK: You are right. You have a wonderful attitude.

RY: That way I'm pretty liberal because in the service we had no Buddhist services.

GK: Oh really? No Buddhist services and no chaplain?

RY: No. They were Christian.

RK: They were all Christian.

GK: Oh really then no chaplain.

RY: No, no.

GK: I never thought about that.

RY: So if you were a Catholic go over there.

GK: I see.

RY: There is only one guy up there to help you and to me it didn't matter.

RK: Right.

GK: And so many of the Buddhist values are Christian values are the same.

RY: To me it didn't matter. If I had to walk in there in the tent there, I'll walk in.

GK: That's great. You have a wonderful attitude.

RY: I want to live. But if you can help me to live I'll go there. It doesn't matter.

RK: Sure.

RY: To me that's (inaudible) it didn't matter. Even though I was Buddhist, it didn't matter.

GK: Thank you so much. Your story is so wonderful.

RY: Well.

GK: What a privilege to have it on tape and share it.

RY: I hope it does some good.

RK: It will, you bet.

GK: Thank you so much.

RY: It's like Ralph. I didn't get to tell him today you know I thought about it and his grandparents and my parents they used to visit each other down in on Nebraska and stayed in their home days and talked and they had beer or something.

GK: That is wonderful.

RY: Down on Nebraska there, you know. These are the things you just don't. You think about it.

GK: Yeah. Well, thank you.

RK: Thanks for sharing it with us.

RY: You are welcome.