

NARRATOR: SAM MAEDA

INTERVIEWER: SHERMAN KISHI (main interviewer) and IZUMI TANIGUCHI

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SK: Perhaps we should start with that you might know about how your parents came from Japan to the United States and how that progressed until they arrived in Livingston.

SM: I don't know what year my father came to the United States but he ended up in Winters-Vacaville area and worked for a rancher there. Then soon after that, they opened up a grocery store in Winters and I think they were in partnership with Okudas. Then he went to, moved to San Francisco and opened the store there and I think a carry-out store, and then the earthquake came and they were talking about the Yamato Colony in Merced County. Mr. Abiko, who was editor of a newspaper in San Francisco, was the instigator of getting people to move into Livingston. He made arrangements to, with some property owner, to sell (inaudible) and I think for the first few people who came here were the Tanakas, Okuyes, and Uedas and a few other people, oh, Kishis and gradually more people moved into Livingston, and my father and the Okudas were still partners and they came in here and started farming.

Of course my father stayed in San Francisco for some time, Okuda's brother was here farming the property and then in 1910, I think early in the year, they moved into Livingston. I was three months old at that time. So I go way back.

IT: So you were born in 1910?

SM: Right.

SK: 1909?

SM: Right, November.

- SK: And your father had never farmed before he came to Livingston?
- SM: Not on his own, no. And they planted grapes but before that they were in row crops. I don't know just what they were farming but they did farm some eggplants and so on and shipped it to San Francisco.
- SK: What was your father's name and your mother's name, and you have any brothers and you have a sister?
- SM: Yeah. My father's name was Yoshitaro and my mother's name was Taneo. Her last name was Enbei, and of course my name was Samuel Yoshitane Maeda, and of course I only used the initial Y.
- SK: How about your brother and your sister?
- SM: My brother is eight years younger than I am. He was educated here and when the war broke, prior to the time the war broke out, he went to Japan more or less as a visit, but he got stuck over there.
- SK: And what was his name?
- SM: Kuniharo Harvey.
- SK: And then your sister?
- SM: Mio – Miyoko, and she was four years younger than I am. And she is up in San Francisco now.
- SK: Do you remember when you were a youngster, when you were growing up, what life was like here in Livingston and what kinds of things you did with your family and some of the other people in the community and things like that?
- SM: Well, there wasn't too much that the community did as a whole, that is, Isseis didn't socialize too much, you know. But we got old enough, they sent us to Sunday school and

that was prior to the time they started the church here and we went to the Methodist Church in Livingston.

SK: In town?

SM: In town.

SK: What was there—were there many Japanese people going to that church at that time?

SM: I think Tanakas went but no one else that I know of. Of course the Tanaka children went to church. The Kishis and Masuda and Sato, that is about all there was.

SK: Did you—when you were going to Sunday school at the town church, did you get along well with the people? Did you have any feelings that they didn't welcome you or anything like that?

SM: No. Not at all. It was quite a deal. They treated us real well. We felt comfortable wherever we went. In fact, I went to, started school. I didn't know a word of English and didn't have any problems.

SK: And you're one of them that had no knowledge of English when you started?

SM: No.

SK: It is amazing how they picked it up as quickly as they did, huh?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Did your parents, as you recall, what kind of values do you think your dad and your mom might have given you? Did they discipline you, or were they fairly easy, or—?

SM: They were fairly strict, especially with me.

SK: Do you recall some of the things they were strict about?

SM: Well, I know as a youngster, I'd start talking with a group of Isseis and they'd shut me up and don't talk.

SK: That is interesting. Let's see now. Did you participate in other things as a youngster? I don't know if there were Boy Scouts when you were growing up?

SM: Yeah, they had Boy Scouts. I think I was twelve years old when I joined the Boy Scouts.

SK: Oh, you did join the Boy Scouts?

SM: Yeah, went camping with them and did things as a group.

SK: If you were twelve years old and born in 1909, that made it 1921. Did they have cars at that time? Did you go on camping trips in cars or trucks or what?

SM: Yeah, we went – we went camping. They took us in a truck to Yosemite.

SK: Do you remember locally in the Japanese community, did the Japanese community, I imagine, got together at that time. Did they have picnics and things?

SM: Yeah, I think so, they did. But that is about it. Then gradually they started holding church services here and eventually built a church.

SK: Do you recall when that church service started here?

SM: No, I don't

SK: Did they, you know, many of the Issei had cultural things that they tried to – do you recall your parents being involved in any of that?

SM: No, I don't.

SK: Were they too busy working?

SM: I suppose. Let's see. About the time you got to be a teenager, the number of children increased considerably. Eventually, you took over half, better than half the school classes, didn't you?

SK: Yeah, my sister's class in 1937 was a big, big class of Nisei kids. Did you go to school here in Livingston?

SM: Yeah.

SK: All the way through?

SM: All the way through high school.

SK: You went through high school also? You never went to Merced High?

SM: No. I was the first freshman class in Livingston. That was 1924.

SK: Do you remember some of your teachers from those days, high school teachers?

SM: High school teachers? Oh, I remember of them but offhand I can't remember names too well.

SK: Was Mrs. Morrison there at the time?

SM: Mrs. Morrison? Well, she came there fresh out of UC when I was a junior and she was made class advisor to our class.

SK: Oh.

SM: And some of us decided, well, she's teaching Spanish, so we'll take Spanish, too. And we went to talk to her and "Nothing doing. You guys just want an easy grade."

(laughing)

SK: (laughing) So she wouldn't teach you Spanish?

SM: Not Spanish II. Well, we took Spanish I as a freshman.

SK: Oh, I see.

SM: And we were juniors then.

SK: Well.

SM: But of course, the Spanish they taught in high school was Castillian.

SK: Oh, okay.

- SM: Okay? You actually come home and tried to talk to the Spanish workers and they'd laugh at you.
- SK: Is that right?
- SM: Because a lot of the words we used didn't match with what they were using.
- SK: Well, that is interesting. At that time did you have some Caucasian haku-jin friends?
- SM: Oh yeah. That is all I had, other than like Norman Kishi, Kabisanto (??) and Kuzu (??).
- SK: Who were some of the "haku-jin" friends that you had? Do you remember?
- SM: Jim Chase, Don Baily, Earl Lungren, a whole bunch.
- SK: Whole bunch of them, huh? Did you participate in sports with them, too?
- SM: Not in grammar school.
- SK: No, how about in high school and after?
- SM: I played baseball.
- SK: You know, they used to have some community baseball teams?
- SM: Yeah.
- SK: Did you play in these? You did, huh? With Chase and those guys?
- SM: If I remember, Jim Chase was the only one left that I started grammar school with.
- SK: Is that right? Did you—when you were in school or after school, did you – I don't know if you did any dating or not then. (laughs) Did you do any dating or date any haku-jin girls then?
- SM: No, I did run around a whole bunch of girls and boys, like in the summertime we'd go swimming in the (inaudible) canal. It was all mixed bunch of girls and boys.
- SK: Is that right?

SM: And after it was us leaving Sunday night we'd get in the car and ride up to the bridge there on the Merced out towards Stevenson?

SK: Oh yeah, yeah.

SM: Park and play on the bridge for a while and come home.

SK: That is interesting. After you got—you also went to college, didn't you?

SM: I went to Davis.

SK: You went to Davis? How many years did you go to Davis?

SM: Two years.

SK: Two years?

SM: In those days they had what they called a two-year course at Davis. I went to Davis in '28 through '30 and got out right in the middle of the Depression and couldn't get a job.

SK: But did you—

SM: And I came home.

SK: You came on home? You had some friends from Davis here?

SM: Yeah, I still have Walt Lyman.

SK: Oh yes, we'd sit together in Rotary all the time with Dan and Walt, they're our elder citizen in the area.

SM: And there are a lot of guys from around here.

SK: That went to Davis?

SM: Yeah, Bill Long was there.

SK: Did they all have difficulties getting jobs, too, right after?

SM: I think so.

SK: During the Depression? That was '30 and the Depression had just gotten real bad. Yeah.
So you came home.

SM: I came home.

SK: And did you work on your farm with your dad?

SM: Yeah. Then about 1936, somewhere along in there, I got a job running an orchard for an absentee owner in Cressey. And I ran his orchard for about two years and my folks wanted me to come home so I came home and helped them.

SK: What kind of pay were you getting in 1936?

SM: Not very good.

SK: Not very good? Do you remember?

SM: No.

SK: You don't remember, really? Let's see, if I remember, about 1936 it was about two bits an hour, wasn't it, if you worked by the hour?

SM: Yeah. Then I got married, you know.

SK: Oh yeah. You were married what year?

SM: 1938.

SK: 1938 to whom?

SM: Yuri.

SK: What was her maiden name?

SM: Fuji.

SK: And she was from where?

SM: From Berkeley.

SK: Was—I don't know, was your marriage an arranged marriage?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Most of the Nisei of your age have, didn't they?

SM: They didn't like the kind of girls I used to date.

SK: Did you date Japanese girls at that time?

SM: Yeah.

SK: You did, huh?

SM: I dated a girl in Sacramento. And my folks got wind of it.

SK: And they got upset?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Is that right?

SM: One thing that amuses me now is they got my sister to tease me about, gee, that is sort of a funny looking girl you are going out with?

SK: Wow, really? Your parents and your sister did?

SM: I think so.

SK: Is that right? What an interesting thing. (laughs) My, that is very interesting to hear that. Let's see now. When you—when WWII started, Pearl Harbor, do you have some remembrances of that? How old were you and what kinds of things happened?

SM: Well, I was at that time I had gone back to work with the fellow who had the family orchard, and by that time he had enlarged his place, he had a lot of pasture and so—

SK: What was the name?

SM: McFarland.

SK: McFarland?

SM: Dr. McFarland.

SK: He was actually the owner then?

SM: What?

SK: He was actually the owner?

SM: Yeah, and Yuri worked in Berkeley for a fertilizer outfit. And one morning we had moved into his place, you know, and one morning I woke up and there is truckload of sheep in the yard, all old pregnant ewes.

SK: That is what time of the year?

SM: Oh, about January.

SK: Oh, my.

SM: And that was an experience.

SK: And so, and so, had you had any experience with—?

SM: No, I didn't.

SK: With sheep husbandry?

SM: No, the funny part of it is when lambing time came, nobody told me that a bunch of old ewes would have triplets.

SK: Oh, my.

SM: So one morning I get up and there is a ewe down and luckily, no, I guess it was long in November, because in those days they had a band of sheep out here eating the grape leaves in the fall. So I got a hold of a herder, he came over and looked at the ewe and said "Boy, a lot of pressure." And he gets down on his hands and knees and pushes the lamb back, grabs the hind legs and pulls it out. And as soon that one came out, two more came out.

SK: Oh, my goodness. So did you have that with all the others?

SM: I did. Quite a few of them. I couldn't do it like the sheep herder. He did it by himself but I had to get Yuri out of bed and come help me hold the head while I worked at the other end.

SK: Is that right? And Yuri came out and helped you then. (laughs) Wow. Now getting back to right after that when Pearl Harbor happened.

SM: Oh, that was about a year or two before. When Pearl Harbor happened, we were raising pigs.

SK: At the same place?

SM: Yeah. And Sunday, (inaudible) people in Cressey came over, and he said, "I want you over there at the Hall Place that is out here on Walnut, yeah, beyond the (inaudible)." He said, "We're having a meeting over there."

SK: And he wanted you to come there?

SM: Yes. What it was, was they were arranging people to look out for planes that come flying by and a, report it.

SK: So did you go there?

SM: Oh yeah.

SK: Well—

SM: I grew up in the area and they treated me like anybody else.

SK: So way back a little further, you don't recall Livingston had up signs saying "No more Japs wanted."

SM: Yeah, but that was after that.

SK: Oh, it was after that? I thought it was before 1920?

SM: No, no.

SK: The signs came up when?

SM: About the time of Pearl Harbor.

SK: Oh, really?

SM: Yeah.

SK: I don't recall those.

SM: Or a little earlier. But what it was, I think some of us Isseis were blabbering.

SK: Oh, really?

SM: Yeah, they were telling the way I got it, second or third hand, was somebody made the claim that they were getting financed by Japan and we're going to buy up a lot of land and all that.

SK: Oh, really. Is that right?

SM: But that sign, as far as Nisei were concerned, it didn't bother us.

SK: So then after that, do you recall what happened? Did you go out on patrols at night to observe and watch for planes and things?

SM: Yeah. Night or day or whenever, and that was prior to curfew—and then about that time, curfew came on.

SK: Well at that time you were still on that—

SM: Yeah.

SK: You were still on the ranch?

SM: I lived—

SK: Or whatever his name was, I forgot.

SM: McFarland.

SK: Dr. Mcfarland.

SM: In fact, when evacuation came, I was still there.

SK: Oh, yeah. Did you have feelings? Now you were one of the older Niseis. Did you have feelings that your rights were being taken away from you when the order came down to prevent you from going out very far?

SM: Oh, yeah. It wasn't fair. We had no ties with Japan whatsoever other than the folks were Japanese.

SK: Did you—in the community itself, now I don't recall this personally, did the older Nisei get together and talk about it some, like you and Roy and Norman and (inaudible), at the time?

SM: No, we didn't get together and talk but if we happened to be together, we talked about it.

SK: You did talk about it?

SM: And about that time Mas Yoshino got active in getting ready for evacuation.

SK: The Merced Assembly Center. Do you recall that very much, going to the assembly center itself?

SM: Oh yeah.

SK: What—can you tell us about that a little bit?

SM: Well, they didn't give us much time. Once they determined when, we were to go, and we met here.

SK: At the church here?

SM: At the church. And bused us to Merced.

SK: Let's take a little break. Okay. Sam, let's go back to some of the when your parents first came to the community. How—how—after they had been told by Abiko, these are all some things that your father probably talked about at some time or another. Do you

know how they purchased the land and some of that information? And what did your father grow here, and what did you grow after you started to take over some of it?

SM: Well, the people that started this area, and I don't know what arrangements he made for being paid for or anything. But we farmed parcels down here and partners with Okudas for some time and then I think about 1913 or somewhere along in there, they split.

SK: At that time, were they growing some vegetables and some row crops and things?

SM: That is what they did when the first came here.

SK: When they first came here.

SM: Later they went to grapes. This area was heavy into grapes. They had some peaches but that was about it.

SK: But the grapes that they had at that time were table grapes?

SM: Table grapes.

SK: Mostly table grapes. Do you remember how they got marketed?

SM: Ah, for a while I think they just marketed at San Francisco and hauled it up there by truck.

SK: Oh, really?

SM: But shortly after that, they started the co-op and packinghouse and that started up for some time, and in about 1924 or 1925, they split the packinghouse and that is when the Livingston Fruit Growers started and the Livingston—

SK: Fruit Exchange?

SM: I guess it was Fruit Exchange, so there was two separate operations and—

SK: Was your dad one of the originals in the Fruit Growers?

SM: No. He was in the Association Exchange.

SK: He was in the exchange?

SM: Yeah.

SK: That one that became (inaudible) later? That (inaudible)?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Oh, I didn't know that.

SM: That was a long time ago.

SK: Yeah, yeah, and was it your dad or were you the one that started your own?

SM: No, he started about 1922 to package and ship his own. He went to the same outfit that the exchange—he went to California Fruit Exchange for marketing and he stayed with them—

SK: And so, as I recall, you had the packing shed over there, did your dad build that?

SM: That was the railroad came in and built that. They built (inaudible) siding there.

SK: The railroad company, SP, actually built it—built those packing shed originally?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Oh, is that right. Then did your folks and did the other associations purchase those sheds from the railroad company?

SM: Yeah.

SK: From Southern Pacific?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Is that right. Do you recall some of that?

SM: Yeah. They leased the land and purchased the shed.

SK: Oh. So all the stuff was shipped by rail then?

SM: Uh-huh, but prior to that, you know, a lot of the farmers packed their own fruit on the ranch and hauled it into town.

SK: To the railroad siding?

SM: Yeah, to the railroad, to the association.

SK: Oh, to the association?

SM: They handled it.

SK: Uh-huh, do you recall who the managers were of the other associations? Your dad ran your own, of course.

SM: I think Noda ran it for some time.

SK: That's a—I don't remember his name.

SM: Andy.

SK: Andy?

SM: Andy's father.

SK: Andy's father, uh-huh, both—that was which association? The association?

SM: The original one.

SK: The fruit exchange?

SM: Yeah.

SK: That became the fruit exchange, I guess. How about the other one?

SM: The other one? Kudo started that.

SK: That started prior to—was that—was that the original association that started?

SM: No.

SK: Oh, it wasn't?

SM: That was a spin-off from the original.

SK: Oh, oh, the exchange was the original then?

SM: Yeah.

SK: And then they split off and started the Pacific Fruit Growers? It was the Pacific Fruit Growers then?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Then at that time the land was not able to be owned by the aliens?

SM: No.

SK: So do you recall some of that? Did you own your father's farm, all your father's property?

SM: No.

SK: Was it in your name?

SM: I owned most of it but there was a parcel he bought later and formed the corporation.

SK: Was there a number of corporations formed in Livingston?

SM: Yes.

SK: Do you recall some of those names?

SM: I don't.

SK: You don't remember the names? Oh.

SM: That's when Collin came in, you know, and he incorporated a lot of them.

SK: Oh, is that right? He was an attorney?

SM: Yeah, San Francisco.

SK: San Francisco attorney? When did that happen, before '20?

SM: Oh, yeah.

SK: That was before 1920 and after 1910, but somewhere between 1910 and 1920? Is there anything else I should ask about that period? (inaudible)

SM: Oh, yeah.

SK: Can you tell us a little bit about those associations that we are talking about? Were they all Japanese and any haku-jins involved, Caucasians involved?

SM: Not at that stage but gradually it changed. But of course the management was haku-jin, like Berryhill ran that.

SK: That's right. Berryhill ran that, didn't he. This is the Berryhill that used to be, what was it, State Ag Director?

SM: I don't know.

SK: Same Berryhill, huh?

SM: That was his family.

SK: Family, yeah. And he was one of the managers of the association?

SM: Uh-huh.

SK: Is that right?

SM: Before he went to Salida to start farming.

SK: And was that about the time that Betsy Austin then was—

SM: Oh, yeah, she was running for a long time.

SK: Uh-huh, Betsy Austin is a lady that was in the community for many years, and she was the secretary for one of the associations for many years. Much beloved by the Japanese community. Let's see, what were we talking about, some of the other things? The church itself, do you remember when this church was started, the Japanese church, others in contrast to town church that was early in existence, the Methodist Church in town?

SM: I think originally, you know, they had a little corner of Kishi's place here and they built that church there.

SK: Oh, I see.

SM: And then they bought this block here and built—moved the church over here (inaudible) and from there it was just boomed. And then it merged with the Methodist Church of Livingston and they came here.

SK: Do you remember when they first started—it was called Grace Methodist Church for a number of years but I don't know what it was called before that?

SM: I don't remember either.

SK: You don't remember either?

SM: I know that a lot of children came here to Sunday school.

SK: Yeah, yeah, but by then you were one of the older Nisei and you weren't involved.

SM: We didn't change. We stayed with the Methodist Church in Livingston until they merged and moved here.

SK: Now let's see. Now is there anything else we should ask about that period? What sort of social activities did they have? Did you hear? What social activities did the Nisei have here?

SM: Well, I'll tell you. We used to get together, boys and girls, and we partied but then we started dancing, and minister raised Cain and he thought that was terrible.

SK: This is about when? Was this in the early thirties?

SM: Yeah, I think so.

SK: Do you remember who the minister? Was it the minister of the Japanese church?

SM: Yeah, the Japanese Church.

SK: Oh, is that right? Do you know who that was?

SM: I can't—I can't remember.

SK: I remember some of the ministers, Fuji was here. Was it his time?

SM: It was after Fuji.

SK: It was after, oh. (inaudible) Oh yes, there was. Do you remember when they started Japanese—do you remember when baseball was really popular in the later thirties?

SM: Yeah.

SK: And before then, way in the twenties, huh? Do you remember when the Nisei team started? Was that your time or a little after you?

SM: After my time.

SK: It was after your time? Did you get involved in it at all?

SM: Not much.

SK: Not much? In the—as I recall in some of the historical things, the community itself had a very strong baseball team. And there used to be Mr. Kagi used to be involved in that.

SM: Yeah, definitely.

SK: Do you remember that?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Yeah, what do you recall of that?

SM: What year?

SK: No, not necessarily what year but what do you recall of that? Do you remember anything about that?

SM: Well, community liked Mr. Kagi to me what he did, and he was definitely a baseball fan.

SK: Were you playing at that time?

SM: No.

SK: You weren't playing. So the community supported that very strongly?

SM: Yeah.

SK: That prior to softball, wasn't it?

SM: Yeah, oh yeah.

SK: Do you remember when softball became very popular in this community and they had put lights on and everything?

SM: That was in the thirties.

SK: Yeah, did you go to any of the games?

SM: No.

SK: You didn't go to the games, huh? Is there anything else in that period we should ask about? (inaudible) Can you recall anything else in that period that you (inaudible)?

SM: No.

SK: Was there any Japanese language school?

SM: If there was, I don't recall. We did go to a lot of movies in town, you know.

SK: Now you are more associated with the town's people, huh?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Of course, you went to church there in town. Okay then, during, let's get back to the evacuation time, you were telling us how we gathered here at the church and then got taken to the assembly center. Do you recall some more of that and where did you get sent and—?

SM: Well, maybe we should go back a little further and talk about that trusteeship—

SK: Oh yeah, that would be very interesting to talk about. What did the people do with the properties?

SM: That's, of course, we were talking about that before and figured it was coming but they figured we should get ready for it. And they had, I think before Momberg got involved, they talked with an attorney—

SK: Griswald? Hugh Griswald?

SM: Yeah, and he was real helpful and they talked about the meetings here, we talked about what we were going to do. And we said, well, we should all get together, Cortez, and Cressey and all the people wanting to join, and so we held meetings and about that time Cal Land was receding, was selling a lot of their properties and Momberg became available, and so they talked him into running it and signed up a lot of potential people, farmers. Some of the farmers decided they would go on their own but most of us went into the trusteeship.

SK: Do you remember some of those meetings?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Prior to those, prior to that starting?

SM: Yeah. So they decided who they would get for trustees.

SK: Do you remember who some of those were?

SM: John Guden.

SK: John Guden?

SM: (inaudible) and one or two others.

SK: (inaudible)?

SM: I don't know.

SK: And then so, well, actually they signed up all the families that wanted to be involved.

SM: Yeah. And get ready for it and just activated it, and Momberg took over before we were evacuated.

SK: Did, how was Cortez involved in this? Did they initiate this or did—do you remember how it got?

SM: I don't know how it got initiated. Griswald was active with Cortez, you know.

SK: Yeah. Well, that was an interesting thing at the time. Were you in that picture at camp though when Momberg came to visit and talk about what he had been doing?

SM: I think I went to one meeting sure but I don't know if it was that.

SK: Was your picture in there?

SM: It's in there.

SK: Are you in there?

SM: I can't pick it out. (laughing)

SK: Yeah, well, actually what was the result of all that? Do you recall how your farm turned out and how the finances turned out and all that?

SM: Well, we didn't get rich at it but we got our farm back and in good condition.

SK: Did you make some money though in evacuation? It was leased, wasn't it? From you?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Subleased to people that ran it?

SM: I think we did a lot better than some of these people that turned their property over to individuals. They really got hurt.

SK: Yeah, some of them did, yeah. Tell us—can you tell us a little bit about what you did in camp and how things were and the assembly center and where you went to and what you did afterwards?

SM: Well, the assembly center wasn't much to do, and they had a little bit of work to do. And when they moved to Amache, that was something. Anyway—

SK: Let's see—you had a baby at that time, or was Lloyd born afterwards?

SM: Lloyd was born afterwards.

SK: Oh, okay.

SM: He was born in camp. We stayed in camp about three weeks.

SK: This is Amache?

SM: Amache.

SK: And now what did you do?

SM: We got a job in Rocky Forge and a guy came into camp looking for somebody to work for him. I talked to him and he wanted three or four guys so I just gathered up some friends and said, okay, we can go.

SK: This was on a farm?

SM: Yeah.

SK: This was to work for a farmer? What kind of work did you do?

SM: Row crop farmer and he had sheep.

SK: Oh, he had sheep (laughing). Oh, you are kidding, Sam.

SM: It's not that I wasn't scared of them.

SK: And you were scared of them.

SM: Anyway, he was feeding young sheep and raising them for meat, anyway, I never did anything like that he had us do. We'd go into town and unload the sheep from the train, the cars that came in and drive them out through the town back into a ranch.

SK: You actually just drive them out—

SM: Yeah.

SK: Like on the roads?

SM: He had a couple of goats that led the way.

SK: How interesting. And how long were you there?

SM: I was there, oh we got there in '42, '43, and about two years, and then about that time, Kono came up with a bright idea, you know, of getting a farm started so we got mixed up in that and ended up on the western slope.

SK: Oh, and what community, that wasn't Rocky Forge anymore?

SM: No, let's see. Yeah, near Grand Junction, west a little, grew row crops.

SK: Did you go yourself or was there a group of you?

SM: A group of us. Over there?

SK: Yeah, after you left the farm?

SM: Two or three of us went together and met at somebody's house.

SK: Who were those that went with you?

SM: Frank Okuda, let's see. Oh, a bunch of young fellows from camp.

SK: Went out?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Oh, is that right?

SM: Kaz Takahashi and Chet.

SK: Did John Kono go out, too?

SM: Yeah, and they didn't stay long because the draft came along.

SK: Oh ,the draft picked them up?

SM: Yeah.

SK: So were you old enough not to get drafted at that time?

SM: I was thirty-eight.

SK: Oh, you were thirty-eight at that time? So you were beyond draft age?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Did you have equipment to farm over there at that time?

SM: Oh, yeah. We had equipment all right. Kono has connections and talked to the farmer on the two farms in Salinas Valley, I guess, and the guy had his equipment stored and he bought that and had it shipped out.

SK: From Salinas?

SM: From California clear to Grand Junction.

SK: Is that right?

SM: And then he got Kurosaki, a seed grower.

SK: So what did you raise there?

SM: Well, we raised onion seed and some other kinds of seeds.

SK: Oh, so this was a seed production? And so you did that how long?

SM: Well, we got there two years, about that time evacuation was over and it was open, you know, so we came on home in '45. Fall of '45.

SK: Then your parents were no longer—what happened to your parents in that evacuation?

SM: They were in Japan by that time.

SK: Oh, they were in Japan. Did they go back before the war?

SM: Just before the war.

SK: Just before the war so you were running the farm and you came back to California?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Can you tell us a little bit about that period and how it was and was it tough?

SM: When we came back? No, it wasn't tough. The people that we knew in Livingston were the same and they treated us just the same.

SK: Is that right? They did treat you pretty well, huh?

SM: Oh, yeah.

SK: Did you—did you go back to the church there in town after the war?

SM: The church, it was well—

SK: The town church?

SM: Not to—we didn't go too long but—

SK: So—so during the evacuation in camp, you had your son?

SM: Yeah, he was— I think Yuri got pregnant when we were in Rocky Forge and I brought her back to camp to have Lloyd.

SK: Oh, is that right? But you were still in Rocky Forge?

SM: Yeah.

SK: So she stayed in camp for a while?

SM: Yeah, she stayed a while and about that time, we moved to Grand Junction.

SK: Well—you made this move in camp out of evacuation, Amache. Did you do most of that on your own or did anybody help you? Did the camp people help you in any way or any way like that?

SM: No, we just, the fellow that hired us came and picked us up and that was it.

SK: Is that right?

SM: Oh, wait a minute. He picked three or four of us up to get things arranged, then he loaned us a truck to come pick up the rest of them.

SK: Oh, is that right, oh? So you drove back to camp and picked up some other people to work?

SM: Yeah. Tommy Toyama was there with us. Fred, Yuri, when we first moved, Walt Marumoto was there.

SK: Oh, is that right? This is at Rocky Forge?

SM: Yeah. For a little while and then he went on that job on the Missouri River.

SK: Yes. Do you recall your trip back from Colorado to California?

SM: We drove.

SK: You drove? Did you bring some farm equipment back or anything?

SM: No, they were still farming. Some of the guys were still farming.

SK: Oh, is that right? So when you came back, was your home available for you to live in? How did that work out?

SM: One of the cabins was open so we lived in that for about a month or two.

SK: At that time, was the person running the ranch living in your home or your father and mother's home, do you remember?

SM: No, I don't think he farmed it. Somebody else lived there.

SK: Oh, I see. So there was a rancher in there. After you came back, then did, you were doing the farming yourself, all of it yourself?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Was it—what kinds of things happened at that time, do you remember?

SM: Nothing special.

SK: Nothing special? Was marketing of your produce and things?

SM: Well, for a year or so we (inaudible) through the shed.

SK: Oh, I see.

SM: And then we started packing.

SK: You started your own packing?

SM: Uh-huh.

SK: Mostly your operation at that time was selling grapes?

SM: Grapes and nectarines.

SK: Oh, you started nectarines? Right after the war you started nectarines?

SM: I had some acreage of nectarines prior to that.

SK: Oh, really?

SM: And I gradually pulled the grapes out and went into nectarines and peaches.

SK: And were you marketing those?

SM: Not at that time because most of it went to auction market because we didn't have the competition they have now from Fresno. The fruit growing area used to be around Vacaville-Winters, and that moved on into out north of Sacramento around Loomis and Placerville, and then it came down through another time period so we didn't have that much competition, and now all of a sudden everybody in the south planted.

SK: So, actually, at that period of time then, your fruit was coming out earlier than some of the more north areas like Vacaville and Placerville?

SM: No, Vacaville was early.

SK: Oh, they were earlier?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Is that right? Let's take a break. And tell us where he went to school and what he is doing now.

SM: Well, he was born in camp and (inaudible) went back to camp to have (inaudible).

SK: And do you want to tell us a little bit about—you have a son, right?

SM: Yeah. (audio problems—silence)

SK: You have a son, right? Tell us about when he was born and what year he was born and what his name is and all that kind of stuff, and tell us where he went to school and what he is doing now.

SM: Well, he was born in camp. Well, Yuri went back into camp to have Lloyd and after that he came on out with his mother to Rocky Forge, and then we went to Grand Junction and he came back with us and went through grammar school and high school here. And then he went to the University of California.

SK: Is that Berkeley?

SM: Yeah, and spent three years in Berkeley and then he decided to stay out one semester. Well, that is when Vietnam deal escalated and he was, had to either go into the army or some other branch and he volunteered for the air force. And he took his training in Texas and when he finished that, they sent him to Biloxi, Mississippi. And he came on home before he was due there and picked up his car, and his mother wouldn't let him go by himself all that distance so she went with him.

SK: And drove all the way to Biloxi?

SM: No, she got as far as New Orleans and they couldn't get into town because they had a big storm and the city was closed. So she got to see the airport and flew home from there and he went on to Biloxi. And he enjoyed all the training at the—and he finished that training and he asked for the West Coast or somewhere closer to home. He got Louisiana.

SK: (laughing)

SM: So he spent one hitch in the air force and came on back to Berkeley and graduated as a mechanical engineer. And he said, "I'm not going to get a job far away." So he looked around and got into Sacramento at Aerojet General and he's been there yet.

SK: He's been there many years now.

SM: He's fifty-five now. A few years back, they had early retirement.

SK: Oh, yeah.

SM: And he had the number of years at Aerojet but wasn't old enough. After that he got real busy there, shorthanded, I would imagine, and he got to travel to Florida about once or twice a year. He is still there.

SK: So he is still at Aerojet, huh?

SM: Yeah.

SK: During the—after the war—after you reestablished here, did you join any groups or any service groups or anything back then?

SM: Rotary Club.

SK: Actually, we joined about the same time, didn't we?

SM: Yeah.

SK: And are you involved in anything else?

SM: Well, for a number of years I was on the board of Blue Anchor Incorporated.

SK: Oh yes, and Blue Anchor still exists?

SM: Oh yes.

SK: Is there anything else that you would like to say or talk about a little bit or anything?

SM: Well, of course go back to—

SK: Sam, before we wrap up this interview, do you want to tell us a little bit about how many acres of farm that you had and has it changed over the years that much and you are retired now, I know. And perhaps what you've done with your farm.

SM: I've gotten completely out of grapes. I went into nectarines, plums and peaches and at the end, I was in nectarines and plums and I had two hundred acres of orchards.

Gradually, I sold one parcel and then I sold another and now I'm down to about a hundred acres. The people leasing pulled all the plums and nectarines out and they've put it completely into almonds

SK: And your son has no interest in coming back?

SM: No.

SK: Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about before we—did you have any kinds of hobbies?

SM: Hobbies?

SK: Yeah, when you were farming. What did you do for recreation and stuff?

SM: Well, I used to like to travel and not far, you know, but right around the country, back country and looking at things. I used to take long trips in the fall of the year and get up into Oregon and Washington and spend about a week or so out.

SK: Is that mostly sightseeing?

SM: More or less.

SK: Any museums?

SM: No, just—I've been to the Grand—Arizona quite often. I used to go when I was on the board of Blue Anchor, we went to, at least once a year we had a meeting in Arizona and we'd go to Mexico.

SK: You had meetings in Mexico?

SM: Yeah.

SK: Oh, is that right?

SM: And a meeting in Hawaii. Then that was to get us acquainted with the farms they had in those places. We went to Hawaii to look at papayas.

SK: You were shipping papayas?

SM: Yeah, and handling itself. And in Mexico we went to see fruit and grapes that they farmed out there and sold to (inaudible) and also Arizona. It was educational.

SK: And do you have the name of the company? Blue Anchor, that is the name of the company now, before it was called California—

SM: California Fruit Exchange, yeah.

SK: Did—did they have citrus also?

SM: Citrus, no, they don't.

SK: They had a lot of things from the south of Fresno area, didn't they?

SM: Yeah, well, in fact, they still have a pretty big shed in Sanger and in Dinuba.

SK: But they never handled citrus then?

SM: No.

SK: It was always fruit? (inaudible) Anything else you want to say, Sam?

SM: No, I think that covers it.

SK: Well, we certainly thank you for your time.

SM: Well, thanks for asking me. It's too bad that I can't remember names and dates as well as I used to.

SK: Well, at your age you can't—well, I should—yeah, I forget yesterday. Well, thanks, Sam.

SM: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW