

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

James A. Nakano (JN)

September 3, 2004

BY: Florence Sugimoto (FS)

FS: Please give your name in full, your birthdate and place of birth.

JN: James Akinobu Nakano; November 12, 1933; Honolulu, Hawaii.

FS: Could you tell us your parents' birthday, if possible, place of birth, and the circumstances which brought them here?

JN: I don't know their birthdates, but they were born...I think one was in 1895, the other...I think my mother...was born 1900. They were both born in Fukuoka, and my dad, I think, came here when he was about 14 or 15, and I think...my guess is he met or married my mother here in Honolulu. She was here with her parents, I think, and I'm not sure why they came. I know my dad's family had three brothers in Japan. My dad's father had come here first...my grandfather...and he was somewhere on the Big Island, I think, and then the rest of the family came some years later. I think it was my grandmother and two sons. One...the oldest son...was left back in Japan and somewhere along the line, he died early. I think it was in the Manchurian war, if I'm not mistaken.

FS: How many children were in your family?

JN: Total of eight. The first two were my sisters. They were the oldest, and then there were five boys in a row...Jitsuo, Bert, William, Henry,...and I was the youngest. We were all about a year-and-a-half...two years...apart, and then twelve years later, my kid sister was born in Tule Lake. She was born the day after the war ended in 1945.

FS: What was the language spoken at home?

JN: I don't recollect, but I'm assuming it was Japanese until...at least to my parents and grandparents...until, and I assume that's what I spoke, but I can't recall...and I'm sure with my friends outside, I spoke English but Pidgin, but at home I think it was Japanese.

FS: What was your family life like?

JN: My dad was a contractor...general contractor. He wasn't home that much. He was a good provider, probably. My mother was very busy. She was a very quiet person. She had to take care of a lot of kids, and of course she had her mother-in-law living with us, so she had her mother, and my grandmother was pretty dominant, I think. My grandfather didn't say a word...just sat outside and didn't say anything...and so the rest of us were... Being the youngest, for one thing, I had all the good things first. You know, I had the first scooter, the first tricycle, the first bicycle, and my older brothers keep reminding me that I got all the goodies from the family.

FS: Were there any particular values or principles or ideals that were emphasized by your parents?

JN: I don't really recall anything like that. I just assume we took it through osmosis, more or less, about being very...uh...because my dad had only third-grade education in Japan...no English...and so, somewhere along the line the matter about education gets into all of us. The matter about all the old...when I say old, I presume the Meiji (Period) values...got into our...got into my bones, though I don't recall anybody telling me anything. I assume I did.

FS: How were your relations with neighbors?

JN: Oh, it was fantastic. It was great growing up in the neighborhood.

FS: What kind of neighbors?

JN: We were...it was all Japanese. We lived in Waialae, and at that...keeping in mind, now, Waialae at that time was basically farm area...pig farms and... Actually, my father leased a whole area, right off where Liberty House is now, and he built all the homes there. He rented out, but he was... like ... village chief. We owned a big white house and had a whole bunch of rented houses that we collected rent from, and the neighborhood was one unit. It was like a village, I think.

FS: Were you all Japanese?

JN: Yes. We were all Japanese.

FS: What did you do about English and Japanese school? Where did you go?

JN: I didn't go to Japanese school, at least I don't recall. I think my brothers did. There was a Waialae Japanese School right across where the Catholic school is now, and I believe my dad was also on the board. He paid his way in. He donated money to get on the board. Because of his lack of education, he thought it was important to get up there. So I don't recall going to Japanese school at all. I remember going to Waialae Elementary School up to the second or third grade when the war came about, so that ended. Then it was education in camp, basically.

FS: Until you returned?

JN: Yeah, and when I came back, I was twelve years old. When we moved to Tule Lake, when that became a "No-No" camp, we didn't go to English school. We all went to Japanese school, so I skipped. I didn't go to fifth or sixth grade, I don't think, so I went to Japanese school only. I don't think I learned anything, though. I didn't learn anything all through the time I was in camp, I think. And then when I came back, because of my age they put me to seventh grade. I was in Liliuokalani for one year. And then after that I went to Kaimuki Intermediate, and then my...when war broke out, before the war broke out, half my family went to Japan...two sisters, two brothers...William and Henry... and my grandparents. When the war broke out, they got stranded there. After the war, in 1946, they came back...most of them did, including my grandparents...except for one sister...Tomiko. She's still there, in Nagasaki. So when my brothers came back...they were one and two years older than I am. We went to Kaimuki Intermediate and then my mother died soon after she came back, so my dad remarried, and frankly my stepmother couldn't stand three teenagers...boys...in the house. She had us basically turned out of the house, and the only place my dad could put us was in boarding school, so we went to MPI. All three of us went to MPI the same year. And so because they were in Japan for five years...more than five years...when they came back they both had to drop back a year, which meant one brother was in the same grade as I was, and the other was one year above me. We had two tenth graders and my other brother was eleventh grade. In those days MPI only had from ninth grade up, so we went in from tenth, eleventh, and I graduated. One brother, Henry, got kicked out and graduated from Kaimuki Intermediate. William and I barely made it, but we got out. We graduated from MPI.

FS: Is that Mid-Pacific Institute?

JN: Right.

FS: And your brother, Henry, graduated from Kaimuki...

JN: Intermediate.

FS: So he never went to Kaimuki High School at all?

JN: He did.

FS: So he graduated from...

JN: Kaimuki High School.

FS: Do you have any special memories of those school days?

JN: Yes. I remember coming back...both Liliuokalani and Kaimuki Intermediate. Boys at that...just coming-of-age kind of thing... The memories I have...you know, you *gotta* survive at school. You had to learn to fight. You had to defend yourself, and you had to establish territories. That kind of thing I remember.

FS: How about before the war started?

JN: Before the war started, I have so little memory of it. I was in second or third grade. The strong memory I have around that time was my teacher was Mrs. Reinecke. She and her husband, of course, took on the whole thing about protesting, and I remember her coming to my house before we were to be evacuated to go to camp. I'm not sure what she said, did, or anything, but I know she came and talked to my mother. Dad was already gone...to Sand Island. That is what I remember most about elementary school. I guess she had a strong presence. I remember her. I don't remember any other teachers; well, I remember my seventh grade teacher.

FS: How about kid-time games?

JN: Oh, yeah. We had lot of great games. My dad, being a carpenter, made... I used to tell people when we grew up that we played games of being Superman, Batman, and also being Tange Sazen, so we were cross-cultural...I mean bicultural. We were doing two things. I remember there was a difference between the two, so one time we'd put a cape on and we'd be Superman flying around and the next time we'd be pulling out a sword and we'd be having a swordfight. We had different kinds also. I remember that they had

a stick that somebody made...broomstick...and then you bang, bang the stick ((?)) and the farther you did it, the better.

FS: Do you remember what happened on December 7, when the actual attack commenced?

JN: Yeah. My memory is it was a Sunday. I remember being at home, and my dad had a couple of workmen working that day. They were working near our house. I think they must've been doing something with some of the rental that my dad had. They were a couple of...I don't know why...there were two supervisors that my dad used...and they worked for my dad for a long time. I still remember them because they were so prominent in my dad's employees. One or two of them working that day...I remember when the news broke out that Japan had actually bombed Pearl Harbor...they just disappeared. The two workers just disappeared. Everybody took off in a state of shock, I guess. I was eight years old, and I recall climbing the tree near my house to see if I could see the smoke coming up from Pearl Harbor, but that's about all I can recall.

FS: Do you remember your parents' reaction?

JN: Not one bit. I'm not quite sure why.

FS: Do you remember the circumstances of your father's arrest?

JN: Yeah. Here I'm not sure how much of it is my own memory or what people told me, but I recall this FBI guy coming into our house and somehow I remember a pistol...a shiny pistol. Why I was able to see the pistol, I don't know, but my own recollection is my dad vaguely...I remember he either came out with a cigar in his mouth or he went out and offered...he always smokes a cigar...he offered a cigar to the FBI guy as he paraded out of the house.

FS: What about the reaction of the family? I guess it was a shock to everyone.

JN: You know, I just don't recall at all. At that time I had two older brothers and my parents.

FS: Do you remember the chronology of events between the time your father left for the Immigration Service and the time you saw him next?

JN: My recollection...he was picked up...like in February of '42. I'm not sure why that stuck in my mind, and I never saw him until I saw him, I think, again in Arkansas, so I don't recall seeing him in between until I saw him in Arkansas.

FS: Does that mean he was sent to the mainland before you went over?

JN: Yes. He went...Mr. Hayashi, who used to do some translation here, found for me when my dad left here...sometime in May of '42, I think. He was on Sand Island, and then I'm not sure where he went...New Mexico, somewhere in New Mexico...Santa Fe. We left...my recollection is November of 1942...for Jerome, Arkansas. We went, I think, on the Lurline and we went up to Oakland, as I recall, and then from Oakland we got on a train going into Jerome, Arkansas. I know my dad came later. He came when we were ready to go to Tule Lake, I think, so it was, like, a year-and-a-half later when we see him, and then we leave for Tule Lake.

FS: Are there any memories of the trip from here to the Mainland...accommodations? Since you were all alone as a family without your father...

JN: Well, again, I had two older brothers...I'm the youngest, so it doesn't concern me that much. We weren't that worried about anything. I'm just hanging around. My two older brothers...they were then fourteen or fifteen...and I'm sure they had concerns. My mother was a worrier, from what I understand...very quiet person...worried a lot. I remember we got on a bus or truck that came to pick us up, and I remember going to the Immigration Building. That building somehow sticks in my mind. I don't recall how we got to the boat, but I remember getting on the boat, and I was thinking, gee, what a nice-looking boat. It was a passenger ship that they were using at the time. I guess the military must've taken over. We got on the ship, and I was sick all the way. I went to Japan before the war. I was seasick both ways, and I was seasick again getting on the ship. I think they put me in with my mother. I was able to stay with my mother rather than being segregated. My two brothers were somewhere in the bottom of the ship.

FS: That was the practice...to segregate men from women?

JN: Yeah. Then when we got to Oakland, somewhere along the line I was diagnosed with mumps, so then, that helped me and my mother a lot because now when we got on the train, we got special, so we got what would have been...what do you call the one that has sleeping quarters?

FS: Sleeping cars?

JN: Yeah...because they had to separate me from everybody else because it's contagious. The best thing happened to me and my mother because now we had a special room away from everybody else, so it was very nice. For me the whole thing was not a bad experience.

FS: When you went to Jerome...that was the first camp...what was the length of stay?

JN: I think it was about year and a half. In my mind, it's always year and a half in Jerome and year and a half in Tule Lake.

FS: What kind of routine did you follow as far as you remember?

JN: First of all, we had these barracks, so there's three boys, and we got...I'm not sure how...we got one room somehow.

FS: Just three boys?

JN: Yeah, three boys and my mother. I remember them throwing sheets to divide the room. I remember the stove in the middle of the room, and I guess it was wood...I mean wood-burning stove...because I remember the huge logs that were outside. And of course this is the first time we're eating at a cafeteria. We don't cook at home. Our bathroom is separate, but I remember going to the cafeteria, and not me...I think my brothers...must have gone more than me, but we would normally...I guess my mother wanted us to eat at home, so I remember we had a box...somebody built a box...to carry food, and what I seem to recall is there was a cover to the box and there was an opening to put drinks. Somehow in my memory I still see that box and the opening there. I guess my brothers must have gone into the cafeteria, picked up food for us and brought it home, and I think we must have eaten at home. Whether we did that three times a day I don't recall.

FS: That's unusual.

JN: Is that right?

FS: Not many people have told us something like that. What about your family life, now that you're separated?

JN: At that time?

FS: In camp. Anything unusual or memorable?

JN: Again, my mother's always like a shadow. She's so quiet. I don't remember her much, but I'm always sticking next to her because I'm the youngest. I know my two older brothers...my oldest brother is Jits, the younger Bert, and the next two were in Japan, and I was the youngest...so I had an age gap between myself and Bert. Bert, being the second, was always a rebel, so he was always getting into trouble. Getting on the train...this is

what I was told... getting on the train in Oakland, he saw the military guy with a rifle, he flipped his finger at the guy, and the guy wanted to come in and pull him out of the train. Even in camp, he's out there doing his thing, but I think my older brother, Jits, was trying to control him, too... kind of act as a father. That brother, Bert, ultimately, by the way, lived in Los Angeles. He becomes head of the new group that ultimately... what they did was they had reparations. JACL looked like they wouldn't move because it's too embarrassed to ask for money, so he and a group of guys just pulled over on their own and started their own group, and they really put the package together. JACL kind of came at the end and tried to take credit for it, but to me, it was my brother, Bert. He wasn't recognized at all. That's consistent with his rebellion. What I remember is that he used to get in trouble, too, but in my relationship with other guys, because he was my older brother they'd say, "Oh, he's Bert's brother," so they left me alone. He was a tough juvenile delinquent.

FS: What kind of things did you do in your spare time?

JN: I remember when I went got to Arkansas, this is November... still kind of cold. The camp was divided. Most of the people in the camp were obviously... we call them *kotonks* for mainland Japanese. Out of forty-something blocks. there were only three blocks from Hawaii. There was 38, 39, and 40 was half... and I was in 40... and there was this quick... not conflict, but... put-on between the kids from Hawaii and we used to walk around barefooted, and so when we first got there, we were walking around and the *kotonk* kids would call us savages, so when school started, we started looking for the kids who called us *kotonks*.

FS: Called you savages, in other words.

JN: Yeah, and we used to catch them and throw them in the ditch. The camp... each block had... the drainage system... had a ditch right around it, so we threw them in the ditch... not me, actually... the guys I ran around with. There was one guy who was big and tough, too. My own feeling was the *kotonk* kids were basically good farm kids. Lot of the kids from Hawaii grew up in Kalihi, Liliha. They were pretty close to being juvenile delinquents because they knew how to fight in gangs. These kids had no idea how to fight. They were fighting individuals, not gangs. Hawaii kids were beating up *kotonk* kids in gangs. That's, as an 8-year-old, 9-year-old, the kind of thing I remember because that's my everyday life. The other things weren't that important. Guardhouses and everything... I really didn't care what they were doing.

FS: What about school?

JN: I remember we went to school. I don't remember who the teachers were, I don't remember learning anything and I don't remember DOING anything. I remember attending because we had to.

FS: That's English school.

JN: Yes. Jerome had English school only. When we got to Tule Lake, then we attended Japanese school only.

FS: Is there anything else about Jerome that you recall doing?

JN: The snakes...water moccasins...because it was a swamp. It was in a soft area, I understand, and being from Hawaii, I'd never seen snakes. We had to go out of our way to look for snakes. There was a guy or these others would get a branch with a fork in it and they'd walk around and look for a snake and they'd pin it down and catch it and tie it. Something like that stuck in my mind because they caught snakes and brought them in alive. I remember them going out then but with the older guys cutting wood for purposes of the stove, and there was a huge...to me it's huge, like a castle...of logs they had to cut for the winter.

FS: You mentioned the snakes. What did people do with the snakes after bringing them in, do you know?

JN: I think all they did was just for show, especially for the kids. They put them in cages.

FS: Yes...?

JN: One thing I remember. I don't know why I remember this, but I seem to recall the delivery guy would be a black guy at the mess hall. For some reason I see this black guy, and it's almost like we're better off than the guy because we have to give him food. I don't know why, somebody, it seems to me, was giving him food, and he was so thankful to have food, and I was thinking, gee...I don't know...that stuck in my mind. Why that day I don't know. I close my eyes and I can see...practically see...the black guy who was delivering stuff to the mess hall. Later on I read a lot of those guys lived in the poor area of Arkansas without running water and electricity, and we had THAT, so in many ways we were better off than a lot of the blacks living in that area. They had their own economic policies, I guess.

FS: Did your mother write letters to your father often?

JN: I wouldn't know if she did. She had up to eighth grade (schooling), so I know she could write. I'm not sure if my dad could read. Probably I guess he could.

FS: Do you recall your father visiting Jerome at all?

JN: No; in fact, I don't think he did, but this is what my oldest brother Jits told me...and this was confirmed recently I went to his...he died in January of this year. We had a funeral, and I met somebody who said, "Oh, I knew Jits. He was in camp with us in Jerome." He and Jits, and a number of others, I guess, together with my mother, so Jits escorted my mother from Jerome and apparently got permission, got a pass to go to Santa Fe to visit and apparently they did. This guy was telling me they would go on the train where the white guys can, but the black guys couldn't. It was a very new experience for him. I didn't even know they did that. I don't remember my mother and father meeting in camp until this guy told me.

FS: When you found out you were going to Tule Lake, did you know why?

JN: No, not at all. I just thought we were moving again.

FS: When you got to Tule Lake, were you able to meet your father right away?

JN: No, my father came to Tule Lake...I mean to Arkansas... to Jerome, and it seems to me that all he did was come back...come to Jerome for purposes of joining us to go to Tule Lake. That's the memory I have of what happened, so I think he was on the train with us.

FS: Then there was really no time spent at Jerome as far as your father was concerned.

JN: I don't think so. I really think he just came for the transition to get together with us.

FS: Tell us about Tule Lake...how long you were there...

JN: We were there about a year and a half. I think there were like 80 or 80-something blocks and I guess ((?)) Block 84. It was the bigger camp apparently and it was located...it was right on the border with Oregon and it was higher up. Apparently it was a dried-up lake, and so the soil was basically black gravel, as I recall. Again, we were...the Hawaii kids were...a small contingent of the whole camp. It was a bigger camp, as I recall. My two brothers, Jitsuo and Bert, were there, and then I know they took...and when it happened, I'm not sure, but both my oldest brother and my father were ultimately shipped out to Santa Fe as, I guess, troublemakers. We went to Tule Lake because, I think, it became a "No/No" camp. When we went there, we had no English school. We went to Japanese

school, and I guess we were all going back to Japan. That's what I think Tule Lake was all about.

FS: In other words, your father did answer those two critical questions with "No" and "No."

JN: I'm just assuming that. I have no idea. I didn't know what the two questions were, other than it had to do with pledging allegiance or whatever. Why my dad and brother were taken, I'm not quite sure. I just remember a comment my oldest brother, Jits, made. He said the only reason we got into camp was because of Bert, his younger brother who was a rebel. My brother was going around wearing...what do you call that ...*hakama*?

FS: *Hachimaki* (headband)?

JN: That red...

FS: Oh, he was one of the members of that group (*Hokokudan*).

JN: Yeah...yeah. Whenever he could, Bert joined the group. Why...I think maybe he was too young to be shipped out. In the meantime my mother, who was forty-three...forty-four...gets pregnant. From that time, for three months, my mother is in the hospital, and kind-of she had complications. We took my kid sister who was an infant...like one month old...home with us, home being myself and my brother Bert because my father and my other brother are gone. We're taking care of this infant, and my brother, Bert, must've been like fourteen-fifteen at that time. He's telling me...I don't recall it, but...he would prepare milk to feed the baby during the time that he was home.

FS: During the time that your mother was still in the hospital.

JN: Yeah. She couldn't come out. Why they didn't leave her in the hospital with my mother I haven't the slightest idea. From what I recall or what they told me was that my brother would take the milk and leave it on the window since we had no refrigerator. I guess ((?)), but this is August, so it must've been pretty hot. Apparently the milk got rotten, and so my infant sister, one month old, was getting the runs. A family...some older couple...volunteered and took the baby, so I remember going to that couple's house to visit my kid sister. The other thing I remember is I'm ten...eleven...years old...twelve years. We had seagulls because this is a former lake, and I remember us getting strings and attaching hooks...I guess we made our own hooks...to try to catch the seagulls. We would hide behind...we call it tumbleweed. We put bread on it and the seagulls would come and try to catch it. My recollection is we caught seagulls. We had red paint. We flipped the bird over and painted the *hino*...

FS: *Hinomaru* (Japanese flag).

JN: *Hinomaru* on both sides and let the bird go in hopes that guards would take a shot at it, but I don't recall the guards doing that. I think they had rules about them not firing. I don't know why, but I remember that.

FS: That's a unique experience. You don't forget something like that.

JN: Yeah.

FS: Did your daily routine change...compared to Jerome?

JN: I'm guessing it did, but I don't recall that much. My mom and father are in the household, and I don't remember this matter of taking food home from the cafeteria.

FS: Then you all ate together at the mess hall?

JN: You know, I don't remember. Somehow the matter of carrying home...I guess I associated that with Jerome. I don't recall doing that at Tule Lake.

FS: When your father and brother left, did it make a very big difference within the family?

JN: It must have, but for me at that...

FS: It wasn't really traumatic.

JN: The only thing I was more concerned about was my mother in the hospital. Somehow my father and brother leaving didn't bother me one bit. I don't remember them leaving.

FS: What about school, since it's Japanese school only?

JN: The thing I remember is how strict the teachers were, because in English school we could get away with a lot, so here I am, ten...twelve years old. The Japanese schoolteachers are tough. The thing I remember, though, is that again, this guy from Hawaii was pretty close to being a juvenile delinquent. It was something to see fistfights by this time...twelve years old, I guess. He was threatening the teacher, saying all kinds of things. I think he got kicked out of school. Speaking of which, my rebel brother, Bert, when he was a sophomore in high school, he got kicked out. When we went to Tule Lake, he got kicked out, so when he came out he had to go to get his high school diploma by himself. When

he came back he never went back to school. He was something. He finished college, though.

FS: Very unique personality

JN: He really was.

FS: Is there anything else you remember as far as having fun at Tule Lake?

JN: Not really. I can't recall.

FS: Except for the seagulls.

JN: Yeah. I really don't have much recollection.

FS: Did you or anyone else in the family make other things as a hobby?

JN: No, not that I recall. My father was always a go-getter, I think. When we got to Tule Lake, the first thing I remember is if you worked in Tule Lake you got like \$17 a month, but if you were a supervisor type you got \$19. Not only that, you got a bicycle. That was a big thing because the camp was big. His work had to do with the mess hall. I'm not sure what he did, but he was on the bike and he was running around, making \$19. Somehow that was like...wow, it was a big deal.

FS: A substantial amount.

JN: The bicycle, from my perspective...wow, he's got a bicycle.

FS: Did anyone else in the family use the bicycle at all?

JN: I don't think so.

FS: I take it that Tule Lake was not as memorable as Jerome might have been.

JN: I guess not because I have more vivid memories of Jerome. I remember a mountain called Castle Rock at Tule Lake that we used to look at all the time, and if you climbed it you look over the border and you can see Oregon and the highway going through.

FS: Did the guards bother you at all, since you're behind barbed wire?

JN: We used to play near there. We went out of our way to get near the guardhouse \_\_\_ guard tower \_\_\_ catch the birds, but it didn't bother me one bit to see the tower there.

FS: You don't know of any incidents that took place between the guards and the internees?

JN: I thought there was something that happened, that had to do with Bert being in that group he was in that brought in some people...the guards, the FBI. It seems like there was also another incident, but it was in Jerome. Something happened, but again, I don't recall.

FS: You spent three years in camp. When you were notified of your release, what were the circumstances?

JN: I have no idea, other than we were going back, and I think the main concern was whether my mother could make it because she was in the hospital after giving birth to my kid sister...this was in August that my kid sister was born the day after August 16, the day after the (end of) the war. She got complications, so she had to stay in the hospital. From August to, I think, very close to the day we left, she was in the hospital, so there's a three-month period that we had taken care of my sister and somebody else later took care of her. I don't recall when we left Tule Lake who else or whether my dad met us or not or whether my dad came back first or later in a separate ship I don't recall. I think we had a separate ship. I don't think he came with us, so going back it was now my mother, my infant kid sister, my brother Bert and myself. In camp in Santa Fe, or wherever they were, my father then came back to Hawaii. How he came back, I don't recall. My brother, Jits, renounced his citizenship and went back to Japan. He went back in...he wrote something in the book...I think like December, and then went looking for the rest of his family.

FS: Was that the reason he went...to check on the rest of his family?

JN: I'm pretty sure, and this is what he told me...that my dad said we hadn't seen the family for four years, so "you gotta go back, go look for them," and he's going back to Hawaii to get the family re-started...his business started, so we and my dad came back and my brother went back to Fukuoka. He's got some memories of Japan right after the war ended. He saw Tokyo, I guess, flattened, he saw Hiroshima flattened. He could hardly speak the language, and the little story is that the reason they were able to get food was the black market. They had money, and he had a friend who also was at the camp, luckily, who also went to Fukuoka...who helped him locate our family in Fukuoka. He stayed there twenty-seven years and then came back home.

FS: With his children?

JN: Yeah, and then he died this year. He's the guy I wish I had talked to about his life and why he came here. I'm sure he had a lot to say.

FS: Would his family have records that might cast some light on his experiences?

JN: I don't know. I could ask, but my guess is not. He never talked about his experience too much.

FS: Now that you were ready to leave Tule Lake and your mother was still ill, the burden must've fallen on Bert and you to prepare to return to Hawaii.

JN: I guess so, but again, I don't recall being too concerned. You would think I'd be worrying about my mother and my sister, but I don't remember. My rebel brother must have handled that. Kind of hard to believe, but he did.

FS: So he decided he would come back, too.

JN: Who?

FS: Bert.

JN: Oh, yeah. He was 15 or 16, and my older brother, Jits, was 17. He (Bert) got his citizenship back, but he was too young.

FS: What about the return trip...any memories?

JN: I remember we were segregated, so we went down to... somewhere, I don't know where. I couldn't see anything. I remember there were bunks. This was a military transport ship, so with bunks, it was \_\_\_\_. I got seasick. Most of the time, I think because my mother was ill and had a child, she had a special place. I think I was sneaking up and staying with my mother. I don't think I was stopped too often, but I remember seeing the room. I remember the smell.

FS: The readjustment on your return...can you tell us something about the difficulties?

JN: For myself it was just going to school. I went to Liliuokalani. It was a matter of learning to take care of myself like guys my age. I remember my two brothers, William and Henry, coming back, my grandparents coming back, my one sister, Sumiko, coming back. It was a big event. We went back to our white house. We had a big white house and we all went back to it. My dad...I'm not quite sure how he did it, but he started up a business.

I think what he did was bid for a job to break down the barracks because the war is over. There were a lot of barracks. He would go in and under contract tear down the buildings, and I guess get paid for it. He took the lumber. There's no lumber right after the war and I think he was building houses with this old lumber. It was something to see. I don't think it lasted very long. I still remember him building houses, and I remember us...three boys... now that were back. By this time my brother, Rebel Bert, took off. He told my father, "The hell with you," and he volunteered for the service. He went to Japan, and created his own problems in Japan. So there were three brothers now. We were all 13, 14, 15...that age...and so we had our own adjustment to make. They had to learn English. Fortunately, again for guys our age it was really important to take care of ourselves at school, and they could do that, so they were going out there throwing people around and getting into fights. I remember a couple of times seeing them fighting and throwing people around.

FS: You were not involved.

JN: Yeah. I always kinda hid. I never got into that.

FS: As you look back, are there any other special thoughts or reflections on your experience?

JN: Well, you know, as a lawyer it worries me that something like this happened. Now I'm looking at the Muslims. If you look like a Muslim, you're in trouble. How're you going to get on the plane? I'm sure that would happen to us, and you hope it doesn't happen to anybody else. I realize it intellectually, but I don't realize it from my gut like somebody who went to camp. I feel like, god, I went to camp. I really should be indignant about this, but it really doesn't hit me that way. I can look at it (my experience) rationally and intellectually. I don't have that kind of driving kind of force; in fact, I used to not get involved until two of my brothers died, and I think, gee, all that experience, and I thought, nobody knows about it. For my own experience, all during that time has been kind of like a guy who went in there and it really didn't affect my life that much. I presume it affected my mother. She died within a year after she came out of camp. That's when my dad remarried. Bert blames (her death) on camp experience. He's morally indignant about the whole situation about the camp and worked for reparations, but I don't have that gut reaction.

FS: Did it enrich your life in any way?

JN: I don't think so. I think if it had affected me more strongly, more emotionally, maybe I could have gotten something out of it, but I kind of floated through the whole experience, almost like unattached, uninvolved.

FS: Like a bystander.

JN: That's my nature, too. I'm an observer more than a participant, and it's my nature...the fact that I sit on the sidelines and watch. My other brothers were not like that. Well, if you're the youngest out of five brothers, you're going to observe before you get beaten up. That's the nature of the environment.

FS: Thank you very much for sharing your experiences with us. Yours is very unusual, I believe, and I think it will enrich our library of internment experiences.