

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAI‘I

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Grace Yasuko Sugita Hawley (GH)

May 23, 2008

BY: Florence Sugimoto (FS)

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

GH: Grace Yasuko Sugita Hawley. I was born in 1931 in Honolulu.

FS: What are your parent's names, what year and place were they born, and what were their occupations?

GH: My mother's name was Shizuno. Her maiden name was Nakamura. I don't know her birth year. My father, Saburo Sugita, was born in Kauai 1899 so she's probably a few years before that.

FS: What about his occupation?

GH: His occupation at the time of, when the war started?

FS: Fine.

GH: They had a bakery, they had a family business, a bakery, in Honolulu and, he was the manager.

FS: So your mother was a homemaker?

GH: Yes.

FS: How many children were there in the family?

GH: Four girls and one boy. He was the oldest and I was the youngest.

FS: Your, that means your, your, the children were all, all *sansei*?

GH: Yes.

FS: What was your family life like?

GH: Uhm...

FS: Like ah, did you have, uhm, did you have close relationships, did you help your parents, did you do a lot of things together?

GH: Uh, we were pretty much middle class. We went to Japanese school typically as all Japanese. We went to Japanese school everyday. My father used to be busy with his business and sometimes he would take us out to the beach and we would pick up food and eat dinner on the beach. We used to go camping. We had a lot of relatives. My grandfather bought property for his sons, so many families lived on that same street that we lived in.

FS: Oh....

GH: So we used to do a lot of things together with cousins and uncles and aunties.

FS: I see....

GH: That's how we grew up, very clannish (laughs).

FS: I think the language spoken at home was English primarily?

GH: Uh hum. Because they were born in Hawaii, both of them.

FS: Were there any cultural values or traditions that you observed that you regularly?

GH: Well we did all the *mochi* making every New Years at our house (laughs). We did that. And then we always had to wear our kimono and have to say "Happy New Years" to all the neighbors all around within a block or so I think. We did all those traditional things.

FS: Really.

GH: And my, not every year maybe, but, we would dress up like that and take our family photo. We had several of those.

FS: What kind of relationship did you have with your neighbors and the community prior to December 7th?

GH: Oh, it was a very close group because we all grew up there, born and raised there. And that's all we knew. Our neighbors and cousins went to school together so, that was our world.

FS: Mm....

GH: Until we went to camp.

FS: I see. Please tell us your, the schools that you attended?

GH: Um, it was Puuhale School that was elementary. I was in the fifth grade I think when the war started. We had four girls, so two of us were in elementary and two were in Kalakaua Intermediate and my brother was just starting high school.

FS: I see.

GH: We're all one year apart (laughs).

FS: Oh....

GH: I year apart. Anyway that's how it was...fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth.

FS: So there were how many children?

GH: Five, four girls and one boy and he was the oldest so he was just starting high school I think when the war was starting.

FS: Oh, I see, I see. Now, on December 7, 1941, how old were you and what are your memories of that day?

GH: I was ten 'cause I was born in 1931 so that's easy to remember. But I remember distinctly, though, I guess at ten you can remember things. I remember distinctly, planes flying overhead 'cause we were in Kalihi. It was quite near to Pearl Harbor and, the shrapnel fell on the next door, we had a cotton factory next door with the *totan* (corrugated) roof. My father woke up because he heard the shrapnel falling. He thought the kids were throwing rocks and playing around. And so that's how we found out about it.

FS: Oh, I see.

GH: But I saw the planes flying quite low, you know, and it scared me. (Laughs) I thought they were going to land and shoot us (laughs). Ten-year old mentality, you know.

FS: Uh huh, uh huh. Oh, I see. What was the reaction of your family? When you found out?

GH: We were just shocked.

FS: Uhum, uhum.

GH: Couldn't believe it. But you see, that year my father just came back from Japan. I think there was a lot of talk about war in those days. I guess all the Japanese people knew there was going to be a war. When, they didn't know, probably. He came back on the last ship before the war. So he came back I think in October with my sister.

FS: May I ask why he went to Japan?

GH: He went, I think he went there for the summer. My memory is a little hazy, but some of it I read in his notes.

FS: Did you go as a family?

GH: He went with my sister only...I'm not sure whether he took my grandfather then. My grandfather is the one that he had to take back and forth each time. And he may have taken him, I'm not sure, but he was going to stay there for the summer and then he had a hard time coming back. That's when it was getting hard to get the booking to come back. So he had to go to the Embassy and get some help and all that.

FS: So he returned in...

GH: He came back in October. They were there for months and months.

FS: Hm, I see. Okay. When was your father arrested? And what were the circumstances?

GH: His was not right away. If I recall, but his notes and my recollections, sometimes it's a little off, you know. I think it was about February, March, April somewhere in '42, '41 the war started. And, I remember coming home from school and the FBI were there ransacking the, you know, those days we had the *hotokesan* and we had the *kamisama*. And they were just throwing it around and...yeah they were just ransacking all those things because to them that was loyalty to the emperor. I didn't know these things but anyway. I understand they picked him up somewhere, wherever he was. But I thought, my memory was, I thought they took him then but he wasn't home I guess. So they came and my poor mother didn't know what to do, you know, and I think they had to look for him. And, they picked him up and took him that night. And we never saw him after that. They took him in for interrogation and, uhm, eventually he ended up in Sand Island and then the spouses could go and visit. Oh, about once a month or something.

FS: How often, what was the reaction of your, the family? Your relatives...

GH: They were so scared, of course. We were so scared because we didn't understand. Part of it was I think being so young, it was being ashamed. Like what did he do, or what did we do, you know because when time came to go to camp, I mean, I was ashamed to tell the teacher we're going...I didn't know what to tell her. I couldn't tell her why, you know. And I guess my mother let us tell all the teachers (laughs). She didn't go with us and so, I remember my teacher was very understanding. I'm skipping over so I'll go back to whatever you were asking me.

FS: Oh, I see... Now that means that your father was taken, just taken away and you didn't have any communications with him until...

GH: ... we had to go to camp.

FS: Okay. What was life like without your father?

GH: It didn't change that much, really (laughs). We had our house, we had the business and probably my mother still had income, you know, so it was a little different situation from some others. But, it was worrisome for her because I'm sure, she's the kind of person that keeps everything to herself. She doesn't show her emotions so we never understood, what she was going through. And we were so young.

FS: Then she was the one who ran the bakery?

GH: No, no, he had brothers. They had a good-sized bakery. They had workers and they had the uncles to run it....so it kept going except that it was affected during the war.

FS: Ah huh. I see, I see. You said that you didn't get to see your father or hear from him until Sand Island?

GH: My mother was finally able to go and visit him. The wives were able, I don't know when they started, and I think maybe it was like once a month or something. They went on a ferry 'cause Sand Island was a separate island in those days. So they went on a ferry and the last time was in December when she came home and said that we have to go to the mainland.

FS: This is 1942?

GH: Yeah, end of '42, huh? And she said we have to go to the mainland because that's the only way the whole family is going to be together again.

FS: Was, how long was the period between, um, the time he was arrested and the first visit that your mother made?

GH: I don't remember that. It might be in his notes, I don't remember that exactly.

FS: Did your mother come home and talk to you, everyone, about....

GH: She told us some things about him and you know...I was too young to understand everything and, to have enough questions. I think my elder sisters had little more memory (laughs) of it.

FS: I see, okay. When your mother came home from, uh, her visit or visits, by the way, how many visits were, do you think there were?

GH: I don't remember you know. I'm thinking, I don't it was that many, though.

FS: Okay. When you decided to relocate, what were the, um, um, what were the official notice from the government? Did you...

GH: Well my mother came home and told us. I'm sure she got her notification or either from my father or whatever it was but she came home and told us. And on short notice. It wasn't much notice and she---, just luckily, you know, we had relatives nearby and all that so she had to get rid of everything.

FS: Oh...

GH: I mean the house was there, an uncle was going to move into the house, to take care of the house. But she had to give away all her groceries, she used to keep a, practically a big walk-in pantry, full of groceries. She gave them all away to the relatives. And then, sold the car, which was almost a new car. So everything cheaper and, um, lot of things that she had to just get rid of as fast as possible. And she left the furniture in the house which wasn't too old either. But, you know for her we were still fortunate because some other people had to walk away from their property.

FS: Uh, huh, uh huh.

GH: We didn't have much notice. She had to shop and get some warm clothes, and in those days, people didn't go to the mainland. She had a hard time. I remember she came back from McInerney's, in those days it was McInerney's, and she brought back some jackets for us. They were so light when we got there but that's all she could find. She also sewed some things for us, pants, long pants outfits because in those days, girls don't wear pants or slacks. So she had to do all the preparation, she had to do so much.

FS: She must have been very busy.

GH: For the four girls, yeah. She sewed a lot of things for us. But other than that there's not much that she could buy because she couldn't find warm things. So everything that we went with, it was all too light. We had to go there and buy (laughs).

FS: Really! Oh, my goodness!

GH: We had no idea how cold it was. And they sent us in the winter, too.

FS: Oh, the coldest....

GH: That's right.

FS: What were the feelings of the children, do you recall?

GH: The others?

FS: At the prospect of, you know, leaving Hawaii?

GH: Well, when I went to school and told my teacher we're going away. Lot of the people didn't know about this and they didn't understand. My teacher was really nice. She told

me to write to the class. She told me to write to the class and tell exactly where you are so I can get the map out and I will show them where you are and I'll read your letter to the class. And they would write to me. And that was so nice of her because I was so ashamed. What am I going to tell her? You know, it's like I'm a disgrace. What did my father do, you know? (laughs) Those days, we didn't understand it. So we each had to go and tell the teachers. And so, the kids were all right. Nobody ostracized me or anything like that. And naturally my cousins were all so sad because we grew up together. And it was sad because we had to leave so quietly. We couldn't tell anybody. And we had to leave early in the morning when it was still dark and so the relatives came over to say goodbye. But it was kind of a sneaky way of leaving and that's the only way we could leave I suppose. You know, we weren't suppose to attract attention. And that's when we first saw my father, we met at the immigration station. They brought them over from Sand Island and we met him there.

FS: I see, oh.... Did you spend the night at the immigration....

GH: No, they took us to the ship.

FS: Directly?

GH: Uh huh.

FS: Oh, I see, I see. When was this, that you left?

GH: December, it was either right after Christmas or right before Christmas. I forget the dates. So I think we got there New Year's, you know. Anyway, we were travelling in the coldest months, you know, we got there the coldest month, in January.

FS: January. Uh, does that mean Jerome or San Francisco?

GH: Uh, Jerome.

FS: I see.

GH: San Francisco, probably, I can't remember exactly, huh. Five days it took I think. You know, those days it took five days by ship.

FS: How were your accommodations?

GH: It was okay, it wasn't so bad. We were on the Lurline. Lurline was the liner in those days. And then what they did was converted it for troop ship and for us. So there were a lot of troops in there, too. And there were families from the outer islands who came over. But I understand we were on the second or the third ship. We were the last ship to go. There were other families that had already left early on another ship. So we were the last ones to get to Jerome.

FS: When you say the last ones to get to Jerome....

GS: There were other ships that already left earlier.

FS: Oh, I see.... This is now in 1942.

GH: Uh huh. So it's '43 January, already.

FS: Do you recall anything about your trip, uh, from California to Jerome?

GH: Well, the thing I remember clearly was when we got to San Francisco, the guards were all there and took us over to Oakland. We had to go over to Oakland to get on the ferry and from Oakland the train. The train didn't go from San Francisco. So we had to go over on the ferry and get to Oakland and then get on the train but the guards were around us all through. It was really demeaning the way they were there with their guns and everything and we being so young not understanding what's going on. I really didn't understand enough at that time. So that I remember, though. Certain things are very clear.

FS: What about your train ride?

GH: The train ride. The train ride was uh, see I didn't remember. My sister remembers that it was all blacked out. I don't remember that. But we did stop, the first stop at Santa Fe, New Mexico, cause there was snow and so they were kind enough to let us get out there and touch the snow. Get out and get some fresh air and see the snow. And that was the first time we saw snow. Cause that was winter, it was cold all over. But I didn't remember having to close, black out all the windows. I'm not sure (laughs), but my sister remembers a lot.

FS: From Santa Fe, you went directly to Jerome?

GH: Uh hm.... And my mother had me write down a journal. You know, I never thanked her. I wrote down all those things she told me, "You keep track." And my aunt also told me to do that. She said, "Write down everything now, someday you're going to be able to read it and look back." So I wrote down from California all the way to Jerome, the states, the announcements, the States we passed through and you know, all of those things. I did that from Jerome to Heart Mountain, too.

FS: Oh.

GH: But we moved so many times, I think my mother got tired of saving things already and there's only so much you can take with you.

FS: That's a shame. Okay. Now you've arrived at Jerome. How long did you stay there, what was the arrival reception like?

GH: Uh hm. They were (laughs), in fact, like I said we were the last group, so there were people already living there. We got there in the cold, cold winter, muddy and wet. And our doctor, our family doctor, was there. They go through the manifest and see who is arriving. And they saw my father's name so people were there to greet us, people he knew from way back from the bakery, this man who used to work for his bakery was there. And he hadn't seen him for a long, long time from when he moved to the mainland, you see, he came with the mainland people who were already there. And then our doctor who ended up treating me in the hospital later. But, uh, when we got there it was really, really cold but we were lucky they were all settled. And they had this one dorm for the people from Hawaii so we were in that dorm. Actually it was three dorms. But this one block was all Hawaii people, huh. So we got in there and then they helped us out, you know. But it sure was cold.

FS: Oh.

GH: And that tar paper construction, cold, huh. And the cracks, you know, the cold air coming in, and the pot belly stove, and so it was an experience (laughs). And you have to get up at night to get to the bathroom. Then we had to prepare to go to school. First time we ever left home, so it was really hard for us. We were pretty timid then. We went everywhere with them.

FS: I see. Okay. Um, did you have any trouble setting up your house?

GH: Hmmm, as far as that it's barracks, you know. Nothing much you can do. Eventually I think they gave us, they issued horse blankets we would call it, army blankets, cause we had to have it. They issued those things. Two rooms we had because we had seven in our family. So my father, my mother and I were in one room and the rest of them were in another room. Eventually people would hang curtains, room dividers and things like that. You would divide it with plants and things like that but otherwise it's bare bones.

FS: Hmmm. What was the routine you followed as a family?

GH: That's the thing that changed because we had to eat in the mess hall and it kind of broke up the family. You know especially where there's teenagers and even like my sisters, they would go to the mess hall with their friends or my brother with his friends. I was the only one who always went with my mother. And my father was very active, you know, he was appointed the manager for our block so he was always making speeches and she's always alone. So I would be her company, sit with her and I would go with them. But he was always busy with people. He was very sociable, you know, and taking care of things and he was always trying to improve things. But I remember I was the only one with my parents. The rest of them were all with their friends and that's what happened, broke up a lot of structured home life.

FS: I see, I see. Do you anything about what your father, uh, did as a block manager?

GH: Well, I think, first when they appointed him the manager (I don't know how he got appointed), then he appointed an assistant, all his people are in our block. And one of them was going to be secretary. And then, he had to appoint different people, the kitchen help, people who can cook. See they tried to utilize all the talents like school teachers and other professional people. So in our block they needed a cook, they needed the ladies to wait, in the mess hall. I mean we'd go and get our own food but they'd pour milk or the water or whatever. And then, they had the dishwashers. And then they had to have the ladies for cleaning, maintenance, bathroom and all that. So it was a lot of work, too. And then, he would go to the administration and ask for things or make improvements or suggestions and all that. So, then when there's any announcements, he would have to do it and it's always in the mess hall because that's where everybody would congregate.

FS: Did he have problems? With any of the people?

GH: Sometimes, sometimes he had. There was one family, I won't name them, but in Jerome, because we were surrounded by forests, the men had to go out and chop wood down. That was our firewood for our heat. When the men come back, the ladies were there to help, they had a full line up, you know, and they would help the men would saw the lumber and the ladies would stack it and they would allocate to each family. One family, he never went out. He thinks he's better than anybody else (laughs). He was a snob. He used the blanket for his rug. Like how dare them, you know. So he was like that, anyway, he never came out to eat in the mess hall. His wife would take his food home for him. And it was just terrible. So, my father wanted him out of our block because he was not good for the morale because when the men all gathered every able bodied man had to be out there and go out into the woods. He never showed up. He would let his wife go and help the ladies. Isn't that terrible? So she was there and we felt kind of sorry for her because she had to face all the people. And then, so that's the kind of problem. So eventually they got him out of our block. He went to a mainland block somewhere (laughs). But in the beginning, we went to school with their kids. And one was my age. They were okay but some of them were kind of snotty, too, you know. But the rest of them, some of them were all right. But otherwise, we had nice neighbors and we all got along and got to be good friends.

FS: Now what about your schedule during the day?

GH: We went to school. When you think about it there wasn't much we can do except go to school and what a life, you know (laughs). Nothing much to do.

FS: I see.

GS: What can you do? You walk everywhere, you walk, there's no transportation. And so there isn't much, except they did start showing movies. So I used to go with my mother and go see the movies. The men, they had their sports. They had their baseball teams and all that and high school sports. My brother used to play basketball and baseball and my father used to be one of the managers of the baseball team.

FS: Oh....

GH: But anyway, they had all of the sports. The girls had their dances, you know. They even had USO, USO for the 442 guys that used to come out.

FS: Uh hum....

GH: They used to have dances for them and they used to bring their baseball team to play with Camp Jerome baseball teams. So they had some social life. I was too young to really know what was going on. All I did was go out and play with my friends (laugh), you know, nothing else.

FS: What did you play?

GH: I don't know what we did. It was so boring. All I remember was that summer was the worst time. Summer was so boring cause there was nothing to do. In the summer, we would go out and catch fireflies at night. We used to pick wild flowers, and stuff like that.

FS: Hm....

GH: When you think about that period, you know, we were there for a year and a half.

FS: Do you have any memories of school?

GH: Uh huh. Oh yes. I was in the sixth, sixth grade, I believe. We had a little graduation. My mother sewed me a dress and I made friends but it was hard for me because I was the last group again to come in so by that time they were all settled. Our doctor's daughter was my classmate so I guess he told her to take me to school with her friend. And so I at least had somebody to walk to school with on my first day. We didn't end up being good friends. But I had someone to go to school with. And so I made some new friends. But that was only half a year. I don't know what happened in that semester, whole semester. But I remember during the summer, toward the ending, I ended up in hospital because they thought I had malaria. And in those days they didn't know how to treat it and they didn't know how to diagnose it because my doctor, later on, you know, years later back here, he didn't think I had malaria. But at that time I was in the hospital for three weeks in the isolation ward. Our doctor was there so he always took care of me when we were in camp because he was our family doctor. I remember school started cause I was going into the seventh grade. Again I had to be a new student and I dreaded going to school because I would be the last one coming in when everybody's settled down. I think I must have started about two weeks later or something like that. And I told my mother I just hated to go to school, I had to start all over again (laughs). New student, again.

FS: Uh huh, uh huh. Was, were the hospital, um, staffed, all ...

GH: Whatever, whatever talents and skills, like I said, the camp population can provide, they'll use school teachers, doctors, dentists, nurses, and then any shortage, they have to recruit from the outside. They had some, mainland people from the outside, and they lived in

administration housing on the outskirts of camp. And so there were a few like that. But in camp, I think, hospitals mostly were our own doctors and nurses. There were quite a few nurses.

FS: And so now, you're back in school in the seventh grade. Are there any other memories of school?

GH: So seventh grade... Well, school for me itself wasn't a problem, I don't think so. But I remember my mother, they had PTA meetings cause my mother went to my PTA meeting and came home and said, "Oh, you did so well." And she was so proud of me. See she spoke English. A lot of the *issei* parents couldn't speak so they won't go. So the teacher was very happy to see a parent come over to the meeting cause the meetings were not very successful. A lot of the parents didn't have the confidence, you know, since they couldn't speak the language. So my mother always used to go to my PTA meetings. And so this teacher, one English teacher from outside, she was really, really nice to me, I still remember her and next camp, too. So I think I studied, you know. I had nothing else to do (laughs). I don't remember any kind of problem at school.

FS: So there were no organized sports, activities...

GH: They had.

FS: ...for your age level.

GH: At my age, was no, not quite. It's only the older ones, the older kids. We had our P.E. class and all that. And I was never athletic so I never enjoyed P.E.

FS: (laughs) Okay.

GH: And then we got word to, that they were going to close Jerome.

FS: Oh, I see.

GH: I think that was almost a year.

FS: Um, what were your, the feelings of the family as regarding restricted life, you know, behind barbed wire?

GH: Well, I can't remember too much except that my father, for my father it was hardest because he couldn't get day passes to go out to the town, whatever town. They always restricted him. He could not get a pass. And this is what he fought almost all through. He went through a lot because for some reason even though they never found anything wrong that he did, he was very, very restricted. And he didn't have the rights that a lot of other people had and he was a citizen, you know. And so, eventually only until my brother was going to be drafted. Until then, then he was able to get a pass. That's in Wyoming, Heart Mountain.

FS: Oh....

GH: But in Jerome, my mother was able to go out. She went with the ladies to Little Rock for the weekend. And they went out to Little Rock cause that's the only big city, you know in those days. And so one day, she took me out of school and she said we're going to go to McGee, a hick town, but it's just getting out of the camp. She said, "I'll take you to McGee." So she took me and, kept me out of school that day and we went shopping and whatever. And that was my first experience with segregation. We didn't know about segregation in Hawaii. We get in the bus and they said, "Colored, huh?" In those days they said colored in the back, white in the front. And we stood there, we don't know what to do. And the driver goes, "Stay in the front." Like we're stupid you know. But we don't know. Where do we belong? We get out there at the station. Every public place, they have segregation for the bathrooms. We didn't know what to do (laughs). So we better go to the white. But that was a real experience for us. The white people would look at us. And the black people would look at us, you know. Like who are you? In between there, huh. But that's something we really learned. We learned that segregation is real pathetic when you see those black people, the way they were treated. You know on the way, on the bus, we see the shanty they lived in and, oh, that was the first time we saw such poverty. I remember that though. I remember that clearly. And that's why I say, the train ride couldn't have been all blacked out because I saw those shanties from the train (laughs). On the train to, going to Jerome or whatever but I saw them sitting there, on the porch watching the trains go by.

FS: When did, uh, father decide to relocate to Wyoming? For....

GH: No, no, no. Wyoming is, just moving again, still staying in camp.

FS: Oh....

GH: Wyoming was another camp. What happened was when Jerome was going to close, they gave them a choice. Which camps do you want to go to? And most of them in the Hawaii group, went to, Arizona because the weather was a little milder and hot, huh. But he didn't want to go there. He says, "Why go to a place that's going to be like Hawaii." He says, "We might as well experience something different." He picked Wyoming when so few of them wanted to go to Wyoming because their weather is just so harsh, their winters and all. People thought he was crazy. But a few other *kibeis*, there were some *kibeis* there that he always took care of because they didn't have parents and all. Couple of them went with us to Wyoming. But there were very few families who went to Wyoming. And so he said, "Well, we have to experience the cold weather." And we had cold weather in Jerome but he said, "You know, this is going to be different." And he heard about Yellowstone and they could go fishing at Yellowstone, when he gets his pass (laughs). So that's how we ended up at Heart Mountain. He did get to go fishing at Yellowstone eventually!

FS: He, you, you as a family didn't argue for or against it?

GH: Nooo, you know in those days, you're just so obedient. Whatever your parents do, that's their decision.

FS: The same thing with your brother?

GH: Uh, huh. Because my brother, you see, he graduated high school in Jerome. He graduated and then he was going to move to Chicago. Because you see, in those days, the kids get out of high school, they either go in the service or they go to school. They can go Midwest. As long as you don't go to the west coast, they let you relocate. So a lot of the kids, got out and went to school. And he wanted to go to Chicago. So for him, it didn't matter where we were going cause that was his plan. And he was going....and that's how he got drafted in Chicago.

FS: Oh, I see. So there was no question of disloyalty or, or rebellion against the government as far as your father was concerned?

GH: No.

FS: It was just that the camp was closing so they had a choice of....

GH: Oh, that's all of us. All of us, they had to close and we all had to move.

FS: Mmm...I see, I see. Okay. What was your trip like?

GH: That was interesting because by that time we were little more experienced (laughs), you know, on the train ride and all that. And then I think we got to see the scenery, you know. Heart Mountain is going toward the Rockies and so we went through Colorado. In fact coming from California to Jerome would be passing through Grand Canyon. That way. So from Jerome to Heart Mountain was the Rockies, Sierras. So it was very nice, you know, the mountains and all. And we could see the Rocky Mountains all year round, snow capped, you know. It was really nice in Wyoming, the train ride and all that was interesting. And then we got there and again people were there to greet us (laugh). We didn't know them but I mean they were just waving cause I guess for them it's something different (laughs) like an event.

FS: Uh huh, uh huh. When was this?

GH: It was about 1944, because 1943 we were in Jerome? 1944 I was in eight grade. By that time I was going into the eight grade.

FS: And how long were you there?

GH: We're there till summer of '45, another year, that's when the camps were closing, and we all had to leave?

FS: I see, I see. Okay, now when you got to, um, to Heart Mountain, uh, what was it like compared to Jerome?

GH: It was a little different because it wasn't Hawaii group. In Jerome, it was like home almost (laughs), all from Hawaii. But this one, we had to assimilate within the camp, just fit in, you know. So my father, right away, they all heard about him from Jerome (laughs) and they wanted him to do some managerial stuff again, you know.

FS: Oh I see.

GH: And he was an entertainer too, that's why.

FS: You said they were not Hawaii people?

GH: No, because...

FS: Where were they from?

GH: They were all mainland people from California, Oregon, Washington.

FS: All mainland.

GH: The camp population is mainly mainlanders from Hawaii, I would say about 1500 people. Total in all.

FS: From Hawaii total? Or where you were camp?

GH: This all together.

FS: Jerome?

GH: All camps.

FS: Of Hawaii people, about 1500 people?

GH: Cause we had our reunion and I remember those numbers.

FS: Oh, I see, I see.

GH: So we didn't have that many people any way.

FS: Uh huh, uh huh. Oh...now I'd like you to compare your, um, reception there, the organization there, and the routine.

GH: It's pretty similar, they had their baseball teams. My father's old friend from Arizona, they were in the Gila Camp (Arizona), and, he knew them from before the war. He was a

baseball player (professional). His sons were playing and he was the manager and he came over and my father got to see him again all those years. You see my father was very active at the bakery, he used to sponsor these teams, baseball teams. These people he knew from the '30s, you know (laughs). And so they had a lot of reunions and they got together. And that team would come and play with the Heart Mountain team. They used to do all those things so it was nice. And then the teenagers, they had their dances and stuff like that.

FS: Uh huh.

GH: So for me, it was boring. Nothing much to do. I don't know what I did except I used to dread summer. It's so boring, nothing to do. And oh, I remember there was a rec center. Every block had a rec center. So I found a part-time job there. I got a part-time job to take care of the rec center. My sister and I used to play ping pong a lot in there. So I got a job to work in there, watch the place and we'd play ping pong all the time.

FS: Oh...

GH: So that was something. You see, you know how the pay scale was there. What was it like, \$15, \$16 a month. The professionals, like doctors, they get \$19 a month, managers and doctors, and school teachers. And others got \$15, \$16 a month. So I was too young so I don't know what I got, if I got anything. I don't remember (laughs).

FS: Oh, you don't remember getting paid?

GH: No, I don't remember. But I used to go there everyday and this lady was in charge told me that I can go and work there. So I used to go there. (laughs) Otherwise it was so boring.

FS: That's true. And I take it that the regular family routine was...

GH: Same thing.

FS: ...each....

GH: Going and eating at the mess hall. I was with my mother all the time (laughs). And then, it got so, I felt sorry for her, you know, because the rest were all with their friends. And I thought, if I don't go with her, she'll be all alone with my father and half the time he's talking to people. So I always stayed with her. I know what we used to have. Once a month, Montgomery Ward and Sears Roebuck representatives would come and they would bring their big catalog and we would do catalog shopping. Imagine, shopping was a big day! And we would tell my mother we want this, this, this. In Jerome we first had it. "Oh, can I have this, this, this, this!" We used to order things, winter clothes, so many things for four girls.

FS: Oh...

GH: We used to order all overcoats, boots, or stuff like that. We ordered lot of things in the catalog so we were lucky that at least we were able to do that. Some of those farmers from California, they were so poor, they had nothing. They had to depend on the military issues. They gave some pea jackets and, uh, mackinaw jackets, they called it. Little heavy ones and things like that.

FS: And so your father didn't have to worry about...

GH: I think he got some income from Hawaii. I think he did. The bakery was suffering, too, because of the war so he had lot of worries, too, even though it didn't look like it. I found out much later.

FS: I take it then your relatives here sent him some money.

GH: Yeah.

FS: From time to time.

GH: From the business.

FS: Mmm, I see, oh, that's int..., you were pretty well off then?

GH: Uh huh.

FS: I see. That's good! Um, do you, were you familiar with the, the fair play committee activities at all? Was your father a part of it?

GH: I don't think he was politically involved in camp. He wasn't. I really don't recall him talking about things like that. The only thing is that every so often they would, he would try to appeal to get a pass to go out.

FS: That was his primary problem?

GH: Uh huh, that and trying to get money from Hawaii. Cause he had to have permission. I don't know why. When I went to the archives and got all his papers, he had to go through so much and write to people and had his brother contacted. I didn't read enough details of it, you know. He did get some but because what they said is also the fact that in camp even if the government gives us housing and food, you know, food and shelter, there are other incidentals, like warm clothing and things, we need. I remember he finally got his pass when my brother was going to be drafted and he fought that you know. He told them how could you take my son when you don't even trust his father. You know that's how the government was, huh. They didn't care. They just want every able-bodied young man, I guess. And so he said that you confine me like this and don't even give me my rights and you want to take my son in? And so eventually they gave him his freedom. Just the pass. We were still in camp.

FS: He must have gone to several hearings then?

GH: Uh huh. He met with a lot of people.

FS: Oh. Do you remember who?

GH: No, it's all in his files from the archives. He had a thick file full of correspondence.

FS: What were the circumstances that led to your leaving the camp?

GH: Well, the camps were closing. Definitely, they were closing and we were all forced to move out (laughs). We didn't know, our status about going back to Hawaii. At that time I think the people weren't going back to California or the west coast. Everybody had to go inland, Midwest or east, get settled there and eventually go back to California I suppose. So because we couldn't go back to Hawaii yet, my father had a friend who had relocated earlier and was living in Minneapolis and had a restaurant. Since my father was a businessman he said why don't you open a restaurant in St. Paul. He said, "I'll help you find one," since they're old, good friends again from before the war days. He said I can help you with the produce, I know where to get all these things. So he said why don't you come out and take a look. So he and my sister, my brother, too, went out to Minneapolis and they went to look. And I guess they found a place in St. Paul. It wouldn't be competing with him because if you know Twin Cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, are two cities with Mississippi River in between and you go by streetcar from city to city. So anyway, it's not really competing directly with him. Japanese food, too, you know. But anyway, so he decided, okay we'll do that until we get approval to go back to Hawaii. The war with Japan was ending. I think Europe ended earlier. And, just before the atomic bombing, we're moving, we're leaving camp, cause we were one of the last ones to leave. The camp was being slowly emptied out. By the time we reached St. Paul, he received word that his brother was killed in the atomic bomb, the atomic bomb ended the war. That was a real shock for him because his brother and family and his parents were all there. So he didn't know what else was happening in Hiroshima. So anyway, we were in St. Paul and he started a Japanese restaurant. He bought it from a Japanese family. And then, I think he went to the military base, Fort Snelling (interpreters' school) and the GIs from Hawaii were there. A lot of them from Hawaii were there. So they found out. I think he went there with somebody to let them know that we're in St. Paul. We were at Seven Corners, they call it, in St. Paul. They come from out of town, buses, streetcars come to Seven Corners. And then from there they go to different areas in the city. We were just within walking distance from there. And they would just come in droves because they found out there's Japanese food, family from Hawaii (laughs). And that's how my father was. Somehow he knew if he got word out, they will come. They would be out there standing in line and when it's on his day off, they would be knocking on the glass window in the cold! He would let them in. He said, "I'll make you folks *chazuke*," he felt so sorry because they're so young, being in the service. And so we were just busy, busy, busy. And so we practically lived there. Because we knew it was temporary, we just got a rooming house nearby within walking distance just to go home and sleep (laughs). But the rest of the time was spent at the restaurant. There was big basement, we did our homework

downstairs (laughs). We'd come straight home and go downstairs to do our homework and then go wash dishes and help at the restaurant. My sister would help wait on tables, you know. My oldest sister who graduated from high school in camp was waiting, she was doing waiting full-time. And we went to school. We were the only Japanese except for one other Japanese girl in school. We had a hard time adjusting in school. And this one girl had same name with us. Can you believe that?! (laughs) Her name was Sugita (laughs). We just couldn't believe it but she grew up there. And never to camp. So for her, it was just natural then. She just grew up among the all *haole* people. But we would not socialize; we wouldn't do any of that. Here we came from camp, all Japanese, all of a sudden we're thrown out there. It's a good thing there were three of us going to school. We went to school together, we met after school, we came home together. And so we did everything together. And so the counselor would ask us, "Don't you want to go on a hayride," "Don't you want to do this," you know, activities. "No!" (laughs) We turned everything down. We didn't socialize at all. And because we knew it was temporary. We weren't going to make a lot of friends and get attachments, you know. You learn, you learn to do that, too. Part of it is, why, why get involved because we didn't know when they would call us and when we would move back to Hawaii. And so, anyway, that was our life. We'd come home and spend the evening, you know, in the restaurant and then go home to sleep (laughs). Everyday, that's all we did.

FS: So you were practically living....

GH: Living, at the restaurant.

FS: ....at the restaurant.

GH: Uh, huh. And then we had a friend, one of the *kibeis*, who was in Heart Mountain with us. This is an interesting story because he was in Heart Mountain with the other *kibeis*. Most of them had no family. He didn't know where to go from camp. Some of them were like that, you know, it's sad. My father said, "Well," he said, "we're going to go to St. Paul." "If you want to come St. Paul," he said, "Why don't you come." He was going to come later. He was going to stay there as long as he could. So I remember we went to the train station to meet him because he came by himself and he came to live with us. My father hired him for our dishwasher (laughs). He was like our big brother. And then, so he was another one in our family. By that time, my brother was already drafted and he was in the east coast. My brother came on a leave and he helped us out a little bit. And so, he was always close by so it was not so bad. This friend and my father never saw each other after we left St. Paul. We came home to Hawaii and he said, "Well, I'll join the railroad." That's what they used to do before when they had no job, nothing to do, join the railroad crew cause he was a big, husky guy. He said, "I guess I can find a job there," even though his English was very poor. He worked there years and years and this is like (sighs) forty years later, has to be thirty, forty years later, my father was at the stadium watching the UCLA and USC game with my brother. And he heard this booming voice. He said, "I'll never forget that voice. That has to be *Kusu!*" He said, "I never heard anyone with the same voice." Here he was cheering. They stood up and looked at each other. And that was *Kusu!* This is the guy. His son was going to USC. He worked on the railroad all the

way to California, from St. Paul and then he got to California, worked on a farm and he met this grape farmer's daughter. (laughs) It's like the movies. He married her, became a rich grape farmer. Because she was an only daughter and he ran it. Years and years later, my sister met him. He's well known in the community, very successful. But imagine, a story like that, huh! So anyway, that's how my father saw him after all those years. We lost touch and then he saw him again. So people scattered around and they all did different things, you know. I went off the track a little bit (laughs).

FS: (laughs) That's all right. Um, now, in St. Paul, how long were you?

GH: We were there from August, about nine months.

FS: Oh.

GH: About nine months when I think we got word to go back to Hawaii. And so, they flew us back, and then we were in a hostel in L.A. They put up hostels for people like us. The government has to pay for us so they don't want to put us in a hotel, I guess. So they put us up, it's like church, church-run. And then we came back on a, marine troop ship, not like Lurline this time (laughs).

FS: When....

GH: And there weren't too many of us. This was ....1946, spring time, because I know I had to finish another quarter of school. It was into second semester already. It was spring. So I only had a few months to go, intermediate school, and here I was in high school in St. Paul. And I had to go back to intermediate. But here, 9th grade was intermediate, in those days.

FS: So in other words, you spent nine months of school in....

GH: ....in high school in St. Paul.

FS: In St. Paul. And then came....

GH: Uh, huh. So....

FS: So, you traveled, you flew, you said....

GH: They flew us....

FS: ....St. Paul to California and then....

GH: They flew us...., I'm trying to think, you know, they flew us back, to California (laughs)....

FS: ....and then....

GH: And then we came home on a troop ship.

FS: Uh huh, uh huh.

GH: Marine Wolf, I remember the name.

FS: Oh....

GH: And so, and there weren't so many of us because the year before, Bert (my brother-in-law) and his family went back in December, I think, and we went in spring. So the bulk of them went back on that ship in December.

FS: So you were the last one practically....

GH: Because we were, somewhere else in the Midwest. We weren't with them. Some of them went maybe directly from camp. I don't know.

FS: Okay. Any, any reaction to the news that you were finally permitted to come home?

GH: Um....

FS: You must have gotten the news in St. Paul.

GH: Uh, hm. I guess, I can't remember too much. But I think we were just waiting. Just biding time, you know. That's why everything was so temporary.

FS: Oh....

GH: We didn't form any attachments and make friends and all that, you know. We had some, we made some friends but we didn't get too involved with the community.

FS: So your father quickly had to sell his restaurant?

GH: He just sold it. He sold it to another (laughs) Japanese family.

FS: Oh, I see.

GH: Yeah, he sold it and, I don't know how well they did but he bought it from a Japanese family, too. But this, family friend in Minneapolis, such nice, old, old friends, they were so nice and every Saturday or, no, not that, on our day off, one day a week we would all get in a taxi and go there for dinner. And every Saturday, I used to take the streetcar and go to Minneapolis. It was a whole day's trip for me, because I would go to Minneapolis, go to the restaurant, or go to their house, their apartment, and she would give me lunch, and then visit with her. And then I would go to the restaurant and he would give me all the produce. You see my father didn't know his way around and we didn't have a car in those days. So this friend, the Yoshikawa's, would buy him all his produce and I would go and get it every Saturday. My mother trusted me. They trusted me and I was only in the 9th grade. I don't know why they asked me to do it. And I used to go, it would take me about 1 hour to get

there cause I had to transfer, and all that. You see, I was always like that, I was able to go places by myself. I used to do all kinds of things myself (laughs). That's why they thought I could do it. So I would stay there all day and come home in the evening. So every week I used to go to Minneapolis and get the produce. And that was a pretty good system he had (laughs). They said it would help him and you know they were old, old friends and he was another baseball player, you know. And so he ended up in Fresno and they got together years later. So amazing, yeah, how old friends show up.

FS: Okay, so now in 1946, you finally came home.

GH: Uh, hm.

FS: Did you have any, any problems?

GH: Well, we went back to our house which was naturally more run down, three years later. And, my father had to buy a new car again. And my mother had to stock up all those things. But, we were still fortunate. Lot of people had no homes to go to and we didn't know about all that. We didn't know these things till much later. People had no home, they had to go to the church and the church would put them up. But we had a home to come to and we had a business. But the business went downhill because of the government. During the war, the government froze a lot of the funds of the bakery because my grandfather who was in Japan, an alien, had a good amount of shares. He started the bakery. And so they froze the bulk of the funds and then my father also before he left donated trucks to the Red Cross. They tried to do their part, they thought at least the government would be fair. My one uncle became a block warden. They used to have that during the war. He volunteered. All those things didn't help because the government, they were just so unfair. So they froze, and by freezing the funds, the bakery was very limited in what they could do. And in those days, they used to do the whole island, you know. They had trucks delivering throughout the island but the business went downhill because they were so limited in funds. That's another reason why my father couldn't get that much because they were restricting money that was coming out. And so anyway, at some point, either right after the war ended, my uncle wrote to my father that government was going to auction off the bakery. I don't know the whole story behind it. They were going to auction it off and so they were going to lose the bakery unless they bought it back. They had to buy it back, you know! Imagine! And they had to pay like \$65,000 to buy it or the government would have auctioned it off. And \$65,000 in the '40s, you know, that was a lot of money. But they managed to do it. After that when we went back to Hawaii, my father saw how the business went down. No matter how much he tried, it was hard to get...things changed, huh. He couldn't get back all the accounts, he had all the restaurants in town, and, he had almost all the public schools. He had all this kind of business that he couldn't get back that easily. So that's why he decided to go back to the mainland. He was so disenchanted with Hawaii. He said that the people who made money during the war, they always call them wartime millionaires. And he was the opposite. He lost more during the war and so he decided to sell out his share, sell all his property, to his brothers and went back to the mainland because my brother and my brother-in-law by that time got married. They both were married and they were going to go to Chicago to go to school. So my dad

said, "I might as well go, too." So he said, "Let's all go." So that's how we ended up in Chicago, after all that. Stayed in Hawaii about five years. He was very, very disappointed because the bakery was just not doing well. So that's how we moved to Chicago and he lived there for a long, long time. For about, I don't know how many years.

FS: So you all left as a family again after five years here?

GH: Uh, hm.

FS: And you went to Chicago.

GH: Uh, hm. But my oldest sister was married. My brother was married. So we all went together.

FS: Oh..., what happened to your schooling?

GH: Oh, I was out of school by that time, I was out of high school. I was out of high school and I didn't feel like going to school. So then I met my husband that time, my first husband. And then we were talking about getting married. So I said, "I'll go to the mainland." My mother told me you just go ahead and when you want to come back, you can come back later. But just go with us. So I went. I came back a year and a half later.

FS: Oh, I see.

GH: To get married.

FS: I see. So going back to your schooling, actually how many years of schooling did you have with all the interruptions?

GH: Oh, I finished high school here. Cause by the time I came back here....

FS: ....in Hawaii?

GH: Yeah. I came back here I was finishing last quarter intermediate and then I continued high school and finished high school. So I was the last one, let's see, we were all out of school. We went to Chicago in 1951.

FS: Oh.

GH: '46 we came home. '51 we left.

FS: Uh, huh, uh, huh. So you went to high school here.

GH: Uh, huh, uh, huh.

FS: How was your adjustment?

GH: Oh, that was okay. Uh, we got to see some old friends. Old classmates from grade school, but that's why we, all of us I think, we don't have close, close friends. Because it broke up our childhood years, friends we grew up with. And then we lost touch. And by the time we came back, intermediate school or high school, my sisters were high school already so. Then during high school, I made some friends but not really, really close friends. Plus we had sisters. We all did things together because we were three of us, my oldest sister was out of school already, three of us were always going to school yet. And so, we were more doing things with sisters. Funny when you have sisters, you don't need as many friends. I felt, I learned that when I got married and then they were on the mainland and I was here. And I said, I have to learn to make friends, close friends. See, when you have sisters that you can talk to all the time, you just don't go out of your way to make close friends. So I learned after I got married to make friends cause they weren't here (laughs).

FS: Oh...., I see. Now after, after one and a half years on, in Chicago, you came back here and got married. I see, okay. And since then, you, you....

GH: Trying to think of the years.

FS: Oh.

GH: I think they were in Chicago about 20 years.

FS: Oh...., I see.

GH: And then moved to L.A. because the rest of them all eventually moved to L.A. So my dad, he invested there in apartments and it was a lot of problems so he eventually moved to L.A., too. So that's where they ended up, in Gardena (laughs).

FS: Oh, how interesting. Now, your father's participation in the push for redress, what was his part.

GH: I have some of these things that you can look at later. He, testified, since a lot of the *issei* couldn't speak English. So when they had the hearing, they had the big hearing in L.A., Bert, my brother-in-law, was so active, he and my sister, Lillian were very, very active in the redress movement. And so they asked my father to testify because he's one of the remaining old *nisei* who can speak English. So that's why he spoke and, my other sister also testified. My brother for some reason didn't get involved in the redress.

FS: I see.

GH: Maybe because he left camp early or I don't know what it was but he never got involved in that movement.

FS: I see.

GH: So my father always supported them, you know, for that redress movement. So they spent a lot of time at meetings and all that.

FS: Did you have the or did he have the support of the community?

GH: In Gardena? Oh, yes! The redress, there were different groups in different parts of California. I saw some video when I was there that my sister had. So, there were a lot of rallies and things like that, you know, fundraisers, and they used to do the *mochi* thing New Year's. They used to do a lot of fundraisers.

FS: When you finally got your, uh, compensation, do you feel that, um, it was worth all the, all the difficulties that you went through?

GH: No, I don't think they can compensate enough.

FS: Uh, huh.

GH: Actually for us, it's not us so much. It's my father's financial loss that will never be compensated because he lost so much. And which he doesn't look back anymore. I mean he didn't. Finally he said you learn to accept things and life's experience and all that. And for us it's just a token. It's a token of apology and all that. But to me the \$20,000 doesn't mean much. They could never undo what they did. The experience that we went through, even young as I was there're certain things I can remember so well. And that, because I was old enough to remember, I can pass it on to my children. Cause they're always interested. My mother never said very much. She kept so much to herself. She was always very supportive of him. Never complained. She had to do all the moving. You know to uproot yourself after all the years living here and from there on we've been moving, moving, moving. She just took it in her stride. She never complained to us. Very stoic, you know. So, I felt sorry for her though. Later on, we didn't realize till you grow up, you don't realize what they went through. And for him, he was used to the a good life. Then to go to Sand Island and clean the toilets and (laughs) all that. He did what everybody did. But he said, everybody's equal. But he had to learn a lot. And so, it's a good thing that he was that kind of person who was more adaptable. It was hard, you know, yeah, to change like that.

FS: Are there any, um, thoughts that you have regarding the whole experience that you didn't mention before? Anything that you'd like to comment on?

GH: No, I think, the only thing I would say is I wish I was more curious (laughs). I wish I was more curious and asked more questions and be more aware, you know. A lot of it is, I was very immature when I look back. I was the youngest in the family and busy playing around and all that, all these things came to me later. I didn't know a lot of it and as I read through his things I learned a lot more. And I wished I found out earlier then I might have felt for them more. Empathize what they went through. But that's okay, it's an experience. And I don't hold anything against the government. I feel that, you know, that's life. And my father felt very, very bitter in the early years. Remember the movie, the Manzanar. He was

like that man. Reminded me when I first saw that movie. I said he reminded me of that man. He was bitter and he was really down on the government, you know, for a while. But after, as he got older and he mellowed and he would say, "Well, that's life." And when he really boiled it down, he said, "I had an interesting life." Not out of choice, but he was able to go through all these different experiences. So if you look at it that way, you know, it a kind of acceptance of what life has in store for you. And I think for us, too, you know, that we had the opportunity to live an interesting life.

FS: Is there anything you'd like to say to the younger people of today and tomorrow? Any kind of advice?

GH: Can't think of anything.

FS: Well, thank you very much for your interesting story.

GH: Well, it was a pleasure. I hope it will be useful.

FS: Thank you again.