Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Voices of internment

with

Jerald Takesono (JT)

March 29, 2018

Interviewer: Mel Inamasu (MI)
With Betsy Young (BY)

Note: Comments in brackets **[ ]** are by the transcriber. Inaudible words or sections are identified by **((?))** in the transcript. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability.

MI: Today is March 29,2018 and we're in the conference room of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii to interview Dr. Jerald Takesono about his family's Japanese American internment history. My name is Mel Inamasu. I'm a volunteer in the Resource Center and assisting me with the interview today will be

BY: Betsy Young, I'm also a volunteer in the Resource Center.

MI: I'm going to begin by asking Dr. Takesono to introduce himself. First of all, his full name, month and year of birth and where he was born.

JT: My name is Jerald Satoru Takesono. It's significant in the sense that Jerald is a given name and not a legal name because we were going back to Japan, after the war, so they only gave me Satoru. Whereas, my older sister and my two younger brothers, they've got Japanese and English names. So, I'm the exception. Anyway, I was born in December 20, 1944, in Tule Lake Detention Center, Newell, California.

MI: Let me ask you a question about your name. This is not a legal name?

JT: No.

MI: But you use it professionally?

JT: Yes.

MI: Does that have any problems?

JT: Yes. (chuckle) Like getting a driver's license…

MI: Why do you do that?

JT: I was always told and I said that I was going to make it legal. But then, after a while when I got more in to the internment and what it all meant, I said, "Well, that reflects my history or our family history, that we intended to go back to Japan." So I said, "I could add Jerald legally but maybe I should keep it." But every time I go back for a drivers

license or that kind of stuff, it's a roadblock. Then, recently, they lost all the records, with the crash of the computers, so the next time I go back, which is next year, I'm going to have the same problem. I even brought my diploma, which has both of my names. It's a little bit of a humbug but I want to keep it that way.

MI: Let's start with your family. Can you tell us the names of your parents, your father and mother, and if you know, what year they were born and we'll go from there.

JT: My father, Seikaku Takesono, was born in Nara, Japan. His family and he, a long line of Buddhist ministers. He was the number two son, so he came to Hawaii in 1934. He was born by October 26, 1906. He came to Hawaii and he was serving at the Hilo Hongwanji.

MI: Why did he come to Hawaii?

JT: I don't know. We never discussed that. So often, as a kid, you're not interested.

MI: You said that he was serving at the Hilo Hongwanji. Was he called here by the ministry?

JT: I think it was probably both ways, I suspect. Being the second son, I think he probably realized that … the church is like a business. It's passed on from father to son, and his older brother was going to have the church.

MI: In Japan?

JT: In Japan. So, he was an adventuresome person. He loved to travel, so I think he was willing, also to leave Japan. He came in 1934.

MI: Now, give us your mother's full name.

JT: My mother's name is Oyobu Elaine Takesono. Elaine is an assumed name because the teachers couldn't pronounce the names. She was *Nisei* …

MI: What was her maiden name?

JT: Oyobu Elaine Nakahara Takesono. In some of the internment documents, it says Elaine. She was born in Olaa, Hawaii.

MI: So, he was *Issei*, she was *Nisei*.

JT: Right. And when she was about sixteen years old, she went to Japan to study. So, she finished high school and went to college there, at a school that's called … it's in Tokyo and it's now a women's college. Anyway, she graduated, came back to Hawaii and served at the Hilo Honganji's Japanese School, which is close to Olaa, because she was bilingual.

MI: What year was she born?

JT: August 29, 1914.

MI: Since we're on your mother, her parents' names.

JT: Her father was Fukuzo Nakahara and her mother was Kito Nakahara. They were from Kyushu. They came to Hawaii on their own. I don't know what year. They were not contract laborers. And, I'm in communication with my cousin in Japan and she did some research and she said that he came because his father was a head of the village and …

MI: What village was this?

JT: I don't know. Some place in Kyushu. A lot of the village young men were being recruited to come to Hawaii to work in the sugar industry. But, they wanted somebody to guide them or be with them so he came here with his wife, my grandmother, on his own. So, he soon became associated with the Puna Sugar Mill.

MI: They wanted someone to overlook the plantation workers?

JT: Yes, basically, the workers asked my great grandfather, his father, if his son would accompany them just to help them get organized. They were scared about coming to a strange place, faraway with no language skills. He didn't speak English, I don't think. I assume he learned.

MI: Did he work for the plantation, as an intermediary?

JT: Yes, he did. It came to that. What little I know of the plantation system, he was called a contractor and it was at a time when many of the workers, they had fulfilled their obligation to their contract and some of them left. But many of them, that's all they knew so they stayed and so, his job, he was an independent but his job was to contract the laborers. The haole bosses would come and they would negotiate with my grandfather. They'd say, "We need this field planted, this field cleaned up, this field, etc, etc." So, they would pay him a lump sum of money and then he would find the workers, to get the job done. And he also owned a store where they could buy. So he must have been doing business where they could buy all the equipment, the gloves and the hats. I have pictures of him. He had a nice horse. He had several horses to go from field to field.

BY: Like a luna.

JT: Yes, he was like a luna. And, from what I heard from my cousin, who knew our family history better, they even asked him to move up, the haole bosses asked him to move up with them. Like manager's row. And he refused because he said, "If I do that, nobody will work for me." (laughter)

MI: What plantation was this?

JT; Puna Sugar Mill.

MI: But, you said he didn't speak English? Is that correct?

JT: I think he learned. He must have, pidgin English. And my grandmother was a housewife.

MI: And her name was?

JT: Kito Takaba Nakahara.

MI: Let's come back to your parents. Tell us about them. Where did your mother grow up and about her pre-war life.

JT: She grew up in Olaa and she had a very carefree life, it seemed like. Going to school but also picking mangoes, exploring. She said, even going to find Hawaiian artifacts and burial artifacts. They would go in to these caves and she just talked about how great life was.

MI: What kind of artifacts did she talk about?

JT: They knew they weren't supposed to be going in there but they would find Hawaiian stuff.

BY: Poi pounders, probably.

JT: Yes. Probably that and probably necklaces.

MI: Any of those things that she kept?

JT: No. I think they were told, "You'd better put them back." (chuckle) She went to school, probably Olaa Elementary but that's where the teachers … this happened a lot to the *Nisei* … they couldn't pronounce the Japanese names they were given so they gave them an English name. One incident I remember, she had an older brother so she was number five in line of seven. So she had an older brother just above her who at eleven years of age, died. He went to school with a fever and the teacher told him to go outside and stay in the sun. Chills, stay out in the sun. He must have had some kind of an aneurysm or something. Anyway, that night, he passed away. That was the brother right above her. And there were two more. So, going back to her siblings, the oldest sister was born in Japan, came with the parents to Hawaii. The number two sister was born in Hawaii but on one of their quite frequent trips to Japan, she was left behind.

MI: With the grandparents?

JT: Yes. The story I heard was because they were lonesome. He was an only boy. So, she was left behind. My mother did see her several times. And then, the number three person was my uncle and he remained with the Puna sugar industry till he died around 1960. Then, the brother that died at a young age. And her and the next brother … so my mother went to Japan at sixteen … the next brother, he wanted to be a physician. He wanted to go to Michigan for school but my grandfather said, "No, you're not going to Michigan. You can go to UH [University of Hawaii]." So, he went to UH and after a year, he said, "I can't become a doctor here and I really want to be a doctor" so he worked for his grandfather. He said, "I don't like this kind of work also." Really hard work. So they compromised. So he was able to go to Japan. So he got his medical degree in Japan. He was a radiologist and he had a family there. So I have first cousins from that. So I have first cousins from that uncle and I have first cousins from my mother's number two sister who was left in Japan.

MI: What happened to that uncle in Japan during the war time?

JT: I had to ask. My mother said that "Oh, he was never put in to the army because they needed doctors and he was still in medical school and so they left him alone. That's why he wasn't in the army. And then the war ended." But when I saw my cousin, she said, "No, that's not true." She said that he graduated in 1944 and about a third of his classmates, all M.D.s, were killed because they were drafted.

MI: They served.

JT: They served in the Japanese Army because things weren't going well so they took anybody. Why he never served, my cousin said, was because he was an American. But we know there were lot of cases … he had dual citizenship. There were lots of cases where Japanese Americans had to join the Japanese Army. So, I don't know. That has to be answered, yet.

MI: You don't know the story.

JT: Yes. But, he survived the war. My mother talked about when the bombings were going on in Tokyo, because he was in Tokyo. He would send his family up in the mountains but he would always give his wife and my cousin, my boy cousin, my uncle's American passport. Just in case any American soldiers came, he could show them he's an American. (chuckle) So, that's one of the stories that were passed down.

MI: Did he ever move back to Hawaii?

JT: No, never did. So, he married a Japanese woman and so I have a boy cousin who also is a physician and then, a girl cousin, She's the one I communicate with because she writes English quite well. She doesn't speak it too well but she writes very well. So, questions I have, I ask her. I think my aunty is still alive, last I heard. She's well into her nineties. So, he came back once or twice. I remember he was on his way to a meeting on the mainland. Talked about walking across the Golden Gate bridge. He got off the bus and decided to walk. So, he did come back, but not often. I think two, maybe three times at the most.

MI: Okay, tell us about your father's upbringing in Hawaii.

JT: So, my father comes from probably ten centuries of Buddhist ministers. As far as we can trace it, we've been Buddhist ministers.

MI: Including one of your siblings?

JT: No. As a matter of fact, I did ask my father when I was in high school or so, "Should I be—"

MI: Are you the oldest son?

JT: I'm the oldest son. "Should I be thinking about going into the ministry?" He says, "No, you don't have to." In Japan, on the contrary, because it's handed down from father to son, I have cousins who are all ministers. Not only that, my father's cousins, they're all ministers. It's everybody you know. But in Japan, it's different because being a Buddhist minister, in a way, that's almost like a side business. They keep it going but many of them have other occupations. Like my cousin that I communicate with, he's a teacher. He was a teacher, he's retired now. And his older brother is an archeologist or something. So, they're not just ministers. And the teaching profession, unlike America, is a very well paid and very well-respected position. So, they retire quite well. But he's still, every Sunday …

MI: So, your father was called to Hawaii. What church was this?

JT: The Honpa Hongwanji, the Jodo Shinshu Sect.

MI: Who was the bishop at that time or did he become the Bishop?

JT: No, he never became a bishop. I remember Imamura. And then, his son, became also the bishop. There were other people from Japan but because he only spoke Japanese, we didn't get a chance to talk to them.

MI: That was his life, his career?

JT: Yes, that was his career.

MI: So you are born in what community?

JT: So, I was born in Tule Lake, in 1944, in December.

MI: That's right. Let's go back. What happens on December 7, 1941 to your parents. He is a minister at Honpa …

JT: Hilo Hongwanji. And, that was a very big church. There were several ministers there. I think, and that's what I've heard from the family, he was more of a teacher than a minister. He was on the administration and teaching at the Hilo Hongwanji Japanese School.

MI: How and when did he meet your mother?

JT: Well, I don't know exactly when they met but she was teaching there, too, at the Hilo Hongwanji Japanese school, because she was bi-lingual and educated in Japan. So, somehow, Japanese style, somebody has to arrange their meeting and all that. But I know that they were married in 1939. But actually, they were married in Japan. Something my father insisted upon. He had a reason but I can't remember. So they were married at the main church in Kyoto. The aside to that is that his brother was in Manchuria. They kept on saying China. He had his own church. I don't quite know why he had his own church because he had a church in Japan, the family church Anyway, he had a church in Manchuria and he liked to wear Chinese clothes. I have pictures of him in that long flowing gown and then he was drafted into the Japanese Army. He was very tall, over six feet, my mother said and he was a college graduate so I think those were enough credentials to make him an officer. I have a picture of him standing with six other people. In the front row, three guys including my uncle. Each had a sword. I knew he was a minister, he wasn't a combatant. But he was killed, they say, in China.

MI: During the wartime?

JT: Yes. The story is that he was supervising unloading of a vessel and an American airplane came and strafed him. All that returned was a few of his belongings and a lock of his hair. So, that was his older brother. His younger brother, who also remained in Japan, the family story goes that he was told to patrol the beaches of Japan with a bomb on his back.

BY: Oh, my!

JT: You talk about the original terrorist, you know how they would kill themselves. He said if there was an American landing craft came up on the beach, he was supposed to run up to it and detonate the bomb. He never saw it. I always said, if it was me, I would be hiding in the bushes. (laughter) "I didn't see anything."

BY: That's like those pilots, the kamikaze.

JT: Yes, but less glorious. You know, they were all prepared to die. They had mobilized.

MI: At that point, was your father ever called back to Japan, because then the church would have needed him.

JT: There was no communication with Japan during the war times. But I think he must have thought about it. I'm sure he must have thought his brothers were killed. How can they survive, especially with America winning? So, he wanted to go back, which is the whole thing about us being at Tule Lake, and the signing "No, No" and all that kind of stuff. So, he assumed, because he had a mother who was still alive, his father passed away, and his two sisters. So he figured that he'd have to go back to take over the church. So, we were

preparing ourselves to go back to Japan. That's why I only was given a Japanese name, which is, by the way, half of his name.

MI: So, by December 7, 1941, how many children were there in the family?

JT: Only one. My sister.

MI: Did they ever tell you what happened on December 7?

JT: Actually, no. But you know, my mother would talk more than my father. But a lot of times, us kids we weren't listening. You know, ancient history, doesn't concern us.

MI: What did you learned from her stories?

JT: Some of this stuff is quite interesting because it's a collection of stuff. My mother said that they were transferred to Wailuku Hongwanji, right around the time of Pearl Harbor.

MI: Before the bombing?

JT: Yes, so when the FBI came to arrest him at Hilo, he wasn't there. And because they had taken everybody else away and everybody was terrified, nobody was volunteering information. So, he didn't get arrested, and I found out through some of the papers that he didn't get arrested till May 1942. So, May of 1942, they came and picked him up. It was interesting because I always assumed that he went to Sand Island.

MI: Did they ever mention him going to the Haiku internment camp before going to Sand Island?

JT: No, he never … I would assume it was the Wailuku Police Station, then to Sand Island. So, how soon they sent him from Wailuku to Sand Island, I don't know.

MI: Then, what happened at Sand Island?

JT: So, he was there for … Soga's book, he lists my father there as going from Sand Island to Angel Island on ship number seven. Gave me a little insight. But one of the few stories my father talked about was that when he was at Angel Island, and he was thirty-eight years old, so he was younger.

MI: For that group, thirty eight was younger.

JT: Yes, yes.

BY: Yes, *Isseis.* They scooped all those guys.

JT: So he was on his bunk and he was looking around and he saw writings on the ceilings. So, he climbed up, he was young enough, and he could read the *kanji*. There was this Chinese man had written his life history, short, but he said where he was from, what his name was, what village he was from and what he hoped to accomplish in America. So I was all excited when he told this story.

MI: This was an immigrant, not an internee.

JT: Yes. So, we went to Angel Island when my nephew graduated from college in California. We went to Angel Island and I was going to find the writing that he saw. Not that I could read it. (laughter) That place is covered, absolutely covered. You gotta go to that. Everybody wrote. Lots of Chinese people.

MI: They preserved all of those?

JT: Oh, they were going to tear it down.

MI: Nobody took pictures of everything?

JT: It's all documented. But some of it is painted over. So you gotta kind of look at it from different angles and there's prose, there's poetry, there's life histories. And then, the [park] ranger who was taking us around said that a lot of this stuff had double entendres. When you read the *kanji*, it can be read one way, it can be read another way. And, this Chinese guy says, "Yes, this one says so and so." And another Chinese guy says, "Oh, no, no, no." So the ranger says, "That's exactly what I mean." And, my brother-in-law, he can read *kanji* too and he's haole but he said, "Yes, they're both right and they're both wrong." But anyway, I told the ranger, "My father said he was here and he saw these writings." He said, "Oh", so he took us to the back, the very end of the building and written in pencil, he said, the internees wrote too. But you could tell it was Japanese because they had the hiragana and stuff like that. So they had their contribution.

MI: Did your father ever mention that he wrote something?

JT: No, he didn't say he wrote. But it's literally carved into the wood.

MI: Carved with …

JT: I don't know what they used. Looked like a spoon or something

MI: So these are carvings into the walls at Angel Island.

JT: Yes. And there's also Russian. There's some Cyrillic writing, some Arabic writing. It's very, very unique. They were going to tear all of that down. Somebody in San Francisco's historical community, they stopped it.

MI: So, today, the whole area is …

JT: Preserved. It's no longer used. But I learned because we went to Ellis Island a couple of years ago and I learned that at Ellis Island, they would welcome people. They needed laborers. They called Angel Island the Ellis Island of the west. But actually, it was to keep people out. Keep the Chinese out in particular. The Oriental Exclusion Act. So people would come in with documents, some with forged documents. And they would grill them. But they're always one step ahead because the cooks were Chinese from San Francisco. They would bring the food, cook the food and they would feed them the answers to the questions. (laughter) So, there were a lot of paper sons. They were sons in writing only [on paper only]. False documents. And I heard on public radio that this guy wrote a book and he said some of the questions were very tough. He said—and he ask his sons who were about ten years old—he said he asked them the same questions. Some of the questions were: when you enter you family compound, what does the gate look like? Which house in the compound was your house? And how many windows did it have? That kind of stuff. His sons couldn't answer how many windows they had in their house. It's not something you would pay attention to. So that was enough to send you back to China. So, all these immigrants that did get through, some of them were legal. They were really children of people but many weren't. When the earthquake struck in 1906, all the documents were destroyed so everybody became legal (chuckle). So it was an interesting sidelight. But the Japanese community in the Bay Area, they hold an annual pilgrimage in

July and one year, I happened to be there at that time. One of my daughters lives in the Bay Area and they have us in contact with somebody. He invited me to come so we went.

MI: But Angel Island was not a detention center for the west coast people. It was for the Hawaii people who went to Angel Island.

BY: Yes.

JT: They just were passing through.

MI: The San Francisco Japanese Americans did not go to Angel Island, is that correct? They went to Tanforan.

JT: It had nothing to do with internment, yes. They went to Assembly Centers like at Santa Anita.

MI: And yet in San Francisco they have …

JT: They honor that, too. It was just a transit station that the guys who were sent to New Mexico went through.

MI: From Angel Island, where did your father go?

JT: To Lordsburg [New Mexico].

MI: Directly to Lordsburg?

JT: Yes, I think so. And actually as far as New Mexico goes, I always thought Santa Fe. They talked about Santa Fe, Santa Fe, Santa Fe and when we went to the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles and they pulled the documents out, so they had my mother's, my sister's and mine, I said, "Where's my father's?" They said, "Where was he?" I said, "He was in New Mexico." So, they went to another … ours was all on the computer [while] theirs was on microfilm. They pulled his out and said "He was in Lordsburg." I said, "Lordsburg? I never heard about Lordsburg." Then later on, it said Santa Fe. So, when I came back, I told my mother, very accusingly, "I didn't know dad was at Lordsburg. I never even heard of that." She said, "Yes, he was in Lordsburg and Santa Fe." To them, it was the same place. You know, New Mexico. That's all they cared about. Because it was out at some godforsaken place out in the desert somewhere and it didn't really matter to them.

MI: Did you ever talk to your father about Angel Island, Lordsburg, Santa Fe?

JT: No. The only story he told me was about the Chinese writing and that was very, very late. He died in 1985. That was maybe in the seventies or eighties.

MI: What brought out that conversation?

JT: I don't know.

MI: Was it you or was it him?

JT: It was him but I can't remember what led up to that, why he talked about that. He didn't say too much. The other thing he used to talk about was the food. He talked about Honouliuli, the bologna. He hated it. He hated it. Hot dogs and bologna. He called it dog food. That's all they got. (laughter)

MI: What did the records say? How long was he at Angel Island, Lordsburg and Santa Fe?

JT: Okay, I know when he left so in 1942, he was in Sand Island. Somehow, I don't know when, he got to New Mexico. I assume a couple of weeks later because they went by train, probably. Another interesting thing we learned at the Japanese American National Museum was that he was released from Lordsburg on March 15, 1944.

BY: To go to Jerome?

JT: Yes, to go to Jerome. Apparently they closed the camp or were downsizing. Anyway, he was allowed to join … and it's in Soga's book, too … that my father was with a small group left [at Lordsburg]. What's interesting to me is that I was born on December 20, 1944. So we're all standing around receiving this news and we all started chuckling. Me, especially. I'm looking at the circumstances of my conception. Because it was nine months to the day, given a few days of transit, when I'm conceived.

MI: In Jerome.

JT: My mother and my sister are in Jerome.

MI: Let's stop there and go back to your mother. In 1942, she's on Maui. Her husband gets picked up and taken away. What happens to her? Did she ever talk about it to you?

JT: She never talked about it but to me … now, my brother, who is a police officer and my sister, they knew about it. And she had already passed away so I couldn't ask her.

MI: What did they tell you?

JT: And I got this from a third person. I assumed that when my father was taken away, that my mother and my sister went back to Olaa, where her brother and sisters were living.

MI: They had been living on the church grounds on Maui?

JT: Yes. So, I assumed they went back there because nobody told me anything. Well, to make a long story short, my high school classmate found out from a calabash [distant] relative, her sister's mother-in-law, said, when she read this article about our trip, she said, "Oh, I knew a Reverend Takesono in Wailuku." And this family was from Wailuku. My classmate said, "Oh, no. He was from Kauai. Maybe that's a different one." Later on, when I saw Lena, that's her name, she asked me the question. I said, "Oh yes, right before the war, my parents were in Wailuku." Then she told me the story that her mother-in-law told her, that there was this policeman, Japanese American guy, who used to come around to the homes where the men were taken away, knock on the door all hours of the day. My sister said, he used to even crawl under the house, this is the story she heard from my mother, and pound on the floor.

MI: Did she know the name of this person?

JT: Never said. I'm sure she knew.

MI: What was her name?

JT: My classmate, Lena Sumida Kawano. So this woman's name was Tamiya. I forgot her first name. Mrs. Tamiya was the one who took my mother and my sister into their home, for protection. My mother must have been terrified.

MI: And had no family there.

JT: Yes. They didn't know anybody there. And then, the other church members, Wailuku Hongwanji Church members, saw that she had taken her in and said, "Let's help out." So they got passed around until they finally left for Jerome.

MI: Do you know any part of the story about how and why Jerome. Somehow, they were communicating with your father in Lordsburg?

JT: I think that they were told that they could go and be with their husbands, But, as it turned out, they couldn't. First of all, my father was under the Department of Justice, the New Mexico camps.

MI: When did they leave Maui? Do you know that?

JT: That, I'm not sure. I haven't found any dates on that but I would assume in 1942, 1943.

MI: So maybe, shortly after your father was taken away.

JT: Also, in the old days, one breadwinner. The wives were housewives. So they had no support, monetary support. So, it sounded attractive. They didn't have to go but financially, they had to go. So many of the Buddhist ministers' wives, somehow got together, discussed it, and so they found themselves in Jerome, Arkansas. They got there when it was cold, too. (chuckle) They got there in their slippers and thin clothes.

MI: Any stories from your mother about Jerome? First of all, they're there without your father, right?

JT: Yes. One story was that the Otokichi Ozaki family remained good friends.

BY: Because, they were from Hawaii.

JT: Yes. They were neighbors in the same barracks. They had four older kids and my sister was the only one [in our family]. She was born in September 1941, so she was two years old. We were good friends with them. One of the interesting stories … remember how the 442nd veterans talked about how they went to the Jerome camp. My sister says that she remembers these soldiers coming to Jerome. But the thing she remembers most was that these soldiers, she wasn't afraid of. They were the 442nd guys. They looked like her and they were friendly whereas the haole guards, with their bayonets and their guns and the machine guns, they were told, "Don't go here, don't go there." So, they afraid of those soldiers. But these soldier, she said, she remembers.

MI: How old was she at the time?

JT: Three at the most. Just a little blip in her memory. She remembers that part. That story, there's another half to it, how the people in the camp received them.

MI: Did your mother ever mention that, the soldier coming? Did she ever talk about that?

JT: I don't remember that. As I said, so often, you're not paying attention. (chuckle) Unfortunately. You might have heard it, but …

MI: While she's there, is someone working on trying to get the family together again? Does she know anything about that or was she just living day to day and waiting?

JT: I think it was more day to day, surviving.

MI: At least she had food and shelter.

JT: Yes. But they talked about the food. They talked about walking through the mud to go to the mess hall. It was interesting how they set it up. It was a military design so there was a mess hall and a bath house, where they washed the clothes and used the bathroom. And there were about twelve or so barracks surrounding. It was broken up like that so each was their own community. So, when they ate, they would have to go to the mess hall to eat. And, she said that sometimes, they were walking to dinner and people are coming back, those who went earlier, and she'd say, "What's for dinner?" And they'd go "Meee, Meee", meaning the bleating of the goat. So they were being fed goat.

BY: Oh, no!

JT: And it would smell. So my mother said, "We'd just turn around and walk back home." My mother said, they'd rather not eat goat. (chuckle) One of the things about Tule Lake, there weren't too many stories they talked about, except friends. So, I'm in dental school, Northwestern, in 1966 to 1970, and there was a Kotonk guy in our class. He was from Denver. And, this is a little harsh, but Stan and I never got along. We never talked. Years later, my daughter is in pediatric dentistry training in Colorado and I meet Stan. He comes up and starts talking to me. So I said, "Oh, who are you?" "Stan." "Oh, yes, yes, yes." So I had to ask him, "Are your parents from Denver?" He said, "Oh no, no, no. They're from Sacramento." I said, "So, they were interned someplace?" He said, "Yes." "Where were you interned?" He said, "Tule Lake." I said, "Oh, that's interesting." He's the same age so I asked him, "When were you born?" He was born five days before me. We were probably in the same infirmary, I guess. (laughter)

MI: So you became friends.

JT: We became better friends, yes. But one of the common denominators when you meet a Japanese American person is "Where were you in camp?".

BY Yes.

JT: Kotonks, especially. When I was in Chicago, there were quite a few Japanese American families. I used to go to the Midwest Buddhist Church and they were so welcoming. They were such nice people but they were all originally from California. There was a time during internment when they were letting the younger people who wanted to leave out as long as they went inward [east]. So a lot of them wound up in Chicago.

MI: At that point in your life, did you know the internment story?

JT: Kind of. Barely.

MI: How did you learn the internment story?

JT: Much, much later. It was always there. My parents had a lot of mementos they brought back.

MI: Like what?

JT: My father was fascinated with petrified wood. So he brought back pieces of rock, yea big.

MI: From where?

JT: I don't know. Maybe it was New Mexico. He was in New Mexico longer than he was in Tule Lake. And then, he had a clam shell, petrified clam shell. It had become rock. And

he used to use for his sumi-e, rub the black ink, make the black ink light. And he had pencil holders, thing like that.

MI: Do you still have those things?

JT: No, very sadly. I wish … I don't know what happened. When we were transferred from Kapaa back to Oahu, I think they must have gotten rid of them. The one I want the most is this trophy he had. It was made out of wood. Little slats of wood that, I asked my mother, "What is this?" because it was written in Japanese. He wasn't good enough to get one of these brass trophies. (chuckle) It was only wood. So she would laugh and she'd say, well, the men, using scrap wood made him this trophy and gave it to him in honor of things that they did, I guess.

MI: You know what it was for?

JT: I don't know, because it was written in Japanese. We used to tease him.

MI: You don't have that anymore?

JT: No, just about nothing. My mother, she was an artist. She was very artistic. So, she had all kinds of stuff, including, they used to take the mayonnaise jars, use the cover as the base and they would design pipe cleaners, fold it and bend them into dolls and they would put shells on it. And the glass part was the case.

MI: None of those left?

JT: None. So, when my sister and my wife and I went to Tule Lake in 2008, I told my sister, "Let's go look around for those shells." Well, the place is covered with shells. You just dig up and you've got a hundred in your hands.

BY: It's a lake. It was a dried-up lakebed.

JT: Yes. So, we kinda lost interest. It wasn't a rare item.

MI: Now, the family is separated. Do they get together at Jerome?

JT: Yes, so my father joins us.

MI: When was that?

JT: Somewhere in May 20, 1944, give or take a few days.

MI: Did you ever get to ask them about what that was like, to have the family reunited?

JT: No. My sister talked about it. She said that she saw this man, all of a sudden, and he was at the door of the barracks. She was outside playing.

BH: That was her father.

JT: Yes. He was calling to her, "Come inside." And she said, "Who's this man?" (chuckle) She never saw him before. She saw him when she was first born but she didn't know him. That's one of the few stories we know about Jerome.

MI: How long were they at Jerome before being moved to Tule Lake?

JT: Because of the Freedom of Information Act, at the Tule Lake reunion, they encouraged us to get your documents. So, I did. And, it said that in May 1944, we went to Tule Lake. Well, not me. I wasn't there yet. I was in utero. So, they made it to Tule Lake and again,

the Ozaki's were next door neighbors. And being older, they kinda baby sat. They helped to baby sit. There were a few more stories in Tule Lake. In January 1945, I was born a month earlier, my father was taken away. He was sent to Santa Fe. I always wondered, why would the government do that, separate them? This was like slavery all over again, where the separated families, sold a son here.

MI: Say that again?

BY: From Tule Lake, he was sent to Santa Fe?

JT: Yes, they arrived in May and in late January, he's sent to Santa Fe. I wanted to know why? Nobody to ask, anymore. My mother's gone, my father's gone. But my cousin's daughter, when she in high school at Mid Pacific, she interviewed my parents. She did a project on internment so she had interviewed my parents. For some reason, I found it and I was listening to it. The answer was in there. My father said that the radical group, there were a lot of radical young people there, because these were the people that didn't sign the loyalty oath. They were going back to Japan. They used to march around the middle of the morning, singing the Japanese national anthem. They cut their hair short and all that. One name that I heard was the Hoshidan. They asked my father to give them a speech and he said, "No", because he didn't believe in what they were doing. However, as a Buddhist minister, he would give them a sermon. So he did. And my mother said, the next morning, he was arrested. And the only real structure left in Tule Lake—there are remnants of other things—is the prison. This prison, where the incorrigible, they were beaten in there. So, they let us in to that [prison] where people wrote on the walls. And so, from there, he was sent to Santa Fe. So, that's where Santa Fe comes in. That was the last place he was in.

MI: So, he didn't go from Lordsburg to Santa Fe. A lot of them did that. He went from Lordsburg to Jerome to Tule Lake to Santa Fe.

JT: They say a lot of the younger men with young children, they were given the chance to go to the Department of Interior internment camps. The older guys tended not to. They tended to stay in the Department of Justice camps. So some of them may have gone directly from Lordsburg to Santa Fe.

MI: So, somewhere along the line a decision was made to go back to Japan? Is that correct?

JT: Yes.

MI: Was that at Jerome or before?

JT: When the loyalty oath came out, they were in Jerome. As I said, I think my father wanted to go back to Japan. And originally, my mother said yes. So when I was born in Tule Lake, I was given a Japanese name. Later on, my mother said through telegrams, and not until 1945. The war's just about over and she told my father that she didn't want to go back to Japan.

MI: While they were at Tule Lake?

JT: They're separated, now. He's at Santa Fe. And I have a telegram, the original telegram that my father sent. My mother said she's not going back to Japan so if you want to go, you have to go by yourself. Which is strong.

MI: What did your father say on his telegram? He asked her if she wants to go back?

JT: Yes. He said to her, "Stop repatriation to Japan."

MI: He told her to stop.

JT: Yes. "Make plans to return to Hawaii."

MI: This was in response to her?

JT: Yes. We don't have that telegram that she sent. But she told us that. Because I would ask, "How come I have a Japanese name?"

MI: Did she ever talk about her life at Tule Lake after he was taken away?

JT: Yes. She said that after my father was taken away, the Hoshidan, men and women, they would come and help her because she said they felt badly that he was arrested because they asked him to give a speech. So he was in Tule Lake from May to January of the following year.

MI: He actually never participated in their activities, then. He just gave a speech at their request.

JT: No. I think, like many of us, he didn't like this radicalism. They definitely were yelling and screaming, quite a bit.

MI: You're in two separate places now. When does the family get back to Hawaii? Do they come back at the same time?

JT: No. I think my mother and the two of us, my sister and I, came back in 1946. And, my father followed a few months later. I think the document said that it was March of 1945 when my mother was supposed to go from Tule Lake. There was a trailer camp, they called it the Lomita Trailer Camp. That's in the L.A. area. So they were housed in this and then they went down to Long Beach to board a ship. When it came to board, our name was not on the manifest. So, my mother was really scared because we're all [given] twenty-five dollars apiece and, although she was free, she didn't have enough money to go back to Hawaii. So, she had to say behind while the people on the ship going back to Hawaii who were interned with her were going back. They were feeling really sad for her because they couldn't do anything and they had to leave her behind with two kids. So my mother said, she didn't know what to do. But then some haole woman came up to her, she said "I'm a social worker, and I'm going to take care of you." So they wound up going to San Francisco where we were put in to a motel. That's how she described it. And, every morning, this woman would come and take us around sightseeing. So we played tourist for about a week. (chuckle)

MI: This woman went up from Long Beach with the family and stayed with you and tried to help you get on a ship back to come back to Hawaii?

JT: Yes. So finally, she said, "Okay, time to go home, now." So we went to the docks and we came back on the Mariposa, first class. (laughter) It was about a week. Every day this woman would come, take them around, feed them lunch and so it was like a holiday. Then she comes back to Hawaii and the people that left her at Long Beach, they came to meet her. They saw her coming back in this luxury liner. And, they said, "We had to

scrub floors and cook our own meals." She said, even the soldiers, they would carry us around, my sister and I. And these are haole soldiers.

MI: Not returning *Nisei* soldiers?

JT: No, not local boys. And then she said another strange thing happened. Somebody came up to our house … I'm not even sure where we were living … and said, "Okay, we're going to go shopping." So they went to the store and they bought a stove, some furniture, like a kitchen table which we had for year, beds, a refrigerator and so, "Okay." My mother said yes and she picked it up. So, when she next saw her friend, she said, "What did you guys buy?" They said, "What do you mean? We didn't buy anything. Where did you get that?" To this day, I haven't found out why she was singled out for this.

MI: Where did she live?

JT: My memory is that we lived on Houghtailing [street], in Kalihi. There was a church there. That area was called McInerney.

MI: This was a Buddhist church?

JT: Yes. They had three houses. The church had three houses where they housed the ministers. So we had one house and another larger family had a bigger house. Another family was more on the roadside. And then, the church. It was just a small, neighborhood church. Without a minister. They would have a minister come on Sundays.

BY: Cause your father had not joined up [with the family].

JT: He hadn't come back yet.

MI: All of this, you were not really aware of, you were too young.

JT: Unfortunately, I was unaware for many, many decades. (chuckle)

MI: When did you become aware. At what point do you remember growing up. Was it at that house or was it somewhere else?

JT: No, much later. I was already a practicing dentist.

MI: What I meant was, as a child, growing up. You were still at the house on Houghtailing, after your father had come back? That's where your memory begins.

JT: Yes. So, he's now serving at the Hongwanji on Pali Highway.

BY: Isn't that amazing. Lucked out, yes.

JT: Yes, I know.

MI: Along the way, any conversations about your parents experience or attitude towards the internment?

JT: I was telling the bus group, as we were leaving Honouliuli [tour], it just struck me because my father, a few times he talked about it, he talked about he and the mortician going to Klamath Falls, Oregon, which is like thirty, forty miles away, to buy a casket, because someone died.

MI: From Tule Lake?

JT: Yes. They were given a pass, a truck too, I guess. And the two of them would go to Klamath Falls to buy a casket but they would also buy things that they couldn't get in the camp. Like coffee, sugar, cocoa, sweets, and then one guy said, "Beer." And my father, he couldn't drink and he didn't drink, so, I know, he would go along with it and when they would go back to the camp, and as they were passing through the gate, they'd have to show their papers. The guard would look at the papers and he'd say, "What you got back there?" They would point to the casket and the guy would say, "Oh, okay, go on through."

MI: And all those things were in the casket. (chuckle)

JT: Yes, hiding in the casket. And how my father said it was that "So we would have a big party in honor of the dead." (laughter)

MI: So he was buying things for others.

JT: Yes. They didn't have that much money so they would pool their money. I imagine some guys wanted cigarettes. I think they probably could get that in the camp. But things that … even stuff that normal civilians couldn't buy. Everything was rationed. Sugar was hard to come by.

MI: Are there people buried at Tule Lake? Cemetery?

JT: Oh, that was interesting. The first event. So, Klamath Falls is the staging area for the reunion. There's an engineering college there and a dormitory so we all stayed there. So, they bussed us into Tule Lake.

MI: How long a ride was that?

JT: An hour, not far. Pleasant ride, going through desert, really. And the first event was we went to pay our respects to those that died there. But there was nobody there anymore. Because, when they closed the camp, they told the civilian population. There's a town called Tulelake and it's interesting, they spell it as one word. The camp is spelled as Tule Lake, two different words. So they told us, come and help yourself. So, some of the barracks were taken. They showed us as we were driving around the town, "Oh you see that, that used to be one of the barracks."

MI: They were taken and rebuilt?

JT: Yes, storage and whatever. But we were standing at this pit because they also came and got the soil. But they got it from the cemetery. So, the bones and everything went.

MI: Why did they take the soil?

JT: Just, I guess, for their farms or whatever.

MI: From the whole camp?

JT: From the cemetery. And so, we had a Christian and a Buddhist service at the site of a pit. (chuckle)

BY: No more graves.

JT: Yes, no graves. There's no things to mark. And there was a mountain they called Castle Mountain, cause it kinda looked like a fortress. On the top, they put up a cross. The

Japanese Americans did that. It was very interesting that somebody has bones in their back yard. (chuckle)

MI: How about your parents' reflections on their internment experience at Tule Lake.

JT: They've always portrayed a very positive thing. It was never … the way it sounded to us was like they went on a big picnic or a camp in the normal sense. They made lots of friends, they had lots of memories about people, things, which they shared among themselves. But never really told the kids that.

MI: Did they keep in touch socially with some of these people? Even the ones who lived on the mainland?

JT: I don't know. There is something to that. I remember taking my parents out to Natsunoya [teahouse] cause they had a Jerome reunion. They used to have fairly regular reunions but they're all gone now. But on my father's side, he became friends with lots of other Buddhist ministers. So, when I was in Chicago, he said, "Go look up Reverend Kondo, he's my friend." But I never thought about where my father knew him. But he must have met him in the camp. So, the Buddhist community actually had a chance to get together, not only in Hawaii but all over the United States. There was a Reverend Tsuji in Denver. And my sister, when she graduated from college, her first teaching assignment was in Denver. So, the Tsujis took care of her. So, there was always that connection. He knew other ministers from the mainland United States that you wouldn't normally …

MI: How about locally. Were there some local ones?

JT: Oh, yes. They were a fairly tight-knit group. Even on Kauai, they would have picnics and stuff like that.

BY: Do you remember or had he ever talked about Naito, Reverend Naito from Koloa?

JT: Yes, there was a young man there and so we got to talking and he was …

MI: Young man where?

JT: On the bus, going to Honouliuli. He was from Colorado College. I thought he was a student but he's a professor.

BY: Yes, instructor.

JT: What was his name? Jason something. Anyway we got to talking and he said, his step grandmother was a Naito and where his family member had been was pretty much the same route that my father took. And when he said who it was, I said, "Oh yes, no wonder, because they were basically in the same boat together." So I have a picture of this Reverend Naito of Koloa. I remember him quite well and he had a daughter close to my sister's age, little older than her.

BY: Gladys.

JT: Gladys Naito. And she married his grandfather, something like that.

BY: Late in life.

JT: They were together for a while and then she was diagnosed with cancer so they got married. She lived maybe a couple more years. Obviously they didn't have any children. But he must have been married before and had children.

BY: She was about six years old in camp. We have a lot of her archives. We have an archival collection for that family. A little notebook, and poems she wrote and stuff like that. I'd say, about three years ago, a bunch of Kauai people, her classmates, came as a group and so we pulled her file and they were all going over it and reminiscing. One of the guys there had taken her to their Junior Prom. (laughter). Fun group that came from Kauai. So, they, too, went back to Koloa church.

JT: As I said, we had socials, like picnics and stuff, the ministers on Kauai. I remember going up the Wailua River. So, they would get together.

MI: At what point did they move to Kauai?

JT: In 1950. So when my father came back in forty-six, we were on Oahu, at Honpa, for a long time. We saw the establishment of the Pacific Buddhist Academy. But it wasn't called that at the time. It was just the elementary school. And in 1950, halfway through my kindergarten, they were transferred to Kauai. We stayed there a long, long time. Until 1968.

MI: So, you pretty much grew up on Kauai?

JT: Yes. I consider that my home town, although Tule Lake is my home town, too.(chuckle).

BY: Where was the Hongwanji that you were at, in Kapaa.

JT: It's still there.

BY: Which one is it?

JT: Kapaa Hongwanji. It's the only Jodo Shinshu. There's a Jodo-*shu* right before you go up the heights to the Kapaa school. But we were down on the flats, closer to the ocean.

BH: I also had, close to my age, Violet Kitajima.

JT: Oh, yes. That was the Jodo-*shu*. Her father's name was Shoyu. [soy sauce] (laughter) Apparently it's a Buddhist name. We used to think it was very funny. Shoyu Kitajima. One of his sons became a dentist, one was an architect. They did well.

MI: So, your parents never expressed any anger or bitterness. What about the children? As you folks learned the story, any feelings?

JT: No, I think we maintained the same attitude as my parents. My parents were not bitter. It was certainly an eyeopener for them. It was something we could reflect on but there was no … I think the Kotonks are more that way because actually, they lost a lot. You look back, if they had a farm or a business, there was nobody to take it over. Whereas those from Hawaii who went up, there was enough family here. If you had something like that, they could at least take care of it. Those guys lost everything. And then, to come back. To me, the worst part of internment was coming back. You got to start from zero and now you're older. An interesting story, I had another classmate in dental school. So we got together on one of my trips to the Bay Area and his wife was German-American. He was Italian, Sicilian-American. She was telling us this story. Whenever somebody in our family died, this Japanese family would always show up but nobody knew who they were. So, they were wondering, "Who are they?" So finally, I guess, somebody went up and asked them. Well, her family took care of this family's farm while they were interned. So, this family always paid respects. I said, "What a nice story." Because with

all the stuff that went on, most of the time it didn't happen that way. That was something positive. It was nice to hear that.

MI: Do you know the names of those people who took care of the …

JT: No, I could find out. I'm still in communication with my friend. Offhand, I don't know but they were from the San Jose area. It has one of the three remaining Japantowns. L.A., San Francisco, which is becoming a Koreatown, and then San Jose has a Japantown. Matter of fact, one time my daughter and her husband are opera singers so he had a job singing in San Jose. It was like an internship, almost. So we were really close to Japantown so we went down to Japantown to have sushi or something. We came out and I saw all these people marching. And then I looked, they're all *Nihonjin*. If was February so I went up to one guy who was had his robes on so I figured it was safe to ask a minister and I ask him, "What is this all about?" He said, "It about 9066. We're marching to honor that." I said, "Oh, I can march too then, because I was born in Tule Lake." He said, "Oh yes, come on." So my whole family went. And then, the guy turned out to have served in Hawaii, he was an Iolani graduate and he was with the San Jose Buddhist church. So, we marched around and we went back to the church and, this was right after 9/11 [2001], like a year or so afterwards, and there were speakers and they had an Imam speak and they had people talking about how we can't let this happen. Way back then, they were very well aware of it. I felt, "Oh, I'm part of history." (chuckle)

MI: At what time of your life did this become a part of your life? At what age? What and why?

JT: I was probably in my thirties, forties, when I started getting interested.

MI: Why and how did you get interested?

JT: I don't know. I started learning and just kept on going.

MI: But not so much from your parents?

JT: No.

MI: How were you learning? Reading books?

JT: Yes. I had some books earlier in life so I re-read them. There were people to ask, there were films I went to see.

MI: Who were the people to ask?

JT: Just people around at church, whatever. Very few, actually, because they didn't want to talk about it. Probably when I really started to become interested was when we saw *Return to Manzanar*. This was a movie and some of it was filmed at Tule Lake. So I had my parents come over, so we had dinner and we were watching the movie. And they would point out, "Oh, that's Castle Mountain." And, there was another mountain called Abalone Mountain, because it looked like an abalone. (chuckle) The Indians had a different name for it. And there was Mount Shasta which they referred to as Mount Fuji. The shape.

MI: Did that change your parents' lives at that point? Did they start talking more about their internment experience?

JT: Slightly more. They weren't very forthcoming about that because they didn't want to bring up any bitterness. I'm sure there was some bitterness, but they really didn't.

MI: Did they go to the Days of Remembrances, the reunions and things like that?

JT: I remember them going to the Jerome reunion.

MI: What year was that?

JT: I recently saw a picture but I didn't hang on to it. I knew they had a picture but when it was, I'm not sure.

BY: Do you remember the saimin restaurant on the side of the road, Fujii.

JT: Oh, yes, Fujii Store.

BY: That guy [Sunao Fujii] was interned, their father. And in our collection, we do have letters that he wrote.

JT: He died early. Mrs. Fujii, when I knew her, was a widow by that time.

BY: They were lucky too because they had a business.

JT: She made the best sushi, cone sushi. Really good. And she made her own saimin noodles. The last time I saw her, was when our dental study club had gone to Kauai. I called her up and I said, "Could I get some noodles from you?" So she made some specially for me. That's the last time I saw her. She was an excellent cook. But I didn't know her husband because he had died by that time. But they had a lot of kids. Only one boy. And, her sister used to come and help at the store. Her son was a friend of mine, he's younger but he's somebody I played with. I didn't know they were interned, too.

BY: The father was. In fact, it's that family, I think, that provided us with these group photos of Santa Fe [internment camp]. The Kauai groups were sent there. And then, about two *obon* seasons ago, Roy Miyake, Kauai, his father was councilman there. Roy did a lot of research on what they called … his father was in this Morale Committee.

JT: In the camp?

BY: No, outside in the community. They were the liaison between the administration and the Japanese community. They're the ones that oversaw the relationships during the war and they're the one who said, "Turn out for kiawe duty and blood drives, speak English." He did [an exhibit], and it's still there at the Kauai Museum, on his father's [work].

MI: Has this family history, family experience, shaped your life in any way?

JT: Yes.

MI: How?

JT: Well, it gives me a different perspective on race relations, civil rights, that kind of stuff.

MI: What would be your message?

JT: Don't take it for granted. You have to be always vigilant. Like, the first time we saw *Allegiance* [George Takei] was in San Diego, before it made it to Broadway.

MI: You saw the original [version].

JT: Yes. And, standing in line, I don't know why. We went to San Diego for some reason and so my daughter said, "There's this play, you wanna go see?" So we bought tickets online so we're in the will call line and this couple in front of us said, "I don't know what this play is all about." These were theater goers.

MI: Japanese American?

JT: No, they're haole. So I said, "Well, it's about people who didn't have a voice." Today the Japanese American community has a strong voice. It's partly due to the soldiers, the 442nd and the 100th. But at that time, nobody really could speak up for us, that people listened to. I remember hearing Mike Masaoka's name bantered around, things like that. But [it] didn't mean anything to me. We really did not have a voice so you can't scream injustice when nobody's listening. I mean, you can scream but nobody's listening. So I told them that's what it's all about.

MI: What did you think of the performance?

JT: I learned that, according to that play, which I became an investor of, because I could not not support it, right. [I learned] that there was a lot of dissension that we don't talk about. There was that radical group and how they didn't want to fight [No No Boys]. I knew that—and in that play anyway—the numbers of the young people who didn't want to fight. From what I understand, when they founded the 442nd, they expected a lot of Kotonks as well as Hawaii boys. But not that many Kotonks volunteered. And so, they filled the numbers with plenty of Hawaii boys that were wanting to fight. So, that's one of the things I kinda [learned]. And I thought, in the San Diego performance, they were very critical of Mike Masaoka. They really came down hard on him. I said, "You know, that's well and good from retrospect, but you know, when you're in the middle of it, and you don't know what's going to happen, are they going to take you out and shoot you? Which seemed very possible. They were doing that in Europe. You know, what's going to happen?" So his voice was a voice of calmness and reason. That's the way I always saw it. And they were coming down on him. I didn't like it actually, from that perspective. So they changed that. In the Broadway production, it was much lower-key and they gave him a chance to defend himself. He had a speech he gave to the audience about what it was all about. It was interesting that my friend's nephew was the actor that did it. You know the Sumida Watercress Farm? Not nephew, his cousin's son had that lead role as Mike Masaoka. He's a Kotonk. But I talked to Dr. [Mark] Mugiishi and said, "I don't have that much money but I'm going to scrape it up because I cannot just leave it alone. I'm a part of it and I want the world to hear of it so here's my donation."

MI: So, did you give your opinion as far as the way that Mike Masaoka was portrayed.

JT: To whoever would listen.

MI: What did you tell him?

JT: I said that I thought it was too harsh on him. And then, at the end of the play, they had a Q and A and George Takei was leading the group, basically. All the actors came out and he was saying how "You know, in Hawaii, the war starts in Hawaii but the Hawaii people were not interned."

BY: Isn't that interesting.

JT: And, I didn't know much about Honouliuli at that time but I knew, from my father's experience that that's not true. So, I'm not usually one that gets up in public but I said to myself, "You gotta speak up because nobody else is speaking up for the Hawaii people." (chuckle) So I said, "Error! Error!" So, everybody looks at me and I started saying, "Yes, we didn't go in the numbers", like very Kotonk was taken up, but "We went, too. My father was taken up, my mother was taken up" and all that. He was quiet. And so, at the first showing of the Honouliuli movie, the guy who did the movie [Ryan Kawamoto] was on the stage with Carole, and I said, again I had to get up and say, "You gotta send this to George Takei because this is what he said." (chuckle)

MI: When and where was this showing [*The Untold Story*]?

JT: It was at Dole Cannery. It was the first time it was shown to the public. It was a big theater and it was full.

MI: It's interesting because from my limited experience, there are scholars on the mainland who make the same statement that internment did not affect Hawaii. It's a misunderstanding.

JT: And then, I remember from a long time ago, the president of San Francisco State, S. I. Hayakawa. He was a Canadian, he wasn't an American, but the Canadians had their internment camps too. He said that we had to go quietly because we had to show that we weren't a bad group, or something like that.

MI: Do you know if he went or his family went?

JT: I think he must have gone. I'm not sure. He could have been on the east coast, where they didn't go. My sister said that, she lives in New Jersey. She was a teacher out in New Jersey. So she said there were a few families out in New Jersey when they closed the camps, they were letting people out, these families went to work for Birds Eye [corporation] and companies like that in the New Jersey area.

MI: Seabrook Farms [which became Birds Eye].

JT: Seabrook Farms, yes. I didn't realize that.

MI: Have you seen the Broadway version [of *Allegiance*]?

JT: Yes. We went to opening night.

MI: Are you satisfied with the changes that they made from the original San Diego production?

JT: Yes. I felt better about it. I felt that they did a good job and now we are seeing the DVD of it.

MI: The video of the Broadway performance.

JT: Yes. They filmed the performance and then, Manoa Valley [Theater] is going to have it on their 2019 season.

MI: I think the venue has been changed.

JT: Yes, they going to have it at the Hawaii Theater. My good friend Stephen Sumida, he's retired as a professor at the University of Washington and he and his wife. He's very active in the Asian theater in Seattle and he said, "We have a better play than that." It was

called, *[Hotel] On the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*. And, he had a good-sized role in that one. And I read the book and so when I saw him in December, he took us around that neighborhood.

BY: Now, we have four short, about 28 minute [documentaries] on each of the internment [sites] on each of the islands.

JT: Oh yes, I saw the Oahu [one]. Oh, I should have brought her card. When we were in San Francisco last time, that was in January [2018], my daughter had a party, one of her friends had passed away. This gal's mother was there and she told us about this movie that was shown in San Francisco, at the law school. USF, University of San Francisco Law School. They were having some kind of a course there. Abby Goldstein or something like that. Older woman, she directed the film. She had made this movie, very good movie. And since San Francisco, she has shown it in New York and Detroit, I think. She wants to bring it to Hawaii, so I said, "When you're ready to bring it to Hawaii" … and it was about … there's an overlap with [Ryan] Kawamoto. There was some overlap with that but it was specifically about Oahu.

BY: Oahu, how interesting.

JT: Yes. I can send you that.

MI: Let me get back to the history. In 1988, the apology, redress. Were your parents still alive at the time?

JT: My father had passed away. He died in 1985. So, my mother … and, they went by [age], the older people got it first. My mother got hers early.

MI: Did she say anything about that? Do you have her apology letter?

JT: Yes, I do, right here. But my sister gets it and my daughter, she comes running up to us and she says, "We're rich, we're rich!" I said, "What do you mean, we're rich?" "The reparation money came in." I said, "Well, first of all, it's not your money. And twenty thousand dollars doesn't make you rich." (laughter) She was in high school. So I corrected her on that. And then I told my mother, "I want to donate this money." She was very upset because I was going to give it away.

MI: There was some [differences of] opinions about the whole experience.

JT: Right. I said, "No, no, mom. I'm not going to give it away. First of all, I'm going to invest it and try to make it grow. But I want to use that money." Because I was an infant, I never suffered. There were many, many other people who suffered and I would like to see that money go to useful purposes." That's why we went to the Japanese American National Museum. I was looking at that to donate and I did.

MI: What year was this?

JT: In 2000. My nephew graduated from Occidental College that year. So, after graduation, we went down to see the museum. So, I've been doing that. I donated at San Jose. They have a pretty good-sized museum there. And then, some of that money went to [support] *Allegiance*. And then they came out with the DVD, they needed money for that. So, I coughed up some more. That's okay.

MI: Did you get your check about the same time as your mother. You mentioned that the older people …

JT: No. Maybe a year later. I remember submitting the documents and having to send a copy of my birth certificate. You had to prove that you were there.

MI: Why? They had your birth certificate.

JT: They had it on their side but I guess they had to validate that I was that person.

MI: Did your mother have to do anything to document that she was the one?

JT: I think we all had to.

MI: Let's get back to your message, what you think this whole experience means to the country and what message we should have all learned from this?

JT: Well, as I said, [it's] about protecting our civil rights, not only yourself or our group, but anybody else's civil rights. We have to be vigilant because there's always people that want to squash it. I remember [Senator] Dan Inouye saying that this can happen again. And this was twenty, thirty years ago that he made that statement. Because we're seeing that. So, that to me is one big thing that I've come away with. But my daughter, who's an opera singer. So, when she graduated from Tufts University, 1999, she was asked to sing the national anthem. So, we're over there …

MI: This was at the graduation ceremony, Tufts University?

JT: This was the whole university. Then they broke up into the different schools. I remember listening and I'm thinking, "In one generation, roughly forty-some years, we went from a country which incarcerated us to, she's up there singing the national anthem. She's accepted now, as an American." I said, "You know, America's not all that bad." I mean, we have our faults, certainly, we've made lots of mistakes. But at least, in our instance anyhow, we owed up to it and we can say, "We were wrong."

MI: As a country.

JT: Yes. So that's one reason why I didn't want to just spend the money. This guy I know bought a new car. (chuckle) I said, "What a waste."

MI: I'm not going to ask you for his name.

JT: I can't even remember.

MI: So, do you see some of this in your daughter? The heritage.

JT: They're very much in tune. They're not quite the intensity that I've developed about this subject matter but you know, I have all this stuff my father collected. I wanted to know what the next generation … who should I give it to that will take good care of it and will talk about it. So, what I've done is I've been writing. I plan to have a booklet of my recollections of things because when I go, "Oh, did he say something about that?" Or, "What did he say about this?" So even if mine is second-hand, maybe third-hand, at least there will be some kind of reference point. That's what we're finding out.

MI: You are a primary source, even though you don't remember. Technically, you're part of the history.

JT: Yes. (chuckle) But there was one guy who was at the Tule Lake reunion, they have it every couple of years. This was in 2008 when we went. Jimmy Yoshi something or other. He was a wealth of knowledge, first-hand wealth of knowledge. He said that the prison that they built in Tule Lake, he said that he was in construction before the war and he was still pretty young but he said that the officials told him they wanted this prison built so "go round up the workers and get your materials." So he goes and asks people, "You wanna build a prison?" They said, "What do you mean, we're already in prison." (chuckle) So, he finally got enough people and they built this prison. That's the only structure that's left standing in Tule Lake. But we met a lot of people. There was an old lady from Sacramento, she talked about her dog. And we had a dog, too and … the things you didn't think about. She said when we had to go to the Assembly Center, they had to leave their dog behind. So they had to take him to the pound. She said, the dog was always happy to go in the car because usually it was something good. But they never saw the dog again. Those little stories, those kinds of stories, wow. And then I also learned that there were only two physicians in Tule Lake and they were almost thirty thousand people. And these are internee physicians. They weren't regular guys that were brought in. And they had to take care of everybody. So, my mother said that "If you were sick and you went in, you'd get scolded because somebody here is dying, somebody needs an operation and you only got a cold." (chuckle) So they would just hold back stay [at home]. My sister had an earache and she lost her hearing. It came back, by the way, thanks to Dr. Mori. But my mother didn't take her because she didn't think she should.

MI: Do you know the names of the physicians you're talking about?

JT: I only know a Dr. Mori.

MI: Which Mori?

JT: Motokazu. His son just passed away [Dr. Victor Mori] and he was in that film. And I was wanting to see it because my father had a long time friendship with him [Motokazu] and I remember going to his office. My sister, when we came back, had lost her hearing because of this ear infection. My sister said that he would see her every week until she regained her hearing, because he felt like when he was in camp, he couldn't give that kind of attention to people like my sister. There were bigger problems he had to worry about. So he felt guilty about it. So she went every week. And I got hit by a baseball bat when I was four years old. I split my lip. So I would only go and see Dr. Mori. So he sutured me up when I was bleeding like a sieve. He was the one, I don't know if you know that story. It was in the movie *Pearl Harbor*. He got a phone call from Japan on December 6. His wife took the call and transferred it to him. They asked him how the weather was and he said, "Oh, the hibiscus is blooming and the sky is beautiful." They were looking for the weather report so everything was clear then for December 7 [1941]. But he was arrested because his phone was tapped. So, they knew something was coming. Anyway, he must have been in Lordsburg or Santa Fe with my father, although my father has this note about … he has Dr. Mori's name at Crystal City [internment camp] so he got transferred to Texas.

BY: Maybe they were thinking of repatriating.

JT: Yes, there were a lot of foreigners there.

BH: They were going to use them as exchange prisoners.

JT: Yes. We have a good family friend from Kauai, the Yamasatos. They were from Peru and they were at Crystal City.

MI: Maurice.

JT: Yes, we knew him as Manuel or Manny. He was the only boy, like six or eight girls. Anyway, the older one is Florinda. The next one is Rosa. Then Manuel. Then Fumi, because she was born in Texas. They don't know where they're going to be. And the two youngest ones were Mary and Margaret. They had English names because they were on Kauai by that time. But the older ones have Spanish names because they were from Peru. The father was taken because they wanted to trade prisoners. And then, Peru didn't want them back [after the war]. So they wound up in Hawaii, luckily. But they were poor. They never really recovered. But every one of them went to college. Every one of them. You talk about an American success story. Manuel is an architect. Well-known architect.

BY: It's amazing.

JT: Fumi, her husband is [Dr] Dennis Crowley, rehab[ilitation specialist]. There were two sisters that came from Okinawa. We thought Florinda was the oldest one but two older ones came. They were stuck there, they couldn't make it out. So then, they came. So now, there's two more of them. And even they went to college.

BY: The value system, you know.

JT: And that's something I'm proud of. The Japanese Americans, they did not live in the ghetto. They got out as soon as they could. They worked hard, got out and made something of themselves. You can see that they would have every reason to be on welfare the rest of their lives but they didn't.

MI: Any other stories you want to share before we conclude?

JT: I talked a lot, didn't I?

MI: That's why we're here.

JT: I wanted to show you this. My father used to write a newspaper at Santa Fe. And I didn't know what it said.

MI: Did they have a printing press with Japanese characters where they could print in Japanese?

JT: Yes. Supposedly he wrote Japanese textbooks. He was really a teacher. They wouldn't bring in Japanese textbooks so he would make his own. But this is a letter that was written and it was censored [cut outs]. We didn't know what it said but we used to make fun of him. "You must have been a spy", this kind of *iran koto* [meaningless]. And the University of Hawaii asked for these things. They had a big display at Shirokiya, I remember. So, they translated the letter and their note here, and we didn't even know that, it said, dated October 10, 1945, and it says [stamped], "Enemy Alien Mail" and I said, "How could it say enemy when the war is over?" And what would a guy who's been in jail for four years, what would he know that had to be censored so heavily? And the war is over.

MI: This translation is of the parts that were not cut out.

JT: He talks about the weather and the people. He was writing to my mother. I have some real pictures. This is my mother and me and my sister, at Tule Lake. And he had a lot of these [pictures] that must have been from Lordsburg or Santa Fe. I don't know who's in it. This is preschool in Tule Lake but notice the tar paper [building walls]. The one story I want to talk about. I went to a dental convention in Washington, D.C. in 1992 I think it was, and we had a gala event at the Smithsonian's American History Museum. So, you go from floor to floor, there's drinks, there's food and you're just free to wander around. So we came up to the top floor and we walked in to this room and I see this guard tower. And I instantly knew that this was going to be something cool. It was about the internment and the 442nd. One of the stories was about this one guy who had size one EEE feet. They had the hardest time finding shoes for him. (chuckle) Anyway, they we were looking at some watercolor pictures about postcard sized, about the sandstorms. Every camp had the same ((?)), they were out in the boonies and I said, "Yes, my parents used to talk about these sandstorms. They'd come in, dust all over the place because there weren't really walls, tar paper with some framing. So dust would be all over and like good Japanese people, they clean up everything and another one would come. Clean over. I was telling my wife about this watercolor painting and this guy next to me says, "Oh, some of my friends talked about the same thing and then he explained himself." He was an orthodontic from Southern California and a lot of his *Nisei* friends coming back from camp talked about their experiences. So he had heard these things. And then, this man comes up to my side and he said, "None of this stuff happened. This is all made up. This is all fake." And I … my head was … my brain was …

MI: Was this a Japanese man?

JT: No, I call him ethnic because he was short. He was shorter than me, and swarthy [complexion], so maybe Italian. Not that it mattered except that I thought that he would know better, being a minority. So he said, "This is all fake." I said, "No, no, no, no, no. I was born there. It's not fake." He said, "Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes because they took the Japanese nationals and their kids have to go with them." I said, "That's not true. I know guys who volunteered in to the 442 and MIS to fight. They were grown people." And then, I kinda go blank because I think my mind was shutting down. But I found myself walking away because I could see the headlines. "Two Dentists Duke It Out in the Smithsonian" (laughter), get arrested and all that. I never thought these deniers … I heard about that there were, like Holocaust deniers. There are people like that but I never thought it would happen to me. It was such a shock. I don't know what happened after that. I think we walked away somehow. My mind went blank.

MI: That's an interesting story. Thank you very much.

BY: Thank you so much, really.