

Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii

Oral History Interview

with

Jane Watanabe [JW]

**Internees: Kosan Nishizawa, Camp Livingston,
Nishizawa family, Jerome, Arkansas, Tule Lake, California**

June 7, 2017

Interviewers: Melvin Inamasu [MI] and Jane Kurahara [JK]

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 June 7, 2017. We're at the Conference Room of the Japanese Cultural Center to interview Jane Watanabe about her family's internment experience. My name is Mel Inamasu, [volunteer] and assisting me with the interview today...

JK: Jane Kurahara.

MI: We will begin the interview by asking for some basic information about yourself and your family. We'll ask questions and then, we'll go from there. So, let me ask you first to give us your full name, month and date of birth and where you were born.

JW: My name is Jane Seiko Nishizawa Watanabe. And I was born on Oahu and raised on Molokai. And that's where my mom and dad were running the Soto-Shu Church in Kaunakakai. So, I grew up there, I think, for fourteen years and then I went to Mid-Pacific [Institute] high school.

MI: Let me stop you here and before you get too far. Tell us about your parents. What were their names, your parents?

JW: My father was Kosan Nishizawa.

MI: How do you spell the first name?

JW: K-o-s-a-n. And Nishizawa. And then, my mom is Chieko Nishizawa.

MI: What was her maiden name?

JW: My mother's maiden name is Fukuda. Chieko Fukuda.

MI: Okay, I'm going to go back one step if you can, if you cannot, that's fine. Grandparents' names?

JW: Grandparents. On my mother's side, she's *Issei* [*Nisei*?]. So, I'm trying to go back. She's from Hiroshima, you know, and my grandfather was from Yamaguchi. And so, my grandmother [mother's grandmother?] was a picture bride at that time. Yeah, so, I still have a photo of her. I also have a photo of her, my mother's grandmother who was on Maui, way back when she came for the plantation. But, unfortunately, I just have a picture of her. But that's the extent of the family that I know of.

MI: Your mother's grandmother? Or your mother's mother?

JW: Actually, my mother's grandmother...

MI: Was a picture bride.

JW: Yeah, right. Yeah, so that goes way back, yeah.

MI: Okay, but did you say your mother was an *Issei*?

JW: *Nisei*.

MI: *Nisei*, oh, okay. So, she grew up on Maui.

JW: My mother stayed [on] Maui for a little while but then her mother and dad came to Hawaii [Oahu] looking for a job.

MI: Came to...

JW: Oahu.

MI: Oh, Oahu. So initially they went to Maui as plantation workers, then came to Oahu.

JW: Right.

MI: And this was where your mother grew up?

JW: Right, right, right.

MI: So, let's go to your father's side.

JW: My dad was born in Tokyo, and he was the only child from the Nishizawa family. And so, my dad was twenty-five or, early then, that he came here to be the assistant ministry [minister] in Soto-Shu. And so, my grandfather remained in Tokyo to run the church. And at that point, when my dad was here, the war broke out.

MI: So, he came here as a minister?

JW: Yeah.

MI: What church was this?

JW: Soto-Shu.

MI: That's at?

JW: Nuuanu.

MI: Soto Mission.

JW: Soto Mission, right. So, he was preaching there, and my mom was teaching sewing at that church. That's how they met. And then they started their home on Molokai because the young minister, just starting out, you know, so they went to Molokai to start the church there.

MI: What church was this on Molokai?

JW: Soto Mission.

MI: Soto Mission. Is it still there today?

JW: Yeah, it's still there. It's just that they fenced it up so that it was difficult for us to just go there and visit the church because, I guess, the membership had kinda dwindled a bit. And so, the minister would go [there] on important occasions, yeah. And that's true for Kauai [also]. So, anyway, yeah, when I was about five, yeah, and going on six, my dad...I didn't know what was happening [after December 7, 1941]; it's just emotion, more emotion. And so, I didn't know what was happening in the house. I didn't see my father, and my mother was sort of despondent, but I was told to just keep quiet. So, and then, the next thing I knew, my dad wasn't around, and then my mom kinda mentioned that the FBI had taken him.

MI: When was this, was this on December 7 [1941]?

JW: It was about ... just when the war broke out.

MI: So, December 7.

JW: Yeah, just after that, I think. It was very quick.

MI: Like a few days after that?

JW: Yeah. Um-hmm. So, that's all I could remember.

MI: Do you remember growing up on Molokai? Before the war, or anything? You were about four, five years old.

JW: No, not really. Not really. I remember growing up there after we came back from internment camp, because I was already eight.

MI: Okay, but let's kinda stick to the early part first. So, you were going to kindergarten or something?

JW: Yeah, I was going to kindergarten.

MI: What school?

JW: It was Kaunakakai Elementary School.

MI: Kaunakakai. Remember anything about kindergarten?

JW: Not really. I know I went [to] kindergarten and that's just about it, you know. And then, because then, I was going on to six already, yeah. The next thing I knew, I mean, we were confined at home. Friends couldn't come visit, you know, people would come and be concerned, but they weren't allowed to visit my mom. So, that was kinda sad, but I kinda remember that friends would come but they'd be so far away. They cannot come close to the house and all that. But anyway, then my memory kinda skipped where...

MI: So, did you have other children in the family?

JW: Yeah, just my sister and I. My sister is about eighteen months younger than I.

MI: Younger than you. So, you were the older sister.

JW: Yeah, so just like Paul. Paul was only three. Oh, not Paul, but Norman. And then, Paul was my age, right. So, then, the next thing my memory kinda remembered [was] going to Oahu.

MI: Go back again. Tell us again about what you remember about your father being picked up, presumably around December 7 or so.

JW: Right. Well, that's where my memory's kinda fuzzy because, I told you, there was a lot of emotions...

MI: You were not there, you didn't see your father picked up or anything.

JW: I just remember, he's gone, you know. So, I didn't see actually [him] being taken, or you know. So, I didn't know what was said, I didn't know ...

MI: So, how did your mother explain that to you?

JW: She just kinda said that, you know, “*Otosan* [Father] is you know, away for a little while.” You know, so that’s the extent of my ... you know.

JW: As a child, you know, like everything is “Wow, what is going on?” Nobody tells you anything, you know. You just kinda feel strange but you don’t say anything. At that time, you know, we were taught to keep quiet, right? Remember those days? And not to ask too many questions, you know.

MI: Your mother was a helper for your father at the church?

JW: My mom went to school on Oahu. And she went to Kaahumanu Elementary School. She came from a family of six brothers and two sisters, so, you can imagine, that was a big family. But, she knew Japanese, she could read Japanese. At that time, the *Nisei*, they could read magazines, they could read Japanese newspaper. My mom was that way, yeah. So, she was teaching Japanese in Kaunakakai. So, we had a [Japanese] language school, after school.

MI: What was the name of that school?

JW: Oh, I guess it was Soto-Shu-no ... it was right on the church ground. So, the students would come--and then, my mom was very talented. She taught how to make Japanese dolls. She’s a seamstress. So, Kaunakakai is a very, not as very active community, but she brought a lot of her talent to the church. So, she taught how to make Japanese dolls. She would teach sewing during the summer. She would teach Japanese language to the younger students, you know, and my mother would teach them *odori* [dancing], you know, for the bon dance [festival]. She would organize that. So, she was very active with the church. Anyway, those are the activities that I remember and when I came back from internment. So, they went back [to] teaching, Japanese language, yeah. So, my mom was alone now, and so her mom told her to come back already. Her sister said, “Come back already.”

MI: Come back to Oahu.

JW: Yeah.

MI: So, you folks left Molokai?

JW: Yeah, we left, with whatever ...

MI: About how long was this, after your father was gone?

JW: Well, that date I just cannot remember, specifically, yeah. And so, my memory was kinda fuzzy at that point. But all I can remember was that I was at [the] pier. I don’t

know what pier it was, but the ship was waiting for us to take us to wherever. So, my mom had to pack her stuff and take us. Because where is she going to live? What's she going to do? Those were her concerns, yeah. Can she get a job? So, she decided, well, you know, just go where the military would take her. So, I can only remember going on the ship, and I could only remember there were [a] pack of all the family [that] was going to be deported to the mainland. And we were down below, what do you call that down below?

MI: Wait, you're talking about going from Hawaii to the mainland, not from Molokai to Oahu? Let's kinda go a little more slowly. On Molokai, were you aware of any other families in the same situation? Any other names?

JW: You know, there wasn't any that I can recall.

MI: Mayeda family? [Yoshihisa Mayeda, see *JCCH Archives* and *Carol Kuroda interview*]

JW: See, I don't know. There may have been. But I just have not encountered anybody, even after coming back.

MI: Even today, you don't know of any other Molokai [internee family]?

JW: No. No, no. So, it was such a small community, yeah. So that's where my memories of Molokai [are].

MI: So, but somehow your life changed from that point where your father was not there anymore.

JW: Right.

MI: And you folks moved to Oahu.

JW: Right, right, and stayed with the grandma.

MI: With your mother's family. Remember anything about that time, living with your grandparents?

JW: No, all I remember is that my grandma had, what, six sons, yeah.

MI: Where did they live? Where on Oahu?

JW: Date Street. They used to live on Sheridan, you know, where there's that Yanagi [Service Station], right in the back there. Grandma had a big house [that] she was leasing. And then, my mother grew up over there. And then right after the war, she went to live on Date Street.

MI: You don't know how long you lived on Oahu before you folks left to go to the mainland?

JW: Very short. Just a very short [time], yeah, so I can't remember much.

MI: Okay. Apparently, you remember a little bit about the ship. Tell us about the ship again?

JW: Oh, I remember that we were just packed into the ship and then, we were at the bottom, you know. And then, there're not too many beds, yeah. But, you know, I mean, all the mothers and the children were all packed down there on the ship, and they were all seasick, yeah.

MI: Anyone that your mother knew? Any friends of hers?

JW: Yeah. She may have because ...

MI: Remember any names?

JW: You know, at that time, there were a lot of ministers, yeah, Buddhist ministers, so they were all on that ship, you know, like, Ozawa *sensei* [teacher]...

MI: Which Ozawa was this?

JW: I don't know his first name.

MI: From which church?

JW: From Soto Mission.

MI: From Soto Mission here on Oahu?

JW: Yeah, right, right, right.

MI: Anybody else?

JW: The Ozawa *sensei*. Matsuura *sensei*.

MI: From which church?

JW: All from Soto Mission. And then you have Morita *sensei*. Morita took over [for] my dad when we moved out of Molokai. I think I was a freshman, 1950, I think. And then the church ... the ministers all moved and get reassigned. So, that's what I remember, going out.

MI: How about other children? Do you remember other children who were on the ship with you?

JW: No. The only time I sort of got reacquainted with them was when we had settled in the camp, yeah. We used to go Japanese school, or we used to go English school. So, that's where we got kinda reunited.

MI: So, what do you remember about the trip, the boat?

JW: Well, that everybody got sick, and then, you know, I know that the kids were crying. Then we had dinner, so we had to go up to the dining area. But that's the extent of what I remember.

MI: Were there soldiers or other people on the ship?

JW: There may have ... but I cannot remember specifically.

MI: Where did this ship land on the mainland?

JW: I believe it was in San Francisco.

MI: San Francisco. And then, what happened from San Francisco?

JW: Then, when we landed, you know, there were all the trucks, yeah, lined up there. And so, we were assigned to certain trucks.

MI: Okay, and where did the truck take you?

JW: So, the truck took us to the rail station. I remember that. And then we got onto the rail. I don't know ... maybe my mother knew, but you know, I never asked her. So, we were on the train for whoa, long time. But after that, I realized that we were going to Jerome, Arkansas.

MI: Now, on the train, were you able to look outside?

JW: No, not all the time. When we passed through towns, they told us to go pull the shade down, because, they said that if they find, you know, you're Japanese in this train, they're going to stone you and all that. So, in a way, we kinda lived in fear, yeah. So that's what happened.

MI: Were there soldiers guarding you on the boat or anything like that?

JW: I cannot remember that.

MI: On the train, you had soldiers?

JW: On the train you had soldiers, but you know, not as many as when we found them at the camp.

MI: So, it was a long ride, and it took you...I guess you didn't know where you were going. But you ended up in Jerome, Arkansas.

JW: Right, right.

MI: You remember getting off the train?

JW: I don't remember getting off the train, but I know that we were assigned to a barrack with just one room and with a potbelly heater and military blankets, military cots.

MI: That was for the three of you, your mother, your sister and you?

JW: Yeah, for the three of us, right. So, we were there and there was a community bath. Everything was community. Community dining room.

MI: So, you had your own room to live in, but ...

JW: Yeah. Just one room like that. No partition no nothing.

MI: The meals, the bathrooms and everything were outside.

JW: Outside, yeah. So, we had to wear, during the winter--it snowed, yeah, in Jerome--so you have to wear galoshes to go to toilet, you know. So, everybody kinda trying to be resourceful, and they got potties for the kids so that they don't have to go out in the cold. You know that kind of stuff, [chuckles] I remember.

MI: So, the next morning, you have to clean those things.

JW: Yeah, yeah. My mom, you know, all the mothers had to do that. You know, the ladies just didn't have much to do, right. Except ... you know, because everything, we gotta go to the dining, you know...

MI: They didn't have to cook.

JW: No. No.

MI: How about clean house?

JW: You know, they cleaned their quarters but it's so small. So, the barracks is long, yeah, the military [type] so everything is partitioned. So, I don't know how many families were divided into that. So, I remember two neighbors. One is Marian Adachi, so I don't know where she is because I'm sure she must be older than me, she was one of ((?)) and then, the other one was Caroline Okada. We had photos of them, too, and then we went to school. So, they taught us where to go, and my mom took us. "This is where the school is." So, it was kinda going back into the routine.

MI: As quickly as possible they tried to get to.

JW: Yeah, right, right. But, around the barracks, yeah, you got the post, yeah, what you call, the military guards.

MI: Guard towers.

JW: Yeah, guard towers around, so we were told not to go near there. And so, there were rules, you know, that you have to follow. And so, life just went on, right? I have some pictures of that but the Japanese museum in L.A. had asked whatever I had or whatever my mom [had] and so my mom brought back that big overcoat, you know, all military issue[d], yeah. So, she brought that home. We brought all the military blankets we had.

MI: Where did you get those? In Jerome?

JW: Jerome. That's where we lived...

MI: Once you got there, they gave you some clothing for the weather.

JW: Yeah, they issued these.

MI: And these things your mom donated to the museum in Los Angeles?

JW: Yeah, we did.

MI: How about the photographs?

JW: I have some, but, oh, my dad had a lot of 'em, too.

MI: What happened to your dad's?

JW: I think my sister in L.A. has it, and I've been trying to see ...

MI: Would it be possible for us to scan some of those things?

JW: Sure, you know, I'll ask her for that, yeah, because they really wanted photos. You know, because we couldn't take pictures. But I don't know how we got the photos, but... they asked for a lot of photos. They said, a lot of camps you weren't allowed to have cameras. So, life went on.

MI: So, was your mother different from say, when she was on Oahu, to when she was in Jerome? Because the idea was she was going to meet [your father], the family was going to be reunited ...

JW: Right. Be together, but it just never happened.

MI: So, was she feeling better there, at that point in time, when you first got there, that the family's going to somehow get together with your father?

JW: Oh, I don't know. My mom, probably all the women got more stronger because she had that responsibility, yeah, for the two kids. So, she was very supportive, and you know, she understood the change. Her sisters may have tried to convince her to stay on Oahu, but she decided to keep the family together. But at that point, I learned that you know, whatever possessions you have, like money or anything of value, they tried to get rid of 'em. So, I know that a lot of ladies ...

MI: Why is that?

JW: Because they would confiscate [a] lot of the money.

MI: You mean before you left Oahu, you tried to give away all your things?

JW: Right. Right.

MI: How much did you take? You remember? As a child, you took a doll or something?

JW: No, no, no. I can't remember anything. But I know that my mom told me that, you know, a lot of the ladies...she's talking about herself, that whatever money she had saved, and she had bought a watch, you know. And it was a very expensive watch, you know--it's platinum with little diamonds on it--so that she can take it with her and then it would probably sustain some value, yeah. Then later on, I heard that lot of people had bought diamonds and gold so that...

MI: They could carry it with them.

JW: Exactly. That's what a lot of the Nazi (?)...

MI: Whatever happened to that watch?

JW: I still have it. And so, I could understand why she did that.

MI: Did she actually wear it? Or she just kept it?

JW: No, I think she wore it. But, you know, luckily it wasn't taken away from her, yeah.

MI: Now, were you aware of any communication between your mother and your father? Did they let you know what was going on?

JW: Her brother was in the service. He volunteered for the 100th Battalion.

MI: What was his name?

JW: His name was Tom Fukuda. Thomas Fukuda. He was already in uniform, so he came up [to] search [for] us because he was in Wisconsin. So, he found out where we were, maybe through ... I don't know what. But he came over to meet us.

MI: Was he already in the military on December 7 [1941]?

JW: No, this was after ...

MI: The 442 was formed? That was a year later.

JW: Right, yeah. So, we were there about a year and a half or so. So, he came to visit us and said, "You want to see your dad? I'll take you there, 'cause I know where he is." And so, we found out that he was in Louisiana.

MI: Your mom didn't know where he was?

JW: Well, maybe she knew, but I didn't know, you know. I only knew that he wasn't there [in Jerome], so...

MI: This was one, over a year later [after arriving at Jerome].

JW: Yeah, yeah. After the 100th Battalion started, you know, and then...

MI: So, all this time, your family has...you remember when it was you folks went to Jerome?

JW: [Pause] Oh, gee. I could search out the date but I'm not too sure [when] it was. But I know it was after...because we came back in '46.

MI: I'm trying to figure out when you went there. Because by the time her brother, the part you're talking about, your brother mentioned going to see your father, that's over a year.

JW: Yeah, right. So, because everything was kinda loose already, I mean, you know. Not as restrictive, so he was able to come. But then, she would get letters, yeah, from home, she would get letters.

MI: Do you have any of those letters that they might have sent to each other?

JW: No, unfortunately, no, no, yeah. So, I know that my dad had photos of all the men who were incarcerated in [Camp Livingston] St. Louis [Louisiana?]. I wish I had the photo, but there were a whole bunch of men, and they were in overcoat and taken. I don't know who took that picture, but they were all, you know... I think that my sister may have that photo.

MI: Okay, let's kinda stop here and go back now to your father. You probably don't know this, but maybe you can help us. From the time that he was picked up at home on

Molokai, did your mother ever tell you the story or he ever tell you, did he go to the jail in Kaunakakai?

JW: Yeah.

MI: He did?

JW: Yeah. He went to jail in Kaunakakai. From there, we never met, so from there, I don't know where he went.

MI: Did he ever mention Sand Island or anything?

JW: No, no.

MI: But, somehow, from that jail in Kaunakakai, he ended up in Louisiana, did you say, first?

JW: Well, that's the recollection. The next thing I knew, he was in Louisiana.

MI: While you folks were in Jerome?

JW: That's right. So, there are a lot of *pukas* [gaps] there.

MI: But then, your mother's brother comes along, he says, "Do you want to go see your father in Louisiana?"

JW: Right. So, I don't when the 100th Battalion had...

MI: Why is that allowed for you folks to get out of the camp?

JW: Because he was in the military? I don't know. He got permission.

MI: To take you folks out of Jerome to go to Louisiana?

JW: Right. Right.

MI: How did you get there?

JW: By train. And he told us that...

MI: And then you went into a camp in Louisiana where your father was.

JW: See, I don't know. That part is so blank.

MI: You're not sure. You remember seeing him?

JK: At Camp Livingston?

JW: Yeah. It was so blank over there, because we went to see him and then we had to quickly go back.

MI: What did he look like? You remember? Did he look different?

JW: The same, the same. But you know, my dad is an alien, yeah, because he never went for his citizenship, because...

MI: Well, he couldn't...

JW: Yeah, well, he never wanted it, because he knew he had to go back to Japan, right, because he's the only child and he had to go back.

MI: Oh, I see. He was planning to go back [to Japan].

JW: Yeah, because his father was still there, you know. And so, he doesn't know what was happening in Tokyo, right. So, you know, it was kinda frustrating for him. So, anyway, those were the blank areas. All I can remember is my uncle said, "You know, you're Japanese, you know, so just look straight or look down. Don't stare at people because they're not going to like you."

MI: This is as you're going from Jerome to [Camp] Livingston?

JW: From Jerome to visit my father. And we have to stop by for the dining, to have lunch and then, you know, those are the instruction[s] we got from my uncle and so we said, "Okay." So, then, we met, but I cannot remember where we met or what camp we went and how we got back. Don't remember. And so, the next thing I knew, was about a year...I don't know when...anyway, from what I heard later on, is that my dad refuses to sign the loyalty letter, okay. And so...

MI: What do you know about the loyalty letter? What did you understand?

JW: I only know later on about the loyalty letter. But I knew already from the start [that] my dad is going to go back to Japan, you know.

MI: How about your mother? Did she get the loyalty letter?

JW: No, she was an American citizen, so she didn't need to, I don't think. It never came up in our conversation. So anyway, my dad said, "Oh, no. I'm never going to sign it." I think a lot of Buddhist ministers didn't sign it. So anyway, at that point, they segregated the family and said, "Okay, the ones who didn't sign, will go to Tule Lake, and be reunited there with the men." And then, I don't know where the rest of the guys went to.

MI: So, as far as you know, [he went to] only one camp on the mainland, before Tule Lake.

JW: Yes, Jerome and then Tule Lake.

MI: No, no. I mean, for your father.

JW: Yeah, yeah.

MI: Camp Livingston and Tule Lake. For you folks, Jerome and then Tule Lake.

JW: Yeah, right.

MI: So, if your uncle had not taken you to see your father in Louisiana, you would not have seen him until Tule Lake?

JW: That's right, right, right. And so, everything was kinda fuzzy at the end, but again, another barrack, yeah.

MI: So, I don't know if you remember, if you can tell us, when did you both go to Tule Lake? Who went first, and what was the situation?

JW: That part, all is fuzzy, yeah, right. We must have caught train ride, so I don't know.

MI: Was he there, was your father already there to meet you?

JW: That part, I cannot even remember. But I thought we met in Tule Lake, you know. He went from his side and so, I don't know. There was a lot of hustle and all that. So then...

MI: Your family had their own unit at Tule Lake, just like in Jerome?

JW: Yeah, it's same thing, same thing, you know, with one big empty apartment. And then, so we had to hang sheets, or you know, blankets and we were sleeping on cots, so...So, same life, but then, the men didn't have much to do, yeah. So, I remember more [of] my life in Tule Lake than I did in Jerome.

MI: So, what do you remember about, what kinds of things do you remember about Tule Lake? Was your father happy there?

JW: Well, they had no choice, I guess, yeah. But he wasn't really having ...

MI: I guess for him was it like a step closer to getting back to Japan?

JW: Probably, probably. But he was more concerned about the war, yeah, because he has that ambition to go back to Tokyo you know. So, anyway, we settled in Tule Lake. So, I remember that more, because same thing, you have that community bath. So, the men had KP duty. So did my dad. And then, we had school. We'd go to school in the morning. We'd go to Japanese school, so they allowed [us] to study Japanese. I spoke more Japanese then than I do now [chuckle], because everybody spoke Japanese, right.

In the afternoon, it's English [school]. So, they kinda relaxed the rule[s] a bit. So, we had our Japanese language [class] in the morning and then, in the afternoon we go to English school. So, I remember my teacher. She was a *haole* [Caucasian] teacher, so, you know, and she was really great. Her name was Miss Avery. So, I named my grand-niece Avery, because I remembered [her]. And I had my books. I brought back all the books, but I gave it to the museum.

MI: What books are you talking about?

JW: We're talking about the English primer.

MI: The Tule Lake school books.

JW: Yeah, issued books, like that. So, we had that.

MI: Let me go back a step. So, you were also going to school at Jerome. You remember any of your classmates' names? Or friends?

JW: Only the two, Caroline Okada and Marian Adachi.

MI: You didn't make new friends at Jerome?

JW: No, after that, we were all separated. We never met after that, yeah.

MI: Okay. How about from Tule Lake? Any friends that you remember? Any names that you remember?

JW: [Pause] No, no. You know, because my place, I didn't see many young kids. But I see lot of old men, you know. [chuckle] But I know my dad...

MI: How about classmates? You were in school.

JW: No, no, until I met Paul Osumi [Jr.]. I never knew anybody who went... Remember, I was on Molokai. I was the only one, you know, that went, so... You know why? Because a lot of people don't talk about it. They never express, you know, and I think, too, my mom felt that she had, you know... maybe her dignity was destroyed. And my dad kinda felt that because he was so bitter you know, that, you know, his dignity was destroyed and [he] then had to go into--they called it "the prison." So that, I think, had affected a lot of people. And later on, I realized that, yeah, "Why are we, you know, here?" But anyway, we went to school and then when we came out, well, that's another chapter, but... In camp, yeah, and then they have, because they relaxed the rules, I guess, yeah, we have Japanese groups. You know, they have a good baseball team. They have organized sports. They would play like, red ball and a white ball, you know, red and white team, and they would have that Japanese games. So, they adopted a lot of the stuff, too so the children were active, especially when they got older, you know. So, we

participated in a lot of those races and activities. Of course, at that time, too, you know, you heard about *inu* [dog] [referring to the Manzanar Riot of December 6, 1942]?

MI: Tell us about *inu*.

JW: Well, see, I was still young yet, but I don't know those things but then, you know, there was a lot of commotion out there you know, and people said, "You're not supposed to have cameras. You're not supposed to have weapons" you know. And so, we knew the rules already. We just know the rules. And then we know that somebody's watching us up there. And so, don't talk too much, keep quiet. That kind of rules that we had. But there was a big commotion, and then you know, somebody had captured one guy, and they said that he was, I guess, he was spying on his people over there and he was Japanese.

MI: Remember the name?

JW: No, I don't. But then, they started beating him up, yeah. That's all they had to do.

MI: Did you see that?

JW: Well, I saw the crowd, you know. But then my mother said, "Go, go inside! You're not supposed to see, you know, that kind." So, we were very protected. Then I hear what the older people were saying, because I was older already, yeah.

MI: How old were you?

JW: I was seven already, seven and a half, already. And so, we hear that kind of stuff. And then, I guess when the military said, "Okay, you know, all you guys, you know, you guys got infection, you have all catch cold." You know we had to go take our tonsils out. Did you know that?

MI: No.

JW: They line us up, all the kids. My sister and I, we were just terrified, you know. We don't know what we were going through. And we see these kids coming out of the surgical ward, yeah.

MI: As far as you know, your parents didn't have a choice?

JW: Probably not. I don't know, you know. And they said, "Oh, that's the best thing" because that was the fad, yeah. Remember, people said, "Hey, take your tonsils out, it's not doing you any good" right? And yet today, it's the opposite, right? So, we were all lined up and then, I didn't know what...we were terrified. My sister and I just hugging each other. They're calling our names, one by one. So, the next thing, we were in the recovery room. All the kids lined up in cots, you know, some crying and all that so... And then, you know why is it painful? That kind of stuff. So, I remember that. I was

really terrified. And then, I didn't know what was going on and we were bleeding. Oh, God. Anyway, that was not a good memory. Anyway, that's how we were treated, like cows yeah, like cattle. So, everybody had to do that kind of stuff. [Clears her throat] But we had chance to learn piano lessons, you know. All the mothers there, they had nothing to do. I mean, you know...

MI: So, they had pianos in Tule Lake?

JW: Yeah.

MI: Did they have that in Jerome?

JW: No, I cannot remember that.

MI: In general, if you were to compare, say, Jerome to Tule Lake, what kind of things come to mind? How were they different? Or were they different?

JW: I thought that Tule Lake was more...because my dad was there now, right, you have your family unit, so it became better. Yeah, better.

MI: It's better. You had the [whole] family there, whereas in Jerome, you didn't know if and when you were going to see your father.

JW: Right. And then, they allowed Japanese school, you know.

MI: They didn't have Japanese school in Jerome?

JW: No. Only English school, maybe only for half a day. But then, you know, people had organized games, because my memory was better then. And so, I remember those, and I remember the guards looking with the rifle. And so...then, my other uncle came. See, [my mother's] three brothers were in the military. And so, Tom was injured in the beach landing, not in Italy, not Normandy, but it was another one. So, he talks, but he doesn't talk too much about the war. But he said that he got shot, yeah, in the leg. So, you know, they land at the beach, right, and then they're running on the sand right, and of course, the German machine gun nests, right, were just you know, killing all these soldiers yeah, on the beach. But he got caught on his leg, so he was just trying to, you know, block himself up from the bullet, you know. Then, he said, the one medic came, and they have that sulfur, yeah, powder, to put on his wound, you know. Because he was like that for about two, three days. He couldn't move, you know.

MI: Was he an infantryman?

JW: Yeah, with the 100th Battalion. So, he's telling us that, you know, if the guy didn't put that thing on, he would have been dead, already, because of poisoning and all. So, after the war, he was sent to Wisconsin. There was a military hospital there, and so, was Shelby, I can't remember. And so, he was there. And then, after the war, he tried to look

for the guy, the medic, yeah, but couldn't find the guy. But his memory is that, you know, he was so trapped, he couldn't move for that three days. But then he settled in Wisconsin and married one *haole* lady, and my grandmother was [gag and laughter]--but you know she was a volunteer--and they got married, had a child and so he lived there. So, for him to come home and bring a *haole*, it was really hard, if you know [how] it is. Because my grandma was just so...but anyway, he came home. The family you know, was happy to have him alive. So, he lived a happy life, you know.

MI: This is the uncle that took you folks from Jerome to Louisiana? You're talking about a different uncle now?

JW: Yeah. I have two uncles, yeah. Tule Lake was my mother's younger brother.

MI: What was his name?

JW: His name was Noriyuki Fukuda. And he just got in the service with the ... I think was, I can't remember what infantry. But he came to visit my mom. I don't know how he was able to get to meet us. But he brought a whole box of candies and all that kind of stuff, right. We never had Babe [Baby] Ruth, you know, so it was such a treat. I kinda remember that. It affected the kids more. And then, he came, right after that, the war ended, yeah. But then the women there, they had nothing to do, really, productive and all that, so they all took up knitting, crocheting. I brought back beautiful crochet bedspread. And you know, it takes a year to do all that and all the women, they help out and they did that. My mother used to knit beautiful sweaters, you know, and so she brought that home. But the bedspread was so darn heavy, you hardly can carry that, but she brought all that home.

MI: So, you still have some of those things?

JW: I kept it and kept it and, you know, the threading was so unraveling that I kinda gave it away, or I don't know what I did with it. But that was their joy, you know, the women's joy.

JK: Yeah, the crafts.

JW: Yeah. And then the men. You know, ministers are just bookies--read, read, read, write, write, write, you know. But some of his friends that he made were from San Diego and they were farmers, you know. So, they would have beautiful garden, you know, out in the barracks [in Tule Lake]. Not like Jerome. Jerome, you know, I mean, I didn't see any beautiful flowers, vegetables, because of the soil, I think. You know, I brought back some stuff from Jerome...the dirt, because it was like, it was really hot there. And then, the dirt...

MI: Wait, when did you bring back this dirt?

JW: It wasn't the dirt, but it was like...their soil was like pebbles.

MI: No, I mean you went to visit Jerome later?

JW: No, when I left Jerome.

MI: You brought it to Tule Lake?

JW: Yeah. We kinda carried it home.

MI: In a container.

JW: Yeah.

MI: You still have that?

JW: I think I still have that. I gotta look for it. [Everyone chuckles] So anyway, but then, Tule Lake...

MI: Why did you take this dirt from Jerome?

JW: Because they were pretty stones. They were real pretty, colorful.

MI: So, more stones, not really dirt.

JW: Yeah, not dirt, not dirt, yeah, so I brought [it] back. And then, my mom brought back a lot of...you know, the men would have wood, and they would make, what you call, pins and there were birds, and they'd paint that stuff, you know. And they do that kind of stuff and then...Tule Lake was a lake, yeah. They had a lot of shells, like that. And then of course, the Indian tribes were close by, too. Because we could find arrowheads, you know, the flint arrowhead, too.

MI: So, you have some of those things, too? Birds and...

JW: My dad took it all. Yeah, right. He took all those [to Japan]. And then, but anyway, because we were older, we could do more things, and do more things. But anyway, my dad, when we went back to Hawaii, he still made contact with his friends at Tule Lake.

MI: Do you remember some of the names?

JW: Oh, not the names. Oh my gosh, no.

MI: You have any letters or anything?

JW: No letters. It's just that, maybe...I don't know if I have pictures.

MI: Did he go back for the reunions?

JW: Yeah. He went back to L.A. and then made a special trip to San Diego because he met this guy, the farmer, and he has a big farm, [a] chrysanthemum farm in San Diego. And I don't know whether he still has that. I wish I knew his name. Because now, he's, you know, his family had taken over.

MI: So, you mentioned some of the gardens and flowers at Tule Lake. Your father didn't do those things, so how was your area?

JW: Oh, no. That's why this gentleman did a lot of farming for them.

MI: For you folks? For your yard?

JW: Yeah, yeah. In fact, the whole area. They all got together. It's like a community.

MI: So, they did it for everybody, not just their section.

JW: Exactly. So, everybody, you know, got together, because they got, you know, what else can you do? Of course, they have KP duty. They gotta wash the toilet.

MI: So, your father did things like that. KP duty.

JW: Yeah, yeah. He never did [at home] but he had to.

MI: So, where did he get his books and things to read?

JW: I don't know. I don't know who distributed them, but he was able to get some books.

MI: Did he keep a diary or anything?

JW: No. He may have, okay, but...remember now, when my dad came back here, we went back to Molokai. His dad passed away in 1950. And then he went to Japan. When he went back to Japan, the church [was] all burned down, yeah, during the war. So, I'm talking about my grandfather's church. So, this was the era after the war. So, he took back a lot of the pictures, his stuff. I may find it there because now, you know...

MI: Find it where?

JW: In his church.

MI: In Japan. Do you plan to do that someday?

JW: Well, I have a brother there, too.

MI: A brother at the church?

JW: Yeah, because my brother is a minister now, took over the church.

MI: Same church? What church is this?

JW: Soto Mission.

MI: In Japan?

JW: Yeah.

MI: Where in Japan was [is this church]?

JW: Shinjuku. So, there's a big property. You know how [was] Japan built, right? Get lot of stores, yeah, small businesses around like that, but he has this big graveyard and then the church.

MI: Your grandfather is buried over there?

JW: Yeah. Yeah. His mother and his stepmother and all that. But anyway, the father, when he went back to Japan, you know, he saw that the church was gone and just the old living quarters [remained] that they had. So, what they had to do was...to make a long story short, my grandfather had a huge property in Asakusa. You know *nakamise* [shopping street lined with stores and stalls]? There's a tourist attraction over there. And so, outside of that, he had a big property. So, the grandfather built this big church for my father's half-sister. Okay, because my father's mother passed away when she was thirty-seven. That's why, my father, in reality, was the only Nishizawa. And so, that church was given to his half-sister. And so, when my father went there, there's no church, right? So, he had to go and then raise money to build his church there. So, it still stands there, the new church. That's where my brother took over the church. So, anyway, that was after the war.

JK: So, he went [to Japan], but you folks came back to Hawaii?

JW: No, we decided...that time, you know, people didn't know what to do, yeah, whether to go back to Japan. And so, my father was so adamant. "I'm going back to Japan, I don't care. You guys gotta..." So, my mother said that it was a big issue. She said, "Well, you go back yourself and you know we're going to stay here, you know." So, she said, "What is there in Japan after the war?" Because everything was destroyed. No more food. You know, it was really bad.

MI: Your mother knew that? Somehow they were getting information.

JW: Oh, yeah, she knew. Right, she knew that.

MI: And she was sharing that with your father.

JW: Yeah.

MI: But still, he wanted to ...

JW: Go back, you know. And so, my mother said...because his father was still alive then, remember. And so, he said, well, he has to go back. But anyway, they decided that that's true. What about us? And so, there's no future for us, if we're you know, a ward of the country, you know. So, we came back to Hawaii.

MI: How did that happen? Like, okay, so, the whole family is in Tule Lake. Did you all leave the same time?

JW: Yeah.

MI: Your father went first and then you folks?

JW: No, no, we all went together.

MI: But you just got on different ships? And he went to ...

JW: Probably, right.

MI: Do you remember that trip?

JW: To come home?

MI: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Oh, I think we came together but I cannot remember.

MI: You mean your father came to Hawaii and then went to Japan?

JW: No. Remember after the war, we all came home, right?

MI: You all came to Hawaii?

JW: Yeah, and then, he decided, yeah, let's go back to Hawaii. And so, he got reassigned to Molokai.

MI: Oh, okay, yeah, yeah, you mentioned...

JW: Okay. And so then, we had to go [to] school there and all that. So, we had to adjust again.

MI: So how many years after the war, did you live on Molokai?

JW: We went almost right away.

MI: Yeah. And then, how many years did you folks stay there?

JW: From that point on, I was eight already, yeah, and I went to school, so I was fourteen, yeah, so I got out of elementary school at fourteen, eighth grade. And then from there, I went to a private school in town.

MI: Did you folks move to Oahu?

JW: I did. My parents were still on Molokai.

MI: Oh. When did your father go back to Japan, then?

JW: 1950. So, when I was already going into high school, the father [my grandfather] died and then he went. So, it was 1950.

MI: And he took your mother with him?

JW: No. He said, "Well, you gotta wait here" because he didn't have the money. He didn't have a place to stay because everything was burned, yeah, during the war. So, my mother had to stay back there.

MI: And she lived on Molokai?

JW: No.

MI: She moved with you to Oahu.

JW: After 1950...we moved out of Molokai, okay, because then he got reassigned to Kauai. There was a church on Kauai, the Wahiawa church.

MI: Wait, wait. There was a Wahiawa church on Kauai? Where in Kauai?

JW: If you remember, Kauai had sugar cane camp, yeah, all over. That was the main industry on Kauai. And so, it's called McBryde Camp on Kauai. And so, there was this Japanese community, right, inside this cane field. So, if you go over there, I think, there's a road going through, into this cane field, right, and then you're going to see many plantation homes. You know those old plantation homes, yeah? And, in the middle of that plantation was a church there. And then, every church get this big, what do you call that? Like a fortress with the bell on it. So, if you go today, you'll [they'll] still have that.

MI: What's the name of that church?

JW: I should know, I should know. But it's still with the Soto-Shu. Yeah, the same sect you know. And so, he took over that church. Ozawa *sensei* got reassigned to Waipahu. So,

the ministers got moved around. And Morita *sensei* came to take over my father's church.

MI: On Molokai.

JW: My father moved and took over Ozawa *sensei*'s [church]. You know Ozawa *sensei*?
[Pause] You know Walter Ozawa?

MI: I know the name, but...

JW: He was born in Tule Lake. His family, his older brothers were all at camp. In fact, Donald is with Craigside [retirement home]. You might want to talk to Donald. He was older than us; he may have more memory. Donald Ozawa.

MI: You know him?

JW: You know, I met him at his mother's funeral.

MI: Can you introduce us please?

JW: No, but I can make contact and see.

MI: Oh, okay.

JW: Yeah, because he was older, so he would have more memory. There was another guy, Richard. He was about fifteen when he was [there]. And he [was] telling me that he was at certain camp, you know. Because we were all in different camps, right. So, he might be another one you might want to talk to.

MI: But as far as the Osumis, you don't really have internment camp contact.

JW: No, he was at Gila.

MI: You met them after.

JW: Yeah. Because it was later on that I found out that they were also in the camp. See, they don't know. Paul doesn't want to talk about it, you know, his older brother. 'Cause Norman doesn't remember, he was only three. And he [']s telling me his story, right. But then, I said "Whoa, Paul didn't tell me that he was in a camp" and he said, "Oh yeah, he was over there." And I said, "Well, how did your father get, you know, put in a camp?" Well, the dad was a Christian minister, right? And then so, but then he was born in Japan. But anyway, Paul never said anything so he's one of those that shut the mouth, you know, and said, "Paul, how come you didn't tell me all that, you know?" [chuckle] And he said, "Oh, I was over there..." but he... lot of people don't talk about it. Yeah, so it's kinda sad.

[MI and JW discuss people that she met after they were interned, not during internment. MI and JK mentioned they interviewed Paul Osumi, Jr. and Norman Osumi and Norman learned so much from Paul.]

JW: It was a surprise to me because we went high school together, Paul, at Mid-Pacific, yeah, we were boarding there so...all this time and then, one class, two years ago, I found out, "You were there?" [He said] "Oh, I was in Gila." [I said] "Where's that?" You know, but then, he's quiet, too. But that's when I found out.

MI: So, you're kinda young, but through all of this, did it [experience] change your father? Was he a different man when he came back?

JW: You know, let me tell you something. When we went back and we settled on Molokai, you know, and then we started to live regular lives, you know. Church members came back because they didn't have any Buddhist church, right, so the membership kinda grew, you know. But he was more open. He likes to do things with the young people, you know, and do the community [things]. So, he would go out to Oahu and hire entertainment, and they would come [to Molokai] and they would have, you know, the Nisei Orchestra. You don't know that kind of stuff. You don't remember the Nisei Club? They would come and play, because we don't have entertainment on Molokai, right. And so he would have them come and the church would...you know, *Hanamatsuri* [festival that commemorates birth of the Buddha], and all the students would wear their kimono and do the dance. So, the community was so happy that they have this outside stimulation, and all that. And my mom used to sew the kimonos. So, that's how active [they were]. And she would come [to] Oahu and learn bon dance and she would go back and teach the students. So, we did that in Kaunakakai. We went to CPC [California Packing Corporation] and we went to Kualapuu, Maunaloa. And we'd go out there and teach the community there. So, the community was very active, until my dad and my mom, you know, moved to Kauai.

MI: So, he really resumed his previous life, more or less. He actually did more.

JW: Yeah, yeah, yeah. More. Right. And so that's what they did. So, when my mom and dad left, there was nothing to carry on the activities. Yeah, my dad was really active, he was...

MI: How long were they on Kauai before he went back to Japan?

JW: They were there ten years.

MI: Ten years? And all this time, he wanted to go back to Japan? Just waiting for an opportunity?

JW: Well, he know [knew] that there was no church there, except for the one that his half-sister had gotten. And so, he doesn't have money, right, to go and build a church there,

yeah, but, so he never went back until his father passed away. And then when his father passed away, he had no choice. He had to go.

MI: The church called him?

JW: Yeah, yeah. So, but that's what my life in Molokai was...was a happy life to me, you know. We did lot of stuff and thanks to my parents, though, so the community was very, very active you know. We had more members and all that. And of course, there's this Baptist minister's wife would come, and she would tell them, "You guys are idol worshipers." I didn't know what she was talking about, but you know, the prejudice you know, had come out.

MI: On Molokai?

JW: Yeah. And so, there was a strong Southern Baptist Church established [there] so they said, "Oh, don't go to that church" you know. There was some kind of friction. So, I told my dad about it, but he said, "Don't listen to that kind of stuff." I said, "Okay." But it hurt my feelings, too. Just like, "You guys were prisoners. You guys, you know, deserved to have been taken away" or something like that. That kind of stuff.

MI: They brought up those kinds of issues?

JW: That kind of stuff, you know.

MI: Did that hurt your father?

JW: It did hurt him, but he didn't show it, you know. It hurt me though. And so, he said, "No, don't worry about all that." They said we're idol worshipers and we're not giving up good omens to the community. And that's the kind of stuff that they would talk about us. But the community was still strong, you know. So, my mother and others got the Japanese school going, too, so it kind of normalized the life. So, [it] brings back a lot of memories if I go back there.

MI: Now, so, your family, then, is separated. Your father is in Japan and your mother and you folks are not. What happens after that?

JW: Yeah, so my mom...there was no place for us to stay, but we were already older, yeah, and so we don't want to go back there. And it's not a culture place where we would be happy so...But my mother had one child from Tule Lake. At that time, you had all these babies, yeah, wartime babies.

MI: Your sister?

JW: My brother.

MI: Oh, there were three of you.

JW: Just me and my sister during the wartime, the two. Then when the family get together and everybody had the wartime babies, like Walter.

MI: I mean your brother was born in Tule Lake camp. What is his name?

JW: Roy Hiromichi Nishizawa. So, by the time we came back, he was about six months I think. And Walter [Ozawa] was born in Tule Lake. So, you have lot of that, babies born during that time. But, I don't think they have any memories. But Walter has about two older brothers, you know, that were older than us and they were there, so they would know a lot.

MI: Still living?

JW: Yeah, yeah. I'll try to see if I can make contact. I'll call Walter.

MI: That would be very helpful because as many of these that we can...

JW: Yeah, I'll call Walter. Norman can call Walter, too. But anyway...but you're going to find that all coming out, so...

MI: So, but ... so your family never got together again. I mean, your father lived there [Japan], you folks lived here. Visited each other periodically. Never lived together.

JW: Yeah, right, right. So, until such time that he had to build the church, yeah...but by then already, when he came, he would stay. He wanted to move back, but then nobody...so he talked my brother into going over there. He talked my brother into going...and doing that that was [during] the Korean War, yeah.

MI: While he was there.

JW: It was Korean War, yeah.

MI: Oh, so, two of them were there, your father and your brother?

JW: Yeah, but my brother was drafted in the Korean War. So, he did come back, and got discharged and then he joined my dad. So, my mom was already, oh, she was kinda old already, yeah, and so was my dad, so...

MI: Wait, your brother went into the military? As a soldier, not as a...

JW: He was drafted. Those days, they were drafted. He got drafted, right, right. Yeah, so, then after he served, and then he came home.

MI: Then he went into the church.

JW: Right. He told the dad, his father, that he wanted to join the Sophia University. So, he went back there and then decided to carry on the church because there's nobody else to take over the church. So, so, such is life.

MI: Tell us a little bit about yourself, now, your life.

JW: My life? Oh, I got out of...well, that time, Kaunakakai didn't have a good high school, yeah...

JK: When were you born? Month and year?

JW: I was born in January 1937. Then I went to Mid-Pac [Mid-Pacific Institute]. Then I got a job, you know. And I got married and then I got two boys. But they never ask about the camp, you know, and I never really talk about the camp, you know. And so, I guess my kids are lucky--they're on peace time right now. And so, I have one grandchild, though from both sides. She's going to Boston University. But I don't talk about that [her camp experience] because she doesn't ask. Lot of people don't talk about it. You know, I talked to this psychologist, you know, clinical psychologist, and she told me that she has lot of clients my age or older, and the first thing she asked me is that "Oh, you're that age. Were you interned?" I said, "Yeah." And she said, "Oh, that's interesting." So, she was going to tell me, from talking to her clients, yeah, that the people who had gone to internment, so she find [found] that a lot of them had this inner feeling about that period that they were gone, you know. So, I was so interested in that but then we never continued. But she said she talked to a lot of them [who] felt that guilt.

MI: Is that what you feel inside, or you felt? Guilt?

JW: I felt that when I was younger, you know, when I came back.

MI: What were you feeling guilty about?

JW: What they did wrong. What was wrong, you know, why...

MI: Why your family?

JW: Right, and then why, you know, we were separated. And then, you know, why we had to have that guard over there, you know. 'Cause we were young, right? Why is somebody there with a rifle, you know? So, that kind of thought goes through your mind and I felt that, well, so when I went back to Molokai, you know, then, you know, I got jeered [at]

MI: You did? By whom or from whom?

JW: Yeah. Well, not from my community, but you know, classmates, some classmates.

MI: Really? What would they say?

JW: They would say like, you know, “What were you doing in prison?” or something like that, you know. But I was told to just ignore those kinds of questions. So later on, you know, life just...

MI: What grade were you then when you had to go through these kind of things?

JW: I was eight. So, what is that? Fifth grade, sixth grade, sixth grade. About that time.

MI: Did the teachers help you, you know, did they know about it?

JW: There was one teacher. This one teacher who was a Japanese. But she was a strong Baptist Church, Baptist person and so she would tell everybody or tell her kids, yeah, “I am not, she’s Japanese” you know. But she’s teaching her own children, that “You’re not Japanese, you’re *haole*.” You know, so maybe she said that during the war because she was not taken or she didn’t go and so...

MI: Telling which other kids?

JW: Her own kids, that they’re *haole*.

MI: Her own children.

JW: Her own children, you know. That they’re not Japanese and they’re *haole*.

MI: How about in the classroom?

JW: She would mention something about, you know, that she’s part *haole* or she’s *haole*, and she’s not Japanese, so... That racial thing comes out, once in a while. But, at that time, we’re kinda naive, too, yeah. But it really made me kinda think, you know, that why they would say that. And then, this *haole* minister would come and say, “You guys are real idol worshipers. You guys [are] not really [a] church.” And all that kind of stuff. And I would cry and talk to my father about that. So, you know, again, he said, “*Gaman*” [Quiet endurance], you know--don’t think bad about that. A lot of stuff we had to, you know, just take it in and don’t say anything. Sometimes you want to retaliate but you’re not taught to retaliate, yeah. You say, “Oh you got to *gaman* and [just] take it” you know. Show tolerance. And that kind of stuff that they’d teach us.

MI: How about some of the other Japanese people [on Molokai]? Did they stand up and defend you?

JW: My friends were young too, yeah, so you know, they don’t understand. And so, they don’t know what we went through. Unless they ask--but they don’t ask--and they say, oh, maybe we just went someplace [on] vacation and came back, but... They don’t talk about it either. They don’t ask, I don’t know, but they don’t ask and then they can’t remember, you know. So, it’s hard because nobody wants to talk about it. Did you see

that documentary [“Relocation, Arkansas-Aftermath of Incarceration” (2016)] on PBS on Jerome, Arkansas?

MI: No.

JK: Yeah.

JW: You missed that.

MI: When?

JW: Haah...was last month.

JK: Recently, yeah.

JW: Really, about that guy and the mother. And he blamed the mother for being Japanese. And that they went into Jerome, Arkansas, and this son is telling that, you know, he was really ashamed of being Japanese and he blamed the parents, you know. And I think the father was from Hawaii, yeah. Went to, well, lived on the mainland and was taken in, and then incarcerated in Jerome. He said, “Why can’t Dad have stayed there in Hawaii?” something like that, you know, blaming the parents for how he felt, you know. But finally, he realized that he was wrong and then he apologized to the mother and the father. Because I think he was a rebel because he was fighting this thing, but he was a surfer, too, so he must have had love for Hawaii. But, finally, he had to say, you know, that he was sorry and he was naive. But that was the sad part. The mother was a piano teacher or something, yeah, and she was playing the piano.

JK: They’ll probably show it again.

JW: Yeah, you might want to call the PBS to see if they can show...they do sometimes, show it again. But that was good because he expressed a feeling that a lot of people had felt, you know, emotionally. But because we were so young, that we’re not as articulate to express our feelings you know. So, like my friend said, “Oh yeah, just *gaman*, you know, *gaman* [quiet endurance].” [Laughs]

MI: So, do you keep in touch with any of the internment camp people or do you go to reunions or anything like that?

JW: No, I never heard of reunions.

MI: You don’t feel like you want to go.

JW: No, no, no. I’m very open. I’m very open and that would be nice, you know, and...but I don’t know, I just never got involved.

MI: You don’t feel like you need to?

JW: No. If there was, I never knew that you know, there was one. The only thing is, I did go back to L.A. to visit because my dad had made a sizable donation to that museum [Japanese American National Museum].

MI: Oh, he went to the museum.

JW: Yeah. And, then my brother. And I would send an annual donation to them. So when I visited them, I kinda cried, you know. They had the desk, yeah, Japanese school desk, yeah, and then...I remember that desk was so unique you know, and so it brought back a lot of memories.

MI: From Jerome?

JW: Jerome, yeah, and Tule Lake I think, was. And then they had clothing. But they had lot of pictures, yeah. They wanted photos, photos, you know. I have some photos to show you, the barracks and my friends. If I had to, I wouldn't know where they are, you know. All the families had been separated; they've been scattered around so... You know that formative years, it's really hard, yeah, to say, "Oh, I'll see you again." You know, it's not [like] that. Just that memories come, you know. You live with the memories. My brother, of course, he cannot remember.

MI: So, at this point, do you think you want to share it [story] with your family, or do you think, if they're not interested...

JW: No. If I get everybody [to] know, they're so busy, yeah. And I don't mind talking about it, you know. Although I do, you know, ask my sister. But like Paul [Osumi, Jr.] she doesn't have much memory. But she did keep a lot of the pictures. I'll go call her up and see if she has them.

JK: Yeah, it's a good way to start.

MI: If you could gather them, you know, and maybe come back someday and share with us, that would be very nice. And we could maybe copy some pictures.

JW: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Right, right, right. I'll try to see what else I have, you know, but...gee, those are just kinda gone, yeah.

JK: The pictures is a good place to start.

JW: Yes, that's what they say you know. But I wish...

MI: It sounds like your father just accepted [the experience] and moved on with his life. And didn't turn back.

JW: Exactly. Yeah, because some people were so bitter, yeah. I mean, totally bitter. But, no, my dad, it seemed to me, [was] more happy-go-lucky personality, I think, yeah, so... Because that's why he was very interested in youth programs and making the community useful, and you know, because Molokai can be so boring. I mean, you know really boring. And so...(chuckle)

JK: Yeah, I think so.

MI: How about your mother? She lived her life on Oahu, I guess, most of it?

JW: Yeah, she lived with me. Yeah, she lived with her mother for a little while because the mother was aging. And they needed help, yeah, and then, her sister. So, my mom took care of her two sisters and her mother. And so, and the two sisters had no children, you know, so, but I still have a lot of pictures of her sisters and then, but they stayed on Oahu, the sisters.

JW: And then, my grandma.

MI: When did your mom pass away?

JW: 2005.

MI: And your father?

JW: My father, oh, '84, something like that. Yeah.

JK: Oh, quite a while before her.

MI: Did your mother ever talk about the camp experience?

JW: Rarely. Unless I asked her.

MI: When you asked her, what did she say?

JW: She won't go into detail. She'll say, "Oh, yeah, we did that. Oh, we did that" you know. But I didn't prod her, so that's why. Maybe Paul did, but I didn't. But Paul is so quiet, too, yeah. [JW talks about the Osumi family.] But Norman is doing a good job, I cannot, yeah. I only recently found out, that's why.

JK: Oh, really?

JW: You know, and Paul is...[laughter]. And so, unless you prod Paul, you know, he rarely...I found out through his wife. [Laughter] But anyway, then when I called Paul, we started talking and I told Paul [Osumi, Jr.] you know, "It should be part of the history, part of the kids' history book that they sent." But then that chapter is just nowhere to be

seen. So, I hope that, you know, when the children take up history they would know that, because my granddaughter doesn't know.

MI: This is almost the tail end [of the story] at this point. After you folks are gone, there's nothing.

JW: Yes, right, right, right. So, you know, that's why I ordered the books [*Today's Thought: Rev. Paul Osumi*, by Norman Osumi]. I sent one to my sister. She said she might leave it here, but...

MI: Which book is this?

JW: The one he put together.

MI: The one Norman did.

JW: So, I think that it should be in the history book, you know, that chapter [of American history]. But then, of course, the issue about the Muslim coming up, too.

JK: Sure. Yeah, yeah.

JW: But it should be part of the history book. It doesn't have anything regarding that, that part of, you know, United States [history].

JK: Yes, they should learn about it because it keeps happening over and over.

JW: Oh, my father was swearing...my father was, you know, for a minister, he was swearing about [the experience].

MI: So, he was angry.

JW: The President, and then, and especially, yeah...you know, when, was it, not Truman. Truman allowed, no, no...it was Roosevelt, yeah.

MI: FDR.

JW: Yeah, yeah.

MI: Wait, when was he swearing, about Roosevelt?

JW: About the presidents. (Laughter). Authorized the, what you call, the atomic bomb.

JK: Oh, I see.

MI: The atomic bomb.

JW: That's why he was so...

MI: You folks were in Tule Lake at the time.

JW: Yeah, yeah. That's why my mom said, "Why you want to go back there?"

MI: Do you remember any kind of commotion or anything at that time in Tule Lake?

JW: Oh, when they heard about it, all the people were out, talking, you know.

MI: Really. They heard about it then.

JW: Yeah, they were talking about it and then...

MI: What did your father say about it?

JW: Then, you know, I mean, he'd swear at FDR. And then he also hated Truman, too.

MI: It was Truman. What did your mom say?

JW: She didn't say much, you know. But it was the men, yeah, going out there and talking about it and coming back. So, all the news came out and all that, so...but as young as we were, you know, the children, you know, were able to kinda separate all that. So, but I wish ... but I wasn't such a writer, and I couldn't...but then, Norman's father [Rev. Paul Osumi], he journalised a lot of stuff, didn't he? [JW, JK and MI mention Norman's research]. Not as much as he needed to.

MI: I'm not sure. I'm not sure.

JW: Oh, really?

JK: Norman had a lot of material to work off of.

JW: Yeah, right, right, right, yeah, so...

JK: But glad he did what he did.

JW: I know that there was one classmate, too, in my class, Paul's class, there was another guy, his father was a Christian minister. But he was not, you know, incarcerated. Not all of them [were].

JK: Not all of them, especially the Christian ministers.

JW: Yeah, right, right.

MI: So, actually, this experience has impacted your life.

JW: In a way, because my sister, too, she kinda felt bitter. She felt that she had not had the full education that she deserved. And then because, you know, we had half-a-day school, we didn't have the education that you normally would see that the kids have today. So, she felt that she was cheated out of that.

MI: So, I'm sorry, did you folks go on to college and everything?

JW: I did. I went two years. And then, my sister, she didn't go. She was eighteen after she left Hawaii--at that time, yeah, people were seeking jobs, a lot of the local, young local guys were going to L.A., moving to Los Angeles, looking for jobs.

MI: Did she feel that this experience interfered or interrupted her educational life, and that's why she was never able to...?

JW: Yeah, right, right.

MI: How about you? Do you think that the quality of education, disrupted education, did that change your life, you think, that you were never, you couldn't accomplish as much as you wanted to?

JW: Well, I was fortunate that my parents had sent me to private school you know, after [camp] and I know that they had to struggle to do that. But...no, not really. I felt that, you know, I could conquer this world [laughs].

MI: But your sister wasn't like that. Handicapped.

JW: Yeah, she was kinda bitter about that, although she doesn't have full memory. But she was only what, four, yeah. But then she remembers Tule Lake. She's one of them [who] won't talk about it.

MI: Actually, it was quite a long period, yeah, because your father was picked up at the beginning, and you were there until the end. Four years, so...

JW: Right. So, yeah, sometimes, yeah, my dad took with him a lot of stuff, you know, his memories [memorabilia] to Japan. He sometimes liked to talk about it. But I think, when we go back [to Japan], I'm gonna see if I can take it all back, you know. I don't know how he got those pictures. But he had some nice pictures so...

JK: Sometimes, if you find the family is not interested now, you know, if you have them come here and then we organize it, then when the family is ready, there it is, you know.

JW: Uh, huh. Right, right, right. But I understand that they're going to try make Tule Lake a national park, yeah. It came out in the paper, you know, so...

JK: Oh, yeah. Because Norman Osumi's papers are here.

JW: Oh, really? Oh, oh, oh, I see.

JK: Yeah, in fact, we talked him into organizing it. [Chuckle]

JW: Oh, really? Amazing.

JK: And it was good for him, because once he did that, he said, "Oh, I can write it."

JW: Right, right, right.

JK: Then he could write the book [*Today's Thought*].

JW: Yeah, 'cause his dad didn't come home right away, yeah. Because he was ill.

JK: Yeah, right, right, that's right, yeah.

JW: So, they give a lot of credit to the mother. She was holding the family together, you know. So, then, of course, because her husband was ill, yeah.

JK: Yeah, yeah.

JW: And Norman gave...

MI: That's actually why they went up. They thought he might die. So, they were told to come up.

JK: Yeah, right, right, right.

MI: But your mother, same thing. She held the family together.

JW: Yeah, you know, so she was a pretty strong woman. They had to be, I think, you know. She didn't want to burden her mother. And she had how many brothers, yeah, six of them, three of them... You know my grandma almost had a, what do you call that, she had a depression because three sons were drafted, yeah. And then when my uncle got hurt, she totally had a breakdown. You know, so during that time, yeah.. you know the doors had this opening where you can see outside, the glass opening? That was a design of those homes, so they would hang the three stars. Remember that? The military would give you the flag with three stars and she would hang it right by the window. But they came out okay.

JK: Yeah, oh, that's good, yeah.

JW: And of course, my husband's family--my father-in-law had a store, you know, and so, he wasn't taken. But he kept running the mom-and-pop store in Kalihi. But then they would hide lot of stuff [from Japan], yeah. You know, and my girlfriend was saying,

whoa, yeah, when the war broke out, everybody got the things they got from Japan, yeah. Even money! They buried the money, you know. And when they were excavating Aiea side for development, they'd find it! [Chuckle] So they did bury a lot of stuff. I think my father-in-law too, they buried all the swords. I don't know what happened. They were scared. Everybody was scared. And we had to paint the windows black, yeah. So, that's the part, was really stressful.

MI: You mentioned, you know, like your mother, when it came time to leave Tule Lake, she said, "No, [we're not going to Japan], we're going to Hawaii" you know. Was she always strong like that? Or did she become like that because of the experience? Because you may have not known how she was, before the war, I guess.

JW: No, because being a teacher, she organized lot of stuff. She's a strong woman.

MI: So, she was already a strong woman. Because it seems to me, she was pretty firm at that point, "We're going back to Hawaii."

JW: Yeah, right, right, right.

MI: And your father came back.

JW: She's the one that really, I mean, I mean ... she'd teach Japanese after school, then she would help organize, you know, the classes and all these activities--and evening [classes] for senior citizen[s], you know. She would have sewing class and she would have doll making class. She would teach *ocha* [tea] and then flower arrangements. So, she used to go to school and then she'd come back and teach them, you know. Because they don't know where to go to get all those lessons, right? No, she did all that so...

JK: My goodness, very strong.

JW: But anyway, it brought back kinda sad memories, but...

MI: Yeah, thank you for sharing your story.

JK: Thank you very much.

JW: No, no, I learned a lot, too. I did, but maybe I should talk more to my granddaughter, you know, and to my son and sons, yeah.

MI: And we will have this recording and this story for you.

JW: Oh, really? I don't like to hear myself [laughter].

MI: You don't have to show this to your family, your children, and your grandchildren.

JK: They might just want to hear, once they know...

[End of interview]