

Arthur Iwasaki
9/1/10
12891NW Majestic Sequoia Way

Art's introductions

1:00: Born in Hillsboro on the family farm on October 27th, 1919. He went to grade school in David Hill elementary. Went to high school at BW Barnes high school in 1938.

2:04: Art remembers that his parents started out clearing the fifty acres that they bought; it was all stumps. They started out as a dairy with 30 cows. They shipped the milk to the Carnation Condensery in Hillsboro. Around 1928 they sold the cows and started growing strawberries and other vegetables.

3:40: In the 30's they rented another farm out in Banks, that's where they grew strawberries also. They hired people of the Midwest. Banks was called "Tent City" because all of the people escaping the dust bowl set up tents so they could stay and pick the berries and make money.

6:13: They had a lot of hired help, because they couldn't do it all themselves.

8:23: During the depression years the Japanese families that were living in town couldn't raise gardens so there was a company in Seattle that would come plant and raise and pick the strawberries with them, and then take the strawberries and sell them and give them a cut of the profit.

11:04: Info about Art's experiences with World War 2 and his frustrations with Japanese discrimination during the war.

"When you came back to the states what did you find?"

15:58: Art came home in November 1946. He helped his oldest brother take control of the farm and clean it up. He worked there for two years. Lots of Japanese people were gone because they rented land instead of owned it, so they weren't able to keep it.

"How has your life in Washington County progressed since the war?"

19:24: It's changed a lot. Lots of split earnings between family members. So he used his last money from his GI Bill and bought his own farm in Tanasbourne. He bought 12 acres- a filbert orchard. He went to school in Gresham to learn a little bit about nursery farming because he didn't think he could provide adequately for his family on 12 acres of filberts. He took down a few trees at a time and replaced them with greenhouses. This was 1979.

21:33: In Japanese tradition, the oldest son always inherits the farm, so since he was third in line he broke away to become more successful. He also wanted to keep the peace in the family.

23:45: Info on Art's wife and kids. His wife died in 2005 ☹ His oldest son took over his nursery business.

26:28: The nursery was at 190th and Cornell, where Whole Foods is now. The people he rented it off to fixed it up and re-named it "Max and Hildy's." (I went there all the time!!)

Lots of information about his kids, pretty off topic.

38:40: Washington County grew one of the largest acreages of strawberries in the nation right after the depression years.

"How has Washington County changed in your eyes?"

40:28: Oregon is one of the leading states as far as nursery business is concerned. It was being overdone, however; it's easy to send fruits and nuts overseas, but it's impossible to send nursery flowers and plants overseas. Art doesn't see a very successful future for the agrarian culture of Washington County. Also, the competition depends on the flowers you grow. You can't ship annuals very far, so any other flowers generally do better.

43:10: "Well, farming has been good; been good to my family. So, I'm fortunate. Washington County has been very good to me."