

**Oral History Interview with
Manzanar National History Site
July 22, 2010**

Informant: Aya Fujii & Taka Mizote

Interviewer: Richard Potashin

Transcriber: Lauren Scher

R= Richard

A= Aya

T= Taka

R: This is an oral history interview for the Manzanar National Historic Site. This morning we're talking with Aya Fujii and Taka Mizote and our interview is taking place at the Residence Inn at the Portland Airport. The date of the interview is July twenty-second, two thousand and ten. The interviewer is Richard Potashin and our videographer is Mark (Hatchman). We'll be talking with Taka and Aya about their experiences being removed from their communities during World War II and sent briefly to the Portland Assembly Center and then later on to the Farm Labor Security Administration Camp in eastern Oregon. Our interview will be archived in the parks library and do I have your permission, both of your permission to go ahead and conduct our interview?

A= Yes

T= Yes

R= Thank you both so much, I'm really honored to have you here this morning to share your stories. I'd like to start out the interview acquiring a little family background. First of all, can you, both of you give us your date of birth and where you were born?

T= I was born on May thirtieth, nineteen twenty-four.

R= and where?

T= In Hillsboro Oregon.

A= I was born March thirty-first, nineteen twenty-seven in Hillsboro.

R= and what were your given names at birth?

T= Taka. Uh-huh.

R= and, uh?

A= and mine was Aya and I think we're out of the five girls; we're the only ones with Japanese names.

R= And why would that be?

A= (laughs) We have no idea, because the rest have English names.

R= Why don't we go over the, your other brothers and sisters, maybe starting the oldest first?

T= Ok...the oldest....

R= Give them...Give us their name and maybe just a little bit of what your remember most about them and what sticks out in your mind about your....

A= Why don't you go ahead?

T= The eldest was George. Um....we all just had one...none of us had middle names (laughs). George was the eldest and of course he, uh, he was born in Washington, **Sumner**, Washington. And the rest of the family were all born in Hillsboro. And being the eldest he always took on the responsibility of taking care of the rest of us.

A= mh-hmm.

T= And then Akira, (coughs), we call him Ike (coughs again)...well he was a big part of the success of the farm too because he....before he went into service. And then Arthur, um, well, in a way the three brothers were the ones that really held, you know, took care of the economics of the family and the farm. And then Kate....and she being the eldest of the girls was like a second mother to all of us. And myself, and then Aya, and Dorothy and Rose.

(Aya and Taka pause and make facial gestures appearing to be reflecting on their siblings)

R= Were you born at the farm or um, did your mom have to go to a hospital to deliver you?

T= We were all born at home I think.

A= I know my youngest sister was born at home. That's just what I remember.

T= I think we were all born... (laughs)

A= Uh huh.

R= Would a mid-wife...?

A= Probably a mid-wife.

T= Uh huh.

A= (agrees)

R= And how about your, uh, both of your names? Since you're the only two that had Japanese names. Are you familiar with the meaning of your Japanese, first and last names?

T= People ask...but....well actually my name is, uh, you know a lot of men in Japan are named Taka. (laughs) It should be **Takako** but I don't like the Ko on it so...I've been on....you know.

A= And I think my name is, uh, derived from Iris. **Ayame** is an iris. I'm not called **Ayame** but then....uh huh.

R= And your maiden name?

T= Our maiden name is Iwosaki.

A= mh hmm.

T= Uh huh.

R= Tell us a little bit about your father, he was the first one to come to America. Um...what was his name?

T= Yasuchici...um in fact we have the whole history of written up on our parents.

A= He was called Billy (Taka laughs) by his neighbors cause Yasuchici was too hard to pronounce. Yeah. But he was a very laid back, um, man. My mother was more of the, uh, you know...yeah.

T= We were a matriarchal family. (laughs)

A= Yeah.

R= Where in Japan did your father come from?

A= They were born in um....

T= Shigake

A= Shigaken. I don't know whether you know...

T= Japan.

A= Anything about the little provinces....the little hamlets that they have...

R= I'm learning.

A= You have heard. Uh huh....And the probably knew each others families...and mom came over as a picture bride. Mh hmm. And dad came over earlier. And, uh, you know he never went back to Japan once he came over. It's amazing. But he never went back and my mother has gone back several times. But, uh, it...like she was the middle of three sisters. And she came over when she was eighteen, on a boat. Yeah.

R= Do you know much about your father's early life in Japan?

T= Well I think he came, you know, in his teens, late teens. And, um, I don't know, story is he came with, as a stowaway (laughs). You know...and he went to Montana and then ventured into Seattle area...and...um...(to Aya) what did he do in Seattle?

A= I don't know but I heard that he lived in a boxcar.

T= You know.

A= Mh hmm.

R= Did he work on the railroad?

T= He could have...he could have. But he, he must have had con(voice trails off). See my dad's younger brother in Japan, married my mother's older sister. So they knew, you know, even they say picture bride, I, there must have been because that's how it happened and so, my first cousins, they, um, came to live in Vancouver. You know, I mean, the other...uncles and aunts...you know... So it was very interesting cause even though they're picture brides, they had con....(voice trails) they knew, they came from good blood I guess. You know what I'm saying?

R= Did you ever ask your father why he came to America? Or did he ever share that with you?

A= We probably never asked but, I mean they probably all came, as it, as an adventure too. I don't know when he was so young but he came over to make a fortune or anything like that....(Taka laughs) You know...yeah.

R= Do you know how much schooling he had in Japan? Before he came over?

T= How much what?

A= Schooling.

T= Um....I don't know, but, you know, remarkably, he, you know, learned...he wrote a diary every day. Every day of his life. And....um....he got his, he was one of the oldest to get citizenship when they were allowed to get citizenship...I uh...(to Aya) Do you remember how old he was?

A= It was in nineteen fifty something.

T= But, you know (Aya murmurs agreement) he was certainly a scholar in that way. You know, and that he wanted to...and that he read well. You know, Japanese of course, but....and he was always up on, you know, politics and things like that.

A= All of his diaries were, um, sent down to L.A. (to Taka) weren't they?

T= Into the museum.

A= Um....into the museum.

T= Japanese museum.

A= I mean stacks of...you know....of a...diaries (Taka murmurs agreement) and so one day I looked up the day I was, on March thirty-first, nineteen twenty-seven, and it says that he took a sack of potatoes into town and a bale of hay and incidentally I was born. (Taka laughs) I was the last entry of that page (both women laugh).

T= He uh...it's just amazing that he wrote a diary every day. And the year he passed on it was sporadic. But um...

R= It was all in Japanese.

T= All in Japanese.

(both women "Mh hmm).

A= Well then he wrote down the temperature of the day and things like that you know...

T= It's amazing. Yeah.

R= I mentioned that your dad was kind of laid back....

A= Mh hmm.

R= Anything else that either one of you can share? The most vivid memory of your dad?

T= Well he was um, there were about, I don't know how many Japanese families in Washington county. And that encompassed, like, Beaverton and Hillsboro and several other communities around there and there was a community, uh, more Japanese in Banks, Oregon. It's a little small, uh, town, and because they had more Japanese there, there must have been about a dozen Japanese families there. And that was probably, in those days, it took us about an hour to get there. But it's (laughs) now you'd get there in about twenty minutes. But uh....the Japanese wanted to have their own organization, association so that they would, you know, have social and business contacts with other Japanese in the area. And my dad was, you know, he was the leader, or the community leader for a long time.

R= So he was, um, organizing folks in...

T= Well yeah...uh huh. But...uh...

R= And how about your mother? What was her name?

T&A= Ito.

A= Ito...It's I.T.O.

R= And she also came from Shiga?

A= Mh hmm.

T= Yeah, she came from Shiga also. Uh huh.

R= And uh, what can you share with us about your mother, when you think about her? Physically, and also personality wise.

A= She was very strong willed. Uh huh.

T= Very dominant.

A= Uh huh. (nods head) But she had to be you know. With five of us and...

T= Well I think we owe a lot to her for the success of the you know, farm and things, because she made sure we got out there to work hard and (laughs).

A= We had to work hard before we went to some social and worked hard because we went to the social. (laughs).

T= She was con...(voice trails off)

R= What other values...or lessons....did you get from your parents? That kind of stuck with you your whole life?

T= Well...education was foremost. (Aya murmurs agreement) And you know, education and not to, um, and to be a good citizen. Not to...

A= Yeah...bring shame to the family. You know that sort of thing....yeah.

R= Um...and your parents were married in Seattle, Washington?

A= Uh...yeah...(to Taka) they were married in Seattle weren't they?

T= Yeah.

(both women murmur agreement)

R= So...um...your father worked, possibly worked on the railroad, or worked in Washington for awhile, perhaps acquired enough money to invest in a farm?

T= Well, uh, they, after they got married, they lived in Sumner, Washington, which is another small area outside of Seattle. And then they ventured into, um, Oregon. And, um, I don't, I think they farmed in a little place near Hillsboro. And, um, I don't know how far it was from Hillsboro, but I remember dad saying that he walked into Hillsboro, over the hill. I don't know....I don't know how...whether he had a horse or...he didn't have a car. Because he says I climbed the, uh, you know, hill and went way down to buy bread. I remember him mentioning that, you know.

R= So eventually he was able to acquire a farm?

T= Right.

A= Mh hmm.

R= And did he, at that time, these days were...

T= Not allowed.

R= Not allowed (both women murmur agreement) because of not being naturalized citizens to own land and so how did he get around the...

T= Well you know, I think, um, if my oldest brother was still living, but I think he homesteaded. Where the farm is now, and it's still there.

A= Yeah.

T= Because and that's how they acquired, and then after, he, um, placed my brothers as ownership. Mh hmm.

R= What was usually done to get around the discriminatory aspect of that.

T= That's right.

A= But that fifty acres is what they have now that the, it's come down the generation. And it's the very original farm.

(Both women murmur agreement)

R= And so who runs that farm now?

A= It would be uh, George's son. Uh huh. And they want to, it's quite a big operation. It's a nursery. And, um, they want to keep it in the family so the grandsons' daughters are involved in it. Yeah.

R= So that's what, over eighty, almost ninety years?

A= Yes, James Iwoskai is the son. Uh huh.

T= (to Aya) It's also in Ikey's kids names too.

A= (to Taka) Huh?

T= (to Aya) It's also in Ikey's childrens name too.

A= (to Taka) Oh.

R= So what do you remember about growing up on that farm?

T= Well um....I think we got along O.K. I mean, you know. (laughs)

A= Well, we had to get up early. We, um, I remember having an asparagus field, and we had to cut the asparagus field before we went to school. And after we came home, we cut it again because that asparagus just grew during the day! (both women chuckle) But you know, we had to get up and cut the asparagus and, uh, change our clothes and catch the bus and (laughs) start all over again here.

T= See, we had, um, the main crop was strawberries, and they, uh, our family, dad rented acreage away from our farm to raise strawberries. And then on our home place, we had truck gardening. So it was green beans, and tomatoes, and cucumbers and you know, asparagus and all this other truck farming. And so after school, in the summer months, all my friends would be going on vacation and everything, we could never go on vacation! We had to work! (laughs) So, you know. It just seemed like um, we always had to um, you know...work and...but I think we're better for all that...I think (laughing).

R= Now tell me a little bit about the Hillsboro area, the community. Was it primarily Caucasian?

T= Right.

R= Were there other Japanese American farmers?

T= There were very few. Maybe ...what?

A= One family that had that grocery store.

T= Yeah, they had a fruit stand. And, um, actually that's about...Well there was another family that lived close by but they, um, they went and moved up to Banks. See the Banks of the area were all the Japanese owned strawberry fields. And so they moved up there. Outside of that, we were primarily, you know, one of the few so...

R= So you had a farmhouse on the property?

T= Oh yeah.

R= And what was that like, living...did you have electricity? Did you have running water?

T= Well not...(laughs). No, we didn't have electricity. I remember when we first got electricity (laughs again) though. But uh, yeah, a barn and we had I don't know how many buildings we had on there. Uh, I remember we had a smokehouse because couldn't, we didn't have a refrigerator or anything like that. Or well (To Aya) No, I remember the ice, do you remember....?

A= (to Taka) Yeah, mom made root beer

T= Yeah, but we had a smokehouse where dad hung, you know, the bacon, um not the bacon but the ham. Yeah and sawdust underneath. And outhouses.

(Richard laughs)

T= Hey! (laughs) yeah.

R= All the luxuries of farm living.

T&A= Yeah.

A= Well just before the war, it was in nineteen forty I guess, evidently, the folks started to build a new home and it was built and just when the war broke out we were still in the old house. But they were building the house and before it was, the new house was finished, uh, dad wanted us to move in. Uh, and so we could just live there. So we only lived there just a few weeks into this brand new home, that had indoor plumbing and all that, and it was pretty sad that uh, and then we left it to rent it out to a physician and two little kids. And locked all of our storage things in one room and padlocked it. I guess it was still there. Somebody came to check, one of the missionaries came by to check on it one day. And I think it was OK but the house was...

T= Well, also you know, every time our brothers had furloughs, they were able to go and check on the farm. And because, you know, our farm was the only that, we had the farm, the neighboring Japanese lived in the outskirts, they wanted to store their things in our barn and stuff too.

R= And did they?

T= Yes. Cause we had greenhouses. And we had several greenhouses, and like I say barn, and there was another, umm....

A= Shed.

T= Shed...that they....well it was more than a shed because that's where, when they had hired help, to house hired help. And, um, so there were quite a few dwellings on the farm. Mh hmm.

R= So who would be hired for extra help on the farm?

T= Well, if it was strawberry time they would get the school kids and then they would come down to Portland. My brothers would come down and get the street people. You know, and then we had I don't know how many steady people that would work year round. There was a little, there was one man, he was kind of like a hermit. But he was the one, the one person that would always, the farm could always depend on him to do things.

R= And what was grown in the greenhouses, were those....?

T= uh.....flowering tomato plants. You know...seedlings?

R= So you started the plants in the greenhouses and then sent them out?

(A&T murmur agreement)

R= Was your father, as a farmer, very innovative in terms of, I mean, a lot of these issei farmers had to be, you know, like part carpenter and part mechanic, and part farmer. Was he kind of progressive in the way he worked his land and uh...

T= I think so, yeah. Uh huh. Gosh I remember him, in his older years, he just spated a whole, it looked like a whole acre by hand. You know, but I don't think it was a whole acre.

A= He always had a hoe in his hand and was always scratching weeds you know. And even into the ditch he'd be scratching the weeds out. But he always had a hoe in his hand. Yeah.

T= Yeah he was.

R= Um, and where, what schools did you attend?

T= Oh. See I graduated in 1942, but I wasn't able to get my diploma because we, you know. I was banned, you know, we were banned from uh, curfew. But I went to Hillsboro schools, grade school and junior high and high school.

A= Mh hmm.

R= How about you Aya?

A= I just finished my freshman year at Hillsboro, and then I went to uh, Nissa high school and graduated there.

R= What was the racial composition of the school system? You mentioned there weren't too many Japanese Americans in the area so...

T= No very few.

R= I assume there weren't very many in school.

A= Probably just another, just another family.

T= Yeah, oh very few.

R= So how were you treated by fellows students?

T= Oh very well. In fact there was one other Japanese fellow that, a family, and he was star of the basketball and player, and then he held student body and...I...

R= What types of religious activities, school activities or sports were you involved in, you know, before the war broke out.

T= Well I was involved in my YWBCA groups and um, pep club and, I wasn't very smart, but then I liked to have a good time.

(A&T laugh)

R= How about you Aya?

A= Well, since I was just a freshman I just remember that I was, you know, secretary for the freshman class which was quite an honor for me. And other than that, you know, we went on, in fact, school wasn't over yet when we had to move. Uh huh.

R= One of you was involved in a 4-H club right, weren't you?

T= Well I was up, in 4-H. (to Aya) Were you in 4-H?

A= Yeah, I was in 4-H and I remember making muffins.

T= Oh, yeah.

A= And I was so embarrassed by (laughs) what it looked like and...

R= Did you, when I hear 4-H, I associate it with raising animals, did you...

T= Oh isn't that something. No, It was all...

R= Home economics?

T= More economics yeah.

R= Oh interesting. What kind of religious background did your parents and you have?

A= Well our parents were Buddhists, and, uh, whenever they had their meetings or monthly gatherings, we went along, because they always served cookies. (T&A laugh) And I remember, that was why we went. But we didn't understand a thing they were saying.

T= Cause it's all in Japanese.

A= We went through the rituals of the gongs and all that kind of stuff, but I know we just went for the refreshments.

T= And they, they would gather in homes, like our home was often a place where the neighboring Japanese would come, yeah, so...

R= Was there a Buddhist temple in the area, or was that the nearest one in Portland?

A= No.

T= No, we had to go into Portland.

R= How about other holidays celebrated? Did you father, sounds like he had very strong optimistic attitude towards America?

(T&A murmur agreement)

R= And he probably encouraged you to be as American as you could be.

T= Right.

R= How did that translate into holidays?

A= Well I think New Years was probably the biggest. And I remember we had to clean house the day before.

T= Yeah.

A= From top to bottom you know. And make sure that all your debts were paid (Taka laughs) and... Yeah that was one of the biggest holidays.

T= Yeah, oh yeah.

R= How about Mochizuki, did you...?

T= Oh yeah. We would do that, in fact, that was quite a thing. We looked forward in doing that. And dad, you know, he had the little fire, actual fire, and we would do it in the greenhouse because, and then he would, my brothers would get the rice and steam it. You apparently know all about Mochizuki, well, and then, that was a big day for us. Because we had to go from the house to the greenhouse, and back and forth, and bring that...

A= And, the pounding, that you know, the pounding with the...

T= Uh soo?

R= So what would you use to pound the rice with?

T= With the mallet.

A= Wooden mallets.

R= Now was that reserved, were the mallets reserved for men, or did, the women, or did you actually pound it?

T= Well mostly, anybody actually, but predominately men.

R= In pictures I see it's always the women actually turning the rice.

T= Right. My mother did that. Yeah. We missed that, because, that's, you know, it was kind of a fun...

A= People would bring in, you know, people that wanted to make twenty pounds would bring their rice over and we would have to do it for them. Yeah.

T= Steam it.

R= So your household was quite a community gathering...(voice trails off)

T= Yeah it was.

R= How about, another important holiday during the year was Boys and Girls day was...?

T= We didn't observe Girls Day that much. I don't know why. Our sister-in-law, my brother's oldest, our oldest brother's wife, she was a very Japanese tradition, cause she was, spent many years in Japan. So she brought into our family a lot of Japanese uh...

A= Cultures.

T= Culture. Right. But up until then we grew up hardly knowing about Girls Day, but she had the whole Girls Day display up and you know. So we learned from her. But we didn't really, as we were growing up.

R= When did you, kind of become aware of your "Japaneseness" growing up?

T= Well probably, well we've known it, but more predominately when the war broke out.

A= Well I think, you know growing up, we were, kind of feeled ashamed that we were different, you know? And, and our folks were poor, and you know, like we had to wear stockings, everyone else wore knee high stockings, and we had to wear the ones that rolled all the way up. (Taka laughs). And when we went to school we rolled them down so that we looked like the rest of them you know.

(T&A laugh)

R= So it was always an effort to fit in and not stand out.

A= Yeah Try to fit in, right.

R= So would this have been during the depression years that you've described?

T= Yeah, I think more, right.

R= And you mentioned that your father had a new house built?

T= Well that was just before the war. And I think another reason is because my brother, oldest brother, just got married.

A= Yeah, he got married. Let's see, it was an arranged marriage.

T= Yeah.

R= It was? And who did he marry?

T= But the family, we, the families knew each other.

A= The family yeah. I mean everything happened all at once you know? Nineteen forty-two is when we evacuated and they got married in February of nineteen forty-two and so all the rest of us except our two brothers and George and his wife, you know, I mean there was really no privacy for them.

R= One other question about growing up and how was, how did your brother communicate with your parents, what, how much of a barrier was the language issue in your family?

T= There wasn't any because we grew up speaking Japanese. My oldest brother had the hardest time when he went to school because he, you know, didn't know very much English and he was really taunted when he went to school. But the rest of us, we just, well I think through our brothers we all learned how to speak English and everything because they were older than we were. But I do know that George really had a hard time when he started going to school.

R= Were any of the siblings sent back to Japan at all for schooling or culture?

T= No, we just went as tourists. You know, afterwards, but we didn't, none of us left, I know there are many families that after school the parents sent them to Japan, but no, none of us.

R= Do you recall your dad sending money back to family in Japan?

T= Yeah.

A= (to Taka) I think mom took several of us back to Japan just to visit and stayed like, two months at a time right?

T= Yeah but then we never, like a lot of families send their kids to Japan for study or...but none of us.

R= Right, and they become what is referred to as **Kibei. Kibei Nisai.**

T= Right.

R= Did either one of you attend Japanese language school when you were growing up?

A= Oh yeah, we both went to Japanese school.

T= See here again, we had this school in Banks where there was a more Japanese living. And we went once a week on a Sunday, to go for, maybe six or seven hours. Maybe not even that much.

R= So you had time after school during the week to...

T= No... Well we had a little homework but, we went there just to visit with our Japanese friends. And so we were not (voice trails off).

R= Do you recall any other social activities that you were involved with while you were growing up on the farm?

T= Yeah we had a young Japanese group that we would have social dances. And that was about it. Well we had picnics, I guess, we had a picnic in the summertime at a park that was not too far away.

R= Was that Kingin Kai type of picnic?

T= Yeah that kind.

A= It was like a community picnic.

R= And that was in Hillsboro?

T= No it was between Banks and Hillsboro. There was a park that we'd go to. Yeah, those events we'd kind of look forward to. My mother would say, "I'm going to take you to the picnic so you've got to work hard." (laughs). And then after we'd went to the picnic she'd say, "Well you've got to work hard because I took you to the picnic." We had to work for it and we had to work....(all laugh)

R= So when you came home from school were you also expected to work on the farm?

T= Oh yeah.

A= They had raised, I remember raising tomatoes and we had to pack the tomatoes for market, early morning market. Or even bunching of asparagus, we had to sort through asparagus so my mother would bunch them and things like that.

T= Oh yeah.

R= And your father would haul his produce into Portland?

T= Well dad and my oldest brother.

R= Did you ever go with them?

T= No. They would go at the crack of dawn. Like 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning to get, they said they had to "get a good stall at the market."

R= So there was a produce market in Portland?

T= Right.

R= It sounds like you were rather self-sufficient on the farm, in terms of a lot of the food, you mentioned you had hams, you have chickens...

T= We were. Chickens and cows. Pork I remember when dad shot the pig and you know.

A= He made head cheese.

T= Yeah he made the head cheese.

R= So what responsibilities did you have with the younger siblings? Were you responsible for taking care of them?

T= Well we all kind of did, took care of one another. I guess it's just a normal, sibling.

A= Yeah everyone kind of just watched out for each other I guess. None of us really got hurt or you know...

R= Let's shift over to a very defining moment in your lives. As well as all Americans and that was December seventh, nineteen forty-one. Can you tell us what you remember about that day and how you heard about the tragic bombing of Pearl Harbor?

T= Yeah. Well I remember, my brother George was working outside, and he came in and told me folks that a war broke out with Japan. And it was just a shock, I mean, we didn't know there was any, any problems with the two countries, weren't aware I should say. So it was a real shock.

A= We had this old field goal radio in the house, and like Taka said, we were probably too young to know all the world events at the time. But I'm sure they were discussing things but we didn't quite understand it, you know?

R= Tell me a little bit about how your life changed after that day? Pearl Harbor Day. What did you become aware of? You mentioned you became kind of aware that you were different.

T= Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

R= You were of Japanese ancestry, you felt, how did you feel?

T= Well kind of ashamed. My heritage, you know of people would do such a thing to America. You know.

A= Well we went to school, and see this happened in December and I really wasn't aware of any prejudice that, you know the same friends. And maybe they were like me, they weren't quite up on history and what was happening. The bus driver was, she was very, you know, she gave us a (?) you know like she understood what we were going through but we just thought it was nothing.

T= Well my friends all said, I mean, not thinking that I was Japanese, she says "Those darn Japs." (Laughs) I mean, they, as I'm a part of them. But of course it kind of, I was taken aback. They didn't think that I was Japanese so.

R= So your fellow students as well as most of your Caucasian neighbors were very sympathetic.

A= Right.

T= Exactly, and I think it would have been different if there were more Japanese around.

R= So outwardly you didn't pose a great threat to that community. Did you, do you recall any evidence of any discriminatory signs, or no Japs wanted here on a store, or were you able to go to places that you normally had gone.

T= Well we were more cautious but nothing. I would say we were just more cautious.

A= I would say after we went to eastern Oregon there was probably more prejudice there.

R= Did you have any thoughts or ideas about many, many kids express, you know, some uncertainty about the future or you just basically went along as you had in going on before. Any thought whatsoever that this catastrophic event called removal, relocation or whatever happened to you.

T= Well we knew our lives were going to change. But not; didn't know in what direction.

R= And so, when you did learn what the government had an exclusion policy for all Japanese Americans on the west coast, do you have any remembrances of your emotions during that time?

T= Well as I had, recall, it was a time that, I thought well we have to move but I know my mother and dad, my mother was in tears, she was very upset thinking that we'd have to leave and become uprooted. In my mind I thought, "well, this is going to be kind of an adventure", we'd never moved in my life. My friends all said well they're moving and that must be fun, living in a another place and I thought "well this is going to be an adventure."

A= Well our folks were young, I mean you know, when you think back, they were like mid-life when all this happened so you can imagine with such a big family so it was probably a big burden.

T= Ah well it was but I know mom has cried. She just didn't know what to pack and what to take. She was very upset.

R= Aya, You expressed a statement about an emotion of excitement, again like Taka mentioned that you never moved before, it was almost exciting to think of what else might be in store in that situation.

(T&A murmur agreement... "right")

R= And apparently there had to be some concern about what was going to happen to the farm.

T= Oh definitely. That was more of our brother's concern than ours. And so they, we had good neighbors.

R= Who did take over the farm?

T= Well they rented the farm out and had good neighbors to oversee?

R= So they continued farming?

T= Right.

R= And do remember ever seeing any of the money, an arrangement was made to split the profits and that helped support you during the time that you were out. And we talked about the items that were stored. How about, you know, this was always such a real difficulty, to sort of boil your life down into one or two suitcases.

T= I know. You mean into the camp? Right, I know!

R= Yeah, what do you take and what do you leave? Do you remember?

T= That was more than a shock, you know, to have to do.

A= We could only carry this one suitcase. I think I wrote in there that one day we went to, (to take) I don't know if you went to, but I remember going to J.C. Penny's.

T= Oh yeah.

A= Yeah J.C. Penny's and these big black suitcases that were like cardboard, not metal, with white paint we wrote our initials on the edge. And I think we packed fun things rather than essentials you know.

R= What kind of fun things?

(T&A laugh)

A= Probably games and stuff, you know, and probably our party clothes because we thought they were nice, you know, rather than essentials. But I know mom had a big duffel bag, and she sewed this duffel bag and just stuffed everything in it. (to Taka) And I kind of remember that the only thing we left on the table when we left was an alarm clock.

T= (to Aya) Oh, really?

A= A Big Ben alarm clock and I don't know why that sticks to my mind.

R= Was it kind of a ritual with your mom that the house be really nice and clean before you left?

A= (to Taka) I think so.

T= (to Aya) Yeah, I don't recall that but probably. Yeah.

R= I've heard stories of issei women that just immaculately scrub the house even if nobody was going to be living there, just to leave it that way.

(T&A murmur agreement)

R= A couple of other situations change after Pearl Harbor too and restrictions were placed on, again, being Japanese Americans, means singled out for specific restrictions.

T= Right.

R= A curfew being one of them. Also the travel restriction.

T= Right.

R= Now you were still, both of you were going to high school at that time. Did that have any personal impact on your lives so that you couldn't attend certain events because of this?

T= I don't think so because this curfew, it was right after the war, wasn't it? The curfew was placed, in place....

A= I don't know when that order came that you couldn't travel more than five miles, but then it could have been only a couple months really.

T= Yeah it wasn't that...

A= Uh huh. Not that it would impact us. I don't think that we would have travelled.

R= How about your father, travelling into Portland with his produce?

T= I don't think there was, and if there were, he'd probably had connections to have his needs met.

R= You mentioned that your mother had a pretty significant outpouring of emotion about the thought of leaving the farm.

T= Right.

R= How about your father? You always hear about the stoic nissei guy, the dad, did your dad fit that description too? Or did he, did you sense anything from him?

T= Well you know we did have his suitcase packed. Because he may be, you know, we heard about all these Japanese, prominent Japanese, in Portland being deported right away. But because dad was kind of a community leader we thought he would be. But he didn't. So we were pretty happy.

A= I don't think anybody came to the house to question him.

T= Yeah.

R= No F.B.I. visits?

A= I don't recall it.

T= I don't recall anybody out, so we were pretty pleased by it. But we did have, you know, a suitcase packed.

R= How about the panic and the fear that spread through Japanese American families and you just expressed it about "God, our dad might be picked up".

T= Oh yeah.

R= To pack a suitcase, there was also the concern that any item was a connection to Japan.

T= Right.

R= Like a picture of the emperor, or a Japanese doll or something might land you in a more difficult situation.

T= Well I do remember that, I think we had a lot of Japanese records. You know, the phonograph records. And I think we said "Oh, we've got to bury those." And I don't know whether we buried them or not.

A= I think they went down through the outhouse toilet.

(Taka laughs)

A= You know, I think that's where they were dropped.

T= Yeah, but we kind of scurried and checked out the house to see if there was any. I can't remember.

R= Any damning evidence. Do you recall where you, after you had packed up your suitcases, where did you go to assemble on the day that you went (voice trails off, inaudible)

T= We went to Forest Grove, which is further west of Portland, of Hillsboro. I don't know how we got there. Do you know? (to Aya)

A= Yeah it was at the...

T= No, who took us?

A= A neighbor.

T= Oh. Then we boarded a bus. A school bus.

A= No, it wasn't a school bus. It was Greyhound.

T= Oh, was it a Greyhound?

A= A Greyhound, Uh huh. And we met at the Forest Grove bus depot and we all got on.

T= Uh huh.

A= And it was the bus to the exposition center, you know.

R= Which was at that time...

T= The livestock.

R= The livestock...

T= Right.

A= And we'd been there before because we were going to grade school. One of the activities that we were given was a rodeo.

T= Well it was a field trip.

A= So we went. That was a big day for us. So we went to the rodeo and you saw the cowboys, and you know, the bullfighting and stuff like that. So, we knew what the place looked like.

T= (laughs) Oh yeah.

R= But you never thought you'd be staying there.

(Both T&A laugh)

R= So what was that like? Just to back up just a little bit, I was curious to know, what was your last day at school like?

T= Oh gosh, I can't remember.

A= I can't either. I think it was just an ordinary day.

R= Did anybody come up to you....?

A= I can't remember.

T= No, because I don't think they were aware of when we were going to leave.

R= And you didn't make it very obvious to them.

T= Uh Uh. Well I do know a couple of my teachers, well one teacher, she gave me a bottle of cologne. You know, I thought "Oh that was so sweet of her". But it seems to me like when we were leaving there were lot of, uh throng, you know, people we knew, and we were waving at them. And I don't know if it was in Forest Grove or in Hillsboro.

A= I don't remember that. I mean, like I said, it was an adventure for us. Yeah.

R= But you said people that you knew, Caucasians.

T= Right, Caucasians.

A= Mh hmm.

R= Had come in to see you off.

T= Yeah. But we just waved at them and smiled and we're going on a trip. (laughs) You know, it was nothing.

R= Was there, were there any evidence of Army soldiers at the assembly point?

T= Oh Yeah. All over the assembly center there. You know.

R= How about on the bus, were there soldiers on the bus?

T= There could have been. But I don't remember.

R= And so it wasn't a very long trip Forest Grove.

A= No.

T= No.

A= Well it might have been from Forest Grove, through Hillsboro to Portland. It might have taken an hour.

T= Yeah.

(END OF DVD I)

Part one ends here

probably the first time I remember ever seeing an Army uniform. And, uh, then when we were ushered to where we were to stay, I remember this canvas door. And there was nothing on top. I just remember looking around and thought, you know, I didn't think much about is this where we're going to live? But, like I said it was mass confusion for me. Yeah.

R= Now, Taka you were three years older than your sister. Were you aware of the fact that you were an American citizen, did you have any sense of...