

Date: August 9, 1995
Place: Seattle, Washington
Narrator: **Kenji Okuda**
Interviewer: Louis Fiset

LF: I'd like to begin by asking you to share with me something about your family background, prior to your birth.

KO: My father, I've forgotten the exact date, came to the U.S. from Japan in the 1880s or 90s. He's one of the earlier Japanese in the migration movement to the U.S. He landed initially in San Francisco, worked in the grape fields, or some agricultural labor, and then moved up, or learned enough English so that he became sort of a labor contractor. Recruiting other Japanese to work in the fields around San Francisco, south of San Francisco. Then he came to Seattle, again, before 1900. He didn't spend that much time in California. He decided there would be more opportunities in Seattle, and came up here. Shortly after he came, again, his first marriage in the U.S. was with a lady who had been teaching English to Japanese immigrants -- I think under the auspices of the Methodist church in Seattle, on Capital Hill. She passed away then my dad married my mother who was already in Seattle. She comes from another part of Japan, in about 1920. I was the first born in 1922, then my sisters followed one and two years later. I was born on Pike Street near the theater district, in the Paramount theater area. Then Dad bought this house on Beacon Hill, south of downtown Seattle. I think my sisters were born there. That's where we lived until we were evacuated.

LF: So you actually were born at home?

KO: I think we were all home births. In those days going to the hospital was not that common, particularly among immigrant groups.

LF: Was your parents' marriage one of love?

KO: I think so.

LF: Not an arranged marriage.

KO: No, no. My Dad's third marriage. He had married, I'm told, in Japan. I know very little about it. Then she died and he left to come to North America.

LF: How old was he?

KO: He was born in 1868. He was probably in his late teens, early 20s. In Seattle he was involved in several businesses. One was as a labor contractor for the Great Northern Railway. Also he had a transfer business, trucking, local cartage. And third, an import activity with fishing tackle, primarily silk fishing lines from Japan.

LF: As a labor contractor, was he part of the Oriental Trading Company?

KO: He was one of the bosses of the Oriental Trading Company.

LF: Bosses, meaning an owner?

KO: Yes, he was senior in there. I can remember as a child his taking trips almost every month to go visit gangs he had sent out, to see how they were doing. To negotiate or discuss any problems they were having.

LF: How far out would he go?

KO: Haver, Montana. It was mostly Montana, west. Haver was one of the points I remember his going to visit quite often, Kalispell, Montana. They had gangs around Spokane as well, I guess. All on the Great Northern main line.

LF: I understand that the bosses did very well financially.

KO: I don't know how well he did financially. He had several other businesses, concurrently. The trading company, the recruiting side of it, more or less faded out in the 1930s. He was still travelling in the 30s, but I don't think they were recruiting new gangs. He was just keeping up with the groups they had recruited and were now working long term with the Great Northern railway. Going out to visit them from time to time. I guess there wasn't much need to recruit any more.

LF: What was your father's name?

KO: Henry Hgae **[spelling?]**

LF: Did he go by Henry?

KO: To the westerners or Europeans he knew it was Henry. And to the Japanese it was Hgae. He had been converted to and had become an Anglican Episcopalian in Japan before he came to North America. So the family association was with St. Peter's Church in Seattle.

LF: Did he learn English in Japan?

KO: I don't think so. He had gone to school. The story goes he walked to Tokyo from his birthplace which is near Osaka, to get some education. He went to some school in the Tokyo area before he left Japan.

LF: Which prefecture?

KO: Nara-ken **[spelling?]**. Osaka, Nara and Kyoto are three cities, and the family home where he was born was in between the three cities, in Nara-ken, closer to Nara than to Osaka.

LF: By the time you were born he had been in this country 25 years. So when you and your sisters were born you were born into a family that spoke English?

KO: Some English. My Dad was able to converse in English. My mother also had worked as a domestic and so she had to learn English to communicate with her employers before she was married.

LF: What is her name?

KO: Rei Okazawa was her maiden name. I have the impression she may have been married previously, but I have no knowledge or specifics about whether she had been married or not.

LF: It was your father's second marriage where the woman was teaching English?

KO: That's right. Clara, Clara . . . This happened about the time of the First World War. Clara Boothe, something like that. She was a missionary who had been teaching in the Methodist Church.

LF: She was a hakujin?

KO: Yes.

LF: That's unusual.

KO: It was. Then, of course, after she died, then my dad married someone from Japan. The pattern has repeated itself in my family. I've been married three times; they're all hakujins. My sister, here, was married once, now divorced, she married a hakujin. And my other sister is married to a hakujin. They've just retired. He was at the University of California, Riverside, teaching in the biology department.

LF: Tell me your sisters' names.

KO: Toyo is one, Toyo Cary is the name she goes by now. You wrote her. And the other is Nao Belcher. Nao can be a male or female name in Japanese. They live in Riverside, California.

LF: It sounds to me as though your father enjoyed some status in the Nikkei community.

KO: He certainly did in the sense that he was quite active. For example, he was called on very often by people, lets say, we used to go down and handle the baggage for the Japanese steamship lines that came into Seattle. There were two of them. O.S.K., Osaka Shosen Kaisha, and the N.Y.K., Nippon Yusen Kaisha. Periodically people who would be arriving would have difficulty with immigration, language, and so on, and he would be around to help them. Immigration Service had their own interpreter service, but for casual contacts he would help them answer some questions, and so on. He was called upon by the community at various times to assist in overcoming particular problems. In the postwar period he was asked to serve as figurehead president of the North American Post, the Japanese Language newspaper that was restarted after the war. He knew nothing about publishing. But he was asked to come in and oversee the whole operation. He was also active as president of the North American kendo federation for awhile,

before the war, which was primarily a west coast phenomenon. The main teacher was from Japan. But they started up kendo groups in Seattle, Tacoma, Vancouver, B.C., on down into California. Then they formed a federation, and I think he was president of that for awhile. He knew people up and down the coast, quite a few of them. He was also asked at the time of the arrest and trial, I'm not sure it ever went to trial, of the gambling overlord in Seattle, at the time.

LF: The Toyo Club?

KO: Yes. Yamamo, Yama, I've forgotten his name [Tayokichi Yamada] You haven't heard the name of the boss? Anyway, he was arrested on tax evasion charges in Seattle. He was kept in jail. The Japanese community thought that rather than have him go to trial, they'd just as soon have him deported to Japan. So they prevailed on my Dad to go to Washington and speak on behalf of the community, asking the federal government to deport him rather than bring him to trial. I gather the U.S. government agreed. So he and his family, married to a Nisei, and children, were deported to Japan. His then wife is back in Seattle. She lives here now. The story goes, and I don't know how accurate it is, that the Japanese government then sent him to handle gambling operations in Manchuria.

LF: What year did this happen?

KO: 1936 or 1937. The community raised the funds to pay his expenses.

LF: Was it the community disapproved of the gambling or was it that they felt they didn't want the embarrassment of a trial?

KO: I think they felt they didn't want the publicity and embarrassment of having a trial. The gambling everyone knew was happening. The police knew it. Locally nothing was ever done. It was the feds who came in on a tax evasion charge that got him. So rather than bring the matter to trial with the attendant publicity I think they'd rather have him leave. And he wanted to go. He [Yamada] may have been discussing with the Japanese government the possibility of going to work in Manchuria if they were able to get him deported. I can't remember his name. My sister has a better memory of those things. She chats occasionally with his widow, now.

LF: The widow came back after the war?

KO: Yes, but I don't know how long after.

LF: So Japan Town was active in those days.

KO: Yes, they used to have various organizations by prefecture of birth. You had the Hiroshima-ken Club, you had the various , Hiroshima was significant in number. Some of the other groups were much smaller in number because the immigrant base was smaller. My Dad was from Nara-ken. My mother's side was from [prefecture?] There were very few from Nagasaki. There was no group there. There was a small group from Narakenjin kai that would meet once a year, have a Chinese dinner. All these meetings tended to focus on the Chinese restaurants that were run by the Japanese on Main Street. There were three Chinese restaurants

on Main Street run by Japanese. The one was upstairs so larger gatherings could be held there. One was Gyokko-ken, one was, boy I can't remember the names [Kinka Low and Nikko Low].

LF: We are going back 50 years!

KO: Sixty years! I can remember going to Japanese fencing, kendo tournaments in Sacramento and Vancouver, B.C. About once a year, usually in the summer, there would be tournaments and we'd all travel. I took up Japanese fencing and was a participant. Being tall had its advantage to a certain extent. I never did get much into other sports. The only time I got interested in and tried out was at the University of Washington in crew. And since I couldn't swim at the time I was terrified at sitting below water level in those shells. So obviously, psychologically I wasn't prepared.

LF: You have the reputation of having been a very good student. Tell me about your experiences in the Seattle Public Schools.

KO: Let's see, grammar school, I went to the same grammar school Sally [Kazama] did. We were in Beacon Hill grammar school. It's still there, the grade school. We used to walk to and from. Then there were about half a dozen other Japanese families on the route, so we'd get together along the way with the Yasutaki's [spelling?], whom you may or may not have heard of. Mr. Yasutaki was an interpreter who worked with the Immigration Service in Seattle. Then the Higanos who were the next ones down. The son, the one we went to school with, has been semi-retired, he's an internal medicine specialist in Wooster, Massachusetts. There were other families that moved in and out. There were the Itoi's. They were somewhat older. Henry Itoi, and the daughter [Monica] has written something about her early life [Nisei Daughter]. They lived across the street. There were a number of these people. Then going to and from the school the Hiyasaka's, who used to run a produce company down on Western Avenue before the war. There was a contingent of Japanese Americans in the grade school.

LF: It sounds like this was on the fringe of Nihonmachi.

KO: Yes. It was just beyond it, because Bailey Gatzert would have been on the fringe of Nihonmachi. That was right on 12th Avenue. Let's see there was Jackson Street then the cross street that goes up Beacon Hill. Just before you got to the bridge that goes over Dearborn Street, that's where the bulk of the Japanese students went. So we were, if you will, those who had moved out of the core community.

LF: Your father had purchased that house? Before the Alien Land Laws?

KO: Yes and no. I think he turned it over to me at some point, even though I was a minor. I think it was because the Alien Land Law came in or something.

LF: The Alien Land Laws were in the early 20s. You came along in 1922.

KO: So, somewhere along the line he decided, I guess for some reason, to be safe, to transfer the title.

LF: So you went to school with a lot of hakkujin.

KO: Yes. There were few other groups. There were a few Chinese, but I have no recollection of blacks at Beacon Hill School.

LF: Did you have hakujin friends?

KO: Yes. I was virtually at the edge of the catchment area. North of us they would go to Bailey Gatzert. Yes, we used to play, in the neighborhood, certainly, street hockey, roller skate hockey. Then there would be basketball and tennis that we would play down at the local park. But there, when we went to play tennis, the bulk of the players were Japanese friends. There was not that much interaction with the Caucasians.

LF: Did your father have occasion socially to interact with Caucasians?

KO: He was active in the Japan Society, for example, which is a mixed group of Japanese and Caucasian, just as it is today. Then his lawyer, the fellow who did much of his legal work, was Caucasian. Business dealings, yes. Socially, there were a number. Somewhere along the line he had gotten to know the editor of, the man who later became the editor of the Spokesman Review in Spokane. So when my Dad was to be released from the Missoula Detention Center, Missoula, whatever it was called, he needed a sponsor to go anywhere. The editor of the Spokesman Review agreed to sponsor him.

LF: And that's how he got to Spokane where he sat out the war?

KO: He didn't sit out the war there. Eventually he was able to join us in the camp in Colorado. We'll come to that. No, he couldn't join us in Puyallup because the Army would not permit him to come out to the coast. He was released before we left Puyallup. So he was sitting in Spokane in a friend's rooming house, but under the formal sponsorship of the editor of the Spokesman Review. The Army simply said no, as long as this is an exclusion zone we don't want anyone else coming in. So they said he could probably rejoin us at the relocation center. There's an exchange of letters I guess that I had with the Army command in San Francisco which they probably noted for future reference, I don't know. My demanding that they let him come join us.

LF: Going back to your education, after you left Beacon Hill School,

KO: Then I went to Franklin High School. That's a much less concentration of Japanese, and some blacks, more Italians, somewhat more cosmopolitan. That's the one right there off Rainier Avenue. There I got to know one fellow very well, a Caucasian, Richard Hadley. His claim to notoriety was that he bought the USS United States. Finally he decided he couldn't maintain it so he sold it or returned it to the US government. He had great plans of remaking it into a condo cruise ship. Somehow he just could never get all the details together. So he at least had nominal title, primarily the banks, for four or five years, to the flagship of the U.S. passenger fleet. But he still lives in Greater Seattle. He still goes to his office. Same age as I am. Another claim to

fame was that he designed, he was an engineer, he designed the Anchorage hospital that survived the 1954 earthquake. One of the few buildings that survived the earthquake. Anyway, he's done quite well financially. He and I used to go around a lot together. He and I were on the debating team. I used to go out and visit him in his home. He'd come over to our place. They lived further out on Rainier Avenue. I, of course, lived on Beacon Hill, so the distances were fairly substantial. And there are others I knew. Certainly one of the teachers in high school I got to know quite well. He was our debate coach. We used to visit him regularly. He live up in the University District. Last time I saw him he was retired and living in his family's home at Point Roberts, Washington. He was of Icelandic descent, the group that settled Point Roberts. So I had gotten a bit more out of the community in terms of contacts in high school. Then there was a three way battle as to who would get the top awards which was based on, I guess it was average grade point, or maybe total grade point, I've forgotten. The valedictorian, the top marks, went to Hadley, who became an engineer. I came in second and got salutatorian. And then Norio, who is now the doctor in Massachusetts, came in third. I don't think he cared as much as his dad, who was very unhappy that he hadn't gotten in ahead of me.

LF: What year?

KO: 1939. Then, among others in that class, Jim Ellis, who has been quite a prominent individual in Seattle civic affairs was in the class. We had our 55th reunion in Seattle early this year, no, must have been last Fall. Several of them I remember from that period. But we did not socialize in the sense of dating, or anything. But some of the Nisei did. I think there was a Tad Fujioka who was dating some of the kids around. We never went to dances, or anything of this nature. And the one episode that sticks in my mind, for what it's worth, was in one of the early grades at Beacon Hill School, where they had a party for the glass organized by the parents. Here were all these second or third graders. Somebody decided to play spin the bottle, obviously parents decided to do this, to break up the group a bit, to generate more interaction. Then, when the bottle pointed to me they didn't stop it at that point, but they stopped it immediately thereafter. I guess some of the parents got a bit queasy at that point, but before that there were no problems.

LF: When you were in high school, Japan was in Manchuria. There was a lot of talk about it. Do you remember being aware of that in high school or talking about it?

KO: Not particularly talking about it. Certainly there was an awareness of it. I was aware, when did the embargo on scrap iron and so on come in? [1940] That was right about the time I finished high school. There was considerable talk in the community about Japan and Japan's behavior certainly got a lot of press. The rape of Nanking. Not much was talked about that at school that I'm aware of. At school I was active in debate, where we had inter-highschool competitions. Also, I guess chess club where there were several of us who used to play regularly in the Chem lab. In the Chemistry room because the Chem teacher was a chess fan. He used to like to play with the students and see if he could beat them. There was one guy who was quite good, a Japanese fellow, in that group. But those were the only things. Because in the afternoons we had to go the Japanese Language School. You couldn't spend much time after class unless you had something specific like going to a debate somewhere.

LF: When did you begin language school?

KO: It must have been some time in grammar school. I have no recollection of when.

LF: Was the purpose to teach the language or the culture?

KO: Primarily the language. There was some cultural overtones, I'm sure, but the focus was on reading, writing and speaking. We were expected to speak in class, in Japanese which for most students was not that difficult because they usually spoke at home in Japanese. But in terms of reading and writing that was the major effort, to become familiar with the alphabets, two forms, kitagana, hiragana, [spelling?] and then to learn the characters sufficient to read the books we had to plow through.

LF: How many hours a day did you spend there?

KO: School was out around 3, even in those days, then it would take us a good half hour or more to get to the Language School. So, I would say probably they would start at 4; hour, hour and a half or so.

LF: How would you get to the School?

KO: As I remember we used to take the bus. I can remember walking up Weller Street, which in the early days wasn't paved, going from the Language School back to 12th Avenue to get the bus. So we must have walked the other way. In high school we just took the bus right straight down Rainier Avenue, got off and walked a couple of blocks up to the Language School.

LF: You continued that all the way through high school?

KO: I'm not sure. I have no recollection of how long it continued. But it did go up to grade eight or nine, or something, in their sequence. Where I joined and where I left my memory doesn't serve me well.

LF: This was an opportunity to meet Japanese kids from other parts of town.

KO: Yes, it was part of that. In fact, I did not maintain as much contact with the group there as my sister did, for example. She still knows and interacts with people she went through language school with. Of course, I've been away for so long. Kids I knew would show up so it wasn't as though they were all new, but there were certainly a number of them I did not know before I met them at the language school.

LF: How fluent are you now in Japanese?

KO: Enough to converse. A limited knowledge of the characters. Most of the major Japanese cities are simple characters. I can read the names. But you get to some of the smaller towns and I cannot read the characters. And I can speak enough to get by. I can find my way around Japan.

LF: When you were going to school, this was during the depression. You mentioned your father had a number of businesses. What impact did the depression have on his businesses and your life?

KO: We were pretty well sheltered from the depression. I got a drivers license at the age of 14 by lying about my age. I started off by driving the small trucks, pickup trucks, for my Dad. So I worked pretty much on weekends and so on, all through high school. Whenever the ships came in we'd go full bore, go out, meet them. Luggage would be unloaded. Then we'd help people who wanted our help to open their luggage so it could be inspected. Then we'd go in and help them close it up. We hoped they would give us the business of transporting it to wherever they wanted the luggage sent. We'd go down after the ship had been cleared and load up the luggage and deliver. So I used to help on that sort of thing, drive the truck.

LF: This was long after the Immigration Act of 1924. These were people who were returning.

KO: Most of them were people who were visiting Japan. My Dad also had as part of his activity, ticket agencing powers for the two Japanese passenger ship companies. So people would come down to buy tickets, then ask us to haul luggage to the ship, or whatever. Then they would go for two or three months and return. It was pretty much non-immigrant. In other words, Japanese people here, going to visit family in Japan. Most of them travelled third class.

LF: How are the three classes distinguished?

KO: By price and size of rooms, and so on. A number sticks in my head, for some reason -- Sixty-three bucks for a third class passage one way. Two weeks at sea. I did that several times. We went to Japan as a family, once. Then I went to Japan in 1939, for a year. My parents thought I could spend a year off, send you off to visit relatives in Japan. So I spent the year travelling around Japan. The Japanese can tell by looking at you whether you're local or foreign. Particularly in the rural countryside you'd be walking along a rural path or something, and hear the farmers in the rice fields yelling at each other about that strange guy walking down the road. What they spotted, clothes, walking gait, I'm not sure what it is, but they spotted you immediately as a foreigner. Didn't even have to say anything, they just spotted you.

LF: What do you recall in Japan in terms of warlike activity?

KO: The degree of surveillance, particularly at railroad stations was quite pronounced. I can remember once being stopped. See, in those days the train stopped at the end of Honshu. Then you had to take a ferry to get to the island of Kyushu. So, once travelling from Osaka to Shimonoseki, which was the terminus before you got onto the ferry, I was in a compartment sitting up, not a sleeping compartment, just one of the compartments. And there was a very attractive gal sitting across from me who simply didn't want to talk. As soon as I got off the train I was stopped by obviously secret police or something, and asked what we had talked about. I tried to talk to her, but she wouldn't talk to me. Are you sure about this? Apparently she was going to take a ferry to Korea or something, from the same area. They questioned me for 15-20 minutes, repetitious, repetitious, and finally let me go. Then when we went to

Sasebo,[spelling?] where my uncle lived, the moment you got off the train, big signs, no photography permitted. I think at this time they were soldiers, plus civilians, looking over everybody getting off. Then going up to some of the hillsides, heights of the city so you could look down on the naval ports. There would be sentries posted. Again, signs, no pictures, and sentries posted to make sure that whoever got there they could keep an eye on. So there was that sign of the degree of paranoia. I remember meeting some Marxists who, of course, you had to be very careful about acknowledging or talking about simply because they would have been arrested if the government had been aware of their Marxist sentiments. Japanese academia had a tradition of interest in Marxism which continues even today. The military were very concerned about the Marxist element. So friends of mine would say well, would you like to meet and talk to some of them. And I'd say, sure. They would arrange it and we'd meet at somebody's house and we would exchange ideas.

LF: You were conversing in Japanese?

KO: Yes, for the most part. If I'd get stuck I'd ask that they say it some other way.

LF: When you were there did you have the idea that the U.S. might be drawn into war with Japan?

KO: It's hard to say where . . . Certainly Japan was proceeding with its activities in China. I can remember asking my cousin, who had been in the Japanese Army. He indicated he had been in Nanking at the time of the taking of it. He confirmed all the stories I had heard in the western press about the rape of Nanking. And how they had behaved in that action. So, at least I was aware of this. The concern as to whether the U.S. would attack Japan, no one I think at that point thought of Japan attacking the U.S. (end side 1) Occasionally we got requests to take things on board ships that if we had been suspicious could well have been contraband. But we were not stopped by customs or whoever would be checking. We'd get a request to take this box and put it in somebody's cabin. We'd carry this stuff, it felt like a ton. We wondered if it was mercury, or something. So there was concern. Now, once we got back. Even before we went, I guess, I was involved in a church group at the Congregational church. A young people's group which, I think, I had joined probably before I went to Japan. Certainly after I got back, Sally [Kazama] was in the group, Norio [] was in the group. There were about a dozen of us who used to meet and talk. There was a fair degree of neutrality sentiments of America First or, if you will, Europe is not America's business. Isolationist sentiments. Certainly once out at the University of Washington, quite active, quite strong.

LF: America First?

KO: Yes. And opposition to American involvement in the War. The isolationists more than America First.

LF: So this would have included the Pacific War as well as the European War.

KO: At that time the thought was that the more immediate war that was to involve the U.S. was the European War. The Pacific War was considered highly less likely to occur. We were

trying to apply pressure on Japan to sanctions and embargoes. But the threat of attack, one on the other, didn't seem very feasible or likely. The most of the people even living on the Pacific coast, there wasn't that much concern that Japan would attack the U.S. or that the U.S. would attack Japan. We didn't like what Japan was doing. We were going to apply pressures to try to stop them. But we weren't overtly going to send any troops to do it. And then, Pearl Harbor. I can remember the details of that one. I first heard about it, either somebody called and said, turn on the radio, about mid morning. It was confirmed on the radio that Japan had attacked. Then I said I wanted to go to the University. I had been involved with the University YMCA, and a cousin was staying in a room right near where the Friends Service Committee used to have its office, right on the main entrance to the University on 45th. So I came out to the University, walked in, told my cousin, she was a graduate student in sociology at the University of Washington. It was my first year at the University. Then I went up to the YMCA. Can't remember if I stopped in at the Friends Service Committee where Floyd Schmoer was directing. It was on a Sunday, so I don't know if it was open. They had some students living around there, so I may have gone there. Then up to the Y, and there was a great deal of deliberation and discussion as to what was likely to happen.

LF: Among the Nisei?

KO: Both at the American Friends Service Committee office and the Y it would have been mostly with Caucasians, because there weren't that many Nisei. There were a few of us; Gordy Hirabayashi, myself, Bill Makeno [spelling?] maybe a few others. The rest were all Caucasians. So there were a number who lived there and we were all discussing what might happen. Would things remain normal or would all sorts of disruptions occur. Then I went home. That night about 7 or 8 o'clock, we were in the house, I think we'd finished dinner, there was a knock at the front door. The fellow identifies himself as an FBI agent. He wanted to speak to my Dad. My Dad's comment was, he was getting rather hard of hearing, What, the PI, the Post Intelligencer wants to meet me. No, the FBI. So the fellow came in the front door. Another fellow was with him, the deputy sheriff. Then, at the back door, 15-20 minutes later two more came. Then they asked permission to look through documents. A lot of it was in Japanese. They wanted to take them to get it translated. Then they asked my Dad to go with them. He went down and they were all assembled at the Immigration center downtown. I don't know how many were in the first round on the night of the 7th. Then they said we hope he can get out shortly. You go down and ask. It turned out that none of them ever got out. Most of them were shipped to Missoula, several months later. Then they had hearings on each case as to disposition. I went to my Dad's hearing in Missoula. The points brought up were quite interesting. Did you have lunch on such and such a date with somebody from the Naval ship that had visited Seattle in that period. And he would say, well yes, I didn't get all the details, but maybe it was a fellow prefecturite, meaning the prefectural association might invite him. Well, did you have dinner with Mr. X or Mr. Y in some restaurant on another night, from the Japanese Embassy or from some Japanese government agency? Probably said yes. I met most Japanese who came through. If it was a more formal visit we were invited or we'd invite them as representatives of the community here. If it was just an informal visit, maybe the consulate would call me up and ask me to meet them. So I certainly met them. It was interesting the list of things on the dossier they went through. All having to do with meeting Japanese military, Japanese government people over a period of five to seven years. Then, finally the hearing board said, because of his age we will let him go.

That's when he went to Spokane. Not that they assessed the evidence, but because of his age he posed no further threat, so they let him go.

LF: Why was he arrested in the first place?

KO: Because of his prominence in the community. In fact, it was sort of a game. Kids whose parents weren't picked up until a week later couldn't have been as important in the community because they weren't on the first list.

LF: What do you suppose is the source of the information that appeared on his dossier?

KO: That's hard to say. It would appear that some of the information clearly came from somebody in the community. Somebody who had attended the meetings, knew about them. These were not secret meetings. There would be receptions for the captain of the ship they were interested in. Somebody probably reported all this information for whatever reason. No particular charges of direct actions or interactions that had any particular security element. We were asked by the Japanese consulate to help shred their documents, as a job after Pearl Harbor. OK, we'll help you burn it, as a job. If they still had it after the war started, I mean if the U.S. was really concerned they would have moved in and done something. No, I have no recollection of anything that didn't have very innocent explanations, the kind of social contacts that would be expected when visiting delegations came, no overt/covert individual to individual meetings under other than normal eating place dinner type things. So even the evidence, the data, if they had assessed it, on what basis was there anything potentially dangerous. Rather than having to assess it they said, he's too old.

LF: How old was he?

KO: In his early 70s, one of the older Issei. Another thing about his activity, he used to be a go between in a lot of weddings. The parents would come and talk to him and ask him to help them find a daughter, a young lady, or man for their child. My dad would make inquiries around and if any name popped up he would discuss it with the parents to see if they had any interest. And if so they would work out a meeting between the young people. If that was successful, that marriage occurred. This was still not uncommon in the community back in the 30s.

LF: Would an attempt be made to match prefectures?

KO: Not necessarily. Although this depended on parental choice. If the parents said it didn't matter, or if they said it's got to be from the same prefecture, then that restricted the choice. He'd make inquiries on both sides. I don't know how many he actually ended up matching. Some of them became pro forma in the sense that the parents would come to him and ask him to serve in this capacity even though the young people had already agreed.

LF: So the point is your father was well respected.

KO: Yes. And he was one of the early ones to get an award from the Japanese government post-war. He got two of them, the sacred order, one higher than the other. But he was one of the

first groups when the Japanese government back in the 50s decided to start this practice with the overseas people. He was one of the first groups to get it from the west coast.

LF: What would distinguish the various orders.

KO: I haven't followed them, but there are various orders. It depends upon the degree of contribution as assessed by the consul general, or whoever makes the recommendation. But he got one and then they upgraded it a few years later.

LF: You mentioned your father being at the immigration station. Iwao Matsushita was there at the same time. You mentioned off tape about having known him. Could you tell me a little about how you came to know him before the war, and how you and your father met him?

KO: He must have had some activities in the community because I think I met him other than just at Mitsui. I remember having some business dealings where we did some work for Mitsui, but I don't have much recollection of how I met him or where I ran into him. But he must have been associated in some community organizations. In some of them, the Language School, there were those involved with the Japanese Language School. There were a whole variety of groups, Japanese singing, which is very interesting kind of tonal effects, traditional Japanese singing. He may well have been involved in language school activities then, like on the board of directors of the school. In that case we would have seen him at various functions with the school. Where else I might have interacted with him I just don't remember.

LF: Your business interactions with him would have been through your father's transfer company?

KO: Yes. We used to do some hauling of merchandise for them. The trading companies, when their people moved in and out, for example, from Japan, we'd get the business to haul their personal effects from the ships to the houses to which they had been assigned, and so on. But my recollection of that is quite limited. In fact, non-existent.

LF: I'd like to move ahead to after the beginning of the war, but let's take a break.

KO: Yes. (tape stopped) Back in the late 30s I could go into almost any Japanese community on the coast and they knew about my Dad. Go up to Vancouver and mention his name to the older generation, they'd heard of him.

LF: Before we talk about post-Pearl Harbor, you said earlier you began the University in 1941. So you were a Freshman?

KO: No. I graduated in 1939, spent a year in Japan, came back in 1940. So I started the Fall of 1940. So I was starting my second year in Fall of 1941. Except I had moved out of Engineering and was going into Economics.

LF: How did you get involved in Engineering?

KO: My parents wanted me to. That was the pressure among pre-war Japanese, that you had to get an education in a readily marketable area. So it would be either medicine, law was not quite as promoted, but certainly medicine was, you'd become a doctor and be bound to have economic security. Law, maybe not quite so much. Engineering should be more opportunity. Back in the depression years the thought was, well, if you couldn't get an engineering job in the U.S., which was difficult because jobs were scarce, and even if available, there was either latent or overt discrimination, which meant your chances of getting a job were poor. But the argument was that you could always go to Japan and get a job if you had to. So, in those areas the parents felt the greatest potential for security lay. So they felt I should make a try at it and I did. So, except for the Engineering English course I took, where the prof and I had a great time and did quite well, the Engineering students were having a hell of a time with simple English construction and writing a story or writing an essay, or things like this. I commiserated with him when I heard some of the students reading their stuff. I wondered how this could come out of a university level class. So I started in 1940, then during that first year was when we used to have very active meetings and a discussion group with the Japanese Congregational Church and the campus YMCA, and the YWCA had offices in the same building. I can remember the first year going to annual meetings of all the YMCA and YWCA groups. I think in the northwest it was Seebeck Washington, a camp on Hood Canal, going out there with discussions, evening sing a longs, etc. I was quite touched that in the second year when we were no longer around, the group at that camp elected me as co-chair or something for the following year. Whether it was symbolic or whether they thought there was any chance we'd ever get back out, I don't know. It seems to be the case I was well liked. And I had been elected in positions at the University Y on their student government thing, and able to serve part of it. With curfew it became very difficult to stay. Then with evacuation I had to step down.

LF: Do you recall a woman by the name of Mrs. Paul Suzuki?

KO: I know Dr. Paul Suzuki, and his wife I can picture, but I didn't know very well. They were much older. I should say that much older, but they were the older generation. The interaction was quite limited between even that age group and our age group.

LF: I ask about her because in [Frank] Miyamoto's discussion of the JACL and the evacuation [of Seattle] he talks about the YMCA and YWCA and a contingent of Japanese Americans there who might have provided an alternative to JACL.

KO: I think Mrs. Suzuki was involved with the Y downtown. There's a University Y and the Y downtown, which is a community Y. So the Y on campus, the director of the YWCA was Ruth Haines, whom I met subsequently and is now living in New York. The fellow running it on his side was, I think, Woodbury [spelling?]. They were very supportive and helpful. But in the group there, there were only half a dozen. There was Gordy Hirabayashi who made his protest and ended up in jail for awhile, about the time even during the evacuation he was still down at King County jail. Then, Bill Makeno. Who else were there? Very few women, I recall. Sally [Kazama] had some contact, but was not that active. There may have been two or three others. And all quite young. Gordy had his own agenda, which was to oppose the curfew on which he surrendered to the authorities. Walked in one night after curfew was in place, surrendered, and ended up in a jail cell with Ted Takahashi [C. T. Takahashi], who ran an import-export business

and was, not sure what he was in for. That's right, charged with violating the embargo on shipments to Japan, of critical materials to Japan.

LF: Was he part of the Masuda and Ito trial? They were charged with being enemy agents and trading with the enemy. They were acquitted and then sent off to Camp Harmony.

KO: I don't know if he was in on that or not. Ted was his own man and somehow I can't imagine him getting that involved with any one individual. He would run his own thing. I don't know if he ever went to trial. By that time we were out of the area. If I knew then I don't remember now. Anyway Ted did spend time in King County jail with Gordon. One charged with violating the Trading with the Enemy Act.

LF: Among those of you at the University, what was your attitude toward Hirabayashi and what he was doing?

KO: Gordon I liked. I spend a lot of time closely with Gordon. We'd have study groups, discussion groups. Gordy and I were quite close. We've moved quite a bit apart since then. When we meet each other we say hello, but I don't feel any close association like I did when we were at University. He was older. He was a graduate student I think, by then, I was an undergraduate. So in a sense there was an element of looking up to him. I liked what he had to say. Strong pacifist position, which I also came around to, tried to maintain it. But finally got fed up, and rather than arguing with the draft board I gave in, I knew I'd be declared 4-F anyway, so I went in, got my physical. But that was after the war ended. During the war, itself, there was some correspondence where I was arguing CO status.

LF: But you and the rest of the Nisei at the University saw Hirabayashi as doing something that you looked up to.

KO: Yes. The group there was quite young, that's the other problem. The Japanese, while they may not necessarily respect age, I think they follow the Oriental pattern that there is some respect owed to age. So that young upstarts trying to run things would not necessarily be as acceptable as having a somewhat older group, or some association of experience, knowledge, and what have you, with age. Although the group that, Jimmie Sakamoto was one of the oldest. He was considerably older than say, Kenji Ito or Bill Mimbu who had, by that time, developed a certain amount of community reputation. My Dad named him Kenji. His parents came and discussed the name with my Dad, and Dad suggested Kenji, which is why he got that name. Then he gave it to me. So in a sense, same source. Bill Mimbu I liked [**Can you provide a sense of him for me, as an individual, as a leader, as a lawyer?**]. They were well known in the community, community activities beyond just JAACL. Bill Hosokawa was sort of an outsider in that he had just come back. I knew him, or me him when he was at the U in Journalism. And he used to help out and work down at Jimmie Sakamoto's place. I used to drop in and out of there quite often, for a variety of things, I'm not quite sure what they were. His office was only half a block away from my Dad's offices. I saw him and I used to read his stuff. Then he went to Asia and was working out of Singapore, I guess it was. Then he came back. I think I have some memory in the days where a lot of the Niseis went up to the Alaska canneries for Summer work while they were University students. One of the jobs we had was, at the request of the

contractors, go and collect the duffle bags that the guys would take to Alaska and haul them down to the Alaska steamship pier. So a number of names were familiar to me because we would go and pick up their duffle bags from their homes and haul them down. Then they would take off en masse to Bristol Bay or wherever they were going to be working. The Hosokawas I remember, Bill and his brother, both went up. A number of other names the association of simply having gone to their house to collect the duffle bags, making sure we had collected everybody's that we were supposed to, then taking it down to the docks, loading it in the areas designated for their destinations. Certainly Bill and I had chatted a few times. Jimmie I've known a long time. My Dad knew him a long time from the days he turned . . . doubt he knew him before he became blind, but when his boxing career was cut short by blindness. Then we knew his wife Misao, quite well. Used to come by and chat periodically. Those were the people, Tom Masuda I don't know as well. I think he was in a little older generation than Kenji Ito and Bill Mimbu, if I'm not mistaken. He seems to have started practice a little earlier than the other two did. So he was somewhat more established in the community.

When the evacuation came, I didn't realize it until I went back to my scrapbook, that I had been identified in a group of 40-50 selected by, I think after discussion, we must have met somewhere, they said, well we've got to order the administrative structure in four separate areas. In Puyallup we were in four separate areas, isolated by barbed wire. So the first group was to go to Area A, and it would be from the South end. Then we had to pick people who were in the area designated to go to that particular camp, then give them responsibilities. There would be a skeleton organization when we moved in. I ended up going up, I guess, in one of the first contingents. I remember the chaos of that early period, we were working 15-20 hours a day, unloading people's luggage and other materials into the rooms they were assigned. And eating 3 or 4 times a day. Usually we'd eat at 5 and start at 6. Then we'd have another meal before noon and finally another at dinner, then another late at night. Eating Vienna sausages. That's all they served us for two weeks. I cannot look a Vienna sausage in the face to this day. I must have had a lot of cans of Vienna sausages. And in the rain and the mud, then I guess we got better organized. But I realize I had been designated information officer for Area A in the organizational structure. Bill Mimbu was sort of the director of the operation. And I guess it must have been basically a JACL operation. My memory of meeting down at the office we had right on Main Street. I guess it was sort of who's available, who lives in the right areas and who could do a good job. We just went down and identified 30-40 people who could handle a lot of thing from what, name it. I didn't know what I did with it but apparently I even had an office, it turns out, or several of us had offices in Area A.

LF: So you weren't part of Headquarters?

KO: No, only Bill Mimbu went over for any meetings. The rest of us got most of our information second hand. We had our own set of offices, where I have no recollection. Because when I was leaving there was a group of notes that were sent to me by people who were in the same office. There were about 10-15 of them, so must have been the whole administrative office of Area A. Unfortunately most of them just signed their first name, so I have no recollection of who they are.

LF: What was your job description as information officer?

KO: It was simply to communicate any information from the military. The initial effort the WCCA, the civilian authorities, insisted all communication by camp residents go through the internal structure, then cross over to be brought to the attention, that there be centralized handling, if you will, from the evacuee side to the McGovern and people running the operation. They didn't want to be bothered by a lot of individual requests coming directly to them. They wanted to come through the chain of command, so to speak. The responsibilities had to do with disseminating information coming down with orders from WCCA or information about what might happen, what have you. Mimeographed material that would be sent over, posting them, and so on. Then assisting anyone who wanted assistance, whether dealing with anybody else. There's a couple of letters I'd written to the railway retirement board on behalf of several people who pension applications were held up by need for more information. Another one where a group of people were having trouble with their lawyers or tenants of their properties and wanted to be able to go to Seattle to meet. That one had to go through command, I guess, and somehow I ended up sending the request to San Francisco. There's a response saying it's something I can't really do, but if you give us specifics we'll see whether we can handle it. So, I don't know how many letters I wrote of this nature, but there are several of them to indicate that at least San Francisco had heard of me even if they didn't get that much correspondence directly from the camps. In some cases they just sent the letters back to the camp. In other cases they did respond. Another one I raised was why my Dad couldn't join us at the center in Puyallup. That one came directly back from the Western Defense Commander saying, no way. And then the biggest objection I raised was when the WCCA decided out of the blue they wanted twice a day bed checks. We'd gone a month, two months without any checks. All of a sudden the order comes down twice a day you're to have a head count. You're to organize the head count. I said, I'm not going to do it. It would have been my job. It was sort of information, what have you. I wrote a strong letter of protest. I don't know if it was ever implemented. I said I'd resign, but I don't think I ever quit. So I'm not sure whether it was implemented or whether we got around it by some sort of pro forma effort of a head count. That one I sent directly to McGovern and if I'm not mistaken, copies directly to the Western Defense Command. Obviously the order came out of San Francisco.

LF: So your communications were with the San Francisco office rather than the Seattle office of the Western Defense Command.

KO: Oh no. We had no communication there. Everything seemed to go to San Francisco. Then you were supposed to go up through Sakamoto and over, so I guess in some cases I did and in other cases I got so annoyed that I sent directly to McGovern. Whether he turned it over to Sakamoto and said OK now you hand it to me I don't know what happened.

LF: Did you have any direct contact with McGovern?

KO: No. I may have met him once or twice, but he sat over in the other area. I don't know if he made the rounds. He may have visited occasionally. I had very little contact with those people who were in Area D. We did some occasional entertainment around and so on, but it was all sort of something to keep life going. No direct meetings that I can recall with Jimmie. I must

have met regularly with Bill Mambu. Certainly not Kenji Ito. He was in Area D, and not with Hosokawa.

LF: Ito was part of Headquarters Staff?

KO: I don't know if he was Headquarters Staff or whether he had any staff position. But I'm sure he wasn't in our area. He was in Area D I'm quite sure. I don't know what connection he had with anyone. But he was one of those ordered out. Why, I have no idea. Now the other thing which came up. In a Coast Guard hearing just about the time the war end was the most interesting. We went into camp in late March [April], I guess. And about May, June we were permitted to organize events. We had church services with ministers from outside given permission to come in and lead the services. Then they set up a room where we could meet people wanting to come in and visit with us in the meeting rooms. They couldn't come into the camp, themselves. People like Floyd Schmoie could come in and visit. We were given permission to invite anybody in that we wanted to have for discussion or listen to. And we invited, maybe Woody [Woodbury?] or someone made the contact, the Dean of Business at the University of Washington at the time, Dr. Preston. A fuddy-duddy if I had ever known one. Conservative as all get out, who had gone to attend a meeting of business school deans somewhere in the Carolinas. On the trip he had travelled around the U.S., probably by train, visited a number of big cities and gave a talk called, "America at War". He talked about what he saw. Somebody must have gotten concerned because I have a one page letter in which I explain that he did not say anything that disparaged the war effort, he did not say anything that in any way hinted that Americans were not in support of the war effort. Somebody must have asked me what did he talk about with the implication that was this a subversive talk. I just have a copy of this memo I wrote. I don't even know who I sent it to. Then I came back to Seattle early, after they opened up the West Coast again, which was February or March of 1945. I came back quite early, one of the earlier ones back. Looked around for a job. The only one seemed willing to hire, without problems, was Harry Bridge's Longshoremen's Union. So I went down and applied for a job. Well, we have jobs on the waterfront, but you'll have to get a Coast Guard clearance. Then I went to the Coast Guard and applied for a clearance. In the meantime they said, well, we have other jobs off the waterfront where you don't need clearance. We'll put you on those crews. So we worked in an Army supply depot, two blocks off the waterfront with a bunch of fellows that were among the slowest I've ever seen. I mean it's just totally frustrating to do nothing in the process of trying to look as though you're working. Well, they finally gave me a hearing. It must have been about July of 1945. The war ends in August. Coast Guard hearing down at the Coast Guard offices which are downtown, with I think about two captains and a commander. They bring out the file which they had received, to discuss with me in this appeal of a denial. They denied me, then I appealed. And it turns out we focus on this talk Dean Preston had given. Why did you invite him? Who was he? What did he talk about? The files must have come from the military at some point. They had it in the Coast Guard, obviously. Or the Coast Guard had requested it. I guess the Army had to give the clearance, as well. That's the only thing they had. After about a half hour of that we discussed pacifism for the next hour. Then, of course, by the time they had reached any decision the war was over, so forget any requirements. (end side 2)

LF: You never got your WCCA record?

KO: No. Those were Army records. I never asked for it, but I'm sure that under Freedom of Information one should be able to get it. where they are I don't know, whether they are in San Francisco or transferred to the Archives, or San Francisco maintains its own archives, I just don't know. The War Relocation at least was centered in Washington and I suppose the camp records that were kept were sent back there.

LF: The WCCA records I've looked at are in Washington, but I haven't asked to look at personnel records, yet.

KO: If you do it should prove interesting.

LF: I plan to go back, and when I do I could look yours up, but I'd have to have a n affidavit or permission from you to do that.

KO: Right.

LF: I'd like to talk about JACL a little bit. After Pearl Harbor the Nikkei community was turned on its head because the leaders were arrested. And JACL stepped in to fill that void. Can you tell me a little bit about how that came about and whether there was an alternative to JACL?

KO: Certainly the interaction that in a sense generated the reliance, if you will, of the WCCA on the JACL probably took place in San Francisco. So that we had no direct knowledge of what led to the JACL and WCCA reaching some sort of understanding of the level of activities that the JACL would be responsible for. I think in the Seattle case we heard that this is what we should do. We didn't say we wanted to do it. In other words, to set up a camp organization or anything like that, we were asked to do it.

LF: When you say we, were you in JACL?

KO: I was active in the JACL. I was one of the younger members, probably the youngest in the JACL at the time. I don't think we were in a position, not that the older members might not have, but I don't believe the organizational structure we implemented was something we were asked to do by anyone other than national JACL. Because there was no WCCA civilian counterpart anywhere around Seattle. It was all organized out of San Francisco. Bendetsen's operation established, they may have appointed some people here, but they were probably appointed to get the Puyallup camp going. I don't know who such a person might have been and whether they would have been in touch with the local chapter. My feeling is the initial effort to work with and the WCCA expecting the JACL to establish an administrative or channel structure I believe came out of San Francisco. The then leaders, including, was Masao Sato national director, I don't remember. Right up about the time of the war there wasn't that much structure. We had national presidents and all, but I don't know how much of an office organization we had and like that. We used to meet in Seattle on Main Street. I don't know if we had our own office or we had somebody's office that we used to use here in Seattle. Back when we were holding our meetings in 1940-41. Now, of course, I assume they had an office. But if we had an office to call our own with our own phone number, I don't think that happened until after the war.

LF: After Pearl Harbor the Emergency Defense Council had an office at 517 Main Street, and they shared that office, apparently with the military.

KO: Well, 517 Main Street I'm sure the place comes to mind, met there. But I don't remember having any military. That's news to me.

LF: Do you remember Col. Malone, the point man for the Army up here?

KO: No. When did he start interacting or did he, with the Japanese community?

LF: My understanding that it was he that met with Sakamoto and said, put this together, create a structure along

KO: Oh, he's the one. When did this occur?

LF: Shortly after EO9066, sometime in March.

KO: You see, by the end of March everything had been put into place. Names had been designated. We left April 28th in the advance group. Could be you're right. But why did Malone pick the JACL? Was it his judgement or was it San Francisco, having worked with the so-called national organization, told him to do it?

LF: That's unclear to me. It's also unclear to me whether Sakamoto went to the Army or the Army went to him.

KO: I just don't know. You think maybe Jimmie initiated this or at least was the contact point? Jimmie was not that active in JACL itself at that time. He was around. He certainly was interested in it. But I don't think of him as an active participant in the local chapter. But he was sort of a senior people in the Nisei community and he knew a lot of people. He had the Courier. The Courier, of course, supported the local baseball athletic activities. So a lot of people knew him or of him. His name, of course, is in there as one of the earlier active JACL members. By the time of the war the leadership was considerably younger.

LF: What was the influence of the JACL on the community at that time?

KO: It was a quasi-social organization. They did attempt some legislative lobbying, but it was a relatively small and limited funds organization. The anti-alien land law battles they did play a limited role, tried to play a role and didn't have much influence. It was an organization that certainly was around, was recognized, and there was always a question as to who started the organization and which group can claim to be the founding member of the organization. And Seattle had its claims as having one of the early groups to get organized among the young people. Then young people, and attempt to speak or deal with problems faced by the community. So the history is somewhat unclear. But I think the first national meeting was held in Seattle. Whether Seattle can claim the earliest establishment or whether it's one of the California groups, its a matter of part definition and part data. Now my Dad was active in both

of them. He helped establish the first chapter, or the first group of Nisei, he felt the Nisei should have some ability to get together and speak on behalf of their group. Then he was also honored at the first national convention, as having been one of the original supporters of the organization. In effect there was no other group that tried to at least represent the community. You had various interest groups -- baseball, athletic groups, the kenjin-kais, kendo groups. Then you had the Japanese Chamber of Commerce. But that was still again pretty much an older first generation organization.

LF: There was a Seattle Japanese Junior Chamber of Commerce.

KO: Yes. But again these were business people. Chambers of commerce, if you were students, see a lot of them, what was the average age of the Niseis, eighteen I think, so the older Nisei like Jimmie, were very few. So there was the chamber of commerce would have been one possibility, but again, it is the sort of thing where young people coming out, particularly since business orientation was not something that, parents were in business, but they wanted their kids to become professionals. So it was not the sort of mind set that directs young people into chambers. You're going to become a lawyer or a doctor, you're going to be in professional organizations. Yeah, the Chamber of Commerce, I'd forgotten that group. Guess my Dad was active in that one, too.

LF: I'm trying to think of organizations in the community that might have stepped forward.

KO: The thing is that a lot of, I don't know about the Junior Chamber as I don't know who was in it, but the senior chamber, the more important people would all be in Missoula by this time. Then you have a few academics, like Frank Miyamoto, who was at the University of Washington, but more or less outside the Japanese community. He studied the Japanese, but he didn't have that much interaction. So, when you think about it, the lawyers were probably it. There were a few dentists, doctors. None of the dentists seemed to have any desire to come forward and do anything. The doctors were a bit more expansive, but they were willing to follow, but I had no feeling that they were willing to take any responsibility outside of their medical activity. This may be hindsight, but there was no organization. If you wanted someone that had a large enough membership or knew enough people so that you could have them staff up to 50, 100 posts, for which we eventually got paid four or five bucks a month. Hard pressed to find any group that could identify that many. Not that we were that much better, but at least in that organization we got a number of people who had a lot of community contacts. So they could just think up names. I think even at that point Mrs. Shigeo Uno who is still active and very well known, was quite active. They ran an ice cream parlor I think even then, if I'm not mistaken. Doing some business where a lot of people would be coming in and out of their shop. These were the somewhat older Nisei. I'd be curious to know if the idea of this kind of organization came out of San Francisco, or was something that originated here. I don't know how things were run in the other assembly camps.

LF: Japanese Headquarters?

KO: Yes.

LF: My understanding is that however it was started, the Army and Sakamoto got together. It was the Emergency Defense Council that had formed early in December in response to the war. It wasn't the JACL, but under the auspices of the EDC that the Army came and said we want you to create this top down structure which they designed after the G-1, G-2, etc. They were to organize this government in camp and work with the administration.

KO: Was this done in other camps?

LF: I don't know the answer to that question. It hasn't been studied.

KO: If it was unique to Puyallup then clearly there must have been something unique about Puyallup. Who was on the EDC?

LF: I have a list. What I have here is the headquarters at Camp Harmony. This is who these people are.

KO: (views list)

LF: For the most part were these university people?

KO: No. They're university graduates, some. The only people from the university, Dike Miyagawa is a union officer, business agent for a union, as I remember. Masuo Uno used to be a truck driver. Merrie Mimbu, I'm sure had gone to university. John Okada, don't remember. Maki was at the university. Nobu Ike was probably studying at the time, student at the University. Dick Takeuchi, probably a student. George Kashiwagi had a tailor shop. I think that's the same family that had a men's clothing store. Sam Taniguchi, his dad had a plumbing company. So it goes. One of the other things it's important to keep in mind, this group was selected from those that were in Area D. We were sent into different areas by where we lived in the city of Seattle, as far as I know. I don't think anybody was moved because they were on this list, with one or two exceptions. They had to sort of figure out where people were going to be sent, then identify those who were in the group that were going to be in that unit, whether area A, B C, or D, to ask them to handle some responsibility. But these are all people who were all known within the community.

LF: So some of them were UW people with undergraduate degrees, some of them weren't.

KO: Some had undergraduate degrees, some had probably never been to college. So that wasn't a factor. They were known through their athletic endeavors. God, Takeuchi, I think his Dad was involved with one of the Japanese language papers. Various connections where they would be known. Maybe they played baseball together.

LF: You were involved with JACL. What involvement did you have with the Emergency Defense Council.

KO: None that I know of. See, I was one of the younger ones. Just attending meetings and so on, but not one that would be considered such as Bill or Mimbu or others who were senior, or the

older generation. I think some of the younger ones were saying, look, the JACL ought to do more than just run dances, little rebels in the making just feeling our way.

LF: So EDC did not come to you and specifically ask you to participate.

KO: No, not the EDC. But I'd like to know who was on the EDC. It must have been the older generation.

LF: I can provide you with such a list. Let's pause the tape for a moment.

KO: Ishihara, yeah he'd be among the somewhat older group. Jiro Oaki, somewhat older, yes. George Takehashi, again somewhat older. I see, mobilize for emergency. This was an emergency organization in case of actions in the Seattle area. It was not initially in connection with evacuation.

LF: No, this preceded it by some months.

KO: Col. Markel. Oh, by Bill Hosokawa, pledge their loyalty, etc.

LF: Hosokawa was Sakamoto's eyes and he filled the same role at Camp Harmony.

KO: Of course the other eyes that would be very interesting would be Misao's, Mrs. Sakamoto. She's still around, though I haven't seen her for years. She's still in Seattle. When we get towards the war, however. Clarence Arai, he's another older lawyer, sort of a buffoon, but. Pledge of loyalty, all of this to make sure that nothing would happen, hopefully, to them. (continues to look at newspaper chronology) Here's the public school problem my sister was telling me about that.

LF: Yes, I'm hoping she'll share this experience with me. Sally Kazama, of course, was involved in that, too. She was one of the clerks.

KO: They're all getting involved now. JACL is quite involved by this time, out of San Francisco, with representatives from all the chapters. Oh, Nobutake Ike, he ended up back east working at the Library of Congress, I think, as a specialist on Japan. Oh, the curfew didn't come until March. That's right there was also a Japanese Students Club which had a building on 15th where they also had living quarters. Japanese Student Club, something like that. A number of Japanese students, particular those from out of town, lived there.

LF: Did most Nisei from the Pacific Northwest go to the University of Washington?

KO: Yes. A few went to the University [College] of Puget Sound. Again, a very few to Washington State. Of course the colleges were non-existent at that time. What they were normal schools, Western Washington, which was normal, and Ellensburg Normal, these were teacher training. And the private school, I guess the tuition was considerably higher, such as Seattle University, if you were Catholic. But generally, the bulk of students around here went to the University of Washington at that time. Four hundred [435] out of an enrollment of nine or 10

thousand [8400]?

LF: I don't know, but that's a pretty significant representation.

KO: It is a good number, but by that time we were getting a larger group of graduates coming out of the high schools. Broadway High was the big high school in terms of Japanese enrollment. Garfield and Broadway were the two big ones. They tended to be closer to the concentrations. Then I guess, Franklin. The others had much smaller, although there were some at Queen Anne and Roosevelt because there were some truck farms north of the city line, greenhouse operators, just north of the city line.

LF: Yes, there were some farmers a mile west of here, near Greenlake, as well.

KO: Yes, smaller. Then the larger farming community was south, from South Park, around Boeing on through to Kent, Auburn. I remember working as a kid picking peas, as a family. My mother, sisters and I would go out, camp out in the sheds they would have and spend a week or so picking peas.

LF: So you were hired by the Japanese farmers to come in?

KO: Yes. We were paid a penny a pound, or two cents.

LF: Was this out of necessity, I mean, you needed the money?

KO: It may have helped, but I don't think it was quite that essential. We're still doing some business with the trucking side, the Oriental Trading Company was pretty well being phased out, but the transfer business, and things weren't great, but we still had two or three people working on the fishing tackle. After all we did buy a new car in 1939, I remember, toward the end of the depression. But still depressed. I still remember men coming to the back door and asking for food. There was a little shanty town near where the city's dump used to be, down toward Boeing field.

LF: Hooverville?

KO: Yes, just off Beacon Hill, in the flats, down where there's a brewery, north of where there was Rainier Brewery.

LF: Were there Japanese men living in Hooverville?

KO: Not that I'm aware of. People coming to our door were all Caucasians. They'd knock at the back door and ask for handouts. They may have come up from Hooverville.

LF: You were talking earlier about who was in the Emergency Defense Council. The name Clarence Arai came up. He was the head of what was called the Intelligence Corp, an antisubversive group that worked directly with the FBI.

KO: I wouldn't be surprised. He was quite an outspoken jingoist in his way, in support of the U.S. He ran as a Republican for the state legislature a few times. I don't think he ever made it. He was quite an outspoken, outgoing sort of fellow. Not considered top quality legal material. He was a nice guy, a bit too loud for his own good. If you had a serious legal problem you normally didn't go to him. Masuda or Mimbu would be the ones you'd go to. Although Clarence was older. He's more Jimmie's age.

LF: Do you expect Arai was active in ferreting out subversives?

KO: There wasn't much to ferret out, that's the problem. There were some spies around, but they were non-Japanese. There's a story I was just reading about a latin American spy in this area during the war who was considered to be a paid intelligence informer for the Japanese. But certainly not the Japanese. I don't know if there were. But if there were, they would have been very quiet under cover. But so many had been here for so long it would have been difficult to, and you'd have to have a degree of sophistication and knowledge to be able to provide any real information. So I don't know who that would have been. There may have been a few ex-military from Japan who came in as immigrants I have strong doubts that anybody considered a local would have had much likelihood of being an espionage agent. They had all been here too long. **[What about perceived subversives?]**

LF: After the original arrests occurred in the first weeks, those arrests continued on well into 1942, February or March. Those would have been people not on the FBI's so-called ABC lists.

KO: Could be, but why they ended up being picked up later, maybe they were making statements that somebody didn't like. Whether they had been doing anything, I don't know. But probably in some cases, for example, I was one of the last to get out to go to college. Because once the WRA took over they tried to expedite departure for midwestern and eastern universities. I was one of the later ones out simply because of the black mark on my record for whatever the reason, which had to be looked at rather than just automatically approved. And there was a guy who was even later than I was who came out to Oberlin. The best he could figure was that his name coincided with or was the same name as the gambler in L.A. They probably thought he was that fellow, the well known gambler. So, they may have used detention as a means of picking up some of these people that would not have been considered a subversive threat, but were sort of considered doing things the government or law enforcement agents decided well, why not just remove them from the gambling scene by picking him up and detaining him rather than trying to bring charges against him. That would be my suspicion. But I have no knowledge of who was being picked up and why.

LF: Miyamoto, in his history of the JACL and the evacuation talks about the grumbling of EDC starting fairly early on. Before evacuation there was unhappiness with the way things were proceeding. There was concern about Clarence Arai's activities or potential activities. Can you speak to that?

KO: I think the problem here, in part, arises from the fact that while the committee was presumably doing its best to ensure that it would do what needed to be done relative to the rest of the community, not in terms of evacuation, but showing that we were doing our bit (end of side

3) . . . the problem of bank accounts being frozen, all those things. These are irritants. We have problems with frozen bank accounts, how do I get them unfrozen and what procedures do you have to go through, etc. So that here's a committee that says its going to look out for and support the well being of and the safety of the Japanese. And yet here are these other orders coming through. Who do you blame? I think there was some of that. Then when people get picked up and here's a guy who is supposed to be in charge of intelligence. How much responsibility did he have? And then, Clarence was not the most popular person in the community anyway, so there would be plenty of people willing to pick holes in him. Whenever you run into a problem it's easy to blame somebody, so that I don't know how widespread If you didn't like what the committee was doing what difference did it make because before evacuation you could ignore it. You didn't have to do anything. You could go your own way. It was just an effort to mobilize and make visible the effort of the Japanese to show they were with everybody else in supporting the defense effort, etc. But if you said well, I don't like the war, why should I get involved? And the draft was being applied then to everybody, so there was nothing different about the way we were being handled until, I guess the draft was called off sometime in February or March. It took awhile before they dropped us from being drafted. As long as you didn't have to do anything, not being involved had no cost. Being involved had no particular benefit except to show psychological, maybe. There was a great deal of unhappiness about being evacuated, and all, but hardly fair to blame a local group for an action signed by the president and implemented by the military. There are those subsequently who said more should have been done. Of course, the newer generation keeps saying it was a mistake to even cooperate. That's rewriting history in your own image, so to speak.

LF: Was there any voice at the time against JACL?

KO: Not that I'm aware of. Certainly not one that was that visible. There were outspoken voices against evacuation, but these were the groups, the Mitsuis, Endos and others, I don't know which were the curfew cases, which were the evacuation cases, with efforts to go to court and argue legally the action was unconstitutional.

LF: But there was no voice at Camp Harmony saying we shouldn't have gone quietly?

KO: I doubt that very much. First, the generations, the younger children, those still at university, I'm not aware there were any who felt we could have done anything about being forced to move. Subsequent generations have argued that we shouldn't have gone, or that we gave in too easily. At the time there was a certain fatalism about it. If we gotta move we gotta move. Anything that makes the move easier, fine. Can't blame the JACL for initiating the move or cooperating to the extent of making it easier for us to be moved. We showed up at the designated points except for a few people. They didn't object, they just forgot, were not informed, or were too confused to know what to do. They were rounded up later or walked into police stations and said what am I supposed to do. I didn't sense any feeling that we shouldn't be cooperating. Let's get on with it. One day you can sell your movies, the next day you can't, very confusing. I don't think anyone was saying let's sit here and let the Army move us. Fathers, bread winners had been imprisoned, detained by immigration and sent to Missoula, Crystal City, etc., and the others, women and children and young men and women, but still not of the age nor of the mind set to, I would argue, be particularly outspoken. A few were, and they

stand out. They took things to court. But I doubt if any others did, or would have felt we were doing the wrong thing. We may not have been happy with what was being done, but they weren't going to say it was JACL's fault that we were being moved, although some people might say it. I think the big concerns about the JACL I thought came up more with the no-no boys and the problems in connection with volunteering. The JACL was very active in supporting volunteering from the camps. There were those in the loyalty questionnaire who said no, they would not swear loyalty to the U.S. and so on. Some of that got rather violent because they were beating each other up.

LF: Speaking of potential violence, I was reading an interview with James Omura that has just been published. He mentioned that there was a group of half a dozen Issei who got together to plot the assassination of Jimmie Sakamoto and that Shosuke Sasaki, a young Issei, was able to talk them out of it or at least postpone any action until they got to Minidoka. That's pretty strong.

KO: Why would they oppose him?

LF: I don't know. I can speculate. The speculation would go back to Clarence Arai and the cooperation with the FBI.

KO: Why not go after Clarence, directly rather than Jimmie?

LF: I don't know.

KO: Of course you had the die hard Issei once they got to camp, for example, who kept saying Japan would never be defeated. All this about the U.S. Navy winning battles was propaganda. That sort of thing clearly went on. Some comments being made Japan could never be defeated, all the stories you read in the paper are lies. Japanese are winning, they will be here any time.

LF: One of the other things I've uncovered is that there was a plebescite at Camp Harmony. There was a vote in which the people, the inmates, were asked to give Sakamoto's administration a vote of confidence.

KO: I have no recollection of that. I have no notes or anything to indicate that. There was some sort of a registration I remember. But that was in preparation for a move to the next center. There was a lot of rumors around about where we would go next. Small groups were sent to Tule Lake. Finally the decision was reached to move the group to Minidoka. But it took awhile before that uncertainty disappeared.

When Bill Mimbu and I were called, I guess we just had lunch, which means between 12 and 1, and we got a note hand carried over by a lady, asking us to go immediately to McGovern's office. This was a day or two before we were to start packing to go to Minidoka. Bill and I, according to my recollection, speculated on what the heck we were being called over on such short notice. And then we were ushered in to McGovern's office. And we were informed by him that we had to be ready to catch the 4:30 train out of Puyallup, to go to California. That I was going to Merced and Bill was going to

Stockton. I have some notes on it. My notes indicate that we got the impression that this was an order directly out of San Francisco. That it had come out of probably Bendetsen's office, or whatever out of the Western Defense Command. I can remember being extremely upset. This was shortly after Sewell Avery had sat down in his office and had been carried out by the military in great shots front paged on the papers. Because he had, I forgot, opposed something and being very belligerent about it and had refused to meet some military requirement or something. Anyway it was a cause celebre at the time and he just sat in his office and the Army was called in and carried out in his chair.

LF: Who was Sewell Avery?

KO: He was president of Montgomery Ward, headquartered in Chicago. Curmudgeon, the old man. So for awhile I was thinking well what would happen if I just sit here, come and haul me away and put me on the train. But ah, then my mother and sister and friends all said, that's ridiculous, you're going to go anyway, might as well make the best of it. So we were ready when the pick up came and put us on the train with two guards, civilian guards. Slow, dirty train. Bill got off first at Stockton. Apparently, my notes say, Bill and Merrie were given berths for the night on the train. For some reason my mother didn't get a berth although she was much older than they were. We just sat up the whole time. We got off close to midnight in Merced. Apparently they had a camp ambulance there to greet us, to pick us up and take us to the camp. Then we discovered we had relatives in the camp. Shortly thereafter, less than a week later, they gave us temporary quarters, because they were already starting to move people to Colorado. We were one of the earlier groups to Colorado. Ended up in Colorado. The relatives that we knew we went on to join in Colorado. Then my Dad joined us shortly thereafter. Then they did not let me out of the Colorado camp until January 1943. Most of the students who had been able to be accepted, were able to leave in time for the September classes in 1942. I was held back until January 1943 before I got permission to leave, then I took off for college, Oberlin. I had been accepted at Oberlin in principle, even before we were evacuated. Harry Yamaguchi, another Seattle Nisei and graduate of Broadway, had gotten a scholarship to Oberlin and went to Oberlin in the Fall, I think he started in the Fall of 1939. I think he went right on to the University in the Fall of 1939. Then there was talk of moving everybody off the west coast. The president of Oberlin college called Harry in and said, do you have friends around Seattle you think would be able to or qualify to come to Oberlin and benefit from it? Harry called us, he had four or five of us in mind. He called us and asked us if we would be interested in going. A couple of them had already left voluntarily. They had gone or were about to leave and had acceptances to colleges back east. so there were about four or five of us that said we would be interested. Then, the president had presumably talked to the president of the University of Washington and so on, and we got letters saying we were accepted. We had to send documents, but in principal we were accepted, shortly before the evacuation. As soon as we were permitted to apply to go from camp, which was initially started even at Puyallup, then the red tape was horrendous, so I think only one person managed to get out of Puyallup in the first month. The rest were held up by the red tape. There was a list of requirements the Western Defense Command required. You must get a statement from the mayor or local community that they would provide protection and treat you and insure your safety from the mayor or chief of police in the community to which you would be going. I've got a whole page of these requirements that had been established by the Western Defense Command. So everybody said, well just wait until the civilian War Relocation

Authority moves in, then you should be able to get right out. Sure enough, once we got in there, most of those who were waiting just within a month or so were on their way to college. Except mine didn't come through for several months. And the fellow that was very helpful in all of this and worked really intensively with, particularly young people up here to help them get to college was Tom Bodine, who was a volunteer with the Friends Service Committee, who was in the student relocation efforts of that organization. We had voluminous correspondence on why my case seemed to be held up. Couldn't figure out why things were moving so slowly.

LF: I'd like to read you something I don't think you've read, that may shed light on why you were removed. This was a letter dated August 14, 1942. It was actually a memo from Headquarters, Western Defense Command, 4th Army, Seattle Branch, to superiors in San Francisco, on conditions existing in Puyallup. Talking about removal of various individuals. It is recommended by this office that the following individuals, in addition to Hosokawa, Ito, Suyetani and Masuda, should be removed to separate relocation centers: S. Hosokawa, who was Bill's father, Kenji Okuda, William Mambu, and Frank Y. Kinomoto.

KO: Oh yes, Frank Kinomoto, right, the accountant. **[Can you provide a brief bio of him?]**

LF: Those four individuals are considered subversive for the following reasons: 5. Kenji Okuda. He is the son of Henry Okuda, recently and unfortunately released by the parole board from internment and now residing in Spokane. The father, Henry Okuda, was considered by the local Japanese Issei to be the number one Japanese propagandist in this territory. Kenji Okuda, in addition to being the son of Henry Okuda, is dangerous on his own part, for the reason that he is active in the publication of the *Pacific Cable*, a publication of the American Friends Service Committee, and the Seattle Youth Fellowship of Reconciliation **[I'd like to know more about this group]**. Kenji Okuda is further reliably reported to have stated before the war, 'I'll be damned if I'll serve Uncle Sam'. So, that's what I know about you.

KO: Well, there we go. That's impressive, interesting. Why would they pick on Kinomoto?

LF: Frank Kinomoto, a Kibei, was known as one of the staunch supporters of Thomas Masuda, and labeled his number one stooge. he was also active in the Junior Japanese Association.

KO: Well, what's wrong with Masuda? Masuda did some work, I think, for the Japanese consulate, things like that. But that's interesting the kind of charges the Army mentality seems to generate.

LF: There's some speculation that maybe the origin of these orders, and by the way, the orders did come from San Francisco, I've got some detail on that, but maybe all this began with Sakamoto, himself.

KO: But what would he have against all these people?

LF: That's what I'm trying to find out. What did all of you have in common that would make you subversive in the eyes of somebody?

KO: Well, we were not quite as enthusiastic in our support of Americanism, of saluting the flag and singing the Star Spangled Banner as Jimmie might have thought appropriate. But hell, Jimmie isn't a fool. He realizes we weren't going around trying to subvert the war effort or anything, or saying America was wrong in going to war.

LF: What about subverting him, that somehow his authority was being undermined?

KO: I had no particular reason to. I've always like him, and I thought he always got along very well with my Dad. He used to come over fairly frequently when he had some problems. He'd come and consult with my Dad and things like this. And occasionally when he and his wife were having some troubles, why they'd come over and Dad would be asked to sort of intervene and work things out. It's possible, and I know certainly Jimmie's wife treated my father with great deference. I suppose he could act one way and think differently, but I have no reason to suspect that. The original group that started the local JACL, the Seattle Progressive Citizens League, was Jimmie, and Clarence Arai, of that generation, the earlier generation. They all got together. My Dad was called upon to help them get support from the rest of the Issei community and so forth. And I guess Tom Masuda must have been in that group. There were a couple of. It's hard to believe that he would have turned on. I mean Bill would have worked with him when he was younger and known Jimmie for a long time. I find this a little hard to believe. It's not inconceivable, it may have happened, but I don't know where one would pick up the evidence. Did Bill [Hosokawa] have anything to say in this connection?

LF: He said he had actually heard such rumors, but that he could do no more than speculate that Jimmie somehow became paranoid. That he had his power base and wanted to protect it, and somehow he was feeling threatened. There was a letter written to Sakamoto from Minidoka from one of the members of the advance group that went there. And there was a comment in it saying the old rumors are started again that maybe you had something to do with Mimbu's removal. So there is some documentation that at least the rumors were going on.

KO: But I don't know why they would have worked on Bill. I know we speculated all the way on why the hell we were being treated like this. Maybe we mentioned Jimmie, but I have my doubts. Once I left, of course, I lost contact with any rumors. Subsequently I never visited Harmony [Minidoka?]. I visited Heart Mountain and Rohwer. I guess I visited those two camps for one reason or another. I don't know why I went there, but I went in to visit Heart Mountain. The only case of overt discrimination that I can think of was being refused a drink while I was waiting for the train in Billings or whatever the nearest railroad town is out of Heart Mountain, where the guy refused to serve me. But other than that I don't know who I met in Heart Mountain, but I decided to drop in on them, went up and visited. I went into Rohwer, Arkansas. I was somewhere in the area and thought I'd drop by and go see the camp.

LF: As far as your removal?

KO: Except for this damn thing about the suspicions generated by that kind of mind on the fact that I had invited somebody in to speak on America at war, trying to get secret materials or God knows what. And the fact that I probably you know, a couple of letters and they decided

they didn't like the tone of the letters; the statement I made that I would never go to war. Well, I may have, because I was arguing I was a pacifist.

LF: What is this relationship to the *Pacific Cable*? What is that?

KO: I had forgotten about that. That's a little news letter that Floyd Schmoe was putting out, just to generate information, keep people friends concerned information on what was happening to the students of Japanese descent around the University, those that had contacts with the Quakers. Then the Fellowship of Reconciliation, that's the pacifist organization.

LF: There's an addendum in this August 14th note. It says, '09. It should be mentioned in passing that the *Pacific Cable* is a new publication that is receiving considerable attention from this office. An example of their editorial policy is their attempt to make a martyr of Gordon Hirabayashi, conscientious objector, and challenger of the constitutional right of the Japanese evacuation and now backed by the American Civil Liberties Union.

KO: It was just put out by the staff, a secretary employee in the American Friends Committee right off campus. It came out, I suspect, after the war started and all the anti-Japanese feelings and sentiments, trying to put out the Quaker point of view. and then what Gordon was doing, what some of the people involved with the Quakers were doing, or had some contact with them were doing around the University, and Seattle. Then, when the evacuation came along how they were responding to it. And Floyd, of course, being a staunch pacifist, I gather he's had a 100th birthday, lately.

LF: Yes, in fact he made the front page of the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, a huge color photograph.

KO: A very sincere, dedicated individual. He used to help provide transport, used to come out to Puyallup and visit regularly. He'd bring out some students from the University just to cheer us up, so to speak.

LF: He went to Fort Missoula as well.

KO: That's right. He was dedicated to help. Then there were people like Mary Farquerson from the University of Washington who was very active. Y. Woodbury and Ruth Haines were active. They were the executive directors or secretaries of the YMCA and YWCA. They were members of the permanent staff and they worked with students to provide activities and have a place for meetings, provide leadership and direction to little workshops and discussions we used to have. When did Jimmie die?

LF: 1955. He survived the war for 10 years. He worked for the Salvation Army. He was killed crossing a street.

I want to ask you about something that happened at Camp Harmony. There was a regulation that prohibited the possession of Japanese language literature, phonograph records, except for religious items. I understand that was a contentious issue. Can you

talk about that a bit?

KO: I have very little memory of it. The thing was that there was a regulation. I think we were expected to go around and dig it out because they didn't want to conduct searches, and then turn it over. I'm not sure we did anything about it. We knew it, and it existed, but I don't think we felt it was in our jurisdiction to go around and ask people to, if they wanted to turn it in that was fine, the regulation was posted. If they wanted to voluntarily turn it in, fine, but we weren't going to go around and check in people's barracks to see whether they had any.

LF: By we, we're talking about the Area A headquarters?

KO: Yes.

LF: Did Sakamoto send down an order that you should do that?

KO: I don't think he did. I think he sent the order out saying we shouldn't have it, but that was directly from the camp office. That's where it stood. I have no recollection of the military guards or civilian staff going around in the camp to do any of this. And I don't think we did it. The order was there and we were reasonably expected to implement it, but I doubt if we ever did. That's my feeling. Otherwise I don't know what they would have done with the materials if there had been much. There may have been a few Japanese magazines. Of course, we could get stuff in, but we used to order stuff from catalogues to some extent. They may have come in and then if they wanted to open these packages in the mail room or camp facilities, they could presumably do it. But people didn't have much space or room to bring in much reading material. They relaxed it a bit. Originally we could only take what we could carry. Then, well if you were old you could take a bit more if you could get help in carrying it. The Army relaxed, the National Guard, I guess, relaxed when we were being put on the buses to go to camp. I think in the early days they just simply turned packages and suitcases away, saying that's just too many. Then, subsequently they became a little more lax and let people carry more. We would assemble in particular places. I'd take a taxi to a friend's and we'd unload the luggage. Then soldiers would come around and just simply in the initial phases you just can't take that, too much. Then I think they relaxed a bit so that you could take more than the initial group did. Then the visitors could bring reading materials. I'm sure they were probably checked to some extent. I think they could bring in books and give them to us to read. But they may have been checked to see what the titles were.

LF: Miyamoto talks about that a little bit. He mentions the regulations. Then he says, "Agents of WCCA therefore went through the entire camp confiscating old books, magazines and other materials written in Japanese." Of course agents of WCCA, maybe Japanese could have been the agents, but that's not clear.

KO: That's not clear, but I'm quite sure we didn't. But again, my memory may be playing tricks on me.

LF: "It was at this point that feeling of a large portion of the evacuees thought the JACL was not sufficiently standing up for the rights of the Japanese reached its strongest expression."

Sakamoto's view was that since the Army had ordered the confiscation of Japanese written material there was nothing for the people to do but to submit to the order. Fellows like Okuda, Mimbu, Masuda, and Ito opposed the stand taken by Sakamoto and demanded that some effort be made by the headquarters staff against the carrying out of this stupid regulation.

KO: Now that could very well be. That makes sense. I was more concerned about the bed check one.

LF: Despite the popular agitation against Sakamoto and the other JACL leaders the WCCA refused to remand the order. This crisis brought out in the open hostility existing between the two factions seeking leadership in the community.

KO: You mean if we're named we're the other faction?

LF: It talks about you and some of the others as being a rival faction that was sort of left out and that you were given minor positions within the hierarchy.

KO: The point was that since we were in a separate area and the main responsibility or the contact point was in Area D and the Army didn't encourage a lot of movement. If you were working in another area you got a pass. If you had some sort of entertainment activity you the performers could move around. If you had to have medical treatment you could move to the hospital area. They didn't encourage it. It was a lot of trouble making sure everybody goes back and forth.

LF: It was also a way of keeping people off balance.

KO: Yes. Bill [Mimbu], as sort of the spokesman for the area, did go regularly to meet. But I don't think there was any cabal to try to get rid of anything. Of course, there was a group at headquarters, Jimmie was the head. I don't think we felt that he was running things in the sense of telling, I mean, if orders came down I don't think that he could have done anything to prevent them. We did oppose the orders. Does that mean we went through, it may have, its possible, alright, we're sorry, we've gotta do this, because we have to. But then we opposed it and whether we succumbed and did it, or whether somebody else came in and did it I'm not sure. I'd be interested to know what the sources and what else he had to say about it.

LF: That's all he has to say about that particular incident.

KO: See, I haven't read any of this stuff. There's a lot of publications, not so much here, about the evacuation, that I haven't gotten around to reading it. I think now you have generated my interest. I think I'd better start going and reading a lot of this stuff, the general stuff. Problems at Tule Lake, this sort of thing I'm aware of, but I haven't read the various versions of what happened.

LF: Since you are out of the picture now and you may not have heard, but the removal of you, Mimbu and the other group, Hosokawa and all, created quite a stir in Camp Harmony, which seemed to further galvanize some of the inmates against the administration. There seemed to be

a lot of contentious things that went on that created quite an unharmonious environment at Camp Harmony.

KO: The question is, I'm sure that when it happened, I can remember some of the comments and people being very sympathetic and wondering, why are you being removed. I suspect if there was this rumor floating around about Jimmie, our camp is Area A as well and it would just generate a resentment. There have been features of Jimmie that would create resentment. He did tend at times to be overwhelming, overpowering, assertive, more so than say a Mimbu, who at least listened. I'm not sure Jimmie listened all the time. So I'm not surprised that once a rumor starts there will be people to be happy to join in because they have their negative preoccupations.

LF: Given what you know about Sakamoto, do you see him as a person who might have gone through a metamorphosis? Here he had a position of authority, suddenly, that he might want to hold on to that power?

KO: The thing is that the power was only derivative. Then, of course he might be concerned about what would happen at the next level where it would be a totally different environment. We expected it and we were assured that the military would have no direct connection with the administration of the camp. That was the thing that was focused upon, commented upon. How active was Jimmy? I assume he went to Minidoka.

LF: He did go to Minidoka.

KO: What did he do there? Do we know?

LF: Yes, he was a [political] non-entity. In fact, according to Mr. Sasaki, who thwarted the assassination plot, he had organized a group of Issei that went to the administration and said, if Sakamoto is our leader there's going to be a lot of trouble. After that, Sakamoto was not seen much around headquarters. He was given some non-significant councilman's job [first alternate to the Organization Commission for community government]. (end side 4)

KO: In the WRA camps as I recall, they had block spokesmen. They had staff counterparts working with the civilian managers. But I don't recall there was any kind of structure as detailed with the hierarchy as the one in the assembly centers.

LF: My understanding is that the top down administration at Camp Harmony was done away with. Instead of having area leaders there were block leaders with greater representation. I think that Issei were permitted a voice, whereas at Camp Harmony they weren't.

KO: I see. Many of the block leaders were Issei, sure. I remember working in the education section under civilian outsiders and dealing with people wanting to go to the universities, and so on, in the few months I was at the camp in Colorado. I think the camp superintendent, project manager, whoever, had secretaries, but no direct counterparts among the camp inhabitants. He would meet with the block leaders regularly. But he had no intermediary between him and the block leaders.

LF: I'm not as familiar with the make-up of the councils at the WRA camps. It was a different bureaucracy, a civilian bureaucracy that was running the camps, not the Army. The reason the G1, G2, G3, G4 hierarchy existed at Camp Harmony was that this is what the Army was familiar with. It turned out to be a highly cumbersome bureaucracy just to try and get something done.

KO: True. On the other hand, the unique aspect of Puyallup was that it was in four physically separate units, so that each unit could pretty much act by itself, except for real central directions that must be obeyed, coming down from the Army. So that we ran, or tried to do what we thought could be done within our own unit. Then, when it came to matters such as when we tried to get permission to do something different, I mean I'm sure the Army bureaucracy would have blocked it in any case. I mean they didn't want to do anything. Yes, we understand there may be a reason for people to have to go to talk with their lawyers, better than having the lawyers coming to them, especially if they are not getting along with their lawyers or representatives, and we'll consider each case on its merits. I don't know if they ever did that.

LF: Of course, those were the issues you were dealing with directly as information officer.

KO: It's interesting. The factionalism about Jimmie seems to be as much really among the Issei as among the Nisei. I would think the Issei would be able to organize or get a group together to oppose him. I don't think the Nisei were quite as involved nor directly felt his position was such a threat to them or so negative in their eyes. I think the Issei probably had a different set of expectations. Many of the Nisei were wanting to get out and hoping to get out, either to work as farm laborers if they were just desperate to go, or to university, or to find a job back east which, once we moved into the relocation centers, became possible. There was some movement into farm labor even out of the assembly centers, pretty limited. But once we got out you had farm labor where we could go get a job or find work in some city in the midwest or east and get out of camp. Whereas the Issei probably felt they were going to be in camp for awhile. So the internal politics wasn't as much of a concern; we can get out of this. The parental generation, well we're going to be here awhile, so we want to make sure things aren't going to take a turn for the worse. A heck of a lot of the younger generation left, taking with them, in many cases, their parents, as well, but not in all cases.

LF: Could the Issei themselves apply for indefinite leave status without tagging on to their children?

KO: Sure. Without tagging on because I think they may have had to provide some assurance, I don't know, since we weren't involved in this, maybe some assurance that their parents would have a place and means of support. Or they, if they were willing to work, go out as a couple, caretakers or something, and get a job. They didn't have to go with the children. Places like the big vegetable farm, Seabrook [Farms] established a real community of people, some who came voluntarily, others who came out of camps. One thing the evacuation did, of course, was to scatter the Japanese all around America. So for awhile you could go in any city and see somebody you knew. Did a lot of that during and after the war. You could hit any college campus in the midwest and you might see somebody you knew. Places like Madison, Wisconsin, even Peru State Teachers College in Peru, Nebraska. I remember visiting that place.

You had to take a bus, you could even go there by train. You take a bus there and go out in the back woods of Nebraska up on the cliffs above, I think, the Missouri River. And here's this little out of the way teachers college, like an overgrown high school, that some friend of mine managed to get into. Really rural midwest.

LF: Roger Daniels is studying the National Student Relocation Council. There's a wealth of information down at the Hoover Institute in California which he is looking at. One day.

KO: The National Student Relocation Council did a great deal of effort. Then I remember Lincoln Noda, a fellow I met in Merced and then in Amache, and is working now in New England somewhere, a few years back started a campaign to start, a memory fund, to continue the kind of work that the National Student Relocation Council had done. To help students, I think mostly Asian students, who might be having trouble getting in and getting financial support. So the effort hasn't been lost, but I haven't been involved in much of that. I seem to have lost touch with that. See, when I came back after the war, I think in 1947, 1948, I was president of the local chapter here in Seattle, after I had graduated from Oberlin. I think it was about 1950, when I was working with the Price Stabilization Board, I was between jobs and I was working for Price Stabilization Board, working on price setting, or at least permitting price increases, the price control program associated with the Korean War. And I worked a year, year and a half, then went back east to try to do more work on the thesis, without much luck. Went back to Harvard for awhile. Sat and tried to work. Finally decided to heck with that, I might as well go back teaching again. That's when I finally got out to Washington State [College] and finally getting serious about getting the thing done.

I guess there are all sorts of tensions when you coop people up. Several thousand in a very limited area. Nothing much to do except to find your own entertainment. We managed, baseball games, forming orchestras, all sorts of various limited activities. People not assigned jobs really had nothing to do.

LF: Were there enough jobs to go around?

KO: No.

LF: So there were more people wanting to work than could?

KO: Well, would like to do something but just sat around or wandered the camp. The jobs were relatively few, about two to three thousand in our area, maybe 50-100 jobs around. There were schools, of course, school teachers or things like this around. But particularly for the Issei, not much for them to do unless they were cooks. They could do cooking, or the barbers and services that are required. But for a lot of them, and there was really very little room to do much. We really didn't have any free space like we did in the later camps where you could open up fields and go out every day and farm a bit of land that was available. Not at the assembly centers; limited land, lousy weather as it would rain a good deal. Had to sit inside, and when you went outside it became all mud. Frustration levels could rise pretty easily and rumors would spread like wild fire. Then you'd have to either check on the rumors or try to put them out as best you could. That was one of my jobs, to try to counter the rumors. It was always difficult.

LF: As information officer that was one of your jobs?

KO: That's right.

LF: How would you do it?

KO: You can't. You can just put up little notices saying this isn't true, or this isn't going to happen. Or this will happen. That's all you can do. You can't go fight the rumor full bore, that's impossible. Except to start a new rumor, which might even be worse!

LF: When you put up these notices was there a central place, like a kiosk?

KO: I think what we did was put them up around laundry rooms and places like this. Gathering places. We'd run off some mimeograph material and put it up. Then we'd try to get somebody to write it in Japanese, as well, so that at least it could be read by the older Issei or the Nisei. You really can't do much. People come in and ask you about it and you just do the best you can.

LF: Can you give me an example?

KO: Well, all sorts of rumors about where we were going. No one knew. That sort of thing was impossible to fight.

LF: Some of those rumors even reached the news letter.

KO: Yes. And rumors such as, well Japan didn't win or did win, we didn't want to get involved in. That sort of thing of course, I remember, in the relocation centers, the older Issei would say, you know, Japan is winning the war. If you say so. Why argue with them. Belief is not a matter of knowledge.

LF: What access to the outside did you have? Did you have radios?

KO: Yes, and we could get papers. I think we could get newspapers. Or at least people could bring newspapers. However, I don't think we were able to buy them in town, at least in Area A. I'm sure we had access to radios, although radios in those days were pretty bulky, and I don't know how many people brought radios to camp. We didn't have convenient portables like these things. Then, other details, people would visit, friends would visit, keep us posted on what was happening at the Y. back in Seattle or at the university and in the various organizations we might be interested in. The Fellowship of Reconciliation, or something like that.

LF: How would you be informed that there was a visitor who wanted to see you?

KO: That's a good question. Whether we had runners or whether we normally expected previous arrangements to be made. I have a feeling we had access to telephones. I don't think we were completely cut off. I think there was access to phones, but I don't remember.

LF: Then you would go to the gate where there was this area meeting room?

KO: Yes, once it got organized. Occasionally people would just show up at the gate. When there were no facilities for getting together we'd just talk through the gate. Somebody would show up and they'd ask for someone, somebody wandering around the gate might run over, walk over and get them and say you've got a visitor. Subsequently, they established areas where we could meet.

LF: Did you have frequent visitors?

KO: Certainly a number of people, not just me, they'd come to see a group of us. We would hear about it or they would say we'll be back tomorrow. Once the initial contact was made they said we'll be back next week at such and such a time, and sort of hang around the area. I have pictures of a number of these people coming down and chatting through the gate in the initial period, before they established the meeting rooms.

LF: You had a camera?

KO: No, people took them who came. I don't think I had a camera, but maybe I did. Anyway, there's some pictures of people talking through the gate. They could take pictures from outside the gate. It was a frustrating period I think, for most people, living in limbo, not knowing, rumors flying, not knowing what was going to happen next. Or that we could go out, then we can't go out. It would be easy to get out, no it won't, you gotta wait until the civilians take over. The Army isn't going to be responsible for releasing us. So then the advance parties went and the reports were not necessarily good or bad. I don't know what Minidoka was about, but we ended up right on the edge of the dust bowl. Boy when the winds blew in the winter, or even in the summer, the dust would swirl around. And after a dust storm there would be an eighth of an inch of dust on everything in the barracks. Just couldn't keep that stuff out. We were just west of Dodge City, Kansas. Had to change trains in Dodge City to get into Colorado on the Santa Fe mainline. They must have had bus service from the depot out to the camp. I don't remember how we managed it, but we'd get off the train and go into the camp, visit, spend a few weeks and go off to college. So many trips I've taken from Cleveland, Ohio to Chicago, and then Kansas City, Dodge City.

LF: Before we end, we haven't talked very much about your mother. I was wondering with your Dad gone, it was you, your two sisters and your Mom at Camp Harmony. What was the effect on her life without her husband?

KO: She, of course, had, not for extended periods, but he used to do a lot of travelling, particularly when he was with the Oriental Trading Company. And then he was not home that much. He would have meetings almost every night of the week, or dinners, and so on. If he was home two or three nights a week, that was the exception. Various organizations having activities. So she was pretty independent. Had become, probably was to begin with, remained quite independent. In a sense life in camp wasn't that difficult, because you got fed. Mess time came you went to the mess hall and you ate. In terms of the living area, it was fairly small, hard

to keep clean because of the dust and rain, but it wasn't much of an effort in terms of the amount of time required. So, in a sense there wasn't that much for her to do. Perhaps, I wouldn't call an easy life, but except for worrying about her husband and things of this nature, it was more of a mental strain than any physical strain.

LF: To what extent did she reflect this worry, if in fact she did?

KO: Not that much. She tended to be somewhat of a worry wart to begin with. Once she knew he was in Spokane it was just a question of when we all could get together. Then when we finally got together, then basically the kids all left, the three of us left, so the two of them were by themselves, in the barracks, with lots of people around them. It wasn't as though they were isolated. My Dad got along with the older people quite well. Some of them had heard of him, knew of him before he came back, from way back before the war. So they survived and I think it was not that difficult a life.

LF: Then they came back to Seattle?

KO: Yes. I came back first, in early 1945. They were among the last to leave from Colorado, Then I met them. I think I had moved into our old house, and so we moved into the old house.

LF: So you had found a lessee?

KO: Oh, we had a lessee for the whole duration of the war, same couple. Then we moved back in. I was around Seattle for awhile, but I didn't move in immediately. I lived for awhile at a relative's house. Then I went out to the University and lived out in the international student house. I had permission to go out there even though I was not a student. Then I moved back into our old house. They came home.

LF: So you were waiting for expiration of the lease.

KO: Yes, the agreement, and as to when they might be coming. Because I didn't need the house, I didn't know how long I'd be around. So, we worked it all out, they came home, and we moved back into the old house. He still remained active after the war. He became president of the North American Post newspaper, which resumed publication. There was no English language section at that time, just Japanese. Also, various other organizations.

LF: But the transfer company?

KO: We kept it up for awhile after his arrest, but with evacuation we closed it. I think we sold off the trucks, and that was it. The fishing tackle business we wound down. With the war the source of supplies dried up, so just closed that one down, business disappeared. After the war I don't know how we survived, I mean how my parents survived. They managed to have a bit of money, and with Social Security support and so on they survived.

LF: You had some income from the house.

KO: During the war. The costs were relatively minimal. You didn't have to have much except clothes, maybe. You were being fed, medical treatment was available at the center hospital, things like this. But after the war they did manage to survive not under difficult circumstances. He stopped driving so he didn't need a car; took the bus.

LF: When did they die?

KO: My Dad died in 1955, or thereabouts at the age of 87. My mother died much later, somewhere in the late 60s. She was in her late 80s. She was considerably younger than my Dad, 15-20 years younger.

LF: She was Nisei?

KO: No, she had come from Japan later than my Dad had, and she was already in Seattle when my Dad met her. She was in a nursing home in California near my sister. My Dad died in Seattle. Then we sold the house in Seattle after my mother became more frail, she moved into a small apartment complex. I'm afraid I don't have as good or sharp a memory as some people I know, but it's been a long time.

LF: Yes, more than 50 years! Thank you very much for talking with me.

KO: Thank you for the opportunity. I'm looking forward to your first book. I'd like to read about Mr. Matsushita.

Date: September 13, 1995
Place: Vancouver, British Columbia (via telephone)
Narrator: **Kenji Okuda**
Interviewer: Louis Fiset

LF: It was nice to see you on Sunday.

KO: It was, I enjoyed that although I didn't see many people I knew.

LF: Yes, I suppose that was a little disappointing.

KO: Do you have any reactions to it, or any observations?

LF: To the dedication? Knowing Sakamoto as I do, being a very controversial fellow, that was certainly absent in the dedication, as I expected it would be. It was a happy time and I thought it was nice that Mrs. Sakamoto was acknowledged, as she was. It would be interesting to know to what extent she did play a roll with the Courier. Do you know?

KO: She was there all the time. She was basically his eyes. They had their rough moments between them. Essentially she did the office work and ran the operation. Jimmie wrote the stories. I haven't been out there, but among the Nisei I don't recall any really negatives said about him. But then I may not have been in the group that would have been critical. But I think within the Issei community there were probably pretty strong feelings.

LF: Do you think Mrs. Sakamoto had any say in the editorial policy?

KO: Probably not. The editorial policy I think the comments Jimmie was making really reflected what he was thinking. The other thing that disturbed me a bit, her memory seems to have gone when I met her the other night. I spoke to her for a moment, gave her my name. There was no recognition. Not that she would remember me, but the name might have meant something to her. She knew my Dad quite well.

LF: It appears it is probably pretty late in the game to talk to her.

KO: Yes. I don't know how old she is. But people that age vary all the way from a five year old to a fellow who spoke that said he was 83, down to the other extreme which would be Alzheimers.

LF: Did you know their children?

KO: Nope. I didn't know any of them. I was surprised to see the family was as large as it was.

LF: It was a little hard to tell how old the one daughter was, who spoke.

KO: Yes, the oldest daughter, she might have been post-war. She wouldn't be 50. I'd say she

might be in 40s or early 50s. They would have been late children. They were married before the war. I doubt she was 50. She seemed to be the oldest. If the kids came during or after the war I'd know very little about them.

LF: In your note accompanying the corrections [to the first interview] you said you had some other thoughts. As I was going through your corrections, for the most part I'll be able to make most corrections on the original document, you know, spelling, some clarification. As far as additional thoughts, you mentioned you might have something to say about Bill Mimbu. That would be fresh. What I'll do is make a separate transcription. So, tell me a little about Mimbu. You told me you liked him, but you didn't provide me with details as to who he may have been.

KO: My first memory was he was already practicing as a lawyer. So I must have been in my teens when I first heard about him. He was one of the young lawyers. The lawyer hierarchy would have been Clarence Arai, Masuda, in the older age group, then the next generation would be Bill Mimbu, Kenji Ito and that group. As far as I know Bill went to the University of Washington and took his law degree there. Then he started practice within the Japanese community. He was a very pleasant, outgoing person. Easy to talk to, quite willing to listen. I think I first met him when he was within the JACL. He was active in JACL. I had met him before, but in terms of working with him it must have been in the Seattle chapter of JACL back probably in the late 1930s. I've never had any business dealings with him, but I found him to be an effective individual who had his ideas and expressed them very effectively. But was also willing to listen; quite a warm personality. His wife was a vivacious lady, Merry. She was much more active in the wider community, not just the Japanese, but in the wider community.

LF: You mean among Caucasians?

KO: Yes. Bill probably as well, but Merry struck me as being more socially active. We, of course, went down to California together. Apart from occasional meetings of saying hello to him the last real contact I had with him was on that train to California. We speculated at some length as to why we were being treated the way we were. But that was the extent of it. Then he got off the train before we did, to go to Stockton, the stop before we got off at Merced.

LF: Do you recall his views before the war in terms of his attitudes toward the war in Asia?

KO: I have no recollection of any of that. He certainly was not as outspoken as Jimmie or Clarence about the need for the Nisei to become as American as apple pie, if you will. Jimmie had this strong feeling, as did Clarence, except Clarence was much more outspoken about declaring allegiance and expressing support of the U.S., whatever was happening.

LF: Mimbu was given the roll of director of Area A. That of course was the first area to have been populated. How was it that he was given that role?

KO: I would think he was one of the individuals recognized as being certainly known in the community and having established himself as a lawyer and working with the community, so he was one of those felt to have leadership caliber in the group within his age. I don't know who were the leaders in the other three areas. I'd forgotten them.

LF: Yes, I don't have those names at hand. I'd like to get them and see if you can identify them as to ages.

KO: He would have been considerably younger than Jimmie, or Clarence, for that matter. But he was at least 10 years older than I. I was just starting university and he had completed his post-graduate degree in law because four years university and three of law school. And he was practicing while I was still in high school.

LF: You were probably too young for him to confide this in you while you were working at Camp Harmony, but I'll ask anyway. There was some speculation as to why he might have been removed; that being (I think Miyamoto may have said this), that Mimbu felt that he should have been part of the headquarters and was stuck out in Area A, or that he had gotten Area A well organized as an independent entity, and then here comes Japanese Advisory Council and tries to take away his power structure. Can you comment on that?

KO: I really have no memory of that kind of interaction. We were busy enough just trying to get organized and getting the camp going and getting people settled. I don't know if there would have been any real opportunity to feel that those coming into Area D and becoming the contact group that worked with the director; I'm not sure that was a major concern. It may have been to some people. Bill may have been ambitious, but I've never had the feeling that he was really anxious to move ahead in any organizational sense. He certainly didn't keep pushing himself in JACL or anything of that nature. He was around, was active, but certainly gave everybody an opportunity.

LF: Did he not serve after the war in any JACL leadership capacity?

KO: I don't know. My time in Seattle after the war was relatively brief. I got back to Seattle in January 1945. I was one of the first ones back. Nothing much was happening, no organizational activity on any scale was happening while I was there. I left in early 1947. Certainly he was getting involved and probably would have been one of those who helped reestablish the organization. But I don't know if he actually served. It would have been natural had he been elected or taken over a leadership role, given the generation and age structure of the Nisei population. By that time there were a number of others who had come into Seattle, one of whom was quite active, who had come out of Portland. That was Terrance Toda, the optometrist. His wife was from Portland; I don't know where Terrance was from. So, by 1950-51 I was president for a year. Bill had stepped down by that time.

LF: He may have helped organize but was not ambitious within JACL. What kind of law did he practice?

KO: I think it was general law. Not criminal, certainly, although he may have taken some cases. But I have the feeling it was mostly civil law.

LF: As far as you know were most of his clients within the Nikkei community?

KO: I have no awareness of the kind of clientele he had, but I expect he had both. Primarily, since he was located right within the community pre-war, and even after the war in what was still the remnants of the community, in the Jackson Street area, that a good deal would have been Japanese. But certainly there were other groups he would have taken on as clients. The other one mentioned along the way was Frank Kinomoto, the accountant. He did a lot of business with the Issei primarily, doing the accounting work for the businesses.

LF: Kinomoto was one of those the Army thought was a trouble maker.

KO: He was much a quieter fellow, and not as outgoing as Mimbu was. But he was quite influential in his own quiet way. He had a lot of contacts, knew people, and could converse both in English and Japanese. He was a Kibei, I believe.

LF: His age relative to yours?

KO: He was probably older than Bill [Hosokawa]. He was well established when I was growing up. I first remember him in high school. He is closer to 15-20 years older. That's the other thing about the age factor. Look at it as a kid growing up. When I left Seattle I was 20. Those who had finished the University and had established themselves or started a business, we thought not ancient, but quite a bit older.

LF: I think this age differential is something I need to study pretty carefully. When we conjure up these theories as to why people were sent to separate camps and the opposition to Sakamoto, to consider the fact that you, as a 20 year old and Mimbu as a 30 year old could get together and conspire is lacking in some credibility when you put that age factor in.

KO: Certainly we were well aware, I was certainly aware of this age consideration. Those established in their career post-university, and some went into business right out of high school. Among the better known or the more professional groups they would all have their education behind them. Jimmie was one of the older Nisei in Seattle. I'd say Kinomoto was certainly older than Bill Hosokawa.

LF: But Hosokawa wasn't that much older than you.

KO: Again, closer to 8-10 years. I'd put him closer to Bill than Bill Mimbu. He'd finished university and had been in Asia before he came back.

LF: He was born in 1915.

KO: OK, seven years older [than me].

LF: That is older than I thought.

KO: Now fellows like this fellow I met at the party, Kenji Kawaguchi, who was born in 1912, puts him 10 years older. I forgot what he was doing. I certainly knew of him, and obviously we knew each other, and he knew the family. My dad was the go-between. Once you get into your

careers then the age factor isn't as noticeable. But while you're a student, those who are no longer students and have gotten themselves established, starting into their professional life, you treat them as a different generation, if you will. Given the age profile (I don't know if you've seen any of the census age data) because of the truncated Issei pattern where immigration was cut off, the children tended to cluster into relatively narrow age group.

LF: In fact it was the census of the UW as far as the Japanese were concern was on the incline just before the war. Those people were beginning to come of age.

KO: Right. Prior to that their numbers were there, but quite limited. Then we got the bulge at about my age.

LF: I overheard somebody at the dedication about somebody being part of the Taisho baby boomers.

KO: That's right, I'd forgotten. I was a Taisho, I guess. That's true because the immigrant population to Seattle had come in 1900 on. So the children would have been starting off maybe 1910-15, onwards.

LF: I wrote that down because I was struck by it. Maybe it will find its way into the book!

KO: What is the Taisho first year?

LF: Hirohito was in for 26, and that was Showa.

KO: Taisho would have been before that. So I guess I was Taisho.

LF: Right. But I don't remember year one of Taisho.

KO: Taisho wasn't there that long compared to Meiji before then and Showa after. Probably 10-15 years, I would think. Meiji would have been 1868, to 1900. Maybe more than that, maybe 20 years or more.

LF: One of the other things you briefly touched on was the Seattle Youth Fellowship of Reconciliation. Can you tell me more about that group?

KO: Well, the Fellowship of Reconciliation was a national organization of pacifists headquartered in New York. Among those who were identified with the group whose names I remember were Kaleb Foote who was a religious scholar. Also I believe a couple of blacks -- Bayard Rusten was one of them. They were very effective as individuals in terms of expressing their ideas and writing out their beliefs in a way that attracted those who were interested.

LF: Were those interested among the younger ones university people?

KO: I'd say yes. A.J. Mustey, I think, was the original founder of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The attraction was to middle class university educated. I learned about it and

became interested as a university student. There was a little circle of pacifists around the University who organized meetings and used to hold the meetings at the University Y.

LF: They weren't affiliated with the Y, but they made their facilities available?

KO: Yes.

LF: Was there a connection with the American Friends?

KO: No, but there was an overlap. Some of the members of the FOR were also active as Quakers. However, there were certainly a lot of non-Quakers among the FOR.

LF: Most of the FOR members were Caucasian?

KO: Yes. I believe there was a minister around the University, Fred Shorter, who was also active in the FOR. I don't recall the mainstream Protestant church he was affiliated with. The students, there was a group within the Y who were active in the FOR.

LF: Did you know some who went on to maintain their pacifism throughout the war?

KO: Oh, yes. A number of them went to CO camps where they did basically conservation work, things like this. They had camps for them.

LF: Had you not gone on to your own kind of camp can you speculate might you have maintained CO status?

KO: I tried. We didn't get into this until I guess I was at Oberlein and got a notice from the draft board once they decided to draft the Nisei again. Then I started a correspondence, and that went on for a year or two, longer than that, because I finally ended up going in for a physical when I was back in Boston.

LF: As I recall from our last conversation you said well, I'm going to be turned down anyway, so I might as well go through with it. But by then you wouldn't have been turned down 4-C, it would have been for some physical disability.

KO: 4-F, for my eyes. My vision has been poor ever since high school and before. But I did carry on quite a battle, a correspondence battle with the draft board for about two years. The war had ended, everything else was back to normal, and it kept going on.

LF: Had you actually gone in you might have ended up in Korea.

KO: Well not quite that long. It was 1946-1947.

LF: Yeah, you'd have just missed it, then. Now, the Pacific Cable was part of the FOR, wasn't it?

KO: No. That was the Friends Service Committee newsletter.

LF: That was local?

KO: My recollection is it was local. It came out as a newsletter to keep everybody informed right after the war started. It was an effort to keep the community informed as to what was happening to the Japanese Americans during the early days of the war.

LF: I understand there was quite a bit written on Gordon Hirabayashi.

KO: Yes. He was, of course, a Quaker. I'm not sure when he married Floyd Schmoe's daughter. That must have been after the war. No, Gordon was quite active and I believe a member of the Quakers. It was when he took his stand on the curfew that he got a lot of directed attention to his effort to question the legality of a lot of the activities that were going on, the constitutionality more than anything else.

LF: I learned through the archivist at UW a couple of days ago when I was talking to her about Mrs. Suzuki that he actually lived with her for some time during that period.

KO: I know little about that. There's some recollection of that before the war. He had come into the university from the Auburn area. He came into Seattle to attend the University. Whether he was a family friend of the Suzukis I don't remember.

LF: One last thing I wanted to ask you is, one of the reasons I went to the UW Daily was to try and find out more about the UW students support of the clerks from the Seattle School district who resigned. I had heard from somewhere there was a petition with a 1000 signatures raised at UW> I never found that in the Daily, although I did find editorial support for the clerks. Did you tell me about that?

KO: I have no knowledge of that. I don't know much about that. Whether any of the clerks involved heard about it I don't know.

LF: I must ask your sister about that.

KO: The one with the best memory and one of the older ones in that category was Kaoru Ishihara who was at the dedication gathering on Sunday. She was the secretary at Bailey Gatzert school.

LF: I didn't make the connection. Is Ishihara her married name?

KO: Yes. Maybe I'm wrong. My sister would know that. She was there and very much alive, and outspoken. She started working back in the 1930s and had been with the District for the longest of that group.

LF: And could well have been the most deeply affected emotionally.

KO: Yes. I don't know her married name.

LF: Sally might know.

KO: She said she started working at Bailey Gatzert in 1932 or thereabouts. This makes her about eight years older than we are, seven years.

LF: Well, that's the last of my questions. Are there other comments from your end?

KO: No, that's as much as I know at the moment.

LF: Well, in time there may be additional questions.

KO: Well, I'll be available.

LF: I'll do this transcription and get it to you. Again thank you for our conversations.

KO: I hope they've been worthwhile.