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1913
"milk stopped"

1 Amy Emi Interview
2 Date: 9/9/94
3 Experiences at Heart Mountain Relocation Camp
4 Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

5 SM: I am in San Jose, California with Amy Emi. You were
6 starting to tell you had a five month old?

7 AE: I had a five month old baby.

8 SM: When you went to Heart Mountain?

9 AE: Uhuh, we relocated, I mean we went to Pamona Relocation
10 Center first.

11 SM: Where did you live at the time?

12 AE: We lived in Hollywood, the Virgil District they called it
13 and we relocated from there. When I was pregnant and we
14 had a party in Pearl Harbor, that morning that day that
15 you that Pearl Harbor, that day after I mean, I had a
16 party at my house for my shower, for the baby shower and
17 they all came in and said that "you know we are in the war
18 now."

19 SM: During your baby shower for you, you talked about the
20 war?

21 AE: Yes, but ah, so my daughter was born Dec. 29th, after
22 Pearl Harbor.

23 SM: So that was 1941 and when were you born? *born in
US? or Japan*

24 AE: I was born in 1913. Supposed to be 13 but my father made
25 a mistake when we come to the United States and he
26 thought the Chinese calendar and the American calendar
27 was different so he thought I was 1914 and so I went
28 through high school and everything else and my
29 citizenship and everything else with 1914, but actually
30 it was 1913. *Kibei*

31 SM: Just so I will know how old you were when you were at
32 Heart Mountain.

33 AE: Anyway so after the evacuation and everything else I had
34 a five month old. By that time it was May so she was
35 five months old and naturally my milk stopped.

36 SM: You were breast feeding up until that time?

37 AE: It stopped and I guess all the stress not knowing what
8 was going to happen.

Pomona Assembly
took canned milk & pablen
pullman on the train

- 1 SM: What did you do then with no milk?
- 2 AE: The doctor told me I could give her canned milk, you know
3 that Carnation canned milk mixed with pablen. At five
4 months she was able to eat pablen you know and so I took
5 a whole case of canned milk and quite a bit of pablen.
- 6 SM: Heavy, canned milk is heavy. That was evaporated milk
7 wasn't it?
- 8 AE: Yes, you know those small little cans. And ah we took
9 that in and we were at Pamona first. That's that race
10 track and next to the race track you know that first the
11 manure is what you smell.
- 12 SM: Were you actually in the horse area or did you have other
13 barracks?
- 14 AE: No we had ah, they had a barrack right in there.
- 15 SM: And who was it, you and your husband and daughter?
- 16 AE: Uhuh, I went in with my in-laws cause I evacuated from
17 the Hollywood district. My mother was in ⁴⁷Boyl Heights so
18 she went to Posten so we were separated. And I went in
19 there and naturally you just don't know what's going on
20 but you just do whatever they tell you. But having a
21 little baby we were treated just like handicapped people
22 now you know, I was treated pretty well.
- 23 SM: You got special treatment because you had a baby?
- 24 AE: Uhuh and like going from Pamona to Heart Mountain on the
25 train and becauser I had a baby that I was in a pullman.
- 26 SM: When did you actually go to Pamona, do you remember
27 about? From the time that you were told that you were
28 going to have to relocate then when did you actually have
29 to go to Pamona?
- 30 AE: That was in May.
- 31 SM: You went to Pamona in May?
- 32 AE: I think we stayed there until about March. And then we
33 were relocated to Heart Mountain.
- 34 SM: Were you, now I think most of the people I have talked to
35 said that they went to Heart Mountain, like the first
36 group went in August and then through the fall they went
37 there.
- 38 AE: I remember we were earlier part.

*train ride - didn't
know where going
attitude of acceptance*
Page 3

1 SM: You were one of the earlier ones?

2 AE: Because it was hot and I know that our Barrack was holey
3 and just when a wind storm came it just came through you
4 know so...

5 SM: Was that at Heart Mountain or Pamona?

6 AE: Heart Mountain.

7 SM: Wait just a minute, you were at Pamona, you had this
8 small baby and you lived there for a period of time.

9 AE: Uhuh, a couple of months or so. June, July, August,
10 there were three months then huh. I know it can't be the
11 beginning of September cause there was August.

12 SM: Tell me about the train ride to Heart Mountain. You said
13 you had a pullman and what was that like? Did you know
14 you were going to Heart Mountain?

15 AE: No, we didn't know. I didn't know where we were going.
16 Maybe my husband and others knew, but I didn't know.

17 SM: Was that kind of scary for you?

18 AE: I'm a Christian family so I felt this way it was going to
19 happen, this way God is doing so I didn't feel as though,
20 ah, my mother-in-law and they were Buddists so they were
21 resisting, they were just constantly quibbling you know,
22 but I didn't feel that way.

23 SM: That must have helped you to cope with the situation.

24 AE: Uhuh and my mother said that whatever you do just
25 remember that you are a Christian and God is taking care
26 of you so I just didn't feel as though, I didn't think we
27 were going to be killed or anything like that, nothing in
28 that way.

29 SM: What happened to the home you left in Hollywood?

30 AE: We lived in another section, my husband and baby and I
31 but we went to my mother-in-laws house and lived there
32 after the war started. But we were not able to leave,
33 the Japanese were not able to go into certain districts,
34 you know we had a restriction and so we thought we better
35 go with our family you know so we moved up to Hollywood
36 to my in-laws home and then from there we went to that
37 camp.

1 SM: You moved a lot didn't you?

2 AE: Uhuh, our furniture we moved it to there and then my in-
3 laws put one bedroom everything we needed and we put it
4 all in there and locked it all up and the rest of the
5 house they rented out to a family.

6 SM: So when you got back was it still there?

7 AE: Yes it was still there. They didn't open it up. And
8 then the furniture we couldn't put in there we sold it,
9 my coffee table and a lamp that I got for my wedding and }
10 all that was sold for 50 cents and all that.

11 SM: That must have been hard.

12 AE: It was hard to see all my things were gone.

13 SM: You mentioned you took cans of evaporated milk, what
14 other things did you decide to take with you? You had a
15 baby so you had to take special things.

16 AE: Yes, I think I took some they had paper diapers I think,
17 I have forgotten, paper diapers were some of the things
18 like that.

19 SM: You had paper?

20 AE: Paper diapers, no I had no cotton and so we could throw
21 it away on the way. I don't remember what did I do on
22 the train, I know I didn't use any cotton diapers.

23 SM: I didn't know there were paper diapers back then, that's
24 interesting. How would they absorb anything?

25 AE: They sold it as a paper diaper, I know somebody told me
26 about it and so I think I bought some of that. I'm quite
27 sure I bought that. And then when I went to Heart
28 Mountain we had a barrack and that is when I had to use
29 the cotton diapers and my room was about well you know I
30 guess they told you how big.

31 SM: Go ahead and tell me.

32 AE: I had a bigger room than this one, I mean a bigger one
33 than other people, but I think the whole thing was about
34 the size of a room, for three of us.

35 SM: Two adults and a child and your in-laws didn't stay with
36 you?

diapers
dirt/wind/dust
cold

1 AE: No, they had another room, they had another section and
2 we kinda partitioned off one part as a bedroom, but we
3 didn't have to cook there so. But in there we just had
4 strung this rope all over the place so I could wash and
5 dry the diapers.

6 SM: Inside?

7 AE: Inside, well you know how cold it gets in Wyoming.

8 SM: That must have been hard.

9 AE: Even in summer though we didn't have anyplace to put out.

10 SM: You mean there was no place outside to hang diapers in
11 the summer even?

12 AE: I never did because we didn't have any place to put the
13 pole up, I guess they could have, but we never did. I
14 washed all my diapers inside, I mean dried them inside.
15 And washing the diapers wasn't in your room, you had to
16 go to the laundry room so every day I would wash my
17 diapers.

18 SM: You were saying earlier that the barrack was drafty or
19 that it wasn't...

20 AE: At the beginning they didn't put any tar paper on yet,
21 that's why I know we were there in the early part, so
22 inside was you know how the knots are in all the wood and
23 it was holy there so the dirt just came through and when
24 the wind started coming through I was so worried about my
25 daughter so I just covered her up with myself or covered
26 her up with the throws, I mean some of the sheets or
27 something, you know covered her up so she wouldn't breath
28 that dust.

29 SM: I can imagine you were worried about her catching
30 something with the draft. Was it cold in your room.

31 AE: Yes. They came in and put the tar paper on and then that
32 helped. I had this for winter and they do it inside and
33 out you know. They put something inside too you know, so
34 it helped us.

35 SM: Do you remember, let's go back just a little bit, when
36 you got off the train, you remember the train ride was in
37 a pullman with the baby and do you remember anything else
38 about that and what happened when the train got to Heart
39 Mountain? You know, what they did or where they took

first response to HH -
weather
baby buggy

1 you?

2 AE: I know we got some place and I know we saw Heart
3 Mountain, you know the mountain.

4 SM: What did you think when you saw that?

5 AE: It was pretty I thought and well I'm here. And then I
6 saw all the barracks and this is it. And then they
7 assigned a barrack to us and so we just got there so
8 that's about all I can think of.

9 SM: What was the weather like when you got there?

10 AE: It was warm. As a matter of fact it was hot in a way.
11 Some days were really hot. That's the reason why I know
12 it was summer. And then September came and then it
13 started to get cold and I didn't realize how cold it
14 would get and see I'm not used to going out to wash
15 clothes so I had to have somebody take care of the baby
16 while I went to wash clothes.

17 SM: Who did that?

18 AE: My husband was home. They didn't assign him to work for
19 awhile and when he started to work then my father-in-law
20 came.

21 SM: Did some women take the baby with them when they went to
22 the laundry?

23 AE: Yes, but I when I could, when there was a nice day I took
24 the baby in my buggy. We got the buggy through the
25 catalogue.

26 SM: Oh you got a buggy, a baby buggy?

27 AE: Uhuh

28 SM: What catalogue was that?

29 AE: Sears. We used a lot of Sears and then we got ahold of
30 the Monkey Wards, you know the Montgomery Wards and we
31 called it Monkey Wards and so we used that quite a bit
32 too. I got the buggy I remember and then..

33 SM: Did that help to have a buggy?

34 AE: Oh yes, uhuh.

food → mess hall
milk for daughter

1 SM: I wonder if the roads weren't kind of bumpy to be
2 wheeling a buggy.

3 AE: It was kind of bumpy.

4 SM: They were dirt weren't they?

5 AE: Yes it was all dirt. It wasn't too bad I mean you know I
6 rode her around and mess hall too, you know you had to go
7 three times a day to eat at the mess hall, even though
8 you don't feel like eating or you want to eat at home you
9 can't do it, you got to go get it.

10 SM: How was the food there?

11 AE: I don't know at the beginning it was pretty good.
12 Afterwards I remember we had baloney morning noon and
13 night. You know different ways they made it. I guess
14 cook was pretty good he one time I guess he made a
15 teriake sauce and put it over the baloney and cooked it
16 and then lunch time was a baloney sandwich and in the
17 morning was breakfast with the egg and the baloney.

18 SM: Had that been part of your diet before?

19 AE: No, not before. I don't think I had baloney that much
20 before. And then we had catfish, I never had catfish
21 before.

22 SM: How was it?

23 AE: It's alright you know, but it's a fish you know and then
24 you have to eat, I had never heard of catfish before and
25 so I would ask what did he look like cause I didn't know
26 what he looks like because we just ate the fillet you
27 know and then when I came out and I go to China Town and
28 I see the catfish and I say "oh, this is what we were
29 eating." But we had that morning noon and night too.
30 Obviously that is all they could get.

31 SM: What did you feed your daughter? Did she eat that same
32 food?

33 AE: Later on yes. She ate ah, when we went to Heart Mountain
34 they gave us a lot of milk so I was allowed to get a
35 bottle of milk every day or every other day if I needed
36 it so I didn't worry about that. And I think they gave
37 us pablen. And then when I became pregnant..

38 SM: You became pregnant at Heart Mountain? Was that

1 something you had planned?

2 AE: No

3 SM: I just wondered because some people, there were a lot of
4 babies born there and it doesn't seem like an ideal place
5 to have children, but when you are young maybe it doesn't
6 matter.

7 AE: I just thought well, she was two years old so. Anyway
8 when I became pregnant they allowed me quite a bit of
9 milk for me to drink and I thought she was eating quite a
10 bit of the food.

11 SM: I read a few things in the paper where people were
12 complaining that the Japanese Americans in the camps were
13 getting fed better than people out in Wyoming, did you
14 every hear anything like that?

15 AE: I just wonder, cause you know we like, I didn't hear that
16 though.

17 SM: Well I think it was just some people grouching about it, I
18 don't know if it was true or not, but that you know, we
19 are treating these people better than you know, "our own
20 people," it was just part of maybe the mentality of you
21 know these people should be deprived because look at them
22 they are behind barbed wire. But it sounds like the food
23 supported you pretty well, I mean baloney is not terrific
24 but at least you had milk and did you have fresh
25 vegetables or fruit at all? Cause it was war years that
26 might have been pretty tough.

27 AE: I'm not sure about vegetables, I don't remember that. I
28 remember we had corn still, but don't remember the
29 vegetables. We had ah, when I was pregnant we worried
30 about what's going to happen if I need some substantial
31 food besides milk and they gave me quite a bit of milk
32 you know.

33 SM: How did that pregnancy go for you?

34 AE: I was always become very ill at the beginning and I had
35 to be hospitalized. When I had my first baby I was in
36 the hospital for one week, I can't keep my food down.

37 SM: Were you vomiting?

38 AE: Uhuh, so they would shoot me and dope me and then they
39 feed me.

1 hosp. during preg
(hyperemesis?)
grandam

1 SM: Oh so they kind of stopped yur ability to throw up by
2 doping you up and then they fed you through your mouth
3 or?

4 AE: Uhuh, I had intervenous too.

5 SM: They did that at Heart Mountain too?

6 AE: They did that. I was at Heart Mountain for about five
7 days, I couldn't stand it, I wanted to go home and see my
8 daughter you know so they said well ok, go home and if
9 you lose one more pound or something like that, the
10 doctors said that, that's Japanese doctors you know, all
11 the Japanese doctors were doing all the interns over
12 there see so (can't understand what she is saying here)
13 I'll go home and try eating, but second one was better
14 than first one.

15 SM: You didn't have quite as much trouble, but that must have
16 been pretty miserable for you. Were you in the
17 obstetrics ward?

18 AE: Umhmm

19 SM: Well you know they had different wards and one of them
20 was just for obstetrics for the women having babies and I
21 wondered if that is where they put you.

22 AE: Yes, uhuh, I think that is what it is. Lets see, (?)
23 was there for this when I was vomiting you know, but I'm
24 not sure.

25 SM: ok, that's fine, I'm just curious. And then when you
26 went home did you feel better?

27 AE: I felt better, I was in bed quite a bit, but I had my
28 daughter so I felt pretty good then and ah he stayed home
29 too cause he didn't work and he bought the food and ah...

30 SM: He took care of your daughter. By then you didn't have
31 diapers that you were washing out.

32 AE: Uhuh, I tried to train her before that you know.

33 SM: The smart thing to do.

34 AE: Uhuh and she was walking around and so my father-in-law
35 was real nice, he loved my daughter so much as a
36 granddaughter and so he came every single day. But he
37 didn't have anything to do so.

1 SM: Almost everybody I have talked to have had extended
2 families that were together in camp that helped out like
3 that and it sounds like that really made a big
4 difference.

5 AE: And then my mother came from Posten.

6 SM: Oh, they let her come. Now when was he born?

7 AE: He was born December 5, 1943 ?

8 SM: So your daughter was two years old when he was born. And
9 your mother was able to come.

10 AE: Ah yes, well see my mother and brother they evacuated,
11 they got out of camp and he was going to get married in
12 Chicago and then he was going to go to New York and so my
13 mother came to live with me at Heart Mountain.

14 SM: At Heart Mountain.

15 AE: And so she came to live with me.

16 SM: She preferred doing that to going to New York?

17 AE: Yes, uhuh. After the war when we were going to be
18 evacuated, then my mother went to New York.

19 SM: How was that having her with you, cause that crowded you
20 a little bit more didn't it?

21 AE: Yes, especially when we had to partition off a little bit
22 more.

23 SM: Then you had two children and your mother in the same
24 space and probably a little less privacy then.

25 AE: Yes. By that time my husband was, he didn't want to go
26 to work only he went to the penitentiary.

27 SM: Your husband did?

28 AE: Uhuh, legal (^{Fair Play} can't understand her) committee and he was
29 one of the committee and the group they decided they
30 didn't want to go to war, they thought that they
31 shouldn't be going to war because they were (?) and they
32 were put into places like that and so they started that.
33 They had this fair play committee they are not with the
34 JACL, but they went against JACL see so, but now
35 everybody now saying well why didn't they do it too you

1 know because so they had about 75 fellows.

2 SM: They were protesting?

3 AE: Uhuh, protesting and my husband was one of the leaders
4 and so he had a trial in Laramie and he was in Laramie
5 penitentiary for what was it one year?

6 SM: I was trying to think if it was actually the jail because
7 I don't think at that time there wasn't a penitentiary
8 was there? There is one in Rawlins, but ah, well it
9 doesn't matter, the point is he was in jail or
10 penitentiary for a year because he protested.

11 AE: And then by that time we were due to disband the camp you
12 know so I had to pack everything up by myself.

13 SM: You were by yourself then?

14 AE: Uhuh, and then he oh, Al Warren, he was what's this group
15 that they have, anyway he came in and he was a lawyer so
16 he got these people out and I think President Truman gave
17 granted so they would come out.

18 SM: So he was in prison while you during the last year at
19 Heart Mountain which left you all by yourself and your
20 mother was there, what was that like for you to have him
21 be a political activist and then go off to prison?

22 AE: I didn't like it at all in a way, but that's his way and
23 his family was all for him so ah..

24 SM: They supported what he was doing and you weren't very
25 keen about it?

26 AE: I wasn't very keen about it. I don't it yet that I was
27 against it. The other people, the other 75 or so fellows
28 they all went to McNeil Island pennitentiary too you
29 know. Neil

30 SM: They were all in prison for what, disobedience to the
31 government was that it?

32 AE: Uhuh

33 SM: Did you and your husband talk about that very much or was
34 it pretty much his own business?

35 AE: Pretty much his own business, and he say well he was
36 going to do it anyhow. I didn't go against him. But

1 when he went to prison, or when he went to trial I went
2 to see him.

3 SM: You went to Laramie? That must have been hard to watch.
4 What did they talk about at the trial?

5 AE: They say that he is against the government and I don't
6 know, they talk about he is pro Japanese and ah...

7 SM: Because he wouldn't go into the military?

8 AE: Uhuh

9 SM: I talked to somebody else who said her husband went and
10 worked on the farms to avoid the military and that was
11 the way he avoided it, but your husband was actually
12 vocally protesting the policy and saying that that was
13 wrong and that wasn't a good thing to do was it?

14 AE: At the beginning I felt that they were, see my in-laws
15 were all against the United States because they were put
16 into camps like that. They said Japanese in Japan they
17 wouldn't do things like that you know, but I lived in
18 Japan and I knew they would do it.

19 SM: They felt that nobody in Japan would put people in camps?
20 Of course there were all kinds of camps in the South
21 Pacific, interesting.

22 AE: That's right and I thought they were doing this to be
23 more pro Japanese you know, I felt that way that they
24 were doing this, but actually they said they were
25 citizens so they shouldn't be put in a place like this so
26 they were protesting. And people they kind of mock you
27 they say that "oh your husband is a spy" and so that's
28 kinda the sort of things, "he should be loyal to the
29 United States" and that was the way they sort of feel.

30 SM: People in the camps said that?

31 AE: They kinda look at you that way you know.

32 SM: Did you have kind of a double discrimination?

33 AE: Yes, uhuh

34 SM: People in the camps because of your husband's activities
35 made comments and then people outside of course there was
36 discrimination from that too. Sounds like you had kind
37 of a burden to bear because of that.

1 AE: I didn't tell anybody that much you know, I just let it
2 go and I left.

3 SM: At the time you didn't tell anyone that at the time or
4 what?

5 AE: No, at the time that I felt I was for him, you know,
6 naturally, I was his wife and so I felt I am with him you
7 know, but in my heart I didn't feel so. But after I
8 divorced him and all that then I just don't want, I
9 didn't have any part in it. Tomorrow afternoon they
10 going to have luncheon together here. They said you can
11 come and I said no, I don't care to go.

12 SM: So your relationship with your husband after he was in
13 jail what happened afterward?

14 AE: Afterward was alright for awhile cause I had my third
15 daughter.

16 SM: You had another child?

17 AE: After he came back and I was in Los Angeles then so I had
18 a third daughter and we were getting along quite well
19 because that was over, you know the past was over then.
20 And then he started to play around so naturally I just
21 got out?

22 SM: So your marriage ended then?

23 AE: Yes and he married a Japanese girl and my sister-in-law
24 tells me that they are not too good now either.

25 SM: Did he come to the reunion too?

26 AE: Yes he is here.

27 SM: How is that for you?

28 AE: It doesn't make any difference, I see him all the time
29 because you have Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, you
30 know and he is there. Comes to all our parties.

31 SM: To the family gatherings.

32 AE: My oldest daughter told him, "mom's going to be there so
33 don't bring your wife." He never brought his wife and he
34 stays from the beginning until almost the end.

35 SM: So you have been able to work that out. One of the

1 questions I have is how Heart Mountain's being there
2 affected couple's marriage relationships and what kind of
3 pressures that might have put on a marriage to live there
4 in those circumstances. Do you think that, you know
5 your's eventually didn't survive, but it doesn't sound
6 like it was exactly Heart Mountain.

7 AE: No it wasn't exactly Heart Mountain, because we got along
8 pretty well because we used to, we had to get our
9 clothing from the bulk you know, get together and say
10 well the kids need, ok I buy this month for them, next
11 month we buy for him and for me because we only got \$30 a
12 month or something and so our allowance was \$30 a month
13 for clothing so we would do that. But when I was
14 pregnant with my son he was, I guess I was relaxed and so
15 I had a big baby. I had an 8 pound baby you know, but I
16 guess I must have been relaxed so by then I had a lot of
17 milk and the doctors were very good.

18 SM: Tell me about that, you told me about earlier you were in
19 the hospital, but then in December you actually had your
20 baby and ah...

21 AE: I did get sick for five days and then I came home and
22 after that first three months I'm (?). And so I was well
23 and ah...

24 SM: Did you keep going to the doctor?

25 AE: Uhuh, every once a month for I guess beginning and I
26 guess every week or so after that you know toward the
27 end.

28 SM: Did you go to the hospital to see the doctor?

29 AE: Yes, uhuh, everytime I go to the hospital and I see
30 different doctors I guess.

31 SM: Were they Japanese doctors?

32 AE: They were Japanese doctors umhmm. And I was going to
33 have a Japanese doctor, Dr. Kimora, he was the most (?).
34 And so when I was going to have the baby Dr. Kimora was
35 supposed to be delivery doctor, but that day he went out
36 of camp and he went to Cody or something and I had a baby
37 boy. Well see, all this time he had a girl and so...

38 SM: I read about that in the paper, he had all these
39 consecutive girls that he had delivered so he left camp
40 and you had a boy.

Dr Suskie
Circumcision
ambulance
in bed in
labor

1 AE: Yes and I said where were you when I needed you and I had
2 a boy and he said "I know, I'm sorry, I'm sorry." And I
3 had Dr. Suskie and he is a Catholic.

4 SM: Most of the women I have talked to have mentioned him.

5 AE: Uhuh, and he ah, so I had a boy and naturally I want him
6 circumcised you know and he was against it. He was
7 really against it, but by that time Dr. Kimora was back *Kimora*
8 you know, and so I told Dr. Kimora I wanted him
9 circumcised and Dr. Suskie came and says "you don't want
10 to do this, you don't want to give him displeasure and
11 all that kind of thing, but then Dr. Kimora did the
12 circumcision.

13 SM: What was your labor like?

14 AE: With the first one I had trouble, I had a day and a half
15 labor.

16 SM: Long labor and that was in Hollywood.

17 AE: But the second one was pretty fast. He was such a big
18 boy you know and he came so fast.

19 SM: You are saying that the labor with your son was pretty
20 fast and were you in labor at home.

21 AE: I did start, I think my water broke or something.

22 SM: Your water broke?

23 AE: And my husband called up and the ambulance came.

24 SM: Was it a long ways to walk there?

25 AE: Yes, oh yes, it would have been a long ways to walk yes,
26 cause the hospital was here and we were way back here.

27 SM: Ok, so the ambulance took you and do you remember what
28 happened when you got there?

29 AE: Then I had the baby and he says oh is it a boy or a girl
30 and Dr. Suskie says can't you tell it is a boy because he
31 cried so loud. !

32 SM: Did you walk around during labor or were you in bed or
33 did you get medication?

34 AE: I was in bed. I think when I started it came.

gas
stiches
br feeding

1 SM: Do you remember if you had medication?
2 AE: I think I had an anesthetic, no first time I had gas.
3 SM: That would have been close to the time your baby was born
4 then.
5 AE: You mean I had any kind of medication before?
6 SM: Well yeah, a lot of times women like during labor before
7 the delivery would get a shot of something, it just makes
8 it more comfortable and then if they were going to have
9 gas back in the 40's that was usually right about the
10 time of the birth.
11 AE: Yes, uhuh, I remember when they gave me gas, I kept
12 saying more gas please, more gas please, that's all I can
13 remember.]
14 SM: You were saying more gas?
15 AE: When you have stitches I guess they gave you gas.
16 SM: You had stitches?
17 AE: Oh yes I had stitches both times. Especially the second
18 one, such a big baby.
19 SM: I know several women have told me Dr. Suski put the baby
20 on their belly and they were surprised. Did that happen
21 to you?
22 AE: No he never put the baby on my stomach or I don't
23 remember. _____
24 SM: So then if you were like the other women you stayed in
25 the hospital for awhile. P.P.
26 AE: First baby was one week, second baby I stayed around five
27 days.
28 SM: At Heart Mountain?
29 AE: Umhmm
30 SM: And did you breast feed that baby?
31 AE: Yes, I breast fed my son for about 9 months.)
32 SM: So you didn't have the same trouble this time?

1 AE: No, I didn't have trouble. That's why I say I must have
2 been more relaxed.

3 SM: It seems like it would be so much more difficult
4 especially at Heart Mountain if you had formula instead
5 of breast feeding, to deal with all the bottles and
6 washing them.

7 AE: Oh yes, I would go there washing and then come back and
8 clean up, get the water from the latrine over there a
9 block and then bring it back and boil the water, umhmm.

10 SM: Did they encourage you to breast feed, the hospital staff
11 want the mothers to breast feed?

12 AE: I think so, yes they did, so and I wanted to breast feed
13 that baby. The second baby was easier.

14 SM: The second baby often is easier.

15 AE: When we were there all the time we never moved around
16 like our first baby you know. I just wonder if that is
17 why my first born was (?).

18 SM: Was she pretty active?

19 AE: Yes pretty active, very strong for a child.

20 SM: So you went home and at this point you had a two year old
21 and a brand new baby, is that right because they were
22 born two years apart right?

23 AE: Uhuh, see we were there for four years.

24 SM: Well you went in '42 and left in '45, so it was like
25 about three a little over three years.

26 AE: Three years, so she was pretty big then.

27 SM: She would have been five.

28 AE: Four and a half or five and then my son was about three.

29 SM: When you left.

30 AE: When I left the camp, yeah.

31 SM: Actually, I was trying to think, she was born in '41 and
32 you left in '45 so she would have been four, right and he
33 would have been about two. So you were really at the

best to stay at HM
no means of support

"Fair Play" issues

1 camp the whole time.

2 AE: Oh yes, from the beginning until the end, until they
3 closed the camp.

4 SM: Did you ever think about relocating or did it seem better
5 just to stay there?

6 AE: I thought it was best for me to stay there.

7 SM: Why was that?

8 AE: Well one thing you know he went to penitentiary so good
9 thing I was there, I didn't have to worry about feeding
10 or..

11 SM: You didn't have anyone to help you, support you.

12 AE: Support, although my mother was there. But I didn't have
13 any means of support.

14 SM: You said other people made comments because you husband
15 was in this movement, did you feel like the government
16 gave you any trouble because you were his wife?

17 AE: No the government didn't give me any trouble, just that
18 they were against him.

19 SM: But they didn't bother you particularly?

20 AE: No they didn't bother me. I wasn't bothered at all and
21 then nobody came to see me to say that you are disloyal.
22 Just that some people felt that, see there were some went
23 to the war so they felt you know your husband just went
24 to jail, you know that's the way they felt. But those
25 people, those fellows that went to war they said we
26 shouldn't have gone to war, why should we go to war when
27 we were citizens and our parents were over here. And
28 some of them were killed you know.

29 SM: It's a good question isn't it?

30 AE: The way I feel it is your own belief if they feel that
31 they were loyal to a country and they went to war that is
32 their..., but ah if my husband felt like and they felt
33 like it was their belief that they shouldn't be put in a
34 place like that then it is their belief, now I feel that
35 way.

36 SM: Now you faced, with your mother's help, quite a bit of

cold days - brought food to
children

talk at the laundry Page 19

- 1 time alone and taking care of two small children, what
2 were your days like? You said earlier how you went to
3 the mess hall and you told about going to the laundry,
4 and then how did it go the rest of the day with two small
5 children?
- 6 AE: Well let's see, well first of all you have to go to the
7 mess hall and then you get, he made a tray for me a big
8 tray, so I got the tray and then I got that food home
9 because I had two children. The good days toward the
10 end, my mother and I, we took the kids to the mess hall.
- 11 SM: OK, so it was the weather you didn't want to take them
12 out in?
- 13 AE: If it was cold you know, snowing days I brought it home.
14 And those days started out the end of September. But I
15 stayed home and we fed the kids at home, but some days we
16 bundled them up and then I took outside and we played in
17 the snow. Then if it's a good day, in fact if I could
18 take them out like that then I took them to the mess
19 hall. On good days I took them for a walk, I took the
20 buggy and put them both in the buggy and then my mother
21 and I went out.
- 22 SM: Did you spend much time with other women?
- 23 AE: Not too much but yes some. I had to do the laundry every
24 day and then that was when I would meet all those ladies
25 and we would talk.
- 26 SM: I've heard about that. What did you all talk about?
- 27 AE: One lady, her husband went to the penitentiary too see so
28 she had a baby in camp and she is in Hawaii now. We just
29 talked about did we hear from our husbands and all that
30 and before that we talked about our food and everything
31 else.
- 32 SM: One thing that the other people talked about was the
33 gossip among women, what people gossiped about because
34 people always gossip.
- 35 AE: Yeah, uhuh, well we talked about this or that person, I
36 don't remember so much of that though.
- 37 SM: This is the wrong time to ask you about that. I have
38 read a few stories about oh, affairs that were going on,
39 a woman who was a mistress, you know people were
40 wondering about what was going on in the neighborhood and

1 watching all the activities and talking about them.

2 AE: Oh yes, we did talk about some. One lady, I think she
3 was from San Francisco or something, her husband was with
4 her, but she had another fellow who used to follow her
5 and when we saw the two children they looked like her
6 husband, but the other one, the third child looked like
7 the other guy you know. So you say oh that boy must be
8 his son and all that, so gossip like that.

Gossip

9 SM: That is what I would expect since you had a lot of people
10 living together with not a whole lot to do although you
11 were busy.

12 AE: One lady she looked so sad, she was just in a daze, we
13 didn't know what was wrong with her. I found out that
14 her daughter or her son or something was kidnapped when
15 he was small, maybe it could have been daughter, but
16 anyway that was the reason why she was in a daze. Up
17 till then everybody says oh she is crazy and after we
18 found that out about her then after that we kinda tried
19 to help her out. It is really sad you know, you don't
20 see too much of that kidnapping or taking away when she
21 doesn't know where she was at or what happened to her.

People stories

22 SM: That was before the camp?

23 AE: Before the camp, way before the camp. See so why when
24 she came to the camp she was just in a daze. That was
25 the only thing I remember, that she was so sad.

26 SM: Did you have much a sense of what was going on outside of
27 the camp during the war, I know you couldn't have cameras
28 or radios until later.

29 AE: We didn't know too much of what was happening, what the
30 Japanese bombed, what did they do to the Phillipines or
31 to the Chinese, we didn't hear that much.

32 SM: You said you went to see your parents at Postum, did you
33 go out of the camp otherwise, did you get to Cody or
34 Powell?

35 AE: Yes, uhuh, we had a pass to go to Powell, I mean to Cody.
36 I never went to Powell. Then the time that my husband
37 was on trial I went on the train and took the two
38 children to see the trial.

9 SM: Oh, you took the two children to Laramie?

discrimination
was born in Japan

- 1 AE: Yes, uhuh, and we went to this person in Laramie. They
2 were a Japanese couple. This other lady that I knew here
3 that we used to talk together, she and I took our
4 children to Laramie and then we left our children there
5 and after the trial we came back. I don't know, they had
6 a hotel, I don't remember, but we left our kids with this
7 couple, especially the wife and I don't know the husband.
- 8 SM: How were you treated when you were outside?
- 9 AE: We went ah, I don't remember, I wasn't aware of
10 discrimination or anything like that. They just looked
11 at us and ah they are Japanese from the camp I guess.
- 12 SM: Some people have said they experienced comments people
13 made or they had experiences of discrimination, that
14 didn't happen to you?
- 15 AE: No, cause we didn't contact with anybody that much. Got
16 on the train and went there then went to the couple's
17 place and came back you know.
- 18 SM: Did you see anything of Laramie when you were there?
- 19 AE: Ah, I think we just went to the park that is about all I
20 can remember.
- 21 SM: That is really interesting the trial was there. So your
22 life was in the camp with very few exceptions. Did you
23 have any friends, I am kind of interested in what it was
24 like to be an enemy in your old country when you were a
25 citizen and how that felt to you to be put in the camp
26 and treated like you were an enemy.
- 27 AE: First of all, I was born in Japan.
- 28 SM: You mentioned that, but you became a citizen didn't you?
- 29 AE: Umhmm, but I couldn't become a citizen until after the
30 war.
- 31 SM: Oh that was after the war, of course.
- 32 AE: And so I was Japanese, and so I thought well I'm a
33 Japanese born in Japan so I was put in her you know. I
34 didn't feel as resentful as being a citizen so I think
35 that is where the difference is.
- 6 SM: That may have been a difference, like it was more
37 justifiable because you were Japanese. But you had lived

- 1 in the United States most of your life?
- 2 AE: I came from Japan when I was four years old and I went
3 back to Japan when I was nine years old and I stayed
4 there until I was fifteen, or fourteen.
- 5 SM: Oh, so you were educated there.
- 6 AE: Yeah, five years I was five years in Japan and I went to
7 school there and then I had to take a test to go to girls
8 middle class school.
- 9 SM: Why did you go back to Japan to school?
- 10 AE: My father wanted to go. He thought that he had more, see
11 is a minister and so he came to the United States and he
12 is an organizer, he organized churches. He organized
13 Salt Lake City Japanese Church, he organized started
14 another one.
- 15 SM: That's how you know Aiko isn't it, because her father was
16 a minister too.
- 17 AE: Yes, that's why we get along. So he started Salt Lake
18 City, he started San Bernadino, and then Pasadena too.
19 First of all he started Hanford when I was small and so
20 he was always and I guess he was always on the go and
21 then I don't know why, but he wanted to go to Japan and
22 so I was nine years old when we went to Japan. I guess
23 he wanted to be a minister in Japan and he never had a
24 chance to be a minister there.
- 25 SM: But the whole family went back when you were there?
- 26 AE: Uhuh
- 27 SM: There was a special name wasn't there when you went back
28 to Japan to be educated? It wasn't Nisse
- 29 AE: No, Nisse Kibee. ✓ Kibei born in US sent to Japan she was born in Japan Nisse Kibei
- 30 SM: Would that be what you were?
- 31 AE: No
- 32 SM: You were Issei weren't you because you were born in Japan?
- 33 AE: Issei more or less but my parents are here see so I can't be
34 Isae too because they are Isaes you know.

1 SM: That is interesting though how people came back and forth
2 though and that was a long long way to go. It wasn't
3 very easy to get to Japan in those days. It must have
4 been a long boat ride.

5 AE: It was, 15 days. It was fun in a way, but in the
6 beginning I was always sick. So when I came from Japan I
7 had forgotten all English. I was use knife and fork
8 because I had to concentrate on Japanese. When I came to
9 the United States I had to concentrate on English but
10 from one to four I was in United States, no, that's
11 Japan, four through nine I was in United States and that
12 is why my enunciation and everything stayed with me I
13 guess. So when I was in grammar school I finish and then
14 I met friends in girls school, you know that's the
15 friends who were Quakers and so they would teach me
16 English and this English teacher said "look at her
17 mouth." My mouth you know they can't say R so I had to
18 stand in front of the class and say R. And then when I
19 came to Japan nine to fourteen so I am able to speak
20 Japanese.

21 SM: You still speak Japanese?

22 AE: Yes, uhuh. Nothing is perfect, English is not perfect,
23 Japanese is not perfect. My mother is half English and
24 so see she is half and I am partly so everything is half,
25 half, half.

26 SM: Lets go back to Heart Mountain a little bit. You said
27 you had to pack up when the time came to go home and do
28 everything to get back to California. Tell me about what
29 that was like. When you were getting ready to leave and
30 then coming home.

31 AE: They said that we should go back and that they were
32 closing the camp so my father-in-law came in and helped
33 me with the big pounding and all that but I had to do all
34 the packing and my mother helped me out at that time too.
35 She took care of the kids, but I don't think we had that
36 much time so I know we did it quite fast.

37 SM: On the train is that how you got back?

38 AE: Yeah, umhmm.

39 SM: Back to California on the train?

40 AE: I remember a train so I know it was a train. Isn't that
41 funny, I remember the train to there more than coming

1 back. Although we were on the train and I saw quite a
2 bit of soldiers on the train.

3 SM: Oh, they were going somewhere, they weren't guarding you
4 any more?

5 AE: No, I mean young soldiers were on the train and I felt
6 sorry for them, wondering where are they going, are they
7 going over seas, are they going to be killed.

8 SM: But the war was over at that time.

9 AE: Yeah, what happened to them I don't know. For some
10 reason it is a depressing feeling.

11 SM: Then you got back to your home in Hollywood?

12 AE: No I couldn't go back to my home in Hollywood yet,
13 because their home that they lived in was, well first of
14 all I didn't go home, I went to a hostel, they had a, I
15 guess a friends hostel there and so I stayed there with
16 my two children for awhile and then my mother, I guess I
17 must have left earlier than my in-laws came back and they
18 opened their house up. They couldn't come back then
19 because their house wasn't open or something so they went
20 to their house and opened it and they had another house
21 right across the street and they said that when that
22 house was open then we could come back over there and so
23 I came back to their house.

24 SM: You really got shifted around didn't you?

25 AE: Yes

26 SM: When you look back at Heart Mountain you were there
27 probably as long as anyone, did that experience make a
28 difference as far as the kind of person that you are and
29 did you learn some things through that experience that
30 have affected you throughout your life?

31 AE: I can't remember, I mean I don't know.

32 SM: Well sometimes when people go through a real hard time
33 and that obviously had to be a hard time for you, it
34 affects their character and the kind of person they are
35 and it does make a difference in the way they live their
36 lives. It is kind of a big question I am asking.

37 AE: I can't say that I grew or matured. I'm not sure that
38 how I was affected.

1 SM: Have you ever been back to Heart Mountain?

2 AE: Yes, we went back once. This was before we were
3 separated. We went back with the children and see what
4 was there.

5 SM: What was that like?

6 AE: It was sad you know because all the barracks are gone,
7 just a chimney there, the hospital chimney was there. I
8 saw some barracks at the farmhouse, you know the farmers.
9 But I felt sad that it was gone.

10 SM: Had you kind of expected it to all be there still?

11 AE: Well I thought there might be some.

12 SM: Not much there.

13 AE: No nothing is. How did they bring the barracks here, do
14 you know anything about this?

15 SM: Well I just read about it in the paper that there are a
16 couple of the barracks that were nearby and apparently
17 they took apart one of them and they are going to
18 **(talking all over each other, can't make it out)**

19 AE: I just wondered if it was somebody else, somebody bought
20 the barrack and how they did it.

21 SM: There is a couple that are still around or nearby.

22 AE: Umhmm

23 SM: Well, I really appreciate your taking the time to share
24 all this, it has really been very interesting and helped
25 give me a better picture of what happened.