

(11)

1916

first discussion of any resistance!
marriage after P.H

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1 Sophie Toriumi Interview
2 Date: 3/3/95
3 Experiences at Heart Mountain Relocation Camp
4 Heart Mountain, Wyoming.
5
6 SM: Sophie was at Heart Mountain and she is going to talk about her experiences before and during camp life and she
7 had a baby at the camp.
8
9 ST: My daughter, Karen, was born on April 1, 1944 in camp, so it was about a little over a year after we got into camp.
10 Because I think we went in 1943, no 1942. I guess it was more than a year then.
11
12 SM: If you went when everybody else did it would have been 1942.
13
14 ST: We did. Well see the idea I think was that my husband felt that he shouldn't have special privileges, that if his
15 people had to go to camp, he should go with them. So he never really raised any objections. Although I remember
16 before we were married, in Pasadena, we had a group of young people who got together and discussed why we had
17 to go to camp. You know, if we could ever resist and we were advised that we ought to cooperate.
18
19 SM: Who advised you?
20
21 ST: We sent a group of young people sort of like a JACL, you know what they are?
22
23 SM: Japanese American Citizens League?
24
25 ST: Yeah, it wasn't that strong in those days, but it was pretty strong. We didn't have one in Pasadena, but it was sort
26 of a gathering of that kind of people. And then we talked about how we didn't like the edict that came down
27 advising us that we ought to obey the government wants us to do without resistance. But then we just talked about
28 it before we knew we were going.
29
30 SM: Did you talk about actually doing some kind of active resistance?
31
32 ST: No. In those days we didn't, we weren't activists, nobody was. Actually nobody was for any cause and I was
33 thinking I think I want to be a conscientious objector. But then I didn't go that far. By that time I was getting
34 married and was going along with my husband.
35
36 SM: So give me a sense of how old you were, what year you were born and then how old you were when all this
37 happened.
38
39 ST: Ok, I was born in 1916 so then this was in 1942, 41 or 42. Well 41 was the Pearl Harbor in December wasn't it.
40 And then we got married in 1942, February of 42.
41
42 SM: Right after Pearl Harbor then. Had you planned to do that?
43
44 ST: Oh no, we were engaged and we were going to get married sometime next spring in '42 but because everybody
45 was going to have to leave and be sent to camp we had to make up our minds because he would have gone with the
46 Los Angeles group and I would have gone with the Pasadena group to other camps.
47
48 SM: You would have been separated.
49
50 ST: Yeah, so then we got married.
51
52 SM: Did a lot of couples do that?
53

few prof. jobs for Japanese

1 ST: Oh yeah, you should have seen all the weddings my husband had before.
2
3 SM: He was a minister?
4
5 ST: Uhuh and so you know people wanted to hurry up and get married so they wouldn't be separated, couples so we
6 had a lot of weddings. My husband was in the downtown Japanese Church, the Los Angeles Union Church and he
7 wasn't their real pastor he was supposed to be their youth paster part time. But their real paster I think he had TB
8 or something and he was sent to a sanitarium so then the people didn't have a paster so they told my husband to
9 take over and then he was doing a lot of weddings you know, one after the other private sort of you know or they
10 had witnesses or their family was there.
11
12 SM: So that was in probably, lets see, Pearl Harbor was in December so perhaps five or six months afterwards a lot of
13 people got married. Do you remember your response when Pearl Harbor occurred?
14
15 ST: I just remember that we were, it was after church I think, the Japanese group was still meeting, the young people.
16 We were just milling around the church you know and somebody I guess turned on the radio and they heard this.
17 Well I guess we were shocked but it didn't strike us that much I guess. And then later that day or that evening a
18 Quaker person came over to reassure us that we weren't really enemies that they were our friends.
19
20 SM: So people were thinking about it already. *ok day of wk*
21
22 ST: Yeah, oh everybody was upset by then I think after the Pearl Harbor. *bless the Quakers!*
23
24 SM: And there were probably many of the parents of the young people were from Japan.
25
26 ST: Oh yeah, we were the second generation and the first generation were the imigrants.
27
28 SM: Ok, and your parents, were they born in Japan?
29
30 ST: Yeah, and of course we were the kids in those days you know we were the Sunday School kids, the young people.
31 Let's see, I graduated college in '38 so then I started working in the YWCA in Los Angeles.
32
33 SM: What was your field in college?
34
35 ST: Sociology and actually most of us Japanese Americans didn't look forward to a job after we graduated college and
36 actually not too many went to college, that's what I hear, they say you are one of the lucky ones because all of your
37 family went to college and most of us couldn't go, couldn't afford to go or there was nothing in the future for them
38 you know. So a lot of fella's would major in engineering, but when they finished they were working in the
39 markets.
40
41 SM: Because they couldn't get a job or nobody would hire them?
42
43 ST: Nobody would hire them.
44
45 SM: Because they were Japanese Americans?
46
47 ST: Umhmm
48
49 SM: Was that because of WWII?
50
51 ST: No it was before. This was before, in the '30s.
52
53 SM: So the prejudice and bias preceded WWII.

prejudice - "always been here"

Japanese "y"

met husb. through church work

- 1
2 ST: It has always been here. And then women usually went into teaching, but the Japanese girls couldn't get into
3 teaching. If anybody got in it was very unusual so none of us ever majored in education.
4
5 SM: I didn't know that. So you tried sociology.
6
7 ST: And then I was going to ah, my father, what a lot of families did was when their kids if they finished college or
8 high school they sent them to Japan and then in Japan they tried to find jobs or go to school over there for awhile.
9 So then he was going to send me to this school in Japan, Yokohama. He had a friend who was president or
10 something and he thought he could get me a job teaching English in that school so my brother had preceded me in
11 Japan, but he didn't go to teach. Anyway, so then when I finished my mother was getting me all ready to go and
12 then somebody told us about this job at the YWCA. In those days we had a Japanese branch, this was in Los
13 Angeles, we had a black branch in their community and then we had the main branch.
14
15 SM: So if you were Japanese you went to the Japanese Y.
16
17 ST: Yeah, they had an opening to work with teenage girls because the girl before me was just, she had an offer from
18 Hawaii so she was going to be transferred and it was a part-time job but it sounded real interesting so I took that
19 job and then I didn't never go to Japan.
20
21 SM: That must have changed your life.
22
23 ST: Yeah, see I had always been in the youth group or something at the church and so I was used to it, not working but
24 being with them so then, and I just loved to have girls because I had four brothers. So then I did the teenage work
25 and in those days the YW had a lot of Japanese girls clubs and the YM had a lot of the fella's boys clubs and they
26 were most always connected with Japanese churches, so they did the group work or the program work for the
27 church actually kept the kids busy while they were still members of the church too. So we had a lot of teenage
28 clubs in Los Angeles. Almost everybody belonged to one of them.
29
30 SM: That is who you socialized with.
31
32 ST: That is where we sort of concentrated. And then we had the older girls clubs too of course, but that was run by
33 another director. So I did that for almost four years and then in the meantime I had met my husband to be.
34
35 SM: How did you meet him?
36
37 ST: He was in the seminary choir in San Francisco. He had gone to sing at Occidental, that's where I was.
38
39 SM: Oh, you went to Occidental?
40
41 ST: Umhmm and so somebody said oh let's go hear him so I went to hear him and I think that is where I first met him.
42 That was just a casual meeting. Then I was doing a lot of work with, we had a young people's Christian
43 conference group made up of Japanese churches in the southland from Santa Barbara to San Diego in the Imperial
44 Valley and we had annual get togethers once a year or more so I was pretty active in that, on the board and
45 everything and we had summer, we called it summer school but it wasn't a school, more like camp and so he was
46 doing youth work among the four Japanese Presbyterian churches in southern California. He had just finished
47 school and I guess he was ordained up there. He was assigned to the youth work so he would go into his church,
48 not every Sunday but some of them. So that is how I met him through church work and then I was in the YW
49 work and the church was downtown and my YW office was downtown too.
50
51 SM: That was handy.
52

Santa Anita

5-mile travel limit

travel restrictions Page 4

for non citizens

West Coast "sectioned" & people

called
by
sect.
to
assem.
cen.

- 1 ST: It was very handy, yeah. And then you know YW did a lot of work with the churches because we were so
2 connected. So then we got married on February 1st and by that time we were not supposed to travel beyond 5
3 miles.
4
5 SM: And you were living in Pasadena at that time?
6
7 ST: Umhmm, so then we had a wedding and we just invited everybody without invitation. His parents are from
8 Sacramento so they couldn't come, but then all the local people could and we had our wedding at our church in
9 Pasadena.
10
11 SM: His parents weren't allowed to come because it was too out of the boundaries of where you were supposed to stay?
12
13 ST: Yeah, if you were not a citizen. I think if we were citizens we could travel because after the wedding and reception
14 and everything he and I went up north. I forgot how we went, driving, I don't think we went by bus. Anyway we
15 had a reception in Sacramento so that everybody could meet me and then we came back. So that was our very
16 informal wedding.
17
18 SM: It was probably more than a lot of people had though.
19
20 ST: Yeah, it was practically near the end.
21
22 SM: And did I see your wedding picture on the wall and you had a wedding gown?
23
24 ST: Yeah, one of the ladies in the church was a seamstress and she asked to make my gown.
25
26 SM: Lovely looks like it was a satin.
27
28 ST: Uhuh it was. It was a regular wedding gown and I could never get my daughter to use it for her wedding.
29 Anyway, so then we got married and came back and I moved to Los Angeles to be with him.
30
31 SM: Oh he was still in Los Angeles and so you went there?
32
33 ST: Yeah, well when I was working at the Y I lived in Pasadena and commuted every day. Anyway so then we got
34 married and I moved and he was living in the church, they had a couple of apartments in the church so we had one
35 of the apartments and very soon after that then the order came they divided the whole place up into areas certain
36 days you would be called.
37
38 SM: So you are saying the whole Los Angeles area was put into different sections and then the sections would be called
39 up?
40
41 ST: Uhuh, well not just Los Angeles, everywhere was.
42
43 SM: Everywhere, well the whole west coast wasn't it?
44
45 ST: Yes, so like Pasadena they were called on a certain date and they had to go to what they called assembly centers,
46 not the real camp, assembly centers in Central California, they had to go there and from there they were sent to
47 Arizona. At L.A. I was in the Japanese town section where you were going to go to see. And we had ah, well
48 our church was sort of like a registration so people in that area had to come and register there in that district and
49 we would all be going together. Then they told us what day we should meet and that the busses would be there and
50 so our group, the little Tokyo section they called it went to Santa Anita the race track.
51
52 SM: Oh you went to Santa Anita. Yeah most of the people I have talked to went to Santa Anita or Pomona.
53

Round up of
suspicious Jap.

didn't feel resentment
"Japanese patriotic"
things → destroyed

1 ST: And so they would come to our church and so many would go on certain days so we were there and helping them
2 to register.
3
4 SM: What was is like for you ?
5
6 ST: Well, we were busy. I didn't really feel a resentment, it was like we all had to do our work, our share you know.
7 Do our work and so I guess people were not showing their resentment or showing their resistance, I think they
8 went really grudgingly because if you had property and well gee, you had to get rid of it and you know people were
9 selling it for nothing and we didn't have anything, so it was just the wedding gifts that we had.
10
11 SM: I have heard of people losing a lot of things that were important to them.
12
13 ST: Oh yeah, and if anything was Japanese patriotic then they had to throw them away or burned them or buried them
14 or something.
15
16 SM: Oh, anything that was Japanese at all?
17
18 ST: Yeah
19
20 SM: Did they just kind of know that that was something you better get rid of?
21
22 ST: Yeah, I think so like the emperor's picture or whatever. We weren't very patriotic in our family though.
23
24 SM: Well sure, since your family came from Japan. Nobody told you you had to get rid of that or burn it did they?
25
26 ST: No, well they were afraid that if they were caught possessing it they might be taken to this, I told you they rounded
27 up the ones that were suspect and a lot of fathers you know the heads of families were because they were the ones
28 that were so loyal.
29
30 SM: They were loyal to the Japanese emperor and they were rounded up?
31
32 ST: Yeah, uhuh, without trial and just suspect.
33
34 SM: And where were they taken?
35
36 ST: Well I think that there was camps like in New Mexico and Montana, Texas.
37
38 SM: Oh they were in special camps.
39
40 SM: Did people worry that they might be considered suspects?
41
42 ST: Yeah I think so because you know they weren't even warned, they just come in and say you are going and the
43 family would be shocked you know.
44
45 SM: Like the mafia huh?
46
47 ST: Yeah. You are just going and they left you know.
48
49 SM: There was no due process at all. Did people tell on each other or do you have any sense of how these people were
50 identified who were suspects?
51
52 ST: I suppose there must have been. We were Christians and I don't think it made that much difference because some
53 of the people in our church were taken too, but then I don't know if we were so ignorant or whatever, the churches

took typewriter,
books, clothes

Temple/Church members registered together
draft avoiders in Japan → West coast
Church as community connection

1 kind of got together like a community and we got folks together. LA Union church was downtown but a lot of the
2 people lived outside of the divided sections but they wanted to go together so they, I don't know if they used the
3 church address or what but they signed up with the church so we had a whole quite a big group of LA Union
4 church members.

5
6 S:M: They wanted to be with their own friends and community I'm sure.

7
8 ST: I guess, although you know they belonged to communities like Royal Heights had a lot of Japanese that I guess they
9 wanted to be together and I suppose the Budhists must have done the same too.

10 SM: You were talking about how you were helping the people in the church to register and be taken to the assembly
11 centers.

12 ST: Oh at the church we were helping the officials and I remember I think American friends would bring donuts and
13 coffee for the evacuees and that was real nice and friendly of them.

14 SM: I have heard some other people talk about the Quakers and how much they helped also at Heart Mountain giving
15 layettes to mothers and doing things.

16
17
18
19
20 ST: Yeah, a lot of churches did and at Pasadena they had this woman, Kathryn Fanny, who was a congregational
21 retired missionary from Japan living in Pasadena so they had her live at the church and the people brought all their
22 belongings to the church for storage so the whole church built and they fixed it over like a storage sections for each
23 family during the war and so you know they didn't have any meetings there because everyone was gone and this
24 Ms. Fanny was sort of a caretaker during that time.

25
26 SM: Well it sounds like the churches were really important in helping people not only to store their things, but keeping
27 the community together and helping them in whatever way they could.] *

28
29 ST: And they were sort of connected see because our church in Pasadena was made up with help from any churches in
30 Pasadena. It wasn't just one denomination at the time and they all kind of helped to start the church which was
31 started from a group of young men from Japan who had come over here to study or to find jobs and they didn't
32 know any English and this one missionary friend got them together to teach them English and then she started a
33 bible class and pretty soon they started to meet together so she opened a church which was for the Japanese people
34 and then I guess they decided they were not going to go back to Japan. See a lot of them hoped to earn enough
35 money and go back to Japan or many of them came here to avoid the Japanese draft, they didn't join the army in
36 Japan so they came over here, draft dodgers or something and so when they decided they were going to stay here Issei
37 then they had to get married so they sent for wives or picture brides or they went to Japan to find wives and that is
38 how the Japanese got started and then a lot of them became Christians and so they made the church and I guess
39 that really brought them together because they had one connection I guess with the rest of the community, the
40 Anglo community because most of them couldn't speak English too well. They couldn't get any loans from the
41 banks because they were Japanese so then we had to organize our own credit in the church and they would all chip
42 in and help each other to start business or to get some equipment or whatever and that credit union was going on
43 until a few years ago when they decided it was time to dissolve it.

44
45 SM: So go back to the movement to the assembly centers and when you went and what that was like for you and how
46 you got there.

47
48 ST: So then when it was our turn to be called I don't know if we closed up the church or whatever happened, but
49 anyway we had to carry only what we could take so my husband actually had to take his little typewriter and some
50 books and I carried some clothes.


51
52 SM: Do you remember what he thought was most important to take? You were told to take just one suitcase was that it?
53

"bare essentials
Santa Anita
ironing underwear!"

- 1 ST: No just whatever you could carry in your hands. Umhmm and we had to take bedding and clothing, all the
2 essentials, bare essentials. Not cooking stuff, we didn't take any of that because we were supposed to be fed. But
3 we had to take towels and we didn't think about curtains or anything. We didn't know the place we were going to
4 go to except we had heard about the stables at Santa Anita. So my husband just had to have his typewriter. But
5 we carried all we could. And then we got on the busses and they didn't tell us where we were going until after we
6 got there.
7
8 SM: You didn't know you were going to Santa Anita?
9
10 ST: Hummm
11
12 SM: Had you gotten any work from other people about where they were?
13
14 ST: No, not really.
15
16 SM: You mentioned earlier you knew something about a stable.
17
18 ST: Well I don't know if we knew that ahead of time or if we knew then, I forgot. Pamona was a fair grounds.
19
20 SM: I thought you said you went to Santa Anita?
21
22 ST: Yeah, we went to Santa Anita and I guess some of them went to (?)But we were not put in the stables at Santa
23 Anita. We had a makeshift barrack. Because I guess we were the overflow and so we were put in a little room in a
24 barrack and the restrooms were in a separate building and they were not curtained or closed or whatever, that was
25 really embarrassing. The people began to bring their bedspreads of something.
26
27 SM: They hung them up, year I heard about that. I also heard that at Heart Mountain some of the women really
28 demanded there be some privacy.
29
30 ST: Did we get a door?
31
32 SM: Well they were curtains I think but you are saying that at Santa Anita you didn't have any privacy at all. How did
33 you handle that?
34
35 ST: Well like I said some people just brought down some sheets and they used them for that.
36
37 SM: Do you think that was more trouble for the women than it was for men?
38
39 ST: Yeah I think so.
40
41 SM: Well it also with special hygenic needs and ^{menstruation} ~~ministration~~. 😊
42
43 ST: But I don't remember how I handled it. Then the dining room another place where you had to wait your turn and
44 then the laundry was down there by the entrance I guess of Santa Anita where they had their administration.
45 There was a little building there and that was a hospital and then next to it they had like tubs I guess where they
46 did their washing and ironing. We had to go down there to do our ironing. In those days I would iron my
47 husband's shorts and pillow cases and everything else oh my god, what was I doing.
48
49 SM: There you were in Santa Anita ironing your husband's underwear.
50
51 ST: In a parking lot somewhere.
52
53 SM: What was he doing while you were ironing?

- 1 ST: Well he was doing his ministerial calls I guess and seeing how everybody was getting along.
2
3 SM: So he got into that role right away.
4
5 ST: Oh he always was.
6
7 SM: Did you work in your own role as a sociologist?
8
9 ST: No, no.
10
11 SM: You didn't do that? *yw*
12
13 ST: Well by the time that we were going to our permanent camps they asked me if I would go to (?) to start one there, I
14 mean clubs you know because that is what they felt the kids needed, but my husband was with the church group so
15 I didn't go. But anyway I didn't do any.
16
17 SM: Do you remember when you actually went to Santa Anita, what month that was or what day?
18
19 ST: I always wondered when I went. I think it was around May.
20
21 SM: Yeah somewhere in there. Most people have said it was around Memorial Day, May, June, I just wondered if you
22 recalled that particularly.
23
24 ST: I didn't keep a diary, I wish I had. Never thought of it.
25
26 SM: Well it was probably somewhere in that time and then how long were you there?
27
28 ST: Well I think it was in September that we left.
29
30 SM: How was that for you living there, just emotionally and...?
31
32 ST: Well I think not much about restrooms (**I am not sure this is what she said, it is very hard to hear her as she**
33 **talks so low and the mike seems to be more on your side than on hers.**) But you know we had all like services.
34 And then there was a piano teacher there who was supposed to be a pretty good piano teacher. She was willing to
35 teach piano so I was able to keep up my piano so I took piano lessons for awhile. So I did that and we had weekly
36 services.
37
38 SM: On the grandstand and you were right out there?
39
40 ST: I know isn't that funny? I don't know what was (?) the way the horses run right now. I just remember across the
41 fence we could see the theatre, Arcadia. I don't know where it is now though.
42
43 SM: In some ways it is kind of interesting as far as what you did like picking piano lessons and then you carried on in a
44 lot of ways like your life normally would have happened.
45
46 ST: Well I was more like a housewife because we took a lot of times doing the things we did like washing, ironing and
47 ah.
48
49 SM: You and your husband had your own place? What did you have in there?
50
51 ST: I think they had beds for us.
52

lack of privacy
 "bring us hamburgers
 talked through the fence
 lack of sense of being enemy
 not real angry

- 1 SM: Here you were a young married couple.
 2
 3 ST: Oh and next door even, the walls were not insulated or anything. Next door was a family, I don't know what
 4 happened to the husband, it was a woman with three young girls that were kids and she was Japanese speaking.
 5
 6 SM: Could you hear everything through the walls?
 7
 8 ST: Oh yeah, everybody could.
 9
 10 SM: How did young couples have any kind of privacy?
 11
 12 ST: I don't think we had radios to ah...
 13
 14 SM: To drum out the noise huh?
 15
 16 ST: No. Of course we were all fenced in so we couldn't have visitors they could't come in and we couldn't go out.
 17 One of the ministers of a church the Michalinda church which is in Arcadia was my husband's classmate so when
 18 he found out we were in Santa Anita he would come over quite frequently. He said is there anything I could bring
 19 you, some food or something and we said oh yeah, bring us some hamburgers. That was our favorite thing you
 20 know, I guess at the time we get to be like that.
 21
 22 SM: What kind of food were you eating?
 23
 24 ST: Gosh I can't remember but it must have been army kind. I don't think we got sick but. 
 25
 26 SM: So did you get the hamburgers then?
 27
 28 ST: Oh yeah then he would come with hamburgers the next time. We had a feast. Kind of embarrassing when
 29 everybody else didn't get it. I don't remember if we had french fries, but that was our favorite thing and you know
 30 there wasn't much else he could do for us. I mean he couldn't try to get us out or anything, and he couldn't come
 31 in.
 32
 33 SM: You talked through the fence?
 34
 35 ST: Yeah we just talked through the fence. You know like they do in the jails.
 36
 37 SM: Was it embarrassing?
 38
 39 ST: I thought it was embarrassing.
 40
 41 SM: Tell me a little more about that being inside.
 42
 43 ST: Yeah being inside and here we were good friends you know we used to go to each other's houses and everything
 44 and suddenly we couldn't do it anymore. He just lived down the street here.
 45
 46 SM: I know you mentioned earlier that they had told you right after Pearl Harbor that you weren't enemies, but as the
 47 time went on did you have any feelings that Japanese and Japanese Americans were enemies or did you have any
 48 sense of identifying yourself that way?
 49
 50 ST: No we didn't because we knew we were American citizens and just our parents could if they wanted to be but they
 51 couldn't get their citizenship so I imagine our parents must have had felt well gee are we accepted or are we really
 52 enemies or what, but I think that most of us young people did not have that feeling but that we were loyal and that
 53 we were Americans. I don't think we were real angry or we didn't show it. And I don't know if we said well how

ashamed
"stick out like sore
thumb"

fear
Jap. "Subversive"
"take us all"

- 1 about the Germans and the Italians. And I hear that some of the Germans and Italians also were rounded up, were
2 suspect on the west coast. Not everybody though. I guess they could very well evacuate them.
- 3
- 4 SM: You didn't feel personally like you were an enemy. Did you feel fear at all for your own well-being or safety?
- 5
- 6 ST: I think we did, we wondered what was going to happen to us because we were not enemies but we were not
7 accepted as citizens so what was going to happen to us. Why are we in the wrong. And it took them the longest
8 time to find out that there was no subversive activity going on on the west coast.
- 9
- 10 SM: Is that what you were told was happening? That they were investigating subversive activity?
- 11
- 12 ST: I forgot if we were told.
- 13
- 14 SM: What was the reason that you were told that you needed to be in camps, that you needed to be relocated?
- 15
- 16 ST: Well some of the top people in Washington decided that we were subversive.
- 17
- 18 SM: Everybody was subversive?
- 19
- 20 ST: Yeah and I guess they couldn't very well segregate those who were not citizens and those of us who were so they
21 just decided to take all of us I think.
- 22
- 23 SM: So it wasn't quite clear to you why you were being...
- 24
- 25 ST: Yeah, why we had to leave and then we would keep thinking well gee, most of the Japanese were farmers, they
26 provided the fresh produce not just for ourselves and yet people think we had to give all that up. Who was going to
27 carry on after us? And they were doing the things that I think the people feared the whites would not do and
28 maybe the Americans thought they could bring in other people (can't hear her here) And then I think they were
29 ashamed that they had to do this and so I understand. After the war they just shut them off and didn't tell their
30 kids what happened.
- 31
- 32 SM: They didn't want to tell their children?
- 33
- 34 ST: Yeah so a lot of third generation kids said they never told us about this or we didn't know what was happening.
35 Why didn't you people revolt or demonstrate like they do now?
- 36
- 37 SM: But it was different then.
- 38
- 39 ST: It wasn't the thing to do I guess.
- 40
- 41 SM: Well you said earlier that there were no activists. You talked about it and you would talk that up.
- 42
- 43 ST: Told us to go along, that we had to support our government.
- 44
- 45 SM: Is that also Japanese cultural tradition to be accepting or is it not? I mean Japan has a colorful history of all kinds
46 of behavior so...
- 47
- 48 ST: I know. I don't know but I know they sort of feel like they need to stay together, to stick together if one person
49 doesn't go along they stick out like a sore thumb.
- 50
- 51 SM: To behave.
- 52

Japanese

"like to be together & not too conspicuous"

draft resisters "made a lot of fuss"

1 ST: In anything. We like to be together and not be too conspicuous I think that is our cultural trait. But in camp we
2 did have some resisters especially when the boys were called up for volunteers for the military, to volunteer they
3 said we don't think we should unless our families are going to be all freed. Why should we go volunteer for what
4 we are deprived of? You should have been here a week ago. We had a wonderful meeting and we did have a
5 speakers from different camps.

6
7 SM: (phone rang) So go ahead, we were talking about the camp resisters.

8
9 ST: Well they resisted and made noise about it and they wouldn't volunteer with the rest of the fellows who did
10 volunteer and they you know got into fascist but I don't think we had any physical problems in our camp. I think
11 some of the others did. But anyway so then they were sent to another camp these boys who resisted and thought
12 they should go back to Japan. They were sent to northern California, Tooley Lake.
13 *Tule*

14 SM: What did you think about the resisters? I have heard people felt differently about it.

15
16 ST: At the time I didn't think, I thought they were, I thought you know it was good for those who want to to go help to
17 prove their loyalty but so we thought they were wrong at the time but now I think gee they really did a heroic thing
18 because they were right, why should they volunteer to do something when they were not getting the rights
19 themselves?

20
21 SM: But at the time did most people feel that was the wrong thing to do?)

22
23 ST: Yeah

"wrong"

24
25 SM: Why was it wrong?

26
27 ST: Well because we weren't being cooperative I guess.

28
29 SM: Did that make it hard on anybody else?

30
31 ST: Yeah it did and they were maybe a little too aggressive for us. It was a quiet kind of ...

32
33 SM: They made a lot of ...

34
35 ST: Yeah they made a lot of fuss and so they became very well known they were kind of afraid of them. I mean I
36 thought that anyway.

37
38 SM: Did you know any of the resisters?

39
40 ST: Yeah I knew two. In fact his wife was in our church. He never came but his wife did. They finally divorced.

Frankemi?

41
42 SM: After camp?

43
44 ST: After camp uhuh.

45
46 SM: Do you think that caused a problem between them?

47
48 ST: Oh it surely did. She was such a sweet thing and he was such a fighter. He was one of the leaders.

49
50 SM: Well back up a little bit now and give me a sense of yourself as a young woman and as a I guess as a pregnant
51 woman and a mothering woman because you did all that during the time at the camp is that right?
52

missing?

- 1 ST: I was in charge more or less of the young people in church
2
3 SM: At Heart Mountain?
4
5 ST: Yeah they were the same people. Most of them were in the choir. We had a pretty active teenage group and I
6 guess at the time I must have worked best with teenagers and the I was pregnant, I became pregnant.
7
8 SM: When were you pregnant, was that before you got to Heart Mountain?
9
10 ST: No let's see it was about, she was born in April 1944 and we went in late '42.
11
12 SM: Was that on purpose or did you ah?
13
14 ST: Yeah, before we went to camp I went to the doctor and said gee I don't know what is going to happen to us I don't
15 think we should get married and have babies and try to conceive so I asked her for something to prevent
16 contraception.
17
18 SM: Do you remember what you used?
19
20 ST: Yeah it was called a diaphragm.
21
22 (A toilet flushed and a door slammed but nothing was said on the second side of the tape. It just sounds like a
23 washing machine is running) ? See insert, next page
24
25 Continuation on Tape 2 of Sophie Turiumi:
26
27 SM: So we were finishing up talking about Hiroshima and I just was wondering if the Japanese community is thinking
28 particularly about it now.
29
30 ST: Umhmm we do and we have big observances now every year in our church.
31
32 SM: Oh every year you do?
33
34 ST: Well in our church, our women's group. One day a couple weeks ago I guess we had a woman who was kind of a
35 spokesman for that. The Hiroshima maidens I guess you call it. I don't think she was particularly be she was their
36 spokeswoman so we had her come and speak to our group. (?) and we read about it in the papers and we know
37 what happened and we know what is happening and we know that many relatives (can't make out what she is
38 saying here) Seems like every war you think well now we have learned a lot this should never be bad and it seems ^{war}
39 like every war is worse. The weapons are cruel and beastly. What's wrong with human beings?
40
41 SM: You have experienced war in ways most people can't even imagine, behind barbed wire and below ground. ?
42
43 ST: Boy I don't we can compare those people to the Jewish people.
44
45 SM: Well that is an interesting question because in some ways the situations were similar, except the degrees were ^{war}
46 entirely different as to what happened, but you were taken from your home, you lost your things, you were taken on
47 a train off somewhere that you didn't know, you were confined, you had your rights taken away from you. Ah the
48 degree was not the same, but your violation of civil rights were certainly similar, but do you ever compare
49 yourselves with the situation of the Jewish people in the camps.
50
51 ST: Well I think we do, I mean I do. I think my gosh there purpose was to anihilate the race you know and I think the
52 government here ever thought of anilating the race, (she is talking too low here, can't make it out).

Toriumi (11)

SM: How did you change your mind because you, when you were at Heart Mountain, you really didn't know how long you were going to be there either.

S: yeah, that's true, so I guess we decided we better start a family before its too late, so then we...not that I conceived right away.

SM: Well if you had a baby in April, then you must have been at Heat Mountain, and that was '44, you must have gotten pregnant somewhere around August of '43. So you had been there almost a year, hadn't you? Something like that when your baby was born.

S: Uh-huh, yes, and when I became pregnant I was ~~so~~ ^{nauseous} ~~nauseous~~, it was terrible. And it was the first baby and my family wasn't there and I felt ya know kinda lonesome and lost, or whatever I guess.

SM: You didn't have your family and your husband didn't have his either there.

S: No. My family went to HEALA, Arizona and his family went to Sacramento so they went to ~~Truly~~ ^{! DilA} Lake first.

SM: So we were talking about your feeling nauseated when you were pregnant.

S: Oh, yes, I was so nauseous that, I guess the doctor told me to go to the hospital, ya know, I might as well stay in the hospital. Or go to the hospital because, you know we don't have in our rooms basins or toilets.

SM: Were you vomiting?

S: Oh yes, every time I ate, and you know I can't be running to the...

SM: Oh I see because the latrines were a ways a way and so if you were sick.

S: It was another building. I just didn't want to throw up all over the place. And I was really feeling awful, so then I went into the hospital and stayed there, I don't know how many, at least a month or more I guess.

SM: You did.

S: Yes, and I would eat in the hospital and then I would walk? and then I would be ok the rest of the time until I ate some more. And I kept doing that see for about a month. Pretty soon one of the nurses said, 'You know, I think that you are in the habit of doing that', and so after that I stopped and I was fine. } ^{? vomit?}

SM: She just said that to you?

S: Uh-huh she said, 'I think you are just in the habit of doing it.' She didn't tell me to stop, but ya know. And sure enough I stopped, and I went home. And I was fine after that. But I was so sick at the time ya know. But in between I would be fine so I thought oh I might as well read the bible. So I started reading the bible from the beginning. And I didn't get through the old testament but I did get quite a bit...

SM: Well a month is a long time to be in the hospital.

S: Yes it is.

SM: What did you do all that whole time?

S: I just stayed in bed and read.

SM: Were you in the obstetrics ward?

S: I don't know, I was in the hospital. I don't think I was.

SM: You were, you must have been an early pregnancy at that time.

S: Yes, it was an early pregnancy. And I guess that was a relief for my husband, because you know he didn't have to take care of me and my troubles at that time.

SM: Was he having a hard time with it?

*what?
refers to
preg or
amp life?*

S: Oh yes, it was awful, it was miserable. Anyway, I was fine after that so I went back to my duties, ya know, with church things.

*awful
miserable*

SM: So once you got through that episode your pregnancy went ok?

S: Fine.

SM: Do you remember the kind of care that you received in pregnancy?

S: I think we went in like once a month or something for a check up. And I think this Dr. Kimura was my Doctor.

SM: KIMARIE?

S: Kimura. He died.

SM: K-I-M-U-R-A
Did you see him every time you went?

S: I think so, I don't know if there were any other doctors, I guess there were.

SM: And what would he do when you went through a check-up?

S: Gosh, I don't remember.

SM: That's hard isn't it.

S: It's hard to imagine. I imagine they do the same thing didn't they, as they do now days. Feel you and take your...I think. There was nothing unusual so I don't remember that I had any problems. ?? One line too low, something about being big and not having any problems??

SM: Did they give you any special food because you were pregnant? Did you get extra milk or anything like that? No?

S: NO. Maybe I could have asked for it. It was all new to me and I wasn't very careful I guess.

SM: Who did you talk to about pregnancy and how did you learn about it?

S: How did I learn about it? Actually I don't remember. I guess it was when I got sick and missed my period or something. Isn't that the usual thing?

SM: Yes, right. ..How you knew you were pregnant. Whether, you know a lot of time we get advice and we get information from other women or mothers. You didn't have mothers there, I wondered if you, if women talked about it a lot.

S: One women told me, she says, 'Oh I was sick for all nine months, but look how strong my boys are'. That's all right she says. one line missing...I don't know, I guess women to talk a lot, ya know, living so close together. But, no I didn't have any special friends, ~~poor~~ out my problems too.

SM: What did you do about maternity clothes?

S: Oh, I think I just had a couple of things, maybe my mother. I think my mother was already out and ?Phoebe?.. and I also had a sister in law out there and she, I remember she made diapers for me.

SM: She made diapers?

S: Yes, out of flannel. Because in those days we didn't have disposibles.

SM: No, you didn't. We hardly had them in my day, so.

S: Ok, see, and so she sent me the diapers and I guess I had a couple of dresses, or some kind of skirts. I remember when I was directing the choir, we didn't have gowns or robes and I

*flannel
diapers*

had this coat about 3/4 length jacket and wore that.

SM: Wrapped yourself up.

Did women go around showing there pregnancy or was that something that you were supposed to keep private?

S: Well, I don't think that you could keep it very private.

SM: Right, well unless you stayed in the house, of course you couldn't do that because you went to the mess hall.

S: Oh yeah, we had to leave the house a lot of times.

SM: And go to the bathrooms. I guess you couldn't keep it private. I just wondered if that would be something that women would try and do.

S: Oh, no. And I don't think I knew very many girls who were pregnant around that time, in my time. I'm sure there were but, ya know 10,000 people.

SM: There were a lot of babies born in three years.

S: That's what you said, I can't believe it. 500.

SM: Yes, Way over 500.

S: What was the number? (?)

SM: I think it was, I'd have to look, it was 560 or 540, right in there.

S: Oh, that was a record.

SM: Yes, those records, the camp had, in fact when I was in Washington doing research, every month the camp put out the number of babies born and the number of people who died at the camp and all the vital statistics and that is all available.

S: Oh really. That's interesting.

SM: Yes. Well, What was you labor like?

S: Uh, what was the labor like? It was uh..

SM: Do you remember when you started in labor?

S: I just remember the baby came on a Saturday.

SM: On a Saturday.

S: So I must have gone in that night or um, I can't remember if

she was born in the morning, at a reasonable time. I think I just had the regular labor pains like everybody else. In those days husbands could ?(couldn't)? come in the room I think.

SM: I knew that.

S: And then I told you that Dr. Kimura told me that I won't want to have the birth on Saturday, that's his day off and too bad, he's going fishing. So I would have to have another Doctor. And sure enough it was a Saturday.

"gone fishing"

SM: And he wasn't there.

S: And he wasn't there.

SM: He'd gone fishing, huh?

S: He'd gone fishing. That was his favorite thing. And I guess you would do that for \$19 a month off (?)

SM: Yes.

S: So then we had this refugee doctor. He's Austrian, I think he was. And he had worked in the, uh, some Asian country before and he came back to this country, and I thought he couldn't, do his practice or something and I don't know how he came over here to America and got his assignment at Heart Mountain..I can't remember his name. Do you have a list of this? I suppose it is in the ?? somewhere. I can't remember his name. He was a very nice Doctor, and I think I was about the first baby, ya know, my pregnancy was the first he worked on there, in camps. He was very careful. Which I liked, ya know.

SM: So he delivered the baby.

S: Uh, he delivered your baby and seemed to take a lot of interest in seeing that everything was ok, and so I.

SM: Do you remember anything about the time you were in labor in the hospital. The way you were cared for?

S: I can't remember who was around.

SM: Do you think you had medication or did you think you would probably just wing it?

S: No, I think it was not natural.

SM: Sometimes ether was used, I think, in those days. Were you

put to sleep right at birth, right before the baby was born?

S: Gee, I don't remember.

SM: That's ok, it's been a long time ago.

S: I know. Some girls remember everything so clearly.

SM: Well, it just depends. It may be too that, um, women didn't make as much a thing out of remembering everything. Like I remember a lot about my children being born, but I also really paid attention to it. Ya know, I was very interested in all those things about it. And it may have been just more of a routine kind of thing that women, because I haven't gotten a lot of details from women about, um, what happen. Ya know, they remember in general the nurses taking care of them and being in the hospital ten days afterwards.

S: We did stay in longer than usual.

SM: Longer, not then. That was normal then.

S: That was normal then.

SM: Did you breast feed or bottle feed?

S: I tried breast feeding, but it didn't work very well for me. I think I was too nervous or something. I should have tried a little harder. But I remember I started the ^{SMA}? I think it was. It stays pretty fast.

SM: Did you feel like you were nervous, as a mother?

S: Uh-huh, I was very, not high strung, but I was kinda a little nervous and not very calm. All though you know Japanese, we put on the facade of being very calm and actually we are really worked up inside.

SM: Worked up inside.

S: And that's why, maybe you don't hear lots of the girls talk about those things because they are so private, ya know.

SM: Yeah, I wonder about that. Ya know, how comfortable would people be even telling me about, because I'm an outsider.

S: To talk to anybody, right, even among themselves, I guess. Although some girls are very talkative, they could tell you everything. I'm just not that kind, I think.

SM: Does it seem like I am asking things that are pretty personal?

*worked up inside **

nervous

S: No, no. I wish I could remember them now, I would be glad to tell you.

SM: That's the problem.

S: I should have written it all down.

SM: Well so, um, give me a sense of your home at Heart Mountain and what that was like, and then what it was like having a baby in your home.

S: Oh, my gosh, our home was very unusual, because it was a corner unit and it was one room. But we had one section for the beds and Karen's crib in the corner and the stove and then on this side, we had this library, book shelves, and you know, at Christmas time the churches used to send us gifts and all kinds of gifts. I think it started at Heart Mountain because I think the presbyterians started it. I think they must have sent out notices to all the churches saying that 'Send gifts to these people in these camps.' Said there are ten camps. And so we got hundreds and hundreds of gifts from churches all over the country. Especially the Eastern. And they would send all kinds of gifts, I mean, everything you could think of, I guess. And it all came to us, ya know, all these packages. Pretty soon we got so much we had to ask the office, 'What can we do?' 'How can we handle this?' So I think we had to, I don't know how we did it, but anyway, we had it all planned so that at Christmas time all the kids would get gifts and we had enough for, there was money so that, if we didn't have enough for something. But then we got the idea that people were sending us books, used books or new books, or whatever. Especially childrens books, they didn't have a library in camp. So we thought we would just have one here and anybody that wanted to come and borrow them. So, we um, I forgot how we made the shelves, I think it must have been card boxing, wooden. Anyway, we got rid of the gifts that way, and then we had enough so that we could give them to older people and others too, and just keep coming in. That was really nice and I was writing hundreds and hundreds of thank you letters to all of these churches.

Gifts

Library @
home

SM: Thanking them for?

S: Thanking them for doing it. Because we never knew it was going to be so big anyway. -missing one line here- And so that part of our room was like a public place. And then the kids, young people in our church, used to come there for extra meetings or extra just to get together, you know, we didn't have bowling and other things to do for the kids that much in those days, so church was part of their social life. And ^{Karen?} ~~Carolynn~~ would be sleeping over here and she just slept through it all and here we were making so much noise, and I'm sure the neighbors were, ya know, very much distracted. But

that was the way our life was at camp. 'I mean in our home.

SM: Was the church life was very central in your camp life as well as outside camp, wasn't it?

S: Yes, it was. Because of ..? And for the kids too if they were at all church related. I wasn't active, but they did have a pretty active (?) school.

SM: So what was your daily life like as a mother in camp?

S: I had to get my washing done I guess.

SM: The washing, was that the big job?

S: Big job, yeah. And then you know everybody was doing it, so you had to go when it was empty, I guess. And then I guess you kinda socialize there too.

SM: I've heard that, that is when the women often get together and talked.

Vegetarian
S: I remember there was some Seventh Day Adventists, and they would be there, doing their own cooking I guess. They'd be there washing their own rice or whatever, because.

SM: Vegetarian.

S: Yeah, vegetarians, and they didn't eat the meats and stuff. So that was unusual.

SM: Do you remember what the women talked about? That's a hard question.

S: I really don't remember that much. I couldn't socialize that much. If they were Japanese speaking that even harder because they didn't socialize with us English speaking.

SM: So you were separated like Japanese speaking would stay together more?

S: Socially, we sort of, unless it was your own family. And then of course I had friends in the church that were Japanese speaking, we were friendly but it wasn't like we would all sit down and have a cup of tea and chat away.

SM: Can you speak Japanese?

S: Very slightly. Conversation maybe, but that's it. What do you mean, they would have to say it over again because I really didn't understand that much. I wish I had learned a little more or tried to. My mother didn't make us go to

Japanese school. I heard they didn't learn much in Japanese school anyway, so I don't know. But she, I had her teach me at one time I really wanted to learn Japanese so I had her teach me to write the characters.

SM: Well go back to you. You started talking about going to do laundry, that that was part of your day.

S: Yes, that was part of the day. I guess we were supposed to eat in the dinning room, we had to stand in line.

SM: You'd take the baby with you?

S: I think so, gosh, unless we took turns or something. I think you could take your food to your room if you wanted to. I can't remember and the kids used to sit together and not with their families. And we used to always said it was too bad the families had to break up for meals. And, let me see, I can't remember sitting and eating. I'm at the stage where I forget things.

family break up

SM: That's ok, it's been a long time ago. I understand.

S: I wish I ???? to do. And then there were others, like Buddhist families, or other faiths in our... Every section had some ya know. And we were friendly and everything but we weren't that close. And the kids would sort of mingle together, but you know how it is with kids.

SM: So there were definite groups in the camp, weren't there?

S: I think so. And then there were a lot of people who were connected with a church, but they weren't really very devoted to a church, so we didn't always see them.

SM: Your life centered very much around the church, and probably your daughters' life did too.

S: Well, she was only one, I mean not even one, so.

SM: But she was right there with you, wasn't she. When you had all those gatherings in your house.

S: Yes.

SM: How did it seem to you to be a mother at the camp. Was that a good time, a bad time, a hard time, an easy time?

S: In a way it was easy because you were confined to certain areas and you didn't have to worry about any other outside things. I know she had plenty of clothes. I don't know where she got them all. I guess people must, friends must have

given them to her, because I was always ironing.

SM: Ironing is a major theme wasn't it?

S: The second time, the second baby I did hardly iron.

SM: You didn't iron.

S: By then I learned. But anyway, the first. Yes it was, I mean it sort of centered around taking care of her, I think, in camp.

SM: Oh, you had the second baby in camp?

S: No, just the first. The second was born here in Pasadena, after we..

SM: Did you purposely wait then to have a second child.

S: I guess, afterward I thought, gee I should have had more because it was all free. It was very convenient too, ya know. But, she just came later. I was having a hard time conceiving her.

SM: I see, so in some ways the camp added some ^{convenience} conveyance to be a mother? I was just thinking about, and I have heard people talking about this, it's cold there in the winter and you gotta go to the latrines to get water, wash diapers.

S: Yea, I don't know how we did that. I think the water in the wash rooms were warm or hot when we needed them.

SM: Do you remember the weather being a problem?

S: Oh, yeah. The first year, I was going to tell you, on Saturday she was born. So, Sunday my husband forgot to take the offering.

SM: He forgot to take what?

S: The offering.

SM: Oh, at church.

S: That service.

SM: Well, that's understandable.

S: That's so funny, of all things to forget. Anyway, I guess that year we also had Easter service, and we had an outdoor Easter service up on the mountain. I mean up on that, ya know that Heart Mountain. We were suppose to go up there.

free



SM: It's pretty cold that time of year.

S: It was and the churches around the Heart Mountain, the ministers ya know, they were coming up, they came up, I think to join us for that sunrise service, that so called sunrise service. And I took Karen, one of the cars, he drove us up there. But it was so cold, I didn't even get out of the car with the baby. I stayed in the car. And I guess we had the service up there, we had the service all right. But, yea, I used to take her to everything. I know my husband was sometimes invited to go speak to the womens' groups and the churches around Greybull and Powell.

SM: Womens' groups though?

S: Churches, ya know they have...

SM: Well, yea I know, but the womens' groups within churches, it that what you are saying?

S: Yes.

SM: Why particularly the womens' groups versus the mens' groups or...

S: In those days it was the womens' groups that were active in anything. I'd never heard of mens' groups.

> f's groups active

SM: OK, so womens' groups in churches were very active and important?

S: Yes, and they were the ones I think that did all the, ya know, sending us things at Christmas time, all the youth groups of the churches. And the Powell church, the Presbyterian church with women, especially one women was very active. She would come every week and first she would ask us if there was anything that we needed that she could get from the outside for us. And there was one church family where the women, the mother and the grandmother, very elderly and sickly, they needed a certain kind of food. Like fresh eggs or something or they wanted fresh chicken or something. So they would order stuff from her, ask her if she could get it, and she would bring it the following week, for them. And so she did that kind of service for people. Which was really nice, church witness.

SM: It sounds like the church is here, because I have heard some comments from people about how, when they went to Powell and Cody they were discriminated against. I know Japanese allow ???, but it sounds like, as far as the church were concerned that wasn't an issue.

S: No, I remember the Methodist church and Presbyterian in Cody

invited us to, I forgot, to the young peoples meeting or womens' meeting or something.

SM: So you went out of the camp sometimes.

S: Oh, yes, we could get permits to go out. Just that we came back I guess. And then one time, the ministers all got together and took us, my husband and me and the baby I guess to Yellowstone for a trip. So we got to see Yellowstone Park while we were up there. And it was so close, but ya know, you don't just go out and tour the place unless you had these special privileges.

*trips
out*

SM: That was unusual.

S: That was unusual.

SM: Most people wouldn't have been able to do that. How did you feel about going out on a trip like that?

S: Oh, was was wonderful. They were so nice to us. They were really, I think that they must have been warned, not warned, but told by their denominational heads, that you know, you have this camp near you and to do some missionary work or ?...Because this Presbyterian guy was appointed by the national board to look after the Presbyterians in all the camps.

SM: That's interesting.

S: And so I think he was appointed to Heart Mountain, but then maybe a Methodist would be assigned to another camp, or something like that.

SM: So, it sounds like at least in your case and maybe for many people, if you had a church affiliation you might be better off?

S: Yes, I think it helped make some kind of communication with the outside. And then, even the scholarships and grants that went for college kids after they opened up the Quakers or the Fellowship of Reconciliation, ya know, started this thing about getting the colleges to open up to Japanese students to go to college during the war in the east, not in the west coast. They opened that up and I think that started by Christians too, that whole movement. And then you can go out of camp if you have a sponsor where ever you wanted to go, and so I think the churches really worked to help that thing to go. Not just churches but that sort of started the ball rolling, so you know other groups, especially during the war, you know they had factories and places that were short of help, so they were glad to get workers. So then they (?) wanting to sponsors families. That's how many families were

able to relocate.

SM: To relocate. And there was some push for people to relocate wasn't there?

S: Yes, they were trying to get them out. But someone of them couldn't move I guess, so they stayed until the bitter end.

SM: When did you leave?

S: We left in '45.

SM: Toward the end then.

S: He had gotten this job by...

SM: What part of 1945 was that? Because the camps closed in '45, towards the end of year.

S: Yea, but it took them awhile to get out, all the families I think, and so we, I can't remember if we left after the west coast was open again or before. But a lot of the families were already moving by then, so my husband decided we better go to, so we left. I think Reverend Capman (?) wanted us to stay until the very end.

SM: To minster to the people there?

S: Yes.

SM: But your husband felt that you should go?

S: I think. I don't know how we decided to go, but we did.

SM: So, you went to Cleveland?

S: Yes, we went there because my folks were there, and we would have a place to stay. And the family that sponsored them would sponsor us too.

SM: I see, I see.

S: And my father, he was working for the Government, doing map translations or something, but then part time he started doing a little congregation of people. But so then, when we went, we went with a job that my husband would work in the Council of Churches.

SM: The Council of Churches.

S: And look after the re-settlers, so that was...? it was suppose to be.

SM: How did it feel leaving the camp?

S: Leaving the camp?

SM: Uh-huh

S: It was very good, I mean it was very interesting, at my age I guess it was very adventuresome. And I remember when we were going out of camp we had to go on a train from Billings to Chicago and the first time we went out Karen was still a baby and was bottle fed. They didn't have a refrigerator, I guess on the train, so the guy got us, the conductor got us a bucket of ice water and we kept the bottles in there until she needed them. I forgot how he warmed it up for us but we had (?), and she would have a bottle, and that was the way we went to Chicago.

*train ride
"out"
"iced" formula*

SM: And you had all those diapers also to take care of.

S: Yeah, that's right. I wonder how we did that, I guess it was extra luggage.

SM: Extra luggage.

S: And then, yeah, then when we were moving to Cleveland for, to leave for good, leave camp for good, I guess, the WRA (?) Government must have helped us with the moving. It wasn't like everything you could carry. And so I think that is how we moved. My husband's family was in Chicago so we had a place to go in Chicago in route to Cleveland, and that was pretty convenient.

SM: And so you stayed in Cleveland for awhile?

S: For over a year.

SM: Over a year, and then you came back to California?

S: Well, we were called back in '46, so I think it was just one year.

SM: Called back to the church here?

S: Well, called back, not this church, but the one in Hollywood, the church wanted us to open that church. ..? They called them interims and they called them ministers. Anyway, he tried to get the church started again because people were coming back to those places and returning, so we had a sizable group, but not very big. And then in '48 we were called to Pasadena, and at that time it was not a Presbyterian church it was like, kinda a union, because many churches in Pasadena had help to organize a church. So then it was called a federated church. But then they called it The Pasadena Union Church. And my

husband said, he really liked to work in a Presbyterian church. So they said, ok, we'll become Presbyterian instead. So, they went through the process of becoming Presbyterians. So then my husband said, ok, he'd come. And that is how we got to Pasadena.

SM: So ya know, when you look back at that part of your life at the camp when you were young, a mother and had a baby, does it seem like something, did it have a real effect on the way you think about life, who you are as a person, so you think it was an important episode in your life, or was it just another period you went through?

S: I didn't think that I was missing anything, ya know.

SM: You didn't seem like you were missing anything?

S: No, and I didn't think, well gee if we never had to go to camp, ya know, what would we be doing or what would are church be like, or whatever, because he really was suppose to be the pastor of the Los Angeles Union church and we didn't know how that church was going to survive because during the war, I think the blacks had taken over little Tokyo. And we had stored all our wedding gifts and stuff in the church, way up in the attic somewhere. But it was all (?) taken, opened up and everything but we got back...

SM: Your gifts had been taken?

S: yes, everything. At the church, I guess people took over and must have just looted up the whole place or something.

SM: So you lost everything?

S: Yes, I lost..Well, one of the ministers who had married us, ?his name?, he was the head of the Los Angeles Presbyterian at that time, near the ~~San~~ San marino. And he says, "We'll store anything you want us to store in our garage for you during the war. And we didn't want to take everything over, so I think we just had him take our valuable things, we received like silver, silverware and stuff like that. So we had those came back to us, but the things we had stored in the church in little Tokyo we lost most of it. Which is ok too, material things, and then when we came back we were in Hollywood, at the church of Hollywood, so. Everybody starting over again anyway.

SM: Everybody was?

S: And everybody had the same problems to resettle, if they lost their home they had to rent. Many people stayed in what we call hostels, like in L.A. L.A. Union Church had this huge, I don't know what kind of place it was, but in (?Braugh) Heights

*didn't think
I was
missing
anything*

*

!

they had this huge building which was, I don't know if it was a school or something but it was, they set it up so that people, families could come stay there until they could get a place, so it was like a hostel. In Pasadena, our church was like a hospital.

SM: So there was a lot of helping to resettle.

S: Yes, it took awhile, so they needed a place to sleep, ya know until they could find a job, find a place. And so everybody was having to go through this together.

SM: Well your community really sounds like it bound you together and helped you through it.

S: I think it did.

SM: I mean what I think you are telling me is life went on reasonably normally even though it was profoundly abnormal. You didn't seem to dwell on that, at least as I hear you talking.

S: It was just part of our job, I mean our work to just go ahead and do what we can at the time. We just took it in a stride I guess, so to speak. We did face a lot of hostility, I think, when people were trying to find jobs. Being rebuffed(?), like banks won't lend the money.

SM: Was that after you got out, the hostility you felt?

S: Oh yes. I'm sure L.A. must have had them too, but Pasadena we had this community, I forgot "Fair Play" or something. It wasn't "Fair Play" but anyway some of the citizens got together and they said that we have got to help these people. In fact they were formed even during the war. There was Herbert Nicholson, who was a quaker, who would take things to Heila(?) if the people in Heila wanted something from their storage places in Pasadena. Like a church. So they would ask him please bring this and this and that, so he would go there and get them and truck them over to Heila. And so we had this committee that was really backing us up and supporting us in every way. So when they had to come back, when they were coming back, then they had to help them to resettle and Pasadena had what they called a test case, they got one girl who would be willing to come back and go to Pasadena city college, and she would be the first Japanese student that would be coming back. And so it was a test case to see how well she could do it, how well she would be received and all that. So she came and they helped her get settled, she stayed in one of the homes. In fact she still hates to talk about ..?living in the home.? so she doesn't say much. But, anyway, she was the first case. And so each family had their thing that they had to go through to get

Community
"took it in stride"
"just part of our job"

settled, resettled and find jobs.

SM: This hostility question is kinda an interesting one because I heard about that even before people went to the camps there was hostility.

S: We always had discrimination.

SM: Has that stopped or do you still feel it?

discrimination

S: No, no, it still is. Don't you feel any in Wyoming? That would be ideal.

SM: Wyoming is not a good example because we don't have very many minority people so its not..and I'm not a minority person either so I can't really speak to that but you are saying that you still feel it now?

*fear
hostility*

S: I think that when too many congregate, ya know of the minority group, it scares the Anglo group or the majority group. It scares them and so they develop fears and then they develop hostility because that is the only way they can express themselves, and so I think, you know, the blacks have felt a lot and I think we sympathize, empathize with them because we felt it to. Of course the blacks think we have it off really easy.

SM: You have it easy, but you haven't always had it easy?

S: They know they had it and we know we had it to so, you know. And then of course some of our Japanese, I guess, any group Asians, ya know, they think 'Well we made it so why can't you?' And then they had this 'hotty' attitude which I don't think was right because we still have that, and ya know as long as we have a different skin color, I don't think we are ever going to change.

*skin
color*

SM: Except for your skin color is just about the same skin color mine is.

S: I know. My eyes, my hair, you know you're Asian.

SM: You're as light complected as I am, so it isn't really skin color it had to do with your ethnic identity.

S: Well we say skin color as our identity. And I think as long as we're that way, I mean, we're not all gonna be one blend ever, are we?

SM: Its hard to get passed ^t all the ideas we have about differences isn't it?

S: And the Latinos too and the Chicanos, gosh, even the Japanese think ?this is hotty? And in Japan I hear it's even worse.

And I don't think we should.

SM: Let me ask you, just go back to the camp because one thing that was said to me during an interview yesterday was that, the women who spoke to me said she felt protected in the camp or their family did from the hostility of people outside, that in some ways being there as a group felt like a protection from possibly greater hostility outside. But at the same time she said later on, she sometimes thought 'Gee, we're altogether in this camp it would be so easy for a bomb to drop and just wipe us out.'

S: That's right, huh.

SM: Did you ever had any sense of that, of vulnerability being in camp. Hear you all are, 10,000 of you in the middle of nowhere, clearly identifiable.

S: No, I didn't feel that, because at that time I don't think there was that much fear of the atomic bombing or any big thing.

SM: Well, of course it hadn't gone off yet at that time. There had just been, but there had been Pearl Harbor, there was that kind of bombing and fire bombing.

S: The only thing was that the watch towers, the guns were pointed at us instead of pointing out. You wondered well how come we are getting it instead of, it should be protecting us.

SM: You should be protected, but the guards really pointed the guns at you?

S: Yes, so like they were protecting the outside from us. I think that is what some people were talking about.

SM: Sure. Did you, when Hiroshima happened, this is the 50th year since Hiroshima and I'm just interested in what your reactions were when that happened and how you are feelings 50 years later, because there is a lot of commeration coming up this year.

S: Oh yes, we do observe it a lot. When we heard that it feel, it dropped.

SM: You would have been in Cleveland at that time. Because that was in August.

S: August, were we already gone? I can't remember. August the 5th or 7th or something. We might have still been at camp.

SM: So you really didn't leap to it until (?)

"it should be protecting us"

S: Maybe

SM: The camp I think was open until November.

S: I think we lived in it in December.

SM: But the Hiroshima, you may not have known too much about it or it doesn't sound like it was something that..

S: We knew just as much as anybody else reading the papers. It was like we didn't get any inside announcement. And of course everybody was worried because our brothers and our boys were overseas stationed.

SM: Were they worried about family in Japan or were they worried about family in the service, or both?

S: Both, Hiroshima was where a lot of the Japanese immigrants came from that area looking for America.

SM: I see, and Nagasaki.

S: Hiroshima more than Nagasaki. (?) Families were concerned.

SM: What, 50 years later, what, how do you view Hiroshima and what happened there. There had been so much discussion already this year.

S: Well, I still feel that is was a terrible thing to do. I mean it seemed like, ^{how} is it justifiable. I just wish they had a little more ~~mind~~ ^{how} hindsight? to do something else. And even that Hyajimi(?) incident was sad, both sides so many lives were lost. I mean I just think its terrible. Human beings or whatever they are can be just lost. I really feel badly about Hiroshima and they say that this earthquake in Ko~~l~~be was just as bad, the ruins looked just like Hiroshima.

1
2 SM: But still you know I have read accounts of women and the holocaust and what they went through. One of the
3 things that really strikes me is the strength of women and the bravery of women. The ability to go on being
4 mothers and taking care of the children despite this incredible adversity. To me that is some of what I see in
5 common if you look at that and start looking at the degree of the destruction that occurred, but how women are able
6 to carry on and that is some of what I see is the strength of women in many stories around the world of women in
7 these situations that seem unbearable and yet they seem to be able to go on and live their lives and take care of
8 their children and protect their children.
9

10 ST: That's true.

11
12 SM: That's what I would see as the common the common line and it is very amazing. Are there any other reactions
13 from your Heart Mountain experience or things that we might not have covered that seemed like a real important
14 part of your life there? We have covered a lot of ground. We didn't talk about the trip but I think I have heard
15 about the train trip
16

17 ST: And then going too. When we were going and every time we would come up to a town we would have to close our
18 curtains because I guess there were a lot of military towns and my brothers two brothers had gone out early so they
19 were there and I guess that they knew that the trains go by there every once in a while and I don't know if they
20 went out every day to look but one brother was there when we got to Salt Lake and the train had to stop there for
21 refueling. But we couldn't get out of the train but my brother was there so we got to talk to him.
22

23 SM: So you talked to your brothers?

24
25 ST: Yeah so I guess every day they go out to see if they find their friends on the train and then we didn't know where
26 we were going so we didn't even know we would go through Salt Lake so you couldn't write to them saying we
27 were going to be coming through.
28

29 SM: You didn't know you were going to Heart Mountain?

30
31 ST: No not until we were ready to go.

32
33 SM: And then you were landed in the middle of Wyoming.

34
35 ST: Some people went off to Arkansas.

36
37 SM: The middle of no where. Somebody was telling me about she was in Powell and she was shopping and somebody
38 made a disparaging comment about the Japanese Americans and she got really mad and she says "you hicks, you
39 don't even have escalators out here. You think we are hicks, you don't even have escalators we are from
40 California." I thought that was pretty funny. She got very indignant.
41

42 ST: This couple that was in back of me said they were in the (?) church.

43
44 SM: Were they at Heart Mountain too?

45
46 ST: No it was before that.

47
48 SM: Well thank you for sharing and it sounds to me like a lot of what you were able to do was to become so much a
49 part of the community wherever you were that that sustained you and your religious faith was so important to you
50 and the people around that but in a lot of ways that was much more permanent than the fact that you were in a
51 camp somewhere. Is that accurate?
52

- 1 ST: Umhmm. We did what we could not necessarily crazy about what they' did to us but just went on with our life and
2 hope for the best. }
- 3
- 4 SM: Does your daughter, the one that was born in the camp ever ask about where she was born, I mean here she was
5 born in Heart Mountain, Wyoming.
- 6
- 7 ST: I kind of tried to tell her you know, but they don't ask too much, but now I think she is curious and her daughter
8 has to write a paper or something.
- 9
- 10 SM: So now your daughter is asking about her roots?
- 11
- 12 ST: No she doesn't ask very much but I think she knows and now I am trying to get her to go to Little Tokyo to see the
13 barack cause I said this is like your first home you know.
- 14
- 15 SM: And she hasn't even seen that?
- 16
- 17 ST: No she hasn't gone.
- 18
- 19 SM: She must be about 50?
- 20
- 21 ST: She will be 51.
- 22
- 23 SM: She is my age.
- 24 ST: Oh really.
- 25
- 26 SM: The woman I spoke with yesterday said the same thing, that her children just didn't seem to be interested that at
27 some level they just want to distance themselves from that heritage, I mean it seems to me it would be hard not to
28 be interested in the fact that you were born in Heart Mountain, Wyoming in a camp. }
- 29
- 30 ST: Well I remember when I was younger I didn't ask my mother about her early days in Japan as much as I wish I did
31 and my father you know my father was always taking pictures we had a lot of family pictures but my mother didn't
32 have any and now I wish I had talked to her more, but one thing was our language differences see, she was
33 Japanese speaking and I was English speaking so it wasn't so easy to just sit down and just chat. I wish we had
34 done more because, you know, I don't know what my mother wrote but she kept a very good diary I understand
35 and my father did too. When my mother died, she died first, my father read her diary and he said I was so
36 ashamed of the way I treated her. He said after I die I want my diary and her diary to be burned up so by that time
37 my father had remarried and he told his second wife and she did it and I thought if we knew about it we would have
38 told her not to you know because then we could of at least had it translated and find out what was in her book. }
- 39
- 40 SM: But you said you didn't keep a journal. Did you keep letters or anything that you may have written in camp? Do
41 you have any written records of your time in camp?
- 42
- 43 ST: I did but I gave them up or threw them away or something after. }
- 44
- 45 SM: Did you have any photos in camp?
- 46
- 47 ST: Yeah, by that time we could take pictures. At first we couldn't so I had a lot of baby pictures.
- 48
- 49 SM: Would you show me some?
- 50
- 51 ST: Well I'll see if I can find them.
- 52
- 53 SM: Ok these are baby pictures. These were actually taken at the camp?

1 ST: Yeah, I think they were.
2
3 SM: You said you had cameras by this time?
4
5 ST: Yeah, my husband had a camera at that time so he took a lot.
6
7 SM: This says 1944 on that one.
8
9 ST: Ok, so we were in camp still. This was when we were in Cleveland so it was later. These are all in Cleveland.
10 That's my husband and that is my brother who was in service and he had to visit .
11