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Takenuchi - Sato, Naoko

Interviews

1981

(Noriko Isuda)

83/115

C

Nacke Takeuchi

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Last time told me ~~you~~ your brother Jack's folks went back to Japan from Tule Lake.... What happened to them? *after you?*

In interview - said you ~~ix~~ didn't talk to me after your brother Jim left Tule Lake -- ~~ix~~ Would you tell me why?

~~20~~ 209-465-1249.

RW: And I talked to Kimiko about her experiences somewhat, but of course, she was just born there, so she doesn't know hardly anything, and so she did give me. . . tell me about you and Jack, and gave me your telephone number. And this is just in case you would like to express your feelings. I could ask you some questions, and if you don't like the questions, why, just say "phooey."

NT: Yes, well like me, I. . . well I wasn't that. . . by nature I wasn't really all that upset, you know what I mean, about the whole deal.

RW: Oh, yes, many people do.

NT: Bob was really upset, but to me it was well, I felt that they did it for our protection in a way. . . It turned out Bob. . . But I think if we were out a lot of us would have been killed. You know, by the people from the Filipino, they were really going wild in Stockton, and many of us, I think, would have been dead if we weren't put in the center.

RW: Now am I to understand that you say they would have killed you if you. . .

NT: Oh yes, there were 2 or 3 murders right here in Stockton, and they were just done by these Filipinos, who just went wild, because, you know, how they were bombing Manila and things like that. In one case where this man that had a garage, we don't know, we didn't actually see. But then he was. . . in those days, it was glass and then just by passing by - boom - they shot him through the window.

RW: Gee. . .

NT: And in this one case where this Filipino man just went. . . these men. . . Japanese couple had a hotel and they had 2 or 3 children, I don't know, they went up the hotel and then rang the bell. . . so that when the man opened the door, you know, they have a little window where you register _____? and they shot him dead.

RW: Oh my goodness.

NT: Now two happened in Stockton just before we were put into camp.

RW: And you were living in Stockton then?

NT: Yes, at that time we were living in Stockton.

RW: And how did your parents earn their living?

NT: Oh, they were more or less semi-retired.

RW: Semi-retired at that time. . . Were you working or going to school?

NT: I was just going to school yet.

RW: In high school or. . .

NT: No, I was going to beauty college.

RW: . . .to beauty college. . . yes

NT: I just got through high school and I was going to beauty college which was interrupted because of the war. But I'm sure if we weren't. . . like I didn't. . . I thought it was. . . you know, being a citizen and we're put into the center, it wasn't right, but still if we were not put in the center, if we stood out, I think a lot of us would still have ended up dead. You know, like. . . I'm sure that there would have been a lot more kids like that. . . and I know that they had it all over, and not only in Stockton.

RW: You remember how you felt when you first heard that you were going to be put in centers, you know, in the assembly centers?

NT: Well, not. . . well, as I say, I really wasn't all that upset but I thought for heavens sake, you know, we didn't think it was right, but we knew we couldn't fight the deal, so. . .

RW: You're the first person I've talked to, you know, where this, where was this violence. . . just a second I'm going to have a swallow of water. . .

NT: Okay. . .

RW: Now, let's see, it's valuable to have your opinion. Let's see, do you remember any incidents about the assembly centers that come to your mind, anything that you remember about it? Where were you sent by the way?

NT: Okay, first we were first sent to Turlock. . . yes. . . that was the assembly center. . . then we were relocated in Gila, Arizona.

RW: Yes, yes.

NT: Then from there we went to Tule Lake.

RW: Then to Tule Lake

NT: And that is where we met you.

RW: Of course, I met Jim in Gila, just before he left.

NT: Oh, I didn't know that!

RW: Yes, we had some nice talks, and I talked to him about segregation and then we corresponded when he was segregated, and then, of course, we renewed our friendship when I was allowed to come there.

NT: But you know what happened. . . I don't know now. . . this I didn't think about it. . . it didn't dawn on me until a lot later. . . but you know when. . . you know how the atmosphere in Tule Lake was. . . there was some people who were really pro and con Japanese. . . pro American. . . you know. . . all this mixed feelings. And like when they used to see. . . and you used to come to our barracks. . . right?

RW: Come where?

NT: To our barracks, barracks. . .

RW: Yes.

NT: But then the people around the neighborhood, especially these young bachelors who came from. . . let's see. . . Hawaii, who were really for the Japanese, you know. . . way of thinking and everything like that. . . they thought that he was like. . . a spy. . . not a spy but he thought there were. . . When he was giving you this information, he was giving you thinking that, you know, that he had ill feelings toward the Americans, right? And he was telling you how he felt all about this evacuate. . . but then they took it the other way.

RW: Oh, you mean that these bachelors accused him of being a spy?

NT: Right, not exactly a spy, but like a. . .

RW: an inu.

NT: . . .going against the Japanese.

RW: . . .against the Japanese.

NT: Now this is the way I added it up later, you know, when I was thinking about it. And he never told me, but I think he was getting threatening letters through the mail. His life was threatened.

RW: I sensed. . . his life was threatened, and you just felt that.

NT: Yeah, I thought that. . . I don't think I'm wrong about it. When I come to think about it now, you know. So this is why he moved to Utah, because of his wife. . . I think first didn't he go to Utah or something?

RW: Well, his wife stayed for a few. . .

NT: No, no. . . his wife went to Arkansas with his mother.

RW: I'm not sure about that.

NT: I can't remember that well either. But anyway, it all ended up that he went out, you know. . .

RW: He went out in September very early, I remember my last talk with him, it was a very, but. . .

NT: At that time he didn't mention anything to you? About. . .

RW: He didn't. But the interesting thing is that a good mutual friend, somebody we both knew in Gila, told me about 4 or 5 months later that Bob Tsuruda had been threatened. . .

NT: Had been what?

RW: Had been threatened by. . .

NT: Oh threatened.

RW: Yes, threatened by the radicals. . .

NT: Yes, we used to call them that. . .

RW: And this is just hearsay, if you want to hear it? And what this friend, she was a woman, she said she had heard that they had threatened him that if he didn't give them sugar from the mess, they'd get him.

NT: Oh, yes.

RW: And so, then I could understand why he was kind of nervous in August and September and you know, God help him, you know.

NT: And another. . . there was a Mr. . . . I just don't remember. . . recall this man's name. . . but he used to work at the warehouse. . . okay now, I think Bob used to work someplace where they were distributing food to the messhall. . . he was in charge of that, and he used to go to various messhalls with this head man. He was a Caucasian. . .

RW: Mr. Hayward, or someone like that.

NT: You mentioned the name, it just doesn't come to me, anyway he used to go with him to the different messhalls to show him EXACTLY how bad the situation was. . . and so. . . and how shortage it was. . . and how the Japanese people liked to have some Japanese food once in a while. . . and so he arranged it so that we used to get some Japanese food from the outside, at that time from Denver or something like that. But he used to get some of those Japanese condiments and things like that. Now Bob arranged it to be that way. BUT the people, the Japanese people. . . they were always looking at it from the wrong angle, you know, like they would never praise you for being good. . . they all said that. "Oh, he's doing that because he's a dog." In other words he was kissing. . . he was brown-nosing. . . you know what that expression means? Like he was kissing his whatchamacall, so. . . since it would be good for him. And they always took it the bad way. And I think in this respect, this is another thing. . . as I say this even after I came out of the camp that this dawned on me. . . that I bet you he was threatened.

RW: The people were down on him after he left the camp or down on you?

NT: No, no, no. At least I didn't feel any. . . I didn't feel. . . I didn't have any feelings that they were, you know, eyeing me or anything like that. This was just for my brother. I'm sure that he was getting threatened, his life was threatened so therefore he was relocated. But at that time I was too naive, you know. . .

RW: Well, you were a young girl. . .

NT: Yeah, and I was innocent; always pampered baby of the family. . .

RW: (laughs)

NT: Yes, I was. . .

RW: Well, I always liked you.

NT: (laughs) You know, as I say. In those days, I don't think they were quite as mature as these young ones are now.

RW: Yes, that is true. People minded their parents more.

NT: Yeah, and we were too naive, you know. . . white was white and you know, we didn't see any black. We believed everything was just, you know. . . which was the world was a lot different from what it is right now. So for this reason. . . and later when. . . but I never even bothered to question Bob. It was past history.

RW: No, I wouldn't but I. . . how should I. . . I appreciate your strong feelings here. I might ask you another question. . . Was there anything that happened in Tule Lake that made you feel especially sad?

NT: Oh gosh. . .

RW: Well, if it's too bad, why we will skip it.

NT: Yeah, like it has been so long that I just can't reminisce, you know.

RW: I was wondering, you were very young at the time, do you remember the military registration in Gila and how you felt about that or where you too young to answer?

NT: Okay, like. . . I think I was really for the Japanese army, at that time I still had. . . I guess, downright I guess I had a feeling toward America because they put us in this center, but I thought we were kind of kicked in the mouth. So for this reason, we. . . didn't, I didn't. . . being a woman I don't register for the army, but then I did. . . Okay, we had a choice. . . sign LOYAL to the Americans or LOYAL to Japan, you know. And so I went with the family. I went loyal to Japan and then therefore we were sent to Tule Lake. Right. But I did not go as far as renouncing my citizenship. When the time came when I had to renounce my citizenship, I just put my foot down and I said, No, no, I'm not going to do that. So I didn't go that far, you know. And when the war turned out to be the way it did, you know, I was released right after, in February I think, and the people who renounced their citizen had to remain longer and some even went back to Japan.

RW: Yes, was this in February, 1946, you were released?

NT: Yes, 1946 I was released. And then I think my brother Bill, whose family was really, really, boy Japan, Japan, they even went back to Japan.

RW: Oh, they did! I didn't know that.

NT: His wife's folks, Bill's wife's folks. . . Bill got married in Tule Lake. . . his wife's parents went back to Japan with the whole - all the children and everybody.

RW: I got that feeling while I was at Tule Lake in talking to Bill that his wife's. . . his in-laws were much more pro-Japan than he was.

NT: Oh, yes. . .

RW: And they were really pressuring him.

NT: They were very. . . especially Grace had another sister, older sister, whose husband was REALLY pro-Japan. So for this reason, I guess, Bill was more or less pressured into renouncing his citizenship. He went along with his wife's side of the family. And he renounced his citizenship too.

RW: And I talked to Kimiko about her experiences somewhat, but of course, she was just born there, so she doesn't know hardly anything, and so she did give me. . . tell me about you and Jack, and gave me your telephone number. And this is just in case you would like to express your feelings. I could ask you some questions, and if you don't like the questions, why, just say "phooey."

NT: Yes, well like me, I. . . well I wasn't that. . . by nature I wasn't really all that upset, you know what I mean, about the whole deal.

RW: Oh, yes, many people do.

NT: Bob was really upset, but to me it was well, I felt that they did it for our protection in a way. . . It turned out Bob. . . But I think if we were out a lot of us would have been killed. You know, by the people from the Filipino, they were really going wild in Stockton, and many of us, I think, would have been dead if we weren't put in the center.

RW: Now am I to understand that you say they would have killed you if you. . .

NT: Oh yes, there were 2 or 3 murders right here in Stockton, and they were just done by these Filipinos, who just went wild, because, you know, how they were bombing Manila and things like that. In one case where this man that had a garage, we don't know, we didn't actually see. But then he was. . . in those days, it was glass and then just by passing by - boom - they shot him through the window.

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RW: Oh my goodness.

NT: Now two happened in Stockton just before we were put into camp.

RW: And you were living in Stockton then?

NT: Yes, at that time we were living in Stockton.

RW: And how did your parents earn their living?

NT: Oh, they were more or less semi-retired.

RW: Semi-retired at that time. . . Were you working or going to school?

NT: I was just going to school yet.

RW: In high school or. . .

NT: No, I was going to beauty college.

RW: . . .to beauty college. . . yes

NT: I just got through high school and I was going to beauty college which was interrupted because of the war. But I'm sure if we weren't. . . like I didn't. . . I thought it was. . . you know, being a citizen and we're put into the center, it wasn't right, but still if we were not put in the center, if we stood out, I think a lot of us would still have ended up dead. You know, like. . . I'm sure that there would have been a lot more kids like that. . . and I know that they had it all over, and not only in Stockton.

RW: You remember how you felt when you first heard that you were going to be put in centers, you know, in the assembly centers?

NT: Well, not. . . well, as I say, I really wasn't all that upset but I thought for heavens sake, you know, we didn't think it was right, but we knew we couldn't fight the deal, so. . .

know, so we just don't get to correspond or talk to each other that way.

RW: But you did have these friends in Tule Lake, which was nice. Am I putting words in your mouth?

NT: No, you mean nice in what way?

RW: I mean if you had a couple of girl friends to whom you could talk in Tule Lake, that would be kind of pleasant, because some people I've talked to have said they've never talked. . . they were so scared they never talked to anybody and they didn't have any friends at all.

NT: Oh, oh, oh.

RW: You see?

NT: You mean talk about what, anything specific?

RW: Well, you know, how girls your age like to get together and do things or maybe I should ask did you spend most of your time with your family?

W NT: Yes, I was more or less family oriented. . . about the only time. . . And I wasn't much too socialized. . . you know, like my family was real old fashioned and they were very protective, especially in camp, you know, all the boy. . . men. . . young men you meet are all total strangers, you don't know where they came from.

RW: And your family was real careful.

NT: Yeah, my father and you know, my folks were really very. . . so I didn't go out and date very much, let's put it this way, maybe I had 2 or 3 boyfriends, nothing serious you know, and even then they used to come to my house, but we didn't go out much.

RW: I see. Did you go to any of the classes?

NT: I used to just go to the Japanese school.

RW: You went to the Japanese school.

NT: I worked during the day.

RW: Yes, oh yes, what work did you do?

NT: First, I worked in the canteen.

RW: At the canteen?

W NT: Right, you know, behind the counter, and then when I came home I used to go to Japanese school. And so there was your day, it was gone. So that was the life in Tule Lake. (laughs)

RW: Yeah, well that was. . . it was Tule Lake (laughs). I was going to ask. . . was there any person in Tule Lake that you. . . people or group of people that you felt were really foolish or stupid at that time? Of course, you were a young person, but was there any group that you thought was being pretty darn foolish?

NT: Well, I thought the one that was talking about renouncing their citizenship and everything like that was. . . but you wouldn't dare express your thoughts. So like. . . okay. . . when I used to work at. . . and before the canteen, I used to work at the beauty shop for a while and next door was the barber shop which was all men. . . and when they weren't too busy they used to come you know, like we used to have those little heaters, you know, in people's homes, and they used to come around and they used to talk and those pro-Japanese, you know, and when they started talking about citizenship and renouncing it and everything. . . or denouncing. . . I used to go away and sit in the corner and do my crocheting or knitting; I wouldn't mingle because I don't want them to ask me if I had already denounced my citizenship, which I didn't.

RW: Well, were these. . . well, first they called it the Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen dan and then they had the Hokoku Seinen dan or maybe you don't remember the names.

NT: Oh, I don't remember the names. No, I really don't remember the names.

RW: But there were these real groups that I know. . . boy. . . I went around and talked with some of the leaders. . . I was there. . . I know how bad it was.

NT: Yeah, because temper ran pretty high at times. So I used to. . . you know. . . go away from them. . . when they started talking I would just. . .

RW: just leave. . .

NT: Yeah, right, you know, the group or something and pretend that I was busy or something like that.

RW: Were you ever threatened yourself?

NT: No, no, because I never let myself in the position where. . . you know, like I never would be verbal. . . never say anything that would antagonize them, let's put it this way, because I thought it was mighty foolish, you know, it was my. . . because I was against the. . . the odds were against me more or less. . . you know the whole surroundings. The one that was not really pro, they all kept their mouth shut, you know. . . This was the wisest thing to do. So. . . like we would never voice. . . and if they're really talking and. . . let them ramble, my gosh. . . we were just, you know. Like some of my girlfriends used to not look at each other and don't say a word. . . (laughs).

RW: Because their folks were kind of pro. . .

NT: Yeah, or the people that you're working with. . . like some of these young bachelors, they were more so than the family men. The family men. . . there were some pretty strong hardheads there, but. . . just let them talk, you know, and this is the way I used to handle the situation. (laughs)

RW: Yes, that is what you call. . . a lot of repression. (laughs)

NT: Yes, but as I. . . was still young and. . .

RW: This was the way. . . how do I say. . . the way to be safe, I guess.

NT: Yeah, right, right, you know. Why want to poke on fire, you know, make it worse. ✓

RW: Yeah, exactly (laughs).

NT: (laughs)

RW: Well, now let's talk about. . . This may be happier. . . when you told me you left Tule Lake in February of '46, do you remember how you felt when you knew you were leaving?

NT: I think I was glad to get back. . . get out. . . so call get out into the world and when we went out we went to a farm. . . okay. . . my sister and her husband used to work for these people who had a big farm.

RW: Was this in Stockton?

NT: Yeah.

RW: You went directly to Stockton.

NT: Right. Zuckerman, _____ Zuckerman used to have this big farmland. My brother-in-law used to be the foreman and he's been with him, oh gosh, maybe since he was 13, I understand. And so we just. . . they told us all to come back. And then. . . a lot of family went back to this particular island. . . it was an island you know, like they used to call Manival (?) island and there was, oh gosh, the place was just packed with people who came out of the center. And we stayed there for a while. As a matter of fact, I stayed there until I got married.

11/18/81

INTERVIEW WITH NORIKO TSURUDA

Noriko Tsuruda

Born: January 16, 1920

In ~~Sacramento~~ Sacramento, Calif.

Now lives in Stockton, Calif.

change initials to
N.T.

11/18/81

Tsuruda
Noriko Hikida

Noriko Tsuruda

NORIKO TSURUDA

do not type this

Noriko Tsuruda

NH: Hello.

Rosalie work

RW: Hello, is this by any chance the lady I used to.. I should introduce myself..I'm Rosalie.. the lady you may have known if you are Noriko ^{Tsuruda} Hikida..

NH: Yes.

RW: I'm Rosalie Hankey, who used to visit your family in Tule Lake a long time ago.

NH: Are you the one who was the author?

RW: Yeah.

NH: ..writing a book?

RW: Yes.

NH: Yeah...

RW: And then..I ^{now} retired and the Rockefeller Foundation gave me ^{some} a little money and I was to see..to call people I knew and see if they wanted to give a kind of life history, which I could record, but I won't use your name, of course.

NH: You want the name of what?

RW: I won't use your name on it. It would be anonymous.

NH: Oh..Where are you now?

RW; I'm now at Washington University in St. Louis.

NH: Are you calling from there?

RW: Yeah.

NH: Oh my gosh.

~~RW: Well, they'll pay for it..Rockefeller will pay for it.~~

NH: Oh goodness. Occasionally I'll think about you, you know, you have crossed my mind, and that book..was it ever written?

RW; Yes, ^{the} that book was written and then I wrote another one at that I sent to ^{Kimiko} ~~the~~ on what it was like for myself doing field work, and she has a copy of that and of course if you'd like a copy, I'll send it to you, because it tells a lot of the inside stories.

NH: Yes, gee, gosh, you spoke to my brother mostly..

RW: Yes.

NH: And he has expired..he passed away about 2 years ago.

RW: Yes, Kimiko ^{that} said he died 2 years ago.

NH: Oh, did you talk to Kimiko you say.

RW: Yes, I talked to her. She wrote me..I put an ad in the paper..I think...~~forget..I think~~ it was some friend..some Japanese friend of mine told me where I could find..that I should try this particular Hikida and it turned out to be Bob's son and his wife.

NH: Oh, yes.

RW: And I talked to Kimiko about her experiences somewhat, but of course, she was just born there, so she doesn't know hardly anything, and so she did give me..tell me about you and Jack, and ^agive me your telephone number. And this is just in case you would like to express your feelings, ~~and~~ I could ask you some questions, and if you don't like the questions, why, just say "phooey."

NH: Yes, well like me, I..well I wasn't that..by nature I wasn't really all that upset, you know ^{what I mean,} ~~about~~ the whole deal. ^{cruma}

RW: Oh, yes, many people do.

NH: Bob ~~(his)~~ was really upset, but to me it was well, I felt that they did it for our protection in a way..It turned out Bob ~~(his)~~ but I think if we were out a lot of us would, I think have been killed. You know, by the people from the Filapino, they were really going wild in Stockton, and many of us, I think, would have been dead if we weren't put in the center.

RW: Now am I understand that you say, they would have killed you if you..

NH: Oh yes, there were 2 or 3 murders right here in Stockton, and they were just done by these Filipinos, who just went wild, because, you know, how they were bombing Manila and things like that. In one case where this man ^{that} had a garage, we don't

know, we didn't actually ~~see~~ ^{but then} (60) he was..in those days, it was glass and then just by passing by - boom - they shot him through the window.

RW: ~~Yes~~ gee..

NH: and in this one case/^{where}this Filipino man just went..these men..Japanese couple had a hotel and they had 2 or 3 children, I don't know, they went up the hotel and then rang the bell..^{so that} when the man opened the door, you know, they have a little window where you register ? ~~(60)~~ and they shot him dead.

RW: Oh my goodness.

NH: Now ^{two} ~~2~~ happened in Stockton just before we were put into camp.

RW: And you were living in Stockton then?

NH: Yes, at that time we were living in Stockton.

RW: And how did your parents earn their living?

NH: Oh, they were more or less semi-retired.

RW: Semi-retired at that time.. Were you working or going to school?

NH: I was just going to school yet.

RW: In high school or ..

NH: No, I was going to beauty college.

RW: ..to beauty college..yes.

NH: I just got through high school and I was going to beauty college which was interrupted because of the war. But I'm sure if we weren't..like I didn't..I thought it was.. you know, being a citizen and we're ~~putting~~ into the center, it wasn't right, but still if we were not put in the center, if we stood out, I think a lot of us would still have ended up dead. You know, like..I'm sure that there would have been a lot more kids like that..and I knew that they had it all over, and not only in Stockton.

RW: You remember how you feel when you first heard that you were going to be put in ~~the~~ centers, you know, in the assembly centers?

NH: Well, not...well, as I say, I really wasn't all that upset but I thought for heavens sake, you know, we didn't think it was right, but we knew we couldn't fight the deal, so..

RW: You're the first person I've talked to, you know, where this, where was this violence..just a second I'm going to have a swallow of water..

NH: Okay..

RW: Now, let's see, ~~this~~^{it's} is valuable to have your opinion. Let's see, do you remember any incidents about the assembly centers that come to your mind, anything that you remember about it? Where were you sent by the way?

NH: Okay, first we were first sent to Turlock..yes..that was the assembly center.. then we were relocated in Gila, Arizona.

RW: Yes, yes.

NH: Then from there we went to Tule Lake.

RW: Then to Tule Lake.

NH: And that is where we met you.

RW: Of course, I met Jim in Gila, just before he left.

NH: Oh, I didn't know that!

RW: Yes, we had some nice talks, and I talked to him about segregation and ~~then~~^{then} we corresponded when he was segregated, and then, of course, we renewed our friendship when I was allowed to come there.

NH: But you know what happened..I don't know now..this I didn't think about it..it didn't dawn on me until a lot later..but you know when..you know how the atmosphere in Tule Lake was..there was some people who were really pro and con Japanese.. pro American..you know..all this mixed feelings. And like when they used to see.. and you used to come to our barracks..right?

RW: Come where?

NH: To our barracks, barracks..

RW: Yes.

NH: But then the people around the neighborhood, especially these young bachelors who came from..let's see..Hawaii, who were really for the Japanese, you know..way of thinking and everything like that..they thought that he was like..a spy..not a spy but he thought they were, ~~'okay now'~~ When he was giving you this information, he was giving you thinking that, you know, that he had ill feelings toward the Americans, right? and he was telling you how he felt all about this evacuate. ^{but} then they took it the other way.

RW; Oh, you mean that these bachelors accused him of being a spy?

NH: Right, not exactly a spy, but like a..

RW; an ~~one~~. inu

NH: ..going against the Japanese.

RW: ..against the Japanese.

NH: Now this is the way I added it up later, you know, when I was thinking about it, ~~and~~ he never told me, but I think he was getting threatening letters through the mail. His life was threatened.

RW: I sensed...~~that~~ his life was threatened, and you ^{just} felt that.

NH: Yeah, I thought that..I don't think ~~I was~~ ^{I'm} wrong about it. When I come to think about it now, you know, ~~so~~ this is why he moved to Utah, because of his wife..I think first didn't he go to Utah or something?

RW: Well, his wife stayed for a few..

NH: No, no..his wife went to Arkansas with his mother.

RW: I'm not sure about that.

NH: ~~you know~~, I can't remember that well either. But anyway, it all ended up that he went out, you know..

RW: He went out in September very early, I remember my last talk with him, it was a very, but..

NH: At that time he didn't mention anything to you, [?] About..

RW: He didn't. ^{Jim} But the interesting thing is that a good mutual friend, somebody we both knew in Gila, told me about 4 or 5 months later that ~~Jim~~ ^R (128) had been threatened..

NH: Had been what? ^{Bob Townsend}

RW: Had been threatened by..

NH: Oh threatened.

RW: Yes, threatened by the radicals..

NH: Yes, we used to call them that..

RW: And this is just ^{hear} ~~here~~ say, if you want to hear it? [?] And what this friend, she was a woman, she said she had heard that they had threatened ^{him} that if he didn't give them sugar from the mess, they'd get him.

NH: Oh, yes.

RW: And so, then I could understand why he was kind of nervous in August and September and you know, ^{look} ~~got~~ ^{him,} help, you know.

NH: And another..there was a Mr....I just don't remember.. recall this man's name..but he used to work at the warehouse.. okay now, I think ^{Bob} ~~Jim~~ used to work someplace where they were distributing food to the messhall..he was in charge of that, and he used to go to various messhalls with this head man. ^{he} He was a Caucasian..

RW: Mr. ^{Hayward} ~~Howard~~, or someone like that.

NH: You mentioned the name, it just doesn't come to me, anyway he used to go with him to the different messhalls to show him EXACTLY how bad the situation was..and so..and how shortage it was..and how the Japanese people liked to have some Japanese food once in a while..and so he used ^{ed} ~~to~~ arrange it so that we used to get some Japanese food from the outside, at that time from Denver or something like that. But he used to get some of those Japanese condiments and things like that. Now ~~Jim~~ ^{Bob} arranged it to be that way. BUT the people, the Japanese

people..they were always looking at it from the wrong angle, you know, like they would never praise you for being good..they all said that. "Oh, he's doing that because he's a dog." In other words he was kissing..he was brown-nosing..you know what that expression means? Like he was kissing his whatchamacall, so.. since it would be good for him. And they always took it the bad way. And I think in this respect, this is another thing..as I say this even after I came out the camp that this dawned on me. ..that I bet you he was threatened.

~~RW: ..even would dawn on him after he left the camp?~~

~~NH: Pardon?~~

RW: The people would dawn on him after he left the camp or dawn on you?

NH: No, no, no. At least I didn't feel any..I didn't feel..I didn't have any feelings that they were, you know, eyeing me or anything like that. This was just for my brother. I'm sure that he was getting threatened, his life was threatened so therefore he was relocated. But at that time I was too naive, you know..

RW: Well, you were a young girl..
innocent;

NH: Yeah, and I was/always pampered baby of the family..

RW: (laughs)

NH: Yes, I was..

RW: Well, I always liked you.

NH: (laughs) You know, as I say. In those days,
/I don't think they were quite as mature as these youngones are now.

RW: Yes, that is true. People minded their parents more.

NH: Yeah, and we were too naive, you know..white was white and you know, we didn't see any black. We believed everything was just, you know.. which was the world was a lot different from what it is right now. So for this reason.. and later when.. but I never even bothered to question ^{But} ~~him~~. It was past history.

RW: No, I wouldn't but I..how should I..I appreciate your strong feelings here. I might ask you another question.. Was there anything that happened in Tule Lake that made you feel especially sad?

NH: Oh gosh..

RW: Well, if it's too bad, why we will skip it.

NH: Yeah, like it has been so long that I just can't reminisce, you know.

RW: I was wondering, you were very young at the time, do you remember the military registration in Gila and how you felt about that or were you too young to answer?

NH: Okay, like..I think I was really for the Japanese army, at that time I still had..I guess, downright I guess I had a feeling toward American because they put us in this center, but I thought we were kind of kicked in the mouth. So for this reason, we.. didn't, I didn't..being a woman I don't register for the army, but then ^{I did...} ~~okay~~ we had a choice..sign LOYAL to the Americans or LOYAL to Japan, you know. And so I went with the family, I went "loyal to Japan" and ^{then} therefore we were sent to Tule Lake. Right. But I did not go as far as renouncing my citizenship. When the time came when I had to renounce my citizenship, I just put my foot down and ^{I said, no no,} ~~told them~~ I'm not going to do that. So I didn't go that far, you know. And when the war turned out to be the way it did, you know, I was released right after, in February I think, and the people who renounced their citizen had to remain longer and some even went back to Japan.

RW: Yes, was this in February, 1946, you were released?

NH: Yes, 1946 I was released. And then I think my brother ^{Bill} ~~Jack~~, whose family was really, really, boy, Japan, Japan, they even went back to Japan.

RW: Oh, they did! I didn't know that.

NH: His wife's folks, ^{Bill} Jack's wife folks..^{Bill} Jack got married in Tule Lake..his wife's parents went back to Japan with the whole - *all the* children and everybody.

RW: I got that feeling while I was at Tule Lake in talking to ^{Bill} Jack that his wife's..his in-laws were much more pro-Japan than he was.

NH: Oh, yes..

RW: And they were really pressuring him.

NH: They were very..especially Grace had another sister, older sister, who husband was REALLY pro-Japan. So for this reason, I guess, ^{Bill} Jack was more or less pressured into renouncing his citizenship. He went along with his wife's side of the family. And he renounced his citizenship too.

RW: You know how he feels about that now?

NH: No, we don't even talk about it.

RW: Yeah, I can see it is something you'd like to forget.

NH: When it came to the point that he was going back to Japan, that's when he put his foot down, *You* know, he said he wasn't going to go back to Japan. Grace's folks...

RW: You mean ^{Bill} Jack refused to go back to Japan?

NH: From the camp.

RW: Good.

NH: You know, he didn't, but all of Grace's folks went back.

RW: All the folks went back..

NH: Grace's folks and all his..of course his sister..one of them was married ~~by~~ Rick was younger, you know, younger than Grace.

RW: Did his wife stay with him, ^{or} did she go..

NH: No, no, no, she stayed with him.

RW: Oh, that's nice.

NH: Right, right, but they couldn't talk..I guess at first they tried to get ^{Bill} Jack to go back to Japan, but I guess that's ~~was~~ when he put his foot down, and I guess he didn't go back.

But Grace's sister was..older sister was the only one ~~who~~^{that} was married and Rick was younger and of course they were still of school age, elementary and all..so they all went back with the folks, But now they are all back in America.

RW: Now they've all returned. ~~Was Mary.~~

NH: Yeah, all come back to America, right.

RW: Many have come back and I've talked to a few who have come back in doing this work and most tell me that they had a terrible time in Japan.

NH: Oh yes, it was rough I understand.

RW: They really, 'they ^{are} ~~are~~' so wounded by it, you know,,so sad.

NH: Yes, like I say if we weren't put in camp..maybe I even wouldn't be around, who knows? They didn't care who as long.. they just wanted to get even with some Japanese is all..and in those days the Filipinos were..they were mostly Filipinos, let's put it this way, I don't mean to single them out, but it was the Filipino people who was doing all this; most of them were bachelors and they were young, you know, they were ~~not~~^{not that civilized.} they ~~were~~^{you know what I mean, they're} more wild..

RW: (laughs)

NH: So this was what was going on, so..

RW: I don't approve of beatings and murdering (laughs) by anybody.

NH: I don't know how well you knew the Filipino people like in the early '20s, I hear..boy if they argue and if you kind of made him feel bad, you were interested in him or something - they would just try to get you for a wife or something and if you refused..there were 1 or 2 girls who even got killed.

RW: Well, let's get back to Tule Lake. There are a few more questions I'd like to ask ~~and Oh we got plenty of time I see.~~ Were there any persons ^{or} persons in Tule Lake with whom you were really friendly? You know, that you felt you could trust and rely on?

NH: Well, all my..like..some of my friends..like..one of my good girl friends passed away already. And like we're all so scattered..like one is in L.A., the other one is in Alameda; some is in even Detroit, Michigan, you know, so we just don't get to correspond or talk to each other that way.

RW: But you did have these friends in Tule Lake, which was nice.

Am I putting words in your mouth?

MH: No, you mean nice in what way?

RW: ~~Ah, well~~ I mean if you had a couple of girl friends to whom you could talk in Tule Lake, that would be kind of pleasant, because some people I've talked to have said they've never talked ~~to~~..they were so scared they never talked to anybody and they didn't have any friends at all.

NH: Oh, oh, oh.

RW: You see?

NH: You mean talk about what, anything specific?

RW: Well, you know, how girls your age like to get together and do things or maybe I should ask did you spend most of your time with your family?

NH: Yes, I was more or less family oriented..about the only time ~~And~~ I wasn't much too socialized..you know, like my family was real old fashioned and they were very protective, especially in camp, you know, all the boy..men..young men you meet are all total strangers, you don't know where they came from.

RW: And your family was real careful.

NH: Yeah, my father and you know, my folks were ^{really} very..so I didn't go out ^{and} date very much, let's put it this way, maybe I had 2 or 3 boyfriends, nothing serious you know, and even then they used to come to my house, but we didn't go out much.

RW: I see. Did you go to any of the classes?

NH: I used to just go to the Japanese school.

RW: You went to the Japanese school.

NH: I worked during the day.

RW: Yes, oh yes, what work did you do?

NH: First, I worked in the canteen.

RW: At the canteen?

NH: Right, you know, behind the counter, and then when I came home I used to go to Japanese school. And so there was your day, it was gone. So that was the life in Tule Lake. (laughs)

RW: Yeah, well that was..it was Tule Lake (laughs). I was going to ask..was there any person in Tule Lake that you.. people or group of people that you felt were really foolish or stupid at that time? Of course, you were a young person, but was there any group that you thought was being pretty darn foolish?

NH: Well, I thought the one that was talking about renouncing^{their} ~~your~~ citizenship and everything like that was...but you ^{wouldnt} ~~didn't~~ dare express your thoughts. So like..okay..when I used to work at..and before the canteen, I used to work at the beauty shop for a while and next door was the barber shop which was all men..and when they weren't too busy they used to come you know, like we used to have those little heater, you know, in people's homes, and they used to come around and they used to talk and those pro-Japanese, you know, and when they started talking about citizenship and renouncing it and everything..or denouncing.. I used to go away and sit in the corner and do my crocheting or knitting; I wouldn't mingle because I ^{dn't} ~~didn't~~ want them to ask me if I had already denounced my citizenship, which I didn't.

RW: Well, were these, ^{well, first they were called the Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen dan} ~~called~~ ^{called} ~~(1900)~~ and then they had the Hokoku Seinen dan ~~(1911)~~ or maybe you don't remember the names.

NH: Oh, I don't remember the names. No, I really don't remember the names.

RW: But there were these real groups that I know..boy..I went around and talked with some of the leaders..I was there..I know how bad it was.

NH: Yeah, because temper ran pretty high at times. So I used to..you know..go away from them..when they started talking I would just..

RW: just leave..

NH: Yeah, right, you know, the group or something and pretend that I was busy or something like that.

RW: Were you ever threatened your self?

NH: No, no, because I never let myself in the position where.. you know, like I never would be verbal..never say anything that would antagonize them, let's put it this way, because I thought it was mighty foolish, you know, it was my ^{because} I was against the.. the odds were against me more or less..you know the whole surroundings. ↵

~~RW:~~ (laughs.)

~~NH:~~ The one that was not really pro, they all kept their mouth shut, you know.. This was the wisest thing to do. So.. like we would never voice..and if they're really talking and.. let them ramble, my gosh..we were just, you know. Like some of my girlfriends used to not look at each other and ~~not~~ ^{don't} say a word..(laughs).

RW: Because their folks were kind of pro..

NH: Yeah, or the people that you're working with..like some of these young bachelors, they were more so than the family men. The family men..there were some pretty strong hardheads there, but..just let them talk, you know, and this is ~~not~~ the way I used to handle the situation. (laughs)

RW: Yes, that is what you call..a lot of ^{re} ~~sup~~pression (laughs)

NH: Yes, but as I..was still young and..

RW: This was the way..how do I say..the way to be safe, I guess.

NH: Yeah, right, right, you know. Why want to poke on fire, you know, make it worse.

RW: Yeah, exactly (laughs),

NH: (laughs)

RW: Well, now let's talk about.. this may be happier.. ~~ah~~.. when you told me you left Tule Lake in February of '46, do you remember how you felt when you knew you were leaving?

NH: I think I was glad to get back..get out..so call get out in ~~out~~ the world and when we went out we went to a farm.. okay..my sister and her husband used to work for these people who had a big farm.

RW: Was this in Stockton?

NH: Yeah.

RW: You went directly to Stockton.

NH: Right. Suckleman, _____ Suckleman used to have this big farmland. My brother-in-law used to be the foreman and he's been with him, oh gosh, maybe since he was 13, I understand. And so we just..they told us all to come back. And then.. a lot of family went back to this particular island..it was an island you know, like they used to call Manival (?) island and there was, oh gosh, the place was just packed with people who came out of the center. And we stayed there for a while. As a matter of fact, I stayed there until I got married.

RW: And let me see, did you work...did you go to school any more or did you..

NH: No, no. I did go back to beauty school and then I did finished my course, and I did get my license. But then when this new cold wave came out, I found out..that my hands couldn't take it, you know. So I quit that, then around that time, I guess.. I was working out in the country, you know, like..then I got married and..

RW: took care.. of the house naturally.

NH: Right, right. That was the life of ? (~~was~~).

RW: What kind of work does your husband do now?

NH: Oh, he's ^{just} retired.

RW: Yes, what did he do before retiring?

NH: He used to work for this.. when I first met him.. he was a chick sex^{er}er..

RW: A what?

NH: Chick sex^{er}er.

RW: I don't quite get it.

NH: Okay, when the chicks first hatches, huh, out of the egg..

RW: Yeah, oh, chicks.

NH: Yeah, he sex^s them.

RW: Oh a chick sexer.

NH: Right, whether it was going to turn out to be a hen or a rooster. They call it cocker^el I think.

RW: Yes, ^ecockeral or. ~~year~~.

NH: Yeah, that was his job. He used to sex chickens. And so he never went into camp, and he..at the..During the war ^{he} He was down south in Alabama, you know, places like that. And then after that he was working at a place called Fibre Board, that was a box company, makes boxes. And then ^{he} just retired..matter of fact, he just retired last year. And right now, part time he's selling vacuum cleaner. (laughs)

RW: (laughs)

NH: And after a while I started working seasonal, and I just work at the cannery..seasonal..so I work about 4 or 5 months out of the year. But I never did go back to any full time job.

RW: ~~This is~~ What type of work do you say you do now?

NH: Just work at the cannery.

RW: At the cannery..4 to 5 months out of the year. Could I tell you..pardon me..Could you tell me your birth date so that..

(interrupts)
NH: Oh, I was born January 16..

RW: January 16, 19 what?

NH: 20.

RW: 1920

NH: Yes.

RW: So you'll about ^{nine} 12 years younger than I am. (laughs)

NH: Oh really?

RW: Well, you've really told me some very helpful things.

NH: Did I really? But are you going..is this thing going to go in your book or..

RW: No, the first thing is that they want me to write a report on ~~Rockefeller~~, on what camp life did to people and how they felt and also how they made out afterward, Like you told me, you see. And then, I am being very careful about publishing, because of the suit for redress and reparation. I figure I've got my reputation now. I'm retired myself. I don't want to hurt the Japanese Americans, after they were so good to me, you know.

NH: ~~Oh~~ Are you planning to..

RW: What I am planning to do is write..well like with ~~del~~ ^{Bob} I have all his interviews in sequence, but of course, with a different, what do you call it, a pseudonym, and ^I will attach to that what you've told me about your life in Tule Lake. I've also got little talks with you and then when it is perfectly quiet, if anybody wants to publish part of this, why then, fine.

NH: Okay, but the name..you are going to keep it anonymous, aren't you?

RW: Absolutely anonymous.

NH: Oh good.

RW: Absolutely.

NH: (laughs)

RW: Otherwise, it has to be.

NH: Or else they might start suing you. (laughs)

RW: ~~No, I have a~~ ^{Bob} Jimmie's name throughout all is..I will tell it to you, because I know you won't tell anybody.. it's ~~Bob~~ ^{only link} ~~Tsurada~~ (434). ~~is the name I've gave him. "Tsurada"~~ So that's ^{the} his pseudonym I gave him. And you are given another name. Got any special name you'd like, instead of _____.

NH: Oh, I don't know. (laughs)

RW: (laughs) Okay, I'll pick out something else. Could I ask.. you know, looking back on this ^{is} is really a very extreme experience...what was the most helpful thing you think you learned about your fellow beings through it all?

NH: Oh boy, I'm not a bit of a philosopher..

RW: You're not a philosopher (laughs).

NH: (laughs) I'm very, what shall I say..well, simple-minded I guess is the best way to describe..

RW: Practical..

NH: Okay, that sounds a little better. But you know, ^{like} ~~there are~~ some people who would like to think too deeply into things, but I'm never that way.

RW: Well, I ~~thought~~^{felt} even ~~in~~^{at} Tule Lake that you were wise and didn't let things bother you.

NH: Yeah, right, just happy-go-lucky, like, you know. And ~~but,~~^{do} even then when you get into a group like that,, you ^{do} kind of pick up a little shrewdness, huh, for self..to exist. You have to turn a little shrewd. ~~Because~~ when I came out, I knew that I was a little different in that respect, you know, you have to be a little shrewd in order to exist.

RW: Exactly.

NH: That's part of growing up too, I think.

RW: Well, I say the same for myself. I learned that kind of thing..I learned that you have to be careful with people.

NH: Yeah, right. ~~Like some.~~ "Why didn't you tell her off;" or something like that, but I figure, forget it, if that's the way ~~they~~ feel, that's .. even now, you know, a lot of things I just let it go by, you know. Because why say anything that is going to antagonize ~~them~~, is the way I feel, you know. You might not get across to them anyway, so, instead of having a friction of any kind, you know, I just like..in a way I just like things to ^{just} be peaceful.

RW: Well, I'd say you are a good person.

NH: Oh, thank you.

RW: Well, unless you have anything.. if you have something more to tell me..

NH: No, no I don't, but as I say I used to think about you once in..I wonder what happened to you...I wonder if she ever did get that book out, you know. What was it sold under..what ~~was the~~ title?

RW: ~~Oh well,~~ Do you want the title?

NH: Yeah.

RW: Um, the..there was a ~~little~~^{real} long history that was written by my professors about it and it..you could probably get it in the libraries and it was called The Spoilage. It's a kind of unpleasant name..

NH: The Spoilage?

RW: Spoilage. S-P-O-I-L-A-G-E. And then the book ~~which~~ I wrote which ~~was~~ I think you'd really enjoy because.. ~~Jack~~ ^{Bob} appears in it a lot and you too, under different names.. I wrote that in 1971. That's called "Doing Field Work." by Rosalie Hankey Wax, if you look in the library.

NH: Wax?

RW: Wax. W-A-X.

NH: Wait, my pen is.. I'm running out of ink.

RW: Oh,..

NH: It never fails, huh.

RW: And if you'd really like, I can send you a copy of this.

NH: No, no that's all right. I'll see if I can get a copy of it. Wax?

RW: Wax, yes, just like in floor wax.

NH: Yeah, and "Doing Field Work" and you said ~~Jim~~ ^{Bob} was..

RW: Yeah, ~~Jim is~~ ^{appears} in there with the name of Tsuruda. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
~~XXXXX~~

NH: What about ~~Jack~~ ^{Bill}?

RW: ~~Jack didn't~~ ^{Bill}.. I'm not sure.. I didn't talk to ~~Jack~~ ^{Bill} quite as much.. and I think I may have called him Bill, or something. ~~And I may quote you, I may not, but..~~ ^{Bill anywhere near so}

NH: Well, ~~Jim~~ ^{Bob} was more or less the.. you know, ~~Jack~~ ^{like Bill} wasn't too verbal either, not as much as ~~Jim~~ ^{Bob}.

RW: Yes, and I usually made my visits at ~~Jim~~ ^{Bob}'s house and whoever happened to be there..

NH: Right, right, and whoever happened to drop by..

RW: And then I talked to ~~you~~ ^{you} a good deal after.. you and ~~Jim~~ ^{Bob}'s wife after he left, and to Mrs. Sato ~~(Sato)~~, whom I hear ~~has~~ ^{now} died several years ago.

NH: Yes, like, I didn't even talk to you after ~~Jim~~ ^{Bob} left. Isn't that awful? (laughs)

RW: (laughs) I think it's kind of wonderful.

NH: Oh, but ^{See.} this was the most unexpected call.

RW: Well, I will be calling ^{Bill} Jack.. is he working?

NH: No, he's retired..

RW: He ~~is~~ retired, ^{last year.} Well, I'll call him some Saturday or Sunday then or something and talk to him.

NH: Oh boy, I'm ^{me} going to have to.. I'll call him up and tell him about...

RW: When you do, give him my regards, and I do thank you so ~~much~~ much.

NH: Oh, what was your maiden name?

RW: Rosalie..Rosalie Hankey.

NH: But this is under Rosalie Wax?

RW: Well, it's probably ~~under~~ Rosalie H. Wax. Or Rosalie Hankey Wax, either way.

NH: And "Doing Field Work".. Okay, ^{Golly} ~~golly~~, my husband did/come ^{n't} home..and we're suppose to go to San Francisco today. I'm glad you caught me before we left.

RW: Well, I'm glad I caught you too and I'll.. I wish you well. And I'm coming to California in January and I may visit..

I don't know if I can get to Stockton, but I may drop in and try to see ^{Bob} James, young ^{Bob} James and ^{Mary} (558).

NH: ^{Mary} is a very good talker.

RW: Oh, she wrote me such a beautiful letter. It was she who gave me your telephone number.

NH: Oh, I see, I was wondering how you ever got in touch with me, you know.

RW: That's how it was.

NH: I never ^{got} to see her too much, but when we do get together, I really enjoy her company.

RW: Yes, she's nice.

NH: A wonderful girl.

RW: Well, I guess I'm running out of tape here and so I will say that I do thank you and God Bless you.

NH: Thank you, same to you too.

RW: And I hope if you enjoy my book, ^{if} you want to write me any questions about it, you could write me at Washington..you want my address?

NH: Okay, I'll take it.

RW: I think this would be the best address - my home.
~~7016~~ ⁷¹⁰⁶ Westmoreland and that's like the general's name-all one word. *Westmoreland Drive*

NH: M-O-R

RW: And this is University City, Missouri. And the zip code, for the life of me I'm always forgetting it. ~~Oh~~ hang on a minute and I'll get the zip code.

NH: Okay..

End of Interview ~~###~~

(Earphone dropped off here and I did not ~~xi~~ notice it, ~~xxx~~ but all we did was repeat our farewells.) RW.)

Longitudinal History

out third.
Second Interview

Noriko Tsuruda

February 14, 1982

Noriko Tsuruda - February 14, 1982

1

Noriko Tsuruda

Lives in Stockton, California

Noriko Tsuruda: Hello?

Rosalie Wax: Hello, is this Noriko, the lady who used to be Noriko Tsuruda?

Noriko Tsuruda: Yes.

Rosalie Wax: This is Professor Rosalie Wax.

Noriko Tsuruda: Oh yes. Yes, I remember you called the last time.

Rosalie Wax: I called. My husband is out of town and the fact is that I was feeling kind of lonesome, and I thought if you had time, it would be nice to have a little chat and maybe talk over a few things. But if you are busy I can call some other time.

Noriko Tsuruda: Well, I have a few minutes. We're going out in about another 15-20 minutes.

Rosalie Wax: Well. . .

Noriko Tsuruda: Are you still back in Washington, is it?

Rosalie Wax: I beg your pardon?

Noriko Tsuruda: Are you still in Washington?

Rosalie Wax: No, I'm in St. Louis.

Noriko Tsuruda: Oh, St. Louis.

Rosalie Wax: Yeah, at Washington University. Well, supposing I just ask and then maybe I could call next weekend or something if you have more to talk.

Noriko Tsuruda: Okay.

Rosalie Wax: I don't want to be a pest, you know. Let's see, what's happen is kind of interesting. A number of people I talked with told me later that after they had talked to me they began to remember things about their experiences that they wished they told me.

Noriko Tsuruda: Yes, I had that too. And one of it is like. when I first came back from the camp, and before I went in I started to go to beauty school and then I just completed my course. But I was unable to go to San Francisco, because they froze us. We couldn't get out of Stockton. I already had my application in and I paid my application fee and everything, but then I couldn't leave Stockton, because of whatever restriction they put up on us to travel. And I couldn't go, so here I finished my course and everything, but I was unable to finish. So when I came back [left Tule Lake] I went to beauty school and then I graduated and I got my license and so forth. When I started working, some of the people wouldn't let me wait on them, because I was Japanese.

Rosalie Wax: Oh, my goodness.

Noriko Tsuruda: There were two or three that would just give me the cold, you know, you could just see darts coming out of their eyes. This was at the very beginning, this was like maybe in 1948. . .the feeling was still there.

Rosalie Wax: Were you working in San Francisco, or was this in Stockton?

Noriko Tsuruda: Oh no, this was all in Stockton.

Rosalie Wax: That must have been painful.

Yeah, but, you know, some of the people understood that they didn't think why

- NT: they should feel that way about me, because I didn't have anything to do with it personally. But I said, well I am sure they have their personal reasons that maybe something happened to someone in their immediate family. And this is why. You just have to accept and turn the other cheek. At first I think being hired or finding employment was difficult for many, not only me, but many other persons.
- RW: That was, especially I imagine in the West coast and certain parts of the West coast.
NT: I imagine it was universal all around California, though, you know. But as time went by and their pain eased and the Japanese people began to be more recognized, you know. .
- RW: How long would you say it was until it began to be more comfortable?
NT: Well, it was such a gradual procedure, that you just can't, you know, but like, let's see we came out of camp in 1946 and then I worked for a while to make enough money and then I went back to beauty school in 1948 and around then it was still quite. .
- RW: I imagine even now and then you meet some kind of nutty person, who can be nasty.
NT: Very few.
- RW: Very few, well, I'm glad.
NT: What they think inside, they won't show it. I guess it's something like these people who, you know, with the Blacks, you know, how they are right now. But who knows what they are thinking deep inside. We are more or less in the same situation, but I think we are being more and more accepted. My daughters and all their friends, you know, I think the third generation and the coming fourth generation - I don't think, I would say hardly any discriminatory feeling there. Like most of my daughters' friends are Japanese, American and all nationalities. . .
- RW: When this did happen to you in 1948 when these people were, you know, very unpleasant - how did you feel about that? If you don't mind telling me.
NT: I can't describe the feelings, you just feel like you had somebody poured cold water down your back.
- RW: That's good, that's a vivid description.
NT: That's exactly, I just feel like all the blood in my face was drained and went down to my feet, you know, but there were very few like that, about maybe two or three. And one would just look at me and. . . They might think it, but then I guess she changed her mind and pretend that the feeling was not there, whatever. Gradually, things began to ease.
- RW: I had been thinking, you know, you told me when we last talked that Bill folks had gone back to Japan and then they came back to the United States. Did you know or are you in a position to know whether they found it especially hard then to make their way here?
NT: They had to have a sponsor to get back.
- RW: I see.
NT: I'm sure that's the way it was. In those days like Bill's sister and brother, they came back before the folks [parents] did. And then I know, like Bill, I think, had to be the sponsor, you know, and he had to put out so much money, you know. I think it was a \$1,000 dollars, whatever it was, and that's about the only way they were able to come, I think.
- RW: Oh, Bill had to. . .
NT: Bill, yes, because it is his wife's sister and brother. The two sisters came first. And I think this was back in about 1947 or so.

RW: *I didn't know. What did he do with the \$1,000?*

NT: *I don't know, I guess that was more or less for the transportation or whatever, I really don't know.*

RW: *Oh, he had to send that to them? Is that it?*

NT: *Yeah, well and another thing, I think they had to kind of sponsor like, they said they would be responsible for them in case, you know, etc.*

RW: *Is it your general experience that people who came back from Japan had a little rougher time, or how would you put it?*

NT: *I really can't say. Because when they came back. .most of the people probably had relatives or somebody here.*

Now this is not talking about those refugees that started coming into America, oh in about 1949 or 1950. There were a bunch of refugees coming in from Japan. But this was under another program. But this too, I think they had to have a place to go before they could come.

RW: *A couple of Japanese I knew in the camp went to Japan. I guess it was the Federal government or somebody got in touch with me and wanted me to say what kind of character they had and everything. So I wrote real good letters for these two nice people I knew there. So that kind of thing went on too, you know. But I was real happy to do that.*

NT: *Well, I'm glad.*

RW: *Let me ask just one and then I'll let you go and if you don't mind, I'll call you again sometime.*

NT: *Okay.*

RW: *Because I enjoy talking to you. You're a nice person.*

NT: *I enjoy talking to you too.*

RW: *Lets see. . .I'll ask you this question about the family. For some people, camp experience sort of helped to strengthen their families, they stood more together. And for other people, I've talked to - it's kind of heart-breaking that camp experience really broke up the family.*

NT: *Yes, I imagine. . .*

RW: *And what happened in your case?*

NT: *Oh, I don't think there was really no dramatic change one way or another. It certainly didn't break it up.*

RW: *I always felt that yours was an especially good, tight family.*

NT: *Yeah, we were, yeah we were the average, you know. And. . .Remember like I told you, like if it wasn't for us being in camp, many of us would have probably been killed, etc. But then of course, this protecting us from the public was not the motive for the government to put us into camp though. You know what I mean?*

RW: *Yes.*

NT: *They couldn't care less what happened to us outside, you know. I'm just saying that in a way it had its good point. One point, I think it saved some unneeded killing.*

RW: *Yes, you told me last time. I was wondering about Bill's family, cause you told me that he really wouldn't go to Japan - he and his wife stayed here - when they came back did they resume good familial relationships?*

NT: *Oh yes.*

RW: *Oh, how nice.*

NT: *They never did--I mean they did not part with bitter words, like. .I think Grace's father and parents were probably very disappointed that Bill wouldn't break in and join them. But Bill had his own - he stood on his two feet and this was it.*

RW: *Well, that's very nice. If you have to go now, shall I say good-bye.*

NT: *Okay.*

RW: *I didn't want to keep you from whatever. .*

NT: *Oh no. In the meantime if I come across something that. .I'll kind of jot it down.*

RW: *I'll be very delighted and I may call you next week or some time. Is Saturday better than or should I call on a weekday?*

NT: *Well, right now since I'm not working I'll be home most weekdays, but I go in and out a lot.*

RW: *Well, then I'll just call when I feel like talking.*

NT: *Right.*

RW: *My best wishes.*

NT: *Thank you Mrs. Wax. Okay, then I'll be talking to you again.*

RW: *Great.*

NT: *Good-bye.*

RW: *Good-bye.*

Noriko Tsuruda
Third Interview
February 16, 1982

Noriko Tsuruda: *Hello?*

Rosalie Wax: *Noriko? This is Rosalie Wax again.*

Noriko Tsuruda: *Oh yes, just a minute, let me close that front door.*

Rosalie Wax: *Sure.*

Noriko Tsuruda: *I was just outside picking up my mail and I thought I heard the phone ring, so I just ran in.*

Rosalie Wax: *That happens to me often. And especially if I'm talking to somebody, but I wondered. I didn't know if it was your lunch time or not or if you have a little time to talk now.*

Noriko Tsuruda: *Yeah, I can.*

Rosalie Wax: *You can. Oh good. And any time you want me to stop, why you tell me, because you know, how should I say, I want to do this according to your wishes.*

Noriko Tsuruda: *I'm usually available, except when we start to work, the season starts around May, June, until about October, you know I'll be kind of busy, but after that. . .*

Rosalie Wax: *So this is not your busy work season?*

Noriko Tsuruda: *No, this is my off season right now.*

Rosalie Wax: *That's good. Let's see. You know last time I was delighted when you told me a thing you had remembered that you hadn't told me - was there anything else that you had thought of?*

Noriko Tsuruda: *Not really, that was just Sunday when I talked to you. No I haven't really. .*

Rosalie Wax: *Not yet.*

Noriko Tsuruda: *You know, right after the war broke out and before we were put into camp, I guess, maybe you already have this information, there was one case where the mother I guess, she just dug a trench or pit or something like that and I guess she was just depressed and upset over the war and what might happen to them, etc. and there were a couple cases of family like murder-suicide.*

Rosalie Wax: *Oh. . .*

Noriko Tsuruda: *And things like that was brought on because of the war.*

Rosalie Wax: *Were these people you knew or you just heard it?*

Noriko Tsuruda: *No, no. Like we just read it in the paper in the Japanese paper or something. And there was one case where I think this family went to church and then, you know, after the blessing or whatever and they went out someplace in a area and I think this was the family of four or something if I remember correctly and then it was like a murder-suicide. Which I thought was real sad, you know. And another case was she just dug a hole or there was a pit or something, anyway, she just doused herself with gasoline or something and just jumped in.*

Rosalie Wax: *Oh my goodness.*

Noriko Tsuruda: *It was probably related to you know Pearl Harbor, you know the incident.*

Rosalie Wax: *I did hear that in Boston after the atomic bomb was dropped a man hanged himself there.*

Noriko Tsuruda: *Is that right?*

- RW: . .A Japanese American. I wondered now that I mentioned it - you were in camp when that happened - when you heard about the awful thing, you know, Hiroshima. Do you remember how the people acted, how it struck them?
- NT: Oh gosh. They were really. .they were I guess speechless I imagine. I thought, you know, that something like this, it was just unbelievable really. Here in America they're talking about. . they talk about other countries being. .what should I say. .cruel things and things like this and I thought, my gosh, they're topping it all, you know. So even now they talk about these people. .mass murderer and they think that's terrible, well America did. . .but then we don't say it since it's already past history and we're living in America, but you know.
- RW: The reason I asked is that I had just been talking to a Japanese American. .he said what struck him then was that there was a deathly silence over the camp.
- NT: Yeah, I think so.
- RW: And I was. .it was just horrible.
- NT: It was right after. .especially after when they heard that Japan was to give up. .it hit some people more than the others, but it was quite like a funeral really. .
- RW: . .like a funeral. .
- NT: Right, right. The camp itself everything was silent, you know, you could just feel the difference. And it was understandable.
- RW: Yes. I had a Japanese American friend was was in Tule Lake wrote me a letter in which he expressed his anger and horror at it all and I felt so sick I couldn't. .I didn't know what to respond. I just felt very, very. .you know, . .it was awful.
- NT: I'm more. .what should I say - nonchalant type, you know, I try not to let things bother me one way or another, anyway, maybe you won't get the true reaction. .from me. .but there are some people, I am sure. .
- RW: There are all kinds of people. That's why I'm talking to men and women. I have the most fun talking to women, I'll tell you, but don't tell anybody. I was going to ask. .I was told by some, that there were people still among the hot heads, what you call them. .that they kept insisting even after the atom bomb, that Japan had really won the war and it was all propaganda.
- NT: Yeah, it was all propaganda and then there were some. .Okay I think there were some that even. .like. .right after the atomic. .then they were being sent back to Japan - some of what should I say. .
- RW: Repatriates?
- NT: Right. And these kids went back to Japan believing that they had won. It was that bad.
- RW: And I was just checking because I myself. .when I was there I. .some people told me that, and of course, I just had to listen and say nothing, you know, because they just really believed it.
- NT: Right, they did. And there wasn't anything like. . . We wouldn't dare tell them, "You're all wet," we just kept silent. . .
- RW: Me too.
- NT: That was the only sensible thing to do and so when they went back I'm sure they found out. Or maybe deep inside they knew, but they wouldn't want to admit it, I don't know. But some I'm sure just believed it.
- RW: I'd like. .I'll ask you some questions that were suggested to me by a Japanese American friend and if you don't like them well you just say so.
- NT: Okay.

RW: Thinking back today on what happened in the camps and what you did when you were there, how do you feel about the way you acted, are you pleased with yourself or are you critical with yourself?

NT: Oh, I don't think either way, I mean, I just took each day as they came. I was very naive and I just didn't let it bother me.

RW: You just didn't take it that seriously. Here's one on the families: For some people camp experience helped to strengthen families, but for other people camp experience helped to break them up or cause them to get hard feelings toward each other?

NT: Well, I don't know why it should create a hard feeling except maybe at the time when one was pro-American and the other was anti or whichever, and at that point it might have created a hardship.

RW: Yeah, you were probably too young to know families like that.

NT: I wasn't really young, but then as I say, I didn't have my own family,⁽¹⁾ all I had was my own folks and Bob and them. So I just went along with my own feelings.

RW: There wouldn't be anybody there to . . .

NT: And my folks wouldn't say one way or another and influence, and maybe if I was married and if I had a husband, maybe I might have something that you miss or with his in-laws or whatever, but I didn't have any of that pressure.

RW: But there were boys and girls too, you know, that I talked to who were pressured by their parents.

NT: Oh yes, there were.

RW: But you fortunately escaped.

NT: Yeah, right. My folks believed the way we felt, you know, I was born an American citizen, why should I renounce it? And I never did renounce my citizenship like some did. I was under no pressure to renounce it either, because no member of my family felt that way, that we should renounce. Except that Bill was pressured from his wife's side, and that's when he renounced it, but when it came to going back to Japan, that's finally at that point, he put his foot down. So when you're at work or something, when it's slack, you know, we'll all stand in front of the you know, they had this big stove and they'll talk about this and that. Oh there were some, 'Oh, we really have to renounce..' - We just walk away. And pretend that we're doing something else.

RW: You were really kind of lucky in that respect I guess.

NT: Yeah, I think I was. As I said, I was never really verbal, you know. I'm more talkative now than I ever was. I mean I'll chatter with friends - I'm really talkative now and chatter with friends, but it's just, you know (minor?) things, but when it comes things like this, I just, you know. . .

RW: Now you're an older woman, so you have a right to talk.

NT: Right.

RW: That's what I tell myself. Well, let's see, as you think back over what you've achieved in your lifetime, in what way did the camp experience help you and in what way did it hurt you?

NT: Well, okay, I don't think it really. When I went to camp I wasn't even employed or anything and so it isn't as if I gave up something to go into camp, and then after I got there I just did whatever, you know, for a while I worked at the beauty shop, although I didn't have a license - they let me work anyway. And then when they closed down the beauty shop, I also worked at the canteen. You know, that's where they sold the groceries and things like that. And so, I really never gave it any thought. And when I

[1. By her "own family" Mrs. Tsuruda evidently means a husband and children.]

NT: *came out to this farmland called. .was run by Zuckerman. .I guess you heard about that. I just worked there until I got married and that was about it. Except for the short time I went to school--the beauty school. And after finishing it and everything, I just found out that's when the cold wave started to come out and my hands just couldn't take it. Like as of now, you can hardly see my fingerprints. The cold wave solution just about dissolved your skin off I guess. And so I just didn't even go back into the business -- I worked for a little while, but then I had to give it up.*

RW: *There have been some people I've talked to especially men - they say - I think your brother Bill said this when I talked to him, that the years in camp - it was four years out of his life, but would you feel that way? I doubt it, the way you talk.*

NT: *Yeah, in a way.*

RW: *In a way, could you tell me how?*

NT: *Not really. I mean it was four years wasted I guess. You could say it was, but then - it's hard to say. If I wasn't in, I just wouldn't know how it would have been out of camp. I mean to me, the only way I could feel is that what happened happened, and there wasn't much we could do about it, and so why hack over or. .what's over.*

RW: *I agree. I got one last one here. Did your camp experience in any way leave with you a sense of insecurity?*

NT: *I don' think so.*

RW: *You don't think so.*

NT: *As a matter of fact, camp life, being among, you know, all enclosed contact with all those people, it kind of makes you more, not really aggressive, but it puts a little bit more I can't - sense of stand up on your own. You almost had to.*

RW: *You could say you got a stronger self image.*

NT: *I think it helped some.*

RW: *You've told me that and that checks out real nice. Well that's the end of these. If there is something else you want to tell me. I did give you my telephone number, didn't I?*

NT: *Yeah, but I think I better write it. . .*