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AIOH-12, Marvin Tetsushi Uratsu
Interviewer Dew Ruiz
June 13, 2005

Time: 1:15 pm – 2:30 pm
Location: Mr. Uratsu's home

DR: Where and when were you born?

MU: I was born in Sacramento, CA on February 7, 1925.

Um, how large was your family.

I have, a sister and two brothers, actually three brothers, but one passed away,

Oh, I'm sorry.

Yeah, so, still alive would be three of us boys and one sister.

Ok, what did your family do for a living.

Way, back in 1937 or so our family bought a 40 acre farm. A fruit farm where they raised a pears and plums and peaches and that kind fruits, in a place called Loomis, CA. Yeah, that was sometime I think in 1937-36-37 when they bought that ranch, but before that time the family move around, you know, and I don't know if you're familiar but during those times, uh, the owners were the white farmers, and they had Japanese families come in and do the work for which they got paid fifty dollars a month or thirty five dollars a month to support the whole family. That was the kind of agreement, most Japanese immigrants worked under did when they first started and then gradually they acquired enough capital or borrowed money to buy their own ranch, and that's what we did in 1937, yeah. And, I'm sure you're familiar with the history of the anti-Asian laws that were passed.

Yes.

Yeah, and during those times they had one called the Alien Land Law and you couldn't buy land if you were a immigrant ineligible for citizenship –

Citizenship –

– Citizenship and so that ranch that we bought, my folks bought it in the name of my older brother who was of legal age at that time.

Oh, okay.

Yeah, and that was about 1937, 1938, and if you know American history.

Uh, huh.

Yeah, you realize that it was just at that time when the country was getting over the big crash of the 1929.

Yes.

During the depression years of early 30's, President Roosevelt came into power and started the public works programs. Yeah, it was those times when we, bought the ranch. Later on the whole economy was gradually on the rise and so we really lucked out and in about two three years, the ranch was paid for.

Wow.

Yeah, so that was great then of course we come into 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed and things really happened and you know and its kinda hard to realize the problems that that caused. We had this so called "evacuation" where they rounded up all of the people of Japanese ancestry, and put us into American style concentration camp in 1942, so from 1942 to 1946 we were incarcerated –

Interned –

– Incarcerated, yeah, but the irony of it all was, in the meantime 1941 my older brother was, recruited to study the Japanese language and Japanese military language, by the army intelligence service, before he was allowed to participate in that program the FBI checked him out, I know that they did, because they even (chuckle) questioned me about it.

Oh.

Yeah, but then they, they cleared him, and so he was able to participate in this military intelligence language school, that was formed on November 1, 1941, that was before Pearl Harbor you see.

Yes.

He was one of about sixty Japanese Americans that was in this first group of soldiers studying at the Military Intelligence Language School. Getting back to the incarceration I had thought privately you know that maybe we were gonna be spared that experience of being incarcerated because my brother was cleared by the FBI and was able to enter into the secret language school. Now if that isn't clearance enough, but me and my family, we got put into camp. When we just started to make some money on the farm we had to leave it.

Sorry.

But during the time that we were away we were fortunate enough to have somebody to take care of the farm, but nevertheless we didn't get the profits, of those four years, when we were away.

But you got it back.

Yes, when I came back in 1946, my brother was already back. I got back in May and I had to help prepare for another harvest. I should backtrack just a little bit, during the time my brother was inducted into the army, or he volunteered for the army, they were taking anybody who was an American citizen

Um-hm.

And then after a while I think it was 1942 or -3, somewhere along the line they stopped drafting Japanese Americans and classified us as enemy aliens unfit for service. But, they found out that they needed more soldiers, and so they reopened the draft, in fact they opened the draft not only for the military intelligence, but also for 442nd regimental combat team. Are you familiar with that?

Yes I am.

Yeah, well, okay so, you know these guys who were classified 4-C got drafted into the army when Uncle Sam needed us. But I should tell you before that, there's a lot of trouble concerning the drafting of the Japanese Americans because all of the Japanese American population were in camp. And for Uncle Sam to come by and say 'Hey, will you volunteer?' You know, it's kinda hard to take. After all the rotten treatment we gotten, Uncle Sam still wants us to help in the war effort. So that was a bad time, I don't know if you were familiar with the loyalty question that came up at that time.

Yes, two questions.

Yes, the two questions, number 27 and number 28, and I can quote you the exact wording but maybe you can look it up if you want.

One is about whether you would volunteer for service at that time.

Yeah, maybe we should be put it on record. (pause) See, this is the book called 'Personal Justice Denied' and it is a report of the commission on wartime relocation and internment of civilians. This was written by a select committee chosen by Congress, and they came up with this book. And in this book the question 27 and 28 are quoted here, and number 27 is, "Are you willing to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States in combat duty, wherever ordered?" And that's asking an awful lot after putting us into camps. And the other question was, "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attacks by foreign or domestic forces? And forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor or any other foreign government power or organization?" And that really, really upset a lot of people asked, "Why should we forswear allegiance to the Japanese emperor, we never knew the guy in the first place."

Yes. What actually did you answer? Did you answer-

Yeah, my buddy and I, we talked about it, you know, what are we going to do? As I told Joe, my buddy, I said, "If someone has a gun pointed at your head, are you going to do what the guy wants?" And I said, "The government has that gun pointed at us, and so I'm going to go along with it and put 'yes-yes.'" And fortunately my family, our family went along with that. The other thought was that if I put 'no-no' for example, then there was that possibility that we would get sent back to Japan. And then we would probably be recruited for the Japanese army and we would be fighting my brother. You see the dilemma that was caused? But under such situation we had all kinds of thoughts running through our minds and it was kind of a stretch to think that we would be drafted by the Japanese army and have to fight my brother. But those things did go through my mind when under stress like we were at that time, you know. So they were bad times, and when that question was resolved what the government did was take all the people who answered 'no-no' into Tule Lake, and those of us who answered positively got moved to other camps. The Tule Lake camp became the super security camp, and there were riots maybe we don't want to go into that now, there are books on the subject. We got sent to Colorado and that was one of the ten camps that was established by the government and I, my family and I, we were sent to this camp in Amache, Colorado sometime called Granada. At that time, I didn't want to stay in camp any longer, I hated it, and so I asked the camp director if I could go out since I wanted to finish my senior year in high school, outside of camp. I always wanted to continue my education, I wanted to study at a university. And so, I thought if I got a diploma from outside camp, not concentration camp school, that my chance would be better, and so the camp director was sympathetic. Students were encouraged to study in the Eastern and Midwestern colleges, so in my case I was just a senior in high school, but I still wanted to get out like I said, I wanted a diploma from an outside school. And so the director asked me, "Where would you like to go?" And I said, "I don't care where I go, I just want to get the hell out of here." (both chuckle) And I left my family, and I finally decided on De Moines, Iowa and I got there in time for the

fall session. And I studied there until about May 1944, and about that time the draft was reinstated for us, and I was draft age. So I thought, "Well, you know I'm going to choose where I want to be, I don't want the army to tell me where I'm going to go, carry a gun and go shoot somebody, or get shot at." So I thought, "Well, I'll try for the intelligence school." And I wrote a letter to the officer there, the personnel officer there, Major Rusch by name, and he told me to write something in Japanese, and I did and I responded to his request, and the next thing I knew he said, "We want you, and come on in, come on in." Originally, the language school started at the Presidio here in SF, and we were right across the bay from Angel Island. That's the area called Crissy Field, where the first 60 students studied. But after a while, they moved the school to Camp Savage, Minnesota. Where there was an old man's retirement home or home that took care of aged people. They turned that into a school. They had to clean it up first. But shortly thereafter the school was getting too small, we had more and more guys coming in and they moved us to Fort Snelling, right near the Twin Cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul. That's where I studied the Japanese language and in 1945 we finished our studies. We had to go down to Alabama for basic training first. And after we finished studying we got sent overseas. That's when we went to Manila, in the Philippines, it took us about 21 days to get there because we were zig-zagging across the Pacific to avoid possibility of being shot at by the Japanese submarines. So we got to Manila, I remember the date, it was July 1, 1945. And then of course, as you know, the war ended in August of 1945, and since the end of the World War, we prepared to go into Japan for occupation. At that time I was assigned to the Chief Engineer's office, General Headquarters. We were attached to a smaller section called the Utilities section, and what we did in the Utilities section was to work with the Japanese government through the Tokyo metropolitan office at that time, and our job was to renovate and reconstruct the war damaged building for occupation personnel use. There were a number of buildings, I can't remember the names of the buildings we worked on, but our job was to accompany the US army officers and check on these projects to make sure they were being done properly and completed on time. There was a schedule to keep. We had all these occupation personnel coming in who had to have offices and living accommodations. So that was our job. I stayed until May of 1946.

Um-hum.

And May of 1946 my numbers for discharge came up, the army discharged soldiers was after you compiled so much in points you got to go home, and when that process first began I thought I would never get home because my points were so low compared to these guys who had gone through the battles in the South Pacific Islands, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, New Guinea, the Philippines, etc. You know those guys who were in for two, three, four years in the Army, got to go home first. They deserved to go home and I thought my number was not going to come up for a long time. (chuckle) But in May, the numbers came down pretty fast, and I was discharged from the Army very fast. So I got out in May of '46 and I went back to the farm. I helped the family harvest the crop for 1946, because I got there in May and the harvest was just beginning. So after that, under the GI bill, you know about the GI bill?

Yes.

The government paid for the education of veterans it paid for all our tuition and books and supplies and what not. And it was pretty neat, because all we had to do is sign our name and number, and I think it was our Army serial number. So I was able to finish at the University of California. I graduated in 1949, and that was in three years, I finished, because I took summer school in between regular semesters.

At Berkeley?

Yeah, at Berkeley. And I wanted to catch up because we had lost at least two years in the Army so I wanted to rush through and get on with my life. So we got out in 1949, and started looking for a job, and it wasn't that easy to find a job at that time, because people still had that anti-Japanese feeling. With all

that bad publicity that came out during the war, I guess in the people's minds they had something against us. And so, it wasn't a very easy time to get a job. But I finally got a job with American President Lines, are you familiar with that?

The shipping company?

Yes, American President Lines, the shipping company. Yeah, they had ships going from San Francisco to Hawaii, and Hawaii to Yokohama, to Japan, and then to Hong Kong, and then to Manila, and then back. And I worked in the passenger department, and so I saw a lot of Filipinos, Japanese, Chinese, from this country going home and from those countries coming in. That was kinda interesting working there, and I worked there for fifteen years, and at that time, in the mid 1960's, I saw that the airlines were coming in pretty strong. And when they came on with the tourist fares, it really cut into the passenger business. Because it made a lot of economic sense. If you went to Manila, for example, it took about three weeks to get there. And then three weeks to get back, and that's a month and a half already. And if you stayed for a month to visit your relatives there, gosh, that eats up three months in no time. So now, when the airlines came in, and you could get on an airplane today and be in Manila in, what is it, about 19 hours or so, and then you can spend a couple of weeks there, and then you fly home and go back to work in like three or four weeks. And then you could make a lot of money. The one thing good about ship travel at that time was that they could bring a lot of baggage free and people in the Orient, Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, they all needed clothing, food, medicine. The war kinda deprived them all. So we had a lot of people bringing an awful lot of baggage, household goods, television sets. (both laugh)

So... you came on a ship too, right? So, how did you come through Angel Island?

Yeah, alright. Getting back to that point, I was born back in 1925. In 1926, when I was about a year and a half, my mother took us kids with her to Kumamoto, do you know where Kumamoto is?

No, I don't.

Okay. (pulls out map) See, I have this map, and I will show you. (pause, map shuffling) See, this is a map of Japan, Japan is a group of islands, this is what they call Kyushu, the main island, and this is Shikoku, on the East side of Kyushu, and then Akishu (sp?), that's the southernmost island, and Hokkaido is the northernmost island. So Japan is made up of four major islands – one – two – three – four. And my folks grew up in Kumamoto, and in 1916, I have records that show, my father came to America from Nagasaki, that's where the ship came out of. (pause) And I don't know where I got this, but see, this is what they call a certificate 'to whom it may concern' and its got my father's name, and he traveled on the ship called Manila Maru and it sailed from Nagasaki in 1916. I don't know if my mother came at the same time or not, but –

So did your father actually go through Angel Island too?

I really don't know. But actually, he came in through Seattle, so not Angel Island. And then, he got married in 1917 or so, and my brother was born, and I came much later in 1925. So my mother took us back to Kumamoto here, and with the thought that she was going to leave us kids with my paternal grandparents. That's my father's side. Okay, that was fine, and I could tell you stories about staying in Japan. But anyway, my grandfather died in 1930, so it was too much of a burden for my grandmother to look out for us alone, so we were sent back and that's when we ended up in San Francisco, and we took a train from here, and I don't know how we got here, but we got on a ship in Yokohama, and we had to take a train from here to here (pointing at map) and then catch the ship from there (pointing), and we got on a ship called Taiyomaru, Taiyomaru. The Japanese ships are all end in maru, you know, m-a-r-u.

How do you spell it?

Taiyo, t-a-i-y-o, maru, maru. So from Yokohama to San Francisco, that would be about 1941, and when we got to San Francisco, we got off the ship and I don't know how we got to Angel Island, but we did get to Angel Island. I guess we spent maybe one or two days. I think I said it earlier. But one or two days, and what I remember, I think this is the part you are interested in, what I remember is that wooden barracks, and any number of beds and they are double-decker, they are double-decker beds I think. It could have been more. Anyway –

I think it was triple.

Yeah, it could have been triple, or quadruple, yeah. But anyway, we were in these barracks, all male. I don't know who they were, I guess they were Chinese also. But I couldn't tell, I was six years old. (both laugh) So I don't really remember who they were, but I remember they were Asians, they looked like me, so –

So you were with other men?

All men. All men. And the whole barracks were men, and there were quite a few of them, as I remember. And I imagine, they were mainly Chinese. They had to stay a long time. I didn't know that at that time. I didn't know that they were having such a bad time during that time, but for six years old, I don't know. But I do remember, what little I remember, I within these barracks, I remember having to take a physical. I think they were physicals, they stripped us, and looked us all over, you know. I remember that part, it was embarrassing, for six years old to have to strip (chuckle) its kinda humiliating to say the least. Those are the highlights that I remember. But I remember walking out of the barracks, clothed of course! And I looked down to the other barracks, about 100 feet away, there was another barracks. And I could see these Caucasian women. They were new to me, 'cuz see, in Kumamoto we never saw a white person, okay? So it was a new experience to see these people. I imagine they were white Russians. But that's my guess, my guess now. But what was another surprise was I saw a lady smoking, a cigarette. That was something I never thought, at that time I never thought that a lady smoked. I never saw anybody smoke out there, where I grew up. But anyway, in a day or so my father came and picked us up.

So did they interrogate you or question you, while you were at Angel Island?

I don't remember that. I don't think they did. When I think about it now, I'm a US citizen, by birth. And I don't know why I was even sent to Angel Island. You know, I thought I was going to be given preferential treatment, come to think of it now, but in those days I was only six years old and I don't know the difference. So –

So your dad came to pick you up?

So my dad came to pick me up and I didn't know what he looked like. See, I was sent to Japan in 1926, and here in 1931, I'm six years old and so I didn't know what my father looked like, I didn't know what my mother looked like. Although in Japan I remember my relatives telling me that over the hill and over the ocean is where your mother and father are. (both chuckle) That's about all I knew, I didn't know what they looked like, yeah. So, it was a brand new experience for me, they told me that I would be seeing my mother and when we came to Berkeley, we went to my uncle's place, I didn't know at that time that was my uncle's place, but looking back I know that was my uncle's place and I thought that his wife was my mother! (both laugh) And wow, I got to see my mother but it wasn't her, I had to wait a couple more days before I went to Plumas where my mother was. And this was the first time that I seen her and

had to get reacquainted because (chuckle) I couldn't remember at that age. I don't know how early you started to remember your parents, so that's what happened. And I told what was her name, the lady who first wrote to me and called me, I don't have much to share about my experience at Angel Island, Erika Gee. But, that was about it, I don't know what else I could tell you.

Well, maybe about you coming here from Japan to America. Do you remember like the ship, how what did you have, what part of the ship did you stay in –

Well –

Were you treated well on the ship?

Yeah, on the ship, it was a Japanese ship, and Taiyomaru as I found out later, was a German built ship that the Japanese government got after World War I, and they converted into a Japanese ship because the crew was Japanese. And, the food, I guess was Japanese, but what I, I think I remember and I like was this cha-shui-bao-like thing.

Oh, yeah. I like those.

But the inside was this sweet, azuki beans.

Yes. (chuckle)

Yeah, you know about those? (both chuckle) Well, it was big and really good I remember that. The other thing I remember was for the entertainment of the passengers the crew people they put on shows and of course on a Japanese ship they put on these samurai plays.

Wow, that must have been fun.

It was, they were so real for six years old.

Yes. (both chuckle)

And, I often wondered but nobody would tell me exactly the answer, but the question in my mind was, "How did they get the samurai's aboard in the middle of the ocean?" (both laugh) Yeah, I often wondered that, it was so realistic I thought they came aboard somewhere and put on the show and left. That's how naïve my mind was at that time. But then later on I found out that the crew people would put on those shows. So, you know, it was a great time. I didn't get seasick, my brother did, but I, I didn't get seasick.

Did you come with, how many –

With my brother.

Just your one brother?

Yeah.

Older brother?

Yeah. And, because we were still minors we had to be accompanied by an adult. So there was a lady that accompanied us. And I can't remember her name, she was nice, we came under her wings across, across the seas.

Was she Japanese too?

Yeah, she was Japanese. So the treatment was great, I have nothing bad to say. And, although I'm sure we were traveling in the lowest class, but I didn't mind it at all. It was kind of a time for expectation for going back to where my parents were. And so, nothing negative, and contrast to what the Chinese people experienced at Angel Island, our time was relatively simple and carefree. And –

On the ship, or at Angel Island?

[New side of tape, missing a few seconds.] the Chinese passengers on the ship. Yeah, better than that.

Were, the lady that you came with, did she, do you remember if she went to Angel Island too?

No, I don't think so. I think she, she had somebody meet her, and I guess that was it.

Over in San Francisco?

Yeah, yeah. But we never saw her after at Angel Island.

But then the men and women's barracks were separate.

Yeah, yeah. The one we were in were all men, of course. Like I was saying that barracks down the road where this lady came out smoking on the deck there. I guess they were all women in that barracks, but I'm not sure.

Do what was, like the day that you were there, do you remember, like, do you remember what happened, like, do you remember the meals or like any –

– No. No, I don't remember the meals, the only thing I remember was this guy looking me over. (chuckle) That's kind of humiliating.

Yeah.

Yeah. And that's about all I can tell you about the experience at Angel Island.

Do you remember what you thought when you first saw Angel Island?

No impression at all. No impression at all and like I said I don't even remember how we got there, by boat, or, it must have been by boat. (pause) But I've gone back to Angel Island after that.

To the immigration station?

Yeah.

How was it when you went back there?

Well, I recall, what I saw there, was this lady smoking (both laughs). That was a major part, and I could say this was the barracks we stayed at. And that the one down there was where the lady was smoking. That's about all. I can't tell you whether the beds were hard or –

Or soft –

– Or cold, or you know, I don't remember anything like that.

Did anyone, like, take care of you or your brother while you were there, or was it just you and your brother taking care of yourselves?

Where?

At the Angel Island Station.

We were pretty much on our own, you know. And I guess that whoever was in charge told us go here or there, and I guess it was a day or two that my father showed up, and took us in tow, and that was the end of that.

Do you, what, like, what, so what effect would you say the experience has had on you? Has it had any major effect on you, do you think –

I don't think it had any major effect on me, at that age, you know you don't really know what's right or wrong or what's bad or good, it just, at that age, anything bad happens to you it doesn't hurt as much as something that happens later. Like, when we were incarcerated, I don't know why it had to happen, because I remember every morning at school, grammar school, the first thing we did when we got into the classroom was repeat the pledge to the flag. And, the flag pledge always ended up with "liberty and justice for all." So, when I look back at the incarceration period, you think, "what happened to those promises of the government?" Freedom and justice for all (chuckle), or was that justice. So when we went through that, you don't quite realize what's going to happen, it happens so fast. And then, at the age that we were incarcerated, I was, what, 1942, so I was seventeen years old, and at that time I don't know how you were, but you know, when you are in your teens, you're busy playing with your friends, same age friends, that's how it was with us, with me. But, when you look at it from my mother's perspective, when she came over to this country she was nineteen. And, she came over with high hopes, and when she got here she was just a farmer's wife, a farmer-laborer's wife. And then, it was her dream that she'd have a piece of land to call her own, a home to call her own. And, she was able to, the family was able to buy this ranch in 1937, and her dreams kinda came true because we were able to pay off the debt in two, three years.

That's very good.

And so, for her it was a real dream come true. And then to have it taken away, and not knowing whether she could come back or not. It was a very, very trying time. Yeah, and that's not only our family but other Japanese American families had to go through that experience –

So –

– So it depends on your perspective an, a kid, you know, in the teens, it did not matter what circumstances you're in. At that age you are gonna try to find ways to have fun, with your friends. Of course that worried my mother because she thought we might be getting into trouble with nothing to do, but (both

chuckle) play around. So she wanted me to go to work, at some kind of a job. Which I did, so I worked on the farm there, and also –

In the camp?

Yeah. The camp, when we got there to Tule Lake, they hadn't completed the buildings,. It was just black tar paper on the outside, on the two by fours. You know how walls are made, you have the two by fours in the middle and you got your outside wall and the inside wall. But they only had the outside wall, and winter was going to come around soon enough especially up in Tule Lake it's cold. So, we got jobs putting on the inside wall. That's these plasterboards, four by eight's, that we put on the wall and then on the ceilings, and that was improvement over the temporary barracks we were put in earlier. And those barracks had open ceilings, so this family's here over the wall on that side, where the top is open is another family so what's going on in that family, we can hear and what goes on in our family they can hear (chuckle). You know, so there's no privacy. But anyway, Joe and I, my buddy and I got a job helping to put up these plasterboards on the walls and also on the ceilings. That, helped a little bit, you could still hear noises on the other side of the wall, and vice versa. But we got a unit that was the end unit, so we had just one neighbor one side, and the other side was nobody. So, we weren't in between. You know, there were about four barrack, to each barrack. So, if you were in the middle two, you had neighbors on both sides (chuckle), whereas in our case we had just one. And then, in camp we had these farms and they grew wonderful vegetables there in Tule Lake, 'cuz Tule Lake itself was a lake bottom and the soil was real good. So, the produce on the farm was very good. So we went out there and helped. You know pick up the potatoes which were grown and I also helped out in the chicken farm collecting the eggs, feeding the chicks and so on, clean up. Yeah, that's the way we spent the summer. And then in the fall, school began at camp. The classrooms were converted barracks. And I remember the chemistry class for example, it was called a chemistry class but we had no equipment, you know, things to experiment with. When you have chemistry class you gotta have equipment to do the experiments.

Yeah –

– And biology and so on. Yeah, but that kind of thing didn't happen. So it was just by reading books and having lecture by the teacher and so on. So that's another reason why I didn't want to get a diploma from the camp school. I wasn't getting enough I thought, but you know nevertheless I know guys who got diplomas from camp, they did alright. And then, recently some were given diplomas that they should have got in 1943, 44 and 45, by the school they attended before the incarceration. And I thought that was nice, there were a number of places they done that, I think Watsonville was one.

That's nice –

– Yeah, it's nice. Yeah, it's nice. And it, they, it was therapeutic I guess, therapeutic and I understand some people really cried.

Yeah, I'm sure.

Yeah. So, those are the experiences that we went through. And, of course I worked for the American President lines for fifteen years. And my job was to help, the Japanese passengers and we had a Joe Martinez that helped the Filipino passengers, and we had others that helped the Chinese. Yeah, the American President Lines was a private international shipping company. Yeah.

But, um –

– But I left them when, like I told you earlier I saw the airlines coming in with these real cheap fares, all relatively cheap fares. I thought I'd better move on and so I had taken an investment class at Cal and always been kinda interested along that line so that's the line I pursued and I still maintain a license as investment representative, investment counselor, or we go by several fancy names. (both chuckle) All we are is salesman, yeah. I'm semi-retired now, I do have calls from my old clients, who ask questions and I try to help out and in order to do that I maintain my license. I have to go every year and go to these sessions where the continuing education programs are. That's to keep us abreast of what's going on. Lately, we spent a lot of time on abuses, you know people are given the wrong advice. And then, and since 9/11, the Security Act it's been more, more security is stressed. That, we have to be careful, about money laundering that could very well happen through, our guys in our business, because we handle money.

Investment of, what was that again?

Investment of, any kind, stocks and bonds, mutual funds. I guess what happens is, these people who are getting illegal money, they do what is called 'money laundering' several accounts, so that the IRS or other government agencies can't know where it's coming from (chuckle). Illegally earned money, especially big chunk of money can be laundered. I've gotta keep up with all these things, in order to maintain my license, that's what I'm doing now. So, I'm what you called semi-retired.

Wow.

So we have, I don't know if you're interested or not, but we have, my wife and I have four kids, two boys and two girls. And we, oldest is a son, he's got three kids, two boys and one girl. And then, that's the girl there in the middle (pointing at picture). And then, my oldest daughter, she had twins, these two boys, one with the glasses one not (pointing).

Yes.

That photo has been taken some years ago but now (pointing), they're going to universities, Mike is going to Cal there, in the engineering school. And then, Tommy, just finished his first year at Cornell. He's into biological sciences, and history at Cornell.

Uh, huh. Sounds like their doing well.

They're doing fine and we're very proud of them and this girl here (pointing), my oldest son's first child is a daughter. She's into sports. Do you play basketball?

No, not really (chuckle).

Oh yeah, she's into basketball, she loves to play basketball. She's small, but she's quick and, she's having fun. (both chuckle) But you know as grandparents, we, kinda enjoy watching how the kids are growing.

Um-hm. Good. But can I ask you one more thing about Angel Island? Do you remember-

Oh, Angel Island, yeah –

Do you remember actually seeing poetry on the walls, or any writings on the walls, or –

Well, I've seen the writings when I went to visit. At that time I didn't know this.

So you didn't notice anybody writing there –

No –

– No

No, no.

Oh, okay.

I wish I did but you know at that time I was six years old, not interested in, anything except for all I looking forward to seeing what my mother and father look like. (chuckle)

About your mother, so when you and your brother were both in the military –

Yeah –

What happened to your mother when you guys were in the military? –

Well, that's the irony, I'm in the army, my brother's in the army, my second brother is in the army, and the folks are still in camp. And my mother was extremely worried she was about losing her mind because all the boys that she brought up, the army takes, and maybe she won't get the boys back. That's going through her mind, I think that's the mother's worries –

Yeah, that's scary –

Mother's, mentality at that time: "What did I raise my boys for, to die in the army?" Yeah, "While I, and aged husband, rotting in the concentration camps, and so". That was a real rough time for my father.

I'm sure –

Yeah, so, what she did, I think was very wise she went to the Red Cross, and told them the story, "That I've got three boys in the army, one boy too young to be of any help (chuckles) living with us in camp, and right now at least one of the boys should be allowed to come back." So, what happened was, through the Red Cross, word was sent to my second brother, not the oldest that's in the Military Intelligence, and me in the Military Intelligence, but the second brother who was in Germany at that time.

Was he in a, 442nd?

No. No, and he came later so he didn't get into 442. But anyway, he was out in the field as I understand, and there was a jeep sent out to him, and the guy on the jeep says, "Hey, Uratsu, we gotta get you back home, they need you back home." (chuckle) And so –

Wow –

Yeah, so through the Red Cross, my mother was able to get Rusty back. Do you remember the show –

"Saving Private Ryan" –

Yeah.

Yes.

That was something along that line –

Yeah –

And, but in my mother's case, more dramatic, more –

More real –

More realistic, than "Saving Private Ryan." You know, I don't know how much of it is actually true, but anyway, that's what happened. So I must tell you, that despite all this, my mother died a happy woman.

That's good.

Yeah, yeah. She was happy in her later life. She gave up living on the farm, came to Berkeley, and she died in this home for seniors. We had to put her in a home. While she was up and able, she enjoyed us being around, and enjoyed working with the church people. Like my brother-in-law used to say, "She's always full of smiles." (chuckle)

Yeah.

So. I guess the point I'm trying to make is that although these trials have come up, trials and tribulations, and wondering what the future may hold, things worked out for her, and we're kinda happy about that. And we don't want to wish similar trials and tribulations like that my mother encountered for other people.

Yeah, I'm sure.

But, it worked out real well.

I'm glad it did. Well, thank you for your help.

[End transcript.]

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