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Takenuchi, Jack

Interviews

Dec. 1981

(Ichiro (Bob) Isurda)

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INTERVIEW WITH ICHIRO TSURUDA

Ichiro Tsuruda

Born in Stockton, California in 1939

Ichiro Tsuruda: *Hello?*

Rosalie Wax: *Hello, is Mrs. Tsuruda there?*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *No, she's at work.*

Rosalie Wax: *Oh, she's at work. Are you Ichiro? She may have told you about that I called her on the phone and found out that she was the wife of the son of the man. . .let me pull myself together here.*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *Oh, are you Miss Wax?*

Rosalie Wax: *I'm Mrs. Wax.*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *Oh, yeah. That's my father you are talking about.*

Rosalie Wax: *Yes.*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *Right.*

Rosalie Wax: *And she was kind enough to give me the (telephone) numbers and names of relatives and then we had a little talk. I have recently talked with both your uncle Bill and aunt Noriko. And we had a wonderful talk, a lovely get-together. And your aunt is sure an out-spoken, frank lady, you know.*

✓ Ichiro Tsuruda: *Noriko?*

Rosalie Wax: *Yes.*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *Yes, I guess so. (laughs) That's the way she's always been.*

Rosalie Wax: *Yes, that's true. And what. . .I'm surprised you're home. . .I thought I would have to call you in the evening.*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *No, what happened is that we have Thanksgiving holidays. I get an extra day off.*

Rosalie Wax: *Oh, good for you.*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *The other boss took the day before, so I took the day after for the weekend.*

Rosalie Wax: *Good for you. Do you have time to talk just briefly?*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *Sure, no problem.*

Rosalie Wax: *Oh good. What I'd like to know first of all is the. . .if you have the telephone numbers of some of the people that Mrs. Tsuruda was kind enough to give me. I tried long distance, but I've had great trouble. This is Mary Tayama.*

✓ Ichiro Tsuruda: *Oh, that's her sister.*

Rosalie Wax: *Her sister.*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *Right.*

Rosalie Wax: *Do you have her telephone number?*

Ichiro Tsuruda: *I do, but I don't understand what this pertains to, what you are trying to get. Because she is not related to my father.*



RW: Oh, was she at Tule Lake?

IT: I don't believe so. No, at. . . yeah at Tule Lake, yeah, because Helen was born there. She was at Tule Lake, yeah. ✓

RW: And was she old enough to remember anything.

IT: I would say so, because she was 13 years old at Tule.

RW: Well, it might be. . . nice. . . because I like to talk to other people also.

IT: Oh, in reference to the barrack life?

RW: Yes, this is. . . you know. . . the Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship wants me to talk to not only to people that I know, but to other folks and their relatives.

RW: I just wondered if your father had ever talked of his life in the camp.

IT: No, he really didn't really speak of it much, not to us, he might have talked about it with my Mom.

RW: Oh, he talked only to your mother?

IT: Well, no, he might have only spoke about the camp life. But we never discussed it, because I was only 4 at the time.

RW: Yeah, I remember you as a little boy.

IT: Yeah, and I don't actually remember much myself of the camp itself, because I was so young. The only thing I do remember was that there was a big sort of a hall or auditorium in the middle of the field somewhere, and I'm not sure if that was \_\_\_\_\_ (?) or what. It was also. . .

RW: Did they have sports there or. . . ?

IT: I'm not sure, I think they went there for meetings and things. I just remember certain items like there was a ditch and there was a lot of crayfish or some-things that I used to fool around with. You know like small baby lobsters that go in the water.

RW: And they'd be crawling around. . .

IT: Yeah, they'd be in the mud or something and I would try to catch them.

RW: It was a real muddy place.

IT: Yeah, I don't know where that was, but I did try to catch them and they were in mud. And also, I remember getting stung by a bee once. And I guess I was at my grandmother's flower garden or something; I was in the back of her place. That's basically what I remember, being that young; but those are the things that stood out in my mind. I never really remember being transported anywhere.

RW: Well, you were pretty young. Did you feel any curiosity. . . how did you feel about. . . maybe I should ask this question. . . Did you feel that this experience had any effect on your father?

IT: Oh, my father?

RW: Yes.

IT: Possibly, yeah. Because after that he never really got a what you'd call a regular, solid job until the last 15 years or so; within the last 15 years. He went into sort of like, I guess you might say - housecleaning and stuff like that until about 15 or 16 years back.



RW: *My goodness. . .*  
 IT: *. . .before he died. And this is when he got a job as an outboard motor mechanic, which was what he wanted to do, because he was really good at, you know, mechanics.*

RW: *And you're saying that he finally got this job as an auto mechanic?*  
 IT: *No, outboard motor mechanic.*

RW: *Outboard motor mechanic.*  
 IT: *Right, he liked fishing a lot. And so we used to go fishing a lot on Saturdays; on the weekends and up until about 15-20 years ago; he did not have, what you would call an 8-5 job. It was sort of the thing where he would go someplace, and he had regular customers, but he, you know, would go to the houses and clean up, like maintenance work, and it was not really what you would call like steady type job. But I don't know if that was the reason why or not. But he got along well with everybody.*

RW: *Yeah, he always did.*  
 IT: *And he was always a going-out type person. My mother was just the other way around. She was more introverted I guess.*

RW: *(laughs)*  
 IT: *And myself, I'm not that going-out myself; my wife is, Helen is, but I'm more introverted than I am extroverted.*

RW: *Your mother was very bashful in Tule Lake.*  
 IT: *Yeah, I probably took after her more than my father.*

RW: *Did your mother ever talk about Tule Lake at all?*  
 IT: *Not really, no. Being that young, I never really pressed it. And I read a little about it and we had a book here and we read a little of that. But I don't think it affected me that much. It might have affected them.*

RW: *Did you ever feel any kind of resentment or anger about what had been done to your father and mother?*  
 IT: *No, not really. Not myself. I felt more anger towards them for this incident; for my grandparents, because my grandparents were taken, you know, they were a lot older. They were established. And in my case, my mother's grandparents who are still alive, by the way, they had a drugstore or something which was, you know, they were fairly well set and when that was taken away, they sort of had to struggle you know, start over. I felt more sorry for them and resentment for the incident happening because of that, more so than my parents. Because my parents were still young enough to rebound.*

RW: *How old are you now?*  
 IT: *Myself? I'm 42 right now.*

RW: *Forty-two, and where were you born?*  
 IT: *I was born in Stockton. In 1939. I'll be 42 this December. I'm not 42 yet, but it's just around the corner.*

RW: *Is there anything that you yourself would like to tell me about this?*  
 IT: *You mean, about being in camp and things?*

RW: *Yes, anything about your father having been interned or about the treatment that was given to the Japanese Americans.*  
 IT: *Well, I could see their point, but I think the treatment itself in general was not equitable to anyone concerned.*



RW: Not equitable?

IT: Not equitable, right. Because. . . I guess it was because of the panic that was done. . . from all the accounts that I've read it just didn't seem right that they should take everybody's livelihood away and just put them inside, because they were scared of something of that nature. The Japanese Americans were here and had established themselves. I don't know how other people may think about it, but I thought at that point that they were very conscientious and very good workers. And that they wouldn't think of you know, going against the country itself, which had given them so much.

RW: I agree.

IT: So to that extent, I think it was some sort of a crazy type of situation, where everybody just went sort of turned wild and didn't realize. . . didn't think about the people themselves. . . just thought about the. . . the fear I guess is what did it.

RW: And in a sense - stupidity because the authorities could have been smarter.

IT: Yeah, there might have been some people who would have done it, but I think they probably had files on those people.

RW: Yes.

IT: You know, I'm sure the government has files like the FBI and the CIA and everything right now, and they should have known which people would have been able to. . . or would have done something which would have been detrimental to the country itself. And to take everybody in mass didn't seem right.

RW: No, it certainly doesn't.

IT: And that's what I feel the worse about.

✓ RW: Does having had your father and mother and grandparents have this experience change you in any way or effected you in any way?

IT: No, I don't think so, I think it made me work a little bit harder.

✓ RW: Made you work harder?

IT: Yeah, because I was brought up in the Japanese ethics, which was to strive for what you want, and to take pride in yourself, and at this point it wasn't so much to take pride in your country, but to take pride that I was a Japanese and I was lucky enough to be in America, and to strive to make myself better, and not to try and depend too much on other people to give me things and that's what I've strived and that's what I still believe in. To that extent I think my mother and father brought me up very well.

RW: That's a good ethic.

IT: Yeah, I felt it that way, and I see the ethic changing now with a lot of people.

RW: In what way?

IT: Well, the current generation and the generation just before. I'll put it this way. About 2 generations after myself, you know, the people in their 20's now, and I see a lot of them just putting out their hand and just saying you know, you owe me something. And I don't think that is right. That's my personal feelings. I was brought up in this ethic by my parents. There are a lot of other people in my same generation who feel that way. But the current generation seems to be an "I" ethics, moreso than "we." And a lot. . . of course. . . the Japanese tend to stick together moreso than other groups or nationalities. Now I had a friend who was a Negro, he was a colored person, and he told me when we were both about 25 or 30, we were both working together and I had known him in



Stockton and we had come to San Francisco to work, and he says that in his group, in his Negro group, if there was a person, who was an optometrist or something, if he was Negro, he would go to him, but that person would not take into account that he himself was part of the same race. And normally, you know, like in Japanese people, I could go into a store, if I was Japanese and the store owner was Japanese, I would say I don't have any money, but I can write you a check. And I could be from out of town. And that person would say, "That's no problem. You're Japanese, so I can trust you." Well, this ethic does not hold over for other groups of people, like especially the Negro people. And I think that's one of the things that I think is nice - the Japanese trust each other to that extent. And right now, I think there is a change in the Japanese Americans now, the younger ones, becoming more, I don't call that Americanized (laughs), or just more like everyone else, and pretty soon they're not going to be able to trust each other the way we are doing it right now.

RW: Yeah, I have seen those things myself. It is interesting. . . I talked a little to your wife, but not as much as I would like. I may phone her again and I think you. . . if you have anything. . . well. . . I would like to call you in a couple of months or if. . . I tell you. . . if you do know of anyone else who was in Tule Lake besides the people that your wife told me - I'd be very grateful if you'd phone me or write me, and ask them if they want to talk to me.

IT: Okay, I do know a couple of people, but I don't know their addresses at the current time or their phone numbers. There was one person, I think it was Okura, and I think they are in Stockton, but I am not sure. They might have moved to L.A., because their daughter goes to UCLA, and I remember him because he said he was the one who took care of me at one time, when my parents had to go someplace. So he was there I know that. But I haven't seen him for about 10 years now. I'm not sure if he's back in Stockton or not.

RW: Well, this fellowship goes on a long time, so in the next couple of months, should you run across anyone, why give me a ring and you can call collect, you know, I have the fellowship. Does your wife have my number?

IT: Yeah, she still has your letter, and your number is on there, so there is no problem there.

RW: Yes, and I'd appreciate that. And if there is anything else you want to tell me, why I'd be glad to listen.

IT: Oh, okay, good. We did receive your book. I don't know if she told you that.

RW: No, she didn't.

IT: The fieldwork, you know, we saw some of the entries in there. So, it's sort of interesting. Yeah, it is sort of nice to know how my father was, you know, involved in something of this nature. I really didn't know what he did then because I was so young, and it didn't make any difference to me at that time. But him passing away now, it sort of brings it back more vividly than it would have if he were still alive.

RW: Well, he was a very intelligent and spunky man, you know. I knew him well, and I met him at the Gila Center. And then we corresponded when he was segregated and then when I was able to go to Tule Lake to continue my study, why, he was, I think he was one of the first people I visited. And you know, he and his wife. He had even gone out to Klamath Falls, some way, he finangled it, to have a delicious cake there for our meeting. Isn't that wonderful?

IT: Yeah, that sounds like my father. He was very conscientious about social items like that. You know, in a way, I wish I was more like him myself. Well, my wife is like he is. Out-going and she also is very aware of the social aspects of life, which myself I could almost care less. She takes care of me and I take care of her.



RW: *That's very good.*

IT: *So, I have my own pride and I'm more pride-oriented than anything else.*

RW: *Pride, yes. Good. Was there anything in my book that. . .you see I really wrote it more to show what can happen to a person when they have a job like I had there, you know. It was very hard on me.*

IT: *Right, the field work.*

RW: *Yeah, in the field work book. But as I say in the book, what helped me was telling myself: "You're here by your own choice, but the Japanese Americans are not."*

IT: *You talking about the first generation?*

RW: *Yes, I'm talking about people in Tule Lake.*

IT: *Oh, I see.*

RW: *I said to myself I was there by my choice, but these people are not, they can't go out; bad as it is, so. . .that's how I felt at times.*

IT: *Yeah, well, I'm sure they felt that way too (laughs). Because they didn't have their freedom anymore. And I don't know what that felt like, really, because at the time I was 4 years old, I just didn't realize we were being restricted to any place.*

RW: *What job or profession did you go into?*

IT: *Oh, I'm a municipal accountant.*

*My father. . .I don't know what he did before the war. I was never really sure. But when we came back, like I said he went into sort of a housekeeping type thing. He worked in small jobs and my mother did the same thing. Then he got this outboard motor job, which really helped him; he really liked it.*

RW: *That's nice.*

IT: *In a way, I think that created a hazard for him, because I think it had a lot to do with leaded fuel being run and I think he got lead poisoning eventually.*

RW: *Poor man.*

IT: *Yeah, but he was okay. There was no problem there. It was just that the cancer caught up with him and he couldn't recover from that. So I have to watch myself now, because both my parents have had cancer, so my brother and myself are watching ourselves very carefully.*

RW: *Well, I had read that it comes from eating. . .one kind of cancer from eating unhulled rice.*

IT: *That's a possibility. Yeah. We do have rice all the time. And the doctor said that the Japanese have cancer of the stomach or something of the intestinal tracts and it is more prevalent with Japanese, more so than in any other race. Like in other races, I guess you have something with the lungs or something. He said German people have certain other, you know, traits, where they get cancer, you know, in some other area.*

RW: *Can I ask you. . .are you intending to bring up your children according to this ethic that you have?*

IT: *Yeah, definitely.*

RW: *How many do you have?*

IT: *I have 3 boys.*



- RW: *Three boys. That's nice.*
- IT: *I want them to take pride in themselves, and it's not so much what other people do, it's what they think is right. What they feel should be right, not so much what other people. . .you know, like peer pressure or something of that nature. I mean that's going to happen no matter what, you know when they get to high school. Peer pressure is going to take over in some extent. But I would like them to have a background where they can say, well, I don't want to be part of that, because I don't think it's right. And as long as I can bring them up in something of that nature, I think I can feel that I did a good job.*
- RW: *Yes. I think so. Well, I can't think of anything else. I don't want to keep you too long here.*
- IT: *Well, if I think of anything else, or if Helen thinks of anything else, we'll give you another call back and talk to you again.*
- RW: *Yes, I'm especially interested in talking to anybody who would like to get this out of their system. I notice often when I begin to talk to people who were there, even with myself, that at first it is very painful and they are very repressed, but once they begin to let it out, they. . .we both feel better.*
- IT: *You've talked to Bill, haven't you?*
- RW: *Yes.*
- IT: *Did you speak to either one of their wives or husbands? I'm sure that they have wives or husbands who have been there too.*
- RW: *Have been there too? Okay, I'll give it a try.*
- IT: *Because I know his wife was at one of the camps. She is about the same age as Bill is. And you know, being in that age group, they would be. . .and also Noriko's husband. I'm sure. . .maybe he came from Japan. . .come to think about it. . .he might have been in Japan at that time.*
- RW: *Well, a terrible thing happened when I called Bill. My recorder didn't work. Bill told me the most wonderful stories. You know, he's a great storyteller. Wonderful.*
- IT: *Yeah, he is. He is very out-going. He's a lot like my brother. He's younger and more \_\_\_\_\_ (?), I guess you might say. He's gregarious too. He's very forward.*
- RW: *Yes, I wrote down all that I could remember and it was great, but I think that in a couple of months I may call him again and have him do it over.*
- IT: *Yeah, give him a call, because he has a lot more. . .because he was there. They know exactly what happened. I don't remember that many things. I was awfully young then. I guess he. . .might have affected my father, but right at the current time, I haven't been thinking about it that much. So it doesn't recall that much on it.*
- RW: *Well, he was a very fine man. I was very impressed. . .it was one of the nicest talks that I had. But then, I guess I'll say good-bye and I say, you might be hearing from me.*
- IT: *Okay, and we may call you back too.*
- RW: *Yes, I'll be very glad to talk to you.*
- IT: *Okay, thank you for calling.*
- RW: *Well, thank you very much.*
- IT: *Okay, we'll talk to you later then. Good-bye.*
- RW: *Good-bye.*



December 5, 1981

*Day  
Taken chi -*

Ichiro Tsuruda →

Born in Steckton, Calif. in 1939

*Remind p. 11  
type sentence  
in correct mt.*

IT: Hello?

RW: Hello, is Mrs. Tsuruda there?

IT: No, she's at work.

RW: Oh, she's at work. Are you Ichiro? ~~This is the lady~~  
~~at Tule.~~ She may have told you about that I called her on the  
phone and found out that she was the wife of the son of the  
man..let me pull myself together here.

IT: Oh, are you Miss Wax?

RW: I'm Mrs. Wax.

IT: Oh, yeah, That's my father you are talking about.

RW: Yes.

IT: Right.

*(telephone)*

RW: And she was kind enough to give me the numbers and names  
of relatives and then we had a little talk, ~~but I~~ have recently  
talked with both your uncle <sup>Bill</sup> ~~Jack~~ and aunt <sup>Noriko</sup> ~~Naiko~~. And we had a  
wonderful talk, a lovely get-together. And your aunt is sure  
an out-spoken, frank lady, you know.

IT: <sup>Noriko</sup> ~~Naiko~~?

RW: Yes,

IT: Yes, I guess so. (laughs) That's the way she's always  
been.

RW: Yes, that's true. And what..I ~~especially~~ <sup>I'm</sup> surprised  
your home..I thought I would have to call you in the evening.

IT: No, what happened is that we have Thanksgiving holidays.  
I get an extra day off.

RW: Oh, good for you.

IT: The other boss took the day before, so I took the day  
after for the weekend.

RW: Good for you. Do you have time to talk just briefly?

IT: Sure, no problem.

RW: Oh good. What I'd like to know first of all is the..  
if you have the telephone numbers of some of the people that  
Mrs. Tsuruda was kind enough to give me. I tried long distance  
but I've had great trouble. This is \_\_\_\_\_.



IT: Oh, that's her sister.

RW: Her sister.

IT: Right.

RW: Do you have her telephone number.

IT: I do, but I don't understand what this pertains to, what you are trying to get. Because she is not related to my father.

RW: Oh, was she at Tule Lake?

IT: I don't believe so. No, at..yeah at Tule Lake, yeah, because \_\_\_\_\_ was born there. She was at Tule Lake, yeah.

RW: And was she old enough to remember anything?

IT: I would say so, because she was 13 years old at Tule.

RW: Well, it might be..nice..because I like to talk to other people also.

IT: Oh, in reference to the barrack life?

RW: Yes, this is..you know..the Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship wants me to ~~do~~ <sup>to</sup> is to talk to not only people that I know, but to others folks and their relatives.

IT: Oh, okay. Yeah, you want to hold on and let me get the telephone book, because I don't have it here right now.

RW: Okay, thank you. Let me see..my papers are foosled here.

IT: That's all right; there's no problem, just go ahead.

RW: I'll look at the...it's at about 109..I just wondered if your father had <sup>ever</sup> talked of his life in the camp.

IT: No, he really didn't really speak of it much, not to us, he might have talked about it <sup>with</sup> ~~to~~ my mom.

RW: Oh, he talked only to your mother?

IT: Well, no, he might have only spoke about the camp life.

But we never discussed it, because I ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> only 4 at the time.

RW: Yeah, I remember you as a little boy.

IT: Yeah, and I don't actually remember much myself of the camp itself, because I was so young. The only thing I do remember was that there was a big sort of a hall or auditorium ~~or~~ in the middle of the field somewhere, and I'm not sure if that was <sup>?</sup> ~~(162)~~ or what. It was also...

RW: Did they have sports there or?



IT: I'm not sure, I think they went there for meetings and things. I just remember a big building out in the <sup>middle of the</sup> field somewhere. And then I remember certain items like there was a ditch and there was a lot of crayfish or somethings that I used to fool around with. You know like small baby lobsters that go in the water.

RW: And they'd be crawling around..

IT: Yeah, they'd be in the mud or something and I would try to catch them.

RW: It was a real muddy place.

IT: Yeah, I don't know where that was, but I did try to catch ~~something~~ <sup>them and</sup> they were in mud. And also, I remember getting stung by a bee once. And I guess I was at my grandmother's flower garden or something; I was in the back of her place. That's basically what I remember, being that young; but those are the things that stood out in my mind. I never really remember being transported anywhere.

RW: Well, you were pretty young, ~~and how did you..~~ Did you feel any curiosity..how did you feel about.. maybe I should ask this question...Did you feel that this experience had any effect on your father?

IT: Oh, my father?

RW: Yes.

IT: Possibly, yeah. Because after that it never really got a what you'd call a <sup>regular</sup> solid job until the last 15 years or so, within the last 15 years, <sup>H</sup> ~~because~~ he went into sort of like, I guess you might say - housecleaning and <sup>stuff</sup> ~~something~~ like that until he about 15 or 16 years ~~ago~~ <sup>back</sup>.

RW: My goodness..

IT: ..before he died. And this is when he got a job as an outboard motor mechanic, which was what he wanted to do, because he was really good <sup>at</sup> ~~in~~, you know, mechanics.

~~RW: Oh, he was..excuse me..I want to check my earphone here.~~



~~IT:~~ Yeah, go ahead.

RW: I ~~had a bad experience once, about not having this thing worked.~~ And you're saying that he finally got this job as an auto mechanic?

IT: <sup>No.</sup> Outdoor motor mechanic.

RW: Outdoor motor mechanic.

IT: Right, he liked fishing a lot. And so we used to go fishing a lot on Saturdays; on the weekends and up until about 15-20 years ago; he did not have, what you would call an 8-5 job. It was sort of the thing where he would go someplace, and he had regular customers, but he, you know, would go to the houses and clean up, like maintenance work, and it was not really what you would call like steady type job. But I don't know if that was the reason why or not. But he got along well with everybody.

RW: Yeah, he always did.

IT: And ~~he~~<sup>she</sup> was always a going-out type person. My mother was just the other way around. She was more introverted I guess.

RW: (laughs)

IT: And myself, <sup>I'm not that going-out</sup> I ~~thought I was~~ <sup>(200)</sup> myself; my wife is, <sup>I am</sup> Helen is, but I'm more introverted than extroverted.

RW: Your mother was very bashful in Tule Lake.

IT: Yeah, I probably took after her more than my father.

RW: Did your mother ever talk about Tule Lake at all?

IT: Not really, no. Being that young, I never really pressed it. And I read a little about it and we had a book here and we read a little of that. But I don't think it affected me that much. It might have affected them.

RW: Did you ever feel anykind of resentment or angry<sup>er</sup> about what had been done to your father<sup>and</sup> mother?

IT: No, not really. Not myself. I felt more anger towards them for this incident; for my grandparents, because my grandparents were taken, you know, they were a lot older;

~~They~~<sup>They</sup> were established, and in my case, my mother's grandparents <sup>who are</sup> ~~were~~ still alive, by the way, <sup>to</sup> They had a drugstore or something which was, you know, they were fairly well set and when that was taken away, they sort of had to struggle you know, start over. I felt more sorry for them and resentment for the incident happening because of that, more so than my parents. Because my parents



were still young enough to rebound.

RW: ~~Well, let me see, if there..I'm a little bit..let's see..~~

How old are you now?

IT: Myself? I'm 42 right now.

RW: 42, and where were you born?

IT: I was born in Stockton. In 1939, I'll be 42 this December. I'm not 42 yet, but it's just around the corner.

RW: ~~WELL, it's hard for me..is there anything~~ <sup>Is there anything that</sup> you yourself would like to tell me about this?

IT: You mean, about being in camp and things?

RW: Yes, ~~about~~ anything about your father having been interned or about the treatment that was given to the Japanese-Americans.

IT: Well, I could see their point, but I think the treatment itself in general was not equitable to anyone concerned.

RW: Not equitable?

IT: Not equitable, right. Because..I guess it was because of the panic that was done..from all the accounts that I've read it just didn't seem right that they should take everybody's livelihood away and just put them inside, because they were scared of something of that nature. The Japanese-Americans were here and had established themselves, ~~and~~ I don't know how other people may think about it, but I thought at that point that they were very conscientious and very good workers. And that they wouldn't think of you know, going against the country itself, which had given them so much.

RW: I agree.

IT: ~~So~~ <sup>a</sup> to that extent, I think it was some sort of crazy type of situation, where everybody just went sort of ~~wild~~ <sup>turns</sup> and didn't realize..didn't think about the people themselves.. just thought about the..the fear I guess is what did it.

RW: And in a sense - stupidity, because the authorities could have been smarter, ~~maybe..I guess~~

IT: Yeah, there might have been some people who would have done it, but I think they ~~probably~~ <sup>had</sup> files on those people.

RW: Yes.



IT: You know, I'm sure the government has files like the FBI and the CIA and everything right now, and they should have known which people would have been able<sup>to</sup> or would have done something which would have been detrimental to the country itself. And to take everybody in mass didn't seem right.

RW: No, it certainly doesn't.

IT: And that's ~~the thing that~~<sup>what</sup> I feel the worse about.

RW: Does having had your father and mother have this and grandparents have this experience changed you in any way or effected you in any way?

IT: No, I don't think so, I think it made me work a little bit harder.

RW: <sup>Made</sup> MADE you work harder.

IT: Yeah, because I was brought up in the Japanese ethics, which was to strive for what you want, and to take pride in yourself, and at this point it wasn't so much to take pride in your country, but to take pride that I was a Japanese and I was lucky enough to be in America, and to strive to make myself better, and not to try and depend too much on other people to give me things and that's what I've strived and that's what I still believe in. To that extent I think my mother and father bought me up very well.

RW: That's a good ethic.

IT: Yeah, I felt it that way, and I see the ethic changing now with a lot of people.

RW: In what way?

IT: Well, the current generation and the generation just before. I'll put it this way. About 2 generations after myself, you know, the people in their 20's now, and I see a lot of them just putting out their hand and <sup>just</sup> saying you know, you owe me something. And I don't think that is right. That's my personal feelings. I was bought up in this ethic by my parents. There are a lot of other people in my same generation who feel that way. But ~~the~~ current generation seems to be an "I" ethics, moreso than "we." And a lot..of course..the Japanese tend to stick together,



~~RW: The Japanese did what?~~

~~IT: ...stick together.~~

~~RW: couldn't stick together, you say?~~

~~IT: No, do stick together now, moreso than other groups or~~  
nationalities. Now I had a friend who was a Negro, he was a  
colored person, and he told me when we were both about 25 or 30,  
we were both working together and I had known him in Stockton  
and we had come to San Francisco to work, and he says that  
in his group, in his Negro group, if there was a person, who  
was an optometrist or something,

~~RW: AN what?~~

~~IT: an optometrist or some sort of (280) person.~~ If he  
was Negro, he would go to him, but that person would not take into  
account that he himself ~~that~~ he was part of the same race. And  
normally, you know, like in Japanese people, I could go into a  
store, if I was Japanese and the store owner was Japanese, I  
would say I don't have any money, but I can write you a check.  
And I could be from out of town, and that person would say,  
"that's no problem." You're Japanese, so I can trust you.  
Well, this ethic does not hold over for other groups of people,  
like especially the Negro people. And I think that's one of the  
things that I think is nice - the Japanese trust each other to  
that extent. And right now, I think there is a change in the  
Japanese Americans now, the younger ones, becoming more,  
I don't call that Americanized (laughs), or just more like  
everyone else, and pretty soon they <sup>are not going to</sup> ~~won't~~ be able to trust  
each other the way we are doing it right now.

RW: Yeah, I ~~can see~~. I have seen those things myself.

It is interesting..I talked a little to you wife, but not as  
much as I would, <sup>like,</sup> and I may phone her again and I think you..  
if you have anything..well..I would like to call you in a  
couple of months or if ..I tell you..if you do know of anyone  
else who was in Tule Lake besides the people that your wife  
told me - I'd be very grateful if you'd phone me or write me,  
and ask them if ~~them~~ if they want to talk to me.



IT: Okay, I do know a couple of people, but I don't know their addresses at the current time or their phone numbers. There was one person, I think it was Okura, and I think they are in Stockton, but I am not sure. They might have moved to L.A., because their daughter goes to UCLA, and I remember him because he said he was the one who took care of me at one time, ~~You know~~, when my parents ~~said they~~ had to go someplace. So he was there I know that. But I haven't seen him for about 10 years now. I'm not sure if he's back in Stockton or not.

RW: Well, this fellowship goes on a long time, so in the next couple of months, should you run across anyone, why give me a ring and you can call collect, you know, I have the fellowship. Does your wife have my number.

IT: Yeah, she still has your letter, and your number is on there, so there is no problem there.

RW: Yes, and I'd appreciate that. And if there is anything else you want to tell me, why I'd be glad to listen.

IT: Oh, okay, good. We did receive your book. I don't know if she told you that.

RW: No, she didn't.

IT: The fieldwork, you know, we saw some of the entries in there. So, it's sort of interesting. Yeah, it sort of nice to know how my father was you know involved in something of this nature. I really didn't know what he did then because I was so young, and it didn't make any difference to me at that time. But him passing away now, it sort of brings it back more vividly than it would have if he were still alive.

RW: Well, he was a very intelligent and plunky man, you know. I knew him well, and I met him <sup>at</sup> <sup>Sila</sup> in the ~~Hilo~~ Center, and then we corresponded when he was segregated and then when I was able to go to Tule Lake to continue my study, why, he was, I think he was one of the first people I visited. And you know, he and his wife he had even gone out <sup>to Klamath Falls,</sup> ~~(234)~~ some way, he finangled it, to have a delicious cake there for our meeting. Isn't that wonderful?

IT: Yeah, that sounds like my father. He was very conscientious about social <sup>it me</sup> ~~time~~ like that. You know, in a way, I wish I was



more like him myself. Well, my wife is like he is. Out-going and she also is very aware of the social aspect<sup>s</sup> of life, which myself I could almost care less. She takes care of me and I take care of her.

RW: That's very good.

IT: So, I have my own pride and I'm more pride-oriented than anything else.

RW: ~~More fighter, you said?~~

IT: ~~pride.~~

RW: Pride, yes. Good. Was there anything in my book that ~~was struck you~~..you see I really wrote it more to show what can happen to a person when they have a job like I had there, you know. It was very hard on me.

IT: Right, ~~all~~ the field work.

RW: Yeah, in the field work book. But as I say in the book, what helped me was telling myself: ~~well the Japanese, you..~~ let me see. You're here by your own choice, but the Japanese Americans are not. "

IT: You talking about the first generation?

RW: Yes, I'm talking about people in Tule Lake.

IT: Oh, I see.

RW: I said <sup>to myself</sup> I was there ~~by~~ my choice, but these people are not, they can't go out; bad as it is, so..that's how I felt at times.

IT: Yeah, well, I'm sure they felt that way too (laughs).

Because they didn't have their freedom anymore. And I don't know what that felt like, really, because at the time I was 4 years old, I just didn't realize we were being restricted to any place.

RW: What job or profession did you go into?

IT: Oh, I'm a municipal accountant.

RW: ~~A municipal...~~

IT: ~~accountant.~~

RW: ~~accountant, ah, yeah.~~

IT: ~~My~~ My father ..I don't know what he did before the war. I was never really sure. But when we came back, like I said he went into <sup>sort of a</sup> ~~some kind of~~ housekeeping type thing. He worked in small jobs and my mother did the same thing. Then he ~~ended~~ <sup>got</sup>



~~up in~~ this outboard motor job, which really helped him; he really liked it.

RW: That's nice.

IT: ~~You know~~, I think in a way that created a hazard for him, because I think it had a lot to do with leaded fuel being run and I think he got lead poisoning eventually.

RW: Poor man.

IT: Yeah, but he was okay. There was no problem there.

It was just that the cancer got up with him and he couldn't recover from that. So I have to watch myself <sup>now</sup> because both my parents have had cancer, so my brother and myself are watching ourselves very carefully.

RW: Well, I had read that it comes from eating...one kind of cancer from eating ~~un~~ <sup>unhulled</sup> eating whole rice.

IT: That's a possibility. Yeah. We do have rice all the time, <sup>and</sup> the doctor said that the Japanese have cancer of the stomach or something of the intestinal tracts and it is more prevalent <sup>with</sup> ~~in the~~ Japanese, moreso in any other race. Like in other races, I guess you have something with the lungs or something. He said ~~german~~ people have certain other, <sup>you know</sup>, traits, where they get cancer, you know, in some other area.

RW: Can I ask you.. are you intending to bring ~~up~~ up your children according to this ethic that you have?

IT: Yeah, definitely.

RW: How many do you have?

IT: I have 3 boys.

RW: 3 boys. That's nice.

IT: I want them to take pride in themselves, and it's not so much what other people do, it's what they think is right. What they feel <sup>should be</sup> ~~is~~ right, not so much what other people..you know, like peer pressure <sup>or</sup> something of that nature.

I mean that's going to happen no matter what, you know when they get to high school. Peer pressure is going to take over in some extent, <sup>But</sup> I would like them have a background where they can say, well, I don't want to be part of that, because I don't think it's right, <sup>And</sup> as long as I can bring them up in something of that nature, I think I can feel that I did a good job.



RW: Yes. I think so. Well, I can't think of anything else. I don't want to keep you too long here.

IT: Well, if I think of anything else, or if <sup>Helen</sup> thinks of anything else, we'll give you another call back and talk to you again.

RW: Yes, I'm especially interested in talking to anybody who ~~sent of like~~ would like to get this out of their system. ~~I tell you~~ - I notice often when I begin to talk to people who were there, even with <sup>myself</sup> ~~me~~, that at first it is very painful and they are very repressed, but once they begin to let it out, they..we both feel better.

IT: You've talked to <sup>Bill</sup> ~~Jack~~, haven't you?

RW: Yes.

IT: Did you speak to either one of their wives? or husbands? I'm sure that they have wives or husbands who have been there too.

RW: have been there too? Okay, I'll give it a try.

IT: Because I know, ~~Grace~~ his wife was at one of the camps. She is about the same age as <sup>Bill</sup> ~~Jack~~ is. And <sup>you</sup> You know, being in that age group, they would be..and also <sup>Noriko</sup> ~~Noriko~~'s husband I'm sure..maybe he came from Japan..come to think about it.. he might have been in Japan at that time.

*Leave this in -*  
RW: ~~Well, a terrible thing happened when I called Jack. My recorder didn't work. But he~~ <sup>Bill</sup> told me the most wonderful stories. You know, he's a great story teller. Wonderful.

IT: Yeah, he is. He is very out-going. He's a lot like my brother. He's younger and more <sup>?</sup> ~~(412)~~ I guess you might say. He's gregarious too. He's very forward.

RW: <sup>Yes</sup> ~~Yeah~~, I wrote ~~them all~~ <sup>all</sup> down that I could remember and it was great, but I think that in a couple of months I may call him again and have him do it over.

IT: Yeah, give him a call, because he has a lot more..because he was there. They know exactly what happened. I don't remember that many things. I was awfully young then. I guess he..might



have affected my father, but right at the current time, I haven't been thinking about it that much. So it doesn't recall that much on it.

RW: Well, he was a very fine man. I was very impressed..it was one of the nicest talks that I had. But then, I guess I'll say good-bye and I say, you might be hearing from me.

IT: Okay. and we <sup>may</sup>~~might~~ call you back too.

RW: Yes, I'll be very glad to talk to you.

IT: Okay, thank you for calling.

RW: Well, thank you very much.

IT: Okay, we'll talk to you later than. Good-bye.

RW: Good-bye.

End of interview # 438