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Osaki, Wayne

Interview

1981

(Robert Oda)



Robert Oda - December 4, 1981

*wonderful p. 10-1*  
INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT ODA

*Wayne  
Oda  
architect*

Robert Oda

Born: Courtland, California in 1923

Mrs. Oda: Hello?

Rosalie Wax: Hello, is this Mr. Robert Oda?

Mrs. Oda: What?

Rosalie Wax: Robert Oda.

Mrs. Oda: Who is this?

Rosalie Wax: This is Professor Rosalie Wax from St. Louis. Is this Mrs. Oda?

Mrs. Oda: Yes.

Rosalie Wax: I was in Tule Lake as a field worker for a year and a half, and the Rockefeller Foundation has given me a fellowship to see if I could talk to any people who were there about their full life experiences, and I asked \_\_\_\_\_ and he suggested that perhaps your husband would, but if this is not a convenient time, why I can call some other time.

Mrs. Oda: No, you are calling from St. Louis?

Rosalie Wax: Yes.

Mrs. Oda: Hold on for just one moment.

Rosalie Wax: Hello, this is Professor Rosalie Wax from St. Louis and I... as I explained to your wife... I have been given... I was in Tule Lake... I was called Rosalie Hankey then, before I married, and I don't know if you ever saw me there... I was a field worker.

Robert Oda: Sure, which department were you with?

Rosalie Wax: I was with the Evacuation and Resettlement Study of the University of California.

Robert Oda: When you were at Tule Lake?

Rosalie Wax: Yes.

Robert Oda: You were not at the Relocation office?

Rosalie Wax: No, I was not working for the War Relocation... WRA as they called it.

Robert Oda: What I mean is when you were at Tule Lake, where was your office at?

Rosalie Wax: I didn't have an office. I just had a little barrack... that's what the administration gave me.

Robert Oda: Oh, I see.

Rosalie Wax: I just went around talking to people... from about February, 1944 until March, 1945.

Robert Oda: Gee, I don't think I ever met you. I know... the sociologist that was there...

Rosalie Wax: Dr. Marvin Opler was there.

Robert Oda: Opler, yeah, and I knew Mrs. Opler. But I don't know who else in that field anyway. But I know, of course, some of the people who were in the relocation office. I don't know if you remember Mr. Holland.



RW: Mr. Holland? Yes.

RO: There was an assistant there by the name of Barney. Barney something. He's now in Berkeley and I think he is writing something on Tule Lake too.

RW: Well, I don't necessarily intend to publish this. But I do want to talk to people and get a picture of them as human beings going through this experience and leave it to historians. I will write a report for the Rockefeller Foundation. Let me see, can you tell me a little about your life before Pearl Harbor?

RO: I lived near Sacramento in a rural area and was still in high school at that time. My parents were both Japanese language school teachers. I don't know what else to say.

RW: How far had you gone in high school?

RO: Well, I was a junior in high school at the time of Pearl Harbor.

RW: Did you have any special hopes for the future, you know, what you planned to be?

RO: Oh, at that time? Yes. I was very much interested in aeronautics.

RW: In what?

RO: Aeronautical engineering.

RW: This is as good a time to ask; where you were born and when?

RO: Well, I was born in a little town called Courtland, near a town called Courtland, California.

RW: Is that near Sacramento?

RO: Yes, about 25 miles down the river - in 1923.

RW: Do you remember how you felt when the government announced that the Japanese American people were ordered to leave their homes and go to assembly centers?

RO: Well, I couldn't quite believe it actually. We had some thoughts that perhaps my parents might be, because they were enemy aliens. But as a citizen I didn't think that that would ever happen. So it came as quite a shock.

RW: And to which assembly center did they send you?

RO: Well, I was not sent to any assembly center; we went directly to Tule Lake.

RW: Oh, you were sent directly to Tule Lake?

RO: Yeah, because all the assembly centers were filled up by then, and so, we had to wait until Tule Lake was ready and we were the first contingent from California to go to Tule Lake.

RW: Is there anything you remember about the trip or how you felt or your parents?

RO: Well, we were full of apprehension, uncertainty, we didn't know what kind of place it was; we weren't allowed to look outside and we mainly traveled during the night; it was an overnight trip. . .

RW: You were there a long time.

RO: Yes, about 4 years.

RW: Four years, which of . . . or there may be several experiences, that you recall the most strongly, could you tell me about it?

RO: Strongly, in what sense?



RW: Well, that is a good question. Well, you might tell me if anything made you angry or then we can go on to anything that made you happy.

RO: Well, of course, in general when we got to Tule Lake, it was not what I expected. I don't know what I was expecting, but we didn't expect to be fenced in with armed guards and all that sort of thing. We thought it was just a relocation center, that it was a temporary kind of quarters. But it was more like a prison actually. Well, that kind of angered me. . .

RW: Did it look like that when you got there?

RO: Excuse me?

RW: Did it look like a prison when you got there?

RO: Well, it was all that barb-wired fence and guard towers, and barrack after barrack, black tar paper. I don't know what I was expecting, but it was not what I thought it would be.

RW: It was grim; it was a grim place.

RO: It was very, very grim; not a tree in sight; not a grass on the ground. . .some sagebrush. . .anyway, it was very grim atmosphere.

RW: Was there anything that you liked in those first few months?

RO: Yes, I think so, I met a lot of people that I enjoyed meeting with. I was young, and I was interested in meeting a lot of new girls. I enjoyed sports, and all that type of thing.

RW: Did you have a couple of boys who were your friends too?

RO: Oh yeah.

RW: Yes, that was very helpful when things got. . .

RO: Of course. Well, we kind of went into that particular area as a group, so actually most of my friends were with us, so that really helped. I think when you say strong experiences you say or very. . .I felt angered. I guess the first thing was the so-called registration.

RW: Yes, could you tell me what happened to you then. How you felt?

RO: In the beginning, I didn't think much of it, actually they said you only have to register, so I thought, "No big deal." And then we started hearing about this so-called loyalty question, even that. . .I didn't give much thought to, because I was a kid and you know, you don't think about those things anyway. But more and more when the question started to come up. People started to ask what does this actually mean? Do these have a double meaning, you know, and all that sort of thing. And then, I think the director was asked to clarify the meaning. He just flatly refused and anybody who won't come to register would be put into isolation camp.

RW: They really threatened you that way?

RO: Oh yeah.

RW: My goodness. I didn't know that.

RO: That sort of angered me. It was under a threat. . .to have to answer something that without even trying to clarify the question. So that angered me. And in fact quite a few just absolutely refused to answer the question and were taken into isolation camp. I think a few hundred of them, . . .not that many. But I waited till the last minute, so to speak, just held out. I didn't want to go to isolation camp, of course. So I guess out of resentment I said, "No. No." I thought that was the only answer I could give at that time. Just let them know how I felt. So that is how I became a "No. No."



RW: *Makes very good sense.*

RO: *Well, I don't know if it makes sense or not, but at least that's at least how I reacted, as a kid, I guess, that was sort of an understandable reaction.*

RW: *Yes, well you know it's interesting. Not only of the men but of the women I've talked to have this same feeling of resentment of being citizens. . . well maybe I'm putting words into your mouth. It was an insult.*

RO: *Yes, I think that's the way we felt. I think it had become a highly emotional kind of issue and if the director had been a little more reasonable, I don't think it would have ever come to that sort of reaction.*

RW: *Yes, I would agree. It was different and it depended on how it was done in the centers.*

RO: *Oh, yes I think so. Most of the other centers, I think the directors were more understanding. I think that's the reason they didn't have the commotion that Tule Lake had.*

✓ RW: *Yes, I was going to skip a little in time. I could ask you about this uprising in the Daihyo Sha Kai business.*

RO: *That was after the segregation.*

✓ RW: *Yes, that was after the segregation.*

RO: *Well, the so-called riot was. . . people seemed to associate the demonstration that took place about three days prior to that, you know, as part of the riot, but that was entirely two separate things.*

RW: *I agree, all my studies indicate that.*

RO: *Because that demonstration was actually a peaceful demonstration. Dillon Myer. . . to let them know what the conditions of the camp were at that time. The food was very poor and it was right after segregation. A lot of new people came from other camps. They were very dissatisfied with the situation there; and they could not get jobs, or if they did have, they had very menial work, you know, when they left with them. I think there was in fact a lot of resentment against the former Tuleans.*

RW: *How did you feel personally? When it happened. . .*

RO: *You mean at the demonstration itself?*

RW: *Yes, when you were a young, you must have been. . .*

RO: *Well, the demonstration itself. . . I wasn't. . . the one thing that happened prior to that, which led to the demonstration was that the farm workers were killed. . . might have led to the demonstration as one of the grievances. And also the hospital care was very poor and all that sort of thing kind of accumulated I guess, and then that demonstration was held, but that was a very, you know, peaceful demonstration actually. But about 3 days later, what happened was that there was a constant rumor going on that the white staff members of relocation authority was stealing the food out of the warehouse, and was selling it to the black market. I guess it was because the food at that time was very bad; there was hardly any meat at all; for weeks. So, apparently some people were kind of patrolling that area at night and they found somebody taking food out of the warehouse - a couple of Caucasians and there was a truck. Whether they were actually stealing or not, I don't know, but anyway it was suspected and then I guess some arguments happened, and then these two Caucasians just ran into the administration building, apparently, and then the director, I guess. . .*



RW: Mr. Best. . .

RO: Something like that, so the director called up the Army. Of course the Army came in and just knocked down everybody's head that looked Japanese.

RW: Yeah, how did you feel about the Army coming in?

RO: Of course, I was in complete shock, and most of the people that were beaten up were the night crew members of the motor pool, which was in the administration area. They had no idea of what was going on. They were rifle butted and they were slugged, they were hit over the head, and so. . .and then a tank came right in to the. . .well. . .portion that the evacuees lived, and we were actually the closest to that administration area, so we were the first ones who were hit, you might say.

RW: Were you scared?

RO: Yeah, because they were shooting machine guns and all that. I think they were shooting in the air, but they were yelling at everybody to get back into the barrack. Of course some people were just going to the bathroom and all that, and they couldn't go to the bathroom.

RW: My goodness, gosh, that's rough.

RO: . . .THE tanks and armory cars and all those. . .they just came with bayonets.

RW: I wasn't there. . .I didn't get there until after they had the vote and they voted to stop the status quo, you know, and I was. . .was there something you were going to say?

RO: Well, the thing is, you know, that was part of the so-called riot, but actually the only rioting was actually the soldiers. . .not the evacuees. The papers kind of turned the thing around. Actually all the violence was done by the soldiers. The next morning, you see most of the people, we were \_\_\_\_\_ ward I, which was pretty much in the center; people on the fringe area - I don't think the tank went that far. So I don't think most of them even knew about it. In the morning, we all started to go to work, and I guess the Army thought it was another demonstration or something, and they formed this long line of tanks and soldiers, you know. They were trying to stop us from going to work. Of course, most of us could not understand why. I knew there was some kind of incident, I didn't know how serious it was or anything.

RW: That's when they threw tear gas at people, wasn't it?

RO: Right, in fact it was thrown at me, and one of them hit the girl who was standing right next to me on the forehead and it just about knocked her out. Of course, that really angered me. . .that tear gas is something that I experienced for the first time, but it's not just that you get tears in your eyes, but you can't breathe.

RW: I'd like to skip ahead in history, because I got there in February, 1944. . .it for a while it looked like things were going to go fairly good and then there was this dreadful thing. . .do you remember the Co-op head, Mr. Hitomi was murdered? I was going to ask how you felt about that personally. What your feelings were.

RO: Well, it was a shocking thing to happen. The thing that concerned me most was my brother was an assistant, the manager at that time, right under Mr. Hitomi, and naturally my brother became the manager after the murder. Of course, one of the rumors was that he was killed because he was the manager. Some people resented the Co-op was making a profit off of the evacuees and all that sort of thing. So I was very concerned about my brother.



- RW: Yes, there were rumors and there had been a number of people beaten up, I remember, who the gossip and rumors was that they were inu, you know.
- RO: Oh yes, well the people who were part of the Co-op, or working for the Co-op were considered part of that conspiracy to make profit off of the people in these camps and all that sort of thing. That was just part of the resentment, that was directed in every direction. I think most of the resentment came from people who were transferred from the other camps, not so much on the former Tuleans. So that was my personal experience: my concern for my brother's welfare and what might possibly happen to him, now that he took over Mr. Hitomi's position.
- RW: Your brother took over Hitomi's position? That really took guts to, you know. They had that list - number one inu, you know, that people talked about.
- RO: Oh yeah, right. Well actually my concern was how it would look upon our family as a whole in fact. I was also working at the administration at that time too.
- RW: What did you work at there?
- RO: Well, I was part of. . .the office for the farm produce, mostly recording of it, I guess.
- RW: Did you know Bob Tsuruda?
- RO: No.
- RW: He wasn't in the office, but--I know he was working in the mess--helping with the distributing of the food. He was a friend of mine.
- RO: Oh, I see.
- RW: Do you remember the people - of course who could forget the people - a lot of people called the "hardheads." And then at the end they even began to shave their heads?
- RO: Oh yeah.
- RW: And from my experience as a field worker, they just kept putting more and more pressure on people. I should ask if you recall and how you felt about them.
- RO: Yeah, I think that group started out as more of an educational sort of, cultural study group.
- RW: Yes, it started out as an educational, Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen dan.
- RO: For people who were going back to Japan, especially the Japanese Americans who were not familiar with the Japanese culture and all that sort of thing to get them somewhat prepared for life in Japan, I guess. That was the whole idea, and so some of these people did join in; some of my friends did too.
- RW: You didn't join it?
- RO: No, well actually I was not, you know, planning to go back to Japan; that's the reason I had no part of it.
- RW: Yeah, that makes good sense.
- RO: But I did go to Japanese language school for a while - night school.
- RW: Yes, they had four different schools; some weren't radical and some were.
- RO: Yeah, this was the one that was actually approved by the administration.
- RW: Yeah, I remember that one. I forget its name, but I remember.
- RO: However, that supposed study group turned into more and more radical; or I think the leadership became more radical; more political and they started exercising in the morning, that sort of thing. That used to irritate me, because it was so early in the morning and wake me up. But some of my friends in that group never hurt me or anything like that.



RW: You mean, you could still socialize and get along with your friends who were in that group?

RO: Yeah, I don't think we got into any arguments, that I recall.

RW: Gee, that's interesting.

RO: Well, they were doing their own thing, you know, and I wasn't about to get dragged into it. Socially, I think we were still friends, and I don't think these people were as radical - my friends were anyway, maybe they felt that they were trapped into it themselves and could not get out now that they were in.

RW: Yeah, that happened later on. Many people felt trapped and were scared to leave.

RO: Right.

RW: That was. . . especially when the renunciation of citizenship was put up, you know.

RO: Right, so at least the people that I knew were not--did not pressure me personally. I think the leadership probably did.

RW: Looking back, what are about the most pleasant things that you can remember about Tule Lake? Was there something that made you happy or you really enjoyed?

RO: Well, I guess I enjoyed sports, being young and of course the social dances and that type of thing. I think I met a lot of nice people. I think that is one of the things that made things a little easier to go through.

RW: No doubt of that.

RO: We encouraged each other. I think one of the big things was the boredom, I suppose. . .

RW: The big thing was the boredom?

RO: Yeah, I didn't like the boredom.

RW: Did you find that about one of the worst things to stand?

RO: Yeah, I think so, there really is no place to go, you know, once in a while there was entertainment, this and that. But the fact that you are cooped up in a very small area, really tends to get you. And not only boredom but the frustration starts to get to you.

RW: Frustration. . . in what way. . . could you explain a little?

RO: Well, frustration in the sense that you can't really plan for the future and what is going to happen to us and the fact that it was very depressing - circumstances physically as well as mentally and psychologically - there was nothing very uplifting about it at all.

RW: Well, it was like in some ways like a prison.

RO: Well, I think I felt prisoners probably feel the same way too. The freedom is really what you cherish.

RW: You know, I was walking through the camp once and I saw a little three or four year old child hanging onto the fence and desperately looking out, and you know I wish I had a camera right then, you know. They wouldn't let you bring in cameras. Because it was one of the saddest-real expressions of, you know, the kid wanted to run around and be happy.

RO: You know, I used to go to the outskirts and look out toward the farms in the distance and wishing to be out there.



- RW: Now I'd like to ask some questions about how you felt after leaving Tule Lake and what you did.
- RO: Well, of course when I left Tule Lake, I just wanted to forget the whole thing and start new \_\_\_\_\_ and hope I could make a better world some way.
- RW: How did you manage to finish high school?
- RO: No, I finished high school in camp.
- RW: Oh, I see.
- RO: I applied for student relocation at one time, but none of the schools that I applied for would accept me; or they just didn't answer me. That sort of thing was very depressing also.
- RW: This was after you left?
- RO: No, no, this was during the time I was in camp. But after I left, of course, I went to San Francisco. And then I worked for a while as a houseboy, you know, and that sort of thing; dishwasher. And then I went to City College and worked part time, and then I went to University of California and then I graduated in architecture. And then I started to work in that field. I became an architect.
- RW: You are now an architect. You stuck with it. Got to hand it to you.
- RO: Thank you. I think one of the things that I'd like to mention was one of the most difficult experience was that I was thrown into the stockade right after the so-called riot.
- RW: You were thrown into the stockade? Oh my God. How did that happen?
- RO: Well, it happened as more of an accident. It so happened that in our neighborhood there were a couple of young fellows who were quite clever with radios, and I don't know how he did it, but he assembled kind of a miniature broadcasting system.
- RW: Yeah, some people did that.
- RO: Yeah, I don't know where he got the parts or anything, but apparently he did. He thought he was doing a great favor by playing the Japanese records for the people in the camp; because not too many people brought in records because we could only bring in what you could carry. Well, our family had a few records.
- RW: Yeah.
- RO: I think my mother lent them to him. I didn't know this at that time. But the thing is that people in Tule Lake or the surrounding town<sup>1</sup> started to pick up this Japanese music. They thought someone was sending out secret message or something (laughs) to Japan or something like that. Anyway, the soldiers came around and trying to find where it was coming from and finally located this one barrack. And then I guess they noticed some of the records with our name on them.
- RW: Gosh, and you were put in the stockade for that.
- RO: So they came to our barrack and I was the only one there; my parents were there, but I was the only one who could speak English, so I was the one who naturally responded to them. They asked me about the records and I said I didn't know anything about it. Because I didn't at that time. Then they started to search the whole barrack and then they said "come along." I thought that they just wanted me to walk outside and ask another question or something. Well, then they ordered me onto the truck and took me to their Army compound and for about

1. A small town called Tulelake was located a few miles from the Segregation Center.



all night I was in one room. I thought they were going to question me, but they never did. They left one guard there with a gun in his hand, and then they took me to the stockade. I didn't know what it was; they just told me to go into the gate. It was a very dark night; pitch-dark night and they closed those gates behind me. So I really got kind of angry.

RW: Gee, how long did they keep you. Excuse me, go ahead.

RO: They didn't even give me a chance to explain. But there was nothing that I could do, so and there was only a tent in there, so I just sort of slept it out in the tent.

RW: I'm sorry I didn't get that.

RO: Well, this was a stockade; a couple of tents with a barbed wire fence around.

RW: There were just tents to sleep in. Must have been. . .

RO: Then I started hearing a voice in the dark, and then I found out these were the people that were beaten up at the night of the so-called riot.

RW: Gee, do you remember when this happened?

RO: When?

RW: What month?

RO: Yeah, this was early November.

RW: Early November.

RO: And it was about a week after the riot. But anyway there was about 6 people all bruised up; one person had his head all split up; black eye. Anyway, they were very severely beaten up. There was one 15 or 16 year old kid, who was hanging around the motor pool that night, he was dragged in too, but he was not beaten up. All the others were very severely beaten up.

RW: How long did they keep you in the stockade?

RO: I was there about a month and I thought they were going to ask me some questions, but they never did.

RW: They never did.

RO: But the hard part was - well it was extremely cold.

RW: Oh yes. It was very cold.

RO: Tule Lake, because I still remember the blanket used to get stiff from being frozen.

RW: Oh gosh.

RO: But the thing is, when they used to take us to the messhalls, the Army messhalls - well, every time they do that they'd load up their guns and surround us and warn us that one false move and you could be dead, that sort of a thing. And even when we were eating, we were given leftover food from the soldiers after they had their meal. They still keep their guns pointed to our back; not very comfortable way of having a meal.

RW: You eat with a gun at your back. Gee, did they even come in and watch you in the latrine?

RO: Oh yes. They came right in and pointed a gun at me. . . (?) I stopped going to the toilets there, so we just had to dig holes in the tent. At night time they would throw rocks at us. One time tear gas was thrown in. It was an extremely difficult (?)



RW: How did you manage to cope with that?

RO: Well, we just had to do it. . .

RW: Well, it seems to me a real trauma, you know - so unfair.

RO: It was, but after about two weeks, they started picking up so many other people for the compound that we were moved into a larger, a regular barrack. That was much better. There was a shower; the soldiers would stay outside of the barbed wire fence, so we were left alone inside at least.

RW: Now we are getting near the end of my tape here. . . I was going to ask you a little happier question. Very different. Looking back, what was the most helpful thing you learned about your fellow human beings? would you say. . .

RO: Well, I think that I realized that not all people hated us. I think there was some people who came from outside, non-Japanese, you know Americans, some were teachers, some were the administration that genuinely wanted to help us.

RW: Yes, there were some like that.

RO: I thought not everybody hated us and also I started to take in Christianity in camp. And I started to realize that God loves us regardless of. . .

RW: I'm sorry, I didn't quite hear that. . .

RO: . . . that God loves us in spite of who we are. That, I think, helped me a great deal. Prior to that I was pretty much a non-religious person. Some of these hardships sort of led me to try to find some kind of answer to life and meaning.

RW: Were you saying that you joined a church?

RO: Yes, it was then when I became a Christian.

RW: Well, that's a nice note to end on. I did want to ask you: are there any other Japanese Americans that you know, who were in Tule Lake who might want, who might be willing to talk to me?

RO: Well, I think so.

RW: Could you give me their names and if you have their telephone numbers - great, otherwise. . .

RO: Well, let's see, I wonder if I have one right now. . . Well, while I'm looking for this. First, I went through the renunciation process too, and that was a mainly a reaction again, and I was very depressed during that period. In fact I thought I was coming down with a mental breakdown almost at that point.

RW: You said you almost had a mental breakdown?

RO: Well, I was getting all these dizzy spells and ringing in my head and all of that sort of thing; couldn't concentrate or remember anything. I was in pretty bad shape for a while.

RW: That was a terrible time in camp. I wasn't Japanese American, but I just couldn't help--it was a very difficult thing to talk to people--they were so anxious. It makes me cry to think of it.

RO: Well, it was a very, very difficult, trying time. I'll give you the name of \_\_\_\_\_ . I don't know if you've talked with him already or not.

RW: No, I haven't. \_\_\_\_\_ I have that. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ gave me that.

RO: Oh, I see. He was in stockade too. He came from Topaz. He was not the original.

RW: When I called him, he wasn't in, so I'll try to call him over the weekend sometime or in the evening. Is there anyone else?



RO: *Well, let me see. Offhand I can't think of anyone. If you could give me your phone number or address.*

(I gave phone number and address. R.W.)



December 4, 1981

Wage O saki

Unit type.

Robert Oda

Born: Courtland, Calif. In 1923.

Mrs. Oda Hello?

RW: Hello, is this Mr. Robert Oda?

What?

RW: Robert Oda?

Mrs. Oda Who is this?

RW: This is Professor Rosalie Wax from St. Louis, and ~~Dr. Uyeda~~  
~~suggested..~~ Is this Mrs. Oda?

Mrs. Oda Yes.

RW; ~~She suggested that perhaps your husband, well I should begin~~  
~~this way.~~ I was in Tule Lake as a field worker for a year and  
a half, and the Rockefeller Foundation has given me a ~~small~~  
fellowship to see if I could talk to any people who were there  
about their full life experiences, and I asked ~~Dr. Uyeda~~ and  
she suggested that perhaps your husband would, but if this is  
not a convenient time, why I can call some other time.

Mrs. Oda: No, you are calling from St. Louis?

RW; Yes.

Mrs. Oda: Hold on for just one moment.

RW: Hello, this is Professor Rosalie Wax from St. Louis and  
I .. as I explained to your wife.. I have been given ..I was  
in Tule Lake...I was called Rosalie Hankey then, before I  
married, and I don't know if you ever saw me there...I was a  
field worker.

RO: Sure, which department were you with?

RW: I was with the Evacuation and Resettlement Study of  
the University of California.

RO: When you were at Tule Lake?

RW: Yes.

RO: You were not at the Relocation office?

RW: No, I was not working for the War Relocation..WRA as they  
called it.

RO: What I mean is when you were at Tule Lake, where was  
your office at?

RW: I didn't have an office. I just had a little barrack..  
that's what the administration gave me.

RO: Oh, I see.



RW: ~~And I was~~..I just went around talking to people ~~about~~..  
from <sup>about</sup> February, 1944 until March, 1945.

RO: Gee, I don't think I ever met you, ~~anyway~~. I know..the sociologist that was there...

RW: Dr. Marvin Opler was there.

RO: Opler, yeah, and I knew Mrs. Opler. But I don't know who else in that field anyway. But I know, of course, some of the people <sup>who were</sup> in the relocation office. I don't know if you remember, Mr. Holland.

RW: Mr. Holland? Yes.

RO: There was an assistant there by the name of Barney, Barney something. He's now in Berkeley and I think he is writing something on Tule Lake too.

RW: Well, I don't necessary <sup>intend</sup> intend to publish this, But I do want to talk to people and get a picture of them as human beings going through this experience and leave it ~~sort of~~ to historians, and I may ~~just~~ <sup>write</sup> write a report for the Rockefeller Foundation, ~~and~~.

~~I'm 70 years old, so I have to take care.~~

Let me see, can you tell me a little about your life before Pearl Harbor?

RO: I lived near Sacramento in a rural area and was still in high school at that time. My parents were both Japanese language school teachers. I don't know what else to say.

RW: How did they earn their...well, you told me that, you already anticipated my question, how your parents earned their living, both Japanese high school teachers.

RO: No, Japanese language school teachers. <sup>omit</sup>

RW: Oh pardon me, I get nervous when I start an interview.

I'll cool down. Japanese language school teachers. And so

How far had you gone in high school?

RO: Well, I was a junior in high school at the time of Pearl Harbor.



RW: Did you have any special hopes for the future, you know, what you planned to be?

RO: Oh, at that time? Yes. I was very much interested in aeronautics.

RW: In what?

RO: Aeronautical engineering.

RW: This is as good a time to ask; where you were born and when?

RO: Well, I was born in a little town called Courtland, near a town called Courtland, California.

RW: Is that near Sacramento?

RO: Yes, about 25 miles down the river - in 1923.

RW: You were fairly young, yes well you were a junior in high school. Now let me get page 2. Let me get a slug of water here. *omit*

Do you remember how you felt when the government announcement that the Japanese-American people were ordered to leave their homes and go to assembly centers?

RO: Well, I couldn't quite believe it actually. We had some thoughts that perhaps my parents might be, because they were *enemy* aliens. But as a citizen I didn't think that that would ever happen. So it came as quite a shock.

RW: And to which assembly center did they send you?

RO: Well, I was not sent to any assembly center; we went directly to Tule Lake.

RW: Oh, you were sent directly to Tule Lake?

RO: Yeah, because all the assembly centers were filled up by then, and so, we had to wait until Tule Lake was ready and we were the first contingent from California to go to Tule Lake.

RW: Is there anything that is especially vivid in your mind about the assembly centers? *omit*

RO: You mean Tule Lake center.

RW: Is there anything you remember about the trip or how you felt or your parents?



RO: Well, we were full of apprehension, uncertainty, we didn't know what kind of place it was; we weren't allowed to look outside and we mainly traveled during the night; it was ~~not~~ an overnight trip..

✓ RW: Which of your experiences in Tule Lake then, because you were there a long time.

RO: Yes, about 4 years.

RW: 4 years, which of <sup>in there</sup> may be ~~there were~~ several experiences, that you recall the most strongly, could you tell me about it?

RO: Strongly, in what sense?

RW: Well, that is a good question. Well, you might tell me if anything made you angry or then we can go on to anything that made you happy.

RO: Well, of course, in general when we got to Tule Lake, it was not what I expected. I don't know what I was expecting, but we didn't expect to be fenced in with armed guards and all that sort of thing. We thought it was just a relocation center, ~~in the sense~~ that it was a temporary kind of quarters. But it was more like a prison actually. Well, that kind of angered me..

RW: Did it look like that when you got there?

RO: Excuse me?

RW: Did it look like a prison when you got there?

RO: Well, it was all that barb-wired fence and guard towers, and barrack after barrack, black tar paper. I don't know what I was expecting, but it was not what I thought it would be.

RW: It was grim; it was a grim place.

RO: It was <sup>very very</sup> grim; not a tree in sight; not a grass on the ground..some sagebrush..anyway, it was very grim atmosphere.

RW: Was there any thing that you liked in those first few months?

RO: Yes, I think so, I met a lot of people that I enjoyed meeting with. I was young, and I was interested in meeting a lot of new girls. I enjoyed sports, and all that type of thing.



RW: Did you have a ~~kind of~~ couple of boys who were your friends <sup>two</sup>?

RO: Yes. Oh yeah.

RW: Yes, that was very helpful when <sup>things got</sup>...

RO: Of course, well we kind of went into that particular area as a group, so actually <sup>most of</sup> ~~in fact~~ my friends were with us, so that really helped. I think when you say strong experiences

you say or very..I felt angered. I guess the first thing was <sup>the</sup> ~~so-called~~ <sup>so-called</sup> ~~focal~~ registration.

RW: Yes, could you tell me what happened to you then, how you felt?

RO: In the beginning, I didn't think much of it, actually they said you only have to register, so I thought, <sup>no</sup> big deal, <sup>and</sup> then we started hearing about this so-called loyalty question, even that..I didn't give much thought to, because I was a kid and you know, you don't think about those things anyway. But more and more when the question started to come up. People started to ask what does this actually mean, <sup>do</sup> ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> have a double meaning, you know, and all that sort of thing. And then, I think the director was asked to <sup>clarify</sup> ~~clarify~~ the meaning. He just flatly refused and anybody who won't come to register would be put into isolation camp.

RW: They really threatened you that way?

RO: Oh yeah.

RW: My goodness. I didn't know that.

RO: That sort of angered me. <sup>it was</sup> under a threat.. to have to answer something that without even <sup>trying</sup> ~~having~~ to clarify the question.. <sup>just absolutely</sup> So that angered me, <sup>and</sup> in fact quite a few <sup>just absolutely</sup> refused to answer the question and were taken into isolation camp. I think a few hundred of them, ~~I'm not~~..not that many, But I waited till the last minute, <sup>to</sup> ~~sort of~~ speak, just held out. I didn't want to go to isolation camp, of course, <sup>so</sup> I guess out of resentment I said "No, No." I thought that was the only answer I could give at that time. Just let them know how I felt. So that is how I became a "No, No."



RW: Makes very good sense.

RO: <sup>all</sup> Well, I don't know if it makes sense or not, but <sup>at least</sup> that's at least how I reacted, as a kid, I guess, that was sort of an understandable reaction.

RW: Yes, well you know it's interesting, not only of the men but of the women I've talked to ~~have~~ this same feeling of resentment of being citizens..well maybe I'm putting words into your mouth..<sup>was an</sup> ~~It's an~~ insult.

RO: Yes, I think that's the way we felt. I think it ~~had~~ <sup>was an</sup> become a highly emotional kind of issue and if the director had been a little more reasonable, I don't think it would have <sup>ever</sup> come to <sup>that sort of</sup> reaction..

RW: Yes, I would agree. It was different and it depended on how it was done in the centers.

RO: Oh, yes I think so. Most of the other centers, I think the directors were more understanding. I think that's the reason they didn't have the commotion that Tule Lake had.

RW: Yes, I was going to skip a little in time, ~~let me see,~~ I could either. I could ask you about this uprising in ~~this~~ <sup>The</sup> Daijyo Sha Kai (1957) business.

RO: That was after the segregation.

RW: Yes, that was after <sup>the</sup> segregation now.

RO: Well, the so-called riot was..people seemed to associate the demonstration that took place about <sup>three</sup> 3 days prior to that, you know, as part of the riot, but that was entirely <sup>two</sup> 2 separate things.

RW: I agree, all my studies indicate that.

RO: Because that demonstration was actually a peaceful demonstration. <sup>Dillon Meyer</sup> The ~~The~~ (191) to let them know what the conditions of the camp were at that time. The food was very poor and it was right after segregation. A lot of new people came from other camps, They were very dissatisfied



with the situation there; and ~~many~~<sup>them</sup> could not get jobs, or if they did have, they had very menial work, you know, when they left with them. I think there was in fact a lot of resentment against the former Tuleans.

RW: How did you feel personally? when it happened..

RO: You mean at the demonstration itself?

RW: ~~Yeah~~<sup>Yes</sup>, when you were a young, you must have been..

RO: Well, the demonstration itself..I wasn't..the one thing that happened prior to that, which led to the demonstration was that the farm workers were killed..

~~RW: Yes, the farm workers were killed, yeah, I know about that.~~

~~RO:~~ ..might have led to the demonstration as one of the grievances, and also the hospital care was very poor and all that sort of thing kind of accumulated I guess, and then that demonstration was held, but that was a very, you know, peaceful demonstration actually. But about 3 days later, what happened was that there was a constant rumor going on that the white staff members of relocation authority was stealing the food out of the warehouse, and was selling it to the black market. I guess <sup>it was because</sup> the food at that time was very bad; there was hardly any meat at all; for weeks. So, apparently <sup>some</sup> people were kind of patrolling that area at night and they found somebody taking food out of the warehouse - a couple of Caucasians and there was a truck. Whether they were actually stealing or not, I don't know, but anyway it was suspected and then I guess some arguments happened, and then these two Caucasians just ran into the administration building, apparently, and then the director, I guess..

RW: Mr. Best..

RO: Something like that, so the director called up the <sup>A</sup> army. Of course the <sup>A</sup> army came in and <sup>just</sup> knocked <sup>down</sup> everybody's head that looked Japanese.



RW: Yeah, how did you feel about the Army coming in?

RO: Of course, I was in complete shock, and most of the people <sup>that</sup> ~~who~~ were beaten up were the night crew members of the motor pool, which was in the administration area.

They had no idea of what was going on. They were rifle <sup>they were slugged</sup> butted and ~~slugs~~, they were hit over the head, and so... <sup>and then</sup>

A tank came right in to the ..well..portion <sup>that</sup> ~~where~~ the evacuees lived, and we were actually the closest to that administration area, so <sup>we</sup> were the first one who were hit, you might say.

RW: Were you scared?

RO: Yeah, because they were shooting machine guns and all that. I think they were shooting in the air, but they were yelling at everybody to get back in to the barrack. Of course some people were just going to the bathroom and all that, and they couldn't go to the bathroom.

RW: My goodness, gosh, that's rough.

RO: ..THE <sup>tanks</sup> TANKS and armory cars and all those... <sup>they just</sup> came with bayonets.

RW: I wasn't there..I didn't get there until after ~~the~~ they had the vote and they voted to stop the status quo, you know, and I was..was there something you were going to say?

RO: Well, the thing is, you know, that was part of the so-called riot, but actually the only rioting <sup>was actually</sup> ~~occurred~~ after the soldiers..not the evacuees. The papers kind of turned the thing around. Actually all the violence was done by the soldiers. The next morning, you see most of the people, we were ? ward I, which was pretty much in the center; people on the fringe area - I don't think the tank went that far. So I don't think most of them even knew about it. In the morning, <sup>we all</sup> ~~most of us~~ started to go to work, and I guess the army thought it was another demonstration or something, and they formed this long line of tanks and soldiers, you know, They were trying to stop us from going to work. Of course, most of us could not understand why. I knew there was some kind of incident, I didn't know how serious it was or anything.

RW: That's when they threw tear gas at people, wasn't it?

RO: Right, in fact it was thrown at me, and one of them hit



the girl who was standing right next to me on the forehead and it just about knocked her out. Of course, that really angered me...that tear gas <sup>is something</sup> that I experienced for the first time, but it's not just that you get tears in your eyes, but you can't breathe.

RW: I'd like to skip ahead here, ~~let me just check my...~~

~~this kind of slips sometimes.. Okay. I'd like to skip ahead~~

ahead in history, <sup>because</sup> as I got there in February, 1944..it <sup>for a while</sup>

it looked like things were going to go fairly good and then there was this dreadful thing..do you remember the Go-op head, Mr. Hatomi was murdered? I was going to ask how you felt about that personally. What your feelings were?

RO: Well, it was a shocking thing to happened. The thing that concerned me most was my brother, ~~who~~ was an assistant, the manager at that time, right under Mr. Hatomi, and naturally my brother became the manager after the murder. Of course, one of the rumors was that he was killed because he was the manager. Some people resented the Corp (203) was making a profit off of the evacuees and all that sort of thing. So I was very concerned about my brother.

RW: Yes, there were rumors and there had been a number of people beaten up, I remember, who ~~were~~ the gossip <sup>and</sup> rumors was that they were <sup>in</sup> ~~on~~, you know.

RO: <sup>Oh y</sup> Yes, well the people who were part of the Go-op, or working for the Go-op were considered part of that conspiracy to make profit off <sup>of</sup> the people in these camps and all that sort of thing. That was just part of the resentment, that was directed <sup>in every</sup> to ~~any~~ direction. I think most of the resentment came from ~~these~~ people who were transferred from the other camps, not so much on the former Tuleans. So that was my personal experience: <sup>3</sup> my concern for my brother's welfare and what might possibly happen to him, now that he took over Mr. Hatomi's position.



RW: Your brother took over Hatomi's position?

~~Oh yeah, gee~~ that really took guts to, you know, They had that list - number one <sup>one</sup> ~~and~~, you know, that people talked about.

<sup>right. Well actually</sup>  
RO: Oh yeah, my concern was how it would look upon our family as a whole in fact. I was also working at the administration at that time too.

RW: ~~You were also working.~~ What did you work at there?

RO: Well, I was part of..the office for the farm ~~of~~ produce, mostly recording of it, I guess.

<sup>Bob Isomura? RO: No, RW:</sup>  
RW: Did you know Jimmie Takeushi ~~he may have~~ He wasn't in the office, but--I know he was working in the mess-- helping with the distributing of the food ~~and~~ <sup>he</sup> was a friend of mine.

RO: Oh, I see.

RW: ~~Yeah, that makes-let's skip on a little and ask about-~~

Do you remember the people, of course who could forget the people - a lot of people called the "hardheads." And then at the end they even began to shave their heads?

RO: Oh yeah.

RW: And from my experience as a field worker, they just kept putting more and more pressure on people. I should ask if you recall and <sup>how</sup> ~~what~~ you felt about them.

RO: Yeah, I think that group started out as more of an educational sort of, cultural study group.

RW: Yes, it started out as an educational, <sup>Sokoku Kankyo Seinen don</sup> ~~(33)~~

<sup>For</sup> RO: ~~A~~ people who were going back to Japan, especially the Japanese Americans, who were not familiar with the Japanese culture and all that sort of thing to get them somewhat prepared for life in Japan, I guess. That was the whole idea, and so some of these people did join in; some of my friends did too.

RW: You didn't join it?



RO: No, well actually I was not, you know , planning to go back to Japan; that's the reason I had no part of it.

RW: Yeah, that makes good sense.

RO: But I did go to Japanese language school for a while - night school.

RW: Yeah, they had <sup>four</sup> different schools; some weren't radical and some were.

RO: Yeah, this was the one that was actually approved by the administration.

RW: Yeah, I remember that one. I forget its name, but I remember.

RO: <sup>However,</sup> ~~Yeah,~~ that supposed study group turned into more and more radical; <sup>or I think</sup> ~~where~~ the leadership became more radical; more political and they started exercising in the morning, that sort of thing. That used to irritate me, because it was so early in the morning and wake me up. But some of my friends in that group ~~were~~ never hurt me or anything like that.

RW: You mean, you could still <sup>socialize and</sup> ~~try to~~ get along with your friends who were in that group?

RO: Yeah, I don't think we got into any arguments, that I recall.

RW: Gee, that's interesting.

RO: Well, they were doing their own thing, you know, and I wasn't about to get dragged into it. Socially, I think we were still friends, and I don't think these people were as radical - my friends were anyway, maybe they felt that they were trapped into it themselves and could not get out now that they were in.

RW: Yeah, that happened later on. Many people felt trapped and were scared to leave. That was .. especially. when the renunciation of citizenship was put up, you know.

RO: Right  
RW:

RO: <sup>Right, so</sup> ~~So~~ at least the people that I knew were not--did not pressure me personally. I think the leadership probably did.



RW: ~~gee, well~~ looking back, ~~I just like to talk about some.~~  
what are about the most pleasant things that you can remember  
about Tule Lake? ~~I just like--if there~~ <sup>there</sup> ~~was~~ something that made  
you happy or you really enjoyed.

RO: Well, I guess I enjoyed sports, being young and of course  
the social dances and that type of thing. I think I met a lot  
of nice people. I think that is one of the things that made  
things a little easier to go through.

RW: No doubt of that.

RO: We encouraged each other. I think one of the big things  
was the boredom, I suppose..

RW: <sup>P</sup>The big thing was the boredom.

RO: Yeah, I didn't like the boredom.

RW: Did you find that <sup>about</sup> one of the worst things to <sup>stand</sup> ~~spend~~?

RO: Yeah, I think so, ~~because~~ there really is no place to go,  
you know, once in a while there was entertainment,  
this and that. But the fact that you are cooped up in a very  
small area, really tends to get you. <sup>←</sup>

~~RW: Yeah, that was...~~

RO: And not only boredom but the frustration started <sup>s</sup> to get  
~~at you.~~ <sup>to you.</sup>

RW: ~~How was~~ frustration..in what way..could you explain a  
little?

RO: Well, frustration in the sense that you can't really  
plan for the future and what is going to happen to us and  
the fact the it was very depressing - circumstances physically  
as well as mentally <sup>and</sup> psychologically - there was nothing very  
uplifting about it at all.

RW: Well, it was like in some ways like a prison.

RO: Well, I think I felt prisoners <sup>probably feel</sup> ~~felt~~ the same way too.  
The freedom is ~~what~~ <sup>what</sup> really you cherish.

RW: You know, I was walking through the camp once and I  
saw a little <sup>three</sup> ~~3~~ or <sup>four</sup> ~~4~~ year old child hanging onto the fence  
and desperately looking out, and you know I wish I had a  
camera right then, you know, ~~They~~ wouldn't let you bring  
in cameras, ~~Because~~ it was one of the saddest-real expressions  
of, you know, the kid wanted to run around and be happy.



RO: You know, I used to go to the outskirts and look out toward the farms in the distance and wishing to be out there.

RW: Now I'd like to ask <sup>some</sup> ~~how~~ <sup>about</sup> ~~let me see~~ ~~I'd like to ask~~ questions <sup>about</sup> how you felt after leaving Tule Lake and what you did.

RO: Well, of course when I left Tule Lake, I <sup>just</sup> wanted to forget the whole thing and start new - <sup>?</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>(425)</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>and hope</sup> I could make a better world some way.

RW: ~~Oh, you wanted to..and what..~~ How did you manage to finish high school ~~and what..let's see.~~

RO: No, I finished high school in camp.

RW: Oh, I see.

RO: I applied for student relocation at one time, but none of the schools that I applied for would accept me; or they just didn't answer me. That sort of thing was very depressing <sup>also.</sup>

RW: This was after you left?

RO: No, no, this was during the time I was in camp. <sup>But after</sup> I left, <sup>and then</sup> of course, I went to San Francisco. I worked for a while as a houseboy, you know, and that sort of thing; dishwasher. ~~And~~ <sup>And</sup> then I went to City College and worked part time, and then I went to University of California <sup>then</sup> and I graduated in architecture. <sup>And then</sup> I started to work in that field. I became an architect.

RW: You are now an architect. You stuck with it. Got to hand it to you.

RO: Thank you. I think one of the things that I'd like to mention was one of the most difficult experience was that I was thrown into the stockade right after the <sup>so-called</sup> riot.

RW: You were thrown into the stockade? Oh my God. How did that happen?

RO: Well, it happened as more of an accident. It so happened that in our neighborhood there were a couple of young fellows who were quite clever with radios, and I don't know how he did it, but he assembled kind of a miniature broadcasting system.

RW: Yeah, some people did that.

RO: Yeah, I don't know where he got the parts or anything, but apparently he did. He thought he was doing a great favor by playing the Japanese records for the people in the camp; because not too many people brought in records because we could only bring in what you could carry. Well, our family had a few records.



RW: Yeah.

RO: I think my mother lent them to him. I didn't know this at that time. But the thing is that ~~people in~~ <sup>people in</sup> ~~pointed to~~ Tule Lake or the surrounding town, ~~we~~ <sup>1</sup> started to pick up ~~the~~ <sup>this</sup> Japanese music. They thought someone was sending out secret message or something (laughs)/or something like that. Anyway, the soldiers came around and trying to find where it was coming from and finally located this one barrack. And then I guess they noticed some of the records with our name on them.

RW: Gosh, and you were put in the stockade for that.

RO: So they came to our barrack and I was the only one there; my parents were there, but I was the only one who could speak English, so I was the one who naturally responded to them. They asked me about the records and I said I didn't know anything about it. Because I didn't at that time. Then they started to search the whole barrack and then they said "come along." I thought that they just wanted me to walk outside and ask another question or something. Well, then they ordered me onto the truck and took me to the <sup>1</sup> army compound and for about ~~the~~ <sup>all</sup> whole night I was in one room. I thought they were going to <sup>question</sup> ~~explain~~ to me, but they never did. They left one guard there with a gun in his hand, and then they took me to the stockade. I didn't know what it was; they just told me to go into the gate. It was a very dark night; pitch-dark night and they closed those gates behind me. So I really got kind of angry.

RW: Gee, how long did they keep you? Excuse me, go ahead.

RO: They didn't even give me a chance to explain. But there was nothing that I could do, so and there was only a tent in there, so I just sort of slept it out in the tent.

RW: I'm sorry I didn't get that.

RO: Well, this was a stockade; <sup>5</sup> a couple of tents with a barbed wire fence around.

RW: <sup>in</sup> There were just tents to sleep in. Must have been..

- 
1. A small town called Tulelake was located a few miles from the Segregation Center.



Then  
RO: I started hearing <sup>a</sup> voice in the dark, and then I found out these were the people <sup>that</sup> who were beaten up <sup>at</sup> in the night of the ~~for the riot, so-called riot.~~

RW: Gee, do you remember when this happened?

RO: When?

RW: What month?

RO: Yeah, this was early November.

RW: Early November.

RO: And it was about a week after the riot. But anyway there was about 6 people all bruised up; one person had his head all split up; black eye. Anyway, there were very severely beaten up. There was one 15 or 16 year old kid, who was hanging around the motor pool that night, he was dragged into, but he was not beaten up. All the others were <sup>very</sup> ~~hurt~~ severely ~~beaten up.~~

RW: How long did they keep you in the stockade?

RO: I was there about a month and I thought they were going to ask me some questions, but they never did.

~~They~~  
RW: Never did.

RO: But the hard part was - well it was extremely cold.

RW: Oh yes. ~~It was very cold~~

RO: Tule Lake, because I still remember the blanket used to get stiff from being frozen.

RW: Oh gosh.

RO: But the thing is, when they used to take us to the messhalls, the army messhalls - well, everytime they do that they <sup>id</sup> load up their guns and surround us and warn ~~ed~~ us that one false move and you could be dead, that sort of a thing. And even when we were eating, we were given left over food from the soldiers after they had their meal. They still keep their guns pointed to our back; not very comfortable way of having a meal.

RW: You eat with a gun at your back. Gee, did they even come in and watch you in the latrine?



RO: Oh yes. They came right in and pointed a gun at me... (?)  
I stopped going to the toilets there, so we just had to dig  
holes in the tent. At night time they would throw rocks at us.  
One time tear gas was thrown in. *it was an extremely difficult (?)*

RW: ~~See,~~ how did you manage to cope with that?

RO: Well, we just had to do it...

RW: Well, it seems to me a real trauma, you know - so unfair.

RO: It was, but after about <sup>two</sup> 2 weeks, they started picking up  
so many other people for the compound that we were moved into  
a larger, <sup>a regular</sup> ~~you know~~ barrack. That was much better. There was a  
shower; the soldiers would stay outside of the barbed wire fence,  
so we were left alone inside at least.

RW: Now we are getting near the end. ~~I~~ end of my tape here..  
I was going to ask you a little happier question. Very different.  
Looking back, what was the most helpful thing you learned about  
your fellow human beings? would you say...

RO: Well, I think that I realized that not all people hated us.  
I think there was some people who came from outside, non-  
Japanese, you know Americans, some were teachers, some were  
the administration that genuinely wanted to help us.

RW: Yes, there were some like that.

RO: I thought not everybody hated us and also I started to  
take in Christianity in camp. <sup>and I started to</sup> ~~I~~ realized that God loves us  
us regardless of...

RW: I'm sorry, I didn't quite hear that..

RO: ...that God loves us in spite of who we are. That, I think,  
help me a great deal. Prior to that I was pretty much a  
nonreligious person. Some of these hardships sort of lead me  
to <sup>try to find</sup> ~~finding~~ some kind of answer to life and meaning.

RW: ~~I'm sorry, maybe I'm a little deaf. Are you saying that~~  
~~you joined a church, you help.. you were helped by a minister?~~

RO: Yes, it was then when I became a Christian.

RW: Well, that's a nice note to end on. I did want to ask  
you: ~~in a minute,~~ are there any other Japanese <sup>Americans</sup> that  
you know, who were in Tule Lake who might want, who might be  
willing to talk to me?

RO: Well, I think so.

RW: Could you give me their names and if you have their



telephone numbers - great, otherwise..

RO: Well, let's see, I wonder if I have one <sup>right</sup> ~~just~~ now..

Well, while I'm looking for this. First, I went through the renunciation process too, and that was a mainly a reaction again, and I was very depressed during that period. In fact I thought I was coming down with a mental breakdown almost at that point.

RW: You said, you almost had a mental breakdown?

RO: Well, I was getting all these dizzy spells and ringing in my head and all of that sort of thing; couldn't concentrate or remember anything. I was in pretty bad shape for a while.

RW: That was a terrible time in camp. I wasn't Japanese American, but I just couldn't help--it was a very difficult thing to talk to people--they were so anxious. It makes me cry to think of it.

RO: Well, it was a <sup>very</sup> difficult, trying time. I'll give you the name of \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know if you've talked with him already or not.

RW: No, I haven't. \_\_\_\_\_ I have that. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ have me that.

RO: Oh, I see. He was in stockade too. He came from Topaz. He was not the original.

RW: When I called him, he wasn't in, so I'll try to call him over the week end some time or in the evening. Is there anyone else?

RO: Well, let me see. Offhand I can't think of anyone. If you could give me your phone number or address.

~~End of interview #670~~

(I gave phone number and address. R.H.)