

Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission Oral History Interview

Narrator: Reid Saito
Interviewer: Morgen Young
Location: Ontario, Oregon
Date: April 15, 2013
Transcribed by: Kimberly Haysom

MORGEN: This is our interview with Reid Saito on April 15, 2013. At the Four Rivers Cultural Center in Ontario, Oregon. So, today I've been having everybody start by stating their full name, birth date, and birth place.

REID: My name is Reid Saito, excuse me, Reid Kasumi Saito, born in October 13, 1950 in Nyssa, Oregon. I'm sixty-two years old.

MORGEN: I understand the Saito family lived in Gresham before they came out here?

REID: Yes, that's correct.

MORGEN: Do you know about your family's life in Gresham?

REID: Well actually they farmed a lot of years in Salem, Lake Labish area and they had moved up to Gresham only a year before the war broke out and the evacuation happened. So it was, my aunt had already married and moved to Gresham, that would be the Kato's. And my dad and his folks and the rest of his family were still in Salem, they moved up in 1941, I believe and started farming in Gresham. And so their crop, their first crop or second crop that they had there was, had to be abandoned when they were evacuated.

MORGEN: What were they growing in Salem?

REID: Mostly celery, they had a type of celery called white celery where you kept it covered and so it didn't green up and celery and things like broccoli. Other types of cold crops. And it was a small truck farm, it was really mucky ground there so when they moved to Gresham it was a different type of ground and of course, the bigger population they could truck vegetables right into the Portland market. So it was pretty good for them. For the one full season they were there and then the partial season.

MORGEN: Do you remember your aunt from the Kato family?

REID: Yes, uh huh, I still keep in contact with her, she's still alive.

MORGEN: She lives in Portland now or?

REID: She lives in Gresham.

MORGEN: Okay.

REID: Actually.

MORGEN: And, did your family ever talk about evacuation?

REID: You know, that's kind of fun because when we were growing up as kids, we never heard anything about evacuation and now I talk to other third generation Sanseis and they say the same thing, from around here. Our folks just never talked about evacuation, they talked about camp, you know. They said, "Well we met so and so at camp." That's how my mom and dad met, at camp, over here in the Nyssa camp. But for Sanseis a lot of times camp, you know, what is that, church camp, boy scouts camp, it was kind of an odd thing. We just never heard about the evacuation portion of it until we got older and then we understood what the camp really was.

MORGEN: And I've read that your father was one of the first to volunteer from the assembly center to come to the Nyssa camp.

REID: Yeah, that was probably in late May, I think of 1942 when they, he was in the Portland Assembly Center and they asked for volunteers, this is what he told me. They asked for volunteers and so there was eight of them in the first group and of course, it was, the Oregon Plan had already failed or been rejected. So this was a paired down plan, spear headed by the Amalgamated Sugar Company who needed, sugar was a commodity that we were gonna need, uh, the U.S. was gonna need. They knew they were going to be short of workers and so, one of the things they were able to do is get permission is to recruit the Japanese Americans to come out to Malheur County and that would be the only county you could be in Oregon if you with Japanese ancestry. So, Dad volunteered, he said there were seven others, there was eight of them. They got on a train, with armed guards in Portland and they went as far as Bakers City and he said, I asked him once, this is. My dad was probably already in his eighties, when I asked him, "Were you kind of scared, Dad?" And he said, he said he friends had told him, "Don't go because they're probably just gonna shoot you." It was just, they were all young, they really didn't know what was going on, it would be real hard for them to see the whole scope of circumstances. But he knew, he said he knew he didn't want to be in that assembly center and he wanted to be out farming and so this was an opportunity, he thought. So he and the seven others came out, they were met in Baker City by Ray Larson from the Amalgamated Sugar Company and Ray took them in a flatbed truck from there to Garrison Corner, just south of Nyssa and that's where the eight of them started setting up a tent camp for the future evacuees to come and work there.

MORGEN: And so did they communicate back to the people at the assembly center letting them know that?

REID: You know, my, I think, you know I looked up some history on my grandfather, my dad's dad, Fukuhei Saito, and he never did go to any of the camps. He basically, he came, he followed Dad over to the Nyssa camp over here, whereas my mothers family, they are from Yakima they went to the Portland Assembly Center and they ended going to Heart Mountain, Wyoming first, spending that first winter there and then the following winter coming back, so they had a little bit different experience because they were actually incarcerated at Heart Mountain where my dad's family came directly to the tent camp and then later on the CCC camp in Cow Hollow. And so, they didn't actually go into the Heart Mountain camp or the Minidoka Camp.

MORGEN: So the parents were there and then Larry and George?

REID: Yes uh huh.

MORGEN: Were also in Nyssa?

REID: For a short time, Larry enlist, he ended up going into the Army and that's another one, we never heard anything. Larry never talked about the war or anything and just recently, the last few years when documents were declassified and they started talking about the translators that were in the Pacific, Larry was one of the translators in the Pacific that spent three campaigns in the Pacific and he never, never once mentioned it to any of us. Maybe something in passing, it's something he never talked about.

MORGEN: The Kato family was also at the Nyssa camp.

REID: Yes.

MORGEN: And your uncle Henry, seemed to be quite the leader in that group. His name keeps coming up in research that I've seen. He was, along with Ray Larson, Roy Larson...

REID: Mm hm, Ray Larson.

MORGEN: Ray Larson, signing documents, trying to actively recruit more Japanese Americans to come to that camp. Do you know that he was a leader in the camp?

REID: You know, of course I didn't know he was a leader in the camp. Later on, I learned that he was and a few, as I knew my uncle Henry Kato, he was always real active in Japanese relations with Japan, from Portland, he was real active in their sister city with Sapporo and with the Chamber of Commerce in Portland. So

he was real good at that type of communication and he was, so he would be a natural leader I would think in a group like that.

MORGEN: Did your father ever speak of memories of the camp itself? What it was like to live there?

REID: Well he told and this is again, he was in his late seventies, eighties before he really talked much to me about it, and it was mostly because I was prodding him and asking him. But, he talks about, well he met Mom in the camp at first, in the, the CCC Camp and so he talked about the dances that they had, he Nishitani or the Hashitani place. They kind of looked forward to that. He talked about how my grandfather was really a hard worker and he would always brag, my grandfather would always brag that he could go thin a row of beets and be on the way back before the young Nisei's, you know, he would meet them on the way back and it was just a work ethic that I think he instilled in my dad and my dad did instill in us. But as far as talking about the camp, probably the funniest thing and I think Yas Teramura remembers it to was, he, Dad, and Yas were in a tent, this was in a tent camp, during winter and the folks from, there was a group from California that were playing in the snow because they haven't seen that much snow. They rolled a snowball up against the door of tent. If you look at some of the pictures of some of the tents, some of them had like wooden framed doors on them so it's not something you could just escape out the bottom of the tents. And they rolled a snowball up against the side of the tent and they thought it was so funny and Yas at first thought it was funny but then, they would let him out, so Yas started be raiding these people and Yas was apparently really good at that. And so, by the end the folks from California were trying to tear the snowball down so they could get in and get ahold of Yas and they said, Yas said, Sonny Takami, who was one of the camp, like a Sheriff or something. He's the one that came in and help Dad break it up and save Yas's life. So, that's according to Dad. He met a lot of people in camp that you know, became life-long friends of course, and just through that shared experience I think. Having that similar experience with these folks, you know, you would naturally become connected. But, it's funny because they really didn't talk about it much, at least I didn't hear about it, very much about it until we actually, we meaning my sister's and I prodded Dad and Mom to talk about it a little bit.

MORGEN: So had did they meet in Cow Hollow?

REID: Actually I think my dad asked my aunt, which is my mother's sister, out and she said, no. And so... but so he asked my mom out and she liked to dance and I guess they got along.

MORGEN: And so they went to the Hashitani farm for a dance?

REID: Oh yeah, they were there for dances. They were married on October 1st of 1944. And for a honeymoon, my grandmother gathered up the coupons for sugar so they

could bake a cake. So they would have enough sugar to bake a cake and the folks were real giving and then Dad had to ask his friends if he could get gas rations from them. So they could take a honeymoon, so he and Mom went to, they were able to borrow a car, drive to Salt Lake and then onto Yellow Stone and they got to Yellow Stone and then there was a horrific snowstorm. But they did make it back. But he said, Mom says that was real memorable, that trip. But, things were really tight then, tires were another thing that were rationed and so he said it was hard to get a tire, hard to get gas, hard to get a lot of necessities.

MORGEN: You mentioned some names, we're talking to Yas this week.

REID: Mm hm.

MORGEN: And um, Sonny Takami's family, any other people that you remember your father mentioning from the tent camp?

REID: Oh yeah, a lot of them have passed away or just not here anymore, but there's a big group from the Yakima, Wapato area that have since moved back to that area. His really good friend Tom Kikuchi, they were good friends in Salem. His family and Dad's family, and Tom came with Dad over to the Nyssa Tent Camp and they worked in crews and as crew leaders. So Kikuchi family, the Kido family, I think they were all here, Mas Kido was over here. My uncle, who his last name was Kuribayashi, his family he came with his brother over here and he eventually married my aunt. The one my dad had asked out... so, but there's you know, he and the Takamis became really good friends so our families you know, grew up together, we were pretty close. The Takami family but there was a lot of bachelors there also, you could imagine the first tent camp, they didn't exactly invite families in, I don't think they wanted little kids then, because it was, all for work. So that first tent camp, there was, probably a majority of them were bachelors, probably a few that were married, but most of them were bachelors. So, even at the time that the CCC camp was, people were all moving out, I know that the Takamis, Sonny was one that was really good hearted and he felt hesitant to move away from the camp until, because there was still some of those bachelors there, that were living in the old barracks there. And so, he stayed quite a long time in the barracks, even after the war was over and then he finally moved in a house where my dad and my uncle had bought a farm and there was a house on there. And so they finally moved over to there, but it was, he spent a lot of extra time I would say, taking care of the people in that old CCC camp in Cow Hollow.

MORGEN: Did your dad ever tell you stories about that camp, the camp at Cow Hollow?

REID: You know, yeah, I don't really remember much about that, I think, after he and Mom were married, they moved out to a house, so they were, he said they were about one mile away from Garrison Corner. So they weren't too far away from Garrison Corner but they weren't that close to Cow Hollow at that point. And I think the Katos had also moved out into a house.

MORGEN: And they moved back to Gresham at some point?

REID: Yes, after the war, my dad stayed and then my uncle came back from the Army and then my second uncle, George came back from the Army. So there was Kayno, Larry, and George and they formed our farm, which is KLG Farms, Kayno, Larry, and George. Larry actually wanted to go back to Gresham because he thought that type of farming was better, truck farming, be closer to a bigger city. And he and my grandfather started out to go back to Gresham and join up with the Katos but they were in a real bad car accident, they ended up in the hospital. Either here or somewhere on the eastside of Oregon, so in the end, they both ended up coming back to Nyssa and staying in Nyssa and farming.

MORGEN: So, forgive my agricultural ignorance, but explain the difference between truck farming and the type of farming you do here.

REID: Okay, well truck farming, I mean would be, like I guess today it would be your roadside stands, you know you grow a number of different vegetables, you take it into the market, you take a truck and take it in the market everyday or as often as you can harvest it. Whereas our commodities out here nowadays, onion harvest is just, one season is onion harvest, one season is sugar beet harvest, so we don't go peddling it everyday to markets. Same with potatoes, you know it goes to processors and those, a lot, instead of going more direct to the consumers or direct to the stores, so now they are bought by companies and distributed.

MORGEN: And so, when did they start KLG Farms?

REID: Actually the three brothers farmed together since after the war, there was a family named Bidie out in the south of Nyssa and they were real good to Dad and his friend Tom Fujii and allowed them to farm on the place and then as they grew, in 1964 is when they actually decided to consolidate and bring all their ground together and form that corporation, form the partnership. Part of the reason they picked KLG Farms is because there are so many Saitos around, Joe Saito and his brothers Paul, Abe Saito. You had Frank Saito who had gone off on his own and his brothers were Jim, Henry, and Fred. And so, it got really complicated when bills came out. Because you know, you would see a bill for a tractor part or something and my dad's farm, they actually went by Saito Farms. But there was another Saito Farms, Inc. and there's a Saito Brothers, so they decided to do something different, and they came up with KLG Farms. Since then, you know, I guess the building got a lot more straightened out after that. But, back to your original question, which was what?

MORGEN: No, that was my question. And so, were they growing onions, sugar beets, potatoes?

REID: Yeah, uh huh. Onions, sugar beets was always a big thing, potatoes; it was a lot more hand labor in all of those. The sugar beets were all thinned out by hand; they were all harvested by hand, topped by hand and thrown up on trucks. The onions were all topped by hand, sacked by hand, and those sacks were loaded by hand on the trucks. Potatoes were, there was a machine they used to dig them out of the ground and lay them on top and the crew or the people would have to go through with these potato belts with a gunnysack hooked to it, dragging it between your legs. And you bend over and you fill the sack as you go and supposedly you've got like sixty pounds in there or seventy pounds and then you unhooked it and stood it up in a row and then kept on down the row. So that's how they used to do the potatoes and that's why it was so labor intensive, why it was so important during the war for labor to come this area to help with the sugar beet harvest.

MORGEN: And the sugar beets are particularly labor intensive.

REID: Yes. At that time, it's a lot different now, it's all mechanized pretty much now. But in those days it was all done by hand. All the weeding and the thinning and the harvest.

MORGEN: And were they, KLG Farms a contractor for Amalgamated Sugar?

REID: Yes, in fact we're still.

MORGEN: Still.

REID: We still grow sugar beets for Amalgamated Sugar. I think Dad got an award, probably twenty years ago for being a forty year grower for Amalgamated Sugar and there was a couple times where they would have, in those days they would have contests for tonnage, beet tonnage and so, he broke a couple tonnage barriers. We have some plaques at home that say, forty-three tons or whatever, but now you know, the tonnage is a lot higher than that. Not as an average but I mean it can be a lot higher. But he was real proud about being able to produce and just, proud to, well actually he was real happy that when I came back to farm, I thought maybe they would, be unhappy if I came back, in a way, because it made a lot of work for my uncles and for my dad to actually train me, to take over the farm. But they were real gracious, my two uncles were real gracious in allowing me to comeback and you know, take over a lot of responsibilities so that was real big.

MORGEN: When you came back, were you in school or?

REID: Yeah I was in Japan actually, I graduated from the University of Oregon and I was studying in Japan and teaching English over there and actually you could make a pretty good living in Japan at that time, in the early '70s, teaching English because the Japanese people wanted to learn conversational English. I had a degree in English, so that really helped me get into some of the English schools over there to teach, so I was teaching there and Dad had called me once, or I had

called him and he said, “You know farming is pretty good right now.” And you know, in the early seventies, it did get really good, ’72,’73, there were some record years for sugar, sugar prices, record years for onion prices, so it was really looking very promising so he said, “you know you should think about coming back to farm,” and I came back in 1974 and immediately we probably had the worse onion year. And so, you know, how that works, you dig yourself a hole right away and so you have to stay and dig yourself out of it. It was, I think it was a really good move for me and I’m just happy that they encouraged me to, you know, come back and to take over.

MORGEN: And now you’re in charge of KLG Farms?

REID: Yes, uh huh.

MORGEN: And you still do the same crops?

REID: A lot of the same crops, we’ve always been real diversified growing a lot of different seed crops. Lettuce seed, radish seed, carrot seed, all of which we don’t grow anymore. We used to grow some onion seed and we still grow probably eight different crops, including onions, sugar beets, wheat, corn, sweet corn seed, alfalfa seed, hay, I’m missing one, but yeah we try to stay real diversified. That’s something I learned from them is, if one crop or two crops don’t make it then your other crops can probably pull you through in the bad years, so.

MORGEN: Can you, you mentioned before working on a crew, that your dad was working on a crew in the tent camp and now you hire crews. Can you just give me a little more detail about what that entails?

REID: Oh, yeah, Dad would negotiate with um, growers you know the farmers, I think... Bidies was one, local farmers that he negotiated with and also a farmer in Jameson, I can’t remember his name but, they used to go out to Jameson and thin beets for him. So, Dad would get workers you know who were willing to go and they would negotiate a price you know, either by acre or usually it was per acre as far as thinning. And then, he would keep track of who did what and then pay them accordingly. In that respect he was a crew leader or a crew boss as they call it. Today’s, they still have similar arrangements with labor contractors who provide labor, they provide all of the paperwork, there’s so much more paperwork now than there ever was. But they provide all the paperwork and make sure all the taxes are paid, workers compensation is paid, and then they charge a percentage on top of the wage for the worker. So, it’s still an ongoing process as far as having crews come in. We don’t need the crews near as much as we did in years past because of the new technology and the new mechanization. But we still, at certain times of the year you still need crews to help out, so those are available, so.

MORGEN: Do you know when your father and uncles opened KLG Farms? Or when they were farming before if they hired Japanese Americans?

REID: Oh yeah, we had one of our neighbor who farmed next to us, George Shimamida, he still lives in Portland area, but his, when he decided he didn't want to farm anymore, we bought his property or rented his property and he came to work for us and his kids, as they grew up, went through high school, they worked with us out on the farm. None of them farm now but there's a number of people like that, that came and worked with us, you know the Japanese people.

MORGEN: I'm going to head in a little different of a direction, do, what do you know about either your maternal or paternal grandparents?

REID: Yeah, my grandfather on the Saito side he was, he served in the Russo-Japanese War and he was a little bit older than his younger brother, Kosika in Japan, but in normally the oldest son will take over, take over the family farm and they had a small farm, a rice farm in northern Japan in Fukushima. But he was drafted into the Japanese Army, went to the Russo-Japanese War, served in Russia and one of the things, this is from my grandfather telling me, when I was young I could understand Japanese, I don't know, what, how that is, but when you get older you lose it. But he would, he told me about, they were in Russia and he was supposed to take care of his cousin, his younger cousin was like seventeen or something and my grandfather was maybe twenty or twenty-two something like that, and they were supposed to across in a place called, Muckdon or something. They were supposed to cross a frozen lake to attack across this frozen lake and his cousin was killed as they were crossing that lake from fire from the Russian's, so when he came to Japan he said he just didn't like he wanted to stay. He felt like he needed to change, to go somewhere else, so they had the Alien Exclusion Act, he wasn't able to come direct into the U.S. so he went to Mexico. He and another fellow named Mr. Sonata, who is younger than my grandfather, but, so they went to Mexico and they worked the railroad in Mexico, and then, I'm not sure the year but when they were up close to the border of the U.S., they left the crew and they crossed the Rio Grande into Eagle Pass, Texas. So he was actually an illegal alien at that point, he and Mr. Sonata. And they worked in a copper mine in, it was a town in southern Texas, but they worked in a copper mine and he said, it was so hot that they would lower them down these baskets into the mine, you could work for a short period of time, they had it all timed. And then they would have to pull you back up and send somebody else down. So they just rotated like that in a copper mine and eventually they made enough money where they could leave, they wanted to go north, so, my grandfather ended up working in the railroad in Colorado. And um, as luck would have it, he when he brought my grandmother over, it was a picture wedding, his brother Kosika in Japan, the one that he had left in charge of the farm, went and found a bride for my grandfather and sent her over and they met up, went to Colorado to work on... he worked on the railroad and there was... they always talk about, there was a boarding house that did really well, because it was catered to the Japanese workers. And so, my grandfather saved up his money and he bought that boarding house. He and my grandmother was going to cook there and she'd cook and then the railroad keeps moving, and

so they moved up the line, and so there was no more Japanese people to stay in the boarding house, so they locked up that boarding house, they went broke. They went to Utah and worked in the coal mine, my grandfather worked in the coal mine there and that had to be about the time when, that's, my dad was born and my aunt Chiyo was born at that point so that would have been in the twenties, early twenties and I remember them talking about the influenza that came through. I don't know if that was the exact time frame, but they said so many people that they knew you know, died from the influenza, young people. But his, my grandfather, Fukuhei, his claim to fame was that he could load a rail car of coke, which is unrefined coal by himself in one day. As they brought it in, they would have to shift it into a coal car and he could do one a day himself. Whereas, they said it took two people generally. So that's why he always had employment, he was able to you know do the work of more than one guy so he was always employable at that point and I think that carried over to later on when he used to talk about he could do one in a half rows of sugar beets compared to the average guys. Then from there they farmed in Utah, and it was actually a truck farm again, where they'd take produce in, but the water was a problem at that point so, Dad said he remembered when he was first learning to irrigate they would go out and he would watch his dad, Fukuhei, with the miners hat on because they only had the water for a certain number of hours. And so, you had to be out there when it was your turn or you didn't get any water. So, from Utah and eventually from there they moved to Salem, I think that's where they were entrenched for quite a few years in the Salem, Labish area, you know, growing vegetables. My mother's side is a lot different, they um, my grandfather was cousin to the Wadas who, so, when they all lived in Yakima or Wapato, my grandfather and Kango Wada lived together, because they were first cousins or something, first cousins or second cousins and they lived together in Wapato, um, Kango went back to Japan, brought his wife back, arranged marriage I think. And they were from the Wakayama area, which is southern Japan. And so um, the following year, my grandfather went back to Japan and brought my grandmother back and it was about nine years difference, no fifteen years difference between my grandfather and my grandmother, but and then when they got back, Mr. and Mrs. Wada had a son, Shingo. And then the following year my grandparents had my uncle, which is Harry Matsui, who lived in, he ended in Caldwell and the following year the Wada's had a child and then the Matsuis had a child and it went back and forth and then the Matsuis gave up at six. But the Wadas kept going, I think they ended up with eight or nine.

MORGEN: I think it's eight, yeah.

REID: But actually Shingo wasn't the oldest, I think there was a sister that was the oldest and Shingo was the oldest boy so he probably would have been the second. But um, and then when they were evacuated, they went to the Portland Assembly Center, the Matsuis, that would be my mother's side, my grandfather was, he was born in 1883, Hachisuke was his name. And so he was already, you know reasonably old for the Niseis, what would that make him? The late fifties or

something? He said he wasn't gonna go to a camp, he went to Heart Mountain, just hated it there so he immediately and came back out to Nyssa and uh, with his older two kids and later on he brought back my grandmother, and my mother and her two little younger sisters and they all came out to Nyssa along with another uncle. And so, but when my uncle Harry, the oldest one, he came out, he actually stayed with the Wadas because they were already established in Ontario, which was outside of the evacuation zone.

MORGEN: So do you know how some of that worked? It seemed that there were other families that were able to do that as well. Sort of be sponsored by established white or Japanese families.

REID: Yeah, I think it was, I think there was quite a few that had done that just in talking to people around. I don't know if they knew that there was going to be a problem but a lot of folks moved over, actually before war broke out but, on the other hand, this was a really good area or is still a really good area for farming. And for those, for those folks, when I went to Fukushima to visit the Saitos side and looked at the ground that they farmed for all those years, and I could see how my grandfather would come here and thing man, this is paradise as far as farms go because the land is here, its so fertile, it took a lot of work to clear all the land but water is available and it's just so open compared to Japan that has, where he lived, just had small fields all kind of enclosed and your neighbor was, you had a one foot dirt durum separating you and your neighbor and so, for them to come here and see all this land, it must have been, you know they thought they were in farming paradise, I'm sure.

MORGEN: I went driving around today to look and to try to find Garrison Corner, the campsite.

REID: Mm hm.

MORGEN: And I heard two different versions, so I'm wondering if you know which one is correct. I went to Garrison Corner itself.

REID: Mm hm.

MORGEN: I don't know if the camp was supposed to be in Garrison Corner or there was another proposed campsite that was next to where they would dump the sugar beets and that is also off highway 201. It's just gravel.

REID: I'm not sure where the dump was but if you take, if you go to Garrison Corner and go straight from Garrison Corner instead of going around the S-curve, if you go straight and look off to the left you know, you can see the river and the camp I think it was between that road and the river. The main part of the tens.

MORGEN: Okay.

REID: That's uh...

MORGEN: Yes that makes more sense, it needs to be near Garrison Corner.

REID: Yeah, uh huh.

MORGEN: In order to keep calling it Garrison Corner tent camp, okay. Um, did your father or anyone else in your family mention any examples of discrimination that they faced living in the area?

REID: Oh, um...

MORGEN: Or living in Salem or Gresham.

REID: Yeah, but that's something they never talked about you know, very seldom, they always said that people here were really good to them and I know that Dad said that he and Tom Kikuchi were working for Bidies. Bidies rented ground from another farmer and that farmer did not want any Japanese people on his ground for whatever reason, so Mr. Bidie would allow Dad and Tom Kikuchi to go out and irrigate or work at night only at that place. But um, and that was just the way it was and they wanted to work so, I don't think they, it must not have been a real big deal to them, that way. And they did talk about, once in a while they would, in a restaurant or something, they wouldn't be served, but they said more often than not, I remember Sonny and Dad were talking about that once. And they came out of the restaurant, they sat there for a long time and just, you know no service, nothing, just ignoring them so they left and after they walked outside, the waitress came running out and said, she apologized up and down and said, she wished she could have done something but her boss said, "If you serve them, you know, you don't have a job here." But she was good enough to come out afterwards and say, that wasn't right, so there was a, I think all in all they probably knew where they were accepted and where they weren't going to be so, stay out of those areas.

MORGEN: Do you have any other stories that you remember from the Nyssa Tent Camp that your father told you?

REID: Yeah I think once a week they were able to go to, I think it was on Sunday, I'm not sure, he said once a week they could go on a supervised outing into town, you know, Nyssa. And if you look at Nyssa, there used to be a laundry mat at the corner of 1st Street and Main Street, in looking through those pictures, Russell Lee, is that him?

MORGEN: Mm hm.

REID: I recognize some of the buildings that laundry mat isn't there anymore or that little store was, but um, there's a law office there now. It's just fascinating to see

all the folks gathered outside there and the same with the movie theatre, which we grew up with as kids, but you know, it's gone now. But to see my uncle, George Saito and some of the other people when they were really young, you know, lined up at the movie theatre to go watch a movie on Sunday. But he did say that you know, they would do that and the dances, you know, there would always be, I guess they just loved to dance. My aunt, my two aunts on my mother's side, they were on Heart Mountain and they were thirteen, they would have been maybe fifteen and fourteen when they were in Heart Mountain and they really like it because, all of a sudden they're in with a lot of Japanese people, you know, kids their own age, kids of their own, you know, ethnic background and they were going to school there and that's what, you know my grandfather just didn't want to be there. My grandfather on my mother side, and he insisted they were going to Nyssa. And so he, my aunt Betty who is the youngest, she when she came out she was kind of disappointed you know. She went to, she ended up going to Nyssa Middle School and then she was six months away from graduating Nyssa High School when they moved back to Wapato, she said she missed out on her graduation here and she was real, real sad about that but, her experience was just a lot different than the people that were a lot older and I imagine, I don't know how hard it would've been for somebody who had an established business and lost it and you know, was maybe to the age where they wouldn't be able to start up again, that had to be real difficult. But for a lot of the younger people, it was an opportunity you know, to make connections, life long connections where uh, sharing the same experiences, going through the same hardships you know, builds a lot of bonds. And so, I kind of wish my folks would have let us know that earlier because we could never figure out you know, how they knew all these people from, not only from here but from California and from you know, Portland and Seattle, it's because so many of them were thrown together and went their separate ways afterwards. It's real interesting seeing how that evolved.

MORGEN: Was there any sense of bitterness from either your grandparents or parents for what happened to them?

REID: You know, they never, I don't think my folks ever indicated anything like that to us or at least they didn't showed it out to us and like I say, we were really unaware of most of this until, you know, until the third generation, until we were older and started asking questions, no I, I don't, they, they never, there must have been bitterness you know, I can't imagine how that would be but it wasn't something they expressed outwardly to myself or my sisters.

MORGEN: You must have known that, I mean before you started prompting your parents about their memories of internment or about the Nyssa camp that there was Nyssa camp, was that something that in the community, everyone knew there was a labor camp?

REID: Boy I don't know if it was that well know. Uh, we never talked about it in school or anything, you know when I was, all the way through high school I don't think

anybody ever mentioned you know the tent camp or the... now the CCC Camp, people were more aware of that, we used to play little league baseball down at Cow Hollow Park of course, some of the barracks were still there, remnants of the barracks, so you knew that was there but it wasn't something that people my age, we, we really didn't know much about it. I imagine the Nisei, the second generation you know, they probably remember, a lot of them probably had no inkling or no desire to go back and visit.

MORGEN: Is there anything else you want to talk about related to your family or the tent camp, anything that I've neglected to ask you? Nice broad question, sorry.

REID: Yeah. Uh, you know, like I say, it's interesting that they never talked about it much and neither did their friends and when they did finally open up about it, later on, I think my sister said that she never knew that much about Mom and Dad's experience in camp until her daughter, which would be fourth generation had a school project in California. You know, her school in California and started writing and calling my mother asking her all these questions about her parents and about you know camp, camp life and so my sister said she learned a lot just because her daughter was asking the question. And Mom kind of opened up more to her than she ever would to us kids. I don't know, maybe it's just easier to talk to your grandkids or.

MORGEN: But that's definitely a common theme that almost everyone I've spoken with, first generation – nothing, second generation – something, but later in life, and then the third generation – is more aware of it and certainly more willing to talk about it.

REID: Yeah.

MORGEN: Even though it's not their own personal experiences. Well this has been fantastic, um, I really, really appreciate you coming to talk to me.

REID: Thank you.

MORGEN: Thank you for identifying the people in the photographs.

REID: Oh yeah, well, sometimes its kind of hard you know, people change and its...

MORGEN: And they're terrible resolution too which doesn't make it very easy that you can.

REID: I think I showed a picture of Yas to Yas and he didn't recognize it was him. But my mom looked at the picture and said, "Oh that's Yas Teramura and that's Dr. Maulding."

MORGEN: Oh, that's him in the photograph? Oh!

REID: Giving the shot, so um she recognized that right away but her memory kind of comes and goes but, when she saw that she knew exactly who that was.

MORGEN: Yeah I've had other people identify that as Dr. Maulding. Well this is great and I want to, once we're done recording have you spell the names of the Matsui family.

REID: Oh, okay. Do you want it right now? My grandfather was Hachisuke, HATCH, no HACHISUKE Matsui.

MORGEN: MATSUI.

REID: The second was Haro Matsui and he went by Harry.

MORGEN: Okay.

REID: The third one was Sayumi. SAYE, SAY, YUMI. Sayumi Matsui. And then Betty Matsui and Sayuki Matsui and Chiharu Matsui and he was known as Chuck and then my grandmothers name was Sumiye Matsui.

MORGEN: And how many do you think went to Nyssa?

REID: No, Say, I think she graduated from Nyssa and then Betty made it through eleventh grade and then she graduated from Toppenish High School and my mother graduated from Toppenish. I think the rest of them, Harry and Chiharu.

MORGEN: And your mother is KIYOE.

REID: E, yes uh huh, goes by Kay.

MORGEN: And the last spelling question I had was your dad's good friend Tom.

REID: KIKUCHI.

MORGEN: And then he was at Nyssa.

REID: Yes, uh huh.

MORGEN: Okay I have this master spreadsheet of names that I'm trying to identify everyone that ever lived at Nyssa.

REID: So you've spoken to the Morishitas?

MORGEN: Mm hm. Tomorrow I interview June and Anne.

REID: Okay they would know a lot, they were at the age where they would remember a lot of people.

MORGEN: Okay, good. And I've talked to Glen Morinaga a lot, he's been helping me.

REID: Oh okay.

MORGEN: And tomorrow I also have, Yas is coming in. and I've also heard that there's a coffee group that meets at Plaza Inn for eighty and older and I'm thinking Yas and I might go over there. Janet recommended them.

REID: They're a lot of fun.

MORGEN: I'm interviewing three Caucasian women tomorrow; one of the families hired the Hirais.

REID: Oh okay, yeah.

MORGEN: Um, Roy and Paul and then on Friday I have, Wednesday I have Mary Takami, Janet Koda, Carol Tolman.

REID: Oh yeah, they would know. Mary was, her family was a big family, the old Chiyo family, they lived right behind the Katos. Chiyo, Carl, those guys you met.

MORGEN: In Gresham they did?

REID: In Gresham.

MORGEN: Yeah.

REID: They had the farm right next door in Gresham.

MORGEN: It's funny how all the families end up being interconnected. And also Nelly Saito, I'm interviewing her on Wednesday; Joe is not feeling well enough. There's someone else and today we interviewed Dange and Fumi Atagi.

REID: Oh okay.

MORGEN: And Patty Imada. Patty Imada lived in Cow Hollow for a long time and she had good memories about that.

MALE: Teddy and Sumi.

MORGEN: And Teddy and Sumi tomorrow.

REID: Oh, okay, see there's the ones, Wadas, so you'll get the other side of the Wada, Matsui.

MORGEN: So it's a nice mix of people that lived in the area before and then people that came in after and how the Japanese community seemed to have a big explosion at the end of the war and many people stayed here. And then I have other people set up in Portland and Washington to try to interview them as well.

REID: Okay Tom Kikuchi lives in Moses Lake now.

MORGEN: Okay that's good to know because I'd like to go and meet Paul Hirai and lives in Moses Lake as well. Okay, great. I have your email address somewhere from Gus and I may send you this spreadsheet when you have a free moment.

REID: That'd be great, it's got my email address on there.

MORGEN: This is different from the one I have. Perfect. Well thanks so much.

REID: Thank you, I hope your project goes well.

MORGEN: Yeah thanks. It's supposed to debut here, I was just talking to Matt about it in May or June of next year, we'll see. Email spreadsheet.

REID: Some of the Nisei will say you should've done this fifteen years ago.

MORGEN: I was in high school, so that would've been a little harder to do.

REID: This is great.

MORGEN: Well thanks so much!

END OF INTERVIEW

This project was funded, in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of the Interior.