

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

NUMBER

538

Interview with

GEORGE FUKUI

Place of Interview: Dallas, Texas

Interviewer: B. Cecile Mayfield

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Approved: George M. Fukui
(Signature)

Date: 10/19/80

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Oral History Collection

George Fukui

Interviewer: Cecile Benson Mayfield

Place of Interview: Irving, Texas

Date: October 19, 1980

Ms. Mayfield: This is Cecile Benson Mayfield interviewing George Fukui for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on October 19, 1980, in Irving, Texas. I'm interviewing Dr. Fukui in order to obtain his recollections concerning the relocation of Japanese-Americans during World War II. Dr. Fukui, would you give me a brief biographical sketch?

Dr. Fukui: I was born on May 19, 1921, to a family living at that time in San Francisco. I was number four, and subsequently there were nine children in the family. I grew up in San Francisco, going through the grammar school system, then on to Berkeley, California, to the University of California, in 1939.

The war broke out, of course, on December 7, 1941. At that time I was at the campus at Davis, and I remember very vividly the afternoon when the news broke out about Pearl Harbor. That evening, when I drove back to San Francisco, they had already set

up sand bags and machine gun nests all along the San Francisco Bay Bridge. When I approached the toll gate, I was asked to pull over and open the car trunk. Unfortunately, it was a borrowed car, and even with a key the trunk didn't open. I was asked what my occupation was, and business, and why I was going to San Francisco. When I informed them that I was a student and I had in the trunk only my snare drum, which I used playing in the school band, and I was going home just to visit the folks to see how they were, they passed me on.

Mayfield: Were they stopping everyone?

Fukui: No, they were only stopping Orientals and obviously Japanese. Then approaching the Japanese town where we had a grocery store, the Japanese section much darker than usual for that time of the evening, even on Sunday. By then they had posted on the major corners FBI and civilian guards rather than military guards at that point.

That evening, after having supper, I was headed back to the Davis Campus of the University of California, and on the way back I picked up my roommate in Oakland who had also gone home. When the State Police car approached my car with flashing red lights,

I pulled over, thinking again there would be some questioning. But it turned out that the State Police had a GI who had to report back to one of the military posts near Sacramento and asked if I was going in that direction. I said, "Yes," so he asked if I would take the soldier back to the station.

The next day on the University of California campus, there were some spontaneous anti-Japanese demonstrations by students carrying whatever weapons they happened to have; and the dean, realizing the very tenuous situation, had announced that there would be an assembly on the campus that afternoon at which time he was essentially instructing the students to keep it cool and let things develop the way they would without violence.

Soon thereafter we, as all students, were instructed to report for draft registration. I distinctly remember Dean Griffin, who checked me out and told me to be ready for the draft in a month. I said, "Well, I'm ready to go." As it turned out, I was not drafted until September, 1945, after I finished my undergraduate years at the University of Connecticut at this time, actually about a week after VJ Day.

Mayfield:

Dr. Fukui, could you tell me something about your

family and their origins?

Fukui: My father came to the United States in 1904 and was in San Francisco at the time of the big earthquake of 1906. It's interesting to have him tell us about his experience. In essence he had been a bachelor at that time, working as a dishwasher in a restaurant downtown. He lived uptown, closer to where the Japanese community is presently. He found that after he finished work--and this was after the earthquake--the city was in shambles, and he commenced to walk back, but he was stopped, and the closest he could get to his home was on Market Street and Buchanan, where presently the U.S. Mint building stands. I don't know if it's still functioning or if it's defunct. He said that they had temporary camping quarters there, and he had to stay there several days before he could return to the Japanese quarters,

He continued to work for two years and then went back to Japan and married my mother and came back to this country. He worked primarily as a wholesale importer for Japanese groceries. They subsequently raised nine children.

My oldest brother took his major in economics at the University of California, graduating in 1936. Then

he had been offered a scholarship from the Japanese government to study in Japan for his master's degree, which he did follow through. Soon after his graduation, the war had broken out, World War II, that is, and he was actually considered an American, and the Japanese security agents had followed him and treated him as if he were an American spy. In spite of that, they had essentially ignored his American citizenship and drafted him into the Japanese Army and shipped him to China, where he fought, as he mentions, a three-way war--not only fighting the Chinese but also the Vietnamese and the Americans. Of course, his heart was not in the war because he felt that he was a victim of circumstances and would have liked to come back to the United States, had he had the chance, but it was too late.

My next older sister is married to a very successful lawyer, Mr. Tuhida, from Harvard University. He's just retired, and they have raised three children, and they're all successful.

My next sister is Mary, who never married, but she's running her own business in dress design and dressmaking. She has been very successful in New York City since the war. She makes dresses for

Mary Martin, Lauren Becall, and the theater people primarily.

Then, of course, I'm next. As I mentioned earlier, I had started at the University of California, but because of the war, I left after my junior year. In between I worked in the relocation camp in Topaz as a cook and as a cattle hand and subsequently left the camp to top sugar beets to help the agricultural cause in Utah. When that was over I took a job in a feed mill in Provo, working for two years until I earned enough money to continue back East, where the restrictions for curfew was not enforced. Subsequently, I went on to complete my education at the University of Connecticut.

After graduating from the University of Connecticut in 1945, as I mentioned earlier, I was drafted in the U. S. Army. I reported to Fort Dix, took my basic training at Camp Crowder, Missouri, then up to Chicago Quartermaster Depot, and subsequently I was assigned as the head of the Bacteriology Department at Mason General Hospital in Long Island, New York. There I not only got a chance to get more experience in microbiology, but I was also instructed and performed autopsies under the guidance of pathologists,

which gave me some tremendous experience in medicine which I hadn't anticipated,

Subsequent to my discharge from the Army on Christmas Day, 1946, I returned to the University of Connecticut, where I continued to study for my master's degree. Upon completion of my studies in 1948, I had been accepted to pursue my doctorate studies at Cornell University. But the department head at Connecticut asked me if I might stay and take an instructorship for another year since there was such an influx of ex-GI students. They were short of instructors, so I stayed on at Connecticut and taught for a year.

Then I went on to Cornell in 1949, I majored in microbiology, minored in biochemistry and dairy science. I was most fortunate to have as one of my advisors Dr. J. B. Sumner, who got the Nobel Prize for crystalizing the first enzyme. He was greatly influential and inspirational in developing my career.

In 1952, when I completed my studies at Cornell, I accepted a position at Fort Detrick, Maryland, and I was assigned to the unit to study the basis for pathogenesis of tularemia, and within a year I was asked to take over the program directly dedicated to

the study of the black plague, pasteurella pastus. I spent about eight years working on plague. I found that the fundamental studies relating to, again, pathogenesis was most inspiring. I got into the area of studying immunology, phagocytosis, the biochemical aspects of virulents. I enjoyed it so much that I would have probably stayed there for the balance of my career. Of course, I didn't realize at that time that public sentiment would close Fort Detrick down.

In 1960, I was offered a position at Carter-Wallace Pharmaceutical Laboratories in New York, where they thought they would like to have someone like myself to join the organization and set up a pathogenic bacteriology department to evaluate and test new drugs useful for infectious diseases. I accepted the position in July, 1960, and I spent seventeen years there--most enjoyable, most productive--not only developing drugs for infectious disease, but developing new molecules for allergic diseases.

The opportunities at Carter-Wallace was even more for the then professional. It gave me a wonderful opportunity to expand my contacts in the world. Dr. Burger, who was president of Carter-Wallace Laboratories and a personal friend, made it

possible for me to not only go to Japan for my first time in 1963 but almost every year thereafter for seventeen years. This gave me an added dimension in terms of understanding myself as a Japanese descendent, but also the Japanese people, the Japanese land, the culture, and many things that I felt but never knew or understood until I had had the opportunity to go to Japan. One of the more gratifying aspects of all these contacts with Japan are the many, many friends, both professional and in the business world, that I was able to develop.

In 1973, when the oil shock hit the United States, Carter-Wallace decided to cut back their research efforts. From that point on, I was responsible for the responsibilities previously covered by about fifty people, but I had to do the work with only about twelve people. This continued until about 1976, when they decided to close the research unit completely. At that time I was asked to either consider staying on with the company and going into international sales or be given nine months' severance pay and look for another position.

I choose to continue in my professional career. Within two weeks I was offered a job to become the director of microbiology and virology for Hazelton

Laboratories in Vienna, Virginia. I took the position and found it most challenging, since there were several large grants from the National Cancer Institute as well as NIH. The responsibility areas were also of interest because one contract was directed to fundamental studies in the relation of viruses to human cancer, and the other was a clinical diagnostic service to the National Cancer Research Center in Baltimore, and the other to diagnostic work for the pediatric oncology department at the clinical center of NIH. The work there, however, terminated in about a year-and-a-half, when the government decided not to fund contract research but to devote their money to grants.

At this time I was offered a position to head up the microbiology department at Abbott Laboratories in their corporate research labs in North Chicago, which I accepted. After spending seven months, there, working on fundamental studies related to developing new diagnostic products for venereal disease and other infectious diseases, I felt that the probability of developing new diagnostic reagents was much more difficult than the company realized. And also realizing that I did not plan on continuing to work for another ten years, but more like five years,

I took the opportunity of accepting a position with their diagnostics instrument division in Dallas, Texas, where I am currently employed. I'm their senior microbiologist in research, and I'm having a most enjoyable time utilizing my experience and knowledge in fundamental microbiology and applying it to rapid and automated systems, which also gives me an opportunity to learn much about automated systems, which also gives me an opportunity to learn much about computers and our modern-day automatic or automated instrumentations.

I'll continue now to summarize in a brief way something about the rest of my family. Next in line is my sister Jean. During the war, she decided to go to work as a beautician. She married a young fellow who was a pharmacist, and currently a very successful pharmacist as well as a part-owner of a bank in Gardena, California.

My next sister is Helen, who took her degree in nursing and worked as a public health nurse in New York City and also taught nursing in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She decided to become a full-time housewife, having five children. Her husband teaches in grammar school. I believe he teaches mathematics and history.

The next in the family is a brother, Henry, who

took his Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Missouri and had been working as an assistant professor at Michigan State, subsequent to his graduation, for about three years. Then he decided that his life's mission had not quite been fulfilled, so he decided to go to Harvard and get a degree in religion and divinity and was ordained an Episcopal minister in Taylorville, Illinois. Subsequently, he had continued to practice in religion as well as continued to teach chemistry until he found it difficult to support a family and two children with a minister's salary, so he left that profession, and he is currently working as the research chemist at the National Eye Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. He also was drafted during the war, and he chose to go into the infantry and had been with the Japanese 442nd Replacement Unit in France and then in Italy.

My next sister, Alice, took her nursing degree at St. Paul's Hospital in New York. She subsequently married a young fellow who was the director of the Spanish language graduate program in Madrid, Spain, so she went to Spain about fifteen years ago and continues to live in Madrid,

My youngest brother, Paul, grew up pretty much in these relocation camps during the war and subsequently

finished his grammar school training in New York upon relocation. He went on to get his MD at Temple and then served his military time as an Air Force captain in Wiesbaden, Germany. He had subsequently worked for the Veteran's Administration as a neurologist for twenty-odd years and decided to go into business for himself, and he's practicing medicine in Pennsylvania presently.

Mayfield: Come back to Pearl Harbor occurring,

Fukui: The following description goes back to my experiences directly following Pearl Harbor. Since we owned a large wholesale-retail grocery store, we had been given notice to evacuate within two weeks. We had to not only close our business properly in terms of obligations to the Internal Revenue Service but to try to salvage as much of the useful groceries and supplies and also get refunds for where we could. We packaged all the opened units of cereal and canned goods, and anything we thought useful was donated to the grammar school which was a few blocks from where we lived.

Mayfield: This is still in San Francisco,

Fukui: This is in San Francisco, in the early part of 1942. The other goods in many cases were sent back to the wholesalers. Much of our personal belongings,

since we were not told how long we would be away, we had either given away or we stored with friends. Of course, most of our stored personal goods in friends' homes, other than a storage unit, was, we were told, stolen directly after we left the community.

Mayfield: After Pearl Harbor, did your store depend primarily on the trade of the Japanese-American community, or did you have caucasians,..others from outside of that area come in? And did it affect your trade?

Fukui: Actually, our trade was 90 percent with the Japanese community. Yes, after Pearl Harbor, the business was not grossly affected in terms of sales because it was Japanese, but we had a deluge of opportunist non-Japanese come into the community who tried to buy goods at essentially ridiculous prices, which was very discouraging. We, of course, did not sell it to those people. In fact, we just closed the store down with many art goods which we felt were just too valuable to just be trown away.

Mayfield: So they didn't really freeze your parents' assets. They didn't give you time to sell out the business.

Fukui: That's right. We just had to liquidate. As you know, there was some payment by the U.S. government to try to make a just settlement on losses, but it's very difficult to come up with honest numbers

or eyen...not honest but real numbers. In most cases, I believe what we got back for what we lost was something less than 10 percent, so it didn't amount to much.

To continue, we were then herded to a grammar school, a Japanese grammar school, on Bush Street, and then from there we were put on a bus to Tanforan Racetrack, which was fenced in. They had temporary eating quarters underneath the grandstand, and the families were assigned a sleeping unit. I remember we got initially four horse stalls, and they had cleaned it out reasonably well. But there was still a semblance of horses being there fairly recently (chuckle). Each unit contained essentially a cot, a sleeping area. As I mentioned, your bathroom facilities and your dining quarters were in a central area.

Since I was twenty-one and not saddled with too much responsibilities, it was much like going to camp. We just kind of took it in stride. While in camp, of course, we wanted to help where we could, and from the first day we volunteered to wash dishes and pots and pans, where they always needed help.

Subsequently, they organized a public health department within the barbed wire fence as well as an

educational system and so forth, I volunteered and got a job as their milk inspector, which I enjoyed performing that responsibility for about a month. It turned out that the public health authorities on the outside, which would be San Bruno and the State of California, apparently didn't anticipate what might go on inside the fence, and they objected to any internal monitoring of food products, and the unit was disbanded.

So to keep busy I volunteered, then, to work as a cook in one of the large dining halls. It was most interesting because to feed any number such as two to three thousand in the kitchen, and having to cook rice for these people, they just didn't have pots and pans of that size, so we used galvanized, large wash pots, which were about three feet in diameter and about a foot deep. You found that you could cook rice in these things quite well if you made a good lid for it. I continued to do this throughout our stay at Tanforan.

Also, for recreation, since I had directed the San Francisco Boy Scout Troop Twelve Drum and Bugle Corps, I had one of my friends, Mr. Samuel Fusco, who had been friendly with the Japanese community, make arrangements to bring in fifteen or so

snare drums and some bugles, cymbals. We were back in business, so we supplied some entertainment for the people contained in these camps.

Mayfield: Well, your attitude, then, at this time wasn't really...you weren't fearful then.

Fukui: No, there was no fear, although it was somewhat disturbing to realize that once you were behind the barbed wire, and they closed the gate and snapped the lock, that you had essentially lost your freedom. It was not as though you were put in San Quentin because it was more of a family-type situation. If you ignored the fact that you were behind a barbed wire fence, to keep your sanity and so forth, one could survive as long as there was food and clothing and a place to sleep. I'm sure that if this were to go on indefinitely, we would become unrestful in terms of objectivity, in terms of life. But we knew it was temporary. I believe that we were there maybe three months or so.

Then we were assigned to a more permanent camp area. We were shipped to Topaz, Utah, where we spent probably, in my case, just about a year. The rest of the family spent three or four years there. Once at Topaz, which was more of a permanent camp, I volunteered to work for their cattle ranch, which

was one of their self-sufficiency projects, where we were asked to grow our own vegetables and our animal protein supply. Since there were very few Japanese-Americans trained or experienced in animal husbandry, let alone being a cowboy, I was given the job because of my training in animal husbandry at the University of California.

Mayfield: This was inside, though, the barbed wire?

Fukui: No.

Mayfield: You were allowed out at this time?

Fukui: The people working on the cattle ranch were allowed outside the barbed wire and guarded area. We had, I believe, about twelve or fifteen saddle horses and two hundred hereford cattle and given about, oh, maybe a thousand acres to graze the cattle on. The range for grazing was in poor shape, so we had to repair the barbed wire fences and make sure that the cattle moved properly, and away from the clover so they won't get bloat. I still remember that my first job was to take a bagful of wire braids and repairing fences and restringing out the wires. It was very cold. In fact, it was so cold that winter that as you rode on the range, the drool from the horses would freeze and form icicles. We survived, though.

Mayfield: Did all of your family go with you to Topaz?

Fukui: Yes, the whole family.

Mayfield: And when you started on this relocation project, what were you allowed to take with you?

Fukui: You were allowed to take to the relocation just what you could carry, which meant you had to carry some of the necessary bedding and eating utensils for the older folks and the younger children. This, in a way, might have been a hardship, but if you just assumed you were going on a long camping trip, you managed. While in camp, of course, since there was no furniture in these sleeping quarters other than a bed bunk, we were able to order some Sears and Roebuck hammers and nails and screws. We found a lot of discarded lumber on the garbage heap. There was some abandoned trucks around the farm, which we took apart and made files and cutting tools from the springs. Actually, we made dressers and tables and chairs and much of the furniture like that made by George Nakashima in Pennsylvania, who has become very famous for making furniture. That type of furniture was made in camp from scraps.

Mayfield: And also your family, because of the way they had to sell their store, suffered, I assume, a pretty good financial loss. When you went into these camps,

were you poverty-stricken? Were you able to take your money with you? Were they able to get to a bank or something like that?

Fukui: Yes, you were able to take what money you wanted or leave it in a bank. In most cases, people were not poverty-stricken in the sense that one would be in normal living. Once in camp, at least you had been provided food for your needs and sleeping quarters. Those of us who worked got a nominal fee. I believe a doctor got \$14 a month. Some of us got coupons in something equivalent to about \$4 or \$5 a month. Yet, we didn't feel poverty-stricken. Of course, the things that we bought through mail order houses was bought with money that you kept as pocket money. In this regard, I remember, when I was ready to leave Topaz to take a job in Provo, Utah, since I had worked on the farm topping sugar beets and had some money from San Francisco, and not knowing how long my family and parents would be there, I left all my change, which didn't amount to more than \$27, with my mother. I kept, I believe, about \$1.50 for incidental expenses until I got on my new job and would be paid.

Mayfield: During that period of time, for instance, what was your social life like or entertainment, or leisure time,

that sort of thing?

Fukui: During that time in Topaz, I decided to work. Again, with other friends I organized a drum and bugle corps with the group that belonged to our troop in San Francisco. By then a few of the boys who got scattered to different assembly centers in Los Angeles had come up to Topaz, and we had a grand time not only rehearsing but putting on shows. We were even invited to put on a show in Delta, Utah, which was the nearest community.

Also, for other social activities in the camp, they continued to have at least one large dance every weekend, usually on Saturday night. Yuri, who I met at the camp...we were not married then, but she is my wife presently. We used to go to all the dances. They had movies, and they had other recreational activities which we could participate if we wanted to. There was always ping-pong going on, and baseball teams. Besides baseball teams, we used to get together with friends and have a mixed baseball game in the evening. We used to play a lot of bridge in the evening. There was other things, but I just don't remember details in terms of kinds of games. There was enough activity going on for young people.

Mayfield: So it was monotonous or that sort of thing.

Fukui: No. Maybe I should just mention that all along here, I personally never felt any great animosity or depression or any bad feelings. Big wars or world wars, as I look back now, are events that do not occur that frequently. When it affects you to the extent that it has affected us in terms of really losing your home and being shipped off to the unknown, it would probably impact more heavily on me if I were older. But as I mentioned earlier, it just was an experience that I can't say that I would plan on it. If I was given the chance of not going to camp, I probably wouldn't go. But as long as I had to be there, I have to say that I enjoyed it. In fact, I met my wife there.

Mayfield: You are one who thought it had beneficial effects, as least personally, for you.

Fukui: Right. In this regards, too, I think that in the long run it has done good things, and that is it has disseminated the Japanese-Americans from those areas where they were quite centralized, that is, in Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and some of the other cities, maybe Sacramento. The way life was going on before the war, we would probably still be there living within the Japanese community. Although we were accepted in schools

and in the community, we just were not accepted on an equal basis by everyone in all activity, especially even in school and social activities. The Japanese-American students, as a whole, did very well scholastically, so they were given recognition for that.

Because of the war, like ourselves, we've moved away, initially being forced to move away through the camp program. But we've chose to live on the East Coast for the past thirty-five years, and we've raised our children on the East Coast. We've not gone back not because we feel badly about what happened to us in California, but because we've obtained an education in the East now; and we have not only raised our family, but most of our families are on the East Coast, and most of our friends are on the East Coast. We will probably continue to live on the East Coast. When I retire here in Irving, Texas, I plan with my wife to go back probably to either Maryland or Virginia and be with our children and many of our friends that we made in the East. Those friends are not of Japanese descent; they are all mixtures of people.

Mayfield: Let's go back to Topaz.

Fukui: We'll back to Topaz, and we'll try to give you more

detail.

After working on the cattle ranch, I realized that I wanted to go on to some university to finish my undergraduate years before being drafted in the U. S. Army. Knowing that we could travel freely in the direction of the East Coast, I chose to go to the New York area, where one of my sisters had already relocated. And my older sister and her husband were at New Haven, he teaching the Japanese language to Navy officers.

So in 1943--I believe around March or thereabouts-- I left for New York with two of my sisters. I stopped off at Chicago to visit my present wife, who had relocated to Chicago. Also, I had many friends who had been in the relocation camps who had already relocated to Chicago. So I spent a week visiting in Chicago and then went on to New York to make sure that my sisters were safe and that they had a place to stay. They were being sponsored by the Episcopal Church, and they were living in an apartment near Columbia University. I had originally taken up quarters at the Sloan YMCA on 34th Street, where I stayed for about a week looking for jobs, which I found difficult to find a job of any sort. Then I subsequently moved into the Japanese Reformed Church

on 104th Street on the west side, where I had some friends. The minister there found me a job working for a Japanese-owned nursery on Long Island.

Mayfield: I'm going to go back here for a minute to Topaz. One of the things I wanted to ask you about was the conflict over the loyalty requirements and the registration during that call for volunteers. Were you involved in that in any way?

Fukui: No, I had left Topaz by that time. Now I would like to go back and just briefly reiterate my experience before getting on to New York. After I had worked on the cattle ranch for a few months, and realizing I wanted to continue with my education, I had looked on the bulletin boards in camp and found that there was a Mr. Knutson, who owned a dairy farm in Provo, Utah, offering to hire a Japanese-American to milk cows. It indicated that no experience was required and that they would teach. So I applied for the job and was offered the position but was told to get to Provo on my own expenses. Fortunately, I found a great, big truck coming into Topaz, which I recognized. It was driven by Mr. Edward Turson, who happened to be driving through Provo to go back to Salt Lake City. So I hitched a ride with him, and he told me that he hadn't slept

for two days, and he'd give me a ride if I would drive his rig back to Provo. I had never driven a "semi" with more than ten or fourteen wheels, but he told me not to worry, that I didn't have to back it. So I drove the truck to Provo and reported to my dairy job.

Mayfield: You didn't have any trouble getting leave from WRA officials?

Fukui: No, the WRA officials gave me a discharge, as long as I had a place to go. So I was then released from the camp to go to work. I found that after the first day, I could not milk a cow fast enough to earn my living, so Mr. Knutson took me to the United States Employment Office, and he explained to the director there that he had to let me go because I could not earn my living as a dairy hand.

It was interesting. I don't remember the name of the director of the United States Employment Service, but he seemed like a very fine gentleman, about fiftyish, and he asked me of my background and what I did for recreation. It just turned out that in the conversation, I mentioned I was an Eagle Scout, and that seemed to help quite a bit because he mentioned that his son was an Eagle Scout. The next thing I knew, he called up a Mr. Cluff and said that he had a very capable

person here, and he understood that Mr. Cluff was very satisfied with a Japanese-American, a youngster, who he had hired before. So, anyhow, Mr. Cluff came over, offered me the job, picked me up, and I worked with him for about a year-and-a half mixing feeds.

It was interesting because, after the first week I was there, the local radio station was advertising to farmers that they should buy their feed at Cluff's Feed Mill, where they had a college-trained feed mixer and the competitors didn't have anyone that qualified. I asked Mr. Cluff who the college-trained feed mixer, was, and he said that it was me. He said the he remembered that I had taken a course in feeds and feeding, but, of course, I had no practical experience of such.

But, anyhow, it turned out to be a nice situation, and I enjoyed working for Mr. Cluff. He asked if I might ask Yuri to get married, and he would build us a little house where we could stay. I thanked him, and, of course, I wanted to continue on with my pursuit of higher education. So I left Mr. Cluff and the feed mill in 1944 and continued east. I have been in touch with the Cluffs all these many years, and we have been very good friends.

So we're back to New York. I worked for the Ozone Park Nursery until the fall of 1944, when I was accepted at the University of Connecticut to finish my undergraduate work, which I did, and then I subsequently went into the Army.

Mayfield: After you went to Connecticut, that is, still during World War II, did you notice any...was there any racism? Did you get any feelings of distrust or anything like that from the people that were around you?

Fukui: No, in fact, we were warned when we went to Connecticut that the people there would be not too friendly, and they would be probably be not receptive to Japanese-American students, much like ourselves, who had been evacuated from California or the State of Washington and so forth, who were getting along quite well.

There were three or four professors who took additional effort to accommodate the Japanese-Americans. There were other members of the faculty who really extended not only their home but the facilities. They were really concerned and very helpful in our relocation. These people, as well as Professor Culp, who was my major professor, actually helped us in our future career development. There was no anti-Japanese feeling or animosity that I could feel. In fact, I think they

kind of bent over backwards in most cases to accommodate us. We found it to be a most gratifying situation.

Mayfield: Did you personally experience any anti-Japanese feeling when you were at the Davis Campus.

Fukui: No, I had never experienced any personal anti-Japanese feeling except possibly on two occasions. One was in Provo, Utah, while I was still living there. I was walking back from the Brigham Young campus to where I lived. It was in the winter, and I noticed... this was about eleven o'clock at night on the back road, a dirt road. There was either a man or young fellow on the ground who had apparently slipped. His bike slipped on the road. I stopped to help him, and it turned out to be a man in his fifties who grabbed me and said, "You're a Jap! I'm going to beat the hell out of you!" It turned out that he was the father of a boy who was in the Pacific War Theater and had strong feelings against the Japanese. He was also the manual arts teacher in Provo, and he apparently went out on drunks occasionally, and he was inebriated. I managed to get away from him without hurting him and reported the incident to my boss. I didn't hear anymore about it.

The other occasion was when I was in the U.S. Army,

when I was stationed in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. At the NCO Club on Friday night, when we usually went to have a beer after inspection, one of the sergeants mentioned, "You're a Jap! I'm going to beat the hell out of you! So when you get through with the beer, come on out!" I said, "Okay!" I was finishing my beer, and he said, "Do you know judo?" I said, "Yes." He said, "What belt are you?" I said, "Black belt." And he said, "Forget it. You're okay." It turns out that I don't know anything about judo (chuckle).

Mayfield: Well, I would have believed it (chuckle). In quite a few of the sources I have read, they talk about the conflicts between the Issei and the Nisei, particularly during the relocation problems. Do you have any personal experience with that? For instance, you and your father in your relationship?

Fukui: No, in our case we did not have any conflict between the Issei, which would be our parents' generation, and Nisei, which is our generation, either because our parents never pressed the situation in terms of either trying to influence or forcing us to be "Japanese" under these circumstances. This, of course, made it a lot easier for us. Of course, there might have been other people that we knew who may have tried to

influence us to side more with the Japanese than the Americans. But I don't remember any specific occasions where I felt that this was a challenge, or any situation that was uncomfortable. So I would say that I have not experienced any uncomfortable situation in that regard.

Mayfield: And your attitude during this time would have been one of patience, that is, "Let's wait and see what happens?"

Fukui: Yes. You know, as the years go, even our children say that we were led like sheep, and they said that they certainly would have not gone to camp. But the whole experience, if you live through it and if the situations were again much alike, our basic reaction is to abide by the law of the land. Granted, it's maybe not too bright or too smart, but there isn't too much one could do other than to follow the laws of the land. Yes, it could have been like the Jews in Europe, but we never felt that challenged or...we didn't feel that it would be that desperate of a situation.

In closing, I might just make a few comments. I'm sure that those of you who have an occasion to listen to these experiences would wonder, "Is this real? And if it is, it's not much of a big deal." It probably

isn't other than for the person who is affected this way. Having grown up in California during a time when the Japanese-Americans were still second-rate citizens...whether it was that or not, we certainly were. Of course, we did not feel that we should fight it. We were happy that we could live in a country where there was such great opportunity in terms of not only education, but certainly through education at least to strive for a better way of life, whether it was making a better living or at least pursuing the professions that you like. Of course, I'm now at the age of fifty-nine, and I have had the opportunity to travel around the world and go to Japan many times in the last twenty years. I have had the opportunity to visit possibly thirty-five of the fifty states. But having traveled over many of the states, the important thing, on the bottom line in terms of living and from what I have experienced, is the fact that in these United States you could come from a minority group, or parents from a minority group, and still pursue those objectives that you want to pursue. We certainly came from a poor family. Our parents didn't have much money. But nine of us grew up, and I believe that we average 2.2 college degrees per

head, which means some of us have more than one degree, There are doctors, and there are lawyers, and there are Ph.D.'s. An education itself is not the end to the means, but certainly it's a reflection of what one could get out of life in terms of freedom of speech, your personal pursuit of religion, pursuit of your profession, and the way and lifestyle that you choose. So I think that if anyone gets anything out of all of this, you have to say that we, and you, should at least realize that you're fortunate that you are living in the United States.

Mayfield:

Thank you.