

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Shirley Ozu Iwatani

Shirley Ozu Iwatani, one of two children, was born in 1941, in Honolulu, O'ahu, Hawai'i.

Her paternal grandparents, immigrants from Hiroshima-*ken*, Japan, founded and operated the Ozu Hat Store in downtown Honolulu.

Her father, Yoshihiko Ozu, a Hawai'i-born nisei, was educated in Japan. He was in his third year at Keio University in Tokyo when he contracted TB. Following the recommendation of his doctor, he returned to the islands in 1929 to recuperate.

For a decade, he worked as an educator. He taught at the Japanese High School in Honolulu and served as principal at Kahului Japanese-language School on Maui.

In 1940, he returned to Honolulu to run Ozu Hat Store.

He married in 1935. The Ozu family in 1941 included Yoshihiko, wife Chiyoko, son Elliot, and infant Shirley.

On December 7, 1941, Yoshihiko Ozu was removed from his home and held at Sand Island Detention Center for a year. He was released from Sand Island but only to be sent with his family to the U.S. Mainland.

The Ozus were interned at Jerome War Relocation Center, Arkansas and at Gila River War Relocation Center, Arizona for the duration of the war.

Allowed to return to the islands at war's end in 1945, Yoshihiko Ozu managed the hat store for several years. Later, he ran a Japanese-language school in Honolulu. He was an active member of Seicho-no-Ie.

Shirley, although very young at the time of internment, still retains memories of Jerome and Gila River. She continues to compile and edit the writings of her father.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Shirley Ozu Iwatani (SI)

Honolulu, Hawai'i

November 28, 2012

BY: Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK) and Warren Nishimoto (WN)

MK: This is an interview with Shirley Ozu Iwatani in Honolulu, O'ahu. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. Today's date is November 28, 2012.

We're going to start by having a discussion about your father, Yoshihiko Ozu. First of all, what year was your father born?

SI: He was born in 1905 in Honolulu.

MK: Okay. I want to know a little bit about your father's parents' background. So if you could tell us about them.

SI: My grandfather, Toraso Ozu, was a businessman in Japan. I understand he majored in economics. So when he came to Hawai'i, he opened a business. This was the Ozu Hat Store on Nu'uaniu Avenue. [The store was located at 1123 Nu'uaniu Avenue in Honolulu.]

MK: Where did your father's parents come from?

SI: They came from Hiroshima [Prefecture].

MK: You mentioned that they had a hat store on Nu'uaniu [Avenue] in Honolulu. Where did they live?

SI: Right above the store. (Chuckles) In those days I guess businesses had (their) residences upstairs. So that's where (they lived).

WN: What part of Nu'uaniu was the Ozu Hat Store? I mean, like was it up . . .

SI: You know Pauahi Street?

WN: Yeah.

SI: And Nu'uaniu Avenue.

WN: Okay.

SI: I remember Pauahi Street, the first store on that corner was Chinese Bazaar. Next to Chinese Bazaar was Rialto Bar and then Ozu Hat Store.

WN: Okay, so if you're heading (down) Nu'uaniu Avenue toward the harbor, is it on the left or the right?

SI: Oh, it's on the left.

WN: On the left, okay.

SI: So on Pauahi, there was Chinese Bazaar, the bar—and I remember that bar because I used to stand outside of the shop in front of the (store) window. Nothing else to do, you know, in those days, not like kids today. So I just stood there and as these guys passed by me to go to the bar, they looked at me and said, “Hi.” (MK and WN laugh.) I watched where they were going; they went next door to the bar. Or they came out of the bar and, “Hi.” So I know that bar was next door. Lot of traffic.

MK: (Chuckles) You know that Ozu Hat Store, was your grandmother also involved?

SI: Oh yes. My grandfather and my grandmother, Shiki Ozu, both worked at the shop and lived upstairs.

MK: When you say it’s a hat store, what was that business of a hat store?

SI: Well, back in those days, people wore hats, unlike today. Like bonnets for children. I remember (customers) coming in—Easter bonnets for the kids. When I (look at) my parents’ engagement photos, (I notice) my (parents are wearing hats). Just (about) every day, (you see) people that wore hats. But wartime, (many) military people came in—sailors, soldiers. They wore the army (or navy) cap. So during the war, we had a lot of military people coming in to buy military hats, service hats. Of course, [civilian] men, what did they wear? Stetson?

WN: Oh, cowboy? Cowboy hat?

SI: Is that . . .

WN: Stetson.

SI: Stetson is a cowboy hat?

WN: Yeah.

SI: I’m thinking of a regular hat. Lot of men wore for business—just about everybody used to wear hats those days before the war. I think there were two other hat stores nearby. I forgot the name of the other one. I think you mentioned it before.

WN: Oka?

SI: No, there was another one not too far. Oka doesn’t ring a bell. Uyeda Hat Store! Uyeda, that’s (the other) one. Small businesses were doing well. Hat shops did well.

MK: And besides selling the hats, did your grandparents also clean or repair hats?

SI: For cleaning, they sent it out. There was this man, Mr. Nagamoto. He came, picked up the hats, cleaned them, and brought them back to us. But my mother used to work on the feather hatbands. You remember . . .

MK: Hatbands?

SI: Hatbands, yes. She would sew them on. Of course, in the store we had—because we (used to) live upstairs—a stairway. And the stairway was all stacked with hat boxes. You know, each step had a—(stack of) hat boxes. My brother and I used to go there on weekends. We played, we fought. We ran up the stairs. We did this too frequently, and in the course of fighting, playing sword fight, we knocked (down) one step of boxes, (causing) all the boxes to tumble down—hats (falling out). I recall that.

(Laughter)

(He) got scolded. (They) put everything back. Next weekend (same thing). We came tough, played sword fight up and down the (stairs) and, I guess, accidentally touched the boxes and *da-da-da-da-da*.

MK: This hat store that your family owned, were there employees in the store way back when?

SI: Oh, employees, yes. (I think) there was one. (When I was) looking at old family pictures, I saw a Portuguese-looking lady, a salesperson. Other than her, my aunt, my father's sister. He has two younger sisters, so they both helped at the shop. So maybe there were three salespeople. And of course, my grandfather and grandmother. And my parents. It was a family business, so all the family (members helped).

MK: When you look back, think about your grandparents, having come from Japan, were they conversant in English, having a business and everything?

SI: Oh, no. No, they didn't speak English. In fact, I didn't know my grandfather. I was (a toddler). No, they didn't speak English so I don't know how they managed. Well, that's why maybe my two aunts probably took care of the sales. But no, their whole life, they didn't speak English.

MK: You mentioned your father's sisters. Tell me about his siblings, your father's brothers and sisters, if he had any brother.

SI: It gets a little complicated, like many family stories. Well, he had an older brother, a half-brother. The reason for that is, his mother, Shiki, was married to Toraso. She had a previous marriage to Toraso's older brother, Masujiro, her first marriage. My grandmother was so—well, she said she was a terrific bride and daughter-in-law. Her mother-in-law (was impressed with) her. Unlike stories we usually hear about mother-in-law trouble, her mother-in-law (liked) her because she was a good wife, good daughter-in-law. But unfortunately, her husband died—oh, (by the way) she had one son from that marriage and his name was Minae. The mother-in-law wanted to keep her in the family. So she encouraged her second son, Toraso, to marry Shiki.

MK: Wow.

SI: And so, from that union, my father was born. His (older) sister, Ayako, lived in Japan. Third was Shigeko Marumoto, you know, Judge [Masaji] Marumoto's wife. In fact, there was a book (about him)—*First Among Nisei* which the [Japanese] Cultural Center [of Hawai'i] published. And then a younger sister, Masako Hiramoto. So he grew up (with) his two younger sisters here. The older sister was in Japan. And half-brother Minae was killed in the atom bomb. That was unfortunate because he was a banker and he took a route that he normally didn't. He didn't have to go into the city, but he did. Something like that. And unfortunately, the bomb. So he perished.

MK: When your father was growing up in Hawai'i, where did he spend his youth? Where did he grow up? In downtown Honolulu?

SI: I don't know. I only know from age eight. I don't know where—well, they lived upstairs of the shop. So I imagine he must have grown up around that area. But when he was eight years old, my grandmother said that those who come from good families would try to send their children to Japan for their education rather than be educated in Hawai'i. I can see that. You know, Hawai'i was such a strange country, strange land, and people from Japan went to work on the (plantations). So anyway, that was the reason they wanted him to have a good education in Japan. So at age eight, his mother, my grandmother, took him and his sister Shigeko to Japan. The three of them went. He thought this (would be a) visit, but the day came when they were supposed to go back to Hawai'i, and his mother gave him the shocking news, "Okay, Yot-*chan*, we're going back to Hawai'i, but you stay here in Japan and live with your grandmother and go to school in Hiroshima." So he ended up living with his grandmother and his aunt, who had divorced and come back to live at home. Of course, that was such a shock for him and he said he cried and cried. He didn't want to be left alone in Japan with the grandmother who was strict. He would always tell us about how she smoked a pipe. You know, (like in) those old Japanese

- movies. So she's sitting and smoking her pipe and every time she got mad at him she'd go *pong-pong* (with the pipe). I've seen that kind of scene in movies.
- WN: *Pong-pong* on his head?
- SI: No! No, on the, you know . . .
- MK: Container where the ashes, uh-huh.
- WN: Oh, okay.
- SI: Yes, what do you call it? There's a name for that, but you know how they sit (in front of it).
- MK: A brazier . . .
- SI: Yes, and most of the time, (she's) just sitting and smoking and gets mad. No, not on his head!
- (Laughter)
- WN: Sorry.
- SI: At dinnertime, he would ask his aunt for a second bowl of rice. *Okawari*, they say, *okawari*. The aunt would say, "Yot-*chan*, one bowl is enough." So they wouldn't give him a second bowl. That's why I jokingly say no wonder my father was small. He wasn't a tall guy. He was five foot three. So life was (probably) not (that great)—to me, you know, your parents are in Hawai'i and you're left to live with your mean grandmother and mean aunt. But his sister Ayako, I don't know why she was in Japan too, but he said Ayako was (sweet and) nice to him. I don't think they lived together, I'm not sure, but he said he was comforted by his older sister. I don't know (why she was there and) how she fits in.
- MK: You were saying that the original purpose was for your father's education he was taken to Japan. So what do you know about the education he received in Japan? What did you hear?
- SI: Well, all his schooling was in Hiroshima. So (that was) elementary, middle, and high school. Then he went to Tokyo to attend Keio University and majored in economics. I understand it was a six-year college, (and after) three years, he contracted TB like so many people back in those days. He was twenty-four. The doctor told him, "Your parents are in Hawai'i and the climate there is much better than here in Japan, so why don't you go back to Hawai'i?" So that's what he did. At age twenty-four, he went back to Hawai'i. I guess my grandmother visited him a couple of times a year off and on. I always marvel at that because today if a child (is in a similar) situation, (there's a chance) the child (might) grow up with problems. But those days, no problem. He was away, he was sad, he cried and he was very lonely, he said. He was so lonely because his parents were not (there although) Grandmother visited him. I'm not sure how often, but sometimes. In spite of that he went back to Hawai'i and no problem, everyone lived together. You know, we all lived together in harmony.
- MK: When he came back to Hawai'i, did he continue his studies here? Did he go to school?
- SI: He went to 'Iolani School for one semester to learn English. That's what I heard. But one semester only. He worked at Hawai'i Chūgakkō. It was well known in those days. It was at (Honpa) Hongwanji. Everybody seems to have gone there, that high school. It was high caliber. It's not like what we used to do—go to Japanese[-language] school for one hour after English [public] school. It wasn't like that. This was extensive and they taught everything under the sun. So he was hired as one of the teachers there. It (was called) Hawai'i Chūgakkō, the shorter name, but there is a longer, more formal name—(Hawai'i Chūgakkō Kōtō Jogakkō (Japanese High School).)

- MK: I think I read in an article that you shared with us that by 1937 he became a principal?
- SI: While he was at Hongwanji, he heard that on the island of Maui, they were looking for a principal for their Japanese-language school. So I guess he applied, he moved to Maui, and was principal of the school there for three years. In the meantime, in 1935, he married my mother; 1936, my brother [Elliot] was born. The three of them went to Maui where he was the principal. Being the principal, he was the liaison for the Japanese community. When they had questions about what to do, they had to contact the Japanese consulate, which is in Honolulu. So he would be the (contact) person. The Maui community would go to him for help in whatever personal matters they had. He would be the one to contact the consulate and help them out. That's why he was on the blacklist.
- MK: Oh, so it was because of his consular work that he did on behalf of the Japanese in Maui.
- SI: Yes, and being a Japanese-language school teacher.
- MK: You mentioned that he got married to your mother in 1935. Now, what's her name?
- SI: Chiyoko.
- MK: What can you share with us about her background?
- SI: Well, again, there's a story behind this one. (Chuckles) My mother's parents came from Wakayama prefecture. Again, eight years old seems to be the magic age. (Chuckles) There was this—what year was that? Nineteen twenty? What was it now? Well, I could check the *butsudan*. There's a date of that influenza, that epidemic.
- MK: Yeah, nineteen. . . .
- WN: Nineteen nineteen about?
- MK: The worldwide influenza, the Spanish flu?
- SI: That's right, the Spanish flu. It was 1920. Everybody got the flu. The whole family went into the hospital. Then one day the nurse came and told my mother, "Your mother passed away." One week later, the nurse came back and said, "Your father passed away." So she lost both parents a week apart to the Spanish flu while she was in the hospital. They were all in the hospital with the flu. So at age eight, she and her siblings lost both parents. They were all separated. My mother went to live with her half-sister who was already married. I think she married early at age eighteen. So she had a place to go. And the rest of her siblings, were. . . . I think (two were sent) to Japan. But there was a younger brother so he and her older sister went to an uncle's place. But the uncle already had four of his own children so his wife didn't want to be burdened with two more children. I think they stayed there, but were not too happy knowing that they weren't really wanted but Uncle said, "We have to take care." It was his wife who was not too happy about it.
- That's why she doesn't know (her parents after) age eight so I don't know too much (about them). But when I said there was a story behind that, well. . . . (Chuckles) Okay, her mother and her father. Now, her father was married previously to this person in Wakayama and he decided to come to Hawai'i. I'm not sure, I don't think he was a (laborer). I don't know if he was a fisherman. I don't know. I'm not clear on that, what he did. But he came to Hawai'i. You know how they did it? When they earned enough, they would call for their family. The time came for him to call for his wife and daughter to come to Hawai'i to join him. But the wife refused. She didn't want to go to a strange place like Hawai'i; what's that? She was comfortable in Japan. She said no, she's not going. So only her child, her daughter, was sent to Hawai'i. I don't know how that happened. I don't know if he asked for her to come over. I don't know what the conversation was. But (his wife) stayed back. She (only) sent her daughter to her husband in Hawai'i. So he divorced her. I know nothing more about her. But he divorced her (and later) married my grandmother and they started a family. (Pause)

(Laughter)

SI: The family, oh, there's my mother, (her) sister, (two other) sisters. There's a brother. Oh, (and another brother who) died (after) birth. So maybe about (six) children from that marriage. That's why she has a half-sister already married and there's an (age) gap.

MK: So your mother was a nisei, then? She was born and raised here.

SI: That's right. But she was very Japanese. Everything about her style, everything. So people always thought she came from Japan. Very gracious and soft-spoken, very feminine. That's funny, because she didn't really have her mother to guide her. But she was like that.

MK: So your mother was born and raised here in the Islands and your father was born here, but raised in Japan from the age of eight and had returned.

SI: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: Okay, by the 1930s, your father was married. He had a son in 1936, Elliot, and eventually he, your mother, and your brother came back to O'ahu. How come? They left Maui.

SI: Because my grandfather was getting old. He was running the store, Ozu Hat Store. He was getting old, so he called my father back. He said, "Come back and take over the shop." That's why after three years on Maui, he came back to Ozu Hat Store to take over for my grandfather. I think that was 1940.

MK: Mm-hmm. Did your father ever express his thoughts on being called back to O'ahu to take over the store?

SI: No, not that I know of. You mean, wanting to go or not wanting to go, things like that?

MK: Yeah.

SI: No. I kind of wonder, you know, those days . . . I don't know, now, people (are not afraid to) say no. I mean, those days, they listened. When they're told what to do or asked to do by their parents, (I think) they listened. They didn't argue. Well, maybe some families did, I don't know. All I know (is when my father was asked by his aging father to return and manage the shop, he did so. No arguments.).

MK: I know that they had returned to O'ahu. I was wondering, when were you born?

SI: Oh, when?

MK: Yeah, when were you born?

SI: April 1941.

MK: And where were you born?

SI: Honolulu.

MK: I know that we will go into depth about your father's wartime experiences by including sections from his own writings, yeah? So I'm not going to ask you too many questions about your father's experiences. But I just want to have for the record so that it would make sense, you were born in April 1941. If you could just briefly tell us what happened when December 7, [19]41 came, how that affected your family and what happened to them. You know, from '41 to '45, just very briefly, and then I'm going to ask you questions about when you were in camp. But if you could [based on what you've read or been told] just briefly explain to us what happened. Like what happened on December 7, 1941?

- SI: Well, Pearl Harbor. But I have no recollection of Pearl Harbor because I was just born in April and we're talking December. So (I was) eight months (old). (Chuckles)
- WN: Kind of young.
- MK: (Chuckles) Yeah, so you were too young to know what had happened.
- SI: What does an eight-month-old know? (Laughs)
- MK: I guess I'll just say that we know from the record that during World War II, your father was detained, sent to Sand Island, and the family eventually was sent to the Mainland. First, to Jerome [Relocation Center], and then to . . .
- SI: Gila.
- MK: Gila [River Relocation Center], yeah? Because you were so young, we're not going to ask you . . .
- SI: But did you want to know my first recollection of . . .
- MK: Yeah.
- SI: . . . something about camp? About the war?
- MK: Yeah. We won't expect details from you, but whatever you can remember. [For the recollections of SI's father, see end of interview.]
- SI: Well, it's nothing significant, but as far as wartime, the first thing I remember. . . . I mean, like I said, eight months, I'm not going to know we were bombed. But my first recollection is that (as) I mentioned before, about going on that ship to the Mainland. [The ship left Honolulu on January 26, 1943.] Because that experience had a lasting effect on me. It was (seeing) the black sea (from) the ship. We were on this ship, and somehow I (wandered) away from my parents and I was walking around. All of a sudden I was on the deck by myself. I just happened to look ahead. Then I noticed, oh, the black sea, I guess black because it was night. And there's nothing, you know. Well, maybe lights far, far away, but it's like I was in the middle of the ocean. This ocean was black. The waves came up to the ship. It was an (eerie) feeling. I looked—black water coming up. It was such a frightening (feeling). Just then my mother came out and said, "Oh, there you are." So I'm (wondering), is that why today I'm still afraid of the water and I cannot swim? Even taking a swimming class at UH [University of Hawai'i], well, I passed with a *D*. I couldn't take the test because I was afraid of jumping into (the pool). Well, I jumped in, but I nearly drowned. (Someone) pulled me out with a pole. I don't know (why), I'm just afraid of the water. I cannot swim. People (can't believe) I live in Hawai'i (surrounded by) the ocean, but I don't go to Waikiki (Beach). (My mother) said I was twenty-two months when I went to the Mainland. But at twenty-two months, I remembered that scene. So a few years back, I was thinking to myself, why am I so afraid of the water? And it hit me, maybe that's why. The black sea. So that's my first recollection of the war, going there (on the ship).
- Other than that, I have small recollections of life at the camp. Small things like, I guess bullying, (which) we talk about so much today, but it started way back then. I was bullied in preschool.
- MK: What happened?
- SI: I don't know what I did wrong. I didn't do anything, but the girls would chase (after) me after school (every day). I told my father that they chased me, so he started coming to pick me up. I call it "bullying," (because they picked on me).
- Okay, let's see, what else? Oh, I'm a slow eater to this day. Everybody went to the mess hall for their meals, but I couldn't go because I was such a slow eater; I would hold the

family back. So my mother said, “You stay back and we’ll bring the food back for you.” So everybody went to the mess hall to eat and I stayed back. What did I do? I still remember, I played by myself. Again, those days no (outdoor) toys to play with, but my play was: there were about three steps to our barrack, so I would jump down one, two, three, (walk up and jump down) one, two, three. I kept jumping until I saw them coming home with the food for me. The lady next door, in Japanese she would say, “Oh, what a good girl you are.”

MK: Ohh.

SI: You know, “*Ojō-chan, wa ii ko.*”

(Laughter)

Because all I did was jump (around) until they came (home). That was my play. As I said, every day, I just waited for them. I remember going to the mess hall, but was such a slow eater; everybody’s done, waiting to go home, and they cannot because I’m still eating.

(Laughter)

Today, I’m still like that, you know. Everything I experienced then is still with me. Maybe that’s why, I used to bully some people when I came back here. (Chuckles)

MK: Oh, no.

SI: Because I was bullied then. Now, when I think about it. I used to pick on (a certain girl) as a kid. But why? Started back then. Can’t swim, started back then. And slow eater, started back then. (Chuckles)

MK: Sometimes some people would talk about some memories they had about how cold it was or how hot it was.

SI: Oh, yes, I remember that.

MK: What do you recall?

SI: Oh, it was so hot in Gila. See by then, that was our last stop. I remember some of Jerome, but especially Gila; it was so hot, the desert. So my mother would carry me and sing a lullaby in front of the fan every day in the afternoon. I remember (being lulled to sleep).

I remember our barrack. Our (living area) was separated by (a single) curtain. It was a green curtain that just ran right across the room. (One side was the living room.) Behind the curtain, on the other side, were the beds. And I had that curtain until a few years ago. I finally (threw it away). Now I wish I had kept it. You see what I mean? I keep everything. So much clutter.

MK: So you remember . . .

SI: Oh, yes, I remember.

MK: . . . the heat. You remember what it looked like with the curtains. Would you have other memories of what it looked like in that barrack at Gila?

SI: Well, I napped every day and when I got up from my nap, I could hear my parents talking on the other side of the curtain. It was just a curtain separating the bedroom from the living room. I wanted their attention so I would kind of, you know, let out some sound, mmmm, let them know I woke up. I thought (my mother) would come and say, “Oh, Shirley, you got up,” but sometimes (she wouldn’t) come right away. They were still talking. So I have to keep (making a sound). And sometimes I really remember: mmm, mmmm, **mmmm!** (MK laughs.) Then my mother would open the curtain and say, “Oh, Shirley, you got up.” (I remember) just waiting for that attention.

- WN: It's amazing you remember that.
- SI: I remember groaning and trying to get her attention. The best is when I (said a short), mm, "Oh, Shirley got up." But when she didn't come, I had to keep (groaning) until (she did).
- MK: And how about your brother? Any memories of what your brother was doing in camp?
- SI: Well, he had his friends to play with and I remember playing along. They would go to—there were some barracks with empty rooms. So then we would go to the empty rooms and I remember seeing some candy in a dish. They would take (some) and I was the last one in (line). Maybe five of us would go from room to room and take whatever we saw, like candy. I kind of remember that. We're five years apart so, he had his friends to play with.
- MK: By the time you were at like Gila, what memories would you have of your playing? What you did? Was it Jerome or Gila that you remember playing on the steps waiting for . . .
- SI: That was Gila. By then, I was a little older, so (I remember more). From home, my family, my grandmother, my aunt, sent me lots of things. When I look at the pictures, I'm always carrying a different doll or a stuffed animal. I always had something. They were always nice to send me something so that I didn't lack what little kids like to have. Seeing the pictures I remember, brings back memories.
- MK: So at least you know there was some contact between your family and your Hawai'i family.
- SI: Oh, yes, they would send us things. Especially when they sent a package, there was always something for me. It was quite frequent that I got new toys. Always a doll, some kind of doll. (The pictures show I'm always holding) a different doll.
- MK: Then you mentioned that you have pictures. So your family . . .
- SI: Yes, we took pictures at camp. So we were free to have a camera and take pictures. Some people are surprised and ask, "You were able to take pictures in the camp?" But yes, I guess we did.
- MK: Would you remember any occasions when you had visitors to your family at camp?
- SI: No.
- MK: No visitors.
- SI: I heard that my uncle, Masaji Marumoto, came once, but I don't recall (seeing him).
- MK: Would you have any other memories? Because you were so young. Even at Gila, you were young. Being born in [19]41 and being in camp until about '45, I thought, gee, I wonder what you'd remember?
- SI: I remember a lot of stuff, everyday things.
- WN: Do you remember anything more about school, besides being bullied?
- SI: Well, I still have my report card.
- MK: Huh?
- SI: I have the report card. And it says: Please encourage Shirley to speak English more. So I (wondered), what does that mean? Don't tell me I was speaking Japanese. I think it (meant) I was quiet, I was shy. I wasn't outgoing. So my mother said, "Speak more."

- That's what the teacher wrote. I mean, all good marks. This is just a preschool report card so it's not that serious, but her comment was, "Please encourage her to speak more." So I think I was quiet. Because all through school, I was pretty quiet. It's only now I'm not. (Laughs)
- MK: Then you were talking about the food being brought back by the family for you to eat. Would you remember the types of food you ate at camp?
- SI: No, not (at all). That's funny, I don't remember the kinds of food I ate. (Guess it wasn't) that significant. Probably something more like rice with—you know what we do—stew over rice or something.
- MK: If you had been in Hawai'i, being a little girl in a Japanese family, the customs would be that you would celebrate certain holidays like Girls' Day, and you have *Oshōgatsu*, and you have things like that. Were there any Japanese things that you remember doing in camp as young as you were?
- SI: No, I don't remember New Year's. My father wrote something about a decorated Christmas tree (in his diary), but I don't remember, no.
- MK: Then you spoke about the fear or the feeling you had seeing the water and the darkness, you know, the ship. Are there any other memories you have while in camp that were scary or even on the opposite end, very joyous?
- SI: No, I don't think joyous. The other memory about camp—oh this is actually about when we arrived back home at the pier [in October 1945]. I remember we came back home to Hawai'i on the ship. My aunt, [Masako] Hiramoto, was very excited to see me. I remember her outfit was a white lace olive-green dress. She was at the pier and (called out), "Oh, Shirley, Shirley!" It's like how I would think about my niece. You know, my cute little niece and I would say, ohhh. It was the same way. She was so happy to see me, "Oh, Shirley." In the car going back home, I sat on her lap. It's just happy memories that my aunt was so happy to see me. But the fact that I remember her clothes, the white lace on an olive-green dress, I don't know why I remember that. So the things I remember—like that one, I don't know what's significant about it. Maybe if I look at my pictures, I (might) recall the events, but right now, as you ask me, I can't think of any event that was joyous or not joyous.
- Well, [Gila River Relocation Center] Arizona was so hot. My mother and I took (long) walks in the wooded area. I don't know if I actually saw a rattlesnake, but (once) we were walking and it was so dry and hot and [we were told] something about snakes so we (turned back). Not that I ever saw a snake. It's just the (thought). I mean, it was not a (fun) place. I have (many) pictures. It was so dry and isolated and hot.
- I guess I remember going—one day it was special because we all got on the bus and we were all going out to town. I think it was Phoenix. It was a treat to be able to go. I think that was probably the one excursion or one shopping trip we had. I went with my mother. I remember riding the bus and going into the city. Otherwise, it's just barracks every day, just barracks. Kind of isolated, desolate. I have pictures (taken) in the woods. Black-and-white pictures; it looks more desolate.
- MK: But that's interesting, though, that you folks would take evening walks.
- SI: Oh, too hot. It's so hot that we had to get out. But then there were dust storms, They had those in, Arizona. My mother used to say, "Oh, that dust storm." I don't remember the dust storms, but she sometimes would talk about it and say, oh, it used to be hot and (everything got) dusty.
- And then Jerome was the opposite. We went in February. So from here going there, it was so cold. We had to go into the woods and cut the firewood. I have pictures of everybody cutting firewood and all lining up and trying to, well, cut wood and share with everybody else. I think there's a whole section on that (in my father's diary), woodcutting, it said. So if you read that, all the details are in the account.

MK: When you folks came back to Hawai‘i, where did you folks live?

SI: (The same place) on McCully Street. We had this house above Beretania [Street]. McCully goes all the way up to Wilder [Avenue]. From Beretania it was the third house on (McCully) Street. My grandfather passed away while we were in the camp. Of course, my father couldn’t go home for the funeral. We must have bought the McCully house before the war. So we just went back to the house.

MK: When you folks came back, what did your father do for a living to support the family?

SI: Oh, he went back to the Ozu Hat Store. Because by then my grandfather had passed away. I suppose my aunt was just holding the fort until my father came back. So that was the main livelihood.

MK: Then how long did he do that?

SI: Do I have it (written) somewhere? Okay, in 1953, he started his Japanese-language school from 1953 until 1968 because by then all the big box retailers started coming, selling hats, like Sears [Roebuck and Company]. Sears department store was the one. And Fair Department Store. But (mainly) Sears from the Mainland. You know (how it is) today. The small businesses being run out. So that’s what happened. Department stores—Liberty House—department stores started selling hats. It drove the small businessman out so my father closed shop and started the Japanese-language school, Kalihi Uka, because in those days, everybody, after English[-language] school, (attended) one hour of Japanese-language school. There were many throughout the Islands, (using the facilities of) different English [public] schools. So that was in (1953 when he closed shop and started his school).

MK: By the way, did you go to Japanese-language school, too?

SI: Yes.

MK: Where did you go?

SI: First, I went to Tanabe Japanese-language School, and then I changed to McCully [Japanese-language school]. McCully was held at Lunalilo School. Tanabe was held at (the teacher’s) residence. So I went right through to twelfth grade.

MK: As for English school, where did you go?

SI: Oh, well, elementary was Lunalilo. From seventh grade up through high school, I went to St. Andrew’s Priory [a private school for girls].

MK: After graduating from high school, did you continue your studies, too?

SI: Yes. I went to UH [University of Hawai‘i] for four years.

MK: I was wondering, whenever your family would get together or when you were still living with your parents, did your parents ever speak about the wartime experience?

SI: Well, only in the sense that, “Oh, remember when. . . .” You know, (a recollection). Sometimes I read about families (for whom) it was so devastating that they don’t want to talk about it. I guess I’ve seen films and they say the family didn’t want to talk about it. They would say it just brought back bad memories. But it wasn’t like that for us. When my parents talked about it, it was (more) like, “Oh, remember we used to do this or. . . .” I mean, it was pleasant, it was reminiscing. That’s how it was. It was a part of our life and we were reminiscing. “You used to do that when you were there,” or something. But it’s was not complaining or grumbling about what the government did. Nothing like that. So I was kind of surprised, some families took it so hard, especially in the films they showed. I’ve seen quite a few films about it. Seems it was hard on some families. But no, I don’t

- think so for us. (I think the bright-thought philosophy of Seicho-No-Ie had a lot to do with their attitude).
- MK: When you think about World War II and how it affected your family, what are your thoughts on that? How did the World War II experience affect you?
- SI: You mean, the war itself, how it affected me?
- MK: Yeah, being interned.
- SI: No, (it didn't affect me. I was too young to understand).
- MK: What are your thoughts on sharing what you know about the history of internment?
- SI: You know, I thought about that and I feel that this event should be taught in all history books. This whole thing on internment. I'm proud to be (culturally) Japanese (because of the values ingrained in me). The Japanese spirit, resilience, the (attitude of loyalty) based on the culture (impress me). The Japanese (have high values). At the [Japanese] Cultural Center, (there is a display of the value markers in the historical gallery).
- MK: Oh, all the values inscribed [in stone] . . .
- SI: Yes, the values. So I bought the book [about Japanese values]. I thought it would be a good gift. I bought the postcards. I want to pass them on to my family. Because none of them—my niece and nephews—they don't (know) the culture. My (grandnephews are) just growing up. I can see that they don't know what Japanese culture is.
- I'm proud of (the nisei soldiers') attitude, their loyalty. Especially, their parents are behind barbed wire, but gee, they fought for their country. I can't believe they would fight for their country (in spite of the unjust treatment by their own government). The 442nd [Regimental Combat Team] and all that. I feel (strongly) that we must teach the next generation and (preserve) this important part of history. Don't forget this is what happened.
- MK: (To WN) Do you have any questions?
- WN: I just wanted to add for the record that we thank you very much for lending us your father's . . .
- SI: Oh, you're welcome.
- WN: . . . memoirs of camp, internment in Sand Island and Jerome.
- SI: You're welcome.
- WN: We're going to read it and learn a lot from this.
- MK: We'll incorporate portions that would kind of let everyone else know what it was like for families to be there. We're fortunate that you kept your father's account. And your family spent time translating it and you spent time editing it. So, this will be really kind of special.
- WN: Thank you.

The following are included here with the permission of Shirley Iwatani: *Reverend Ozu*, an article that appeared in a newsletter of Seicho-no-Ie in 1991; excerpts from an unpublished wartime account by Yoshihiko Ozu, translated by Leslie Iwatani and edited by Shirley Iwatani.

REVEREND OZU

Yoshihiko Ozu was born in Honolulu on July 3, 1905. His parents immigrated to Hawai‘i from Hiroshima and started their own business, the Ozu Hat Store, on Nu‘uanu Avenue. At age 8, he was sent to Japan by his father for a better education. He attended schools in Hiroshima while being raised by his strict grandmother. When he was in his third year at Keio University in Tokyo, majoring in economics, he contracted tuberculosis. The doctor recommended he return to tropical Hawai‘i to recuperate. The year was 1929 and he was 24 years old. Shortly thereafter he enrolled at ‘Iolani School for one semester to study English. His life in Hawai‘i continued as follows:

1930—Teacher at Hawai‘i Chugakko Koto Jogakko (Japanese High School)

1935—Married Chiyoko Nishiguchi

1937—Moved to Maui to become the principal of Kahului Japanese Language School.

1940–1953—Returned to Honolulu to manage Ozu Hat Store for his aging father. (This was interrupted by World War II).

1941—On the evening of December 7 when Pearl Harbor was attacked, he was forcibly taken from his home by two military policemen and thereafter detained at Sand Island for one year.

1943 (Feb.)—1945 (Oct.)—Interned with his wife and two children, Elliot and Shirley, at relocation centers in Jerome, Arkansas and Gila, Arizona.

It was at the interment camp in Arkansas that he was first introduced to Seicho–No–Ie. One night in June, 1943, while strolling through the camp, he noticed a gathering of people and was invited to listen to the lecture. He was so inspired by the message that night that he returned the following day to hear more about Seicho–No–Ie. He was very fortunate, at that time, to be able to borrow and read the 15 volumes of the “Truth of Life,” which someone had smuggled into the camp. Thus began his lifelong devotion to Seicho–No–Ie.

The following narration is Reverend Ozu’s story:

The day World War II began on December 7, 1941, two military police officers came to pick me up. As they drove me away, one m.p. sat with me in the back seat of the car and the other pointed a pistol at me as he faced me from the front seat and I was not allowed to say anything. At that time I was wearing a yukata (Japanese bathrobe) for I had just taken a bath. Since it was in the early evening and quite windy and chilly, I asked that I be allowed to change clothes, but I was refused.

That evening I was confined on the second floor of the United States Immigration Service’s detention station. As the evening wore on, and as it became dark and darker with no electricity due to blackout, those arrested were brought in one after the other. Soon the double–decker bunks were filled to capacity and there wasn’t a single open space. Even then, in the pitch darkness, more people were brought in with only the clothes on their backs and they were forced to sleep on the concrete floor. The place reeked with the odor of their breath and cigarette smoke. Soon, a group of fishermen who were arrested offshore were brought in so the odor became even more overpowering. There were people who became ill and complained of headaches. There were people stepping on those lying on the bare concrete floors. It was so noisy with all the commotion, we were unable to sleep a wink. In the morning we were surprised to see that there were 160 people in the facility that could only accommodate 97 people.

On December 10, we were divided into two groups and sent by a barge to the detention camp on Sand Island. The first group went during the day to set up a camp for us. They had to put up about twenty army tents neatly placed so when viewed from any angle, they would be orderly. If any of the tents failed the inspection, it had to be set up all over again.

After a year of living a dreary life on Sand Island I was sent, along with my family, to a relocation camp on the mainland. However, we did not know where we were going. All I knew

was that my family would be allowed to accompany me to the mainland. Therefore my request was predicated on the condition that if my family could come with me, I will relocate to the mainland.

The day of our departure finally arrived. As soon as we boarded the ship, I felt a sense of peace — “If I die, we’ll all die together.” Our ship was in a convoy heavily escorted by destroyers. It was with a sigh of relief when we finally reached San Francisco.

From San Francisco, we were placed on a dilapidated, rattling train. Since the windows were covered due to blackout, we were not able to see the scenery until we left the state of California. The trip took us two and a half days. It was early February when we finally arrived at Jerome, Arkansas.

At the camp, we moved into our respective barracks. Arkansas was in the midst of winter. There were stoves in the barracks but no wood to burn so we were quite distressed. There were many people who caught cold. From the following day, all the men went to the woods to cut down the big trees which were hauled back to the camp on trucks. The trees were then cut and split into proper sizes and stacked. Every day, we engaged ourselves busily in stocking up on firewood.

The cold winter was finally past and the season of warm weather began. One early evening, as I was taking a leisurely stroll, I saw a group of people gathered in front of the barracks. As I got closer, I could hear someone talking inside. I stood at the front entrance to listen to the speaker. There were many people sitting inside listening to the lecture. Soon after, the talk ended, and the crowd all returned to their homes. Since I was the last person remaining there, the person who was the speaker asked me, “Is there anything I can do for you?” I asked him, “What kind of gathering was that?” The person replied, “That was a gathering of Seicho-No-Ie. Have you ever heard of Seicho-No-Ie?” I, in turn, replied, “No, I’ve never heard.” “Is that so,” he continued, “I will lend you this so please read it. Please come to my home tomorrow.” The book that he lent me was the “Truth of Life.” After I returned home I read it and discovered the wonderful teachings of Seicho-No-Ie — that man is a child of God —and everlasting life. As I continued to read, I felt as though a bright light had shined through my darkened mind.

The following day, I promptly went to see Maehara Sensei, the person I had talked to the previous night, with the “Truth of Life” that I had borrowed. At his home, I was surprised to see so many people wearing gloomy expressions. I found out that these were the people who came for individual counseling from Maehara Sensei.

Mr. Maehara owned a complete set of the fifteen volumes of the “Truth of Life,” which had purple covers at that time. I borrowed the “Truth of Life,” a volume at a time, reading until I completed the entire set. This was June 1943 — the year I was first introduced to the teachings of Seicho-No-Ie.

When the war ended in 1945, Reverend Ozu returned to Hawai‘i and joined the Seicho-No-Ie group. His life in Hawai‘i continued as follows:

1954—Closed Ozu Hat Store and opened the Kalihi-uka Japanese Language School with his wife until 1968.

1956—Seicho-No-Ie Hawai‘i received its charter from the Territory of Hawai‘i. He became the first president of the organization.

1957—Vice President of O‘ahu Koshi Kai.

1958—President of O‘ahu Koshi Kai.

1965—First President of the newly organized Hawai‘i Koshi Kai, a position he continued to hold for many years.

1963—Attended the 10-day reisei with his wife and daughter Shirley at Tobitakyu Rensei Dojo in Tokyo, Japan.

1968—Upon retirement from school, he started working for Seicho-No-Ie at the Kyokabu every day, assisting Bishop Sento until 1985, before his 80th birthday.

1969—He was appointed to the rank of Tokumu Koshi (Seicho-No-Ie Regional Assistant Minister) by Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi.

1972—Returned to Tobitakyu for a 10-day reisei followed immediately by another 10-day reisei at Kawaguchiko Reisei Dojo located at the foot of Mount Fuji.

1985—Retired from working at Kyokabu but continued to be active in Seicho-No-Ie, lecturing at home gatherings, officiating at the monthly ancestors' memorial services, conducting shinsokan services and various family church services. Today at age 86, he continues to lecture at home gatherings and officiate at the ancestor memorial services. His hobby is composing "tanka" (Japanese poetry). For many years, he has been the contributing editor of the poetry column in the Seicho-No-Ie Kyokabu Dayori (Seicho-No-Ie Japanese Monthly Newsletter).

He spends most of his day at his desk reading and studying Seicho-No-Ie holy books and magazines. He attributes his fulfilling life to living a life of gratitude. He knows no anger because he is grateful to everyone and to everything.

Postscript: Yoshihiko Ozu passed away in August 2000.

Excerpts from a wartime account by Yoshihiko Ozu.

The Day the U.S.-Japan War Began

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, at 7:55 a.m., strange loud sounds suddenly resounded over the skies of Honolulu. They were sounds of planes flying overhead followed by anti-aircraft guns firing with loud bangs. I was working at my store on Nu'uuanu Ave., decorating the show windows for Christmas. I went out to the street to see what was going on. In the clear blue skies scattered with thin silken white clouds, I could see formations of six or seven aircraft plunging like hawks with terrific speed into the clouds.

Anti-aircraft fire exploded below the planes as black smoke floated away. The puffs of smoke appeared like black *go-ishi* (Japanese checkers) in the sky but in a moment became transformed into a long belt. As I stood there watching, I thought, "For a mock battle, it looks so real." Suddenly there was a frightening sound overhead as an object hit the galvanized roof with a loud bang and then fell to the ground. I picked up the object, wondering what it was. It was shrapnel and inscribed on it was "U.S." As I was thinking, "My, this is so dangerous practicing with live ammunition," a Korean neighbor across the street came out and yelled, "Hey, it's war! Japan is attacking Pearl Harbor now!" He had just heard this on the radio.

Around that time, Mr. Izumi, in the laundry business, who had just returned from making a delivery to the Police Department, said excitedly, "Mr. Ozu, it's war! Japan is attacking Pearl Harbor and sank five or six warships that are burning furiously with black smoke rising. This is being reported by the police. . ." It was something that I couldn't believe, but this was indeed what was happening.

The city was immediately cordoned off, with MPs on motorcycles and military vehicles dashing everywhere. By emergency summons, military personnel reported to the YMCA and were taken immediately to Pearl Harbor by buses. The cacophony of aircraft flying overhead and the sounds of exploding shells made everyone nervous and unsettled.

"Ring, ring, ring." As I picked up the telephone, my mother's excited voice cried out, "A bomb fell on Miyamoto Drug Store, and the whole block there is burning. Our place is also in danger so come home right away . . . I'll be looking after Yukiko (Shirley) so she'll be all right." I immediately closed shop and was on my way home taking Takaaki (Elliot) with me. On the way home, we were stopped many times, challenged by police cordons. Finally, at 10 a.m., we arrived at our home on McCully Street.

Various notices came one after another. "From tonight, there'll be blackouts, so don't let any light leak out," or "Don't drink tap water, for it may be poisoned."

The Japanese attack ended in about an hour. In the afternoon, although sounds of aircraft or shells could not be heard, we were filled with extreme excitement and apprehension as to what would happen next.

Internment

About 4 p.m. on December 7, a tall, husky MP called out my name, "Mr. Yoshihiko Ozu," as he entered from the back door of my home. I had just taken my early bath and was in my room wearing my *yukata* robe. My younger sister Masako told me, "There is an MP calling for you." Again I heard the voice, "Mr. Yoshihiko Ozu." As I came out from the back door replying, "Yes, sir" I saw an MP waiting with a pistol in his hand. I asked, "What is this all about?" He replied, "Just come with us. This will not take too long, so come as you are."

Since I was told to hurry, I had no time to change my *yukata*, so as I came out the back door, I asked the MP whether I could put on my underwear since I had just taken a bath. He replied, "Then put them on right away." He then stood beside me, in front of the closet, pointing a flashlight at me and observing every move I made.

Fortunately, my trousers and shirt were hanging in front of me so I received permission to take them with me. Escorted by two MPs, I left home just wearing the *yukata* and slippers, with my clothes and shoes in hand. There was no time to exchange words with my wife Chiyoko. As I left, all I told her was, "I'll be gone for a short while and will be right back." There was a car parked one block mauka from my home. Already in the car was Shujiro Takakuwa, my senior. He said, "Oh, you're going too?" I asked the MP, "Where on earth are you taking us?" He replied immediately, "You're not permitted to talk." From the front seat, the MP was pointing a pistol at us. The car was bouncing along so we were afraid the gun might go off any time.

"This is no ordinary thing. The MP is saying they'll let us go after the complete the investigation, but I think maybe, we may not be going home tonight." I was quite apprehensive that his finger might trigger the pistol each time the car swerved.

I felt chilly with the evening breeze blowing into the car, so I asked the MP whether I could wear my undershirt that I brought along. He said, "Let me take a look." As he closely inspected the undershirt, he replied, "We'll be arriving there soon, so you can wear this there." Reluctantly, I had to bear the cold as the car headed makai from King St. Soon, we arrived at the immigration station. As we got out of the car, there were already five or six detainees who were giving their names and addresses, and their possessions were being checked. They all wore suits. Since I was wearing only a *yukata* and carrying my slippers, trousers, shirt, and shoes, they all stared at me. After a simple formal investigation, I, along with five or six others, was escorted by an MP to a room on the second floor. The clanging sound of the door locking behind us sounded so eerie.

"Oh, you're here too," Bishop [Gikyo] Kuchiba of Hongwanji Temple greeted me. As I glanced around the room, I saw about 20 leaders and VIPs of the Japanese society all looking downcast and depressed. They were Bishop [Kyokujo] Kubokawa of Jodo Mission, Totaro Matsui of Taiheiyo Bank, Mr. [Torataro] Onoda of Sumitomo Bank, Mr. Sugita of [Yokohama] Shokin Bank, and Mr. [Kenji] Kimura of [Nippon] Yusen Company.

I was on the top level of the bunks along with Rev. [Shigemaru] Miyao of Izumo Taisha where we could see Pearl Harbor with oil tanks burning furiously.

The internees were streaming in continuously. Since it was so dark, once in the room, they became confused in finding their way around. At about 11 p.m., a group of fishermen noisily walked in, reeking of a fishy odor. Apparently, they had been fishing, unaware that war began and were told by the patrol boats and planes to return to Honolulu. They were arrested as soon as they reached port and taken to the Immigration Station. Already the bunks were full and there was no place to sleep. There were three on each bunk that was placed side by side. There were also many others who slept on the floor, adding to the confusion. Beset with uneasiness and anxiety, no one was able to sleep.

That night, there was something that bothered me: why was I, a Nisei, being interned here? Those here were all Issei (first generation Japanese). I intuitively felt that they made a grave mistake. So I yelled out in the darkness, "Are there any Nisei here?" Then, from the corner of the room, there was a voice, "Yes, there are" (they were the Akizaki father and son [Yoshio and Takeo]). However, no matter how much I thought about it, I couldn't find any reason for being there. I quietly lowered myself from the bunk and walked towards the door, side-stepping those sleeping on the floor. A while later, the next group of internees arrived, so I took a chance and asked the guard, "I'm Nisei. Why am I here? There must be some kind of mistake; will you ask your superior and let me return (home)?" The guard replied, "I can't do anything on my own, so wait until tomorrow, " and noisily slammed the door behind him.

The following morning was December 8. The skies were blue, but our hearts were heavy like being overcast with dark clouds. The room was swirling with cigarette smoke and there were those who complained of headaches. That should be so. There were 160 men in a room with a capacity of 97. We didn't have anything since lunch yesterday so I was very hungry; we finally had a meal at 9:30 a.m.

Jerome Center

The Early Days

Arkansas was like another world when compared to Hawai'i, the land of everlasting summer. Coming from warm Hawai'i, we were greatly affected by the extreme cold of winter. The day after we arrived, the grounds were glistening with snow. We were assigned to block 39 where most of the internees were from Hawai'i. Saburo Sugita, who arrived on the second ship, was the block manager, and Futoshi Arakawa was the councilman. We did not particularly feel lonely since we knew most of the residents who took good care of us. Our room was in Block 2C. In room A were Mr. Ito and Mr. Ogata, both Kibei, in room B Rev. and Mrs. Hino, in room D Mrs. Asada (later Mrs. Nomura), room E Mrs. Kudo, and in room F Mrs. Sugano. The block consisted of 12 barracks of two rows of 6 barracks facing each other. Between the two rows of barracks were the mess hall, laundry room, bathroom, shower room, and exercise ground. All 46 blocks were similarly set up. There was also a large hospital. The camp was surrounded by forests that extended for many miles. There were about 10 such centers that were established by clearing the forests and desert areas. Neighboring towns were quite a distance away from our camp. In other words, "We were living deep in the mountains without any worldly concerns."

A friend who had arrived before told us that when they first arrived, they had to shower at the next block since there was no hot water. When it rained and snowed, the ground became muddy, making walking difficult as our shoes sank into the ground. To ease this problem, all the block members built new paths and dug ditches to improve drainage. They also had problems with the stoves since firewood did not burn well. We do not know how this came about, but apparently there was a group of Californians who had heard of the difficulties facing the Hawai'i internees, who had arrived earlier on the first two ships, and collected old clothing and money to give them.

The day after we arrived, I took a tour around the camp. I was astounded by the size of the center. As far as my eyes could see, rows and rows of barracks extended endlessly. Each barrack was surrounded by a deep ditch spanned by two or three bridges. It rained heavily in Jerome especially in the spring. If not raining, it was cloudy without any blue skies for days. There were canteens and dry goods stores but no merchandise. Hence, many internees were ordering from Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, and Spiegel catalogues.

Yukiko (Shirley) Hospitalized

Many of those coming from Hawai'i came down with a cold due to the sudden change in climate. We were surprised when 2-1/2 year old Yukiko, who had a cold, caught pneumonia with a high fever. Doctors ordered her immediate hospitalization. We were deeply concerned since she was only a baby. What if anything should happen to her? We would have no excuse to make to her grandparents who loved her so dearly. What if anything should happen to her? We were literally on pins and needles thinking about this.

Hospital rules did not allow us to care for Yukiko during hospitalization. As concerned as we were, we had to wait for visiting hours. After visiting hours, as we left, Yukiko cried out, making

it difficult for us to tear away from her. Thanks to the good care of the doctors (Drs. Taira, Tanaka, Miyamoto, and Kuroiwa), her high fever came down. However, she became so emaciated that only her large eyes were shining.

In the beginning, she couldn't even drink orange juice, vomiting everything that she ate, but as she recovered, her appetite returned. By the time her primary care physician Dr. Taira said she was all right and seeing her facial complexion almost returned to normal, we were able to heave a sigh of relief. Yukiko, by then, was often standing in her crib holding on to the side frame with her large dark eyes twinkling, waiting expectantly for visitors. She was so happy to see us when we suddenly appeared before her. From then on, every day she made a rapid recovery. In early March after 16 days in the hospital, she returned home.

Closing of Jerome Center

In February [1944] we heard the shocking news that Jerome Center would be closed. This was totally unexpected, like a bolt out of the blue, although we had been hearing rumors that some of the centers would be closing that year. Since Manzanar was high on the list, we never dreamed it would be Jerome. We were taken aback, but even more shocked were the white workers at the Center who were making good wages. They held meetings to deal with this situation but to no avail, since the decision had already been made in Washington, D.C., that Jerome Center would close in June.

With the closing of Jerome Center, the problem confronting the authorities was where will the internees go? They distributed survey forms for us to fill in our choice on where we wished to be relocated. We were to write down the centers we desired to be relocated to in order of preference—first, second, third, or fourth choice. The plan was to relocate the entire population of Jerome that numbered 9,000 to centers such as Rohwer (Arkansas), Heart Mountain (Wyoming), Amache (Colorado), and Gila (Arizona). Most of us wanted Rohwer followed by Amache.

Gila was in a desert area and very hot, whereas Heart Mountain was too cold, so very few desired to move there. There were far more people wanting to move to Rohwer and Amache Centers than they were capable of accommodating (Rohwer had a capacity of 1,500, Amache, 500). Therefore, the authorities stipulated the following conditions for those wanting to move to Rohwer:

1. Families of those in the military
2. Those relocating in the near future
3. Those with relatives in Rohwer

Those wishing to go to Amache were also given the same conditions. However, in spite of not meeting the conditions, there apparently were “back roads,” for there were some who were able to move to Rohwer and Amache. I heard rumors that there were those who gave a \$25 bribe, but the verity of this, I do not know. My first choice was Rohwer and did not write down my 2nd and 3rd choices. Of course, my request was denied. Those not going to Rohwer and Amache were all assigned to Gila Center. Gila, with a capacity of 5,000, welcomed us with open arms, sending their representatives to Jerome to make our living arrangements in Gila. Our new home assigned in Gila was Block 4, 61-A.

As Jerome Center began closing and the residents started to move, the blocks' population started to dwindle, making us feel lonely. Each time a train left Jerome, the number of those giving send-offs began to diminish. On Jun 18, after the third train left Jerome, there were only three families left in Block 29: the Teraokas (6 members), the Okimotos (1 member), and the Ozus (4 members), which made us even lonelier. We ate our meals at the next Block 30.

We left Jerome at 7 p.m. on June 23. The move from Jerome was completed on the following June 24 and it was snowing in Gila.

We learned that because there were too many moving to Rohwer, those from Jerome were unhappy for they were being accommodated in apartments partitioned into two units.

From Jerome to Gila

On June 23, 1944, our party of 500 left Jerome on a train that consisted of one Pullman, two kitchen cars, two baggage cars, and nine passenger cars, along with a carload of MPs. We left with a sendoff from those remaining behind. "Goodbye, goodbye." "Take care." "Till we meet again." "My regards to so-and-so." Each car was assigned a captain who took care of the passengers. Mr. Kawabata was in charge of our car. Those assigned as cooks, waitresses, and assistants were paid 50 cents a day. The dining car was a make-shift affair created by placing long tables on the two sides of the baggage car that had no windows. It was so dark in the dining car we couldn't see very well what we were eating.

Each car was assigned an assistant nurse who took care of the women and babies and kept the car clean. I was assigned as a captain of Car G and Miss Yumiba was the assistant nurse.

After leaving Jerome, our train headed north and from Little Rock we headed toward the southwest.

(Ed. Note: The account of the train trip from Jerome to Gila ends here.)

Gila River Relocation Center

Early Period (June—August 1944)

To those who came to Gila from Jerome, the cottonwood trees and castor-bean trees surrounding the dwellings of white walls trimmed with red gave off a bright, modern look. In contrast, the Camp Jerome barracks had been a monochromatic black. The roofs here were double insulated. There were many homes with beautiful lawns. The quarters assigned to us were located in Block 4, 61-A, where the former tenants left a large awning on the front porch near a water faucet, which was convenient. Inside, there were no ceilings or interior walls, only rafters, so when compared to Jerome, it looked threadbare. However, the floorings were laid out in dark russet color that we thought were pretty. Each block had seven buildings on each of the two sides. Besides that, there was a recreation hall, two kitchens, toilets for men and women, showers, a laundry room, and an ironing room. Each building was 100 feet long and divided into five or six sections.

In May the heat became really intense, and even in April there were homes with coolers turned on. The coolers were not regular air conditioners. Rooms were cooled by opening up sections of the walls through which electric fans blew in outside air through the water cooling device into the rooms. Without the coolers, we wouldn't be able to withstand the summer heat in Gila. The outside temperature was 120 degrees F., so even with the coolers on, the inside temperature was lowered to about 90 degrees. Gila was located in the desert area with an elevation of 2,000 feet, so it didn't rain for months. There were many days the skies were always azure blue with not a speck of clouds. When we walked on hot days, the reflection of the heat was so intense that it appeared as though the sun was coming from the ground. Since the air was so dry, we didn't perspire as much. In mid-summer, when we were awakened in the morning, the thermometer indicated 80 degrees. However, by October, the heat became more bearable. From November to March, it was mild, neither hot nor cold. Gila was known for its winter resorts. In the winter it became somewhat cold so there were many homes with their stoves burning. During summer all the Blocks had iced water prepared for us to drink anytime. Watermelon in Gila was so delicious that it was considered among the best.

Butte (Camp 2) and Canal (Camp 1) in Gila were about five miles apart so there was a bus running every hour on the hour between them. There was a canal along Camp 1 where carp as large as 15-16 inches were caught.

Raising vegetables, watermelons, and varieties of melon was something only the Japanese could do very well and I felt they were great. This center was originally part of an Indian reservation but the WRA leased the property from the Indians.

In the surrounding mountains, cacti, designated as a natural national monument, pointed to the skies here and there. We were not allowed to take them. It was said that Camp 1 had a capacity for 5,000 but at Butte, the capacity was said to be 10,000.

Gila was sweltering hot but despite the heat the children grew up healthy, not becoming sick. They ran barefoot on the scorching ground but they didn't even get sunstroke. However, the disease that was endemic to this area was *valley fever*. It had symptoms similar to the early stages of TB. In advanced stages, the person became afflicted with TB. Besides *valley fever*, there was also *hay fever* caused by flower pollen that filled nasal passages, causing discomfort with itching eyes. There were also rattlesnakes.

Common in the desert areas were sandstorms that blew swirling sand into our homes no matter how securely we sealed the doors and windows. Everything was surrounded by clouds of dusty sand that we couldn't see beyond one foot. In Jerome we were tormented by rainy seasons but sandstorms in Gila were yet another source of irritation.

END OF INTERVIEW

Unspoken Memories:

Oral Histories of Hawai‘i Internees at Jerome, Arkansas

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Social Science Research Institute
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