

Abstract

Narrator: Sumiyo “Sue” Fujii

Interviewer: Tom Fujii

Date: 12/11/2011

Location: Montebello, CA

Language: English

Ephemera: Picture of Sumiyo Fujii standing near the front door

An oral history with Sumiyo Fujii collected for the *Nikkei* for Civil Rights/Redress Oral History Project by California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview is to gather information regarding her experiences of growing up as tenant farmers in Colorado and Utah, living in Hawaii during World War II, and her experiences in Los Angeles beginning in the 1960s. She began describing her childhood in Colorado and Utah; her father was a tenant farmer; living in a very small house going to school and assisting with the family chores; life in Utah as tenant farmers going to high school; she met her future husband in Utah; he relocated to Hawaii for work; she left for Hawaii to marry Thomas Fujii, my grandfather, in 1940. She lived with the in-laws and worked as a seamstress; gave birth to Robert and Melvin Fujii; descriptions of married life in Hawaii; working at the restaurant with in-laws; Japanese attack Pearl Harbor memories; remembers the FBI searching their residence; removing patients from hospital rooms making room for the injured military personnel; discussed the assembly centers for people of Japanese ancestry who were prominent in the community; communicating with family members in California who went to the Poston Relocation Center in Arizona; she talked about how the war altered her daily routine, the community, and the family. Sumiyo discussed relocating to Los Angeles during the early 1960s; finding work as a seamstress; taking the civil service tests; the LA riots; her views regarding Vietnam War and the civil and women’s rights movements; her opinion regarding the Japanese-American Redress Movement; her feelings about multi-ethnic communities; her knowledge of the redevelopment of Little Tokyo; her descriptions of the differences between Hawaii and Los Angeles; resemblances between the Japanese-American experience and the Muslim-American after 9/11; lastly, she discussed the similarities of the LA riots of the 90s with the 60s;

Abstract

Narrator: Richard Katsuda
Interviewer: Tom Fujii
Date: 2/13/2011
Location: Los Angeles, CA
Language: English
Ephemera: Digital photograph of Richard Katsuda

An oral history interview with Richard Katsuda collected for the Nikkei for Civil Rights/Redress Oral History Project by California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview is to gather information regarding his experiences as a grassroots activist during the Japanese American Redress Movement. Richard Katsuda was born to Kibei parents on March 18, 1951 in Los Angeles, grew up in Oxnard while his parents worked on celery farms, who struck against the Farm Worker's Union and Cesar Chavez. His parents did not talk about their forced removal and incarceration with him. He knew that they went to the Tule Lake facility in northern California. After their release, they went to Colorado and returned to Oxnard during the resettlement era. He attended Stanford University where he was instructed by Edison Uno, who taught Asian American courses. Katsuda informs that Uno was his role model. Katsuda worked at the Stanford University Press. He relocated to the Bay area and became involved in the Japanese American community. Katsuda became active in the Tule Lake Committee, where he assisted in planning yearly pilgrimages. He was also active in San Jose, where he formed the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee to help surviving Issei and Nisei detainees. He was active in battling redevelopment in San Jose's Japantown. He was active in northern California. He heard of a new grassroots activist organization named NCRP. He joined this organization while still a member of the JACL. Katsuda talks about his efforts in Los Angeles promoting redress and reparations throughout southern California. He was active in the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization (LTPRO), where they assisted the older Issei and Nisei in keeping their residences during redevelopment issues in the city. Katsuda also recalls his involvement in educating the public about the CWRIC hearings in Los Angeles through outreach programs. His activism centers on the bridging of Nikkei and civil rights concerns.

Abstract**Narrator:** Kay Ochi**Interviewer:** Tom Fujii**Date:** 06/22/2012**Location:** Los Angeles, CA**Language:** English**Ephemera:** Picture of Kay Ochi standing next a Japanese drapery

An oral history with Kay Ochi collected for the Nikkei for Civil Rights/Redress Oral History Project by California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview is to gather information regarding her experiences growing up in Chula Vista in San Diego County going to primary schools and California Western University, relocating to Los Angeles to attend classes at UCLA for a teaching credential and her teaching career. Her family went to the Colorado River War Relocation Center in Poston, Arizona, returned to San Diego, finding residence in the lower income housing with African Americans, and her father became a commercial fisherman and her mother labored in the fish-canning factory. She recalls going to Luther Burbank Elementary school, which was primarily African American and recalls being called racial names by the schoolchildren. Parents earned enough money to purchase a house in new housing development in 1954. She discusses her parents working on a strawberry farm. Ochi recalls that her parents did not tell her about their experiences during the war. At the time of the forced removal orders, her parents went to Santa Anita before leaving for Poston. Her parents married in “camp” in September 1942. Her father worked as a truck driver while being detained and was a taxi driver after their release. They returned to San Diego and lived with their friends the Hayashi family. She then starts talking about Executive Order and the legal consequences it had for Japanese Americans. She moved to Pasadena and married then was divorced a few years later. Ochi talks about when the Redress Movement began and how she became involved. While working at the La Cont School where she met Kathy Masaoka, who gave her a flier about the CWRIC hearings held in Los Angeles in 1981. She recalls how emotional the hearings were and how it changed her life. She became an NCRRC member right after the hearings by enlisting with the organization. She recalls that the 60s Civil Rights Movement helped her protest silently with picket signs. She incorporated nonviolent protests to assist NCRRC in battling for the passing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. She was involved in the teacher’s union and JACL. Ochi was the JACL national convention queen in 1966. She mentions the Principles of Unity NCRRC follows in pursuing civil rights. She remembers educating the public about redressing the unconstitutional actions by the government and how to prevent these actions in the future. Ochi was active in organizing the Day of Remembrances; how her family felt towards her activism and how they felt when reparations checks were distributed. She recalls her relationship with Congressman Marvin Dymally and the lobbying trips to Washington D.C. and working with the Office of Redress Administration.

Abstract**Narrator:** Kenneth Inouye**Interviewer:** Tom Fujii**Date:** 9/12/2012**Location:** Laguna Hills, CA**Language:** English**Ephemera:** Digital photograph of Mr. Inouye in his office

An oral history with Kenneth Inouye, an Orange County Agriculture and Nikkei Heritage Museum donator, collected for the Nikkei for Civil Rights/Redress Oral History Project by California State University, Fullerton. The purpose of this interview is to collect information about the Japanese American community in Orange County. He discusses his early childhood in Colorado and his family did not go to “camp.” His parents were farmers growing cantaloupe, potatoes, and other vegetables. His parents belonged to the Buddhist temple and were members of the Farmers’ Bank in the San Luis Valley. He went to primary school and graduated high school then attended CSULA to obtain his business degree and now is a CPA. The family moved to the Crenshaw district of Los Angeles. He admits that not until the Redress Movement that he realized the racial tensions before and during World War II. He was in the reserves in the early 70s as a finance sergeant in San Pedro. He believes that education assisted the former detainees to return and rebuild their lives. He was the president of the finance club while in college. After graduation, he experienced racial tensions, while employed by CPA firms. He was the tax manager for the Dodgers and the O’Malley family. He recalls about being a member in the JACL and becoming a district governor for the SELANOCO chapter of the JACL. He was also national president of the JACL as well. He describes his efforts in the community. He discusses his involvement in the OC Deregulations Committee and he founded the Huntington Beach Human Relations Task Force. He describes the Redress Movement in Orange County lead by Clarence Nishizu. He mentions individuals who were active during the Redress Movement, such as Minoru Yasui, Senator Norman Mineta, and members of the NCRR. He also talked about the animosity between the JACL and the ACLU minutely and requested that it not be recorded. He talks about Rusty Kennedy’s efforts in squelching housing restrictions in Orange County. He wants to see the Sikh community bridged with the Japanese American community here in Orange County.