

Rich Iwasaki
September 15 2010
Washington County Museum

(From very end of Akira Iwasaki tape)

Born April 1954

“Maybe you remember about when Iwasaki Brothers started, how it was.”

52:14: Rich remembers growing up with his many other cousins working on the farm after school and during the summer. There were a few workers from Mexico, but mostly the workers were Rich and all of his cousins.

00:55: One of Rich’s earliest memories was when his dad and his brothers were raising strawberries. They acquired school busses and drove to Skid Row in Portland to hire by the day pickers for the strawberries.

2:50: Rich says the reason his dad said he wasn’t involved in the community was they were so busy working on the farm there was very little time to be social or active.

5:51: Rich describes working on the farm day to day. He and his cousins weren’t too involved with the physical planting of the plants, but they filled trays with dirt and stacked the “flats” up. The flats were big wooden containers that you would fill up with dirt. They were paid per flat. After you filled the flats with dirt, you’d take it to another station where they’d be leveled off and then finally they’d be given to the planters to I guess put starters, seedlings into before they were ready to go into the ground.

8:35: The other tasks they did was sweeping up and keeping everything working.

Was your mother’s family in the same kind of business?

8:54: Rich’s mom’s parents owned and managed a hotel, and then it became an apartment building, in downtown Portland.

10:36: Rich remembers visiting his grandmother at her apartment. She had in the fridge a jar of “Umeboshi,” sour pickled plums. They’re supposedly good for your health, and whenever any of the kids got sick, that was one of the medicines they’d be forced to take. He also remembers him and his brother going to help his grandmother clean the apartment building. Unfortunately he and his brother did not have the same sense of work ethic as his grandmother and the two of them got in trouble a lot for not doing a good enough job!

After this Rich talks a lot about Japanese culture and Japanese customs / traditions / religion, a little off topic I feel but possibly something to look at later if we need to.

Do you remember George?

23:17: George during the time was the bookkeeper of the farm. Akira was in charge of the maintenance of the farm equipment. Art was in charge of the growing part- order the seeds, planting, growing. The girls did the planting with the trans-planters.