

Washington County Museum  
Oral History Interview with Don Moore  
At Don Moore's house  
October 12, 2011

Informant: Don Moore

Interviewers: Beth Dehn, Adam Mikos

Transcriber: Jeff Millen

DM = Don Moore

BD = Beth Dehn

AM = Adam Mikos

**DM:** My dad's side came from Missouri on the Oregon Trail, and my mothers side came by actually water. They came to this country to New York and after a few years there they went down to the Isthmus of Panama. No canal of course at that time. But they crossed there, however I wouldn't have any idea, and caught a ship on the other side and came up San Francisco and went into the gold fields -- Sacramento and all the California gold fields. And they were there about nine years down there. And not only were they interested in gold mining but . . . they were merchants . . . and for those nine years they were selling things to the gold rush people. And then they moved up to Hillsboro. And I can't give you the exact years. I could get it from other sources, but if I knew I was going to have to know these things . . . but it must have been . . . and they actually came to the Banks area in the 1890s.

Both families, they didn't know each other necessarily, but they both came to Banks, my father's side from Greenville. And I don't know if you know where Greenville corners are on 47?

**BD:** Uh-uh [No].

**DM:** It's about two miles from Banks. It's four corners. One way goes to Roy, and the other one goes to Kansas City. And that was there before Banks. My grandfather had a store on the southwest corner of that junction with a post office, well I say post office sometimes. And caddy corner was another store -- Parkers family. Parkers were Democrats; the Moores were Republicans. The post office resided on which ever side the President of the United States was. So when the Republicans, when the President was Republican, the post office was in the Moores' store; and when it was . . . Democrat, the President was Democrat, . . . the Parkers' store.

**BD:** That's great.

**DM:** Then in . . . finally like historically we've seen . . . heard this story a lot about how a city, the railroad failed to go where the people wanted it to go, and here it didn't hit Greenville but went area where Banks is now. So then my grandparents, Moores, moved their house to Banks. The house still stands in Banks. They used one horse, got right down the road. My dad was finished his first grade education at Greenville School, one room school. And then about 1890 something they got established

in Banks because that's where the railroad was going. Granddad was the first postmaster because he had experience running a post office in Greenville.

**BD:** So what are some of your first memories of Banks? What are some of your memories growing up here?

**DM:** I was born here, but a few years later they moved into Banks actually. So I took all my . . . up through grade school I lived in Banks. And quite a few of the buildings that are in Banks now were here then. I was ten years old when they built the log cabin, scouts log cabin, which still is used. I started school of course at the age of seven, and I actually had Japanese in my first grade class. They were just moving in here coming down mostly from Seattle area where the governments, you know, at that time were passing laws to protect the people that were already here and to keep . . . when the Chinese and the Japanese and so forth . . . they were limited in owning land in the Seattle area. And they were so down in Oregon, too, but other things made it more advantages for them to move down here.

**BD:** So, at that time, how many Japanese families do you think lived in the community?

**DM:** Well, I suppose there were three or four. My grandfather and a group of people in the meantime had started a bank called the Washington County Bank. And my grandfather came to Banks because his father had given each of his . . . the father had come from California gold fields, had given each of the boys a farm. The farm is immediately west of Banks not today was the farm that they gave my grandfather. And that's where my mother was born. And the house still stands in Banks.

The grandfather who got the farm then bought a store in Banks -- the type of a store that the people were used to in the country in those days that sold everything from cattle feed to shoes and all types of clothing, everything. And the bank and the store were actually across the street from each other.

The school that I went to was a four room school on the west side of Main Street and right next to the store, which later became the pool hall and still is a pool hall. Our house was located such that I could even walk home for lunch if I wanted to.

The school . . . the things that might be of . . . the four rooms were two floors. And the first four grades were on the first floor, and the other four grades were on the second floor. And the classrooms were heated with a big stove in the middle of each of those rooms. And on cold days in the winter, often we would people who walked, you know no school busses of course, walked to school, so some of them several miles, brought their lunches. But even the city boys in Banks would take their lunch with them, and they'd heat their soup on the stove in the classroom.

**BD:** And so your father owned a bank and one of the reasons we are interested is that we are under the impression that he gave loans to Japanese.

**DM:** Right. And, of course, that was a time of economic . . . very poor economic conditions. Farmers in those days made a living on a farm with forty, fifty, sixty acres with no problem. And because they produced most of the food they ate right on the place with their own pork, beef, chickens, and of course eggs and so forth. But it was very poor times for them -- markets were bad, couldn't sell crops very much. And so they . . . farmers existed, of course, because they did raise their own food.

So, when the Japanese came in, most of them didn't have money, to any degree. They were glad to rent

their place to these Japanese. And actually all of these hills, hard to believe, all of these hills became strawberry patches. And of course it took a little financing to do all this. And fortunately grandfather was able to believe that he was safe in financing them, and so did. And of course, financing in those days, I'm sure, was a very small scale compared to what people, what a farmer today would need for his operations. The ease of being able to rent to the Japanese to rent this land and the fact then that they'd get enough money to get through the year, and so the processors the strawberry processors then moved in first one into the area to process these crops. In the summertime, strawberry season seemed to me was much longer than it is at this time. They need berry pickers, and so they set up tent cities, what amounted to a tent city. Most every farmer set up his own. And so they had tents, and most of the people came from Portland and other towns around here and lived there in those tents for better than two weeks that strawberry season lasted.

**BD:** How would you describe the atmosphere then with Bank or with citizens in the area with Japanese-Americans?

**DM:** I didn't know any difference in my Japanese classmates than anybody else. I don't think anybody did. The Japanese even opened a Japanese school here, because they realized their kids were losing their Japanese growing up here now. Their folks were concerned because they were growing up not with the Japanese culture particularly, and they wanted to help keep them -- as I guess parents are in this time and day -- they wanted to keep them, know something about their culture and their lives. So the school operated on Saturdays and Sundays. Japanese came from all over Washington County to school. They were glad to even have any of the local caucasian people to school. They would let them come to classes, too, if they wanted, and a few did -- not too many, but a few.

**BD:** Now, do you remember what happened when World War II started and Pearl Harbor was bombed?

**DM:** Well, that time, of course, I was in college.

**BD:** Were you in the area then?

**DM:** I was in Corvallis at Oregon State. . . . I was a junior, becoming a junior class at that time. So we just continued school. And of course the draft came along and all of the various aspect of what was going on. And how we pulled the curtains down and no lights at night. And afraid of Japanese invasion. But no one got too upset yet at that time. But there was the various stories that everybody probably knows . . . occasionally a Japanese ship made an appearance. So for people like myself in college where they had military training -- it was available even long before the war started -- a lot of the students, male students particularly, took military course. Well actually . . . in some you had to take it a military course for the first two years in school. And then if you qualified and wanted advanced military service you could . . . take it the last two years of your education, and you came out of it with a commission. So those were the things we were looking at, and I personally tried to get into the Air Force and they wouldn't accept me for physical reasons, my eyesight mainly. So, I had to look around and see . . . is time for me to be made part of the draft if I wanted to make some choices of my own I had to do something. So, I went to the Navy. They accepted me and sent me back to school . . . just sent me back to school . . . I had another term [at] school before I was called up for active duty.

**BD:** Do you recall what would have happen to the Japanese-Americans in this community at that time?

**DM:** I surely do. It was just as heartbreaking then as . . . many of us, at least, have read the stories. They immediately started rounding up any Japanese in the Pacific . . . . They ruled a four hundred mile

strip along the coast that those people had to come into a camp that they established all along the coast. And, of course, it was done very fast. And there were not any prepared places really, such as in the case of our local people, most of them went into the stockyards where they had pavillions there for stock shows and so forth. It was the best thing they had available. They had to leave their farms, and, of course, they didn't own them because by law they couldn't own . . . to anyone that wasn't born in this country. Among those Japanese in our territory here . . . I think there was only one Japanese family who was able to own land because they had a member of the family who was old enough to be a citizen and own land. The parents could not do it because of coming from Japan. So, they had to give up everything . . . . A few of them managed to move themselves away four hundred miles which was basically Ontario and Idaho, and were able to move up there and find land and continue farming. But the rest of them didn't have anything else . . . couldn't take anything hardly other than the clothes on their back . . . just leave everything and go into the camps that the government set up for them which were just not camps developed for people to live in to begin with.

**BD:** Did you know your classmates or anyone at that time? Did you have personal connections with people that were . . . ?

**DM:** There was one Japanese family, the Wakasugis, were the people who owned their land here. He was president of a Japanese organization headquartered in Portland. He was in his late teens, I'd say. And so, the government would use him as a representative of the Japanese for what representation they could get. He was able to move his family to Ontario area. Many of the other families that I knew very well did not. They had to go into camp . . . start out from stockyards in Portland.

**BD:** What was the community's reaction when the Japanese were interned?

**DM:** Well, of course, as time went on the enmity towards the enemy grew, and so they became suspicious of all Japanese. I mean, it was just one of those things. It just had to happen. There was kind of no choice on the thing. People couldn't identify in that area . . . that's why they moved away . . . whether there could be somebody there that was a traitor to our country. Of course, there was nothing like that really that I was aware of.

**BD:** Now, when the war ended, I don't know where you were at that point. Were you in Corvallis? Were you in the Navy?

**DM:** I was in China.

**BD:** Now do you remember how the community was affected when the Japanese started coming back to their land? Were they able to?

**DM:** There were lots of people who would not accept them. Lots of people who would not accept them. As a matter of fact, the Wakasugis still owned their land here, and they lived here briefly for a while after the war, but they moved back up to Ontario . . . and disposed of their land. There was lots of enmity towards Japanese. A lot of people still realized the situation that they were good people, and most of them were American citizens . . . considered themselves as American citizens.

**BD:** I'm curious. Do you think a lot of Japanese families tried to return to the area then, or was it not . . . ?

**DM:** Well, not too many, but a few did, and a few did stay. But see, they then didn't have any land.

They didn't have, most cases, any money, being in a camp all those years of the war, to do anything with, so they had to find other jobs. Like in the Hood River area where there were lots of Japanese, most of them were unable to reestablish themselves.

**BD:** Now, we know that your father was very helpful loaning Japanese money before the war . . . .

**DM:** My grandfather.

**BD:** Your grandfather . . . before the war had started. How did that continue, then, after the war?

**DM:** Well, they recognized and knew who were reliable people, but there were very few of them that were here, so.

**BD:** Can you tell us about your experience in the Navy?

**DM:** When they called me to active duty . . . I was actually given an enlisted man's clothing -- just a sailor's, because we were all officer candidates. And they sent us to various institutions. Interestingly enough, Oregon State was, that's considered an agricultural college, so I reported for duty at Purdue where they had a big agricultural school. And they took us from there as they needed officers, and so forth, and I was only there for only one term actually. And they took a few of us and assigned us to officer training schools. I was sent to New York to Columbia University who had two classes of officers there, all on the campus. And we were there for about four months before we were then given our commission and sent to various places. And that was just prior to the landings in Europe. And because of my eyesight then continued to be something of a problem . . . I was sent to . . . They opened a new officers training school in upper New York State that had been an army base since World War I. The Army was closing it up, and the Navy took it over for another officers training school. And I was sent there as the first staff for that institution 'cause they wouldn't send me out to active duty because of my eyesight. I was there for two classes of officers came through. The first class were people like myself, from universities all over. And we trained them militarily and got all the classes that was necessary for the service . . . . We had that class there for four months, plus I had been at Columbia. And that was in Plattsburgh, New York, a little town that . . . the Army having been there all those years, that was their biggest economic center for them. And when the Army left they were desparate, so they welcomed the Navy to take the place. It was town that just had a small teacher training school. All who attended school were female when we got there. Then our next class were people who were commissioned directly out of older people because of various trainings and experiences that they had. They needed the lawyers or mechanics or whatever. They commissioned a lot of those people. Some of them were quite high commissions up to majors and so forth. We had them there just for sixty days. They all came commissioned. They didn't know anything about military life. We had to teach them. We had to march them up and down . . . let them learn what military operation was. So, then they closed that school and came to all of us people that were there as part of the staff, the teachers and so forth. I was the military staff. There were people there that were teaching math and navigation and everything.

They asked us where we'd like to go. "We're going to have to reassign. Where would you like to go?"

I said, "Well, I'd like to go to a cruiser in the Pacific."

And would you believe, back came orders to a cruiser in the Pacific. Nobody asked me about my eyes or anything else [laughing]. So, all by myself, my orders were to go to the South Pacific and find the Nashville and report aboard there for my duty. So I had to find transportation. I had to report to Navy

places. San Francisco was the first one out of New York where we were. I had to just tell them that I needed transportation to the South Pacific, and they found room on a ship that had been converted from civilian times. It was a cruise ship, a regular passenger ship. I was one of a couple dozen people that had reason to head for that territory. Plus, there were about three thousand WACS on board going out to service.

**BD:** What is a WAC?

**DM:** A lady soldier. Female soldiers . . . . We stopped at Pearl Harbor and then went on out to . . . the first land that we hit I reported to a Naval officer . . . I showed them my orders and told them I was looking for the Nashville. Well, they didn't know where the Nashville was. They didn't know what to do. So, I got back on the ship that I was on which had been headed south. It was headed for Australia. So, I got back on the ship and ended up in Brisbane, Australia, and reported to a Naval office there. And then showed them my orders and said "Well, . . . know where the Nashville is, but here's a hotel room you can stay at, and here's where you can eat. Just report in every morning and we'll see if we can find the Nashville." So, I did.

After a week, the weather was very nice in Brisbane, and I had nothing to do expect find out what Brisbane was like. So, after a week I says, "Well gosh sakes. We better do something," and they still didn't know anything. I says, "We better do something. I'm about to get me some kind of transportation back up to where the war had moved at that time."

They said, "Well, ok." The next day they had passage for me on a navy plane to the equator, back to the island there.

[other conversation between DM and BD]

I ended on this island which was a large island that was completely army military. I reported in to an army headquarters there, and they found a place for me to sleep and a place to eat with the soldiers. I was in constant contact with people . . . . It was a large port. I wandered around the island there for a couple of days. There were lots of people, lots of army, a big army base. And on the third day I was there, here came the Nashville into that port. So, I reported aboard the Nashville. The Nashville had just come from the landing at Leyte -- the return of MacArthur to the Philippines. So, they just took on new supplies and so forth, and headed right back to Leyte where they were. Then we cruised up and down the Gulf of Leyte with other . . . there were three other cruisers. We were light cruiser. Back and forth. And we had some small destroyers and stuff with the group. For quite a few days, we did that. Finally, we were ordered to the second invasion in the Philippines -- another island just west of where we were. We were at a navy base north of Manila. We were the Seventh Fleet. The Nashville was in the Seventh Fleet, and . . . the commander of the Seventh Fleet was on board our ship the Nashville. So, we were ordered to go with the next landing, so we moved with the landing craft . . . from LSTs which you can remember were good size ship which could run itself right up onto the beach and the bow could open up and they could drive cars, trucks, stuff out onto the beach; and then small vessels, you know dozens of them. And so we were a huge fleet moving out of the Gulf of Leyte around the south end of the Philippines back up to where the island -- and again I can't remember that name -- west of Leyte for the second landing. We moved at about six knot speed because of all these small landing craft and so forth did not have the kind of power that could go any faster. So we were moving, and about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the first day out we got down out of Leyte and were just going in the waters further west. All the major cruisers and destroyers were on the outside perimeter of this great fleet that was moving. A beautiful December . . . a beautiful day, sun shiny. We were all under way but not under fire.

So we were in a condition on ship which we stayed in our battle position, but we were relaxed and made lunch and ate our food. We couldn't go down to actual big messes or anything for meals or anything. And about 3 o'clock, we were on the right side of the fleet and the land was very high on this side, and all of a sudden an airplane came out of the blue came from over the land which could not be picked up on the screen of the . . . as we had it in those days. It was a kamikaze. The pilot did a beautiful job of flying the thing. He came in and he took a shot at us. He came in on one side, on our port side, followed and went around our bow on this side and came in on the starboard side and put his plane in right at the foot of the forward superstructure. He had carried a hundred pound bomb. The plane crashed there. The Nashville was the oldest cruiser . . . the best cruiser class when the war broke out, but now we were the oldest class of . . . cruiser. We had six inch guns and turrets, and then for secondary we had five inch guns in open mounts -- the others were in turrets, the six inch guns were in turrets but the open mounts. As the ship hit and it came in and put itself right in the base of the main superstructure, and its bomb went through the superstructure. And all those five inch guns, those open mounts, the crews were just relaxed around their gun. And the ammunition that they used was up stacked on the deck right beside them. The bomb went through the superstructure and set off all the ammunition on the one side, and the plane itself set all the ammunition off on the other side. As I say, it was about 3 o'clock. We being the flagship had the commanding army officers on board our ship of all this whole landing. The officer in charge of the army was killed and several of them were. So we just kept steaming along with the whole fleet going to the target. We still had power, but a lot of our guns were out of commission from when the plane hit. And we had about 25% casualties, so it was like four hundred injured, dead and so forth on board. We just kept cruising and trying to take care of the wounded and putting the dead over the side until it got dark, and we moved the rest of the army people who had been on board in small craft over to another ship. And we were ordered then to turn around and head back to Leyte Gulf. And we didn't have any anti-aircraft protection. We took just one destroyer, and at that time they had taken underwater gear off of cruisers and only underwater gear was on destroyers. So one destroyer had to be pulled out of the fleet and go ahead of us. So under the dark of night we headed for Leyte Gulf and reached Leyte Gulf the next morning. Meantime, we had gotten rid of a lot of dead boys and taken care of a lot of others. There were floating dry docks that could accomodate a cruiser, but they didn't have any materials to get us fixed up. So they ordered us back to Hawaii, and we proceeded back to Hawaii. And everybody swarmed . . . determining all the damage and what had to be done and so forth. And they couldn't do anything at Pearl Harbor, and so they ordered us back to Bremerton. So we landed back up at Bremerton in December. Then we were there about four months getting repaired. Of course, they replaced a lot of the damaged stuff with more recent development -- ammunition and guns and so forth on the ship. It took about four months getting us back in shape. Then we headed back to, we were ordered back to the place we had come from north of [Manila?] . . . gosh I can't think of the name of that base, the naval base there, that big port north, on the north side [Subic Bay] . . . We stayed there. The Seventh Fleet, interestingly enough, all the other ships from other countries -- no battleships itself, but the cruisers were the big heaviest ships -- were assigned the Seventh Fleet -- the Australian ships, some European naval vessels were all part of the Seventh Fleet. We could not consume liquor on board our ships from the United States, but the British could. [laughing] So during the daytime, we'd go over for exercises and play ball on the islands. We could take the beer, we could carry the beer with us, and we had lots of Australian beer which was 12% alcohol, but at night we'd have to go over to the British ships to have other drinks. [laughing] And occasionally something might happen and maybe we'd get under way to head to something that look like there was some danger or something we could accomplish, but we'd get under way maybe for a day and then the situation changed and we went back in. But then in July we were ordered to make a landing of all Australian troops in Borneo which we did. We were, of course, the flagship as usual, and so on that fourth of July we were bombing Borneo, we and the other cruisers. We'd go up and down the coast, you see, and bomb them with our big guns, clearing the beaches and so forth for the landing

craft. So we made a landing. We actually hit both sides; we . . . one side of Borneo, and then we went around to the other side . . . So when that landing was completed very successfully, but all Australian troops, we were ordered back to Subic Bay -- Subic now comes to me -- where we had been. And that's where we sat when the war ended, in Subic Bay. And we being the flagship, we were ordered to Shanghai to take over. Go to Shanghai. Take control of the territory there. This was terribly interesting. We headed for Shanghai. You've got the Yangtze. At the mouth of the Yangtze there are thousands of islands that have developed over the years as all the soil and stuff came down from all those countries. There were just thousands of island. So, rather than go in the main waterway that ships used getting in to go Shanghai to get into the Yangtze . . . we wound our way through the islands cause the main courses were so lined with bombs and all kinds of military enemy stuff that we didn't know what was. So we wandered up through those islands to get to the mouth of the Yangtze. And like we know at the Columbia River here, you had to wait for the tide at the mouth of the Yangtze, the high tide. We were sitting then when a big tornado [typhoon?] hit. So we had to go back to deep water, and we moved back through all those islands again out to deep water and road out that tornado [typhoon?]. Then we returned back again through -- and of course as we would go through those islands we would occasionally see a depth charge or something floating somewhere, so we had boys with rifles on the bow so they could shoot those things and explode them before the ship hit them. And as we sat waiting for the tide to go up the Yangtze, here came the British Navy. And as you may recall, prior to World War II, the British Navy was the greatest navy in the world. Here they came. And our admiral issued order of precedence up the river, and all of the American ships went first, and the British ships followed us. [laughing] And it's about, oh not too many miles, maybe seven miles up the Yangtze, and you get onto the Huangpu to get to Shanghai, like coming up the Columbia and coming up the Willamette to get to Portland. [crying] This really gets to me. It's hard to describe this next part. Both sides of the Huangpu were covered with people and the water was full of junks. And these people who had been under the Japanese occupation, were just waving flags and greeting us. They were so excited. The memories of that were great. And those little junks, and so forth, they'd run up their colors, and of course we'd have to . . . They handed their kids to us like they wanted us to take their children. It was just amazing.

Our admiral gave orders that we should moor at British Naval Buoy Number One. Which I think was the best moorage you could have in the harbor. And all our ships went fore and aft of us in the river, and the British had to go find their own place.

The first thing we did was call a meeting of all the people, of all the underground people who had been helping us. Among them was a young Chinese man that I met that afternoon at that first meeting. We told him what we were going to do. We actually took control of the city. Our officers moved into the city. There was about a million people in Shanghai at that time. And then we had our own . . . jeeps and so forth on all these ships, and we put them all ashore for transportation. This young fellow was a college graduate, born and raised . . . in China. His father and his brother were in the Chinese army, but they were still in the west a long ways away from Shanghai. He was married to a very lovely Chinese girl, also a college graduate. He had been all this time working for the communications with the . . . He was about my age. Good looking people. And we just got well acquainted quickly. And I spent most of my time when I was ashore with them. He was living with his wife and his mother. His mother had been born and raised in Connecticut. And her husband who was as I say was still in the army was still far away with his brother went to the University of Pennsylvania to study, and that's where they met. And they were married there, and they took their honeymoon and went back to China. And she had never been back to the States, or had any contact for the last four years, those four years the Japanese occupation. And they just took great . . . they were lovely people . . . and they still couldn't communicate with outsiders because they'd been cut all off, so I had them write letters to their families,



and I put them in my mail, and had my folks forward their mail to her mother her parents.

We were there for two months running the city. My duty, I was Junior Grade, J.G., at that point which one night I was in control of the whole police force of Shanghai. I had about eight different people there that could speak Russian and all of the different dialects of China and everything for communications. We had our jeeps all over the town, and murder and rape and everything going on. But the Chinese people, of course, were just so civil, and kind, and so . . . except for economically prices went up very fast.

**BD:** How long were you in China?

**DM:** Two months.

**BD:** Was that the end of your war experience?

**DM:** Then we got orders to return to the United States. Of course, they were trying any way of transporting all of the soldiers and all the military back to home. And so, we picked up a whole lot of civilians and people, on our ship and headed back to the United States. We came in at Los Angeles. I still was in the Navy, and it was a while before I got out, but they gave us all thirty-day leaves. You had your choice of where you'd like to go, and being young and adventuresome I said, "Well I'd like to go to the East Coast," cause I knew if I said Los Angeles I wouldn't see much more of the world. This way I got air transportation to the East Coast, and then they ordered me to the battleship North Carolina which was in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. And that's where I was. I was set free.

[conversation]

**DM:** Akira Kaga in my first grade, after the war -- I can't remember for sure exactly what state he was in. Interestingly, he married a Japanese girl who had come over since the war. She had been sent over here by her family to learn how to tell a male from a female chick at school -- would you believe. And that's where he was, learning a trade. And he looked me up after he got situated there. That was a very rewarding thing, meeting his wife. Even after he died I kept in communication with her. They were living in Texas.

**AM:** So, after the war you were able to reconnect?

**DM:** Uh-hum [yes].

**BD:** The last question I was hoping to ask was what your return was like in terms of, since we started talking about the Japanese-American community here, and when you came back to the area, what the atmosphere was like?

**DM:** Quickly as I could, I found out where, particularly those I wanted like [Mamoru?] Wakasugi who was the young man that was president of these Japanese and the government helped with him in trying to get things done when they wanted to . . . I got in contact with him, and then we remained very close. We would go up to see them and spend time with them, and they would come down here and stay with us. He had married, in the meantime, a gal that was raised in Idaho, a Japanese girl, who was a lovely, lovely gal, and people that we . . . til they died. They were just great. And of course, all of the other Japanese, any of those that were locals, we were in contact with. We enjoyed being with them or doing things with them. There were quite a few of those around. There wasn't much that we could do to

help them or anything. The Mamorus had two younger brothers who both went into the Army and served in Europe. They were great. And he had two sisters, two that we would see all during the rest of their lives. They came back here, but there land . . . they weren't being treated very well. And so they just went back up to Ontario where they had establish during the war. They were farming. They were just farmers. He was very intelligent. He was in real estate business as well as farming.

**BD:** Well, thank you for sharing this with us. You've had a very interesting life, and it helps us to have some historical record of that. Is there any final think that you'd like to add?

**DM:** I know the people that you're working with, the Japanese that you are working with. . . . There's a, you must have it somewhere, there was a television [show] in which I appeared too and spoke. It's been repeated on local television many times about the Japanese.

**AM:** I'll have to look for it. Was it an interview or a television show?

**DM:** It was a television show of some kind. I can't remember. I didn't even know it was done until people saw me on television and said, "I saw you on television." [laughing] What's his name now that's kind of the head guy working with you? Japanese.

**AM:** Ron Iwazaki?

**DM:** Yah. I'm sure he knows all about that.

**AM:** Ok. I'll ask him.

**DM:** I had not known him prior to the war.

[interview ends]

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Terms:

Armed Forces

Armed Forces--Officers

Agriculture--History

Banks and banking

Communities--Oregon--History

Education, Rural

Families--History

Farms--Oregon

Local history

Navies--Officers

Oregon

School buildings

Second World War, 1939-1945

Strawberries

Don Moore

Parker

Wakasugi  
Douglas MacArthur  
Akira Taga  
Ron Iwazaki

Japanese-American  
Japanese School  
Oregon State University  
Purdue University  
Portland Stockyards  
Columbia University  
Washington County Bank  
Oregon Trail

Isthmus of Panama  
San Francisco, California  
Sacramento, California  
Greenville, Oregon  
Kansas City, Oregon  
Banks, Oregon  
Seattle, Washington  
Washington County, Oregon  
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii  
Corvallis, Oregon  
Ontario, Oregon  
Idaho  
Hood River, Oregon  
New York  
South Pacific  
Brisbane, Australia  
The Philippines  
Gulf of Leyte  
Manila, The Philippines  
Subic Bay  
Bremerton, Washington  
Borneo  
Shanghai, China  
Yangtze River  
Huangpu River  
Plattsburgh, New York

USS Nashville  
Seventh Fleet



Name of person interviewed: George Tsugawa

Date of interview: September 24, 2011

Location of interview:

Special Conditions:

General Description of contents: growing up in Hillsboro, experience being sent to and living in Minidoka internment camp during WWII

:37 – 5:15 growing up and going to school in Hillsboro area as a child, playing sports in high school, former teachers

5:17 – 8:54 moves to North Portland, Japan attacks the U.S., talks about new laws imposed on Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor, talks about process of being sent to Minidoka internment camp: kept for 2-3 months in North Portland in 15x15 ft sq meatpacking room with bad stench, loaded on a train and transported to Minidoka Idaho packed onto train like sardines

8:56 – 11:53 describing Minidoka camp physical layout: watchtowers, barracks, population size, roads

11:55 – 12:40 talks about his family, losing father and helping take care of siblings exempted him from military service.

12:45 – 16:40 work/jobs at internment camp, permit to leave camp to do farm labor at local farms

16:45 – 17:37 recreation in internment camp, dances

17:40 – 20:47 talks about U.S. finally trusting Niseis enough as loyal citizen to volunteer for U.S. army, 442<sup>nd</sup> division heroism and paving the way for better treatment of Japanese Americans after the war.

20:55 – 23:10 talks about post-war discrimination upon returning to Portland after internment, seeing signs that say "No Japs Allowed," moving to Beaverton and beginning farming.

23:25 – 24:20 talks about the people he met in the internment camp, dying off of WWII generation

24:30 – 26:00 back to experience of being rounded up and finding out he will be going to an internment camp, personal items allowed to bring and had to leave behind.

26:20 – 28:00 back to Japanese Americans in camps who volunteered for military service in WWII, wanted to prove they were loyal Americans, opposition of parents to children fighting for nation who had imprisoned them, Tsugawa admires those who volunteered.

28:00 – talks about Japanese-Americans who were not interred, only those near the coast had to move.

29:00 – 31:00 talks about feelings about living in Washington County before and after war/internment, Japanese “ghettos” (particularly in NW Portland) where gathered in groups broken up by war because people scattered.

31:00 – 33:25 desire of Japanese-American parents for children to go to college and make a better life for themselves. Many friends turned out to be doctors, dentists, lawyers though Tsugawa became a farmer. Hard work and optimism among Nisei

35:35 – 38:30 talks again about people being able to bring very little to internment camps, having to leave almost all possessions behind forever. Talks about getting outside retail in camp through Montgomery Ward’s catalogue. They were promised personal possessions would be returned when they left the camp, but never got anything back.

38:40 – 40:35 Though some people do not understand it, in spite of everything that happened to him, Tsugawa says he really does not have any hard feelings. It was war. Everybody suffers in war. Pride in second and third generation Japanese-Americans. He admits his feeling is not common, many Japanese-Americans were bitter about the way they were treated and they have a right to be.

### **Tags**

Agricultural laborers, Basketball, Beaverton—Oregon, Construction, David Hill Elementary School, Farming, Football, High school sports, Hillsboro--Oregon, Hillsboro High School, Japanese internment camps, Minidoka--Idaho, Minidoka internment camp, Nisei, North Portland, Northwest Portland, Peter Boscow Jr. High, Seattle—Washington, Shute Park, Tule Lake—California, Tule internment camp, Twin Fall--Idaho, World War II