

7:4

Muruyama, Paul

Interview

Oct. 1981-

(Peter Morimoto)

83/115

c

Paul Moriyama

ca. Oct. 12, 1981

PM. Hello

RW. Hello, Is this Peter Moriyama?

PM. Yes.

PM. I'm Professor Rosalie Wax, and I don't know whether Mr. Iida talked to you about me. I had lived in Tule Lake Center...

PM. Yeah? (very interested) Is that right!

RW. And I was the one person who went in and walked around and talked to people all the time.

PM. Oh! (laughs)

RW. And...

PM. Is that right! And you're here now in St. Louis?

RW. And I'm now in St. Louis and the Rockefeller Foundation - they have given me a little money and they have asked me if I would talk to any people who were in Tule Lake.

PM. Yes.

RW. And see, you know, about their human feelings..

PM. Yes?

RW. And how the whole evacuation affected them, and how they are doing now. And I wonder if you'd be willing?

PM. Surely!

RW. You have time now?

PM. Oh yes!

RW. Oh great. Well, we will go ahead and if you get tired or if you want to stop, you let me know.

PM. Oh yes. Where are you now?

RW. I'm at home. I'm living in St. Louis.

PM. St. Louis?

RW. Yes.

PM. Where?

RW. I live <sup>on</sup> ~~in~~ Westmoreland, right near the University.

PM. Yes, yes, Washington University.

RW. Yes. I am a retired professor.

PM. Oh? (surprised) I see..

RW. And I was 31, 32 in the camps.

PM. Oh?

RW. And I think what Mr. Iida said, you were a couple of years older.

PM. Which Mr. Iida

RW. Sam Iida.

PM. Oh, Sam Iida

RW. Yes.

PM. Oh yes, I am much older than Sam.

RW. Yes.

PM. Laughs.

RW. You are older than me. (laughs).

PM. Yes, yes.

RW. \_\_\_ (?) with respect

PM. I'm a retired man. (laughs)

RW. I'll be 70 next month.

PM. I'm 74 already.

RW. Oh yeah.

PM. Yes

RW. I'll ask you some questions and you don't have to answer them if you do not want to, and you can say just what you please if you like.

P.M Surely..

RW. First, I would like to know a little about your life before Pearl Harbor struck and what you were doing.

PM. Surely.

- PM. Well, can we meet you someplace then?
- RW. Well, I was wanting to interview you over the phone.
- PM. Oh, I see..
- RW. I have a recorder.
- PM. Oh, I see.. Well, I was teaching in Sacramento, California.
- RW. You were living in Sacramento?
- PM. Yes, I was teaching in Sacramento, California, in the Japanese Language School.
- RW. Oh, you were a language school teacher?
- PM. Yes. And I was there about a year and a half to 2 years.
- RW. Yes. Hm, Hm...
- PM. And, then Pearl Harbor, they evacuated to Walaga, then... To Tule Lake
- RW. Which was the one you were evacuated to?
- PM. Walaga, Walaga is just a few miles from Sacramento. That's, I think an Assembly center.
- RW. That was the Assembly center they sent you to?
- PM. Yes.
- RW. And could you tell me a little about what <sup>happened</sup> before all this struck, what your hopes were for the future; what you planned to do, you know, with your life?
- PM. Well, before the war?
- RW. Yes, before the war.
- PM. Well, I came from Japan as an exchange student.
- RW. I see...
- PM. And I studied in Colorado and I went to NYU...
- RW. Yes.
- PM. <sup>And</sup> then, in 1939-1940 I was teaching a Sakura Gakuen of Sacramento.
- RW. Yes.

PM. And I was teaching a Chu to ka — Middle school.

RW. Yes.. And..

PM. And I was planning to go back to Japan in, end of 1941 or '42, and then the war start and (laughs) and ~~I was forced~~ <sup>it was impossible</sup> ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ to return ~~from~~ <sup>to</sup> Japan.

RW. Yes. So you were... .

PM. Well, I spent nearly 3½ years in Tule Lake.

RW. Gee, that's a long time.

PM. Well, I was an exchange student you know. I could not get out from there...

RW. Yes.

PM. For that reason.

RW. ~~And, I can..~~ I was going to ask would you mind telling me when you were born. I assume you were born in Japan?

PM. Oh yes, naturally.

RW. And your birth date? *me*

PM. February 15, 1907. (hesitates)

RW. 1907? Great, I'll just get that down and...

P.M. And I finished grammar school, high school and college in Japan.

RW. In Japan? And then you came as an exchange student to the United States?

PM. Right, right.

RW. And then you were teaching Japanese school in Sacramento?

PM. Yes. yes,

RW. ....I'll tell you this one, you can judge. Can you tell me how you felt when you heard the government announcement that the Japanese American people were ordered to leave their homes and report to the Assembly Centers?

PM. Well, after all it was war time, you know.... the country and the people and everybody, <sup>they're</sup> ~~is~~ not normal..

RW. Yes..

PM. Well, I have complained, but I can't help that..

RW. You can't help that..

PM. Yes, well, many American people ask me here in St. Louis, we are very sorry; how was the treatment and so and so, you know?

RW. Yes.

PM. Well, I didn't say much. We were ~~LUCKY~~<sup>lucky</sup> to intern in the United States. If I was in Manchuria or Siberia, I ~~had~~<sup>would have</sup> miserable time.. I have a friend who lost his life in Siberia, So, but, well, after all, that is war time, you know, not normal times..

RW. Yes, it could be worse. ~~(laughs)~~

PM. Yes, yes (laughs) but ~~to~~<sup>can't</sup> complain (laughs) \*

RW. I see, so ~~then~~ you went to the Assembly Center all by yourself, I guess..

PM. ...with my wife.

RW. Oh, you were married?

PM. Oh yes, I was married in 1941.

RW. You were married in 1941. Did you have any children?

PM. Yes, my son was born in Tule Lake.

RW. Your son was born in Tule Lake?

PM. Yes, and you know, he finished Colorado and got a Masters from UCLA. Then went into the United States Army.

RW. He went where?

PM. Where? He was in the Army.

RW. Oh, he went into the Army?

PM. Yes, he was in the Army and stayed 4 years; came out as a Captain.

RW. This was in ~~World War?~~ the Korean War?

PM. No, no, Vietnam!

RW. Vietnam.

PM. Yes.

RW. Excuse me, I... (laughs) I'm not as young as I use to be..

RW. Your son was in Vietnam.

PM. My son was in Vietnam, Korea, Okinawa, Taiwan, Phillipines, all over! He is a camera man; he took a lot of documentary films for the army; because he studied graphic design in UCLA.

RW. What kind of design?

PM. Graphic, graphic design.

RW. He took many films in Vietnam?

PM. Yes, he got a lot of citations from the Army, navy and air force. He made a lot of good film; and he is a film producer now in Washington, D.C.

~~Photo~~ Just  
RW. / Wonderful!

PM. Yes, commercial film.

RW. Well, then would I be right in saying you didn't find the ~~assembly...~~ the life in the Assembly Centers too hard?

PM. Well, Assembly Center was really bad place; very bad place; toilet system and mess hall..

RW. What system?

PM. Toilet, you know, and bathroom system was so bad in assembly center.

RW. Yes.

PM. Oh, my wife could not go to the toilet for 3 days. (laughs)

RW. (laughs)

PM. / Oh,  
That's terrible...

RW. I can well... toilets weren't even.. well even in the Relocation Centers, but...

PM. Relocation Centers were much better than Assembly Center.

RW. Assembly Center was very bad....

PM. Yes.

RW. Let's see, ~~Did~~. The questions was how did you manage to cope with this experience; how was it that your wife finally went to the toilet (laughs).

PM. Well, she couldn't go but after a while... you gotta go!  
(laughs)

RW. You gotta go (laughs) Good for you. To what ~~R~~elocation  
Center did they send you?

PM. What?

RW. To what ~~R~~elocation from the ~~A~~sssembly Center....

PM. Assembly center, ~~then~~ Tule Lake.

RW. And so you were an ~~old~~, what they call an ~~Old~~ Tulean..  
You were there all the time.

PM. Yes, all the time.

RW. Can you remember how you felt when you were told that you  
were going to be sent to Tule Lake?

PM. Well, yes, they told me to go to Tule Lake, someplace near  
California and Oregon border line.

RW. And?

PM. And, I was ~~forced~~ <sup>first</sup> my job as block manager..

RW. ~~Was~~ what?

PM. Block manager. ~~Manager~~ of each block.. Then next, I took  
treasurer of Co-op. Then I was ~~Community~~ Activities direc...  
supervisor..

RW. Oh..

PM. That's three jobs I did. Block manager, Co-op treasurer,  
then community activities supervisor.

RW. Yes, it was very responsible work..

PM. Yes, very interesting and (laughs) I learned a lot of things.

RW. Kept you occupied.

RW. Well, I could ask, which experiences in Tule Lake do you  
recall most strongly?

PM. Well, I have a very pro-Japanese Issei, ~~Pro Japanese issei,~~  
~~criticize,~~  
/ and I had a little hard time, because I told those Nisseis,  
you know, young people, if you have the chance, go to  
school or get out from camp and go to school. But that...  
everybody thought I was telling all young people, you know,  
get out from the camps and go to school and all the Issei  
peop people said, "you are a leader of this camp, why... you

FOOTNOTE p. 7/ 8.

R. I suggest that what Mr. Iida is trying to tell me is that some "pro-Japanese Issei" were ~~kahhngnhhantahannan~~ implying that ~~kyxchhhmawinnhngm~~ if he were "true Japanese" he would not be ~~ka~~ advising young people to leave the camp and go to school.

PM. (continued)

shouldn't say such things, you know.. accussing me you are Japanese?<sup>1</sup> (laughs) They ~~were~~<sup>even</sup> come in the evenings, to my place.. they would.. I had a hard time... but I had to tell the truth for the young people, you know. It's old people like you, it's all right; but young people, 19, 20 young people, they have a chance for a big future.

RW. This is very interesting. Of course, you were then a young man and you weren't afraid that they were going to beat you up like..

PM. No, no, they were all my friends, you know. Well, if you have a chance I recommend to get out of camp and go to school. That's all.. the Issei people got mad at me.. (laughs)

RW. Not only that....

PM. I ~~xxxxxx~~<sup>just told</sup> tell the truth..

RW. There were these ~~segregationists~~<sup>for</sup>, how do you say in Japanese - Hoshidan <sup>Hoshi-dan, registration</sup> [military]

PM. I was at that time, you know, at the ~~segregation~~<sup>re</sup> time, I was an interpreter of someone, they can explain that, you know. But, I just said Yes and No answer. Not No, No.

RW. Oh, you were a Yes and No.. yes

And how did you feel about the military questionnaire?

PM. Well, they shouldn't ask that question in the first place, you know. That is wrong. They shouldn't ask that question. We were in camp.. I think the question is wrong, but I answered; everyone had to answer; but I'm not interested in ~~that~~<sup>such</sup> questionnaire.

RW. Yes, I see. Well, maybe I could ask you.. Lots and lots of things happened in Tule Lake while we were there...

PM. Yes, yes.

RW. Anything today...

PM. I tell you something new. <sup>Well</sup> /How long were you there in Tule Lake?

RW. Well, I first.. when I went to work for the University of California Study, you know, I was first in <sup>G</sup> Mila; then I ~~met~~ <sup>made</sup> some friends there who <sup>got</sup> had gotten segregated, <sup>then</sup> and I visited in Tule Lake in early 1944 and I came and lived there from May, 1944 until a whole year later.

PM. Well, do you know some <sup>incident</sup> instance where Co-op was <sup>G</sup> general manager.. somebody assassinate..kill...?

RW. I certainly.. not only that but before he was killed there were a lot of people beaten up; because they were suppose to be <sup>one</sup> ~~number~~ <sup>inu</sup> and then... Mr. Noma

PM. Mr. Noma he was <sup>G</sup> general <sup>M</sup> manager of Co-op. At that time I was treasurer of Co-op.

RW. You were what?

PM. I was treasurer of Co-op. Treasurer..

RW. How do you spell that, I'm sorry..

PM. / <sup>Kaiki</sup> ~~Treasurer~~, you know.. general manager, Treasurer, you know

RW. I see.

PM. Mr. Noma was general manager and I was treasurer, you know, handle the money and everything. Next victim was Morimoto (laughs) They said they had long list of about 10 people.

RW. Oh yes, there was suppose to be number one ~~one~~ <sup>inu</sup>.

PM. Yes, number one; number two was Morimoto So government asked me, "why don't you come into the inside of the government building." <sup>they took</sup> So/all family; took us there for 4 or 5 days; but I couldn't stay there, you know. So I returned and I announced at mess hall, "I have to leave my barrack to <sup>go</sup> the administration building"; but I can not stay any longer, where I don't care whatever happens, but I returned to my block. Oh, everybody prayed for me, you know (laughs).

RW. You know, that really took guts, I know. Did you have any idea why they killed Mr. Noma?

PM. Well, I think, I don't know. <sup>three</sup> Well, when you are in that position, a lot of complain<sup>to</sup>... anything you know. People think that <sup>maybe</sup> they are dictator.. doing Co-op all by themselves; but we have a ~~board~~ Co-op board member, and they can't do anything one man, you know. Especially the Co-op system, you have to consult everything, board members, treasurer, assistant, everything. They can't do anything by themself. But a lot of people <sup>they</sup> don't know those things. I'm doing the same <sup>way</sup> as Noma, No., but I have 5 or 6 accountants working for me, you know.

RW. Of course...

PM. ~~16~~ <sup>Twenty</sup> 20 bookkeepers, you know.. So those things happened in camp.. that's <sup>the</sup> camp. (laughs)

RW. I heard that they were carefully edited.. how should I say.. that the accountants went over it afterwards and there was no bad stuff going on at all in the Co-op. It was just rumor and gossip.

PM. Yes, that gossip, you can't go do anything about it, you know. — inside Co-op.

RW. When you left the Co-op, did you have any other job? what did you do then?

PM. Co-op.. radical group we call Manzanar group, you know. At that time we had a group come in from Manzanar. Those groups took over Co-op..

RW. Yes George Maruyama

PM. Yeah, yeah. I remember that. He is nice, personally he is good, but those groups took over Co-op, so I resigned. Then I took community activities supervisor.

RW. Yes. Did you know another young man who was sometimes in community activities, George Wakida?

PM. Wakidy? yes, very well.

RW. You knew him very well?

PM. Yes, he is in Japan ~~you know~~ <sup>though,</sup>

RW. He was a good friend of mine. I knew him in Gila..

PM. Oh, is that right. Yes, I know that.

RW. I knew him and his wife.

PM. I think he is some hotel man, eh? He's working in hotel?

RW. I heard that in Japan.. that, this is what I read in a ~~book~~ book, that he had gotten a very good job; that he was a director.

PM. Yes, he has a very good job in Japan.

RW. Yes, director of the railroad, you know.

PM. Oh, is that right?

RW. That's what I heard.

PM. Oh, I see..

RW. He really did good for himself. This is so fine to get you because this is the first time that I've been able to talk like this to someone who was in the co-op.

PM. Oh, I'm glad.

RW. Let's see, I'll ask a somewhat different question. Did you have any personal <sup>or</sup> persons, whom you <sup>really</sup> thought were your ~~really~~ good friends, you know, who you felt that these men will really stand by me in Tule Lake?

PM. Well, I have some administration buildings.. <sup>I had a</sup> ~~some~~ good friends, even director was very good. He recommended.. good recommendation letter to anybody. I still have that letter, you know in my memory.

RW. Was this Mr. Bert or..

PM. Yes. 5

RW. Mr. Bert was good.

RW. Yes, I know him.

RW. Among the Japanese - any good friends?

PM. Oh yes, yes. I was living in the block manager- doctor's block, you know.

RW. Oh yes, of course..

PM. Block seven..

RW. Block seven..

PM. Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ all those doctors <sup>are</sup> good friends.

RW. That's nice because younger people I have talked to.. sometimes went to Tule Lake and they were so scared that they hardly ever made a friend.

PM. Oh, I enjoyed it. I would like to meet them sometime before I die. (laughs).

RW. <sup>Well, the people I talked to are</sup> ~~was~~ in California. Well, I'll tell them about you and let me ask you just a <sup>kind of</sup> crazy question here. <sup>Were</sup> ~~is~~ there any people in Tule Lake, who you felt were being, any group of people, who were being very foolish or stupid in what they were doing?

PM. Well, I'll tell you. One fellow here in St. Louis; that time he was very poor Japanese young man and he said .. we call wa-sho wa-sho group..

RW. Yeah, yeah..

PM. I think all those group went to Japan. They denounced their citizenship; then <sup>they</sup> went to Japan. Then <sup>when he</sup> ~~they~~ returned here; Oh, he is a nice gentleman now; so quiet. I ask him sometime, what happen to him so many years ago, you were so radical...

RW. Yes, everybody's going <sup>Dai</sup> ~~back~~ Nippon.. and they come back..

PM. <sup>Oh</sup> ~~Yes~~, that time was really crazy; he said "I was really crazy," I said, well that was war time.

RW. Gee, <sup>maybe</sup> / I wonder, is he in St. Louis?

PM. Yes, we play mah jong and we are good friends now, you know, very good friends.

RW. Do you think he might talk to me or do you think he wouldn't like to talk about it?

PM. Oh, he doesn't mind.. His name is \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe he <sup>doesn't</sup> ~~won't~~ like you asking about this story..

RW. That's what people hate to... is it \_\_\_\_\_. Let me see..

PM. He's a landscape man, gardener <sup>here</sup> and busy. You just call evenings. I'll give you telephone number.

RW. All right. It will be interesting to see.. sometimes it is interesting to see what people don't want to talk about, you know.

PM. Well, you can try.

RW. You got his phone number there?

PM. Yes, I have it here... \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

RW. I'll give him a try..

RW. Wife's name is \_\_\_\_\_.

PM. She was in Japan too. He and \_\_\_\_\_ went to Japan together.

RW. In 1946 and so on?

PM. Yes, 1946 and they returned here <sup>about</sup> 15 - 17 years ago. American government said, <sup>"Well,</sup> you denounce American citizenship, but that's all right. We give back to you American citizenship, so nice, you know."

RW. That was nice..

PM. So, everybody returned to this country.

RW. Many of my friends and people I have talked to returned and some have what they tell me <sup>often</sup> was that <sup>often</sup> life in Japan, ~~there~~ it was just terrible; they didn't have enough to eat and it made me cry.

PM. <sup>Well, sometime</sup> Those were young people, you know. Parents, father and the mother influence denounce citizenship; then very radical, but of course maybe young man think he all right, but father and mother strongly, you know, against this country.

RW. And you know, like some I talked to, 11 or 14 years old, well you have to do what...

PM. Yes, that's right, that's right..I think American government knows that.. that's why they thought, well, it's okay, we give you citizenship again (laughs)..

RW. I think that is really very.. a good thing.

PM. Yes, yes, I think so. I think that is American democracy.

RW. I read of <sup>terrible</sup> tragic things happening in America, but I always tell myself it's much worse in other places..

PM. Right, right, yes.. that's right.

RW. Now let's see..As you look back on this experience in Tule Lake, which of the experience<sup>s</sup> has affected you the most deeply?

PM. In Tule Lake?

RW. Yes.

PM. Some good thing or bad thing?

RW. Well, both, what was most good?

PM. Well, I...(hesitate)

RW. or painful

PM. I think Sacramento area people, they know I was teaching head of school, so they listened to me, you know, what I said, those people. Well, you are school teacher, and you are head of teacher's group, so...that I admire those people when I was a Co-op board member and they listened to me. So, I thought I should lead them in my best way, you know, even old people, <sup>or</sup> young people. ~~Bad thing,~~ <sup>and the</sup> I didn't have much bad thing; only a few people, but, you know, criticize that I'm too lenient with the young people. (hesitate)

RW. I didn't quite understand you when I asked. What I asked was what in Tule Lake happened that really hurt you most?

PM. Well, it didn't hurt me...

RW. Nothing, nothing you would say... and let's see..

PM. I do not regret anything while I was in Tule Lake. I just felt maybe it was waste 3½ years in Tule Lake, but I have a lot of experience. (laughs)

RW. When you think back. I'll ask it this way..what was the happiest experience?

PM. In Tule Lake?

RW. Yes.

PM. Well..(long pause) I don't know what my happiest experience in Tule Lake.. I don't know. I can't think of that.

RW. Well, that's okay. I just thought there was <sup>a</sup> Let me see on these questions..Oh yes, <sup>could</sup> ~~can~~ you tell me what you did right after you left Tule Lake?

PM. Tule Lake?

RW. Yes.

PM. Well, As I said, I was a leader of the people and administration office, Mr. Best and some people ask <sup>ed</sup> me, "Murimoto, you are the leader of this camp and the people <sup>they</sup> don't want to go out, you know. So we pay you all your traveling expenses, so why don't you go out by yourself; look around all Midwestern cities and eastern cities. So, they bought me train ticket. So I stopped by Chicago, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Cleveland, all those cities. Met college presidents, and church leader, <sup>and</sup> chamber of commerce president. Then I ask those people if they accept Japanese people if they get out ~~of~~ <sup>from</sup> the camp. So all I ask in those cities <sup>and they</sup> ~~and all those people~~ said "yes." "Send them in!"

RW. Can you remember when this was when you were doing this?

PM. 1945. --

RW. I would think this would be early 1945..

PM. No, end of 1945.

RW. Oh, end of 1945.

PM. Yes, right after the war.

RW. and to find places....

PM. Then all cities; none of the cities object, you know; they welcome. So, I returned to Tule Lake. I wrote the newspaper article, big article and I talked to all different mess halls. You do not afraid; <sup>don't</sup> ~~not~~ be afraid to get out; they'll welcome. Then, <sup>well</sup> encourage all the people. Don't stay out; war has end. You people have to get out.. early <sup>is</sup> the better. <sup>Best</sup> ~~Well~~ I got the best impression from St. Louis, so I moved here.

RW. So, you thought that was the best place to go.

PM. Well, I got a good impression from Washington University's Chancellor, Baptist Church minister, chamber of commerce president, all those people/<sup>they</sup> encouraged me. So I told people. Some people said, "if you Mr. Morimoto go, I'll go with you." So, some people came out with me to here. I told all the different messhalls, you know, told all the people, you don't have to be afraid, because there are a lot of job openings; they will accept you. So, I told them.

RW. What kind of work did you do; what job after that?

PM. Teaching school.

RW. I didn't quite understand..

PM. I was teaching school here. Oh, just a minute, I got a call from long distance.. just a minute.

(long pause) All right.

RW. Was that a Japanese school?

PM. Somebody call me, so I call later.

RW. I'm almost finished. What school did you teach at?

PM. Oh, evening school, Washington University, Berlitz Language School, 2 -3 language schools, they ask me to teach Japanese.

RW. So, you are a colleague of mine at Wash. U.

PM. Laughs.

RW. Well, that's really great. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

PM. No, I guess that's about all.

RW. Well, you have told me things I have never known before..

PM. I'm glad..I never tell<sup>all</sup> my whole camp life. This is the first time in 30 years (laughs).

RW. Well, I'll tell you this, because sometimes I talk ~~with~~<sup>to</sup> some people and it was such a sad experience, that it just made me remember sad things and I feel bad. Talking with ~~you~~<sup>you</sup> you has <sup>now</sup> given me strength to continue.

PM. Oh good, good.. L'm glad.

RW. Thank you so much..

PM. Yeah

RW. Good-bye

PM. Good-bye.

PETER MORIMOTO  
12 October 1981

In 1944 and 1945 all of my Japanese American respondents tried to dissociate themselves from the despised and hated informers and accommodators -- the inu. Everyone I talked to was, or appeared to be afraid of being called an inu. In June of 1944, five men, suspected of being inu were severely beaten and on the night of July 2, Mr. Noma, the Chairman of the Cooperative Enterprises, was murdered. At that time, most of my respondents approved of the beatings - or felt impelled to express approval.

Though, in 1981-82 I was interested in what Japanese Americans might wish to tell me about this tragic period of camp life, I did not include specific questions about the beatings or the murder in my questionnaire. Somewhat to my surprise, four respondents, three men and one woman, spontaneously told me how they had said or done what they thought was right and, in consequence, had been stigmatized as inu. Three respondents spoke well of Mr. Noma. Some told me how other well intentioned people had been called inu by "the radicals." Only one respondent spoke critically of "people who co-operated with the administration and spied on us."

In 1981-1982 Peter Marimoto was the first respondent to tell me how and why he had been called an inu.

Mr. Marimoto, age 35 was born in Japan, finished college there, and then came to the United States. He told me that he had attended college in Colorado and at New York University.

*Peter Marimoto: And then, in 1939-1940 I was teaching a Sakura Gakueu of Sacramento and a Cau to ka - Middle School... And I was planning to go back to Japan at the end of 1941 or '42, and then the war start and (laughs) it was impossible to return to Japan.*

*Rosalie Wax: Can you tell me how you felt when you heard the government announcement that the Japanese American people were ordered to leave their homes and report to the Assembly Centers?*

PETER MORIMOTO  
12 October 1981

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P.M. Well, after all it was war time, you know...the country and the people and everybody, they're not normal...I have complained, but I can't help that...

R.W. You can't help that...

P.M. Yes. Many American people ask me here in St. Louis, we are very sorry; how was the treatment and so and so, you know?

R.W. Yes.

P.M. Well, I didn't say much. We were lucky to be intern in the United States. If I was in Manchuria or Siberia, I would have had miserable time... I have a friend who lost his life in Siberia. So, but, well, after all, that is wartime, you know, not normal times.

R.W. Yes, it could be worse.

P.M. Yes (laughs) but can't complain (laughs).

R.W. I see, so then you went to the Assembly Center all by yourself, I guess...

P.M. ...with my wife.

R.W. Oh, you were married?

P.M. Oh yes, I was married in 1941.

R.W. Did you have any children?

P.M. Yes, my son was born in Tule Lake. Yes, and you know, he finished Colorado and got his Masters from UCLA. Then went into the United States Army. He was in the Army and stayed 4 years; came out as a Captain.

R.W. Your son was in Vietnam?

P.M. My son was in Vietnam, Korea, Okinawa, Taiwan, Phillipines, all over! He is a camera man; he took a lot of documentary films for the Army; because he studied graphic design in UCLA.

R.W. He took many films in Vietnam?

P.M. Yes, he got a lot of citations from the Army, Navy, Air Force. He made a lot of good film; and he is a film producer now in Washington, D.C.

R.W. That's just wonderful!

P.M. Yes, commercial film.

R.W. Well, then would I be right in saying you didn't find life in the Assembly Centers too hard?

P.M. Well, Assembly Center was really bad place; very bad place; toilet system and mess hall...

R.W. What system?

P.M. Toilet, you know, and bathroom system was so bad in Assembly Center.

R.W. Yes.

PM: Oh, my wife could not go to the toilet for 3 days. (laughs)

PM: Oh, that's terrible.

RW: I can well...toilets weren't even...well even in the Relocation Centers, but ...

PM: Relocation Centers were much better than Assembly Centers.

RW: Let's see. (looks at questionnaire). The question was, how did you manage to cope this this experience; how was it that your wife finally went to the toilet (laughs).

PM: Well, she couldn't go, but after a while...you gotta go!

RW: (laughs) Good for you. To what Relocation Center did they send you.

PM: Assembly Center -- then Tule Lake.

RW: And so you were an Old Tulean...

PM: Yes, all the time.

RW: Can you remember how you felt when you were told that you were going to be sent to Tule Lake?

PM: Well, yes they told me to go to Tule Lake, some place near California and Oregon border line...And, I was first my job as block manager...Then next, I took treasurer of Co-es. Then I was Community Activities director... supervisor.

RW: Oh.

PM: That's three jobs I did. Block manager, Co-es, treasurer, then Community Activites supervisor.

RW: It was very responsible work.

PM: Yes. Very interesting and (laughs) I learned a lot of things.

RW: Which experiences in Tule Lake do you recall most strongly?

PM: Well, I have a very pro-Japanese Issei criticize (me) and I had a little hard time. Because I told those Nisei, you know, young people, "If you have the chance, go to school or get out from camp and go to school."...And all the Nisei said, "You are a leader in this camp...You shouldn't say such things," Accusing me, "Are you Japanese?" (laughs) They even came in the

- PM: (con't) evenings to my place. I had a hard time. But I had to tell the truth for the young people, you know. (I told Issei) "It's old people like you, it's all right; but young people, 19, 20, young people, they have a chance for a big future."
- RW: Of course, you were then a young man and you weren't afraid that they were going to beat you up like. . .
- PM: "No, no. They were all my friends, you know. Well, if you have a chance I recommend to get out of camp, you know. The Issei people got mad at me. . . (laughs). . . I just told the truth.
- RW: How did you feel about the military questionnaire?
- PM: Well, they shouldn't ask that question in the first place, you know. That is wrong. . . We were in camp. . . I think the question is wrong, but I answered. Everyone has to answer. . . I just said Yes and No answers, not No-no.
- RW: I see. . . Lots and lots of things happened at Tule Lake while we were there. . .
- PM: I tell you something new. . . Do you know some incident where Co-es, was General Manager, somebody assassinate. . . kill?
- RW: But before he was killed there were a lot of people beaten up; because they were supposed to be inu and then. . . Mr. Noma. . .
- PM: Mr. Noma was General Manager of Co-op. . . I was treasurer, you know, handle the money and everything. Next victim was Merimate (laughs). They said they had long list of about 10 people.
- RW: Oh yes. They were supposed to be Number 1 inu.
- PM: Yes, Number One; Number Two was Merimoto. So government ask me, Why don't you come inside of government building." So they took all family; took us there for 4 or 5 days. But I couldn't stay there, you know. . . I returned to my block. Oh, everybody prayed for me.
- RW: What did you do then?
- PM: Radical group we call Manzanar group. . . These group took over Co-op. So I resigned. Then I took Community Activities supervisor.
- RW: Did you know another young man who was in Community Activities, George Wakiea?
- PM: Wakia? Yes, very well.
- RW: He was a good friend of mine. I knew him in Gila.
- PM: Oh, is that right?
- RW: This is the first time that I've been able to talk like this to someone who was in the Co-op.
- PM: Oh, I'm glad.

- RW: Let's see. I'll ask a somewhat different question. Did you have any person or persons whom you really thought were your good friends, you know, who you felt that these men will really stand by me in Tule Lake?
- PM: Well, I have some administration buildings. . . I had a good friend, even director was very good. He recommended. . . good recommendation letter to anybody. I still have that letter, you know, in my memory.
- RW: Was this Mr. Best or . . .
- PM: Yes. Mr. Best was good.
- RW: Yes, I knew him.
- RW: Among the Japanese - any good friends?
- PM: Oh yes, yes. I was living in the block manager - doctor's block, you know. Block seven. . . Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ all those doctors are good friends.
- RW: That's nice because younger people I have talked to. . . sometimes went to Tule Lake and they were so scared that they hardly ever made a friend.
- PM: Oh, I enjoyed it. I would like to meet them sometime before I die. (laughs)
- RW: Let me ask you just a kind of crazy question here. Were there any people in Tule Lake, who you felt were being, any group or people, who were being very foolish or stupid in what they were doing?
- PM: Well, I'll tell you. . . we call wash sho wash sho. . . I think all those groups went to Japan. They denounced their citizenship; then they went to Japan. Ong fellow here in St. Louis; that time he was very poor Japanese young man. Then, when he returned here; Oh, he is a nice gentleman nowp so quiet. I ask him somethime, what happen to him so many years ago, you were so radical. . .
- RW: Yes, everybody's going Dai Nippon. . . and they come back. . .
- PM: Oh, that time was really crazy; he said, "I was really crazy." I said, well that was war time.
- RW: Gee, maybe I wonder, is he in St. Louis?
- PM: Yes, we play mah jong and we are good friends now, you know, very good friends.
- RW: Do you think he might talk to me or do you think he wouldn't like to talk about it?
- PM: Oh, he doesn't mind. . . His name is \_\_\_\_\_. Maybe he doesn't like you asking about this story. . . He's a landscape man, gardener here and busy. You just call evenings. I'll give you telephone number. He and his wife went to Japan together.

1. Mr. Merimoto is referring to Mr. Iisa, from whom I subsequently obtained an interview.

RW: In 1946?

PM: Yes, in 1946 and they returned here about 15-17 years ago. American government said, "Well, you denounce American citizenship, but that's all right. We give it back to you American citizenship."  
So, everybody returned to this country.

RW: Many of my friends and people I have talked to returned and some have. . . What they tell me was that often life in Japan was just terrible; they didn't have enough to eat. And it made me cry.

PM: Well, sometime those were young people, you know. Parents, father and the mother influence denounce citizenship; then very radical, but of course maybe young man think he all right, but father and mother strongly, you know, against this country.  
I think American government know that. . . that's why they thought, well, it's okay, we give you citizenship again (laughs). . .

RW: I think that is really very. . . a good thing.

PM: Yes, yes, I think so. I think that is American democracy.

RW: I read of terrible things happening in America, but I always tell myself it's much worse in other places. . .

PM: Right, right, yes. . . that's right.

RW: Now, let's see. . . As you look back on this experience in Tule Lake, which of the experiences has affected you the most deeply?

PM: In Tule Lake?

RW: Yes.

PM: Some good thing, or bad thing?

RW: Well, both, what was most good?

PM: Well, I. . . (hesitates a long time)

I think Sacramento area people, they know I was teaching head of school, so they listened to me, you know, what I said, those people. Well, you are school teacher, and you are head of teacher's group, so. . . that I admire those people when I was a Co-op board member and they listened to me. So, I thought I should lead them in my best way, you know, even old people or, young people. And the bad think, I didn't have much bad thing; only a few people, but, you know, criticize that I'm too lenient with the young people.  
(hesitates)

PETER MORIMOTO  
12 October 1982

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RW: What in Tule Lake happened that really hurt you most?

PM: Well, it didn't hurt me. . .

RW: Nothing, you would say. . .

PM: I do not regret anything while I was in Tule Lake. I just felt maybe it was waste 3 1/2 years in Tule Lake, but I have a lot of experience. (laughs)

RW: When you think back, . . . what was the happiest experience?

PM: In Tule Lake?

RW: Yes.

PM: Well . . . (long pause) I don't know what my happiest experience in Tule Lake. . . I don't know. I can't think of that.

RW: Well, that's okay. Oh, yes, could you tell me what you did right after you left Tule Lake?

PM: Tule Lake?

RW: Yes.

PM: Well, as I said, I was a leader of the people and administration office, Mr. Best and some people asked me, "Morimoto, you are the leader of this camp and the people they don't want to go out, you know. So we pay you all your traveling expenses, so why don't you go out by yourself; look around all Midwestern cities and Eastern cities." So, they bought me train ticket. So I stopped by Chicago, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Cleveland, all those cities. Met college presidents and church leader, and chamber of commerce president. Then I ask those people if they accept Japanese people if they get out from the camp. So all I ask in those cities and they said, "Yes." "Send them in."

RW: Can you remember when this was when you were doing this?

PM: 1945. . .

RW: I would think this would be early 1945. . .

PM: No, end of 1945.

RW: And to find places. . .

PM: Then all cities; none of the cities object, you know; they welcome. So, I returned to Tule Lake. I wrote the newspaper article, big article and I talked to all different mess halls. Don't be afraid to get out; they'll welcome. Then, encourage all the people. Don't stay out; war has end. You people have to get out. . . earlier the better. But I got the best impression from St. Louis, so I moved here.

PETER MORIMOTO  
12 October 1981

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RE: So, you thought that was the best place to go.

PM: Well, I got a good impression from Washington University's Chancellor, Baptist Church minister, Chamber of Commerce president, all those people they encouraged me. So I told people. Some people said, "If you Mr. Morimoto go, I'll go with you." So, some people came out with me to here. I told all the different mess halls, you know, told all the people, you don't have to be afraid, because there are a lot of job openings; they will accept you. So, I told them.

RW: What kind of work did you do; what job after that?

PM: Teaching school.

RW: What school did you teach at?

PM: Oh, evening school, Washington University, Berlitz Language School, 2-3 language schools, they ask me to teach Japanese.

RW: So, you are a colleague of mine at Wash. U.

PM: (laughs)

RW: Well, that's really great. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

PM: No, I guess that's about it.

RW: Well, you have told me things I have never known before.

PM: I'm glad. . . I never tell my whole camp life. This is the first time in 30 years (laughs).

RW: Thank you so much

PM: Yeah.



Peter Merimote: And then, in 1939-1940 I was teaching a Sakura Gakuen of Sacramento and a Chu to ka - Middle School. . . And I was planning to go back to Japan in end of 1941 ~~xx~~ or '42, and then the war start and (laughs) it was impossible to return to Japan.

Rosalie Wax: Can you tell me how you felt when you heard the government announcement that the Japanese American people were ordered to leave their homes and resort to the Assembly Centers?

PM: Well, after all it was war time, you know. . . the country and the people and everybody, they're not normal. . . I have complained, but I can't help that. . . .

RW: You can't help that. . . .

PM: ~~Wally~~ Yes. Many American people ask me here in St. Louis, we are very sorry; how was the treatment and so and so, you know?

RW: Yes.

PM: Well I didn't say much. We were lucky to be intern in the United States.

If I was in Manchuria or Siberia, I would have had miserable time. . . I have a friend who lost his life in Siberia. So, but, well, after all, that ~~ixxxx~~ is wartime, you know, not normal times.

RW: Yes, it could be worse.

PM: Yes (laughs) but can't complain (laughs).

~~What was your experience in the Lake de Ven area?~~

Peter Morimoto - ca. October 12, 1981

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*Rosalie Woy*

RW: I see, so then you went to the Assembly Center all by yourself, I guess. . .

PM: *Peter Morimoto* with my wife.

RW: Oh, you were married?

PM: Oh yes, I was married in 1941.

RW: ~~You were married in 1941.~~ Did you have any children?

PM: Yes, my son was born in Tule Lake.

RW: ~~Your son was born in Tule Lake?~~

PM: Yes, and you know, he finished Colorado and got a Masters from UCLA. Then went into the United States Army.

RW: ~~He went where?~~

PM: ~~Where? He was in the Army.~~

RW: ~~Oh, he went into the Army?~~

PM: ~~Yes, he was in the Army and stayed 4 years; came out as a Captain.~~

RW: ~~This was in the Korean War?~~

PM: No, no, Vietnam!

RW: ~~Vietnam.~~

PM: ~~Yes.~~

RW: ~~Excuse me, I. . . (laughs) I'm not as young as I use to be. . .~~

RW: Your son was in Vietnam?

PM: My son was in Vietnam, Korea, Okinawa, Taiwan, Phillipines, all over! He is a camera man; he took a lot of documentary films for the Army; because he studied graphic design in UCLA.

RW: ~~What kind of design?~~

PM: ~~Graphic, graphic design.~~

RW: He took many films in Vietnam?

PM: Yes, he got a lot of citations from the Army, Navy, Air Force. He made a lot of good film; and he is a film producer now in Washington, D.C.

RW: That's just wonderful!

PM: Yes, commercial film.

RW: Well, then would I be right in saying you didn't find life in the Assembly Centers too hard?

PM: Well, Assembly Center was really bad place; very bad place; toilet system and mess hall. . .

RW: What system?

PM: Toilet, you know, and bathroom system was so bad in Assembly Center.

RW: Yes.

PM: Oh, my wife could not go to the toilet for 3 days. (laughs)

PM: Oh, that's terrible. . .

RW: I can well. . . toilets weren't even. . . well even in the Relocation Centers, but. . .

PM: Relocation Centers were much better than Assembly Center.

R:W: Leb's see.. (looks at questionnaire) the question was, how did you manage to cope this this experience; how was it that your wife finally went to the toilet (laughs).

PM: Well, she couldn't go, but after a while. . . you gotta go! (laughs)

R:W: ~~xxxxxx~~ (laughs) Good for you. To what Relocation Center did they send you.

PM: Assembly Center -- then Tule Lake.

RW: And so you were and Old Tulean. .

PM: Yes, all the time.

RW: Can you remember how you felt when you were told that you were going to be sent to Tule Lake?

PM: ~~Well~~ Well, ~~Yes~~ yes, they told me to go to Tule Lake, some place near California and Oregon border line. . And, I was first my job as block manager. . . Then next, I took ~~treasurer~~ of Co-op. Then I was ~~the~~ Community Activities director. . <sup>supervisor</sup> <sub>treasurer</sub>

RW: Oh.

PM: That's three jobs I did. Block manager, Co-op ~~xxxxx~~ treasurer, then Community Activities supervisor.

RW: It was very responsible work.

PM: Yes. Very interesting and (laughs) I learned a lot of things.

RW: Which experiences in Tule Lake do you recall most strongly?

*Issai*  
PM Well, I have a very pre-Japanese ~~xxxx~~ <sup>Issai</sup> criticize (me) and I had a little hard time. Because I told those Nisei, you know, young people, "If you have the chance, go to school or get out from camp and go to school." ~~xxxxxx~~ . . And all the Issai said, ~~Yes~~ "You are a leader in this camp. . You shouldn't say such things," ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>the Issai</sup> Accusing me, "Are you Japanese?" (laughs) They even came in the evenings to my ~~xx~~ place. I had a hard time. ~~xx~~ But I had to tell the truth for ~~x~~ the young people, you know. (I ~~xxxx~~ <sup>the Issai</sup> told them) ~~xxxx~~ "It's old people like you, it's all right; but young people, 19,20, young people, they have a chance for a big future."

RW: Of course, you were then a young man and you weren't afraid that they were going ~~by~~ ~~xxxx~~ like. . .

*beat you up like*

HM  
He replied: "No, no, they were all my friends, you know. Well, if you have a chance I recommend / to get out of camp, you know. The Issei people get mad at me. . (laughs) . . . I just told the truth.

RW: How did you feel about the military questionnaire?

HM: Well, they shouldn't ask that question in the first place, you know. That is wrong. . . We were in camp. . . I think the question is wrong, but I answered. Everyone had to answer. / . . I just said Yes and No answers, not No-No.

RW: ~~Yes~~, I see. . . Lets and lets// of things ~~happened~~ happened in Tule Lake while we were there. . .

HM: I tell you something new. . . Do you know some incident where Co-op, was General Manager, . ~~xxxxx~~ somebody assassinate... kill?

HM  
I said: But before he was killed there were a lot of people beaten up; because they were supposed to be Iuu, and then.. Mr. ~~xxxxx~~ <sup>Noma</sup> ~~xxxxx~~ . . .

NM Mr. Merinote: Mr. Noma was ~~xxx~~ General Manager of Co-op. At that time I was Treasurer of Co-op. . . . I was treasurer, you know, handle the money and everything. Next victim was Merinote (laughs). They said they had long list of about 10 people.

RW R. Wax: Oh yes. They were supposed to be ~~xxxxx~~ Number 1 Iuu.

NM Mr. Merinote: Yes, Number One; Number Two was Merinote. So government ask me, "Why don't you come inside of the government building." So they took all family; took us there for 4 or <sup>5</sup> days. But I couldn't stay there, you know. . ~~Every~~ I returned to my block. Oh, everybody prayed for me . (laughs) . . .

RW R. Wax What did you do then?

NM Mr. Merinote: Radical group we call Manzanar group. . These group too<sup>x</sup> ever Co-op. . So I resigned. Then I took Community Activities supervisor.

RW: Did you know another young man who was ~~XXXXXXXX~~ in Community Activities, George Wakida?

PM: Wakida? Yes, very well.

RW: He was a good friend of mine. I knew him in Gila.

PM: Oh, is that right?

RW: This is the first time that I've been able to talk like this to someone who was in the *Coop. Co-op.*

PM: Oh, I'm glad.

RW: Let's see. . . I'll ask a somewhat different question. Did you have any person or persons when you really thought were your good friends, you know, who you felt that ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> men will really stand by me in Tule Lake?

PM: ~~RW:~~ Well, I have some administration buildings. . . I had a good friend, even director was very good. ~~He~~ He recommended.. good recommendation letter to anybody. I still have ~~that~~ that letter, ~~you know~~ you know, in my memory.

RW: Was this Mr. Best or. . .

PM: Yes. Mr. Best was good.

RW: Yes, I knew him.

RW: Among the Japanese - any good friends?

PM: Oh yes, yes. I was living in the block manager - doctor's block, you know.

~~RW: Oh yes, of course. . .~~

~~PM: Block seven. . .~~

~~RW: Block seven. . .~~

~~PM: Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ all those doctors are good friends.~~

RW: That's nice because younger people I have talked to. . . sometimes went to Tule Lake and they were so scared that they hardly ever made a friend.

PM: Oh, I enjoyed it. I would like to meet them sometime before I die. (laughs)

RW: ~~Well, these people I talked to are in California. Well, I'll tell them about you and let me ask you just a kind of crazy question here. Were there any people in Tule Lake, who you felt were being, any group or people, who were being very foolish or stupid in what they were doing?~~

PM: Well, I'll tell you. One fellow here in St. Louis; that time he was very poor Japanese young man and he said. . . we call wa-sho wa-sho group. . .

RW: Yeah, yeah. <sup>yes?</sup>

PM: I think all those groups went to Japan. They denounced their citizenship; then they went to Japan.

One fellow here in St. Louis; that time he was very poor Japanese young man<sup>1</sup>

Then when he returned here; Oh, he is a nice gentleman now; so quiet. I ask him sometime, what happen to him so many years ago, you were so radical. . .

RW: Yes, everybody's going Dai Nippon. . . and they come back. . .

PM: Oh, that time was really crazy; he said, "I was really crazy." I said, well that was war time.

RW: Gee, maybe I wonder, is he in St. Louis?

PM: Yes, we play mah jong and we are good friends now, you know, very good friends.

RW: Do you think he might talk to me or do you think he wouldn't like to talk about it?

PM: Oh, he doesn't mind. . . His name is \_\_\_\_\_ . Maybe he doesn't like you asking about this story. . .

RW: ~~That's what people hate to . . . is it \_\_\_\_\_ . Let me see. . .~~

PM: He's a landscape man, gardener here and busy. You just call evenings. I'll give you telephone number.

He and his wife went to Japan together.

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1. Mr. Merimote is referring to Mr. Iida, from whom I subsequently obtained an interview.

RW: In 1946 ~~and so on?~~

PM: Yes, 1946 and they returned here about 15-17 years ago. American government said, "Well, you denounce American citizenship, but that's all right. We give back to you American citizenship," so nice, you know."

RW: ~~That was nice. . .~~

PM: So, everybody returned to this country.

RW: Many of my friends and people I have talked to returned and some have... What they tell me was that often life in Japan was just terrible; they didn't have enough to eat. And it made me cry.

PM: Well, sometime those were young people, you know. Parents, father and the mother influence denounce citizenship; then very radical, but of course maybe young man think he all right, but father and mother strongly, you know, against this country.

RW: ~~And you know, like some I talked to, 11 or 14 years old, well you have to do what. . .~~

PM: Yes, that's right, that's right. . . I think American government knows that. . . that's why they thought, well, it's okay, we give you citizenship again (laughs). . .

RW: I think that is really very. . . a good thing.

PM: Yes, yes, I think so. I think that is American democracy.

RW: I read of terrible things happening in America, but I always tell myself it's much worse in other places. . .

PM: Right, right, yes. . . that's right.

RW: Now let's see. . . As you look back on this experience in Tule Lake, which of the experiences has affected you the most deeply?

PM: In Tule Lake?

RW: Yes.

PM: Some good thing or bad thing?

RW: Well, both, what was most good?

PM: Well, I. . . (hesitates a long time)

PM: I think Sacramento area people, they know I was teaching head of school, so they listened to me, you know, what I said, those people. Well, you are school teacher, and you are head of teacher's group, so. . . that I admire those people when I was a Co-op board member and they listened to me. So, I thought I should lead them in my best way, you know, even old people or, young people. And the bad thing, I didn't have much bad thing; only a few people, but, you know, criticize that I'm too lenient with the young people. (hesitates)

RW: ~~I didn't quite understand you when I asked. What I asked was what in Tule Lake happened that really hurt you most?~~

PM: Well, it didn't hurt me. . .

RW: Nothing, nothing you would say. . .

PM: I do not regret anything while I was in Tule Lake. I just felt maybe it was waste 3½ years in Tule Lake, but I have a lot of experience. (laughs)

RW: When you think back, ~~I'll ask it this way. . .~~ what was the happiest experience?

PM: In Tule Lake?

RW: Yes.

PM: Well. . . (long pause) I don't know what my happiest experience in Tule Lake. . . I don't know. I can't think of that.

RW: Well, that's okay. I just thought there was a . . . Let me see on these questions. . .  
Oh yes, could you tell me what you did right after you left Tule Lake?

PM: Tule Lake?

RW: Yes.

PM: Well, as I said, I was a leader of the people and administration office, Mr. Best and some people asked me, "Morimoto, you are the leader of this camp and the people they don't want to go out, you know. So we pay you all your traveling expenses, so why don't you go out by yourself; look around all Midwestern cities and Eastern cities." So, they bought me train ticket. So I stopped by Chicago, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Cleveland, all those cities. Met college presidents and church leader, and chamber of commerce president. Then I ask those people if they accept Japanese people if they get out from the camp. So all I ask in those cities and they said, "Yes." "Send them in."

RW: Can you remember when this was when you were doing this?

PM: 1945. . .

RW: I would think this would be early 1945. . .

PM: No, end of 1945.

RW: Oh, end of 1945.

PM: Yes, right after the war.

RW: And to find places. . .

PM: Then all cities; none of the cities object, you know; they welcome. So, I returned to Tule Lake. I wrote the newspaper article, big article and I talked to all different mess halls. You do not afraid; don't be afraid to get out; they'll welcome. Then, encourage all the people. Don't stay out; war has end. You people have to get out. . . earlier the better. But I got the best impression from St. Louis, so I moved here.

RW: So, you thought that was the best place to go.

PM: Well, I got a good impression from Washington University's Chancellor, Baptist Church minister, Chamber of Commerce president, all those people they encouraged me. So I told people. Some people said, "If you Mr. Morimoto go, I'll go with you." So, some people came out with me to here. I told all the different mess halls, you know, told all the people, you don't have to be afraid, because there are a lot of job openings; they will accept you. So, I told them.

RW: What kind of work did you do; what job after that?

PM: Teaching school.

RW: I didn't quite understand. . .

PM: I was teaching school here. Oh, just a minute, I got a call from long distance. . . just a minute. (long pause) All right.

RW: Was that a Japanese school?

PM: Somebody call me, so I call later.

RW: I'm almost finished. What school did you teach at?

PM: Oh, evening school, Washington University, Berlitz Language School, 2-3 language schools, they ask me to teach Japanese.

RW: So, you are a colleague of mine at Wash. U.

PM: (laughs)

RW: Well, that's really great. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

PM: No, I guess that's about it.

RW: Well, you have told me things I have never known before. .

PM: I'm glad. . . I never tell my whole camp life. This is the first time in 30 years (laughs).

RW: Thank you so much.

PM: Yeah.

Peter Morimoto

in 1907. He  
 Peter Morimoto was born in Japan, and came to the United States as an exchange student. He was teaching in the Japanese Language School in Sacramento, California, when the war ~~xxxx~~ began. Evacuated to the Tule Lake Relocation Center, he did his best to co-operate with the administration and to advise and assist other evacuees from Sacramento. ~~During the war~~ He told me that during the wave of hostility to and fear of "informers" he was called "Inu Number Two", that is, the next ~~xxxxxxx~~ after Mr. Noma.

When I interviewed him

in 1981, he told me that at Tule Lake his best friend had been Mr. Best, the Project Director. W I asked him: "Could/ you tell me what you did right after you left Tule Lake?" he responded:

~~PM:~~ "Well, as I said, I was a leader of the people ~~and administration office~~, Mr. Best and some people asked me, "Morimoto, you are the leader of this camp and the people they don't want to go out, you know. So we pay you all your traveling expenses, so why don't you go out by yourself; look around all Midwestern cities and Eastern cities." So, they bought me train ticket. So I stopped by Chicago, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Cleveland, all those cities. ~~Next~~ <sup>met</sup> college presidents and church leader, and chamber of commerce president. Then I ask those people if they accept Japanese people if they get out from the camp. So ~~at~~ I ask <sup>all</sup> in those cities and they said, "Yes." "Send them in."

RW: Can you remember when this was when you were doing this?

~~PM:~~ 1945. . .

~~RW:~~ I would think this would be early 1945. . .

PM: ~~Oh~~ end of 1945. ↗

~~RW:~~ Oh, end of 1945.

PM: Yes, right after the war.

~~RW:~~ and to find places. . .

~~PM:~~ Then all cities; none of the cities object, you know; they welcome. So, I returned to Tule Lake. I wrote the newspaper article, big article, and I talked to all different mess halls. You do not afraid; Don't be afraid to get out; they'll welcome. Then, encourage all the people. Don't stay ~~out~~; war has end. You people have to get out. . . earlier the better. But I got the best impression from St. Louis, so I moved here.

RW: So, you thought that was the best place to go.

PM: Well, I got a good impression from Washington University's Chancellor, Baptist Church minister, Chamber of Commerce president, all those people they encouraged me. So I told people. Some people said, "If you ~~go~~, Mr. Morimoto, I'll go with you." So, some people came out with me to here. I told all the different mess halls, you know, told all the people, you don't have to be afraid, because there are a lot of job openings; they will accept you. So, I told them.

RW: What kind of work did you do; what job after that?

PM: Teaching school.

~~RW:~~ I didn't quite understand. . .

~~PM:~~ I was teaching school here. Oh, just a minute, I got a call from long distance. . . just a minute. (long pause) All right.

~~RW:~~ Was that a Japanese school?

~~PM:~~ Somebody call me, so I call later.

~~RW:~~ I'm almost finished. What school did you teach at?

PM: Oh, evening school, Washington University, Berlitz Language School, 2-3 language schools, they ask me to teach Japanese.

RW: You have told me things I have never known before. . .

PM: I'm glad. . . I never tell all my whole camp life. This is first time in 30 years (laughs).