Maggie Nachlin

American Beliefs and Cultural Values

Interview with Reverend Daniel Ogata

Spring 1993

Margaret Nachlin: The following is an interview with Daniel Ogata. It is being conducted in April 28, 1993 as part of the Grinnell Oral History Project. We are at 1214 Broad St. in Grinnell, Iowa and um...and why don't you tell me where you were born and, ah, when?

Daniel Ogata: ok, ya'. I was born in Stockton, California..umm.. August 9, 1919 (laughs). That was the year the armistice was signed. You know, for the First World War, not the second. Yeah, and I, ah, was born in a farming family. Uh, my parents were immigrants and they were truck farmers and I guess I was expected to take over the farm.

MN: And what is a truck farmer?

DO: Ok, they raised all kinds of vegetables. Everything to supply the, uh, the grocery chains. So we raised anywhere from radishes. And...which, it only took 30 days for the radishes, you see? To asparagus, which is the annual...kind of a perennial thing. To onions, potatoes, celery, you name it. Raised everything.

MN: Do you have brothers and sisters or?

DO: I have, let's see, two brothers and a sister. They're all in California.

MN: Where did you go to school?

DO: All right, yea. I went through the school system in Stockton California, with the exception of my junior high year. My dad sent me back to Japan to study there to get some of the culture. The Japanese culture. And so, I was there from 1931 to 1937. Just about five and a half years, you know, studied there.

MN: your parents came to (unintelligible)..?

DO: Uh-huh (affirmative)

MN: And did they, did they come together or..?

DO: Yea, no, my dad came earlier. He came after he fought the Russians during the Russo-Japanese War, which was in 1904, 1905. And he came to this country around 1910, from what I gather. Um, I say that because we lost all of the, uh, records. We destroyed during the war for fear that, you know, the FBI might find it and. Uh, so um..1910, he came and worked for the railroad. He worked for Northern-Pacific in Missula, Montana. And uh, he worked for about 6,7 years the way I understood. Made enough money to buy land in

California. This was just a swamp land. Every spring the snow would melt and flood the area along the Santee River basin and the land was very cheap. Ya', three dollars an acre, so he bought a couple thousand acres along with some friends who also, also bought 2000 a piece and when they bought it, you know, they had about 3 feet of water in it. You know, with all kinds of things growing on it, you know. so they built a levy around it with the help of the Army Corps of Engineers. And the levy was 20 feet high and they had to pump the water out. And after the water was all pumped and dried, they found out that the land was about 3 feet lower than the river, the Santee River. And this is why it's known as a delta region, you know. and they had free water, you know. All they had to do was to open the gate and they had water. Everything had to be irrigated because of the warm climate. And in those days, would you believe it? It never rained from June one to October. Not a drop of rain. But now I heard that they have torrential rains. The climate has changed, so they don't need to irrigate as much, you know with the rain.

MN: And when did your mother come over?

DO: And my mom came in 1916. My dad went back to find someone, you know. And he was a Christian, so he wanted to find a Christian woman. And, uh, his friends told him that he knew a woman in a place called Sendai, Japan. Which is maybe 30 miles from where my dad lived and he went over to meet her and then started writing to her. And it was a little different than the way that...in those

days they had picture weddings. You would send a picture and they would marry them, through the mail. And so she came over, like, about 1916, and I was born in 1919, yea. And she was a piano teacher, a Baptist piano teacher. My dad was a Presbyterian elder in Japan, so...

MN: So after you studied in Japan and came back to America that was I guess, during the Depression. What do you remember about that?

DO: It was awful. I came back right during the Depression and my Dad had, uh, lost most of his property and, ya know, because he borrowed his capital. He couldn't pay back and, uh, then he had a very small farm at a place called Linden, California. And he worked there for somebody else and he was a foreman for a large company. And he had his own land. He farmed about 30 acres of strawberries. and uh, times were...I still remember that we bought. It was my graduation day, I think, and I didn't have a pair of shoes, a decent one to wear and so we ordered threw Montgomery Ward catalogue, you know. And I recall, it was like about eight-fifty or so, for pretty decent dress shoes. And food to, you know, we couldn't buy any food. We had plenty of vegetables because we lived out in the country. We had chicken also, but yeah, we didn't do hardly any traveling or vacation. I don't remember once when we ever went on vacation.

MN: You said that you bought the shoes for your graduation. What were you graduating from?

DO: I was graduating from junior high school. See, I had part of it in Japan. I had to take it over again, because you know, I couldn't get any credit. So this was junior high graduation and Linden didn't have a high school. I had to go to Lodi for that, so we moved to Lodi because of that, yeah. So I went to high school until Pearl Harbor, the bombing of Pearl Harbor. And I was twenty-one at the time. I was a late graduate, of course, because I lost so much time, you know.

And, uh, things changed after that. We were out in the farm, working on Sunday, December seventh. We didn't know anything about it. Until, on our way home, this was, like, about ten thirty because we always went to church at eleven. We stopped at the gas station to gas up, and they said "Sorry. We can't serve you today." We said, "What's the trouble?" We were going to pay him cash anyway. They said "didn't you hear about it? That you guys bombed us?" And that was the first time, you know, we heard about it.

And then we stopped to get our Sunday paper and they wouldn't sell that either, at the newsstand, you know. So then we were boycotted. And so if I needed food, I had to go to an ethnic store. We had some ethnic shops , so that helped.

MN: So as the, as the War progressed, what happened to you..(unintelligible)..?

DO: After that? Well let's see. We were very careful not to (cough) raise any kind of suspicion on the part of the public. So

we surrendered all the firearms we had. I had a shotgun. My dad had a rifle. He was a deer hunter. And we even surrendered our knives and so forth, thinking that people might think they were contrabands. And we took 'em to the sheriff. And they had a curfew, that we were not to go out during the night, because they suspected that maybe we might be saboteurs. And so we just darkened the house. Pulled down the shades. Uh, now there were some incidents, not in our home, where rocks were thrown into the windows.

And things got bad, got worse, because the billboards. A week after Pearl Harbor, the billboards had huge signs "Rats, Niggers and Japs not wanted" so forth and so on. Real bad. And they had the typical cartoon character of the, uh, Japanese with the buck teeth, you know and so forth (laughs).

So after that we decided not to even travel, just stay in and do the work. We still had a little farm to farm. And then, let's see, that was in December of 1941. And then in the beginning of 1942, around January, we started hearing rumors that we were going to be removed, forcibly. And that we would have to give up our property. And we said, "No, that's not going to happen here. This is a free country."

But the rumors were true and in February we were forcibly removed. They gave us three days notice to get ready. Sell the property if you can, but who can sell it in three days? We boarded our windows and locked, padlocked our doors and so forth. But our neighbors got in there and looted the whole thing. They took everything.

And, uh, we were removed into a temporary detention center in the fairgrounds at Santee, county fairgrounds. And some unlucky families were placed in horse stalls. We were fortunate enough that we had a barrack to live in. The barracks were only about twenty by twenty. A family of five with no privacy whatsoever. Now if the family had more than five they gave you another rooms.

And the pastime for the local people on Sunday afternoon was to drive by and see how we were doing. So we were made spectacles, you know. Um, and the rumor was that all of our houses were looted. We didn't have anything left any more.

And so I called the, my local lawyer. And the lawyer called the police. The police said that now that we are enemy aliens, we are not entitled to protection, so we couldn't do anything about it.

And then around uh, let's see, we were confined in February and around July there were rumors that we might be shipped inland because it was too close to the coast and that they were afraid that we might collaborate with the enemy if they landed. And we said, "No, that's not going to happen. How could they remove a hundred and ten thousand of us?" You know. But, it was true. And there were rumors that there were mosquitos all over the place where we were going to go to. Mosquitos as big as sparrows. Boy, Isn't it terrible the rumors that get around? So right away we started buying mosquito sprays, you know, ha ha, getting ready for it.

And we got orders. They took us alphabetically and I was in the group. I think this was the fourth train that left our camp, you know, for Arkansas. We were shipped to Rower, Arkansas. Near

McGehee was the largest town and that's where the post office was located and that's spelled m-c-g-e-h-e-e. You know McGeh-ee.

And on the way, they needed a medic on board the train. The train had six hundred people on it. And they said, "We need a medic. How many of you have worked for the hospital?" And I had. I was a volunteer orderly. And so they said, "Okay, you're it. You're the medic on board." And I had nothing, uh. No prior knowledge of any, uh, treating people. They gave me a case of pills. I didn't know what they were even. I could tell what the aspirin looked like.

And there were twenty military personnel on board to guard us and I was in charge of them too. So every day, I made my rounds three times through the train and try to give out pills to those who were sick. And the military, the guards would call me "Doc" and a lot of times they stopped me. They said "Hey Doc, I got a terrible headache today. What could I do?" I said, "well, take some of this, aspirin. And I'll see you in about five hours." (Laughs)

So it took us five days to get to Arkansas, to Little Rock and this was a Missouri-Pacific train. And the train backed all the way to Rower which was about thirty miles. And we got to our destination, um.

You know, en route I was always worried about the pregnant mothers. And you know, we delivered three babies.

MN: (laughs)

Yeah, and fortunately I asked the people on board to see whether there where any nurses. Not a single nurse on board. But I was fortunate though. There was an elderly midwife, and so I assisted her and we delivered three babies.

We lost one person. He died of heart failure at Elko, Nevada. And it was kind of a strange situation, because we didn't know what to do with the body, you know. I said, "Will someone look after the body." And they said, "Don't worry about it. We'll look after the body." The family never heard from them. Never, never found out what happened to the body. (Cough) Excuse me.

And the camp we were put in was almost ah, a mile and a half square. With barbed wire, sentry towers with machine guns and so forth and it had the appearance of the concentration camp in Germany. There were some people who got out of camp but they were mentally deranged people. In fact one was shot...but other wise the guards were bored.

They were so nice to us too. Yeah, they understood that we didn't do anything real bad. You know, they couldn't understand why we were behind barbed wire. It was costing the government so much to keep us there. They had to feed us and...

And let's see. In 1943, they asked some of the young people to see if they would like to enlist in the army. And that they would have an all Japanese-American combat team. And that this way they could show their loyalty to the country.

It was a strange situation, because here our families were treated like enemy aliens and yet they wanted us to fight for the country that was...persecuting us. But thirty thousand of them

enlisted and they fought in Italy and France and Germany. And it's today known as the most decorated combat team because they were out to prove their loyalty. They exposed themselves to gunfire. There were a lot of them who died. And there were Congressional Medal of Honor winners, two of them, in fact.

And some of them were sent to the Pacific theatre as interpreters. And they tried to break the codes along with the Navaho Indians who were there. You see the codes were sent in Navaho language. And the Japanese-American interpreters would try to interpret some of the Japanese messages that were sent from the captured, you know.

And some fought in India for...what was his name? Chenalt, was it? And they crossed the hump. They tried to keep the....uh, communication with the Chinese, so they crossed the Himalayas. And there were some Japanese-Americans who flew that.

MN: Did you volunteer, or?

DO: I volunteered but they wouldn't take me, because, you see, I had...I lived in Japan for five and a half years, and when I was there I had to take military training. All the fifteen year old boys go to summer camp and take boot training. So they didn't take me. My brother was enlisted of course. He enlisted. I have two brothers. They both were in the service.

So. And then, like about 1944, January '44. We received the news that we could leave the camp if we wanted, but you gotta get clearance from the FBI and all that, and have enough money to even

go out. We didn't have a cent with us.

And I wanted to you out because I was just utterly bored in there, you know. So I had to write to the Department of the Interior to borrow some money and, uh, I borrowed about five hundred dollars to buy my train fare and buy some luggage, because O didn't have anything there, you know.

And I went out to Chicago. I had a promise of a job there in the war industry. I was making gun mounts. And I thought, well, the war would end pretty soon, so I'd better find a peace time job, so that if the war factory closes I could work there. And I found a job in a book concern. They sold...books. They were jobbers. And I was selling part of the time there, by phone, by telephone. And then later on I worked in the shipping room also for a while.

And then I made enough money to call my family out. And I had a brother and a sister still in high school so, ah, I had to work. My dad didn't want to work any more, he just. He was heartbroken. And he had this language barrier and they, they wouldn't hire him. So I had to work full time, two jobs all the time to put my brother and sister through high school.

MN Did they go to school while they were (unintelligible).

DO: What was that?

MN: Did they provide school in the camps?

DO: Ya, they had school there, manned by mostly local personnel.

People with two years of college taught in our camp. And there were some Japanese-Americans also, who had two years, you see, and they could teach. So we had a school. The school didn't start until 1943 so we lost about...oh, I think about six or seven months. You know, when we didn't have a school.

But we didn't have enough books because, you know, books were very scarce in those days. So they asked for churches and people all over to donate. And it was amazing, this American Field Service. They, they collected enough. I think about three truck loads of books, textbooks and they brought it for us. in fact they were the only (cough) organization that would help us, ya. And so I have very high regard for the American Field Service people.

MN: (cough) So what did you do...on a daily basis?

DO: Yeah, well, you never got up early of course. And the breakfast was at 7:30...The, each block had a washroom and a lavatory and so forth, but, ah, there were only one kitchen or mess hall for every two blocks, see? So we had to walk quite a bit to the mess hall and, ah, we had rice three times a day, mostly carp. The, the authorities asked local people to go and get some carp and they bought the carp, you know, for like about 15 cents a pound. So we had carp, and we had beef or pork once a week and chicken, maybe twice a week. But, the meals, the food was adequate. They never starved us (laughs).

MN: So, did you, did you study while you were there or did you...?

DO: I took language courses, night classes, you know. I tried, I wanted to speak Chinese, so I took Cantonese language and then I took, um, some German. There were night courses for adults...um. That's about all the ambition I had (laughs).

MN So when did you, did you have religious training?

DO: Well I, Ever since I was small, y'know, ever since I was junior high age, I had the desire to go into some kind of religious work. I see the whole thing, y'know, the whole evacuation as kind of a blessing in disguise for me, because if I lived on the farm I would be farming, you know, because my dad said, "You're going to be a farmer, and you don't need any more education beyond high school." But you see, I was out in Chicago and there were, um, opportunities to study there. So I did. I studied at YMCA downtown..night school, which was the extension of the University of Chicago. I took, mm, about two or three courses during the semester and... Which made it rough because when you have to work so long (laughs) and then still go to school, yeah.

And then I found a real good church. You know, we were not welcomed at the churches in Chicago. They didn't out right tell us not to come, but they would give us the silent treatment. But one church in the near-north side of Chicago...It was called the Fourth Presbyterian Church put an ad in the paper, welcoming us. So I remember going there. My first Sunday the pastor saw me and he came and welcomed me. And so I became a member of that church. I taught Bible class in that church and so forth and, uh, then I felt

the urge to study for the ministry, but then I found out that I needed four years of college on top of that, on top of the seminary training for another additional three years, see.

And I didn't have any college so I had to go find a college to go to, but I couldn't do it right away because I still had my brother in high school. And, so, I waited until he graduated from high school, see? And he went on to Chicago Tech and got a scholarship. And so I figured, well maybe, and then my sister would look after my father.

And so I came to Iowa, to Parson's college in Fairfield, Iowa. And I graduated in three years and when to McCormick Seminary in Chicago. And right now, they moved to the University of Chicago campus. It used to be on the near north side.

MN: So how did you like Parson's College?

DO: It was just right for me, because, you know, being a small town boy, a country boy...It was a very small school with 300 student body

[end side one]

[side two]

MN: This is side two.

DO: Ok, side two. Well, I'm getting long winded (laughs).

MN: (laughs) That's good.

DO: (laughs) Yeah, and then after that in seminary, in seminary this was the third year, the year I was supposed to graduate. And about ten days before graduation I didn't have a church to go to, where as all my other friends did, you know, the Seniors. And, uh, because of my racial background some of the churches would ask me to come down for an interview, would see me, and uh,
I was to stay there over night sometimes and they said, "Well, it's not necessary. I'll put you on the next bus." You know.

I went to St. Louis once, and they even sent me a plane ticket and, uh, the committee was there to welcome me and when they saw me come down, that was it. They said. "well, we don't even have to go into St. Louis. We'll have our interview right here, uh, at the coffee shop." And they put me on the next plain back to Chicago.

I think the churches had a real difficult time, you know accepting people of another race. For fear, of course, that, uh, I might not be accepted, in the first place, in the congregation.

But ten days before graduation, a, a committee from Clinton Iowa, the first Presbyterian Church there was on the campus, looking for some one to come as an assistant pastor and I was one of the interviewees, I guess. And they said that, uh, "We decided on you" and that, "will you please come to Clinton and give the candidating sermon, you know? And the committee will meet after that to see whether we will accept you or not...not accept you." And they sent me a, uh, plane ticket, so, not a plane ticket, *train* ticket. And in those days, you know, you got around all over with the train.

And so I went to Clinton and served that church for three

years, and uh, from there I got called to Fort Dodge--served that church for six years. And then to Davenport--served that church for three and a half years. And to Udina, Minnesota--served that church for about four years. And then came to Grinnell and served this church for thirteen years and I retired in 1985. And since then I've served six churches, after my retirement and currently I have three churches that I serve. I preach at one church regularly, whereas, the other two churches I have student doing the preaching for me, but I uh, still have to administer...the church. And I keep myself busy, yeah.

MN: So when you first got to Clinton Iowa, how were you received by the congregation?

DO: Wonderfully. There wasn't a single person who resented me or shunned me, you know. If fact they would, people would, when they would come downtown--the church was located downtown--they would always make it a point to stop and say hello to me, yeah. And so in the, let's see...I guess, right now I've been in the ministry thirty odd years. I've only had one case when it was a, uh, kind of overt type of prejudice...expressed to me. And that was at Clinton.

My job was visitation there, because I was an assistant. And I went to see this woman she opened the door, but she wouldn't open the screen door. And she said, "who are you?" So I said, "well, I'm the assistant pastor at the Presbyterian church where you're a member. And I'd like to visit with you."

And she said, "Are you Japanese?"

And I said, "No, I'm Japanese-American. I was born here."

She said, "I'm sorry. I can't let you in."

That was the only time in the thirty odd years, that I ran into something like that. And I felt sorry for the woman because I'm sure she...she had a misunderstanding, you know.

Then I found out. I wrote to her and she wrote back to me. She lost a son over Tokyo in a bombing raid. So I tried to explain to her, you know, that I was born here. I'm a citizen here. I had nothing to do with the war. My father was also here.

And it took her three years to somehow resolve. When I was about ready to leave the church. During the reception, she was in the line and she apologized. But that was the only case.

And as a whole, as a whole the people in Iowa are very broad minded, I think. In spite of the difference they accepted me as pastor.

A lot of the families said, "Dan, I never even think of you as a Japanese American. I think of you as one of us." Yeah, so. And I get called back for weddings and so forth. To conduct weddings at a church that I've served...I've served about 20 years ago. And they say, "Well, my children really grew up when you were in the church. When you were in charge of the Sunday School and they have not forgotten you." They want you to come back, so you know. It gives you a good feeling.

MN: Did any of the rest of your family come to Iowa?

DO: No, no. My dad lived in Chicago, and my two brothers are in California. My sister, too, is in California. And they dropped in about once. That's about all.

They can't figure out why I'm in Iowa. Either that or in California, where things are really moving fast, you see. It's exciting. They don't think that Iowa's very exciting.

MN: (cough, pause) Well, where did you...did you live near the church or did you live outside of the town?

DO: No, in fact I lived right next to the church. They had a parsonage. And the senior minister lived way out in the suburbs. I lived in the parsonage, right next door. And I did the same thing in Fort Dodge, right nest to the church.

But when I went to Davenport, I had to live in Bentondorf, because I couldn't find any housing. So I had to drive, at least 3 or 4 miles to work. Which wasn't bad.

And then when I went to Udina, I couldn't live in Udina, because that was high rent area, you know. So I lived in Bloomington.

And then of course when I came here, they had a parsonage next to the church here. But it was in disrepair. Well, they bought another house for me, for me to live in. Right on Elm street, 1523 Elm.

MN: What was the town like when you came?

DO: Came here? No different. I think the people were much more

open because of the college. And I work with the college students, try to get them to church and I try to get college faculty members to join the church. And it took about three years, but I was getting quite a few college people.

When ever you live in a college community, the atmosphere is different from the, other communities where they don't have a college. Because they are used to the cosmopolitan atmosphere.

So after retirement, I decided to live here, since I like it so much.

MN: Well, You said that there was a big subway, not subway, train system. Did trains stop in Grinnell?

DO: About 2 or 3 years before I came here, it stopped. It stopped running. This is the Rock Island railroad, you see? But I remember when I used to live in Fort Dodge, we used to go down to Des Moines to take to Rock Island all the way to Chicago. Yeah, It's called the Rock Island Rocket.

And I took, every year in the Spring. The baseball season opened and I took my young people from the church. I remember one year I had 60 kids. And I got on the Rock Island, and they gave us a special deal--three dollars a student. Isn't that something. Went all the way to Chicago, saw the ball game and came back. But those were the good old days when they had trains.

MN: What other...kinds of things did you do as parson (unintelligible)?

DO: I had four areas. These are some of the things that the pastor concentrates on. One, is of course, you try to increase the membership and so that's called evangelism. I did that along with my lay people in the church. Try to call on new comers, call on people who are not connected with any church. And that takes a lot of time.

And then the other is the Sunday service. That's very important. You might say that's the showcase. People come, and it depends on how you do, how you perform in the pulpit. That makes a difference for the people who say, "Maybe I'll come back. I liked what he said." So that's one area.

The other area is young people, and we have a lot of young people. We are very fortunate to have that.

And then I started a college fellowship, also. And we had about 60 to 70 college kids on our mailing list. And I would take it to the post office here at the college. And I pigeon holed the messages all by myself. They wouldn't do it for me.

And, of course they other area is my participation in the community. I try to make myself visible in the community. You know, sometimes the pastors don't care to do that, but they'll be at a disadvantage, because that's how you get to know the people. So I try to help the school board out occasionally. If they need some kind of special committee, I'll volunteer for that. And I was in the civic club here, the Kiwanis Club. And I've been in that since 1974. I've served as president and right now I am Secretary of the Kiwanis Club. And I make all my contacts through the community. And it really helps broaden my acquaintances.

So those are the four areas that I concentrate on.

MN: (pause) Did you plan and other events (unintelligible) community?

DO: Well, you mean, other than religious services. Well, you always make the church available for people that way, you see you expose the people to you edifice, your building. Yeah, I used to have United Nations meetings, and I was a member of the United Nations Committee here. President one year. And we would have, occasionally food fairs, you know. Ethnic food.

We had various events in the church.

MN: The town of Grinnell, what was it like culturally? Were there theaters or other events?

DO: When I first came there weren't theaters here at all, No musicals or hardly any. Until they built the theatre, you know, in the Community Center. And then after that things started to role and we have musicals, as well as plays. It was the facility that caused the lack of these cultural things.

But, what helped was the college helped, because they have plays and musicals occasionally and our people took part on those too. It works both ways I guess, you know the college helps the community and, you know, the community also helps the college. It's a two way street.

MN: Have you ever taken any courses at the college?

DO: Uh-Huh, yes, I did. You know they have this deal where if your a senior citizen you get to take them for nothing. And I did, I took one under Dr. Kurtz on Native American history. And a lot of my friends, my age, are also taking it now. In fact, a friend of mine who's a retired minister too is taking...he's been taking that for six, seven years now and he even takes tests. I didn't take any tests (laughs). Pretty hard to compete with the kids in the class, there so bright, y'know.

MN: Did you meet your wife in Grinnell?

DO: I met her, yes, right here in Grinnell. I lost my wife, my first wife in 1980. She died of cancer. Let's see I met my wife about 1984, when I lived in the condominium here. And I had her mother's funeral. That's how we got to know one another.

MN: Where did you meet your first wife?

DO: That was in Chicago at the church. She also came there to the church. She wasn't a member, but I met her. She was a Baptist, but joined the Presbyterian Church, because the baptist churches were not open. They didn't open the church for minority groups, in those days.

MN: Was your family.. Did the rest of your family belong to that

church?

DO: With the exception of two, yeah. Because my sister was not home. She was in St. Paul. And my other brother lived in the suburbs, so it was not very convenient for him to come into town.

But my dad was a Presbyterian, same church. I was a member there. My other smaller brother, younger brother was a member.

MN: Do you have extended family...?

DO: Because of my second marriage, and this is my wife's second marriage, we do. Yeah, we do. She's got grandkids, that'd be my step-grandkids. And I just have one daughter, and she graduated from Grinnell College in '82, and she's in California right now. Works at the Scripts Research Institute in Lahoya. She got her Ph. D. last summer from the University of Iowa.

MN: When your parents came to this country, did they come with any brothers or sisters?

DO: No. They came by themselves. My dad felt that he wanted to see other places. Got tired of Japan, you know. My mother was probably happy as a piano teacher in a Baptist school, but when she came here things were rough. You know, during the Depression. She had a real hard time.

MN: Did she continue to teach the piano?

DO: No, she was a farmer's wife, so we had farmhands. So her job was to cook. During the peak season she had to cook for about 40 people. We had mostly Mexicans and Filipinos working for us in the truck garden. And so she was pretty busy.

MN: What did your brothers and sisters do? Did they also work?

DO: They also worked and put themselves through school. They went to night school and worked during the day. And my sister got a scholarship to MacCalister College. Except that they forgot to find money for her to have her meals. Some body forgot to.

She just about subsisted for the four years she was there on candy bars. Really. When I went back for an interview at the college, they had a church there. One woman came up and said, "well, I girl by the same name that you have just about lived on candy bars." I felt so sorry for her. It turned out to be my sister.

And I didn't know anything about it until she told me. They would not give her a job, you see, anywhere. So she couldn't find employment to make enough money to buy meals. Occasionally some kind friends from the church would invite her.

Can you imagine when you're invited out? She said she ate all she could, because she could eat otherwise. She had one good meal during the week.

MN: What kind of holidays did you celebrate?

DO: The only thing I remember is the Fourth of July. We always had fireworks. And Memorial Day, I remember we had a family picnic. A picnic was pretty big in California. We went to Yosemite National Park which was about an hour and a half away.

Now its so crowded you don't dare go, but in those days it was not crowded at all. We went early in the morning and we would, uh, take a picnic bench and have a good time all day. Yeah.

And, of course I don't remember any vacations at all. We hardy went out to eat.

MN: Where your parents strict with you...as far as discipline?

DO: Um, yeah, in a way, but they were pretty busy too and didn't have a chance to watch us very much. We were pretty much on our own. We tried not to bother them...and we had our own things to play with. We played with tractors and so forth. My dad and mom were too busy. Of course they were trying to raise us as Americans. They tried to help us forget that we have Japanese roots. Which might have been a mistake, you know what I mean. They didn't teach us enough Japanese language and we had to go to school to learn it.

Well they did that mainly because, my parents were afraid, of course, that the majority of the people would not accept us unless we learned their language.

MN: They did sent you back to Japan to...

DO: He sent me back. I don't know what the reason was, but...well, he said the school system there is much better. Superior, they way he put it.

But the strange thing. When I went back, I lived with my uncle and I had 11 cousins. They all lived in one house, and, uh, I had the same facial features. I had the same name and all that, but they would not accept me. And I didn't find out why they didn't accept me until I got back. And my dad said, "Well, it's because I left." Left the fatherland for some other country, and so they never forgave him for that.

And, uh, they same thing was true in the school system too. I was, they thought I was an extra burden on their part, I guess, because I didn't know enough Japanese language, you see. And they didn't have special classes in those days, like we do today. Language classes.

MN: So, have you been back since then?

DO: No. I haven't. I'm thinking about going back one of these days to see me cousins. We have not communicated ever since I left there in '37. And I know some of them have died. My sister still writes to some of her cousins. Out of the 11 cousins, 8 of them were men. Four of them died during the war. One died in training, so they must have drove them. He died in training. And the other died in Thailand. And the other two were on ships, and I guess the ships were bombed or torpedoed. And they don't know what happened to them. The only thing they know is that probably they went down

with the ship. So, it's kinda sad when you think about that.

MN: Were your brothers and sisters also sent over or did they just keep in touch?

DO: They just kept in touch. Because my sis was very close to one of her cousins. They were about the same age, so they became pen pals and they started to write. But I never wrote, I never wrote back, so I don't know what happened. So when I do go back they'll look at be like, uh, "Oh, boy, here's a renegade cousin. You know, never writes."

MN: Are you the oldest of all your brothers and sister?

DO: Yes, the oldest. In a Japanese family, you know, they oldest son is responsible for everything after the parents retire. This is why I had to work to put my brother and sister through school, high school. I felt responsible, and so when I went to college, you see, I was 33, I think. I was the oldest one in college. And the hardest course was gym. I had to play basketball. You know, Parson's was such a small college they had to recruit everybody who's a male, who's agile enough to play. I had to play basketball. I had to play baseball, football. Would you believe I was right tackle? I was only 130 pounds. But it's a good thing I wasn't a first stringer. I was a reserve. Phys. ed. was the hardest course I had. (laughs)

When I graduated from Seminary, I was 38. So I had a short

vocation, you might say.

[End second side]