

July 8, 2005

Oral History

George Iwasaki

Ike Iwasaki

Marsha: George's Daughter

Toshie & Sagie: Georges Grandsons

Katie: It is July 8, 2005 and I am in the Iwasaki home and here to interview two brothers.

Marsha Iwasaki:

My name is Marsha Iwasaki, I'm a graduate from the class of 1971, and I was notified by e-mail by our class reunion coordinator that there was a Girl Scout named Katie who was looking for interviews from old Hilhi Alumni, and when I saw that I thought to myself, wow I'm too young to get an oral history from, and my husband said yeah but your dad, your dad would be great at that. And I knew that from different stories that my dad had told me over the years that that might be something worth pursuing. So I contacted Katie and arranged for her to come to meet dad and by pure luck Uncle Ike was here too on his 89th birthday. And so Katie is here in the kitchen in Hillsboro at the farm interviewing George and Ike Iwasaki. So with that I'm giving you, the tape recorder back to Katie and she'll ask them more about the family, the pioneer family here and Hilhi memories. Here you go.

Katie: All right, okay, so George what is your birthday and where were you born?

George: I was born uh March 4, 1912. at Sumner, Washington.

Katie: Alright and Ike um when were you born and where?

Ike: I was born in Farmington, Oregon which is about 4 miles from the city of Hillsboro and uh July 8, 1916.

Katie: All right, and um could you tell me a little about the family history and how they came to be in Hillsboro?

George: um... I'm not quite sure uh after I was born in Sumner, Washington in 1912, what uh was the um reason for migrating to Oregon because uh well um. In the vicinity of where I was born was uh so called colony of Japanese immigrants, but uh here in Oregon there was only uh scattering of Japanese people and uh I'm sure we didn't know anybody to look up to when we, when we moved or decided to move, so I really don't know how it was that we ended up here south of Washington.

Katie: How did your family get in to the uh nursery or farming?

George: Well, um originally as most Japanese immigrants, even if they were agriculturally oriented, um when they first encountered agricultural pursuits they were all mostly dairies and that was kind of foreign to them because Japanese were more vegetable farmers as such, but uh I guess uh they adapted and but they didn't stay long in the dairy industry. Most of them migrated to vegetable and berry farming.

Katie: Okay, um and you went to Hillsboro High School correct?

George: Yes

Katie: And what was your class?

George: 1930 I graduated.

Katie: And um were you at the first Hillsboro High School building?

George: Yes, three years in the old building, which incidentally was also built in the year I was born 1912 and then spent my senior in the new facility which was called, well I guess Hillsboro Senior High School, now its called J. B. Thomas Intermediate School.

Katie: Was there a big difference between the two schools?

George: Oh, everything was new in my senior year, so it was larger and really had a good feeling being in a new school.

Katie: What was your favorite subject?

George: U.S. History was my favorite subject.

Katie: What kinds of things did you cover in that class?

George: What kind of what?

Katie: Things? Subjects did you cover? Like, the Revolutionary War

George: Lets see in U.S. History, economics, lets see, public law or something like that, that I enjoyed very much and also a smattering of bookkeeping.

Katie: All right. Ike, what class were you from?

Ike: I am a graduate of the class of 1934. And did you have a favorite subject?

Katie: And did you have a favorite subject?

Ike: That is kind of an embarrassing question. I didn't have any favorite subjects, they were all kind of foreign, not foreign, and nothing appealed to me. I think Geometry and

Algebra, that kind of think appealed most to me, but as far as languages, social studies had no appeal.

Marcia: You had said earlier Uncle Ike it was because you felt a little bit alienated as the only Asian in the class, can you talk a little more about that?

Ike: I think I was the only Asian person, person of Asian background and so I felt self-conscious and that I was inhibited which probably affected my ability to gain you know full advantage of education. I think it affected my personality.

Katie: Were you involved in any clubs or sports there?

Ike: No, I was not because I didn't feel like I was you say a part of the school atmosphere.

Katie: George, were you involved in any clubs or sport?

George: No, I was not partly because they needed me on the farm so I was not able to partake in extracurricular activities at school. I was told to come home and go to work. Help the family.

Katie: What was transportation like back then? How did you to school?

George: As I remember I think in the primary grades one and two, that I had to walk to school and then they instituted a bus system. I remember the first bus, well I guess they were independent contractors who provided the transportation and I remember the first bus I rode in from here to Hillsboro was a home constructed box. it helped kind of thinking back now, it felt kind of like a, what do you call what they transport criminals,

Marcia: Paddy wagon?

George: Yeah.

Katie: What was the size of your class?

George: Size of the class? Uh, senior class was um 87, I believe. The total school population would be around 324, all four grades.

Katie: I am told that you helped design the school mascot or came up with the idea of the Spartan? Could you tell me about that?

George: I am I repeating

Katie: Yeah

Marcia: But that's okay

George: That's what I thought

Marcia: You can talk about how did this contest happen and were you still in school at the time. Just give Katie the whole background.

George: Well, lets see now um. I guess I am repeating

Marcia: That's okay

Katie: Good

George: The only Spartans that I had heard of or knew or was San Jose Spartans and Corvallis High School Spartans and I kind of like that name because of its warrior content.

Marcia: But how did the first idea even come that the school needed a Spartan, or mascot rather.

George: Well, because they never had one.

Marcia: So you had already granted from high school

George: Yes

Marcia: And then what happened.

George: Well there was a contest on and um

Marcia: How did you find out about the contest?

George: Well, my sister Kate was 10 years younger and she was going to the high school yet at that time and she said they were having a contest so I suggested that.

Marcia: And she submitted it?

George: Yes.

Marcia: And then what?

George: She got an annual out of it I guess.

Marcia: So that was the award?

George: Yeah.

Marcia: But didn't you also say that another person also suggested the Spartan and who was that?

George: Yes. It was a boy, I don't remember his name, it was a Van something

Marcia: So, both Kate and this boy named Van received a school annual for suggesting the name of the school mascot which to this day is still the Spartan?

George: Yes.

Marcia: How do you feel about that legacy?

George: Oh, I don't reflect on it much, but I am glad the name stuck.

Marcia: What occurs to me is that you chose a Greek warrior and you are of Japanese descent. Why didn't you say Samori?

George: I don't know. I don't believe I was immersed in the Japanese

Marcia: Samori culture?

George: Yeah, or mythology.

Katie: So did you have an open campus? Could you go downtown to Hillsboro? Was the school close to downtown Hillsboro at all?

George: Yes, about four or five blocks of Main Street.

Katie: Were you able to like for lunch or any of those things, were you able to go to downtown Hillsboro to eat?

George: No, I don't think so.

Marcia: So did you bring your lunch or did the school offer like a hot lunch?

George: Oh no, I think we had to bring our own lunch from home. I don't think they had instituted the hot lunch program yet.

Katie: What was social life like back then? Did kids get together a lot or?

George: Yeah, except being the minority kind of felt like you were, whether you were discriminated or not, you had the feeling that you probably were so.

Marcia: Before we leave the mascot thing, do you remember any other names that were suggested? Who were the runners ups or do you remember? Since you weren't there, may you don't remember.

George: No, I don't remember.

Marcia: So, what happened when Kate came back and told you that you won?

George: What happened?

Marcia: Yeah.

George: I don't know. I was elated that they chose the one that I picked.

Katie: I don't know if this was on this tape or if we had asked it earlier, but what were the major differences between the first Hilhi school and then the new one that you went to for your senior year?

George: What was the major difference?

Katie: Yeah.

George: Well it was much more roomier and very nice atmosphere, the new school and I was really proud that the senior year was able to spend it in the new facility.

Katie: All right, Ike, was the school still sort of new when you went? Was the high school that you went to still sort of new?

Ike: Well, as I recall I guess I really can't remember too much about my first high school days, but, I am sorry I can't tell you whether there was a feeling or not

Katie: Fine.

Marcia: What were your best memories about high school and Hilhi?

Ike: That's a hard question?

Marcia: Obviously, it wasn't in the classroom as you have already indicated, did allow you guys to go to football games or any sports games to support the Hilhi baseball or football or basketball.

Ike: Well in those days, um athletics didn't appeal to me. I was not that involved in you know school competition and this kind of thing, my participation in social activities was very limited when I was going to school.

Marcia: So by interest, no just because your parents said you couldn't go. Because

Ike: It was because say lack of interest.

Marcia: Whereas Dad on the other hand was very interested in football. Did you every go to any of the games?

Ike: Well, uh very early and when I did get a chance I never got to see the bulk of the game.

Marcia: Why?

Ike: Well, I was told to come home on the first bus that traveled this way and help work on the farm.

Marcia: So this family Katie is one of the pioneer families of Hillsboro. One of the first Japanese families. They were call esay, which is the first generation that came from Japan and settled are known as esay. George and Ike and all of their siblings are considered nesay, the second generation and I am sonsay, the third generation and then our kids are yonsay, the fourth generation, but there is big differences in attitudes and interests and freedoms that each generation holds. So it is important to note probably in this case is that my grandparents, you want to say the names of your parents dad and talk just the names of all of your siblings because they went to Hilhi in the order of their age. Just start with Jujabac's first name:

George: My dad's Japanese name was: Yousu Peachie, I don't know what it means except maybe it means serenity, I am not sure and

Marcia: And he went by?

George: The Caucasians named him Billy, so he went by the name of Billy always in his dealings in Hillsboro.

Marcia: And your mother?

George: Mother, well she because of the farm and family conditions of the man of the family had to go out and make contact with the world, so the mother stayed and reared the kids and also to care of the farm front.

Marcia: Right. Just say her name and then the name of all of the siblings.

George: Okay. Billy Yousu Pieachie Iwasaki, that's my father and my mother's name was Ito Bauw, was her maiden name and what else did you say?

Marcia: You are the oldest.

George: I am the oldest

Marcia: Then came?

George: Ike, who is four years younger. Then there is Arthur and next came girls in order. First was Kate, next was Tauka. Kate is now deceased. Iya, Dorothy and Rose.

Marcia: All Hilhi graduates. Rights?

George: I think Iya graduated in Nissa High School.

Marcia: And just briefly because why.

George: Because of the war, we were all Japanese were evacuated from the Pacific Coast because they feared in case of invasion that they would side with the enemy, which wasn't the case, but that was the reason.

Katie: Why was it that you didn't serve in the Army?

George: What was the question?

Katie: Why didn't you serve in the Army?

George: Oh, uh well have a hearing board, a draft board in Hillsboro and I had a hearing before I think the board consisted of three people in Hillsboro, prominent people and they interviewed me for a long time and then. My argument was that my father was 65 years holds and since two brothers were already in the service, I had to be the mainstay of the family and they accepted that, so I was deferred.

Katie: Ike, you served in the Army correct? You served in the Army?

Ike: Oh, my Army days, after December 7, 1941 that was Pearl Harbor event when Japan declared war and so since my selective service time was up on January 7, 1942, I went into the service and took training, basic training and then at that time um those of us soldiers of Japanese ancestry um in the service we were deemed to be not suspicion, but because of our background in war with Japan why we were, after our basics training, we were assigned to menial jobs in the United States as soldiers and not committed to going to active combat overseas. So for about a year and a half those of us nesay, we were called nesay, those of us who were of Japanese ancestry so all of us were segregated and detained in duty in the states. Then say 1943, the earlier Secretary of Navy, his name was Cox, I think it was John Cox, ordered that those nesay soldiers in the service now are, they are loyal and they should be actively enjoined to take part in actual combat, so from a result of that all Japanese American combat was formulated and trained and then actually as a unit we ran overseas and took our positions in actual combat conditions in Italy and France.

Marcia: When you were active in actual combat you said before for a couple years?

Ike: No, we were about a year and a half. Went over as I recall in the summer of 1944, and we were in Italy and later we were committed to active front in France and then of

course the war in Europe was declared to have ended in 1945, I think around June and so about six months after that, late in 1945 that I was able to be shipped back to the states and then subsequently discharged.

Marcia: Were you in the service with Uncle Arthur too? Were you in the same?

Ike: We were in the same combat team,

Marcia: The name of the team is what?

Ike: Was called 442nd Regimental Combat team. It had three divisions. We had the first division or 100th, called the 100th and the second battalion and third battalion. So there was three battalions plus other supporting units.

Marcia: The significant thing about the 442nd Battalion is what? They were all Japanese Americans

Ike: We were all Japanese Americans and the unit has been what shall I say

Marcia: Highly decorated?

Katie: Wasn't it the most highly decorated

Ike: It was one of the most highly decorated units of its size and numbers and it had several presidential unit citations awards.

Marcia: Are you all went back for the World War II Memorial dedication in Washington, D. C. last year? Isn't that right?

Ike: I think it was about two years ago that I went back to Washington, D.C. There erected a monument memorializing our Japanese American soldier participation and it stands near the Union Station in Washington, D. C. which I attended at the opening ceremonies.

Marcia: There are two memorials, two recent memorials, so are you talking about the one that recognizes Japanese Americans it had cranes and different names or are you talking about the World War II one which was a big circular with the water. You are talking about the Japanese American one with cranes on the.

Ike: There were two occasions, the one I am referring to is the one the memorializing the Japanese American participation.

Katie: That's pretty cool um and what was going in Hillsboro on the home front.

Marcia: Let me back up I just want to tell you about one thing Katie that happened maybe a long time, 15 years ago or so where there was light rail was coming into

Hillsboro and there were going to be a number of stations and there was an artist of Japanese-American descent named Valerie Otami from Portland who is a well recognized public artist which means an artist who does work public on a large scale and she was doing some research about people who lived in the Hillsboro central area and she wanted to put some type of an artwork that recognized the voices of the community, so she was able to find different quotations done by people of different ethnic backgrounds, including migrant workers, different farmers that settled here I think from Germany or Scandinavia and she also read a quote that my father had said that she found at the Oregon Historical Society and she selected that quote and had it sandblasted on concrete at the central light rail Tri-Met station,

Katie: In Hillsboro?

Marcia: Yes and my dad had told us about this 15 years ago or so and he told us all of the kids because he was quote sure he would have died by then, but it didn't happen. He was still here and I'll have to look at the date of when the station actually opened, but you remember what the quote is and you can tell that to Katie right now.

George: Um

Marcia: Shall I help you? In 19 you were talking about the war when executive order

George: 9066

Marcia: Which was an order that was ordered by President

George: Roosevelt

Marcia: Yeah. When Executive Order 9066 was ordered all the people that you had business dealings with said

George: This doesn't mean you? Does it affect you?

Marcia: It can't possible mean you and that was the executive order that ordered all the Japanese Americans to be interred and so the quote basically says: when executive order 9066 was announced all of your friends and business partners said this doesn't mean you, this can possibly mean you, but if course

George: We knew better.

Marcia: We knew it did and then it says George Iswaski remembering 1942. George Iswaski. So you can see that there.

Katie: All right.

Marcia: Think of things going back to Hilhi because that is really what Katie's oral history is about. It would be very helpful to her to have a few other comments by either of you of the good old days.

Katie: Was there any sort of dress code that you had to do?

George: Any kind of a what?

Katie: Dress code?

George: Oh, no. I don't think so. We were poor and also self conscious of how we appeared in school.

Marcia: What did you wear? Jeans and flannel shirts? Overalls like you do most of the time now or what do you remember wearing? Clothes that your mother made?

George: No. I think up to the eighth grade it was more bib overalls and through high school I was amazed at transition, no body wore those. The next fall I had my parents go to the dry goods store and me out differently.

Marcia: What were you wearing? They outfitted you in what differently.

George: I had pants, no bib overalls.

Marcia: That must have been hard for you. My dad doesn't like wearing anything around his waist. It is too tight he says. His purpose has always been to wear bib overalls. How about you Uncle Ike, I don't ever remember seeing you wear bib overalls.

Ike: At one time when I was actively farming I did wear regular bib overalls, but since then I have not worn that type of (laughter).

Marcia: Did the school put on any plays or did they have any school events like assemblies or

Katie: Or Freshmen orientations or carnivals?

Marcia: Any kind of special events do you remember at the school?

Ike: No really. I do recall however that in my freshman year for some unknown reason, I must have had a lapse in memory, but I did join the, what do you call that singing group, what do you call that

Katie: Quartet?

Ike: No. Well any way, I took part, but that was the extent of my extracurricular activities.

Marcia: You mean you sang, you actually sang?

Ike: Yeah, I actually sang,

Marcia: Ike, I didn't know this.

Ike: Do you want me to prove it? I had very little extra activities in school. I mean because one of the reasons was that you know we had to come home and dad run the farm, so none of my buddies, you know change your clothes, get in a football outfit and baseball and things like that. I often envied them that they could stay after school and do those things, but I felt I was denied that opportunity to socialize.

Marcia: That generation had a huge sense of obligation and their parents were, especially the grandmother, was quite controlling of the family members' responsibility. Would you say?

Ike: Yeah. Yes of course economically our family I guess we were struggling on the farm and so my mother especially you know concerned that we would help on the farm and augment our income and so that held true with all of us, my siblings, we were very limited to participate to in any extra school activities.

Marcia: Well the farm itself actually started as a small dairy farm, right?

Ike: In 1916, as I recall. Of course I was born in 1916, but when I was about 6 months old according to the reports my mother used to say that they came from another farm in Farmington where I was born, we used to come here with a wagon and horses and they would come and work on this farm daily until we could establish our residency here or so that was a period when of course I was a baby and I've said this before that my parents would be working clearing the brush or clearing the field, but I would be crawling around and getting into the family lunch and lick all of the butter out of the sandwiches. I recall my mother saying that I did that, of course I had nothing to do and smelling food and I would scratch and found this butter so this butter so it appealed to me apparently.

Marcia: This farm that we still have that has been here since 1916.

Ike: That is correct

Marcia: And you began first growing the produce and in the early 30's started selling the crops to farmers in downtown, including to Fred Meyers. Is that right?

Ike: That is correct. Initially, dad had a few cows and we marketed milk and that was the main activity. Since then gradually we converted to vegetable farming and it evolved into a greenhouse and then also evolved in raising vegetable starts and plants, but also into um ornamental flower raising, growing to where we are today in the greenhouse nursery business.

Marcia: But it is one of the longest family owned bedding plant nurseries on the West Coast, isn't it?

Ike: We uh

Marcia: This is the fourth generation now

Ike: Several years ago we were honored by the I think the Oregon Department of Agriculture recognizing old established farms dating way back a 100 years or so and so George and I was invited to go to Corvallis, Oregon State University where they recognized old farm establishments.

Marcia: And then later you were recognized by the Japanese American National Museum in California. Remember when you all went down for that shortly thereafter for having a Japanese family owned business for more than three generations.

Ike: Yes, that is correct Marcia.

Marcia: And so to this day now the farm is about 50 acres and you have over 543 square feet of green house to the original family farm and about how many different kinds of bedding plants, types do you guys raise now, do you remember? Do you have any idea?

Ike: Well I am guessing that it could well over 100. Different varieties and species annuals and perennials that we raise in market.

Marcia: And you sell them primarily to

Ike: Fred Meyer and

Katie: Do you remember any kind of food you had? Do you remember any teachers?

Ike: It is kind of hard to recall,

Marcia: Think about cars then, dad, my dad can remember cars?

George: Cars, well most of the kids had home constructed, I guess then called them , on the framework of the Model T and they were quite ingenious I thought, mostly left the framework of the car and drove them to school. I remember when they had mile relay teams in track. One kid ran to school from Orenco about six miles, he ran to school and also ran back.

Katie: And he carried books?

George: Um?

Katie: Did you have a lot of school books? A lot of homework?

George: I don't remember. I think I tried to get all that done in school time because when you got home, why you had to work and didn't have time to concentrate on any homework.

Marcia: You all went to Japanese school didn't you? Saturdays. Uncle Ike and Dad?

George and Ike: Yeah.

Marcia: And that was in Portland?

George: No, Banks.

Marcia: Where the Japanese kids got together and they learned language and culture and other.

Ike: Our parent's generation were very much concerned that we were getting too Americanized and appreciate our culture, so the parents set up a language school where we learned the alphabet of the language and held various um ethnic celebrations so we would be immersed in our background.

Marcia: Well good.

Katie: Yeah

Marcia: Do you remember school style, clothes that people wore? Like what the girls wear?

Ike: I think the boys wore corduroy pants and they had as I remember soiled corduroy as a sign of distinction.

Marcia: What about the girls? What did they wear?

Ike: I don't know.

Marcia: Well, they had to wear dresses? It is not like these days where you can wear shorts

Ike: No, the girls had to be girls

Marcia: And wear dresses

Ike: Yeah

Marcia: And high heels, I don't know about high heels and I don't know not high heels, but real shoes so it is much more formal obviously back in those days.

Ike: Yeah.

Marcia: Did we get the part on the other tape about the events or not?

Katie: Events, other schools events. Yes.

Marcia: Do you remember any fads back then that kids would do

Katie: Or any music?

George: Well, I remember traditional football game was with Forest Grove and

Marcia: So they were your rivals?

George: Yes. And so the night before the game, we had students align, they called it serpentine I think it was where they would go and mark around the business establishments the night before the game.

Marcia: Doing what?

George: Just marching

Katie: In downtown Hillsboro?

George: Yes.

Marcia: Just to get up the school spirit.

George: Yeah, yeah

Marcia: Did you participate? You didn't get to

George: I don't think so, may I viewed some of them but that is about it.

Marcia: Did they play music like they were marching with a band or you just

George: No, no I don't think so.

Marcia: Just a serpentine activity

George: Yeah Yeah

Marcia: Around the downtown core

George: Yeah Yeah

Marcia: Do drum up excitement

George: Yeah Yeah

Marcia: In anticipation of the rival game

George: Um huh

Marcia: Did you go Uncle Ike?

Ike: I don't remember or recall any of that.

Marcia: School activity?

Ike: Yeah.

Marcia: But, did they have homecoming king and queen? You don't remember any kind of recognition

George: No, they might have but my memory fails me.

Marcia: What about music style? Rock and roll with Elvis. Elvis wasn't there yet. Elvis came way after that.

Katie: Did you have Jazz?

Marcia: What did you guys listen to on the radio?

George: Amos and Andy?

Marcia: Tell Katie who they are dad?

George: Black face comedians.

Marcia: So they would be on the radio when you were in high school?

George: Um

Marcia: Do you remember any other kind of music though, the big bands.

George: No, they didn't come in until later. Lets see I don't know. I guess Alexander's Rag Time Band.

Marcia: So if you do a backdrop of this Katie, era of their school find some old rag time music as the background and when this gets produced from oral history to a book to the movies that could be the soundtrack.

George: Movies?

Katie: Did you go to the movie theatre? Did they have a movie theatre here in Hillsboro?

George: Yes. I think they had the before they had the talkies it would be dialog would be printed out on the screen and then the action

Marcia: You mean segments would be here's what happening in narrative form and then a picture.

George: Yeah.

Marcia: And they were all in black and white right?

George: Yeah

Marcia: What were some of the movies you remember like Charlie Chaplin?

Katie: Mary Pickford?

George: Yeah and Buster Keaton.

Marcia: So you saw those during the high school period.

George: Not many, because

Marcia: Wow, Buster Keaton, and

George: Harold Lloyd and Grandma's Boy

Marcia: Wow! What do you remember Uncle Ike? Do you remember any of those?

Ike: No, I can't remember back those days for some reason or another I haven't been able to retain my.

Katie: That's okay, I can barely remember freshman year?

Marcia: Do you remember favorite foods that kids would eat? In those days you didn't have pizza?

George: No.

Marcia: So what kinds of things did kids eat, hamburgers and hot dogs?

Katie: Was there a candy?

George: I remember Christmas candy. It was in the shape of a ribbon,

Marcia: Multi colored candy that was popular back then?

George: Yeah, Yeah.

Marcia: Did the kids do things in high school like sometimes I would see old pictures like they try can cram as many kids as they can into a car or into a telephone booth?

George: No.

Marcia: You were all such good boys.

George: That came later.

Marcia: Did they have the Hillsboro Happy Days back then?

George: Yes, yes, it was the annual Fourth of July celebration in Shute Park.

Marcia: So they had the usual carnival activities I assume

George: Um uh

Marcia: What did you guys do? Do you remember?

George: Dad took us there on the 4th of July and had ice cream for the first time.

Marcia: What was that like? What did you think?

George: It was good. As I remember there was 10 different brands of ice cream sands.

Katie: Ten, that many?

Marcia: Ten different little stands that were selling ice cream?

George: Yeah, they had different brands.

Marcia: They must have only had a few flavors though back then? Not like now where you have

George: No, I think just three flavors

Marcia: Which were?

George: Chocolate, Vanilla and strawberry?

Marcia: Wow, so that was a big deal roughly around that period?

George: Um uh

Katie: Did they have like pony rides, carnival games?

George: They possibly did. I remember one particular event which was like a huge up at the top and it was big enough so a trick motorcycle rider would ride around the inside and come up to the top.

Marcia: That right and you know what that is called. Actually I just worked on an art project that links to that it is called "Wall of Death". That is does that ring a bell?

George: It possibly was

Marcia: It was a turn of the century carnival spectator sport and it was like the shape of a giant velladrome which is where there is a little door at the bottom and the walls are slightly curved up and the motorcycle rider or bicycle rider way back when would come in through the door with a little helmet and a bicycle riding slowly around the bottom of the this velladrome going up, up, up high

George: That's right

Marcia: Higher, higher until they are almost perpendicular to the ground because the centrifical force allows them to keep at that level and all of the spectators are at the top of the velladrome looking down. That is what you are talking about right?

George: Yeah.

Marcia: So that was at the Happy Days?

George: Yeah

Marcia: And then there was also things like I am assuming the Ferris wheel right? I just remember mom always wanting to go on that. Do you remember those Happy Days?

Ike: Merry-go-rounds.

George: Yeah, Yeah

Marcia: How did you like those?

George: Well, I guess it was quite an experience for me you know at the young days and mother would take us kids to the Hillsboro amusement park and make a day of it and it was always I think the highlight of the summer you might say. Other than that, we had no social outside activities. So this was a big deal.

Marcia: And they always had the fireworks too right?

George: Yes, as I recall at one time the fireworks caused a fire right next to the Hillsboro Park. It burned down a farmer's barn from the sparks of the fireworks. I kind of remember that. It burned a barn down. They had what they called Roman candles that would shoot across back on the track.

Marcia: Wow. Did you have more questions?

George: Well Marcia I am glad you are prompting us for more questions because it is hard to recall events on our own.

Marcia: Well Katie did all the asking, I just

George: I appreciate your help.

Marcia: It was fun to recall all the and now Katie's got them recorded for posterity and this is going to get her a gold badge, gold award and she will be able to apply for scholarships and other awards. This will synch it for sure.

Katie: Is there anything else you would like add.

George: Yes, we had

Marcia: Ping-pong balls

George: No smaller than that, that exploded and puffed and jumped around and they called that the nigger chasers

Marcia: Dad, you can erase that. That is horrible.

George: I suppose if I had training I could relate to the interview a lot better, but.

Marcia: That's okay we have Katie's phone number so if you have some great revelation in the next couple of weeks or something, we can call her up and she can come back. Katie just lives in Singing Woods.

George: I understand that.

Marcia: Actually, my husband is also a Hilhi graduate from 1969 and he designed the houses in Singing Woods.

Katie: Really.

Marcia: So quite possibly you are living in one of his houses.

George: Well I hope we did some justice to your project.

Katie: You yeah definitely helped a lot.

This is Toshie and I am 18 and I am George's grandson and I am curious what time school started and what time it ended and how much homework there was on average.

George: I am I supposed to respond. I mean school started at about 9:15 a.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m. and a half hour lunch break

Toshie: How much homework did you have each night?

George: I don't recall that we had much homework. I think we got it all done during the school hours.

Toshie: Wow

Marcia: Did you have winter, Christmas vacation, spring vacation, all those holidays like we do these days? Do you know?

George: No spring vacation. The only vacation I think was Christmas.

Marcia: Did you have two weeks off like they do these days?

George: Yeah.

My name is Sagie and I am also George's grandson, 15 and I was wondering if you every got hit and how many classes you had a day.

Sagie: The teachers hit him, like with a paddle or a ruler?

Marcia: Did you understand the question?

George: No I did not understand the question.

Marcia: Say it again Sagie.

Sagie: I was wondering if the teachers ever hit you with a like a paddle or something?

Marcia: For bad behavior.

George: I remember one incident I was called up the principal's office and I don't know whether um got any reprimands at the principal's office, but I do remember in the classroom once or twice the teacher got after me with the ruler and a slap on the wrist. I don't know what the infraction was.

Marcia: Did it hurt? I mean did she hit hard enough for

George: Well, she was supposed to make an impression on me.

Marcia: Whatever it is you probably never did it again.

George: No.

Marcia: What was your second question Sagie?

Sagie: How many classes did you have each day? Did you just have one class or did you have different periods to go to?

George: We had about three or four subjects and also had a break, one or two breaks plus, how don't know how frequent the general assemblies were but then you got to relax.

Katie: Were the general assemblies like pep assemblies?

George: Um?

Katie: The general assemblies were they like pep assemblies?

George: Like what?

Katie: Pep assemblies. Spirit assemblies.

George: Oh, Oh, Gosh I don't remember. There may have been some, but I think there were more serious, whatever the assemblies were.

Marcia: Good questions.

George: Um huh

Marcia: The physical abuse thing was interesting because that would never happen today. You could never hit a kid or say anything bad to them.

Katie: More questions? Do you guys have any more?

Marcia: Or if you do just speak up during the course of the taping?

Katie: Yeah. Were there any other Japanese farming families in Hillsboro when you were going to high school?

George: There was two others, but I don't remember if they were in my class but the girl that was there moved away so she was only there freshman year.

Marcia: But there was another Japanese family that graduated right?

George: Yes, yes.

Marcia: So who were they.?

George: The Wakasugies.

Marcia: And they did not stay though in Hillsboro after the war? Is that right?

George: No, they moved to eastern Oregon.

Marcia: Because they lost the land after the war?

George: Um uh (yes).

Marcia: That is terrible.

Katie: Okay, car, back when you were in high school, what kind of cars did the highschoolers drive?

George: What kind of what?

Katie: Cars.

George: Cars? Well besides the boys that had made over Model T's and rich bankers boy from Cornelius had a well he had a gardner which was a ordinary type car and he also drive a fancier, I am trying to think what it was now, either Peerless or I can't think of it.

Marcia: It doesn't matter, that's okay. We were just trying to get a sense of the style.

Katie: Do you remember any other type of cars that were around?

George: Um?

Katie: Do you remember any other type of cars that were around Hillsboro? You mentioned Chevies and Standards.

George: Well, lawyers

Marcia: Business people?

George: Business people drove not Cadallics, but just below that fancy car like Studebaker, Hudsons.

Marcia: But you didn't have your own car and most people in those days just had a family car right compared to these days were a lot of kids in high school have their own car?

George: Yeah.

Marcia: In those days they were so expensive? Is that correct?

George: Yeah.

Marcia: You just had one car if you were lucky that was your family car.

George: Yeah, and only the father done the driving. He didn't let the kids drive it.

Katie: And there was a speed limit?

George: I think so. At one time it was 45, but then most cars you really had to get it up to 45.

Marcia: That was fast.

George: Yeah.

Katie: Did the cars have any radios or turn signals.

George: No, no turn signals.

Marcia: So what did you do if you were going to turn?

George: Well you stuck your arm out, this is right, this is left and this was stop.

Marcia: Even if it was dark and raining you'd be

George: Yeah, yeah.

Marcia: At a truck stop and you'd ruin your clothes with such a thing and no seat belts of course?

George: No, no.

Katie: So as far as entertainment, um, what kind of radio shows did you listen shows.

George: A comedian, oh his name was Fred, can't remember, black and white comedy show Amos and Andy, Jack Benny and I can't remember but football games were broadcast and you just imagined that the ball was going back and forth.

Katie: Yeah, you also had cinema, right?

George: Just a start.

Katie: And were there animated cartoons, were those called talkies.

George: Yeah, I think the cartoons came first.

Katie: And then the talkies?

George: Um huh.

Katie: What about vaudeville?

George: Vaudeville was a standard feature because before talkies came in why that was a main feature in theatre programs was vaudeville.

Katie: And they were comedy?

George: Yes.

Katie: Were there any in Hillsboro or did you have to go elsewhere?

George: No, I think they showed it in Hillsboro.

Katie: Really?

George: Um huh

Marcia: Explain to Toshie and Sagie dad what a talkie was?

George: It was coming in of the prior to television.

Marcia: So they were show the movie that had a story, but between times they would add the words, so it wasn't simultaneous. Right? Is that right? Okay, keep going dad, you can explain.

George: At first it was wasn't scenarized so. They flash the words on the screen and then you'd hear

Marcia: So there would only be a few sentences

George: Yeah, yeah

Marcia: Not like you know paragraph of narrative

George: No no

Marcia: Just a sentence or two.

George: um huh

Katie: Did you ever go into Portland?

George: Rarely.

Katie: How did you get there?

George: We a train called the Red Electric. It ran on, well the railroad is still here and it took an hour to get to Portland cause every little stop was a stop where the train picked up passengers, so I think it probably took an hour to get to Portland cause the train stopped.

Katie: Were there any other minorities that came to Hillsboro?

George: No, I don't know of any, other than the Japanese.

Marcia: But there weren't Chinese or Koreans, Phillipano, other Asians.

Katie: Were there any native American or blacks.

Marcia: Or Hispanics?

George: We adopted a castaway. He was a guy he was Koren.

Marcia: You say we adopted, you mean the family?

George: Un huh. We could have been arrested at that time. We were not going to expose anybody. He jumped ship and he happened to be resting in Washington Park under a tree and it so happened that Mr. Minemoto was at that time single. He spoke Japanese, this Korean spoke Japanese, so right away Mr. Minemoto befriended him and took him to the farm.

Marcia: To our farm?

George: No to his farm.

Marcia: The Minemoto farm?

George: Yeah, but he also camped in our farm too because Mr. Minemoto just has strawberry, dry land strawberry and we had various vegetables. He worked for us too.

Marcia: For how long? I have never heard this story.

George: Oh, I think it must have been two or three years and then one time we got hint of a rumor that they'd got crack of him so in the middle of the night we took him to Eatonville, Washington, was a lumber camp that had many Japanese, kind of smuggled him in there.

Marcia: And who smuggled him, did you, were you the one who drove him up there?

George: No, it was Mr. Minemoto.

Marcia: What was his name?

George: Lets see, gosh I can't remember.

Marcia: That's okay, but did you keep in touch with him after that?

George: No.

Marcia: That was a two or three year period where this guy. Did he live with your family, this Korean worker?

George: No.

Marcia: Did he live with Mr. Minomoto's family?

George: Well, when he was here in those days they harvested potatoes and a cellar that they stored in the wintertime and I think he kind of squeezed a living quarters in that potato area.

Marcia: Was this during your high school years?

George: Yeah, grade school maybe.

Katie: So, the mentioned something about girl's basketball and the way they played? That is kind of interesting, can you describe that?

George: Well, all I know is that they played in the zones, so they don't use the full court.

Katie: What were their uniforms like?

George: You call them blummers, I guess looked like oversized knickers.

Marcia: Were they good? Were the boys better than the girls?

George: Oh, I don't know. I didn't see many of the girls' games.

Katie: Were the guys okay?

George: Um

Katie: How were the guys?

George: Yeah, they were good. Yeah, I remember the state tournament in March. I think I don't know for whatever reason, but maybe it was Hillsboro that started the tournament, I don't know but it was held in Salem, but Hillsboro was always automatic in. As a participant.

Katie: And you were also in a play at Hilhi? In a senior play?

George: In a what?

Katie: You were in a senior play at Hilhi?

George: Oh.

Marcia: What was the name of the play?

George: Gee, I don't know.

Marcia: I think Katie knows.

Katie: I think it was "A Lucky Break". What was your part?

George: Just a prop I think.

Marcia: We looked at the program and you had an actual role.

George: Yeah, I think I just walked across the stage.

Marcia: No, Katie what was his role?

Katie: A Japanese valet

George: Oh, I don't think I had a speaking part, I just walked across the stage one side to the other.

Marcia: Do you remember being on stage?

George: Yes.

Katie: Were you nervous?

George: No, I don't think I was.

Katie: Were there a lot of people there?

George: Yeah.

Marcia: Did your family come to watch you?

George: Oh, no no no.

Marcia: Why not?

George: Well, they weren't involved.

Marcia: That's okay. You needed to have some people in the audience.

George: Yeah, but no, you were just on your own.

Katie: Going back to the sports, do you remember any of the cheerleaders or anyone leading cheers at the games.

George: Yes. There is the picture in the yearbook.

Katie: Yeah. Do you remember any cheers?

George: I think just prior to the time that I was graduating from high school they had various long, long yells and theatrics, but there wasn't many of that at the time I went to high school, but I have heard that there were many animated yells and stuff before.

Katie: Do you know anything of the types of dances that they did, like the waltz, Charleston?

George: No, other than that I don't know. I didn't dance anyway so.

Marcia: But you were telling Katie and I earlier that you remember kids would do the waltz and then the Charleston was the coming thing.

George: Yeah, it was a fad, yeah.

Marcia: What was such a big deal about it?

George: Uh, I think they something about the dance around and cross their hands opposite me, done the jig.

Katie: So it was wilder than the waltz?

George: Oh, yes, yes.

Marcia: It was scandalous.

George: Yes, I think it was, yes.

Marcia: Did you ever do it?

George: No.

Marcia: Too bad dad, that sounds like fun.

George: Well, I am not a dancer and besides I have short legs. It would be ridiculous.

Katie: Do you remember any other plays at Hilhi like 'Tulips of Holland'?

George: Um huh.

Katie: Operetta. Did you go to that?

George: Yeah, probably did, yeah.

Katie: Do you remember any major world events that happened when you were in high school, what about, do you remember anything about World War I?

George: I guess not other than I remember when the Armistic was signed.

Katie: What do you remember about that?

George: Yeah. I think that news probably came over the radio and I remember walking, well I wasn't walking to school, its just, just meandering on the farm grounds when I heard that the Armistic was signed.

Marcia: We were talking about the significance of the number 11. Tell us about that?

George: About the what?

Marcia: The significance of the number 11 to that day.

George: Number letters?

Katie: 11, the number 11. The 11th day of the 11th month

George: Oh, yeah. I remember that that was the day that the Armistice was signed ending World War I. That the 11th day of the 11th month

Marcia: The 11th hour.

George: yeah, 11th hour.

Katie: Do you remember the stock market crash by any chance, the depression?

George: Heard of it

Katie: Didn't feel the effects?

George: No no effect, we didn't have any stock. Didn't understand what it was and the big depression that followed it.

Katie: So it didn't effect the farm?

George: Well, I think it did in ways that prices of our farm products the market was really unsettled after that. Kind of fluctuated with the times.

TAPE #3 – Side A

Katie: Did you hold an officer position when you were in high school?

George: No. I was just chosen secretary-treasurer of the senior class.

Marcia: Did you have to run that office?

George: No

Katie: What is the class that elected you or teachers?

George: No it was the class.

Marcia: And why do you think they selected you?

George: I don't know.

Marcia: Were you good at bookkeeping, they knew that?

Katie: Were you good bookkeeping or being organized?

George: No.

Marcia: Where did they get the money for your to keep track of? How did they raise the money?

George: You got me. It was an honorary position.

Marcia: You must have had fundraiser events?

George: No, I can remember any?

Marcia: You must have, got to be tied to something?

George: It was just honorary.

Katie: Do you remember your graduation?

George: Yes.

Katie: Did you have rows and all that?

George: No

Marcia: What do you remember about it?

George: I think there was 87 of us.

Marcia: What did you do?

George: Do?

Marcia: What do you remember that?

George: I think the chairman of the Board of Education handed us our diplomas as our names were called.

Marcia: Was there a commencement speaker or valedictorian?

George: No I don't recall. I know there was.

Katie: There is actually program here I am going to use it.

Katie: Were you able to keep in touch with any of your classmates after you graduated?

George: Not many.

Marcia: Why don't you tell Katie about what is coming up on August 14?

George: A picnic.

Marcia: And who is it for?

George: For the 50th anniversary of the class.

Marcia: Tell Katie a little bit about that event so that she knows what it is about and maybe she'll come.