Interview with Shiro Aisawa for the Nisei at UConn Oral History project by Dr. Bruce M. Stave and Sondra Astor Stave on October 15, 2003

SONDRA STADEV: We are now speaking at eight forty-five with Shiro Aisawa.

AISAWA: Aisawa:

SS: Aisawa, for the Nisei Oral History project at UConn. Today is October 15th 2003. This is Sondra Astor Stave doing the interview. And we’re—

SA: And for your information, in Japanese the A-I is always strung out.

SS: Fine. Okay. I will—

SA: That’s a common mistake.

SS: I have already learned something.

Okay. I’d like to start by asking you about your family life.

Tell me a little bit about your parents. Do you have siblings? Where were you growing up, anything in that general area.

SA: Well, both my parents, my mother and father, were born in Japan. And—

SS: Where in Japan?

SA: Fukushima Prefecture.

SS: And do you want to spell that?

SA: Fukushima is spelled F-U-K-U-S-H-I-M-A Prefecture. That’s not the town. That’s just like a [unclear] or whatever you want to call it. And the town, if you’d like to know the town.

SS: Okay.

SA: My father was from, well, it’s a village, I guess, called Namie, N-A-

Now they didn’t come at the same time nor were they married in Japan. My father came over in 1907 for the purpose of earning enough money to pay off a debt, a mortgage, you know, a debt on the property of the land that they owned. And so his father sent him, asked him to come over to America, the land of the gold, to earn enough money to pay off that debt.

SS: How old was your father when he came?
SA: I would guess in the twenties, early twenties.
SS: And what kind of work did he think he would get here to be able to earn that money?
SA: I don’t know whether he knew himself. All he knew was that others that had come ahead of him, you know, found work here.

And so he came in 1907 to Seattle. He got off in Seattle. I, I didn’t know that myself until later. Then he came down to Santa Rosa, California, where he had relatives. And he worked in the fruit fields, I think it was, also, on the railroads and whatever work he could find. And then from there he moved over to around San Jose area and worked in the fruit orchards because there was a lot of fruit growing there.

And eventually he earned enough to pay off that debt. But since he was making money here he decided to stay. And let’s see. Seven years later my mother came in 1914.

SS: And how old was she at the time?
SA: Oh, around twenty-one. I don’t know the exact age.
SS: Did she come with her parents or—
SA: No, no.
SS: By herself.
SA: She came with his sister, my father’s sister.
SS: Oh, they were friends.
SA: Well, not from way back. They became friends.
SS: When they came.
SA: Well after—. Yeah, after—. On, on, you know, after they came back, came over together.

But it was a situation where my father’s sister went to visit her in order to see whether they would be compatible, I guess. Maybe not so much from a personality standpoint but from a social, you know, level standpoint. They’re different back there. So she wanted to make sure that they were about socially equal. And anyway, she met with her—

SS: And what social class would your parents had been considered to be at that time?

SA: Well they were farmers. But my father also had an uncle who was in the—. Oh what’d they call that? They called it the Diet or the—

SS: Legislature?

SA: Yeah, from that community. And so they were more than just laborers they were [unclear]. I don’t know all the details from that.

But anyway, my mother and my aunt came over together on the same boat. And that was seven years later so obviously my father didn’t know her at the time. But my aunt had visited with her. She, she said it was okay. And they came over here. And then meanwhile
my father had found a husband for his sister. And they were married in San Francisco.

SS: So how long did your parents keep company before they got married?

SA: I don’t know, a matter of days, one or two.

SS: Oh, very fast.

SA: Well, yeah, because they came over and he, he and his friend they met them in San Francisco. And I guess at that time they, the immigrants came over to Angel Island and--. I don’t know if you’re familiar with that area but it’s like the—

SS: Ellis Island.

SA: Ellis Island type of thing. In other words, then they were quarantined for so many days or something and before they could get off and go to San Francisco. So it was something similar to that on the West Coast. Well anyway, they got married in San Francisco and then, then, then they went down to, to Los Angeles area.

SS: So your aunt married that quickly, also?

SA: Yeah. They, they got married at the same time, I think, by the same minister. It may have, may have been the same, same ceremony. I don’t know.

SS: Yeah. And you said minister, were your parents Christian?

SA: Buddhists.

SS: Buddhists.

SA: At that time, yeah. So a Buddhist master married them. In fact I still have their—

SS: Certificate?
SA: Marriage certificate, yeah, at home. [Laughs] I just happened to find it after they passed away and I was searching through all of the stuff that they left and there it was.

But anyway, they got married in San Francisco. And they went down south where he was working as a contractor getting workers for the fruit growers, you know, the people that raised oranges and different kind of fruit down there, citrus fruits.

SS: How were your parents treated? Did they feel that there was much discrimination or—

SA: That I couldn’t say because I didn’t talk to them very much about that.

SS: But they didn’t talk about it.

SA: No, they didn’t volunteer the information.

SS: Right. And did you have brothers and sisters?

SA: Yes. And, of course, they lived down there for a number of years.

And I have three, two brothers. Well, I have two, two brothers and a sister. But I said three initially because one died at birth or within the first, I think, the first year after birth. So when I was growing up, I being the youngest never knew the one who died.

SS: So there were two brothers and a sister and you.

SA: Yeah, while I was very young.

SS: And what year were you born?

SA: Nineteen twenty-four.

SS: Nineteen twenty-four. Okay. And at that point your parents had moved to Imperial Valley.

SA: Well, a place called Covina, which is outside of Los Angeles, which is, oh I don’t know, I’d say fifteen, twenty miles out, about twenty miles outside of Los Angeles.
SS: And—

SA: And before moving to Imperial Valley, they worked in the fruit orchards. My, my dad worked sort of like a contractor I suppose. He would get the workers for the owner of the orchard to pick the fruit and stuff like that.

SS: Now, did your mother work, also?

SA: No, not in the fields. She said that they started as cooks for the workers. You know they may have a dozen, dozen workers or so. And she, she and my aunt served as a cook, cook for the—. It was like a labor camp, I guess.

SS: And did they—

SA: This was back in, well, 1914 to 1920, that period, time period.

SS: And did they cook mostly Japanese food?

SA: I would imagine so because they were mostly Japanese workers.

Then eventually around 1921 or '22 they moved to Imperial Valley, or, they moved to Imperial Valley because my brother who is two years older than me—he was born in 1922—was born in Imperial Valley.

SS: Now did your parents, were they active church members with the Buddhist temples or—

SA: I don’t know that they were active but I suppose they donated, you know, to the church.

And see I was born in 1924, so my brother was born in 1922. My sister was born in 1919 and my oldest brother was born in 1915. And my brother, oldest brother and sister were born in Covina. My, the other brother, was born in Brawley, I think, in Imperial Valley. And I was born down there in Imperial.
But the thing is they moved around about every three or four years because they couldn’t own property. My dad couldn’t own property.

SS: Because he was Japanese.

SA: Yeah. There was an alien land law in California that wouldn’t allow him to own property.

SS: Now could your parents become citizens?

SA: Not at that time. They could become after the World War II in, around 1950 [unclear].

SS: But now, were you a citizen when you—

SA: Well, if I’m born here I’m a citizen—

SS: Here, you were a citizen so—

SA: By birth.

SS: So the four children were citizens even though your parents were not and could not—

SA: Right, because we were born here.

SS: Right. Okay. Now were your parents active in any kinds of political or voluntary groups?

SA: Well my dad belonged to this Japanese association, which it consisted of all these Japanese farmers getting together. But it wasn’t so much of a political group as a social group. You know, because the, that they’d get together and converse among each other and just like other ethnic groups. They have, you know, the Irish groups and the Italian groups and so forth.

SS: And what do you—

SA: But it was not a political group.
SS: Right. What do you remember about your growing up? What kind of house did you--? What, what--? Although your family kept moving, what would a typical residence be like?
SA: It was just a--. It was a house. It wasn't--. It had floors and it had windows and everything. It wasn't a dirt floor house or anything like that. It was--. It was, it was a regular house.
SS: Electricity, plumbing [unclear] and so forth.
SA: Well, not initially because electricity didn't come out to the country until they, till sometime in the thirties. And so, initially, we had kerosene lanterns or we had gas, gas lanterns that we used. And we had iceboxes where you had the ice in there, you know, the old iceboxes until we got electricity and then we got electric refrigerators and all the other stuff that goes with electricity. But that didn't come about until the mid-thirties in the country.
SS: Right, here, too.
SA: And let's see. What else?
SS: What do you remember about going to school?
SA: What do you remember. I didn't have to walk.
SS: School bus?
SA: School bus picked us up, yeah. But we always took a lunch, sack lunch. And I don't even remember having to be hungry or anything like that. I always had enough to eat.
SS: Did you like school?
SA: Yeah. I didn't hate it. I enjoyed school.
SS: Do well?
SA: I thought I did. Well, I--. The teacher, anyway, thought I was doing okay because--. See I started first grade at, at five. And nowadays
they start around six I think. And she thought I was doing well enough so she skipped my second grade and I went to third grade the next year, next year. So at six I was in third grade.

SS: So how old were you when you graduated from high school?
SA: Sixteen.
SS: Me, too.
SA: So, you know, I kind of—
SS: And when you started school did you speak English?
SA: Yes. We always spoke English at home.
SS: Oh, your parents spoke English in the house.
SA: No, no they didn’t. They spoke Japanese. So until— I don’t know. My mother never learned how to speak English very well although she did speak broken English. My father could speak a little better but not that much.
SS: But you were the youngest of the four children. So was it that when your older siblings went to school they learned English and brought it home to you?
SA: Probably the oldest one didn’t speak English initially at, early on. But I wouldn’t know because I wasn’t born at the time.
SS: By the time that you were born—
SA: They all spoke English.
SS: They were all speaking English.
SA: At home, yes.
SS: Yeah. So that was helpful to you.
SA: Yeah.
SS: Okay.
SA: So I had the advantage of talking to them in English. But then, again, we didn’t learn much Japanese, which is kind of bad because, you know, it’s good to know these other languages.

SS: Yeah. Well you didn’t need to speak Japanese so that you could speak to your parents or—

SA: Oh, we spoke Japanese to our parents but it was broken Japanese. There’d be a few words in Japanese mixed in with the English words, some of the verbs and so forth of English, and then the nouns were maybe Japanese.

SS: But you could understand each other.

SA: Yeah. They could understand us and we could understand them. And it worked.

SS: Now did you have the feeling that education was important to your parents.

SA: Yes, I did.

SS: Did they want you to be a good student and go to school?

SA: Well, I, they didn’t say that, you know, outwardly. But I knew that education was important to them because the oldest son they made sure that he went on to college.

And we were poor farmers. I mean I won’t say farmers because he, he, he grew lettuce and vegetables and melons, lettuce and melons and stuff, vegetables, for a large fruit and vegetable conglomerate called American Fruit Growers. And so it wasn’t--. He wasn’t--. He wasn’t doing the actual dirt work, grunt work. But he had hired, he was able to hire laborers, Mexican laborers, to do that.

But he was hired by this American Fruit Growers to, to raise crops and grow the melons and stuff up to the point where they, they
could be packed and shipped. So he did all the growing for them and then they did all of the shipping and selling.

SS: Now your older brother, did he graduate from college?

SA: Yes, UC-Berkeley.

SS: Oh. And what did he major in?

SA: Economics, I think.

SS: And did that then become his career or—

SA: In a sense, yeah.

He was--. Well after he, right after he graduated my father started his own shipping business, you know. He was raising this crop for the American Fruit Growers and they were doing the shipping.

Well he decided to—

SS: Ship it himself.

SA: Yeah. So he would—

SS: And where was it being shipped to?

SA: Back east, anywhere from the Midwest on to the east.

SS: East Coast.

SA: Because he continued to do the raising of the crop but then my brother was running the—

SS: Business part.

SA: The shipping part, yeah, business part.

SS: And what about your sister? What did she--? Did she go to college?

SA: Yeah.

SS: And did she graduate?

SA: Yes.

SS: And, and what did she study?
SA: Well, initially she graduated, I think, in home economics. I think that’s what she--. And she graduated--.

Well she was in her senior year at the time the war broke out, or at the time we were evacuated from California, ’42. She was a senior at that time and was going to graduate that June. But I think she, she got a degree in absentia or something like that because she had gone so far.

SS: And, and your younger brother?

SA: Well, at the time the war broke out he was in college, also. He was taking pharmacy at USC, University of Southern California. And I was in junior college.

SS: Right. Now your father was grabbed before even the executive order 9066. Do you remember exactly when he was taken away?

SA: Don’t you have that there? [Unclear]

SS: No. This--. My husband made up the questions. But we do have a page and a half that I have of yours that--

SA: Biography.

SS: Yes.

SA: Yeah. I sent that to Angela.

SS: Yeah. And--

SA: And that was a quickie that I--

SS: It was helpful.

SA: She asked for it and within a matter of two or three hours I whipped something up.

SS: So do you remember when it was that your father was taken off?

SA: No, right now I don’t. I mean it’s, it’s--

SS: You were--. You were in the junior college at that point, right?
SA: Yeah, I was in school, yeah. I was going to school at the time. And a person I knew picked me up in town. School was in town. And he says, I'll take you home. And then on the way home he said, did you know your father was picked up by the FBI? Or he didn't say, did you know. He said, your father was picked up by the FBI today. That was the first I—

SS: Now were many others picked up at the same time?

SA: Oh yeah, quite a few.

SS: Do you have any idea why they decided to take your father?

SA: Well, I, I don't--. I never knew why. But I knew that the FBI and these people that did that were given names from some others in the Japanese community that indicated these were the leaders of the Japanese community group. So—

SS: So was your father looked upon as a leader because he was successful do you think or—

SA: I was--. I, I being fairly young at the time I didn't know all this stuff.

SS: Right. But in retrospect—

SA: And not only that but, it's just the Judo instructors, the fencing instructors—

SS: They were taken, too?

SA: Oh yeah, yeah. And the Buddhist minister and, you know, the ministers and all those people were taken.

SS: So anyone who seemed to be in a position—

SA: Influential position, I suppose. I suppose that's it, yeah.

SS: So in a way it speaks well of your father that they thought he was important enough to be taken.
SA: I don't--. Yeah. And I don't know what his position was in that Japanese association that they had because I wasn't too interested in that sort of stuff at that time, that age, you know, as a teenager.

SS: And then how much after that was the rest of the family moved out?

SA: Oh, I think this was done around January, somewhere in January, February in the—

SS: Of 1942.

SA: Yeah. The evacuation or—

SS: That was your father.

SA: Yeah. Nine o six six was the February, middle of February of 1942. So it was--. I think it was before then. And then we were moved out in May so however long that is.

SS: Three months after.

SA: About May 8th, early, early May, first week of May 1942.

SS: And you packed up as much as you could carry.

SA: Well, that's the orders. Whatever we could carry in our two hands was all we could take.

SS: And what happened to the rest of your things?

SA: I don't know. They were either left or we had left them, some of that stuff with some friends that, thinking that we might come back to, to get them again but we never did.

SS: Japanese friends or non-Japanese--?

SA: No, Caucasian.

SS: Caucasian friends. Did you have many Caucasian friends in the area?

SA: Well, we were way out in the country. And I know we had two or three families that we were very friendly to us. In fact, one of them was my grammar school teacher and her husband. He came by right
after the war broke out said if anybody gives you any trouble let me know. I'm a deputy sheriff. And I said, gee thanks.

SS: Well when you were going through school out in California what proportion of your classmates were Japanese and what proportion would have been Caucasian?

SA: Oh gosh, that's hard to say. I'm going to just make a guess, maybe twenty-five percent.

SS: Japanese. And were there any other ethnic groups that were [unclear]?

SA: Mexicans.

SS: That's what I was wondering, and about how many of those?

SA: Maybe twenty-five percent.

SS: So twenty-five percent Japanese, twenty-five percent Mexican and fifty percent Caucasian.

SA: Yeah.

SS: Roughly?

SA: Or there may be others.

SS: There were other groups, too.

SA: There weren't too many blacks as I recall, very few, but mainly Mexicans.

SS: Any Chinese out in the area?

SA: Yeah, there were some but not as many. Yeah, there weren't too many.

SS: Was there much of a relationship between the Chinese and the Japanese?

SA: Well, the few that they're there we got along well. I mean we didn't even think about the fact that they were Chinese, you know.
SS: So you considered them to be more like yourself than the other groups.
SA: No, we got along well with the Caucasian groups. I don’t recall we had any problem. I mean, you know, we played together and so I didn’t see any distinction at the time.
SS: So now you’ve been moved out and where do they take you and how do they take you?
SA: Well, we, we were ordered to assemble at this Christian church. It was a Japanese Christian church, a Methodist church. We were told to assemble there at such and such a time one morning and we all went.

    I don’t, I don’t—. Even to this day I don’t remember how we got there but somebody drove us there apparently because we lived five miles out, out from town.
SS: Did you have a car, your family?
SA: Yeah. We had a car but somehow I think—
SS: The car wasn’t going.
SA: No. A lot of things got sold, you know. We couldn’t take anything. And we could just sell whatever we could for however much we could get. And I don’t know. Maybe it’s my oldest brother that took care of getting rid of those kinds of things. But I didn’t have anything to do with it. Anyway—
SS: Do you remember how you felt about this happening?
SA: I just accepted it because I had all this—. We had a lot of notice of it for months before we—. We had heard rumors that we were going to get moved out. And everybody was going to—. Well, by everybody, all the Japanese were involved in this. So it wasn’t just myself. So I
didn’t think too much about it. Well, I’ll just go along with the rest of them, that sort of attitude.

SS: Now, I mean you could tell from the late 1930s into the beginning of the 1940s that Japan was doing things in Asia with regard to moving into other places and things going on—

SA: No.

SS: How did you feel personally? Did you feel an identification with Japan or did you feel you’re an American and—

SA: No, no. Yeah.

SS: And whatever they’re doing over there is—

SA: It didn’t concern me.

SS: Right.

SA: No. I didn’t feel any attachment to Japan.

SS: So you knew—

SA: At that time nor now.

SS: So your family was here in the United States and your—

SA: Maybe they did. Maybe my parent did because they were born there but we didn’t.

SS: Did you ever talk with them about any of this or—?

SA: No.

SS: Too painful, too unpleasant or—

SA: No, just didn’t think about it. Just as we haven’t talked to our kids, my, my children very much about the camps.

SS: They don’t ask or—

SA: They don’t ask.

SS: Do they not ask because they think you wouldn’t want to talk about it or—
SA: No, I don’t—. That—. I don’t know what their feelings are. My daughter asks once in a while. But when they ask we answer them, well, you know, what camp was like. But a lot of things, you know, you just don’t volunteer to them because they may not want to hear it, you know. So we just wait till they ask. And if they ask we’ll answer.

SS: Okay. So you go to the Christian church with your family, with your family.

SA: Yeah, and all the other Japanese families.

SS: And about how many people would have been gathered there, do you have a guess?

SA: I think there must have been about half a dozen buses.

SS: Okay. So you went on a bus.

SA: Yeah, buses or maybe, something like that.

SS: And where did the bus—

SA: And I guess the buses in those days maybe they would hold about what thirty or so. So that would be about a couple hundred people.

SS: Right. And where did the bus take you?

SA: Took us to Poston, Arizona. And there was a new place that was named after, I guess, I don’t know, maybe they named before then. But it was the camp, relocation camp, set up in the middle of the Colorado River Indian reservation, which was near a town called Parker, about ten miles from Parker, Arizona. That’s the closest town.

SS: And what kind of facilities did they have for you there? Were there houses or—

SA: Barracks.

SS: Barracks.
SA: That they just put up. In fact, they were still working on them, building them, when we went. And we were one of the first—

SS: Now was your family able to stay together in one section or were the men in one place, the women in another?

SA: Oh, no, no we were staying together. But there was, let’s see, they would allow as much as six, as many as six in one—. Those barracks, I don’t know if you’ve seen pictures of them—

SS: No.

SA: I brought a tape. But, anyway, they’re, they’re long, about twenty feet by, what is it, about ninety feet long. And the two end ones are the largest and they were about twenty-five, twenty-five feet. And then the two middle ones are about twenty feet. So together it’d be about ninety feet, I guess.

Anyway, the big ones they could hold as many as six, six adults. And the in between ones, I think, they’d hold four or five. But we had six in our, they called them apartments. We had six in our apartment.

SS: Now when were you reunited with your father?

SA: I, I had left camp by that time.

SS: Okay, so—

SA: And but he came back—. Well, you know, first he was sent to Bismarck, North Dakota. And then they transferred him to Lordsburg and Santa Fe, New Mexico. And these were Department of Justice internment camps. They were different from where we were. They were run by the Justice Department, I guess. And our camps were run by the, well, civilian organizations, War Relocation Authority. And
anyway, he was sent from the Department of Justice camp, internment camp, to Poston.

SS: Go ahead.
SA: He was sent from there to Poston, oh, about two years after he was taken. So what would that be, about '44?
SS: So for two years he was separated from the rest of your family.
SA: From, from my mother. Mainly from my mother because we were, we were gone from, from Poston by then. I think the rest of the family when he came back.
SS: So how long were you in Poston before—
SA: How long was I?
SS: Yeah.
SA: Well, we went in May 1942 and I left in June of ’43.
SS: So about a year.
SA: Yeah, about a year. Except I left for about six months of that year on a temporary leave.
SS: And where did you go?
SA: Tempe, Arizona where my aunt was living. See there’s a certain part of Arizona that was, didn’t have to be evacuated. That’s where the line was drawn through. And they happened to be on this side of the—
SS: Better side.
SA: Well, couldn’t call it better after the experience they went through.
SS: What, what happened?
SA: Well, the stores wouldn’t sell them anything. And so because they were Japanese. So they had good neighbors who—
SS: Buy things for them?
SA: Yeah. Caucasians who would go to the store and buy things for them and bring it to them.

SS: Now before the war I assume they could shop—

SA: Oh yeah, before the war everything was fine. But it was after the war broke out, then they wouldn’t sell them anything. So—. And then, then initially they were farmers and they would grow things. And they wouldn’t buy what they grew. So for a while they had a hard time.

SS: Now—

SA: But they had good neighbors who helped them out through those hard times.

SS: During the time that you were in Poston, what did you do during the daytime? What [unclear] to do?

SA: Do whatever we could find that we might like to do, things that they would do in any community. People worked in the hospitals. People worked in the school. And I worked different jobs. But finally wound up working as a draftsman.

SS: Now were there schools for the younger children in Poston?

SA: Yeah. But that—. See we went there in May and the schools started in September. So in that approximately three-month period they had to get teachers and set up some temporary buildings for schools and stuff like that.

And so things were not too good the first year, the first, you know—. They didn’t have any material, school material, blackboards, even, even blackboards and stuff. And so I wasn’t around too much—

SS: Now when did it first occur to you that you could continue your education?
SA: Well after I went to camp--. See I had to drop out of junior college. So when I went to camp I--.

There were others in my same situation. But this one friend I had got accepted at the University of Nebraska. He had applied to different places. And so when he left I asked, asked him if we would be a sponsor. A sponsor is somebody who would be responsible for finding a job for you and see that you wouldn't become a burden to the government.

SS: So did you think then that you would go to the University of Nebraska, also, or--?

SA: No. They--. There were quite a few applied there because at that time there weren't too many schools that would accept Japanese Americans. So if there was one you heard about it and everybody--. And they--. And you couldn't blame them. They didn't want too many in one school.

SS: So he could sponsor you at another school even though—

SA: Oh no. He could sponsor me to come out of camp. In other words, saying that he will see that I have, get a job and have a place to stay and—

SS: Okay. So you went to Nebraska to get some money and to try to see where you could move from there.

SA: Well, I, I went to Nebraska because he would be my sponsor and they would allow me to leave camp. And without any intention of going in, you know--. Mainly what the people in camp knew was that I had a job out there, not that I was going to go to school out there.

SS: Right. So what kind of job did he get for you?
SA: Well, he didn’t really--. He, he showed me where I could get some work. And then I got a job at the state highway materials testing lab, which is a lab assistant type of thing. Did whatever the, the engineer there wanted me to do. I did the grunt work for him, for the engineer.

SS: Were you studying engineering at junior college?

SA: No. It was just a general—

SS: You hadn’t started—

SA: No, I hadn’t--. I didn’t--. You know the first couple of years of college you just take a bunch of courses. You don’t really get started in the major until you’re a junior or at least, you know, second semester—

SS: So had you given any thought to engineering before you got this job?

SA: Somewhat. But actually I didn’t have any thought to any major. But engineering was a consideration mainly because I felt there was work opportunity in engineering as opposed to something else, art or something. I’m not an artist but—

SS: But you were good at math, and science and so forth?

SA: Well, it came easier to me than something else, literature and all the others.

But anyway, I got out of camp. But meanwhile I--. Well I was still interested in continuing college. So I had written to this National Japanese American Student Relocation Council that was set up by a Quaker organization. And they referred me to the University of Connecticut as having a major in engineering and was willing to accept Japanese American students.

So I was--. I wrote to the University of Connecticut. And then got in here. And I earned enough—I won’t say enough. But I earned
some money and saved it when I was, while I was at Lincoln, Nebraska, which was enough to give me train fare. And I actually saved two hundred dollars there in summer.

SS: That’s good.

SA: And at that time that would carry me a couple of I’d say at least one month of living expenses. So I figured that would be enough until, until I got a job here and carried me through further. So I left then and came here with, with that in mind.

SS: How did you travel from Lincoln to—

SA: Train, train.

SS: Did you have any trepidation about coming this far away?

SA: Well, somewhat. But then again the desire to continue, you know, in, in college and the opportunity to continue in college overcame that. You know, that was much stronger than the trepidation of coming this long distance. But I did have, I won’t say a problem, an incident—

SS: What happened?

SA: On the way over here that--; Well, I was minding my own business coming through, let’s see, past Chicago. And I got around Toledo, I think, Ohio. And some official looking person came over and—. Very, very nice. I mean wasn’t rough or anything. And said that he would like to reroute me around the Great Lakes if I didn’t mind.

Well, of course, I couldn’t say I did mind. [Laughs] Because he says I don’t want, we don’t want to have any problems of you going through Canada. You know the train tracks would go through Canada from Detroit to Buffalo, New York. That would be the direct route.

SS: I see.
SA: So he rerouted me around the Great Lakes to Buffalo, which I didn’t—. He said, oh, it’d be no problem. He said it won’t cost anymore.

SS: So he didn’t want to take the chance of you having to cross back into the United States, I guess.

SA: You know going, yeah, out of the United States and back into the United States. And I don’t know all the reasons. All he did was ask me if I would, wouldn’t mind doing that. And I said, no, I wouldn’t mind to avoid any problems.

SS: So you arrived here in Storrs in 1943?

SA: Yeah. I don’t know the date though. It was in September. It was about a week before school started. But that was a, that was an experience.

SS: How did it seem?

SA: Huh?

SS: How did it seem when you got here? Do you remember?

SA: Well, it was night. It was about nine o’clock at night. And it was a Saturday night. And you know Willimantic is, gee—

SS: That’s where the train came in.

SA: Yeah. That’s where I got off. And so I looked around and what am I going to do, you know.

SS: How did you get from Willimantic to here?

SA: Oh, a bus. They have buses there. But I said, well—. There were two hotels in Willimantic, one was a Nathan Hale and I don’t remember the other one. And so I—. The other one was pretty raunchy.

SS: Hotel Hooker perhaps?

SA: It was something like that. I don’t know. There were only two anyway. I stayed at the Nathan Hale that night. And then I asked
how can I get out to Storrs. He says, oh, there’s a bus that’ll leave at such and such a time and take you up there.

So this was Sunday. So I got on the bus and came out here on Sunday. And, and there was just--. At that time, see, it wasn’t a very big school. And the students I found out on weekends all went home. This place was vacant. [Laughs] But fortunately there were some students that were, were staying here because they were fraternity students and getting the place ready for the, for the incoming students.

And they helped me out a lot. They—

[end of tape 1, side A]

SS: Side two of the interview with Shiro Aisawa.

[Recorder is turned off and then back on.]

SS: So, you slept over in Willimantic Saturday at night you came up to Storrs on Sunday. Practically nobody was here.

SA: Yeah.

SS: Which is still sort of the way it is.

SA: Well, at that time it was even worse, I guess, because they all went home on a weekend come Friday, Friday afternoon. And, and there’s a mass exodus out of here because they’re so close to home. And—

SS: Now, before we stay with this I just realized there was one other question I should have asked you. Did you have any other schools that you were considering coming to or was this it?

SA: No. Well, actually, the student relocation, or the Japanese American Student Relocation Council, gave me the name of three schools but I chose Connecticut. The other schools were Emory University in Georgia and Union College in—

SS: Schenectady.
SA: Schenectady, New York, which is a GE school. I say GE school because GE is nearby.

SS: Right. So why did you decide to come here?

SA: And then the University of Connecticut. I thought it would be— Being a state school I thought it would be less costly for me. Cost was important, too.

SS: Of course.

SA: Because I didn’t have much money. And I was hoping that I wouldn’t have to drop out of school because I was, you know, short of funds. But so, I chose the University of Connecticut because it was the only state school among the three.

SS: What expectations did you have before you got here? Did you have anything in mind that you thought would be happening or—?

SA: No. The only expectation that I had was that I would get a B. S. in engineering before I, well, you know, so that I could— Mainly I guess the goal was to find job, find a job. And I didn’t want to go into farming that my dad did. That was the main purpose. And I just didn’t want to go into farming because I wasn’t a farmer.

SS: Okay. So you—

SA: And so my main goal was to find a job and I thought that engineering would be a good—

SS: Would provide that.

SA: Yeah.

SS: Okay. So you found these fraternity fellows who helped you out through Sunday.

SA: Yeah. Well, they—

SS: And did you stay over at the fraternity house?
SA: Yeah. They, they said, well, we have a place you can stay, you know. Nobody’s here right now. They were between terms. And so--. And on Monday I can show you where the administration office is and I can introduce you to the manager of the dining hall—

SS: And—

SA: Here, here on campus where I can, you can probably find a job.

SS: And they did that the next day on Monday?

SA: Yeah, on Monday.

SS: And what kind of reception did you get at the admissions’ office and so forth? How did the people—

SA: Well, yeah, they were very helpful. In fact, they suggested that--. I don’t know if you’ve heard the name of Pfuetze’s, Professor and Mrs. Pfuetze request that they’d like to have two of you Japanese American students live at their house. (I learned later that the Pfuetze’s were instrumental in getting us accepted to UConn.)

SS: How nice.

SA: So William Hayakawa and—he’s not going to be here by the way. His wife wasn’t well enough to travel so--. He’s, he’s okay but his wife [unclear]. So he’s not going to be here. But he and I roomed together at Pfuetze’s for once--. [Unclear] it was a semester or quarter then?

SS: Probably a semester.

SA: But anyway, for one term. And then we moved into the dormitories because they lived out—I don’t know what the name of the street was, but kind of far from campus. So once we left campus we did, we were out of the campus life.

SS: How did you get back and forth?
SA: Walked.

SS: Oh it was close enough that you could walk then.

SA: Yeah. But it was too far to be walking there between classes. It was once a day you’d walk up to, down there on the campus and then once a day you’d walk back because, to the room. And generally that once a day would be around oh, after dinner, five, six o’clock, and in the morning after you’d get up, you’d come down for breakfast.

SS: Now I assume that prior to coming here you had been eating mostly Japanese food. Once you got here I assume that there wasn’t much in the way of Japanese food.

SA: At home we probably had more Japanese food. But in camp we had whatever they, they cooked. And it wasn’t primarily Japanese food.

SS: And probably not very good either.

SA: Yeah. Well, you can’t blame them. Whatever they could get during the wartime and make it do whatever they could make. But so, I--. It’s not that we had Japanese food all the time. But even today if I don’t have rice for a week or so I get, kind of get to crave it. But here we would if we want to eat some rice we’d go into Willimantic to a Chinese restaurant and get some Chinese food with rice and we’d satisfy our, get our rice fix.

SS: Because I suppose in 1940 the starch was mostly potatoes up here.

SA: So we, we, we got our rice over there in the Chinese restaurant. There’s a Chinese restaurant in every town.

SS: Yeah. Okay. So when you got settled in here and got your courses and got going were your friendships primarily with the other Nisei students or—
SA: No, not primarily. But with everybody that we met in the dormitories and what not. No, we didn’t specifically go out and seek. It’s just like any place else whenever we met, we met but that’s about it.

SS: And what were the reactions of the other students here?

SA: They accepted us just like anybody else we felt--. I, I didn’t feel any discrimination or somebody trying to avoid us or anything like that, like we had some disease. It just, just—

SS: You were here and—

SA: Yeah. Yeah. We--. That’s why we enjoyed it so much here because we didn’t feel any discrimination.

SS: And how long were you here?

SA: Well, I came in September of ’43 and let’s see. I got, took my physical for the service in around, I think it was November of ’44. And then shortly after that I left. But then I essentially dropped out of school by that time after I took my physical.

SS: Because you thought you were going to be drafted or—

SA: Well, I passed the physical and they said we’ll call you as soon as, you know, we find out where to send you. They didn’t know where to send us.

SS: Well, did it seem ironic to you that on the one hand you were too dangerous to leave in California but on the other hand they were willing to train you and put a gun in your hand and send you out to go do whatever?

SA: Well, I didn’t think--. I didn’t think too much about that. I just went with the flow.

But right after we took our physical they said well you can go back to the campus until we call you because I guess they had--. By
that time they must have had word that if you see anyone with a
Japanese background to let the army know or let them know. Because
I think—now this is speculation on my part, they were looking for
people with some Japanese background to train or teach as
interpreters. And they would be more capable of that than some,
somebody, you know, out of the blue. Because that’s where, where
most of them went.

SS: Right. But you said you really weren’t fluent in Japanese.

SA: No. But it didn’t matter because if you were from a Japanese family
they figured—

SS: They just assumed that—

SA: Well, that you could, you could pick it up faster.

SS: Probably.

SA: Pick it up faster. And I agree with them that having spoken it at home
with the family and so forth, I could pick it up probably faster than
somebody who had never had Japanese at all even though I don’t
know it that well right now. I did go to Japanese school, language
school.

SS: Okay. So what happened between November of ’44 and the time that
the war was over? Did you actually get taken into the service or—

SA: Oh yeah, yeah. I was—

SS: Which branch of the military did you—

SA: U. S. Army.

SS: And did you go to training camp and so forth?

SA: Oh yeah. I went to basic training in Camp Croft, South Carolina, got
my uniform at Fort Devins in Massachusetts.

SS: And what did you think of your army experience?
SA: That's, that's one part that I wasn't, that I didn't enjoy very much, the army experience. But that was because if you're in the army they always seem like they have their hands on you. That they can pull you back, do whatever they want with you. I mean you're not free to just go off and do things on your own.

SS: So even the internment camp was freer than being in the army.

SA: Well, insofar as that part of it goes, they didn't order you to do this or order you to do that while you're in the camp but you couldn't leave the camp. Well the army they can order you to do this while you're within the camp—

SS: Right. And you can't leave—

SA: And then you can't leave. So that's more restrictive in that sense especially if you're not a, an officer or something like that, high ranking officer.

SS: Right. So how long did you serve?

SA: Two years.

SS: Two years.

SA: Well probably maybe a month or two less. But I got out in September of, of '45 I guess it is, '46, '46.

SS: And then did you come back here?

SA: Because I went in from '44 to '46. And just as soon as I got out I came back to campus and was readmitted. That was September of '46.

SS: And how long did it take you after that to get your degree?

SA: Till June of '47, June of '47. But I was very fortunate because actually by the time I got here the school had been in session for a week.
And so I said can I get in? He said all right, as long as your instructors say okay so I got in because one week, you know, is not, not very much.

SS: So you were able to catch up.

SA: So I got in and take the courses because a lot of the courses I had stopped partway through because the term had started in September and by November why—

SS: And some of them were courses you had already had because there was two months of--.

SA: Yeah. Yeah. [Unclear] So I completed my senior year.

SS: Now what kinds of, besides going to class, do you remember what kind of activities you were active in? You were going to class and you were working but did you have time to do anything else?

SA: Well, active in the engineering society. You know the civil, civil engineering was my major. So I was active in that and ASCE, American Society of Civil Engineers, and also the Engineers’ Club, the Engineer’s Club. And aside from that there was a club they called an outing club where you’d go out for walks on the weekends different places, just, just go out walking around. And we, we were in that. And—

SS: What kind of social life did you have? Did you date much or--?

SA: Not much. There were--. Well, no. I dated a person that was going to school here but—

SS: A Japanese American or--?

SA: Yeah. But she’s not here this time. She chose not to come. But nothing serious. Just to be—

SS: Okay.
SA: Because most of the time we were working. Aside from the work in the dining hall--. I don’t know. The person that was in charge of getting people to do, to do odd jobs and stuff like that we got to know them pretty well. And so I didn’t think about it too much at the time. But he would always say hey, can you do this or do you want to do this? And we, I have this available for you if you want to do that. And like checking coats and hats at a dance and stuff.

SS: So there were additional ways to pick up a few bucks.

SA: Yeah. That’s what I--. We used to, used to check coats at dances. So I never did go to dance. But we would get, get additional, you know, money that way. So that was.--. There was a lot of additional things that we were able to do.

I used to help one of the professors. He would get some surveying jobs from a local, I don’t know, people that wanted some surveying done. And I don’t know if you know too much about surveying but—

SS: Just a little bit.

SA: You need--. You need two people, somebody to hold the, hold the rod. And so I’d go help him with holding the rod while he does, takes the measurements.

SS: Complicated stuff.

SA: Yeah. And, and then he’d pay me for that. And, you know, that would be done on a weekend because he had to teach too some Saturdays. And things like that. So I was able to make enough money to go to school and pay for the fees and stuff like that.

SS: And did you have much interaction with federal government while you were here? Were they checking up on you at all or--?
SA: No, I didn’t—. Except the last month I was here around November, somebody came by one time to the dormitory looking for me. And he said, hey, we don’t have any record of you being here. And I says well, you know, I am. And he says--. And I says, it doesn’t, won’t be much good because I’m going into the service. I’ve been--. And [unclear]. He says, well, in that case I guess there’s not much we can do. So he just left. So they didn’t take, they didn’t take me in.

SS: Now what was—? When the war ended what, what were your feelings about that?

SA: I was--. I was at Ohio State at the time for the army when the war ended. Well, I was real happy about it. But other than that I don’t recall [unclear]. I guess the other feeling I had was well, what’s going to happen to us now. By us, the whole group that were, were at Ohio State.

SS: Right. Yeah. Now what were you doing at Ohio State for the army?

SA: I was going to school. They, they were teaching us some engineering, engineering classes. They had given us some engineering classes. And—

SS: So that was actually kind of good.

SA: Yeah. Except none of that helped me in, later on.

I think personally, my personal opinion--. It’s not necessarily the opinion of the government. Was that I think that they had us there because for one thing on our record it shows we, we had, we were advanced students in engineering.

See it was in my senior year [unclear]. And the others were also. And so they, they had all these professors at these various universities. And they needed somebody to teach.
SS: Right. So you were helping [unclear].
SA: That's what my guess was.
SS: So you didn't actually engage in any combat any place during your--?
SA: No, no, only, only in basic training. Yeah. Fortunately.

   Well, the other thing is, when I completed the basic training, you know, they, they have everybody, assign everybody to different places. And when they took me into to let me know what my assignments would be they said, they gave me a choice, which was unusual.

   They said you have a choice of either going to a language school, Japanese language school, or, going to engineering school. So I chose the engineering school and they sent me to class there.

   But Bill Hayakawa, who went in service with, together with me, and we went through basic training. He said that they sent him to language school. So my guess is that if I had continued to be with him, why I would have gone to the same language school. And he, he wrote a biography. I don't know if you got it or not.
SS: I have a couple here but I didn't want to read anything beyond yours and get confused.
SA: Well, anyway, in his it tells you about his experience after basic training. And my guess is I would have gone through the same thing. He went actually went into intelligence service in Japan after that.
SS: In Japan.
SA: Yeah, after he would finish the Japanese language program.
SS: This was after the war was over.
SA: Yeah. Yeah.
SS: During the occupation I guess.
SA: Well, before the war was over he was, he said that the direction of the, of the class was, I don't know, one way. And then after the war ended then it deviated to occupation type activity, interrogation—occupation, interrogation.

SS: Well at that point it would be particularly useful to have people who could speak Japanese.

SA: Yeah. So that's why--. I think--. That's why I mentioned earlier that I think the reason that they separated us at that physical was they were looking for people with, or they had been told to keep an eye open for people of the Japanese background. But that's not--. That's speculation. That's not a fact.

SS: Now was your mother in the internment camp the whole time of the war or--?

SA: Yeah. They left in '45, 1945. The camp had probably closed a couple months after that.

SS: And where did your parents go at that point?

SA: Initially they went to my, my aunt's place in Arizona, Tempe, Arizona. That's the same, my father's sister.

SS: Right. And, and after that?

SA: And after that they went to--. Well, my brother, oldest brother, got a job in Monterey taking care of a weekend home and then also working down in the canneries in Monterey. And when the cannery work--.

Well, before then he had my folks move up to Monterey where he was away from, you know, being dependent on my aunt. And then he eventually left Monterey and went down to Southern California to do some gardening work because the work in Monterey had gone down.
If you remember the canneries, the, the sardines quit running and the canneries had to pull them. And even now that area's no longer Cannery Row but a bunch of shops.

SS: Now did your father go back into farming?

SA: No, no. He—-. So he, he took over as caretaker of this, this property that, that belonged to a doctor [unclear]. And, and then he and my mother took care of it. And then during the day he would go do some gardening for, for some people down in Pebble Beach.

They, they were these wealthy people that had homes in, I don't know, New York and Florida and Pebble Beach and different places. Well he was the full-time gardener for the, one of the families down there. So he would drive down there during the day and work and come home at night. And meanwhile they took care of this doctor's home and property and lived there.

SS: Okay. Getting back to you, what would you say was the impact of having been at the University of Connecticut on your life after, after school?

SA: Well, I guess the biggest impact was that I was able to get the degree in engineering and, and also—

SS: Do you think you were well prepared? Were the classes good?

SA: I thought so. I, I have no complaints. Plus getting to know the professors. And, and, and the head of the civil engineering department, Mr. Tippy, got—-

Well, first of all, in those days the, the companies did not go to the universities to interview students for, for jobs like they do nowadays. The department heads or the professors helped the students get jobs in different places if they could. Well anyway, he
asked me well what do I plan to do, this Professor Tippy, who was head of the department.

SS: How do you spell the professor's name?

SA: T-I-P-P-Y.

He, he asked me what I wanted to do. He says I--. Would you--? He said, asked me if I'd like to go to work for a couple of structural engineering companies where he had some contacts. I said, no, not right not. I don't think I'm that well prepared.

So then he asked me if I'd like to continue, go on to graduate school. And that kind of sparked my interest. And so I says, yeah, I guess I would.

So he said he knew a professor (Professor Newmark, Director of Structural Research) at the University of Illinois where he, he did his graduate studies. And he would write him and ask him if, if I could get a research assistance ship. So he did and he got me one.

SS: Now UConn didn't have graduate work or, at that time—

SA: Not at that time, no.

SS: So you went to Illinois.

SA: So he, he got me this research assistance ship with this professor, and I went to the University of Illinois.

SS: And got your master's in Civil Engineering.

SA: Yeah.

SS: How long did that take?

SA: Well I went straight though. I, I--. June of '47. Even before I graduated I left, I left here because school was going to start on a Monday and graduation was a Sunday. I guess something like that. Saturday or Sunday. I don't know what the day was.
So I went there and got there on Monday, started classes right then. And I went through the summer like a regular semester, and then in the fall and the spring, and then the following summer. So I went through four, four terms by September of 1948. See I started in June of ’47 but I went straight through without taking any time off.

SS: And then you started work?

SA: Yeah. Well, not exactly. I’m trying to recall some of this.

I went back home for a couple of months. By home, Monterey, where my folks were, to kind of wind down, I guess, because I hadn’t taken the time off during summers. And then I came back to Chicago and went to work.

And I worked---. Well, while I was working I applied to Stanford because I didn’t want to stay in Chicago. And I felt that was not a place I would want to live the rest of my life. So I applied to Stanford because they had a good department (Engineering Mechanics) in, in the courses that I was interested in. And—

SS: So was this for a doctoral degree or—

SA: Well, if it came to that it would be okay. But I was really in the back of my mind, I’d, I’d go to, keep going to school until I got a job. And I figured that I wasn’t going to fall behind or lose anything by continuing school.

SS: Right. Was it hard to get a job at that time or—

SA: Yeah. Plus I didn’t have any leads in California. And by going to school I could probably get some leads through the school. So that was, that was really the intent. But if I didn’t get a job at least I’d be in school and maybe I could continue on for a doctorate. So that wasn’t the main purpose. The main purpose, in my mind, was that.
And I did get a year--. Well I got another research assistance when I got to Stanford. So I could only--. By that I could only--. By, by having these assistanceships you can only go half-time. And you have to work on the essays or whatever project you had the other half-time. So consequently I went two years to Stanford but I only got one year of schoolwork plus the other half--

SS: But you must have been rather a good student to be getting these assistanceships.

SA: Well, I'm not going to--. I don't want to say that but--

SS: But you wouldn't contradict it either.

SA: I, I--. At least I got it. And it helped to pay for, pay for graduate work.

SS: Right. And then after the two years at Stanford you got employed?

SA: Well, at the end of the two years--. See I went there in '49. What was it, September of '49. And in June of '51 I got married.

SS: How did you meet your wife?

SA: She was working in the Stanford Library and, as a clerk. She wasn't a librarian. She was working as a clerical, helping the librarian, you know.

SS: Had she gone to college or--

SA: No. But you know, it was just clerical work. And the librarian liked her, I guess.

SS: Now was she Japanese American?

SA: Um-hmm. Yeah. I have her picture.

SS: When we're done you can show it to me.

SA: I don't know. It's a young picture.
Well, anyway, she--. We got married on the third of June. And about a week or two later this professor (Professor P.H. Young) that I knew, I had some classes from him. And he called me and said that--. He was a consultant at Westinghouse during the summer. Said that they would like to have someone that was knowledgeable in this area (vibration and stress analysis) that he was consulting on. And he knew based on the classes he taught, he says, I think, I'm pretty sure you'll be able to do this work. So he says, gave me the name of the person (Head of the Mechanical Engineering department)--. I got a job at Westinghouse a couple of weeks after I got married.

SS: That was good.

SA: Yeah, that was very fortunate. So I told my wife, boy, everything just seems to fall into my lap [laughs] you know with these assistantships and what not.

SS: Hard work is good for luck.

SA: So I said I sure have been lucky. Anyway, you know, well, getting into the University of Connecticut is, was fortunate, too, you know. I sort of fell into it. But anyway—

SS: How often do you come back to UConn?

SA: This is about the second, third time, about the third time in the sixty years.

He got this job for me and I went to work there until that particular project ended, which it took about five years. And then I thought that I should--.

Well, I was working mainly with mechanical engineers at that time. But it was analytical, analytical type, a mathematical type work.
It’s analysis of what they call critical speed analysis of wind tunnel compressor.

And that essentially consists of determining the natural frequency because when, when you have rotating machinery--. When the, when the machinery rotates at a certain speed if the structure that’s supporting it has a natural frequency the same as that speed it gets into resonance and it starts to bounce around a lot. So what you try to do is design it to stay out of that frequency. And so the job that he, he said that I could do what to determine this natural frequency of this system. And that’s what I worked on for a number of years.

Anyway, that’s, that’s the mechanical. Mainly a mechanical engineering type work. Well, since I had my degree, earlier degrees in civil engineering I thought that I’d like to see what the civil engineering was like. So I went to work for a civil engineering firm after that particular job ended. And that was in San Francisco.

And I worked for them for two years on designing pen stocks for hydroelectric powerhouses. And after a couple of years off it’d get kind of boring because pen stocks are just large pipes carrying water to—

SS: So you went back to Westinghouse.

SA: So I, I applied to actually another company and they put down, my work at Westinghouse as, for reference. So they called Westinghouse to find out what they thought about me. And then Westinghouse in turn called me and—

SS: Offered you a job?

SA: Yeah.

SS: Oh wonderful.
SA: So I went back to work for them.

SS: That's neat.

SA: And I stayed with them then after that till, till I retired in '88. So, yeah, it's been good for me. Life's been good.

SS: Have you enjoyed your retirement?

SA: Oh yeah. Yeah, it's-- The only aspect of it-- Huh?

SS: What do you enjoy doing in retirement?

SA: Oh, that's a hard question because I don't do much. I like to work at the computer and stuff. But I guess the aspect of it that wasn't so enjoyable was that my wife passed away in '93.

SS: I'm sorry.

SA: Yeah. Well, she wasn't that well. She had a bad heart. And--

SS: Do you live close enough to your children to see your grandchildren?

SA: I have four. We, we had four, three, three boys and a girl. And--

SS: Like your parents.

SA: Yeah. That's right. But the girl is the youngest, spoiled. [Laughs] I won't say that. But she was the youngest. The oldest son is still single. He lives in New York, Long Island. And he plays, works for a country club, Nassau Country Club. And he's in the tennis part. They have three activities, tennis, swimming and golf. But he's in the tennis part of it. And he, he teaches, I guess, tennis, group tennis or individually.

And then the second son works for, what used to be Hewlett Packard. And then Hewlett Packard split into two. Now he works for Agilent, a Hewlett Packard spin-off on scientific instruments.

And then my third son works for a construction engineering company as a construction management engineer. And then my
daughter, youngest one, lives in New Zealand and works in computer software.

SS: Oh wow.

SA: So—

SS: So three of the children kind of followed a bit of their father’s career.

SA: Yeah, well, they’re in engineering but not the same kind.

SS: Yeah.

SA: And—

SS: Is there anything that I haven’t asked you that you thought that I would or that you wished I had or anything that you’d like to add into this before we conclude?

SA: Not really except that, that, oh, everyone that I’ve got to know at the University of Connecticut have been very, very good. If it weren’t for that I probably wouldn’t have come back here after I was discharged from the service because I was free to go to any university that I chose that would accept me. In fact, more, more than likely, you know, my folks lived in California so—

SS: You would have gone there.

SA: Yeah. But I chose to come back here because the area, including the staff, the professors and the, and the students were so good to us.

SS: Have you had a chance to take a look at the campus yet?

SA: Not this time, no. It was too dark by the time that we got here.

SS: Okay. Tomorrow you prepare yourself for something like you’ve not seen. There’s been a tremendous amount of building.

SA: Well, I’m—. So, I’m, I’m always happy that I chose the University of Connecticut.

SS: And I think the university was lucky to get you.
SA: And they’ve been good to me. They’ve been good to me.

SS: Well, thank you very much for speaking with us. We very much appreciate it.

SA: And, and, so, consequently, we, George and I were out fishing last, oh what was it, a couple of years ago. It’s been quite a few years since we’ve been planning this. He says, you know, we ought to get together with the, the others, other [unclear] who came at that time.

SS: So you and George see each other frequently or—

SA: Oh about once a year.

SS: And do you keep in touch with any of the other students that were here?

SA: Not, not that frequently. Just George.

Oh yeah, there’s one other person lives in Redwood City, which is a, oh, about fifteen, twenty miles from where I live. And I see him about four, oh, maybe more than that, a half a dozen times a year.

But anyway, we, we thought wow maybe we ought to get together with some of these others because I don’t know how much longer we’re going to live [laughs] and it would be nice to get together. So we planned on this being a sixtieth 1943 to 2003, being sixty years since that’ll be a good time, it’ll be a good reason.

And then all of a sudden I hear that—I won’t say all of a sudden—but Angela and [unclear] making a big to do about—

SS: Well, it’s special.

SA: Huh?

SS: It’s special.
SA: About us coming back. And that's another aspect. They, they make us feel special, which we aren't. But anyway, we're, we're appreciative.

SS: But you got a degree from here, went on to have a successful career. So it speaks well for the university. You're a good alumnus.

SA: And that's what we--. That's the impression I get of the University of Connecticut is they're, they're good to everybody.

SS: Okay. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW