

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #174 - Side A

Subject: Shizuno "Susie" Okita

Place: Okita Home - Burns, Oregon

Date: April 16, 1986

Interviewer: Dorothea Purdy

DOROTHEA PURDY: I am Dorothea Purdy, and I am interviewing Shizuno (Susie) Okita at her home in Burns. The date is April 16th, 1986. Can you tell something about yourself, Susie? What is your true name?

SHIZUNO "SUSIE" OKITA: Shizuno Okita.

DOROTHEA: And how do you spell that?

SUSIE: See that is where I get mixed up. S H I Z U N O.

DOROTHEA: What was your family's name?

SUSIE: Nakamoto. N A K A M O T O.

DOROTHEA: And your father's first name was?

SUSIE: Hinasuke. H I N A S U K E.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and your mother's name?

SUSIE: K A N E.

DOROTHEA: And it was pronounced how?

SUSIE: Connie.

DOROTHEA: Where were you born?

SUSIE: Born in Hood River, Oregon.

DOROTHEA: Did you live there all of your life then?

SUSIE: No, about three years.

DOROTHEA: And then where did you go?

SUSIE: Then we went to Bingen, Washington. My folks had moved to Bingen, Washington.

DOROTHEA: And what did they do there?

SUSIE: They did truck gardening, I think.

DOROTHEA: In Washington?

SUSIE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And then where did you go from Washington?

SUSIE: From Washington we moved to Mosier, Oregon.

DOROTHEA: Where you spent most of your life?

SUSIE: Yes, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Or your growing up years?

SUSIE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Where did you go to school?

SUSIE: Mosier High School. But that was combined with Mosier, or I mean combined with high school and grade school.

DOROTHEA: Both of them? Does your name have a special meaning?

SUSIE: I think it has, but I don't remember.

DOROTHEA: How long did you live in Hood River?

SUSIE: Oh, about three years.

DOROTHEA: And then you moved on to Bingen, and then on to Mosier where your folks had a truck farm, or garden. They did gardening?

SUSIE: Yes.

DOROTHEA: Where did you go after that? Did you go to work someplace? Or ---

SUSIE: No, we stayed there until I graduated from high school. All my school years I

stayed in Mosier.

DOROTHEA: In Mosier.

SUSIE: Uh huh. Then when I got to about a freshman year, then I had to help my folks. Working in Hood River, apple season.

DOROTHEA: What did you do after you graduated from high school?

SUSIE: Well, there wasn't nothing special to do, so --- It was 1938; I think it was, from high school.

DOROTHEA: Did you have a special dream that you wanted to become a model, or teacher, or ---

SUSIE: No, I had special in mind of trying to be a nurse.

DOROTHEA: Did that dream ever come true?

SUSIE: Well no, because I was unable to go to Walla Walla Nursing School. Because I had to help my parents to get all the money coming in for the next ones all coming down, than I was.

DOROTHEA: You had several brothers and sisters?

SUSIE: Oh, yes.

DOROTHEA: Did you have a special sister?

SUSIE: No, because I got married early, and then all the rest of them still had to go to school. I didn't have a special sister at that time, I never, because I got out of the home early, you know.

DOROTHEA: Did you speak the English language in your natural home, or did you have a hard time learning the English language?

SUSIE: I had a hard time learning, picking it up.

DOROTHEA: And then --- Then you didn't speak it at home?

SUSIE: No, because nobody understand. They did not understand how to speak.

DOROTHEA: So when you went to school you had to learn how to understand at school. Did you have some help with this, or ---

SUSIE: Yeah. We had to go about four miles and visit some people that was higher grade than us. And they graduated earlier, you know. And then we started to pick up as soon as my brother started to pick up. He was able to pick up some. But then my brother was older, so ---

DOROTHEA: You mentioned you had a twin sister. What was her name?

SUSIE: Kimie. K I M I E.

DOROTHEA: And how did you meet your husband? Did you marry? Or first I should ask you, did you marry?

SUSIE: Yeah, I married after I graduated from high school.

DOROTHEA: And how did you meet your husband?

SUSIE: I guess you call it a "go-between". I think that is what they call it. Oh, matchmaker.

DOROTHEA: And where did you meet him at?

SUSIE: I met him at Gresham. I had to go over there.

DOROTHEA: It was planned where you would meet him then?

SUSIE: Yeah, he had planned where I was supposed to come to meet him.

DOROTHEA: What is your husband's name?

SUSIE: James Okita.

DOROTHEA: And where were you married?

SUSIE: We was married in Portland Buddhist Church in Portland, Oregon.

DOROTHEA: Was your husband born in the United States?

SUSIE: No, he was born in Japan.

DOROTHEA: And how old was he when he came to the United States?

SUSIE: Oh, let's see, he was 17 years old.

DOROTHEA: Did he have a hard time picking up the language? Or was he ---

SUSIE: No, he was fluent --- He spoke real good language, English.

DOROTHEA: How did he think of this union? Did he think that this was a good idea?

SUSIE: Well, he didn't have a chance to say whether no or yes. So --- So we got along okay, so I thought well, we had just a certain time to get ready and get married.

DOROTHEA: So you finally decided to take the big step.

SUSIE: Yeah. I thought well I'd better go ahead and get out of the house. I shouldn't say that, but then ---

DOROTHEA: That's how you felt, huh?

SUSIE: I felt like that, but they were really --- My parents were really good to me too.

DOROTHEA: How long did you stay in Gresham, or the Portland area before you came to Harney County?

SUSIE: Well, I stayed there since --- What year was that? We worked for the farmers over there in Gresham after we got married.

DOROTHEA: And then did you come to Harney County from there, or where did you go from ---

SUSIE: From Gresham we had to evacuate, May 11, 1942, I think. And then from there we had to evacuate. I mean from May 11th we went to Portland Assembly Center. And then from there we went to Tule Lake, California, Relocation Camp.

DOROTHEA: How did you feel about that? Did you feel this was right or wrong, or how did you feel about being sent?

SUSIE: Well we couldn't think too much. We felt well they going to send us, then they going to send us. We might as well go. We had nothing to say, we couldn't say much at that time. But then we got out of --- You see, I had Linda in 1941, she was born, you

know. And then it was in 1942 that we had to go into the Portland Assembly Center. That was the first move. And then from there, in about two weeks, Linda had her birthday on the train, and she was one year old then. So we moved, May 27th, we evacuate, was on the train going to Tule Lake, California.

DOROTHEA: Tule Lake is T U L E ?

SUSIE: Uh huh. Then capital L A K E.

DOROTHEA: And then from there what did you do? Did you just stay in the camp or ---

SUSIE: We stayed in the camp. And then they gave us all different things to eat. They had a mess hall. And then I was able to take a drafting course. And that is where I learned quite a few in drafting.

(Note: Upon visiting with Susie, I learned that a drafting course would be the same as designing and making one's own clothing.)

DOROTHEA: Okay, then how did you end up in Harney County?

SUSIE: Well we went from Tule Lake, we had to evacuate to Minidoka Camp, Minidoka Relocation Camp.

DOROTHEA: And this was where?

SUSIE: At Hunt, Idaho. In the County of Jerome, it was Eden, Idaho, Minidoka, uh huh. I'm not quite sure about that, because it's called the Minidoka Relocation Camp.

DOROTHEA: Do you remember how they spelled that?

SUSIE: What? Minidoka? M I N I D O K A.

DOROTHEA: Okay. And then how did you come about being in Harney County, and ending up in Burns?

SUSIE: Well in 1943, Jim didn't go into the camp. He was working up there to Trout Creek.

DOROTHEA: Oh, he moved here ahead of you?

SUSIE: Uh huh. But then see, they had to call him back. And so in Tule Lake, he had different kind of job. But then I just took care of my little one, Linda.

DOROTHEA: And you stayed in the camp?

SUSIE: Yeah. And then they had to call him back, so he was in Tule Lake too. So we moved from Tule Lake to Minidoka.

DOROTHEA: Oh, he came to Trout Creek then before you went to Minidoka?

SUSIE: Before --- Yeah, I think he was there before we went to Tule Lake. And I don't remember whether he was with me. I think after we went to Tule Lake he came out here in 1943. And then they called him back home, and then he was in Tule Lake with me. And then we moved to Minidoka, Minidoka Relocation Camp.

DOROTHEA: And did you hear about a job over here that you could come to, or how did you come back to Trout Creek?

SUSIE: Well, you see, Jim went out first. After we was in Minidoka Camp. And then they were offered to give him a job up here. Same, and then that way, we were headed for this way. And that is how come we know Harney County. But that was in 1945.

DOROTHEA: What did you think of the kind of treatment that you got there? Were you treated good?

SUSIE: Well, yes. We were treated real good in the camp. But there was nothing what we can do. We couldn't go against them or anything, you know, because --- just went along with them.

DOROTHEA: Well, being grown American, you kind of --- Was it different? I mean, you didn't have the freedom that you were used to, but ---

SUSIE: But then they treated us real good in camp.

DOROTHEA: Did you have good medical care, and things if you got sick?

SUSIE: Oh yes, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: How did you come to Harney County? Did you come by bus, or train, or ---

SUSIE: Let's see, I think we came by truck. I don't remember. It's so --- I think we came in a truck. I don't remember about the train, but Beulah, what's her name that works in ---

DOROTHEA: Rhoades?

(Note: The Okitas arrived in Harney County in an Army truck.)

SUSIE: Rhoades. She met us. I don't know whether we was in a truck or train. But we did go on the train from Portland Assembly Center to Tule Lake.

DOROTHEA: You did?

SUSIE: Uh huh. Because she had her first birthday on the train, that's how come I remember that. And then after we went to Tule Lake, we stayed there for, I don't know, must have been about '43 or '42. I'm not quite sure about that. And then in 194--- Yeah, in 1943, we went to Idaho, Minidoka Relocation Camp. And then in 1944, I had Gilbert there. I had Gilbert; he was born in '44, December 14th.

Then the following year we got our okay to get out, you know. So we did, and when we got out he was only 8 months old. It was in '45, August 30th. Then Beulah Rhoades met us, and she brought us to the camp up there, Section Crew house. And then she met us there, and then remember we had to go through all the rough roads, you know. Well, there might have been some different things in between, but I can't remember all of those things.

DOROTHEA: Oh, that's fine. What was your life like up at the Section Camp? Was it kind of interesting?

SUSIE: Yes, it was interesting. And then we met Eki's, you know, and then from there --- Well first thing when we went on the train, when Linda had her birthday, well here my sister-in-law and Eki's were on the same train.

DOROTHEA: Oh, they were?



SUSIE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Were they going to California too?

SUSIE: Yeah. They were sent to the same place. We were just about in the same block. So --- it was kind of interesting too, you know. And then when we couldn't go to town, we went on the section speeder. We rode on the speeder and came down to town.

DOROTHEA: You didn't have a car then?

SUSIE: No, we didn't. But then it was kind of interesting. Boy, what a place! We didn't know what kind of place we were going.

DOROTHEA: I'll bet. What did Jim do while you lived at the Section Crew Camp?

SUSIE: He worked on the railroad.

DOROTHEA: Did he have any special job, or just ---

SUSIE: No, he just went along with everybody, what they were supposed to do. And then later on he was the Section foreman.

DOROTHEA: Was there any special thing that you can remember about that happened while you were living up there?

SUSIE: No, there wasn't special thing. After my children grew up, I mean they grew; they went to school all year until they graduated.

DOROTHEA: How did your children go to school?

SUSIE: Mrs. Lambert was our bus driver, school bus driver, Eunice Lambert.

DOROTHEA: How many children do you have?

SUSIE: I have four.

DOROTHEA: Can you tell me their names?

SUSIE: Linda, do you want the last name? Gill, like that? Who she's married to? (Linda Okita Gill) And Gilbert Okita, Karl Okita, and Paul Okita.

DOROTHEA: Did they all finish school here in Burns?

SUSIE: Yes, they did.

DOROTHEA: So you have lived here continually since you came?

SUSIE: Since 1945.

DOROTHEA: And they all rode the bus down there. They must have graveled the road then?

SUSIE: Yes, they did.

DOROTHEA: Can you remember what the road was like when you first came?

SUSIE: Oh, it was all gravel road. Some places wasn't fixed. But eventually they put that tar over it, that black top.

DOROTHEA: It made quite a difference in the travel then.

SUSIE: Oh yes, it did.

DOROTHEA: Did you get a car as soon as they made the roads then, or when did you get your first car?

SUSIE: Well, I think it was in --- Jim went to Portland and got that car, first car, an Oldsmobile, you know. And then at that time the road wasn't too good yet, either, you know. But that was the first car we got.

DOROTHEA: Did you go out quite a lot then? Did you like to drive to town and see the sights?

SUSIE: Well, it was just that I didn't have a license, see. And then they had to interview for my driver's record. So that was in 1952 when I got my driver's, first driver's license. Then from there I have been driving.

DOROTHEA: Did you work while you were there? Did you cook for the crews, or ---

SUSIE: No, I just took care of the children.

DOROTHEA: You didn't.

SUSIE: And then, let's see, must have been in 1962, I finally decided I'd better get a job.

So I got a job at the nursing home.

DOROTHEA: At the Burns Nursing Home?

SUSIE: Uh huh. They were just building that home. They were half way done.

DOROTHEA: Now did you work there for --- How long?

SUSIE: Oh, must be, until '67. About three or four years.

DOROTHEA: And then from there, where did you go?

SUSIE: Well, then they had a strike. The mill had a strike, you know. Then I worked for Diaz, in Quality Cleaners. And then I worked for, I don't know what his name was, Charles. I couldn't remember his name; he had that hamburger stand, this one here. (Pointing North) The one McDonald's (McDannel) got. You know the one right behind the ---

DOROTHEA: The A & W?

SUSIE: Yeah, that's right, that's the one. And then other places I got a few little jobs, but then I applied at the nursing home. No, it was after that, I went into the nursing home again. And then from the nursing home I went to hospital, and I worked for 14 years after that. I enjoyed working every place, but you know, you get ---

DOROTHEA: Do you have any regrets about what life has led you? About being put in these camps, and what they did to you?

SUSIE: No.

DOROTHEA: Do you have any hard feelings at all?

SUSIE: No. Because all I did was just go along with everybody. And we couldn't do anything too much. And that's why we were, yes, yes, you know, to get out. So we was able to get out.

DOROTHEA: So, in other words, you were able to choose where you came, and what kind of work you did do then?

SUSIE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Were any of your children born in Burns, or Harney County at all?

SUSIE: Yes, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Who were they?

SUSIE: Karl and Paul. I did have two more, but then I lost those.

DOROTHEA: What do you do now? Do you just ---

SUSIE: I retired in '81. I retired early, at 62. Because of Jim's health, I retired early.

DOROTHEA: Have you made many friends in Burns who are --- Are you friends, what you call good friends, or ---

SUSIE: Well, I wouldn't say I got acquainted with them at the hospital. And that's all my friends.

DOROTHEA: So you feel like you are happy ---

SUSIE: I'm happier here. But I won't move any --- Until some-thing does happen.

DOROTHEA: So you like it in Harney County?

SUSIE: Well, I'm going to have to like it, because I don't want to move.

DOROTHEA: You don't want to move.

SUSIE: Yeah.

DOROTHEA: Your kids, none of them live here?

SUSIE: No, none of them lives here.

DOROTHEA: What do they do?

SUSIE: Well Linda is a hair stylist; she works in a beauty shop. And Gilbert works for Clackamas Precision Cast Company. But then he is above now that he works on making different things, and go other places and see what they are doing, for his interview in jobs.

He was sent to England last year.

DOROTHEA: Oh, he gets to travel.

SUSIE: Uh huh. So he has to make up his mind, what the company is doing to show them something, you know. So mainly he is, I guess you would call an assistant. He not way on the top. He is under that; he's more like an assistant. He has to go and show what is good for the cast, and all those things.

DOROTHEA: Do you think any of the kids will come back to Harney County? Do you think they miss it, or do you ---

SUSIE: Well, I don't think they will. Because they got good, all of them has good jobs up there. And I'd just as soon have them stay up there.

DOROTHEA: Well there is not much around here for younger kids.

SUSIE: But as a job, they might as well stay, and have a good job up there in Portland. I don't intend to go over there in Portland, not until something does happen, you know. And then that means I'll have to start moving. And the kids could come, and then I'll go whenever I please. When to go up there, or something goes on, you know, then I will go up there. But then I won't live there for a while.

DOROTHEA: Did you know how to drive when you first got your car? Had you already learned how to drive?

SUSIE: No.

DOROTHEA: You didn't? That was quite an experience?

SUSIE: It sure was.

DOROTHEA: Can you remember what it was like?

SUSIE: Well see, he got this Oldsmobile that had a shift. And then I say, well since he's gone to work, I'm going to try it. And I said, "All right you kids all get in the back," Then I stepped on the brake, you know, and they slide all off. It was quite a ---And they say, "Hey, Mom, what you doing?" And I say, "Well, just give me time, I'm learning." Instead of having somebody show me, you know, I just went ahead and went up the highway and

came back. And then coming down the hill, I stepped on the brakes so hard, that the kids all fell off of the seat. But after that, well I got used to that. And then it was getting kind of fun. And then the kids start telling me, "Well, Mom, let's go different places," you know. I said, "I can not go every place, because I don't have a driver's license." I say, "I have to go easy on that." Then when I went to take my driver's license, then the children was all in different activities at school. So I took it, and then ---

DOROTHEA: You've been driving every since, huh?

SUSIE: Yeah. Like I say, it was kind of new to me, you know, because I never drove before. Of course I used to drive my dad's car, or try to go forward and backwards, you know.

DOROTHEA: So you did know a little bit about how to steer it?

SUSIE: Yeah, just a little bit. Because otherwise I won't --- You know, you get all flustered, and then you try to go, and you don't know which one to push over. Oh, it was sure different.

DOROTHEA: What did Jim say? I imagine the kids ran out and said, "Oh Daddy, we went for a ride."

SUSIE: I told him before. The kids say, "That was a lot of fun." And then Dad says, Jim says, "Oh, what did you do?" Then they tell, "Mommie stepped on the brake, and we all fell on the floor." It was so funny.

DOROTHEA: Well did you visit around over there? Did you have any-one to visit with while you were at the crew camp, or ---

SUSIE: No. Betty was always working, and of course I did visit her quite a bit. But there wasn't that much to visit.

DOROTHEA: Betty did the cooking up there?

SUSIE: Well, she did after this other lady went to Portland.

DOROTHEA: How many families lived up there?

SUSIE: Let's see, there were about three families. The rest of them was bachelors. They get in --- well, during the summertime they get these college students, you know, and they work out there.

DOROTHEA: And the college students were from all over?

SUSIE: Yeah, all over. Wherever they could get, you know, those people come ---

DOROTHEA: Did they come from Japan, or ---

SUSIE: Well, I think some of them did. Some of them were in the United States, you know.

DOROTHEA: Were they mostly Japanese boys?

SUSIE: Yes. There wasn't no American people there.

DOROTHEA: No American? Did you meet any of the train crew that ran the train back and forth through there?

SUSIE: Oh, I wasn't too acquainted with them. But I knew who they were, you know, after we'd been living there a long time. But then it was just that we know who a certain person is, you know. But then wasn't acquainted that much.

DOROTHEA: What did the train --- did it just go by, or what did it do?

SUSIE: They used to stop up there and get water. They had a water tank, and they had great big hose type, you know. Then after they got rid of that old engine, they had that diesel. So it was going, I don't know how long it was. Because by that time I was coming down to work, so I don't know too much about it.

DOROTHEA: So the first train they had was a steam engine?

SUSIE: Steam engine, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Did it pick up lumber and come by, or was that out of the way?

SUSIE: Well they went to Seneca, and get the lumber there, I mean logs there, and they

come back and stop right there at the camp. And then they go on, and come into Burns.

DOROTHEA: Did they make that trip in just one day, or did it take them two days?

SUSIE: Oh, I don't remember. I think they went early, and they came back at night, I think. Because by that time the train was going back and forth, you know, but then I don't know the true details of it, you know.

DOROTHEA: You heard the noise, and knew the train was going by.

SUSIE: Oh yeah. Well, sometimes when I was at home the train was stopped there, and they probably gas up or something. Change, and put water in the engine, you know.

DOROTHEA: So Jim mostly just helped on the railroad track, then it wasn't working on the railroad, it was just the railroad track?

SUSIE: Yeah, that railroad went through from Burns clear up to Seneca, you know.

DOROTHEA: Now do you remember when you first moved up there, was there any kind of --- were you asked to just stay in that territory?

SUSIE: No, we was able to go.

DOROTHEA: You were free to go as you came? To come and go as you wanted?

SUSIE: But then, well I guess when we came into town, they didn't like the Japanese wandering around, you know. But we were told it was okay to go around.

DOROTHEA: Well this is one of the things that I was wondering is, how the people felt about you being here. And if you felt like they didn't really like you being here.

SUSIE: Well, it didn't --- because we wasn't questioned that much. Being up there, well, they couldn't do anything to it anyway, because we were Japanese, we were Japanese. But then there was maybe some people was, you know, didn't like Japanese. But they go along after awhile. They knew that, why we was there.

DOROTHEA: Well in those hard times, though, I think people were a little frightened of everything.



SUSIE: Yeah, that's right.

DOROTHEA: I imagine you were just as afraid of us as we were otherwise. The feeling was probably mutual.

SUSIE: But then, we got along okay though. But it's just that when we came to the restaurant they had at the Trailways there, the Chinese people had that. And some Japanese men went in there to eat, you know, and they held them back. They said no Japs are allowed. They got nothing to say about that, because we was all free, you know. And we didn't do anything to them.

DOROTHEA: But they didn't like you coming into their place.

SUSIE: They thought, well no Japs allowed. Well, we are not Japs, we are Japanese, we told them.

DOROTHEA: Did you ever get to eat there, or did they finally accept you?

SUSIE: Well, we didn't go in very much. We went other places, but I don't remember. But then we thought why they are against us, we won't go in there, we will go someplace else, so we did.

DOROTHEA: Can you think of anything else that you would like to tell me about that I haven't brought up?

SUSIE: Well I think you have covered most of the things what I---I don't know too much about it myself. The only thing, we stayed there, and Jim worked. And then when the children got little older enough to know, well then I just got to getting myself a job.

DOROTHEA: Well then you have really made something of yourself while you have been here. I think that you've probably grown as the word goes. You feel comfortable around here, and people accept you. And how do you feel about the people?

SUSIE: Well I get along with them. And they just, many people was wondering how many friends I have, you know, as friends. I say most of them is from the hospital when

they came in as a patient. That's how come I know them. But otherwise I probably won't know if I didn't work.

DOROTHEA: Did you ever know the Purdy's up there; they were long time residents of the Silvies Valley? Did you know them?

SUSIE: Well we start knowing them after we moved up there. And then it took us a long time. And I think, didn't somebody used to go to school with us, with my children?

DOROTHEA: My kids did, yes. (Also Clinton Purdy rode the bus with the older Okita children.)

SUSIE: That was when Mr. Pierce was driving the school bus.

DOROTHEA: No, we didn't go to school when Pierces drove that. We didn't move up there until 1961. He had already quit. It was Byassee, John and Lila.

SUSIE: Oh, that's right. But Mrs. Lambert used to drive the children to school.

DOROTHEA: She was the first one. They have had several bus drivers up there. I can't think of the names.

SUSIE: Pierce.

DOROTHEA: Pierce was one.

SUSIE: Leao Pierce. Wasn't he one of them?

DOROTHEA: I think he was one of them.

SUSIE: And then Byassees.

DOROTHEA: Did Byassees drive after Pierce?

SUSIE: I think so. I'm not quite sure.

(Note: There was several bus drivers on that route, including the Lamberts, Pierce, Bob Gilliland, Carl Westfall, and Johnny and Lila Byassees.)

DOROTHEA: I'm not sure either, I wasn't there. I was kind of bashful little girl, didn't know too much.

SUSIE: Well that's with us, that when we was in a camp, you know, in the Relocation Camp, well you don't know very many people, you know. They are all mixed with the Portland people, Washington people, you know. And you sure had to go tiptoe around, and knowing what to do. But then ---

DOROTHEA: How did you feel about the people that you were thrown in with in these camps? Were you all the same people that was ---Were you all American born, and ---

SUSIE: Yeah, and the ones that was born in Japan. They were all in there. Well we got, you know, you get acquainted with those people, and they was nice.

DOROTHEA: Did you make some long life friends? In that, that you still keep in contact with?

SUSIE: Not very many.

DOROTHEA: Not very many?

SUSIE: No, because don't know where they have gone. Only ones like Betty and Frank (Eki). We was able to, you know, after we moved here, we found out they was about two blocks away from us. And they was really good.

DOROTHEA: But you didn't know that until you came here?

SUSIE: Well we knew that, but of course I didn't know how much difference was. But then after we came here, then they moved in. See, they moved in later than we did.

DOROTHEA: Oh, you were here first?

SUSIE: Uh huh. Because Jim had a heart attack in '68, so we moved right away when he was in the hospital.

DOROTHEA: Oh, you mean when you moved into Burns? Right, right, yeah I remember that. But the Ekis were already at Trout Creek when you got there, and went up there to live.

SUSIE: Yeah. They were a little bit ahead of us. Yeah.

DOROTHEA: And they had a cook shack up there, and everybody was fed there?

SUSIE: Well, except the families, we had our own.

DOROTHEA: They cooked for themselves?

SUSIE: Uh huh. Before Mrs. Eki started cooking there was another lady there. But she moved to Portland. Then Betty was cooking after that.

DOROTHEA: That must have been quite a job.

SUSIE: Well, you know, when you get a job you got to do it. So I figure well --- She was real good in handling that too, you know. She was always, has been busy, you know, so I never --- Sometime I go over there and visit with her, you know, but then when a person is busy, you got certain time to go and then come back.

DOROTHEA: Well what do you do to keep yourself busy now? Do you

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SUSIE: Well I try to do some crocheting, and beadwork. And go to Senior Center. A lot of time I don't get nothing done in the house.

DOROTHEA: Do you watch TV? Or do you work in your yard?

SUSIE: Oh, sometime. I don't do too much in the yard.

DOROTHEA: How do you get your yard work done?

SUSIE: Oh, I hire people.

DOROTHEA: Oh, you are smart.

SUSIE: Well see since I had that heart attack, I was unable to do what I am supposed to do. Anyway, I'm supposed to walk, but I haven't been doing that much. I'm going to start in pretty soon.

DOROTHEA: As soon as the weather warms up. Me too.

SUSIE: Yeah. It's kind of hard to do anything. I come in here, and then finally this LPN told me, "Well, let's go." After I came back from Portland, you know. She said, "Let's go."

And I said, "Where are we going?" She said, "Oh, we'll just ride around." So that's what I've been doing, riding around.

DOROTHEA: Do you do any kind of volunteer work?

SUSIE: At the hospital. Working at the hospital auxiliary.

DOROTHEA: Do you enjoy that?

SUSIE: Well, I thought I might as well get out. I enjoy doing that. Sometimes there's days that you don't sell anything, but then ---

DOROTHEA: Do you work at the hospital at all as an aide yet, or

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SUSIE: No, I quit.

DOROTHEA: You're completely retired.

SUSIE: Uh huh, yes, completely retired, since Jim had that stroke. Then I thought, well he needs me more than me working steady, you know. So I thought, well I'd better do that. But I did work for a while, then I really quit. But I enjoyed working at the hospital; I worked there 14 years.

DOROTHEA: Yeah, I saw you up there a lot. Susie, you were born in the United States, so naturally you were a United States citizen. Did Jim ever become a citizen of the United States?

SUSIE: Yes, he was naturalized in August 27, 1958.

DOROTHEA: Okay, that was quite a celebration for him, wasn't it?

SUSIE: Yes it was. Because he had to go through, like we would go through school, you know. And he had to go to school, to learn all different histories.

DOROTHEA: Was real interesting. Had he gone to school before he came to the United States?

SUSIE: Well he probably had gone a little bit.

DOROTHEA: He didn't graduate then, that you know of from high school or ---

SUSIE: No, he just went night school. He said he went to first grade, then went to night school instead.

DOROTHEA: Well, he did have some kind of schooling though. Did he do this after he came to the United States, or had he done this in Japan?

SUSIE: I don't know. I think he had done that after he --- he did go in Japan. His grandma took care of him. He did go to school, but I don't know how long he had gone, or when he went.

DOROTHEA: Sometime before you met him.

SUSIE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Well I can't think --- let's see that was Hunt, Idaho for the Minidoka Relocation Center.

SUSIE: Minidoka Relocation Center, uh huh.

DOROTHEA: And you had come from Tule Lake. And you arrived here by Army truck, with Beulah Rhoades driving. Can you remember some of the names of the families on Trout Creek?

SUSIE: Well there was Mr. and Mrs. Nagaro, and Mr. and Mrs. Furukawa.

DOROTHEA: Can you spell that? Nagaro is ---

SUSIE: N A G A R O.

DOROTHEA: And the other one was ---

SUSIE: Furukawa. F U R U K A W A.

DOROTHEA: Okay, and most of the other people were bachelors, right?

SUSIE: Yeah, mostly bachelors. And like I was working, you know, so --- They were there for a few years, but I don't know how long they were there, you know. Anyway, it was kind of interesting. There were about four families.

DOROTHEA: About four families, and that included the Ekis and yourselves?

SUSIE: Uh huh.

DOROTHEA: Well, I thank you for your time. I think that this high school diploma you have is a very pretty one. We don't get those like that any more. The high school diploma she showed me is a plaque, and it shows her class colors and her school colors on a black plaque, and it is a very, very attractive one.

We've visited here and had a good visit, and I think we'll close off for now, and maybe come back and do this again sometime. Thank you, Susie.

SUSIE: You're welcome.

(NOTE: After reading the transcript, the family has requested that some corrections be done to the transcript. The Corrections were made on the transcript, but not on the tape. The tape has been left as originally recorded.)

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