

Port of Los Angeles Centennial Oral History Project
Charles Hamasaki Oral History
Date of Interview: Unknown
Location: Los Angeles, California
Length of Interview: 00:38:49
Interviewer: MS – Unknown
Transcriber: NCC

Male Speaker: Hard question first, please say your name and spell it.

Charles Hamasaki: Charles Oihe Hamasaki, C-H-A-R-L-E-S, my first name. Middle name is Oihe, you pronounce it. O-I-H-E. My last name is pronounced Hamasaki, H-A-M-A-S-A-K-I.

MS: Charlie, what year were you born, and where?

CH: October 7, 1922. You know where I was born? Can I say a few words? Where I was born, I thought I was born on Terminal Island. Okay? So, when I went to junior high school, I went from kindergarten to sixth grade. Then I went to Richard Henry Dana Junior High School across the bay. Then when we first went over there, we made an application. So, down the line, where I was born, I put Terminal Island. Okay, that was fine. So, I went home and asked my mother. I asked my mother, "Hey, mom, where I was born? Terminal Island, but where?" She hesitated. "No, you wasn't born in Terminal Island." "Where I was born then?" Well, I was born in Japan, she told. "Japan? I don't know anything about Japan. [laughter] Well, how come I was born Japan? Since I opened my eyes, I was in Terminal Island." But she said, "Well, you was made over here. The fetus was over here, but you were born in Japan due to certain kind of circumstance that – my older brother and my – they all took the whole family because had a hard time living over here to raise a big family. So, they sent it to Japan to save money and come back over here. They planned to go to Japan, but no, my whole family stayed over here on this side of the world. But the other brother and sister, they left them in Japan. My one oldest brother – I wasn't born yet – my oldest brother got that childhood disease. He got measles or – that childhood disease. She overstayed, got a pretty bad serious disease. She overstayed. That's the time I was born, one or two months later.

MS: What are your earliest memories? Tell us some stories about the early memories of growing up on Terminal Island. What was it like and what did you do?

CH: When first I noticed everything, I was in kindergarten. I still remember, I was five or six years old. They divided the morning class and afternoon class. We go over there. Like I say, I didn't know how to talk English with the other guys. There's all Japanese. Like I say, there's one Russian, (Jimmy Kazarov?). He didn't know how to talk English. He was talking just like us, like Japanese, same thing. So, we got along fine. That's the early part of my kindergarten. First, second, third, you got divided. When you go to first grade, you say B1, right? We had little B1 and big B1, they you used to call it, half a year. So, we learned more English. It takes one year. Then we go to second grade. Second grade had the same thing, big one and small one. Third grade was normal until sixth grade. My childhood days in Terminal Island were real fun. Like San Fernando Valley, you had a lot of friends too maybe, playmate. So, we had a lot of kids. That's why we always have some kind of game or something always going on. When you're five years old, you don't know. You just come home, that's it. Go to school, that's it. Maybe from third grade, fourth grade, that place was a real good place. Not like today's youngster. They all stay at home and watch television from morning until nighttime. They don't know what the outside athletic program – they don't go through all that, but we did. We had [inaudible], Kick the Can. [laughter] Eventually, when we grew up, we went to basketball, baseball, and football.

MS: Let's just go back. When you were growing up, what was Terminal Island like? Who lived

there? What were they doing? All that. People don't know this. So, you have to tell us.

CH: The way we was growing up?

MS: Yes.

CH: When we were little, maybe 15, 16 years old, then we start going outside. In 17, around there, we used to go to these social club around Torrance, Gardena. They had this high school Japanese club there at Torrance and [inaudible] high school. We used to get together socially.

MS: I heard you like cars.

CH: I like cars.

MS: Tell me about that.

CH: Automobile. I used to go to Long Beach and pick up these [19]29, [19]30, [19]30 Ford Model A. I used to buy them cheap and bring them home. In fact, I had to take auto shop [inaudible] high school. So, I know how to fix a car. So, that's what I was doing. So, with the car, we used to go to Palos Verdes. Palos Verdes, diving, big abalones like that. White people, they didn't know what abalone was them day. Look how much it costs today. One abalone cost 80 bucks. Maybe you never ate abalone in your life. I don't know.

MS: I have, yes.

CH: You have. Okay. How much it costs? I go to Sea Empress Gardena where the abalone costs \$80, one of them. I used to get for free, boom-boom-boom-boom. No Fish and Game. Today, San Pedro, all over LA, they have rules, regulation. You can go here. You've got to have this permit, that permit, [inaudible]. My days, I didn't have no driver license, nothing. We just drive my motor. I have to go Hollywood Hill, Beverly Hill, all over the place, working hard in different farms or whatever. I used to make a lot of money when I was going to school, a lot of money. Five cents, 10 cents is nothing. I had like \$1, \$2, that big money. Hotdog, hamburger, do you know how much it cost them day? Five cents to 10 cents. Soft drinks, 5 cents.

MS: When you were working on cars, were you making hot rods? What were you doing when you worked on the cars?

CH: You have a hot carburetor, and we didn't have a tail pipe. We had a street tail pipe. When you step on the car, you go – after you let the gas go, that noise they make [laughter] big noise. That's why all my Japanese people, kind of naïve people. They're innocent. They don't know about outside world. Terminal Island is just one big family. They never went outside. Nobody have power. Nobody have telephone, no television, nothing. They were all backward people them days. They don't know too much about anything. So, anyway, thinking growing up, Terminal Island was divided into sections; eastside, westside, Cannery Street, Tuna Street, and they used to call a place, Hokkaido. If you've been to Japan, you know Hokkaido, the northern island over there. It's so far apart, maybe two blocks away, [laughter] known as Hokkaido. Two

blocks was far. We were a small area, that's why, you see. We used to have Olympic Games. Terminal Island, especially, we were very athlete – athletic involvement. San Pedro is another town, man. The Italian, [inaudible] the Irish men and the English men over here, they used to make – they used to challenge as game. Of course, you know, Japanese people were much faster than Caucasian people, young time. Classic football we take the champion, all Japanese. I play big football, all Japanese any Italian game. I wait for my classmates going out. Then we used to play against each other, and we'd have Olympic. Since we had so many Japanese living over there, we had a Japanese American Union, JAU, Japanese American Union, all athletic, all sport. So, we used to challenge all different – like LA, West LA, East LA, Boyle Heights, San Fernando Valley, where you come from, and as far as San Diego. We used to come together, and we played elimination. You know why? We got so many guys to pick from. So, we took like fencing champion, judo champion, and we took a swimming champion, baseball champion. When you talk to (Yuki?), you tell – he's a good baseball player. He's a played – good football and baseball player. So, we used to take everything. But one thing we lacked was Nisei Week queen. You ever heard of that Japanese festival?

MS: No. Tell me about it.

CH: Rose Queen, three years ago, Rose Queen was a Japanese American Girl. (Kawai?), my buddy, she won. She was entering Nisei Week queen, but she came in as a princess. She didn't win a queen. But from Terminal Island, there was one representative that won Nisei Week. You've never heard of Nisei Week festival?

MS: Oh, Nisei Week, of course. Of course.

CH: Yes, yes, that's what I'm talking about. We had one Nisei Week queen, even if we had a lot of them. Because a lot of girls, they don't want to participate. They're kind of embarrassed. That's why they don't want to participate.

MS: Let's go back when you were young again. You worked in the canneries, right? Tell me about that.

CH: Yes. Terminal Island, we had other people. I don't know if they got a job, but we always go find a job, make few buck. So, I used to work in a cannery making – how much money – 33 cents an hour, something like that it was. But my mother and I, we were working 33 cents an hour. But this was one job that you get that mackerel, you get this liver. So, you pick the liver from each little mackerel, the whole bunch of mackerel, all gut. The meat is not there. So, from there you pick – if you know the (Hill & Hill?) coffee can, the big one. . You fill it up, you get 25 cents. So, I was filling 40 in one hour, a buck an hour. I was making more money than a woman working. So, that was one hour's job. Sometimes, we go to this boat, and I don't want to say stealing, but we borrow a few big tunas like that. Actually, I don't want to say the word was stealing. Actually, it was robbing that boat that – coming from Mexico. So, we go in the galley, and there's a watchman, of course, Japanese old man. Oh, boy. To me it was old because they were 35 years old. It was old for us. So, "Here, drink saki." Three, two guys go over there and take about ten of them, put in a skiff, then put in my motor, need to come to the San Pedro market over here to sell it. Sell it for \$3. Three dollars, that's big money. Thirty bucks, whoa,

that's big time.

MS: All it cost you a little saki, and that was it.

CH: Yes. Then I had to come to high school. I got lots of money. I said, "Hey, who wants to go date with me? Go to LA with my car." I had a lot of, not only Japanese, but Caucasian women, girls too, more friends. You have to go over there, have a lot of good times. Then we had to go to – you know where Deadman's Island is? Deadman's Island? See, that's a campground. You know the federal penitentiary? That was nothing. It was like a desert, maybe 5 acres, 10 acres, maybe 20 acres around then nothing. We used to camp over there. Then over the weekend, all the Caucasian guys, they came fishing, all from Downtown LA, from inland anyway. So, they're fishing for mostly croaker, kingfish, and tomcod. You know what happened? They got the line tangled up, yanking. Here, I'm watching. "Hey, mister, I could untangle that for you." "Who? You? Untangle?" "Five cents." "Five cents? Oh, okay. Five cents, yes." So, I go underneath, untangle it up, come up, 5 cents. A lot of people get tangled up. Nothing but rock and kelp, they get tangled up. So, that's the way we used to make money. Then I used to go dive for crab too and lobster and sell it to them people. Always make some kind of way to make money. Then wintertime, spring, or spring summer, we go to the farm. All South Bay was all Japanese farmer, Gardena, Torrance, Lomita, [inaudible] all farmers. I used to go top onion, get corn, tomato picking, these [inaudible]. There was not even one house. It was all bare, all nothing but farmer. No house like this today. So, we used to pick tomatoes for 10 cents an hour. We used to work eight hours. So, then piecework came in. You 6 cents a (lockbox?). This is the two ways of picking tomato. Canary tomato make ketchup and green tomato for supermarket. See, way to make money.

MS: Did you also dive for coins and stuff? Tell me about that.

CH: Dive for what?

MS: Coins. Money. Tell me about that.

CH: Yes. [laughter] Ever heard of Matson Line? (Euroline, Matonia?) – there were four of them. I forgot the name. Four, they come from Hawaii. Here they come. Let's go. Let's go to that pier over there. Then we were swimming. "Hey." "What do you want?" But from Hawaii, they do the same thing. They know. So, they throw money. You could see when a penny came down [laughter], a penny. When that thing is shiny, I know it's nickel, dime, quarter or 50 cents. Them day it was all silver, not like today, all silver. So, you go there. Of course, we don't know why. We try to get the money. We miss, the coin goes down.

MS: You dive for it.

CH: No. You dive underneath the water. Then you've got to scoop like this. So, you can't pick it like that. You could pick like that then you miss. But this way, you're sure it's coming down. They used to do the same thing when tourists came around from LA or outside cities. They come around Terminal Island. All [inaudible] then was going to smell like that. [laughter] So, they used to throw us money because we had to swim around. That's why I want to tell you

something. When I was in the service, [19]46 to [19]49, we represent the Sixth – I represented the Sixth Army for the Olympic Games. See, I qualified. I took first place in the Sixth Army tournament. A lot of people, they don't believe me. "Yes, [inaudible]." "Hey, I've got a picture and a trophy to show you, man." Well, they didn't believe me. But there was the [19]48 Olympic games in London, I think London or Australia. London, [19]48, I came out [19]48. But when I went for the Olympic trial, there was over ten heats. You know what a heat is? I was about 70 heat or something, line up in swimming. That was in Fort Lewis, Washington. You know Fort Lewis Washington? They had American General Hospital. That's where all the veteran injured people, everything. But they had a big Olympic swimming over there. When I swim like bam-bam-bam-bam, when I came up, I thought I was first. I beat everybody. So, I looked around like this. I thought I beat everybody. So, I looked around. There's nobody behind me. So, I came up. Hell, when I came up, I was the last one. [laughter] I was the last one. Hell. Of course, I'm competing with the university college people. They're good.

MS: Let's go back to before the war. What do you remember about the day that Pearl Harbor happened? Where were you, and what do you remember about that story?

CH: Okay. This is another chapter in my life, a little different. Like I was saying, I was born in Japan. When I graduated from high school, they got the Fish and Game permit, like food. I've got to tell the truth. I thought I was born in Japan. So, when the war came, that same day – it was Sunday or Monday? It was Monday. Yes, Monday. I was still sleeping. Here this guy, he came, "You Charles Hamasaki?" "Yes, Charles Hamasaki. Hey, what the hell are you doing in my house," I tell him. He was a White guy, Caucasian guy. I look at that thing, and I see FBI right here. "FBI, what the hell did I do? What are you doing here?" "Will you put on your coat and shoes, and you follow me?" "What the hell I did? I don't have to follow you. Where's your search warrant?" I told him [inaudible]. "Hey, you're kind of young for alien." "Well, how did you find out?" "Well, look at the permit on the fishing license. It says, 'Born in Japan.'" "Oh, what's that got to do with it?" "Well, we're at war." Well, yes, certainly I knew about war. No. Did I know about the war? Well, they asked me, "War. Okay. What happened? Pearl Harbor?" "Where the hell is Pearl Harbor?" Well, I didn't know any – when I went outside, oh, that – well, I know where it was. Okay. Because it was February 4, 1942, when they came to arrest me. That was one month and a half later. So anyway, when I went outside, man, I see all the FBI agents all over the place with all the people getting arrested. They shoved me in the car and everything. One of the guys, "Goddamn, what the hell did I do anyway?" So, I put on my clothes and this. They took me to the immigration station where they rounded up all the aliens. You say alien, first-generation Japanese. That's fishermen now. The people that had business, they wasn't getting arrested. They were scared of fishermen. When December 7 came out, the first time, they put up – you know where the lighthouse is? There's another break on that side? They put like a gate across, so the boats didn't come in. So, when they came in, they arrested all the boats. See, they had to go fishing Sunday night, take the boat, and Monday, they've got to come in. That's when they closed that thing. They arrested every one of them. Only the second-generation, they didn't arrest. There was some second-generation guys in there. So, all the people they arrested, they took them to Tujunga. You know where Tujunga is? The old CCC camp. Was it CCC camp or Boys Reformatory School? One of them, anyway. So, all the family, they didn't know where they went. So, they found out. So, I went to see them with a few other family members. So, they were there. The second guys that were picked up, it was us,

February 4, 1942, all showed us to immigration. They were surprised to see me. He said, "What are you doing here?" "Well, I'm an alien too." "Well, okay." [laughter] [inaudible] You are arresting. Okay. "Hey, you know how to talk English." "Of course, I know how to talk English." "You know what? You could be the interpreter." "Okay, let me go then." "No, we can't do that." "You know, to hell with the job then. Why should I work for you for free?" I told them that, but I volunteered. When they ask you a question, and they answer and everything. Then, "Okay, now all the interpreters, you get to go home." I was walking out with them. Nobody stopped me until I went right by the door, and one guy officer, "Stop that guy. He belongs here." [laughter] So, I went back over there. I stayed four days. Four days. You want to know something about the war? When the war started, about that period, okay, four days. Now, how long are we going to stay there? Nobody knows. But finally, after four days, they brought a big bus with the – what do you call it – the guardrail on the window, so nobody escaped. We weren't going to escape anyway. So, they took us to LA Union Station. They unloaded us over there. They put us on the train, all the Japanese from Imperial Valley, from Gardena, Torrance and Imperial Valley, from the Valley, like, maybe, I don't know, about 3,080 Japanese they put on. Then the train started moving. I could talk English, but other guys got broken English. They had two guards on two sides with the blinds down, so you can't peek outside. So, they sensed moving, moving. They go, "Hey, where the hell are we going?" "You shut up." [laughter] He told me. "Well, why should I shut up? Freedom of speech in this country, isn't it?" I told him. [inaudible] and everything. "Well, what the hell going on like that?" So, we keep on going. The train keeps on going. The next stop, they want to know all the people. "Hey –" they call me my Japanese name. "Hey, Oihe, see where we're going." So, I peeked up. He saw me. "Hey, shut the (close?) down." I'm like, "Hell with you." I open – I look at that thing. "We're in Fresno." [laughter] The train stopped. They put some more people, Fresno. Next stop was in Sacramento, Lodi, Stockton, people they got on. Next stop was Eugene, Oregon. Next stop was Portland, Oregon. The second biggest Japanese community in United States was Hood River, Oregon. Those people, they loaded them up. Then next stop was Tacoma and Seattle. I'm explaining to all these guys. I know that geography about United States. So, I tell them, "We're going to Seattle." Then I noticed we started going east. "Where the hell are we going?" The next place we stopped was Butte, Montana. That's where they cut the train in half. I see half of the people getting up over there. They've got a prison over there. I forgot the name of that prison, long time ago.

MS: Well, we're getting away from San Pedro. We want to go back. After the war, you came back, right?

CH: I went to North Dakota, Bismark.

MS: Bismark is where you went.

CH: February, the snow way up here, 25 degrees. I didn't have nothing. That's why they told us to work. I went to Fort Lincoln. Fort Lincoln, one of the 7th Cavalry – Custer. That was one of his stations, Bismark. It was the old Fort. There was German prisoner POW there.

MS: When did you come back after the war? When did you come back to San Pedro?

CH: See, that's where I'm trying to go back to, see? I stayed there six months or something with all that people. You saw that show, *Stalag 17*?

MS: Right.

CH: Same thing. You line up every morning, when the guard wake up, they get (building?) and everything. They look over to see nobody jump on them. All these fishermen over there, dangerous criminal people. It's danger. Watch out. After one month, they found out, "These guys are harmless. They're funny kind of people. They're fun." "Hey, hi, good morning. How are you doing?" That's the way it got. Then they finally – the food was bad. They fed us that – I forgot the name. We called a Spanish [inaudible]. We complained about the food and some other kind of thing. We got it. Then a few months later, we are arrested for nothing. Well, you go by democracy in the Constitution. I know all that bullshit about those things. I told them about everything. I was like, "Hey, what the hell in the Constitution?" "Constitution don't mean shit." They were Korean interpreters. "Are you a Korean guy?" "Yes. I don't need [inaudible]." "You Korean guys, you don't know how to talk English properly and all that. So, I don't want you. You get out." So, the commissioner guy, he told him up. Then I explained everything, this and that and everything. One question they asked me was, "Hey, Charlie, what if I gave you a gun and Japan Army come all the way over here? Would you shoot them?" "Sure, I'll shoot him. I'm American-born and educated. But let me tell you something. If a Japanese army come all the way to North Dakota, you think the war is lost already. How can they come all the way from here to over there? You want me to shoot them? Ha, I don't have to shoot them, because the result, you lost the war already. Can't you understand those kinds of things?" Well, they changed the subject. Then that guy said, "Charlie, we're releasing you. You don't have nothing to do." They let me out of the camp. So, I got out of the camp. Of course, by that time they had 48 notices to evacuate February 18 or 19, around there. So, they moved to LA. My family moved to LA somewhere. All went different places. Then they went into Santa Anita, about April, May, the big center over Santa Anita. So, from Bismark, it was August, I came, August or July, around this, I came to Santa Anita where my folk were. From there, I went to Arkansas, Rohwer, Arkansas.

MS: When the war was over, though, I want to get you back here.

CH: Yes. I volunteered in the service.

MS: So, when you got back to San Pedro, how had it changed since you'd been there before? How did it look different?

CH: I came back to Terminal Island, the first time I came here, when I was discharged. I came to LA. Then I came to Terminal Island to fish. Because there's no other job I know. I know somebody Italian, [inaudible] walking around here, and they asked me if I want a job. "Yes, well, sure. What?" "Fisherman." "Fisherman. Okay." I go, "What do I do then, fisherman?" "Well, we're having CIO AFL strike them day. This – what's the term you call it?"

MS: Scab.

CH: Scab, yes. Scab boat. "You want to go, or you don't?" I don't give a shit if it's a scab boat. I'd get on that thing with some other aliens. We go. So, we went to Costa Rica for two years. Stayed there two years to get away from the tax. Stay over there, fish over there. When I came over here, at first, aliens could fish for 1945, [19]46, I think, [19]47. I wasn't in the service yet. They could fish. That's all the Nisei people. Nisei means second generation. They were fishing. So, they don't know the difference. They don't check. If you're old, they find out. But they didn't question anything. So, I got home. Everything has changed. Because there's no small boat no more, like my father used to own a small boat, a little jig boat, you call it. You can go the Italian bank over here and [inaudible] Santa Cruz over there. They were market fishing. You know what market fishing is? Okay. But I was on a commercial –

MS: Where you lived was gone, right, where you grew up?

CH: The first time I came over here, I looked around [laughter]. I go, "Oh, my gosh. What –" everything flat. Nothing around there. Where I had to live, it is the same building, where you have a boat shop and the little garage over there was still standing. But everything else was gone. I look around. Then I found my place where I used to live, and everything was flat. Nothing was around. Terminal Island was a desert-looking area. Before the war, Terminal Island was, man, a real busy place. There's always people around from morning to midnight. Oh, everything was – like a festival they're having. That's why San Pedro, the [inaudible], they catered to a lot of Japanese and Japanese American. I used to go to (Canasta?) over there. We all used to hang out in Canasta, the clothing store. We know that guy real good, that's why. Boy, [inaudible] Warner Brother over here and a Globe Theater and a Fox Cabrillo and Strand. Strand was kind of far, on Pacific. So, we used to go there. Then after the movie, we used to stop at the Coney Island Cafe and eat hotdog. Coney Island over there, I used to have about four or five of them, 20 cents. [laughter] You go to your favorite theater, best hamburger, I eat 10 cents over there, I get to pay for 5 cents and go over there. But we had to pay for the ticket. But afterwards, when I was junior or something, free ticket, but we still had to pay 3 cents. But we saved 6 cents, five days, 30 cents.

MS: It was big audience.

CH: Yes. I figured nobody's going to come because they saw it once. But when I came over, I saw that long line. I said, "Oh, my gosh." I was really surprised. I was really surprised.

MS: For someone who's never heard of Terminal Island, please tell me what they should know about it.

CH: Like me, I've been to a lot of associations and organizations. All these people, they were always curious, what camp you were in. All these people I talk to, right now, they ask me where I'm from. I say, "Terminal Island." 80 percent of the people don't know where Terminal Island is. They don't know. "You're sure it's not one of the Hawaiian Islands, a small one?" I go, "No, Terminal Island." "Where is Terminal Island?" I tell them, "Terminal Island is 2 miles long or 3 miles long." I tell them that. It's a port of Los Angeles." "Is there a place like that?" "Yes, but it's a little small island," I tell them. "Oh, yes? What do they do over there?" "Fishermen." [laughter] "Fisherman. Oh, you're a fisherman." That's how I have to explain it to these people

that never heard of Terminal Island. When I was in service, they tell me, "Hey, where are you from anyway?" They ask me, "Well, I'm from the island too. What island is it?" "Terminal Island." "There's no Terminal Island in Hawaii?" [laughter] "Not Hawaii, guys." What was the question again?

MS: Question is, tell us what Terminal Island was. What did they do there? Who were the people who lived there? Why is it so important that we remember Terminal Island? It is gone now.

CH: It is gone. Terminal Island is composed of mainly three prefectures of Japan, like Wakayama, Shizuka, and Miyagi, three prefectures. There were few Okinawa people, and this and that and the other kind of different people was small. Rob Fukuzaki, they're from different area of Kyushu. That's why he came too, see? He know where the root is, that guy. Anyway, he came in. That's why all the mixture get together. When we talk Japanese, it's a mixed kind of Japanese. When I talk in front of Japanese people in Japan, they tell me, "You're crude and rude." Of course, that's the way my father want to talk. I can't help it. I went to Japanese school, but goddamn. [laughter] I went to Japanese school, but hey, we didn't go study Japanese. We went just to have fun. So, that's the way we came out. So, that's the way I talk. I can't help it. My heart is clean, and I'm real honest and sincere about what I'm saying. But the word I'm saying is just the way I learned, I can't help it. Then they understand, "Oh, excuse me." They apologize.

MS: Fishermen.

CH: That's different. Fishermen, obviously, you can't talk real nice. "How are you, mister? Oh, thank you very much, sir." You don't say nothing vulgar. You can't talk like a woman, not a fisherman. Fisherman's a hardworking man kind of work. You can't find no sissy working in a fisherman. They'll throw you out the boat. That's the way it is. They're rough people.

MS: Well, in the Sunday, you said there was a song that the fishermen sang about themselves. Tell me about that.

CH: Yuki could tell you. I don't know how to translate. Hard for me to translate into English vocabulary. I don't understand Japanese vocabulary. That's the hard part of it. Song is –

MS: How would they sing it in Japanese?

CH: Japanese? How did it go? [laughter] [foreign language] Even if we're rough and tumble, we're real sweet inside your heart. Fishermen is here. We're proud to be a fisherman. Rough weather and calm weather, that kind of thing. It means good though. To the Japanese people, at least it means good. But like the song I sang over the house I live in, I don't want to repeat my same thing I said, but –

MS: What was the process of learning English? How did you learn it? I was told that when you learned, some kids would get a jellybean if you said the right thing. How did you learn to speak English?

CH: Talk English?

MS: Yes.

CH: Well, you've got to learn how to talk English. You're going to American school, eventually you're going to start learning – start talking more English than Japanese. That's the way we go. But Terminal Island people, somehow, it's funny. When they talk English, one Japanese word might come up. The verb might come up, Japanese word. Can't help it. Sometimes I start talking English, but sometimes I end up ending with Japanese. All these Terminal Island people are like that. But the younger generation, my kid and my grand – they don't know how to talk Japanese. But I send one of my kids and her daughter to a Japanese school. Boy, it was a real advantage for him because he was bilingual. That's why he had a better job, and he had better business, everything. So, I told my other kids, "See what (Roman?) did. He's way better off than you guys. A university graduate, but look what he does. He's got his own business. He hired people, and he's bilingual. He went to Japan to teach over there. He did good. That's why he got the advantage."

MS: What does San Pedro – what does it mean to you? You grew up all your life. What does this place mean to you?

CH: San Pedro?

MS: Yes.

CH: Oh, this is my hometown, man. Terminal Island is my hometown. This is my second hometown. I've got a lot of buddies living here. We've got a class reunion every five years. But last year, they didn't have it because – our graduates are 452 people. Now, the last reunion we went was maybe five, seven years ago – ten years. Every five years, we have it. Last year was supposed to be the reunion, but they didn't have it because a lot of guys are dying. The last one we had was only – we had about 140 people. [inaudible] He's still living. (Ray Fork?) was here today. He's still living. (John Moore?), he's still living. A lot of guys I know. [inaudible] Mexican guy over here and all the Irish people that live in this side, longshoremen, they're still living.

MS: Good. We're going to have to stop here. I'm going to slide your chair about a foot to your right. I'm going to take another picture of you.

[end of transcript]