

Hiomi Nakamura

Interview conducted by Deborah Day

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

I interviewed Mr. Nakamura in his home on Fay Avenue in La Jolla on the afternoon of December 16, 2002. We sat in his living room and talked together for two hours. Mr. Nakamura told me that he had never been interviewed for an oral history. He was very softspoken, but was in excellent health and good spirits. We were interrupted once by the mailman and again at the end of the interview when Mrs. Marie Nakamura came into the room.

During our conversation, Mr. Nakamura showed me photographs from his album depicting his years at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Most of these showed him working on the R/V *Scripps*.

In my subsequent correspondence, I addressed him as Dr. Nakamura, and in a note sent on December 27, 2002, he corrected me: "Evacuation and subsequent incarceration in 1942 precluded the completion of my degree requirements. Conditions following the war forced me to abandon those pursuits. The title is Mr., not Dr."

Deborah Cozort Day
Archivist, SIO/UCSD
December 23, 2003

INTERVIEW WITH HIOMI NAKAMURA: 16 DECEMBER 2002

Day: ##¹Well, it's December 16, 2002 and we are in [Mr.] Nakamura's living room in La Jolla, and we are going to be talking for about an hour about your life and especially your relationship with Scripps Institution of Oceanography. I wanted to ask you first: you were born in La Jolla? Is that so?

Nakamura: Yes.

Day: And what was the date of your birth?

Nakamura: January 24th, 1913.

Day: 1913. And your parents? They ran a shop, is that right?

Nakamura: They had a restaurant here. They arrived in La Jolla about 1910, I believe.

Day: And what were their names?

Nakamura: My father was Naojiro.

Day: And your mother?

Nakamura: Misao.

Day: And were they American-born?

Nakamura: No, no, they both were born in Japan. My father arrived here about 1891, I believe.

Day: And what part of Japan was he from?

Nakamura: Wakayama.

Day: What brought your parents to La Jolla, of all places?

Nakamura: My father was the chef for Spreckels.²

Day: Really—.

¹ The symbol ## indicates that a tape or section of tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see page 41.

² John D. Spreckels (1853-1926).

- Nakamura: At his home in Coronado. And later he became chef at the University Club. Then he decided to go into business for himself. He started the restaurant in La Jolla.
- Day: Were you born at home or were you born in the hospital?
- Nakamura: At home. In those days you were born—. In fact, there was no hospital here.
- Day: Miss Scripps³ hadn't built it yet.
- Nakamura: Yes.
- Day: Did you have other brothers and sisters?
- Nakamura: No, I was the only child.
- Day: And then you went to La Jolla High School. Is that correct?
- Nakamura: To the little red schoolhouse, and La Jolla grammar school and La Jolla High School.
- Day: I know you had many friends among the other students there. There were several people from Scripps who went to the high school that you might have known. Tillie Genter—.
- Nakamura: Oh, Tillie Genter— yes, I knew her very well. I knew her brother very well, too. Ben. Let's see—the two people I influenced to go to Scripps were Townie Cromwell⁴ and Herb Mann.
- Day: Had you already known them in the village?
- Nakamura: Oh, I went to school with them.
- Day: Did you go to the college first? What was your education after high school?
- Nakamura: I went to Stanford. I got my A.B. at Stanford.
- Day: What subject was that in?
- Nakamura: In pre-clinical sciences, pre-med.
- Day: Pre-med. And what year was that that you graduated?
- Nakamura: 1935. I graduated in ['35.]

³ Ellen Browning Scripps (1836-1932), La Jolla philanthropist.

⁴ Townsend Cromwell (1922-1958), oceanographer at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

- Day: And what did you decide to do after getting your degree?
- Nakamura: I was admitted to Stanford Med School. This was during the depression years, and I didn't have enough money to attend. So I thought maybe I'd better go into some other line of work, so I thought I'd go into bacteriology. I did my graduate work at Cal, in the University of California.
- Day: And in bacteriology?
- Nakamura: Bacteriology, yes.
- Day: And who were your professors there?
- Nakamura: My professors? The head of the department was—.
- Day: I can look it up.⁵
- Nakamura: Krueger was my immediate supervisor—Paul Krueger. Oh, the head of the department was Karl Meyer. I think everybody knew Karl.
- Day: He knew many people down at the institution as well. Did you ever meet Charles Kofoid?⁶
- Nakamura: I took his class.
- Day: Did you? What did you think of him?
- Nakamura: The class was run by Kofoid and Swezey. Swezey was the one who was my instructor. And we saw Kofoid occasionally. He would give a little talk or something. [Swezey] was the one who was actually doing the instructing.
- Day: You are the only person that I know who knew both Dr. Kofoid and Dr. Ritter.⁷ I understand you met Dr. Ritter once with Roger Revelle.⁸
- Nakamura: I went to see Dr. Ritter when he was in a rest home in—oh, must have been Palo Alto, one of those places up there. With Bob Scripps,⁹ so we went to visit him there.
- Day: What year was that, do you remember?

⁵ The chairman of the UC Berkeley Department of Bacteriology in 1936 was Dr. Karl Friedrich Meyer (1884-1974).

⁶ Charles Atwood Kofoid (1865-1947), UC Berkeley professor of zoology and assistant director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

⁷ William Emerson Ritter (1856-1944). founder and director of SIO.

⁸ Roger Randall Dougan Revelle (1909-1991), a graduate student at SIO in 1936 who became director in 1950.

⁹ Robert Paine Scripps, Jr. (1918-1938), son of SIO patron E.W. Scripps.

- Nakamura: That must have been 1937, or '36. He passed away shortly after that, didn't he?
- Day: He died in 1944, very early in 1944.
- Nakamura: Must have been 1937.
- Day: And how did he strike you? What was his personality like?
- Nakamura: He seemed to be in pretty good health, you know. We chatted—quite affable person.
- Day: Did you also meet his wife?
- Nakamura: No, no.
- Day: She was not there. She was a physician, you know.
- Nakamura: Oh, I didn't realize that.
- Day: Kofoid must have been ten years younger than Ritter, so he would have been a man of almost seventy. How did you like Berkeley?
- Nakamura: Oh, Berkeley was fine. Of course, when I went to Stanford, the entire enrollment there was about 3500 students at the graduate school. So you knew just about everybody on campus. At least you'd recognize that they were students there when you walked downtown or something. But when you got to Berkeley—I think the enrollment there was a little over 12,000.¹⁰ It was sort of overwhelming.
- Day: And where did you live?
- Nakamura: When I was in Berkeley? Let's see. Oh, my very good friend was Leonard Loeb,¹¹ Dr. Loeb, and so I stayed with him for about a month and then I moved to a boarding house in the same block.
- Day: Did you leave Berkeley and go to Scripps?
- Nakamura: No, after I graduated from Stanford, I was wondering what I should do, and I thought, "Well, maybe I'd better keep up on my lab procedures. I went over to Scripps to see if they had an opening. And I went to work for Moberg, Erik Moberg."¹²

¹⁰ UC Berkeley enrollment in was 15,355 in 1936.

¹¹ Leonard Benedict Loeb (1891-1978), UC Berkeley professor of physics.

¹² Erik Gustaf Moberg (1891-1963), chemist and assistant professor of oceanography at SIO.

- Day: Was it Dr. Moberg who interviewed you?
- Nakamura: Yes, it was. I worked with Kittie Gehring¹³—
- Day: Kittie LaFond.
- Nakamura: Yes. And incidentally, there's a service for LaFond¹⁴—
- Day: Yes, there is.
- Nakamura: In January. And where is that to be held?
- Day: It's going to be in T-29, which was Martin Johnson's¹⁵ house.
- Nakamura: Martin Johnson's old house. I plan to attend. I knew Gene LaFond very well.
- Day: When you arrived at Scripps, it was 1936 or '35?
- Nakamura: Thirty-five. Just after I graduated from school.
- Day: For what job were you hired?
- Nakamura: Assistant in chemistry.
- Day: Did you know you would have to go out on ships or was that something—?
- Nakamura: Yes, I realized that. In fact, I was looking forward to it.
- Day: Had you been out on ships before?
- Nakamura: Actually not. But I lived all my life on the beach, you know. In fact, when we would go out on the trips, I was the only one that knew how to handle a skiff. So my duty was to row the people from shore to the ship and other chores.
- Day: Had you sailed before? Could you handle a sailing boat?
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, yes. I built a sailboat.
- Day: That's great.
- Nakamura: That's when I was still in high school. I took 25-foot sloops; we used to sail it around the Cove and into San Diego.

¹³ Katherine W. Gehring LaFond (1910-), assisted Dr. Moberg in the chemistry lab at SIO.

¹⁴ Eugene Cecil LaFond (1909-2002), graduate student and assistant at SIO in 1935.

¹⁵ Martin Wiggo Johnson (1893-1984), marine biologist at SIO.

Day: That's wonderful.

Nakamura: Yes, we used to have a lot of fun.

Day: How did Dr. Moberg strike you? What did you think of him?

Nakamura: Oh, I liked Erik; he was a lot of fun. Kind of a gruff person, you know, but very gentle under his rough exterior.

Day: He also was a chemist?

Nakamura: Oh, yes, he was a chemist; he was the head of the chemistry department. My first job was doing salinities.

Day: And how did you do those at that time?

Nakamura: Just titration, wet chemistry.

Day: And you would do them on shore?

Nakamura: On shore and of course onboard ship. I would do Winkler oxygens. I was exposed to an awful lot of different types of jobs out there. I used to help them haul in the plankton nets, and gather the specimens. It was really one of the most enjoyable times of my life, I think.

Day: I'm very curious about what equipment they had.

Nakamura: What equipment they had? Of course, Nansen bottles. Bathythermographs did not come into the play until later on. Clamshell scoops, you know, and very primitive core samplers, which consisted of a tube with a big weight on top, and you just let it go down. What else did they have on there?

Day: Did you use Kofoid buckets, or how did you sample seawater?

Nakamura: Sample seawater? Well, surface water we just took a bucket; of course, anything below that was Nansen bottles. And I remember they had an accident out there once. One of the Nansen bottles tripped before it went down, and when it went down—of course it was sealed at both ends, and boy, the pressure just crushed it. So I took the thing and repaired it.

Day: Did you?

Nakamura: I took it apart and hammered it out, put it back together, and it worked.

- Day: I've always understood that the instruments were mostly European made at that time.
- Nakamura: Yes, I guess the reversing thermometers were all made in Europe, I believe. There was a little trick in constructing the neck of thermometer with a branch off the side so the mercury column would break when it reversed; it was very tricky. A tricky job of glass blowing.
- Day: Yes. Did you do that?
- Nakamura: No, no.
- Day: Did Moberg do it, for instance?
- Nakamura: No.
- Day: That would have all been ordered.
- Nakamura: Yes, yes.
- Day: And did most of your glassware come from San Francisco at that point?
- Nakamura: I'm not sure where the glassware came from, really. I remember we used to get samples of standard seawater for salinity from Copenhagen. We used to call it Copenhagen water. Comes in little sealed vials.
- Day: How much chemistry was actually being done at that point? Versus biology and geology—
- Nakamura: Salinities, silicas, Winkler oxygens, carbonates, I believe. Phosphates.
- Day: You were interested in calcium carbonate at that point?
- Nakamura: Somebody was doing calcium. I didn't do the calcium carbonates myself.
- Day: Roger Revelle was interested in calcium carbonates or told me that he was during those early years.
- Nakamura: I guess John Lyman¹⁶ was interested in that too, because—didn't he write his thesis on—what was it? The second dissociation constant of bicarbonate, something like that. Some obscure thing.
- Day: Of course. With so much interest now in atmospheric CO₂—

¹⁶ John Rowen Lyman (1915-1978), *Buffer Mechanism of Sea Water* (University of California: Los Angeles, 1956.)

Nakamura: Oh, yes, yes, certainly.

Day: There's a real interest now in seeing what were men doing in the 1930s. Did you have any inkling—?

Nakamura: I did. I spent a lot of time on carbon dioxide. In fact, at that time the only way of analyzing dissolved gases in seawater was by Van Slyke machine, Van Slyke manometric. I spent a lot of time in—. We had a walk-in refrigerator, and we used to keep it at constant temperature, fifteen degrees. I used to go in there and work with that darn thing. I can remember the whole darn floor was covered with droplets of mercury. It's a wonder—

Day: It's amazing you're still here!

Nakamura: I used to spend hours at a time during the day working with that darn Van Slyke machine.

Day: How interesting.

Nakamura: It was kind of interesting, too, because with my experience with the Van Slyke machine—. During the war I had gone to OCS¹⁷ and received my commission, and of course this was the infantry, and so as an infantry second lieutenant, ready to go out and get shot—. And this very good friend of mine, Dick Bancroft, was with the School of Aviation Medicine down at Randolph Field. And they needed somebody who was familiar with the Van Slyke machine to analyze blood gases. So he knew that I had worked with the Van Slyke machine, and so he requested that I come down there. The head of the department was a brigadier general so within two weeks of the time I told Dick that I'd be interested in coming down, there I was in San Antonio. So that's where I spent the rest of my time, just working in the lab, which is much better than being out in the field getting shot.

Day: I have a couple of pictures of you working in the laboratory at Scripps.

Nakamura: Oh, yes.

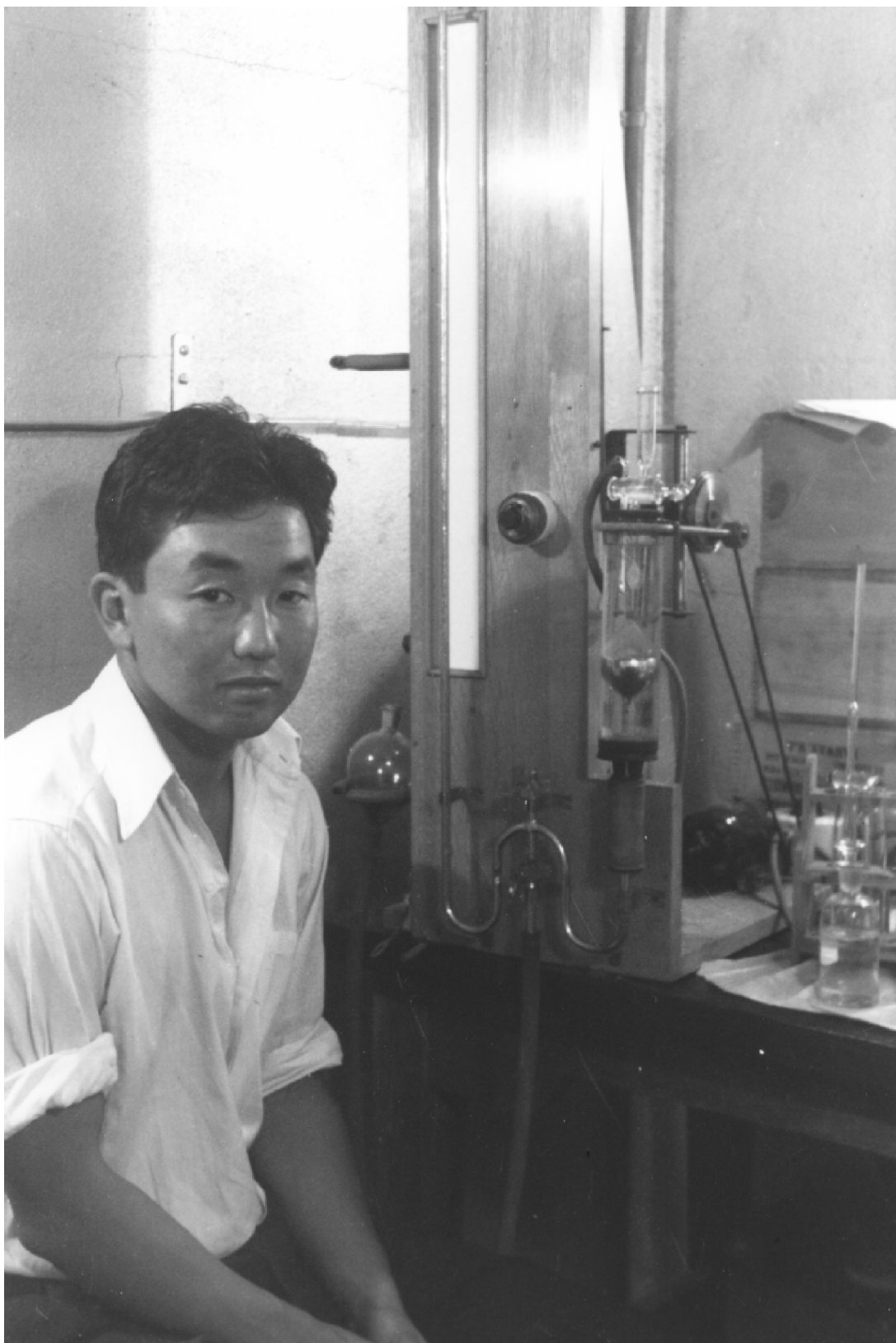
Day: This one: I wondered if you could tell me what building that was in and, if you remember it—it must have been 1936.

Nakamura: Thirty-six, probably yes. It looks like a Van Slyke machine.

Day: Yes, that's right. I wondered if that was it.

Nakamura: Yes, this is the same thing. This is the Van Slyke machine. This is before we put it in the constant-temperature room.

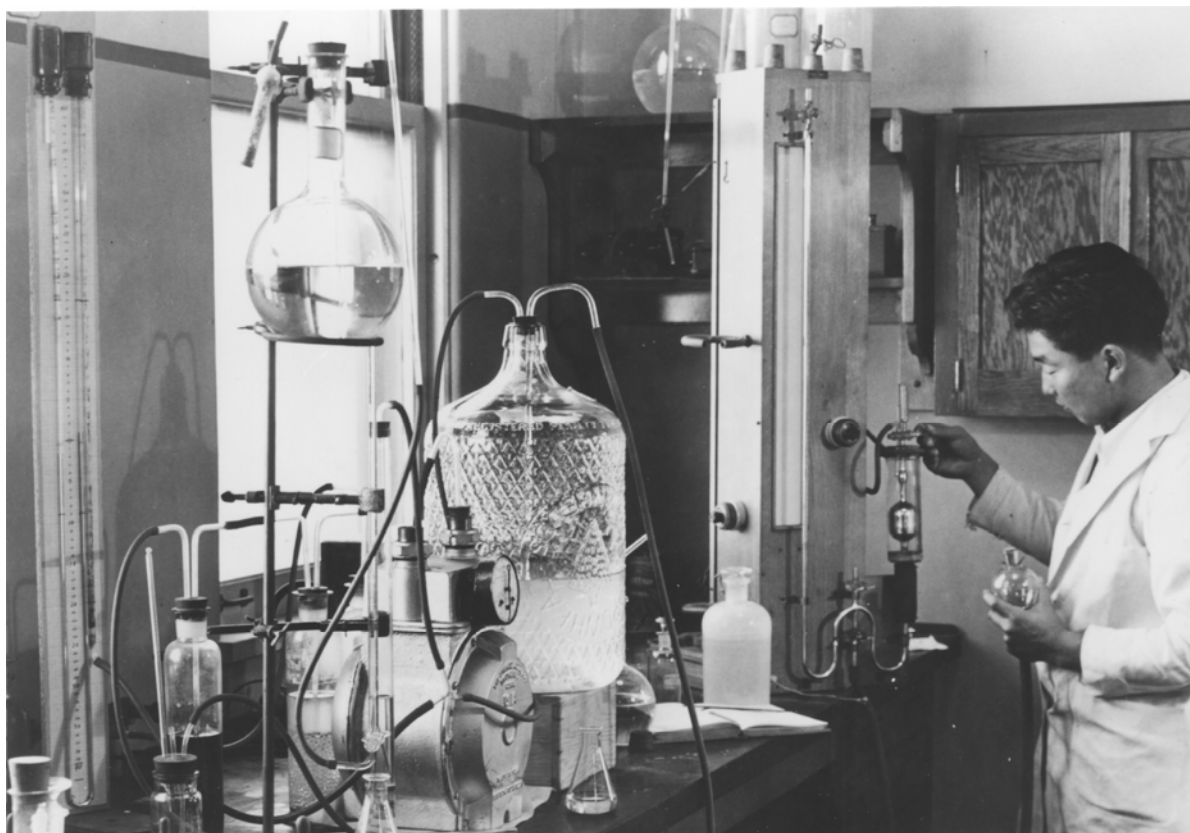
¹⁷ Officer Candidate School.



Hiomi Nakamura and Van Slyke machine, 1936. Photograph by Eugene La Fond. SIO Archives, UCSD.

- Day: Was there a list of instructions for the laboratory, or were you—was Moberg teaching you? How did you learn to do all of these things? Or did you come already knowing how to use the machines?
- Nakamura: I knew about the Van Slyke machine. I guess I had fooled with it a little bit, experimenting with blood gases.
- Day: In Berkeley, you think?
- Nakamura: Yes, I was at Berkeley.
- Day: But there was no laboratory manual for Scripps or anything like that?
- Nakamura: No, no. I guess Moberg—I talked with Moberg and we decided this might be adaptable to seawater, and we got some fairly good results but that darn machine was a difficult thing to work with, because the whole determination depended on the integrity of the seals. Sometimes it was hard to get a good gas-tight seal in the little valves.
- Day: Where were you working in these pictures? Were you in the Old Scripps Building or Ritter Building?
- Nakamura: Ritter Building. Yes. Scripps Building is the one in back. That's where Earl Myers¹⁸ worked.
- Day: Right.
- Nakamura: Oh, gosh, when I took the course from Kofoid and Swezey up there, protozoology, I remember one of the highlights of that course was a movie, actually, of alternation in generations of the foraminifera, *Patellina corrugata*, and that was the first time that anybody had ever recorded the alternation of generations in a protozoan of any kind. They knew it existed but nobody had actually demonstrated it. I think he used to go down there and take these time-lapse photos. They didn't have any automatic machine for doing that; he just got a Leica camera on the stand. I think he used to go down there at all hours of the night and click that thing.
- Day: Well, you knew many other people at Scripps. Where were you living while you worked there? Were you in one of the cottages?
- Nakamura: I was living here, no.
- Day: You were living at home, that's right?

¹⁸ Earl Hamlet Myers (1898-1975), graduate student and researcher at SIO.



Hiomi Nakamura operating Van Slyke machine in Ritter Hall, 1936. SIO Archives, UCSD.

Nakamura: That's right. Of course, we only had—what?—fifteen to twenty people there: Moberg and Denis Fox¹⁹—

Day: [Claude] ZoBell.²⁰

Nakamura: Oh, yes, ZoBell, [Claude] ZoBell.

Day: Sumner must still have been around here.

Nakamura: Oh, yes, I knew the Sumners²¹ ever since I was a little kid, because I used to go to school with Elizabeth—Elizabeth was in my class—oh, yes, the Sumner kids. Paul McEwen²² was one of the kids I used to play with.

Day: I still talk to him from time to time. He runs a big farm.

¹⁹ Denis Llewellyn Fox (1901-1983), assistant professor of physiology at SIO.

²⁰ Claude Ephraim ZoBell (1904-1989), assistant professor of marine microbiology at SIO.

²¹ Francis Bertody Sumner (1874-1945), professor of biology at SIO, and his wife, Margaret Elizabeth Clark Sumner (1876-1967). Their children were Florence Anne (Henderson), Elizabeth Caroline (French), and Herbert Clark Sumner.

²² Paul Albert McEwen (1913-), son of SIO professor George F. McEwen.

- Nakamura: I understand he lives—he's out in the San Joaquin Valley some place.
- Day: And he says that he was a troublemaker.
- Nakamura: *[laughing]* I don't think so. Paul was—
- Day: He said he was always getting in trouble because some of the—who was it—Mrs. McEwen kept chickens. And he would take a stone and put it in the nest of the chickens. It annoyed her very much. Did you have a car? Did you drive out daily?
- Nakamura: Yes, I bought a car from one of my schoolmates at Stanford for \$15. It was a—what year it was? A 1925 Chevy coupe. Moberg had the same kind of a car. I remember driving to Scripps. You know, gosh, you'd possibly pass one or two cars or something like that. Now it's a solid line of cars.
- Day: And there must have been few buildings at that time.
- Nakamura: Oh, gosh, yes, very few buildings there.
- Day: Can you tell me about some of the young people, like Roger Reville, who had then just finished his Ph.D., I think. Did you know him at that time?
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, we used to go out on the trips and things.
- Day: Do you remember when you first met him?
- Nakamura: Probably when I went out to work at Scripps. I knew of him, though. And Fleming,²³ of course. [John Lyman.]²⁴
- Day: Marston Sargent²⁵—
- Nakamura: Marston Sargent, yes. Gene LaFond. There was a fellow that worked for the Navy too—Forest Whedon?²⁶
- Day: Yes. And Wesley Coe²⁷ was there from time to time too. He worked with Whedon, I think.
- Nakamura: Who was the fellow that was a meteorologist? Woody Jacobs?²⁸

²³ Richard Howell Fleming (1909-1989), a graduate student at SIO.

²⁴ "John Lyman in chemistry—became one of my best friends." Hiomi Nakamura, personal correspondence regarding this transcript, December 2003.

²⁵ Marston Cleaves Sargent (1906-1986), instructor in oceanography at SIO.

²⁶ Walter Forest Whedon (1904-), a graduate student at SIO.

²⁷ Wesley Roswell Coe (1869-1960), visiting researcher at SIO.

²⁸ Woodrow Cooper Jacobs (1908-), a graduate student at SIO.

- Day: Woody Jacobs, yes.
- Nakamura: Andy Anderson, bacteriology. Easter Cupp.²⁹
- Day: Easter Cupp. What was the routine of work? What time did you go to work and how long did you stay?
- Nakamura: Oh, I would go to work about nine o'clock or so and work until probably about four-thirty or five.
- Day: Did you meet Dr. Vaughan³⁰ when you first came?
- Nakamura: Dr. who? Oh, T. Wayland Vaughan. Sure. He was the director when I first got out there. And his dog Spooks.
- Day: A German shepherd, I believe.
- Nakamura: Oh, sure.
- Day: I have read in some of the correspondence that he was called the Texas autocrat. Some people thought he was a little bit too autocratic.
- Nakamura: *[laughing]* He may have given that impression.
- Day: What did you think of him?
- Nakamura: Well, I didn't have too much contact with him, of course; I knew Sverdrup³¹ much better.
- Day: And Sverdrup came to follow him.
- Nakamura: 1937.
- Day: And what did you hear about him coming? Do you remember when you were told he would come?
- Nakamura: That's about it. I was told he was coming and that was it. He was a Norwegian, he had gone on the *Fram* Expedition.
- Day: Had you heard of him before?
- Nakamura: No. No.

²⁹ Easter Ellen Cupp (1904-1999), a graduate student and research assistant at SIO.

³⁰ Thomas Wayland Vaughan (1870-1952), geologist and second director of SIO.

³¹ Harald Ulrik Sverdrup (1888-1957), oceanographer and third director of SIO.

- Day: Had you read his papers?
- Nakamura: No.
- Day: What was Moberg's attitude?
- Nakamura: Moberg's attitude? I don't know. I don't think I was privy to that. I'm trying to think of people I might have known there. Jim Ross,³² of course, you know. And Oliver Maler was another one on the grounds.
- Day: He was so handsome in all the pictures.
- Nakamura: Of course, I wasn't there. He was a couple of years ahead of me in high school.
- Day: W. E. Allen.³³ Did you know Fred Allen? He was the plankton man.
- Nakamura: Yes. And McEwen,³⁴ of course.
- Day: Who was the physical oceanographer. And there was a guy named Stan Chambers.³⁵
- Nakamura: Oh, Stan Chambers, sure.
- Day: Who took care of the instruments.
- Nakamura: He had a couple of kids who went to the high school; they were a few years younger than I was.
- Day: So how often did you go out on the *Scripps*?
- Nakamura: Oh, probably not more than once a month.
- Day: Really. And it was kept down at the Yacht Club, is that right?
- Nakamura: Yes, yes.
- Day: Normally, when you went out, where did you go and how long did you stay?
- Nakamura: Oh, we'd go out for sometimes a week, probably not more than a week or ten days at a time, and many times just for maybe three days. And we'd go to different stations out from us: of course, San Clemente, Catalina, and as far

³² James M. Ross, superintendent of grounds and buildings at SIO.

³³ Winfred Emory Allen (1873-1947), assistant professor of biology at SIO.

³⁴ George Francis McEwen (1882-1972), professor and curator of physical oceanography at SIO.

³⁵ Stanley Wilfred Chambers (1890-1967), physical oceanographer at SIO.

north as Port San Louis. Never more than about—San Nicolas Island was about the furthest west that we went. I remember one trip going to San Nicolas. Getting there was kind of strange. I was the only one that knew how to row a boat. At San Nicolas there was a huge shore break, it was maybe fifteen feet from shore. It was fairly common also that these waves would just pop up and crash down. I was rowing the boat, there were about half a dozen of us on board, including Roger, and we got near shore, and Roger saw all these shore breaks crashing down, he says, “I’ll take the painter and jump ashore and pull you guys in.” So he got up in the bow, he jumped overboard. He thought the water was probably about four or five feet deep; it turned out to be about eight feet deep. He went clear out of sight, came bubbling up, you know. And the next wave came and really crashed down on us. The first thing he said was, “For God’s sake, save my shoes. Save my shoes.” He wore size fourteen shoes, and they were very difficult to get. *[laughter]*

Day: What was your opinion of the old *Scripps*—the vessel?

Nakamura: Oh, the old *Scripps* was a lot of fun—that old converted purse seiner. The laboratory was about like this.

Day: About two by four feet.

Nakamura: Right. I remember doing Winkler oxygens one day. You couldn’t stand up because the thing would pitch and roll. So I was sitting down pipetting this really strong sodium hydroxide. The darn pipette came out of the solution and I got a big mouthful of concentrated sodium hydroxide. Felt like my mouth was full of cotton; it tore the mucous membrane off.

Day: Who was normally out on those trips with you?

Nakamura: Well, Roger many times, Moberg a few times. Dick and Roger [and John Lyman] usually came.

Day: That’s Dick Fleming, right?

Nakamura: Dick Fleming. Gene LaFond, of course, was on most of the trips.

Day: Was Kittie ever out?

Nakamura: No. I never went out with any of the women at all.

Day: She was doing similar work to yours, so there would be no point in taking—

Nakamura: She used to go out, I remember, before I got there. She used to tell me about it. I can’t think who else used to go. Of course, later on Sverdrup used to go out with us quite often.

Day: Who was the captain when you were going out?

Nakamura: Usually Roger. Moberg, at times. I remember once we were out, off Cortez Bank, and it started to get a little rough out there. In fact, it got so rough that we decided we'd better get out of there because those waves were—I would say—at least fifty feet, and we thought we'd go end over end.

Day: Really.

Nakamura: Yes, and I used to get seasick all the time. About the first day or so I wasn't feeling too well. I remember John Lyman experienced the same thing; he would get sick too, and we were both out there just sicker than dogs, you know, and it got really rough, and everybody else got sick, and John and I recovered. We were out there eating hardtack with raspberry jam, and everybody'd look at us and hit the rails.

Day: Who was navigating? And how did you do that? Do you know?

Nakamura: Mostly dead reckoning.

Day: Yes.

Nakamura: Yes, because we weren't too far from shore. I don't think I ever saw them take a sextant out. The bottom is so uneven out there they said that by using a fathometer, you could just about navigate with a fathometer, with a profile of the bottom.

Day: Because it was so well charted right in that area.

Nakamura: Yes, very well charted.

Day: Did you ever go down to Mexico?

Nakamura: No. Coronado Islands, but never went into Mexico for any distance.

Day: Never to Guayamas or any those places?

Nakamura: No. I remember one trip we went out to Catalina, and we put in at Isthmus Harbor there, and there was a little—what was it? I guess a little tavern or something. Anyhow, we came ashore there and went to the tavern—there were seven of us, Roger was heading the bunch. We all walked in the tavern. Roger was feeling pretty magnanimous at that time. He stood up and started counting heads—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. He turns to the proprietor and says, "Well, I'll have seven beers." And John Lyman says, "That's a good idea. I think I'll have seven beers, too."

- Day: Was that during prohibition or after?
- Nakamura: This was after, I guess, because they were serving beer. We didn't, of course, all drink seven beers.
- Day: That's wonderful. Well, tell me a bit about Marston Sargent. When did you meet him?
- Nakamura: When did he arrive there? Marston Sargent. I met him when he first arrived. He and his wife—his wife's name was—
- Day: Peter.
- Nakamura: Peter Sargent³⁶, right, right.
- Day: He had a post-doc, C. K. Tseng,³⁷ who worked for him a couple of years, although he may have arrived later. Did you know C.K.?
- Nakamura: No.
- Day: That must have been later, then.
- Nakamura: There was another fellow there, and his son: the Youngs, [Old Young and Young Young.]³⁸
- Day: Yes, Robert Young? There was a UCDWR³⁹ guy.
- Nakamura: This fellow and his father—his father was quite elderly, I remember. They were doing work on seawater transparency or something, I remember. They'd put a white disc down and then they'd measure the distance to which they could discern the disc.
- Day: You must have known Martin Johnson, too.
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, sure.
- Day: Did he sometimes go out to sea with you?
- Nakamura: Johnson, no.
- Day: I know Fox and ZoBell didn't go out very much.

³⁶ Grace Charlotte "Peter" Thompkins Sargent (1909-1992).

³⁷ Cheng Kwai Tseng (1909-), botanist and research associate at SIO starting in 1943.

³⁸ Robert Thompson Young (1874-), biologist, and Robert Thompson Young, Jr. (1908-), physicist at SIO.

³⁹ University of California Division of War Research

Nakamura: Who's that?

Day: Fox and ZoBell.

Nakamura: Fox, no. Fox didn't go out with us, or ZoBell either.

Day: Were they not interested in ship work? Or just—

Nakamura: I don't know. I did some chemistry for Denis Fox. What were we doing? One of the sugar components in bivalves. I can't think what it was now.

Day: But most of his work was in the laboratory then?

Nakamura: Yes, yes.

Day: When Harald Sverdrup came, he made a big point about trying to take what resources there were available, do as much work at sea as possible. Did you feel a change after Sverdrup came?

Nakamura: I think so, yes, yes. I think the emphasis was more on *in situ* work at sea, you know.

Day: He also wrote the book, *The Oceans*.⁴⁰

Nakamura: Oh, yes, I have that. I have an autographed copy of that. Vaughan's work was primarily foraminifera, but Sverdrup was more interested in dynamic oceanography. So there was a definite change, you might say, of attitude as far as the type of work that we were doing.

Day: Sverdrup was also interested in changing the curriculum at Scripps as well. Did you ever go to staff meetings where there were discussions of the curriculum?

Nakamura: I probably did, but I don't remember too much about them. We would have meetings periodically, and people would get up and talk about the work they were doing. This was very interesting because we got a good insight of a lot of other disciplines.

Day: Could you comment on the effect of the Depression on La Jolla and on Scripps?

Nakamura: Well, I guess everybody was more or less in the same boat, you know. There wasn't an awful lot of money floating around. Jobs were scarce. Skilled

⁴⁰ H.U. Sverdrup, Martin W. Johnson, and Richard H. Fleming, *The Oceans: Their Physics, Chemistry, and General Biology* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1942).

carpenters, I think, were getting as much as five dollars a day. I remember I worked one summer at a fruit stand for 25 cents an hour. However, you could get real sumptuous meals for a dollar. So everything was quite relative.

Day: Did you see bread lines and hobos?

Nakamura: Not so much in La Jolla, no. I'm sure there were in San Diego. Yes, there were in San Diego: bread lines, soup kitchens, and things of that nature.

Day: Did people at Scripps have their own gardens?##

Nakamura: ##I was always interested in fish for some reason. I knew Dr. Jordan, you know—David Starr Jordan at Stanford. He was there in my first year. Every morning I'd go to my eight o'clock class and I'd meet Dr. Jordan taking a little walk around there. We'd say a few words. In fact, my youngest boy was named after Dr. Jordan—David.

Day: What was David Starr Jordan like? Did he have a wonderful voice and great personality?

Nakamura: Oh, yes, yes. He was pretty old at that time, probably in his eighties, I'd guess—I'm not really sure. He walked with his cane, you know. I would say, "Good morning, Dr. Jordan," and we'd talk. I'd go to class—very nice old gentleman.

Day: Did you take any ichthyology classes?

Nakamura: Yes, I did. Took ichthyology from a fellow by the name of Rich.⁴¹

Day: Was this at Stanford?

Nakamura: At Stanford, yes. One of my best friends was—who was the director of fisheries in Hawaii?⁴²

Day: Herb Mann?

Nakamura: No, no, Herb was just an instrument technician, I think.

Day: It'll come back to you.

Nakamura: Anyway, he was the head of the Bureau of Fisheries out at Hawaii. And then Hubbs;⁴³ I knew Hubbs. And Pete Doudoroff.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Willis Horton Rich (1885-), ichthyologist at Stanford University.

⁴² Vernon Brock, as Nakamura later recalled.

⁴³ Carl Leavitt Hubbs (1894-1979), ichthyologist at SIO.

⁴⁴ Peter Doudoroff (1913-), student at Stanford University and SIO.

- Day: And what were your plans then? Did you think you would go back and go to medical school at some time or were you happy being—
- Nakamura: I don't doubt that it was out of my reach financially so I decided, well, maybe, I'd better go into bacteriology and see if I could get a lab job some place. I did work for the Oakland health department as a public health bacteriologist a couple of years and after the war I went into the clinical laboratory business.
- Day: Before we talk about that, I'd like to talk for a minute about the coming of the war and what happened to you in La Jolla.
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, of course, we were all given notice that we'd have to leave the coast.
- Day: And when did you get that notice? In what form did it come?
- Nakamura: I don't know—we got a direct letter or what.
- Day: This was after Pearl Harbor?
- Nakamura: Yes, yes. Nineteen—it must have been forty-two. We were all assembled and taken to the Santa Anita assembly center.
- Day: I have read that all Japanese-Americans had to register. Did you have to—?
- Nakamura: Yes, I think so. Yes, that's right.
- Day: And how was that done? Was that done at the post office? Do you remember any of this?
- Nakamura: Golly, I really don't know. I know my father would have to register every year because he was an alien—at the post office. That escapes me, just what the details were on that.
- Day: In any case, you received a notice and were told to report somewhere?
- Nakamura: Yes, we were supposed to report at the train depot in San Diego for transportation.
- Day: What was said about your parents' shop? What about the house?
- Nakamura: We got some notice, a couple of weeks or something like that, that we would have to evacuate. We could take all our personal possessions and have them stored by the Army. My father had things in the store; they were stored by the Army.

- Day: How did your parents feel about this? It must have been quite a surprise.
- Nakamura: Well, it was quite a shock to them, of course. They were quite elderly at the time, you know. I guess my father was in his seventies, so it was a hardship on him. For me, it wasn't. It didn't bother me much, really.
- Day: You were unmarried at that time?
- Nakamura: Yes.
- Day: It must have been difficult for your parents. Were they in their seventies?
- Nakamura: Yes.
- Day: Was there any discussion that perhaps elderly people should be exempted from this?
- Nakamura: No, no, there wasn't. As long as you were of Japanese ancestry, you went, with no regard for your state of health, really. Of course, patients in hospitals were allowed to stay there, because they didn't have any medical facilities at the assembly centers. So, when I first went there—of course I had a lot of experience in the laboratory work, so I ran the laboratory.
- Day: That was at Fort Lewis.
- Nakamura: At the assembly center at Santa Anita.
- Day: Oh, you ran the laboratory at Santa Anita! What kind of medical facilities did they have? How long were you at Santa Anita, to start with? You were there for some time, weren't you?
- Nakamura: At least six months. Then we were transferred to permanent relocation sites. I went to a place called Gila, which is near Casa Grande in Arizona; it's on the Indian reservation there. And of course they had barrack-type buildings set up. I don't know how many people were there, quite a bunch. I worked in the laboratory there. Then after about another six or eight months, I was allowed to seek employment, away from the coast someplace. So I got a job at St. Vincent's Hospital in Toledo, Ohio. I worked there until I got my draft notice.
- Day: But your parents stayed in Gila ?
- Nakamura: My parents were still in camp, yes. When I went for induction, you know—there was a first lieutenant in charge of the induction, and I wrote down my address as the camp address: block 31, something, something. He said, "What kind of address is this?" I said, "The address of my parents in the relocation

center.” He said, “You mean to tell me they’re drafting you, and your parents are in a concentration camp?” He said, “I don’t believe it.”

Day: Peter Sargent, who was Marston Sargent’s wife, protested very much the internment of the Japanese.

Nakamura: Yes, I know she did.

Day: I thought that was very interesting. Did people talk to you about what was going on? Did you have your own political views at the time?

Nakamura: No, I don’t think I talked to anybody.

Day: Peter Sargent was unhappy about it, and Walter Munk⁴⁵ was another person who felt it was very unfair and spoke out about it. Within the community of people who were of Japanese-American ancestry, was there any discussion in San Diego that you know?

Nakamura: Not really. You mean political aspects of it, things like that?

Day: Was there just a decision that it had to be done?

Nakamura: Attitude of “*c’est la guerre*,” you know.

Day: At Santa Anita, I know that the conditions were very poor there. Did they have a medical unit set up?

Nakamura: The medical unit was the internees themselves. They had doctors there. Of course, I was on the laboratory staff. The hospital consisted of a couple of barracks buildings in all, with beds. Of course, we had nurses there too. My wife was taking nurse’s training at UC Cal, at camp, and so she was a nurse. That’s where I met her.

Day: Oh, at Santa Anita?

Nakamura: Yes.

Day: Were you well supplied? Was there good food?

Nakamura: Oh, yes. Oh, all the necessities, as far as—we didn’t suffer any hardship as far as food. Well, living quarters were pretty bare, but, I mean, livable.

Day: Those were the stables at Santa Anita?

Nakamura: Yes.

⁴⁵ Walter Heinrich Munk (1917-), graduate student at SIO.

- Day: Were you allowed to see visitors or to have mail service?
- Nakamura: Yes, you could have visitors and you had mail, yes.
- Day: What was said at Scripps about your departure? Did they say they would hold the job for you?
- Nakamura: No.
- Day: Any discussion of that?
- Nakamura: Let's see. I had left Scripps by that time. I was at Cal.
- Day: Was there any discussion about your having to leave school?
- Nakamura: Not really.
- Day: There were lots of young people who were Japanese-American at Cal at that time.
- Nakamura: Yes. I think most of them thought, well, this wasn't going to last too long. We'll be back.
- Day: Tell me about meeting your wife. When did you meet her?
- Nakamura: Well, of course, we were in this hospital unit together.
- Day: She was a nurse, and you were a laboratory assistant.
- Nakamura: She finished her nurse's training at St. Mary's at Rochester.⁴⁶
- Day: Was she also sent to Gila? Did she and her family go to Gila as well after Santa Anita?
- Nakamura: Yes, and she finished nurse's training in Rochester. We were married there.
- Day: When was that?
- Nakamura: 1946.
- Day: How did you get to St. Louis? Somewhere in St. Louis. You were in Gila and then you were allowed to work, you said—

⁴⁶ St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota.

- Nakamura: Oh, yes, just gave us a ticket on the train. There were two at St. Vincent's hospital in Toledo, Ohio.
- Day: This was after you were inducted into the Army?
- Nakamura: No, this was before.
- Day: That's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to straighten out what happened.
- Nakamura: Then after I'd worked there for—oh, it must have been six months or so—I got a draft notice.
- Day: In St. Louis?
- Nakamura: In Toledo, yes.
- Day: So you reported.
- Nakamura: I was inducted into service at Salt Lake City. My first tour of duty, or basic training, was in Fort Lewis, Washington with the medics.
- Day: Is that what you were going to be? You were going to be a medic?
- Nakamura: Well, of course, that was my experience, so that's where they put me. That was quite an experience there too, because in the medics we had a bunch of conscientious objectors, you know, along with people like the holy rollers and Jehovah's Witnesses. They refused to carry arms. So on guard duty they'd be given a stick. In fact, we were given rifle training, and I guess these people were forced to go up there on the rifle range and shoot a rifle in spite of their objections.
- Day: And did you —?
- Nakamura: Oh, yes.
- Day: Were you a good marksman?
- Nakamura: Oh, yes. I remember one time they started evaluating all of us. They said, well, I had an opportunity, if I wanted to, to go to infantry OCS. I decided I might as well go. It was quite a change. First year in the medics, you know, a profession where you are trying to save people's lives, and you're put into infantry OCS where the emphasis was on different methods of killing people.
- Day: Where was your OCS?
- Nakamura: Fort Benning, Georgia.

- Day: Had you traveled around the United States much before then?
- Nakamura: Not much, no. I'll have to give credit to the Army. They really gave me a good sightseeing tour of the United States. From Fort Lewis, Washington, to Georgia, and from Georgia I came home on furlough after basic training. I was assigned to—oh, I had a friend in military intelligence—language school, Fort Snelling, Minnesota. So he says, “As long as you have Japanese ancestry, they think you can speak Japanese and you can get a job as an interpreter. Come on up here. It's a snap.” So I put in for that, I was assigned to Fort Snelling, and I stayed there for about four months. My Japanese was rudimentary, so they had to assign me a Chief Warrant Officer as my special tutor. Which is ridiculous. And I was there for, as I say, about four months. I got married up there. Marie was at Rochester, Minnesota. That's when I got this letter from Dick Bancroft, who was down at the school in radiation medicine at Randolph Field. He says, “You know, I told this general about your experience working with dissolved gases and liquids, and they need somebody here to run a program on blood gases.” He says, “Would you like to come down?” I said, “Sure would,” and that's how I got down there in about two weeks from the time I said I would enjoy being down there until I was transferred there.
- Day: And when was this and where was it?
- Nakamura: This was when I was at language school at Fort Snelling, Minnesota.
- Day: I'm trying to get the year.
- Nakamura: It must have been early '46. Of course, the war was just about winding down by then. So I spent the rest of the year down there, at Randolph Field.
- Day: Before we talk about after the war, I want to talk about the war a little bit. Could you get war news when you were in Gila?
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, yes.
- Day: What was your housing situation in Gila? Were your parents comfortable there? Were you able to have furniture?
- Nakamura: Well, barracks-type building, single room.
- Day: For all three of you?
- Nakamura: The three of us. And you could sort of divide the room by hanging blankets on ropes. Bathrooms were communal, as well as the mess halls.

- Day: And the kitchens? How was the cooking done?
- Nakamura: We had people there who volunteered to be cooks, and they were assigned permanently as cooks. They were divided into blocks, maybe twenty or thirty dwellings in a block, and they would have a common kitchen, and dining hall.
- Day: And what was the menu like?
- Nakamura: Well, it was tolerable, you know.
- Day: There was rationing at that time.
- Nakamura: Well, let's see. At Gila we had quite a few farmers, and they actually grew crops there. We had squash and watermelons and corn, and things like that. In fact we supplied many of the other camps with fresh vegetables.
- Day: Was there enough fresh water to irrigate crops there?
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, yes.
- Day: It's very dry there.
- Nakamura: The land was fairly fertile. I remember going out to the fields and seeing these crops. They were really going. Of course, the men who were in charge of the crops, you know, they were farmers of long standing. They knew everything about farming, so there was no problem about—
- Day: In those days Japanese-Americans grew ninety percent of the tomato and strawberry crops in California.
- Nakamura: Yes, I'm sure of that.
- Day: And there were many Japanese farmers right around La Jolla before the war as well.
- Nakamura: Yes, let's see. Down in the Hidden Valley area and over here in Pacific Beach we had numerous people.
- Day: You had friends among the farmers, too?
- Nakamura: Oh, yes.
- Day: At Gila, were the people from all over or mostly from southern California?
- Nakamura: Mostly from the Los Angeles area. The people from San Diego were sent to Poston, which is near the Imperial Dam area.

Day: So when you were interned, did you come down to be with your parents then and go to Santa Anita with them?

Nakamura: Yes, I was at school. I came home.

Day: At Gila was it a mixed community? Were there lots of young children?

Nakamura: Oh, yes, just a mixed community. Elderly people and young kids, babies. Just a cross-section of a community.

Day: What on earth did you do to entertain yourselves?

Nakamura: Well, of course, young kids organized baseball teams and they'd have—oh, maybe once a week or so—they would have little assemblies and people would volunteer to do things like sing or put on little plays, things like that.

Day: Was there a library?

Nakamura: I think there was, but not much of a library.

Day: You couldn't continue your studies?

Nakamura: No, oh no. The library consisted mostly of paperbacks, things like that.

Day: And your wife's family was there as well?

Nakamura: Yes.

Day: And how large was her family?

Nakamura: She had one older sister in Hawaii, a younger sister here in Los Angeles. Her younger brother was in the 442nd, and the older brother, Lincoln, was inducted in service early and dismissed at the convenience of the Army.

Day: Why?

Nakamura: Just because he was Japanese. This was very early, this was 1941, I guess.

Day: What was your wife's maiden name?

Nakamura: Maiden name? Shimidzu.

Day: And she was an American citizen when you met?

Nakamura: Oh, yes, she was born in Los Angeles.

- Day: And her education was what?
- Nakamura: She went to UCLA and then she went into nursing. In fact, at the time of evacuation she was taking the nursing course at the University of California.
- Day: University of California in Los Angeles?
- Nakamura: Berkeley. Oh, I'm sorry. San Francisco. The nursing school's in San Francisco.
- Day: What was her experience with the evacuation?
- Nakamura: She said that things happened very abruptly. They called all the Japanese students together and said, "Well, you're out of here." That's about it.
- Day: Did you hear anything about the atomic bomb?
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, sure.
- Day: Tell me about that, would you?
- Nakamura: The atomic bomb was exploded before we went to camp.
- Day: It was in August 1945.
- Nakamura: Was it?
- Day: [Yes].
- Nakamura: No, it was after; I'm sorry. I get confused by time. We heard about the atomic bomb, I'm sure.
- Day: I wondered if you remembered where you were when you heard—?
- Nakamura: I remember when Pearl Harbor happened: I was out swimming in the Cove.
- Day: Here in La Jolla?
- Nakamura: In La Jolla, yes.
- Day: And what time of day was that?
- Nakamura: What time of day?
- Day: Was it in the morning?

- Nakamura: Probably around noon or so. Yes, a bunch of us were swimming in the Cove.
- Day: And then what happened? How did you hear the news?
- Nakamura: Well, I figured my life would change, very drastically. Before long, it sure did. Max Miller wrote about that. I knew Max Miller. In one of his books he wrote about that.
- Day: I like his writing very much. And when the war was over, how did that affect your life?
- Nakamura: When the war was over, I was of course stationed down at San Antonio at the School of Aviation Medicine, Randolph Field. Then they said, "Well, how would you like to go to Japan with the Atomic Energy Commission?"
- Day: Really!
- Nakamura: I said, "Well, I'd better establish some kind of a business or something," because my folks were absolutely destitute at that time. I had to support them.
- Day: Tell me how old you were in 1945, at the end of the war.
- Nakamura: I was born in 1913, so subtract that from 46.
- Day: So you were thirty-three? And your parents were—?
- Nakamura: My parents were in their seventies.
- Day: So they had no savings? Nothing left after the war?
- Nakamura: They had bought this lot, so we had this lot.
- Day: But their business had gone? And at that time you were married. Had you any children?
- Nakamura: No, not at that time.
- Day: So what did you decide to do?
- Nakamura: Well, I just looked around and thought—I had an opportunity to work with the Health Department in San Diego.
- Day: How did that come about?

- Nakamura: Well, I guess they put out a flyer—it was a city job, and I put in my application for that.
- Day: From Texas? Did you apply from Texas or did you come back here?
- Nakamura: No, that's when I came back here. No, after leaving Texas, I had no idea what I'd do. And so I worked for the city as a bacteriologist, and the city at that time had no laboratory of its own, so laboratory work was conducted at Thompson Laboratory, which was an established laboratory, clinical laboratory, in the old medical-dental building on Third and A Streets.
- Day: And where did you live?
- Nakamura: Where did I live? Here.
- Day: Here. Was this house built?
- Nakamura: No, this house wasn't built at that time, but we rented a little house in the next block. After working there with Dr. Thompson—he was ready to retire, quite old—and he asked me and his chief technician if we would be interested in purchasing the business. And so we jumped at the chance and from then on we were in business together.
- Day: What kinds of bacteriology did you do?
- Nakamura: Oh, this was clinical bacteriology, and, in fact, all types of clinical work: chemistry, and all different things, parasitology, serology.
- Day: This was almost all medical applications?
- Nakamura: Yes, all medical work. We ran that until 1978. I was doing part-time work, too, with the coroner's office as a toxicologist, so I retired from both places in 1978. So I haven't been doing anything since.
- Day: How did La Jolla change? Because you had left here in '42 and you were back in '46.
- Nakamura: Forty-six, yes. La Jolla was undergoing quite a change at that time. I think after '46 there was just a tremendous change. People began flocking in here, people who had come through here during the war, being in service, you know, who I guess liked the place and decided, "Well, why not live out here in La Jolla?" So we saw a big influx in population right after '46.
- Day: And had the prices changed too? Because you went from the Depression in the thirties to a post-war economy.

Nakamura: Oh, yes, the economy just rose. Yes, it was an interesting time.

Day: And were your children born in La Jolla?

Nakamura: Yes.

Day: How many children do you have?

Nakamura: I have three. The oldest is William, the second one is Marianne, who lives down the next block. Our youngest is David, who lives in Maui. Marianne has two boys; the oldest is a junior at USC now, and the youngest is a junior in high school. Bill is still unmarried; he's had a gal friend for several years. I guess he's shied off because so many of his friends have gotten divorced, you know, but he's done very well. He and a friend of his worked for an electronics place in Sorrento; they did electronic modifications, and the company went broke. So they got a job with another company, and the other company went broke, so they decided, well, they'd go into business for themselves. And they did, really made a success of it.

Day: Electrical engineering?

Nakamura: What they do: it's kind of an unusual work; it's electronic modifications, people that manufacture electronic equipment and want some changes made. They consult Bill and his partner and then they figure out what's needed. They send the work up to—. They purchase the parts, send the work up to a place up in San Jose and have the physical work done, with the parts and instructions and what to do, the parts are sent back to customers. They've done very well. They've got a new office up there overlooking the racetrack in Del Mar.

Day: That's great. Are your other children scientists as well?

Nakamura: No, David went to Humboldt State. His first job was as ranger in Yellowstone. He was a ranger out there for two years.

Day: Beautiful place.

Nakamura: Oh, yes. But, you know, the pay is just minimal. It's a nice job but you're not going to get rich at it. So he decided to go into building houses, went with a friend of his to do a house in Maui for this retired corporation lawyer—just a beautiful place. He decided, well, he might just as well do that as a permanent occupation. He's built several houses over there. In fact, he's building us one over there now.

Day: Wonderful.

Nakamura: We went together with our oldest son Bill and bought a couple of acres of land over there. And David is building the house, which is almost complete. We're going back there to Maui in May, and I hope it's complete by then. They were doing the interior when we left a couple of months ago. So we intend to spend some time over in Maui. We usually go twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring and stay there for, maybe, a month and a half each time.

Day: It's beautiful.

Nakamura: Yes, it's nice. We're out in the country, away from the tourists. So all you hear are cows and chickens. We have a horse, board a horse over there. We got two acres of gently sloping land—comes off Haleakala—nice change from being out here.

Day: Now that La Jolla is so built up.

Nakamura: It's like a highway here.

Day: I remember reading that Tillie Genter's family had a farm, that was on what is now Genter Avenue. She described how rural it was around here. Not too long ago.

Nakamura: We used to have a nice view of the golf course, and then they built these buildings.

Day: Tell me a little more about your parents. After the war they moved back here with you. Is that right?

Nakamura: Yes.

Day: And how long did they live after that?

Nakamura: Gosh, I forget the dates, that they lived for, probably ten more years.

Day: Did they make it into their nineties?

Nakamura: My father was ninety-seven when he passed away.

Day: Really.

Nakamura: And my mother was ninety.

Day: Did they ever talk to you about their feelings about the internment?

- Nakamura: No, not really. Because I was with them for a great deal of the time in camp. I guess the general feeling among the older Japanese was that this was sort of an impalatable thing, you know: two countries going to war, looked kind of sideways at the rest, and seeing your own country from the enemy's point of view. Most people, you know, took a philosophical attitude toward the whole thing.
- Day: Did your parents become citizens?
- Nakamura: No, they never did.
- Day: Did they ever go back to Japan?
- Nakamura: No, never.
- Day: Did you have family there? Did you know anything about them? It's more than a century now.
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, we had distant relatives. In fact, in 1971 Marie and I took a trip to Japan with Marie's mother, and she took us around to all these different places. She went to her old home. And right after the war things were pretty bad there economically, and they asked Marie's mother if she could loan them some money so they could rebuild their house. So when we went over to Japan, we went to visit them and saw their new house. I was sort of curious, I said, "Well, what kind of condition was the old house? I mean how old was it?" They said, "A little over 400 years." *[laughing]* They had a barn that was still there, that was over 400 years old. That's amazing. Oh, another fellow at Scripps: Nori Nasu⁴⁷—
- Day: Oh, yes.
- Nakamura: Nori was quite a character. He used to come over all the time. Nori was quite a bit different from most Japanese exchange students, a very outgoing person. When we went to Japan, we looked up Nori, and he was a happy-go-lucky student here—very outgoing person, and here he was, he was head of the geophysical department over there at the University of Tokyo. He came to call on us; he had a big chauffeur-driven limousine.
- Day: Tell me how you knew Bob Scripps and what he was like.
- Nakamura: Oh, Bob Scripps. Oh, he came over to see Anne Sverdrup,⁴⁸ I guess, and of course we were all kids of about the same age, so we got to know each other quite well. Bob is now living in Texas, I guess.

⁴⁷ Noriyuki Nasu (1924-), graduate student at SIO from Japan.

⁴⁸ Anna Margrethe Sverdrup (Hamre), daughter of Gudrun and Harald Sverdrup.

- Day: He has eleven children.
- Nakamura: Oh, my gosh.
- Day: But he was quite a farmer too.
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, that was his great interest, was farming.
- Day: Did you know the other members of the Scripps family?
- Nakamura: No, no. Bob was the only one. Bob was very soft-spoken, slow-going fellow, a real nice fellow, you know. He was going to school up there someplace, was it Davis?
- Day: It might very well have been.
- Nakamura: I was going to Cal.##
- Day: ##These are all photographs of the Scripps Institution. These were all taken by Eugene LaFond, from the thirties. A lot of these were taken for Dr. Vaughan's retirement party. So this must have been, then, 1935.
- Day: Easter Cupp, I know, had one of these little cottages down at the south end of the campus.
- Nakamura: Barnhart⁴⁹ lived in here someplace too.
- Day: Of course, this was the Aquarium.
- Nakamura: Right. Percy Barnhart was an amazing person. He used to collect the specimens. He did a lot of the construction on the actual aquariums.
- Day: Did you?
- Nakamura: I used to see him working in there, with a trowel and cement, fixing up things, preparing the glass, things like that. He would collect the specimens, and he was a taxidermist, too. He used to mount different fish specimens, and took charge of the museum, and wrote a very nice book on Pacific Coast fish.
- Day: He also drew drawings, to illustrate—
- Nakamura: Oh, yes, illustrations. He was a remarkable fellow when you think about it.
- Day: We're very lucky to have some of those illustrations.

⁴⁹ Percy Spencer Barnhart (1881-1951), first aquarist at SIO and author of *Marine Fishes of Southern California* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1936).

Nakamura: He was a great taxonomist, too. I used to try to catch him, you know. I'd go out to these fishing boats. They would come in with all kinds of strange fish, you know, with their purse seines and things. One day I remember, I saw a strange-looking fish that was about that long, kind of an eel-like thing. I said, "I'll go and see if Barney knows what that is." I took it over to him, and he looks at it, and he says, "*Otophidium scrippsi*." I remember that very well. He knew his taxonomy backwards and forwards.

Day: Of course, before the war people used to fish from the pier.

Nakamura: Oh, sure, sure, my father used to do a lot of fishing there. My father caught a silver salmon off of the pier once. They're kind of unusual, not too unusual, because a good friend of mine that used to be a professional fisherman said that every year he'd catch maybe four or five silver salmon.

Day: There were huge black sea bass. These days you never see them quite this large any more.

Nakamura: This same friend of mine who used to fish nets—caught the largest sea bass that I think has ever been recorded: 620 pounds. Looking up a lot of the literature, they said the largest one was 500 and something pounds. I remember when old John Philip Sousa caught a black sea bass off of there.

Day: Interesting. I know abalone, people say, were very plentiful in those days.

Nakamura: Abalones were so plentiful here that you wouldn't think twice about going down there and get a whole set of abalones. You could say, "Let's have an abalone feast. Okay, we'll go down and get some abalones." You'd go down there, and in fifteen minutes you'd have all the abalones you wanted.

Day: Just from diving. And what kind of abalone were they? Were they black abalone?

Nakamura: Blacks we wouldn't fool with—too common and too tough. They were in the intertidal zone, you know. Green abalones were good, and the pinks—*corrugata*.⁵⁰

Day: Now you can hardly find them anywhere.

Nakamura: I remember, there was a fellow—. What the heck was his name? LaPlace Bostwick.⁵¹

Day: Oh, yes, the pearl man.

⁵⁰ *Haliotis corrugata*.

⁵¹ La Place Bostwick (1869-), visiting researcher at SIO working on pearl culture.

Nakamura: He asked me if I could get him fifty abalones, live, with no nicks in them. So this friend of mine, this fellow Bill Seward—we went out there and in an hour we had his fifty abalones, took them over there. He gave us 25 cents apiece. We thought we were just sitting on top of the world with all that money. Gosh, I used to get lots of abalones. The limit used to be ten abalones.

Day: This was for divers.

Nakamura: Yes, and, you know, at times I'd get ten abalones in a single dive, just stuff them in my trunks. There were so many abalones we just thought that they'd just never disappear—no chance of these things ever being scarce. But they're gone.

Day: Did you ever go back to Scripps after the war and just visit people?

Nakamura: Oh, sure. I influenced Townie Cromwell to go there, and Herb Mann. Herb went over to Hawaii to assist in their oceanographic department, setting up the instrumentation. He never came back. Herb was a very unusual fellow. His mother was Hopi Indian. His father was—

[Marie Nakamura enters the room.]

Day: It's nice to meet you.

Mrs. Nakamura: Would you like some tea?

Day: No, thank you, I'm afraid I'm going to wear out your husband. We're going to conclude in a few minutes.

Nakamura: His father was an Austrian Jew, and Herb physically was a rather unusual kid; he was about six feet tall, real skinny, dark features. We used to call him Ghandi. He went to Hawaii, and three years later he came back on a visit, and what do I see but a great big fat Hawaiian, speaking pidgin English. He said he used to go out on trips to various islands on the South Pacific, and the natives there would try to speak to him in their own tongue. They thought he was a native. He just loved that life, and he later did work for the Bishop Museum over there. When we went over to visit him—we visited him once when he was in Oahu—he knew Marie's sister over there, and then he invited us over when he went to the big island, and we spent a week with him over there, and he took us out to all the various old ancient Hawaiian habitations, sites and things. That was very interesting.⁵²

⁵² “Herb Mann, after moving to the ‘Big Island,’ underwent a complete change in culture and became a devout Austrian. [He] joined a German-speaking organization in Hilo, spent all his vacations in Vienna, and even spoke with a slight German accent.” Hiomi Nakamura, personal correspondence regarding this transcript, December 2003.

Day: Do you know that Dr. Kofoid's wife, Carrie Kofoid,⁵³ was a missionary in 1893 over in Hawaii?

Nakamura: Oh, my goodness.

Day: And in Dr. Kofoid's papers, which we have in the Archives, we have photographs that she took during the 1890s.

Nakamura: Oh, my.

Day: The next time I see you I'll show you some of those. Well, thank you very much. It's been a pleasure to talk to you, and I very much appreciate your time. Thank you.⁵⁴ ##

⁵³ Carrie Prudence Winter Kofoid.

⁵⁴ "In looking back, the time spent at Scripps was one of the most interesting episodes of my life, both from the standpoint of friendly personalities and fascinating glimpses into various disciplines associated with oceanography." Hiomi Nakamura, personal correspondence regarding this transcript, December 2003.

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