

OREGON HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY HISTORY PROGRAM

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW

WITH

Katsumi J. Nakadate, M.D.

Interview conducted July 15, 2000

by

Tadaaki Hiruki, M.D.

SUMMARY

In this interview, University of Oregon Medical School alumnus Dr. Katsumi J. Nakadate talks about his experiences as a Japanese American, a doctor, and a decorated World War II veteran. He begins with a discussion of his experience as one of five Asian Americans in the UOMS Class of 1939, noting that none of those five were subsequently able to secure internships in Portland. He talks about attitudes towards Asian Americans in the Midwest during early 1940s and describes his encounter with the FBI on the morning of December 8, 1941, when he was in the second year of his internal medicine residency in Michigan.

He returns to the early years of his life in Portland, and talks about his success in starting the first Boy Scout Troop specifically for boys in the Nisei community here. He notes that many of the boys he taught in that troop went on to volunteer for service in the United States Army, after being relocated to the internment camp at Minidoka, Idaho. Nakadate himself joined the Reserve Officer Training Corps when he was a student at UOMS. In his third year of residency at Eloise, he was called up to join the 17th Airborne. He describes being shot down over Germany. He was awarded both the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart for his actions.

Returning to the States in 1945, Nakadate found it difficult to maintain a general medical practice; the shrapnel he still carries from his war wounds had rendered him too disabled to conduct house calls. He turned to anesthesiology and completed a second residency, this time at Hines VA Hospital in Chicago. He returned to Portland in 1956 when he received an invitation from Dr. Albert Oyama to join the staff of St. Vincent Hospital. He practiced there until his retirement in 1980.

Nakadate talks at length about his family, highlighting the accomplishments of his children and grandchildren. He describes his experience as a Japanese American living in predominantly white areas of Portland, and notes that he has always been treated as “just another citizen.”

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July 15, 2000

Site: Dr. Nakadate's residence, Courtyard Village, Portland, Oregon

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

HIRUKI: This is an OHSU Oral History Project interview with Dr. Katsumi Nakadate, of Portland, Oregon, on the fifteenth of July, year 2000, on a Saturday just before lunchtime at his residence in Courtyard Village, Portland, Oregon.

NAKADATE: I was hoping my son would be here, but...

HIRUKI: Okay. Dr. Nakadate, you understand that this interview will be for the historical record; it is not a media interview?

NAKADATE: I understand.

HIRUKI: In oral history we talk about the who, the what, the where, the when, and the why, so perhaps we could start with who you are.

NAKADATE: My name is Katsumi Nakadate. I don't have any English name, until I got to Indiana in about 1940, when they said, "We can't pronounce Katsumi, so we'll call you Jim." That's why a lot of people around here always call me Jim.

And it's interesting that I started out as a youngster—they said, "Are you American?" I said, "Yes, I'm American," but they'd look at me and say, "You're Japanese." And even when I went to school, it would be that way.

Now, as far as going through school, I went to grammar school, high school, and then I went to Willamette University, which is down in Salem, Oregon, and its so-called premedics. And there I worked on a farm while I was going to school, and worked all the time whenever I can, to pay for the tuition. And I got through at Willamette, and when I was admitted to the University of Oregon Medical School—I say University of Oregon Medical School—in '35, I had—Willamette said "You could go; you don't have a diploma yet, but you can earn it when you go." And Oregon said, "You can come to medical school." That was in the fall of '35. So when I ended medical school I didn't really have a bachelor degree yet. That's kind of interesting. Actually, when I got my bachelor's degree it was in 1940, when I was an intern for my first year of medicine, after I had graduated from the University of Oregon. I got my Oregon diploma before I got my Willamette diploma [laughs]. It was very interesting.

And at the University of Oregon Medical School there were five, I say Orientals: three Japanese-Americans [Nakadate, William Ito, Joseph Sato] and two Chinese-Americans [Ed

Louie, Sam Liu]. And it was amazing, because that class, the class that graduated in '39, had the most, let's say, minorities, and the minority—I can't remember seeing any Afro-Americans. They were all Japanese-Americans or Chinese-Americans. And they treated us, as far as I'm concerned, just like we were Americans. And I thought that the University of Oregon Medical School was a wonderful place to be and a wonderful place to graduate from.

HIRUKI: Was there any reason, that you know of, that there were so many in your year?

NAKADATE: We don't know, because I think there were only two that I know of that graduated from the University of Oregon Medical School previous to us, and they—I don't know, one of them could have been from Hawaii, and the other one was not a Nisei. I think he was from California or something like that. And they graduated one from—I think in 1935.

HIRUKI: So you were aware of the history of Asian Americans at OHSU prior to your starting medical school?

NAKADATE: I didn't know about them until after I graduated and was looking for somebody that I thought would have an M.D. in Portland. The doctors' names were Dr. [Robert] Kinoshita, I think, and Dr. [Robert H.] Shiomi. Are their names listed, do you know?

HIRUKI: Oh, yes, I've seen them on the register.

NAKADATE: They're both living, as far as I know, at this time, which is—I don't know what the day is today. Fourteenth or fifteenth of July. I don't know what health they're in, but I know that they're retired.

It's very interesting that when we graduated, all five of us Oriental Americans graduated, we could not get an internship here in Portland. I think they might have tried in Seattle and they might have tried some places in California, but I don't think any of us could get an internship.

HIRUKI: What was the climate like at that time?

NAKADATE: The climate was maybe a little bit tough. I don't like to say anything bad about it, particularly. Most of us—I went to the Midwest, towards Chicago, looking in Chicago, and I even went to New York City, but I took my internship there in Indiana, right next door to Chicago. I went to St. Catherine's Hospital, which is a Catholic hospital, and, as you know, I'm a Methodist Episcopal [laughs], not a Catholic. But they treated me just like I was one of their people. I think that in the Midwest they were very excellent, taking care of so-called Japanese Americans.

HIRUKI: Were there many others there?

NAKADATE: None. When I was there I must have been the first Japanese American in the cities of East Chicago and Hammond, Indiana.

HIRUKI: What was that like?

NAKADATE: I was just another citizen, primarily because in that area there are many Italians and—let's see. The others would be from Europe, European people, and so they were all, theoretically, aliens [laughs], many of them who were not citizens yet, even. Oh, quite a few Polish and quite a few—I don't think there were very many Germans there, but I think Polish—anyway, they were European, from small European countries, and they were all friendly.

It was interesting that I ended up there. And then, when I went in for residency, I got into a place in Michigan, a hospital called Eloise, and which is now, I think, Wayne County Hospital, the county hospital. At that time, why, I went in for internal medicine. So I was there for, what, two years.

In that time we had Pearl Harbor in 1941, and I remember this very distinctly. I was in my second year of internal medicine, and Pearl Harbor was Sunday. Monday morning I went to go to work in the hospital, and they told me, "There's a couple of people in the director's office to see you, and you are supposed to go there." And I go there, and who do you suppose it was? It was the FBI. Well, they were the ones checking Japanese Americans in that area, in the Detroit area. And they said, "We know all about you, Doctor, because we have a man here that's in our service that was a Boy Scout, an Eagle Scout, with you in Portland, Oregon, in your same troop." And they—the outfit is the federal—you probably know what it is. It's the one that checks for problems here in the United States. They said, "We know all about you, so you don't have anything to worry about. We just wanted to let you know that you're okay." And this fellow by the name of Kirby, Jim Kirby, was a fellow Eagle Scout in Troop 66 in Portland, Oregon, in the years, I would say, 1928 through 1931. A fellow Eagle Scout.

HIRUKI: So he vouched for you?

NAKADATE: He vouched for me before the group knew anything about me. He vouched for me. And so several times I went out and ate with the federal people, and they all knew I was just another fellow citizen. That was very interesting.

Now, when I was going to school, medical school, I had to work. So I worked in—I got what they called a student something or other, and I worked mostly in the chemistry lab. I had to clean up the chemistry program after school, and I'd put in so many hours there. I did that, and then part of the time I had to go to the library and clean books, the Medical School Library. The librarian there was a lady [Bertha Hallam]. I can't remember her name, but she was very, very nice, a very good person, and treated me just as a student that has to work to help pay their tuition.

HIRUKI: And you were living at home at the time?

NAKADATE: I was living at home on the east side. I had to travel through the middle of Portland, say Broadway and in that area, and go up that little road. The family had a Ford with a rumble seat. I don't know if it had—I think all it had was foot pedals, a little Ford. Then, there was another fellow that lived very close, and we used to carpool, interchange getting up to school in the morning. I can't remember his name, but he was a very nice person, and he graduated at the same time I did from medical school, and I don't believe I've seen him since. I don't know if he's living or not, even.

Now, as far as medical school, during school, the professors were all excellent people, and they treated us just like we were fellow students. None of them were minorities, of course, the professors or the teachers, the instructors. I just felt that medicine had good people like that teaching students. I don't know if any of them had private practices or anything like that, but I know that the chemistry man was not an M.D., he was a Ph.D. in chemistry. It was kind of interesting.

There was one person that I can remember that was an instructor or a teacher, and I think he's still living, and I'm trying to remember his name. But every time I used to see him afterwards, especially when I—because we were on the same staff at St. Vincent Hospital. That's where I finally ended up in anesthesiology. It was very interesting. He's the only one that I can remember as being an instructor at Oregon Medical. I'll think of his name, I hope, but I can't right now.

HIRUKI: Maybe we could talk about when you were born?

NAKADATE: When I was born?

HIRUKI: Yes.

NAKADATE: Well, as far as I know, I was delivered by a midwife. My mother had come from Japan in about 1902 or '03. She learned how to speak English, but she was also—when she was in Japan, she was a grammar school teacher. And she married my father, who worked here in Portland. He came—here's a funny thing. He was the firstborn of the Nakadate group in Japan, the first boy. He was supposed to stay there in Japan, but he came to the United States to work for Furuya Company—I don't know if you know that outfit—and he worked there. But Mother and Father, at that time they couldn't be citizens. Of course, I'm a citizen because I was born here.

They did the very best they could for me going through school and this that and the other, helped me with my tuition, and I lived with them in grammar school and high school. Then, when I went to medical school, and came back to Portland from Salem, I lived with them. He worked for the Furuya Company then, and Mother was a caretaker for Japanese young fellows that came to work in the United States. She could speak good Japanese, of course. I used to be able to speak to those fellows at the house where we lived. And I

commuted from the east side to medical school. And these fellows were called *juutaku*. I don't know if you know what that is.

HIRUKI: Explain that for me.

NAKADATE: Well, these were young fellows that came here to work for Furuya Company and for some other companies around, and they were all Japanese firms.

So she did the cooking and she did the watching that they were okay. So there were quite a few, and I don't know of any one of those fellows that I used to know that are still living. I outlived them.

During school, when I was going to U of O Medical, they needed something for the younger fellows, younger Nisei fellows. So I says—here, I'm an Eagle Scout and so forth, which I got in 1930. I says, "All right, we will start a scout troop all for the young Nisei, twelve-, thirteen-, fourteen-year-olds." So I says, "Okay, I'll start that, and I'll be the scoutmaster, and we will go have our scout meetings at the Catholic church," which is on about Fourteenth, here. It would be on Fourteenth and Couch, somewhere on the west side. A Catholic church. And, here, all the Japanese American citizens were either Buddhists or Episcopalians or Christians. No Catholics. The Catholic priest was Father Theelin, who was a tremendous person for us Japanese Americans. And they had about twenty-three or -four fellows join the scout troop, and they were twelve-, thirteen-, fourteen-year-olds. Very few fourteen, they were mostly twelve- and thirteen-year-olds.

The interesting thing about that is, I think out of the group most of them stayed in scouting, and when the internment came, they had to go to Idaho, Minidoka, Idaho. And they started a troop there, or made a troop, and then the older ones volunteered for the Army service, and they went to the 442. And I feel very good about those fellows that volunteered, Boy Scouts—or, not Boy Scouts, they were young fellows eighteen, nineteen years old by then.

Those are the interesting things. And at school, you can imagine me going to medical school and being a scoutmaster of a bunch of Nisei youngsters. I say youngsters. But they were only five or six years younger than I was.

HIRUKI: The movement to establish a Nisei scout troop, was that from the community?

NAKADATE: Well, the community says, "Okay, how many young fellows are there around that would join a scout troop?" Evidently, most of them lived on the west side, and there were no west-side scout troops. You understand, I say scout troops of 100 percent Americans, and there was nobody who wanted to be a scoutmaster or anything like that. So through the Japanese Ancestral Society, or something like that, with a little help from them, why, we started a scout troop. And it was very interesting. We'd have our scout meetings in the Catholic church. And they became good scouts. I think out of that bunch there probably

were maybe three Eagle Scouts. And when they went to internment camp in Idaho, why, I think there were probably—of that troop I thought I heard them say maybe there were nine fellows who volunteered for the 442 out of that scout troop. That’s wonderful.

HIRUKI: What about scouting do you think made them more likely to do that? What qualities did the scouting give them?

NAKADATE: I think that they felt that they were going to be men, mostly Americans. I don’t know of any that went to Japan. I know that a couple went to Hawaii, which was at that time—no, I think it was part of the United States, Hawaii. A couple of them went there, and a one of them went into medicine and practiced there in Hawaii. And the others, they did pretty well wherever they went. I think we lost three of them in World War II in Europe. Three of them are probably buried there in Europe, of those Boy Scouts. That’s one of the things that I felt sorry about, that—but they did it for the United States.

And medical school, I still say that it was very wonderful. We got our diplomas of medicine in Eugene. That’s the only day that I went to the University of Oregon in Eugene is for the diploma of medicine.

HIRUKI: Could you explain that to me, what the arrangement was?

NAKADATE: Well, evidently they had graduates of Oregon—at that time it was University of Oregon Medical School, you see. Now it’s just, what, OHSU. At that time it was University of Oregon Medical.

HIRUKI: Oh, a separate unit.

NAKADATE: It was like a graduate course, medicine. So we got our diplomas there. I remember having to wear a cap and a gown, M.D. And it was one day. We went down there one day, and that was it.

I think that my father was the only one. My mother died in—you can’t believe this. My birthday was the third of February. She died on the tenth of February of HCVRD. You know what that is? Hypertensive cardiovascular renal disease. And she died in uremia. And I felt so bad, because here I was going to graduate in three months from medicine, and I couldn’t do anything. And so some of the professors—I don’t remember their names—they came up to me and said, “We can’t do anything for your mother.” She died in uremia, which was kind of sad. Nowadays they would give her a kidney transplant or a machine, or whatever it is, and she would have lived. She only got to be of the age of, what, forty-five, forty-six. She died young. And she could not go—when I graduated in Eugene, I think my dad went down there to see me graduate. That’s one of the things that I think about.

My mother was the one that did most of the—made sure that when I went through grammar school and high school, “You’re going to be a doctor.” My mother was the one. And so I feel real strong about that. Premedics. “You will be premedics, in high school and

Willamette University.” Premedics. I had to take a lot of chemistry, physics, this that and the other.

HIRUKI: Why do you think she wanted you to be a doctor so much?

NAKADATE: I think that—the other thing that she thought about was to be in religion, be a—what do you call it, not a priest but a—but she felt she wanted me to be in medicine, I think primarily because her older brother in Japan went into medicine. And she thought that that was something good, better than one brother who went into the service, went into the Japanese army, I guess. But she liked education or medicine, and that was the way she felt that I should go, one or the other, so I entered medicine. That’s why I became a doctor.

HIRUKI: So you knew this well ahead of time, then.

NAKADATE: Way ahead of time. So whenever I went through school, I took a lot of chemistry and a lot of physics. It’s a funny thing. When I went to Willamette, they says, “You have to take a second language.” And I says, “Well, I speak Japanese. Isn’t that a second language?” “No, you have to take something else.” So I says, “Well, I’ll take German.” You can’t imagine me thinking of German.

HIRUKI: Why did you pick German?

NAKADATE: Well, I don’t know. I didn’t feel like I wanted Italian, and I think the other was Spanish, see. But I said I’d go German. I don’t know why I thought that way, but I did [laughs].

[End of Tape 1, Side 1/Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

HIRUKI: At the end of side one, we were talking about German as your second language, or rather third language?

NAKADATE: Yes. And it was surprising, because the German professor was not a German. I think he was Jewish, the professor that taught the German class. Isn’t that peculiar? Here it was in Willamette University, which is Protestant, and here was me—well, I’m a Protestant, of course. And the fellow that taught German there was—I’m pretty sure he was Jewish.

It’s a peculiar thing, because when I got into Germany—I was in the 17th Airborne, and we jumped into Germany. Finally, after World War II ended, after I had been discharged from the hospital—I was a patient in the hospital, I was never working in the hospital. I was a front-line man. And so we went to the 82nd Airborne, which they transferred me to after I was released from the hospital. We went to Berlin, Germany. This was late in 1945. And the German people would say, “Oh, you’re a Japanese and you’re in the American army, and you speak German?” Wasn’t that interesting? Because I could speak German. They’d look at

me kind of funny, like this, you know: “You’re in the American army.” So my German came in handy. Isn’t that amazing?

So those are some very interesting things that happened to me, and I appreciate being able to—now, when we were in Indiana, when I came home, most of the time that I was in the service overseas, Mary was in the internment camp.

HIRUKI: This was your wife?

NAKADATE: Yes, with my first son. That’s a picture I’ll show you upstairs, if you want to come up. And she was in the internment camp, and they said that when I got wounded severely—which I did, I got wounded severely, I was in the hospital for two months, and they said, “You almost died because you lost so much blood from the wounds that you got.”

HIRUKI: What happened? How did you get wounded?

NAKADATE: Well, I got hit in the air when we—I went in on a glider, and I got hit in the air. And then, when I was on the ground, I was helping people that were wounded worse than I was. And I must have worked pretty hard, because they said that I finally collapsed while I was treating somebody. And they said, “Well, you have to be sent back over the Rhine,” because we jumped in over Wesel, a town called Wesel, which is over the Rhine. They said, “because of the loss of blood and the pain that you were going through, why, we had to evacuate you as a patient.”

I can’t remember too much of that, but I remember this, that they said they had to cut the clothes off me because they were all bloody. When I ended up in the hospital, they says, “You don’t have any clothes; you don’t have any army clothes, and we don’t have too many clothes, so we’ll just put you in whatever we got” [laughs], which was—in the hospital, why, all you got was a gown and a—oh, whatever you want to call it. That’s all I had as a uniform. And the fellows would look at me, fellow people that had been wounded, and they’d look at me and say, “Hey, you’re Japanese, aren’t you?” And I said, “No, I’m an American.” And they’d say, “What’s your rank?” And I’d say, “I’m only a captain,” and they’d look [laughter]. And it was very interesting in the service.

This was 19, what, ‘44, ‘45.

HIRUKI: And you had enlisted at what point?

NAKADATE: Well, I was in the reserve. When I was in the University of Oregon Medical School, they said, “Anybody that wants to can sign up for the Reserve.” So, theoretically, I was a first lieutenant in the Reserve at Oregon, but, “You’re just a student as far as we’re concerned.”

HIRUKI: This was before the war?

NAKADATE: That was just before the war. This had to be 1938, see, just before I graduated from the University of Oregon Medical School. And so we had to go to some military classes. And I says, “I don’t know what the military is.” But, here, I’d been a Boy Scout, so it wasn’t 100 percent different. But it was very interesting.

So when I got through the University of Oregon and went into internship in Indiana, why, they said, “Well, you’re in the Reserve.” And in 19, what, ‘41 I was in Michigan, and at the same time I got orders, before Pearl Harbor, to go in as a first lieutenant in the—some medicine. But the internal medicine people there at Eloise says, “No, he’s in the second year of internal medicine, so why don’t you release him? Don’t let him go to the service.” And so, “Okay,” the service says, “We’ll cancel your orders.” So I had been ordered in 1941.

HIRUKI: Before Pearl Harbor.

NAKADATE: This was before Pearl Harbor. And then Pearl Harbor happened, and I told you what happened. Then I was in the third year of internal medicine when the hospital says, “You’re going to get orders. We’re pretty sure you’re going to get orders. So you can start third year, but I don’t think you better stay with us.” So at the end of the second year of internal medicine, why, they says, “We’ll release you, because you’re never going to finish the third year.” And so I was waiting, and I got orders, all right. They knew before then that I was going to get orders, the hospital knew that.

So when I got the orders, why, then, I says, “Uh-oh, I’m going to go—I’ll be going in early ‘43.” Active duty with the 442. I didn’t know that at that time. And the 442 were just being built. So I says, “Well, I’m going to the service, and I’ll probably go overseas,” and I says, “If I should get killed, I have nobody else in the family.” So I told Mary, or wrote to Mary, and said, “We should get married before.” So we got married. She had to get special permission to leave the internment camp.

HIRUKI: She was where?

NAKADATE: She was in Idaho, in Minidoka. So she got special—from the senator, Indiana senator, the whatever it is, plus something else, so that she could get out of the camp and we could get married. So that’s the way we got married. Then, four months later, I had to go to the 442. So we were married for the total of, what, five months [laughs].

HIRUKI: Where did you get married?

NAKADATE: We got married in, I say the East Chicago Methodist Church, which is just a little bit away from where—and I think I had—at that time there was a, I say Chinese American doctor getting his first year internship at St. Catherine’s Hospital, so he was my best man. Wasn’t that interesting? And so we got married, and then...

HIRUKI: Did she have a bridesmaid, then, to go...?

NAKADATE: The bridesmaid was a lady that was—a doctor who took me in while I was waiting for orders. A doctor had a clinic there, by the name of Biknell. And Mrs. Biknell was the bridesmaid, so-called bridesmaid, and the Chinese fellow was the best man.

Dr. Biknell was a good friend. He was quite a bit older, but he was a regular physician. I sort of worked in his clinic, but I didn't get anything moneywise. But I will say this. When I came back in 1945, he says, "Come to the clinic and you can work with me," or "for me," or something like that, whatever you want to call it. I think that at the time that I came back from overseas I was a captain, and I think the pay was about two hundred dollars a month.

HIRUKI: In the army?

NAKADATE: In the army. But overseas, because I was overseas and because I was a reservist, I got a little bit more than that. But when I got back to East Chicago, he says, "Well, you'll start at two hundred dollars a month. Your pay will be that" [laughs].

HIRUKI: That was the going rate?

NAKADATE: Well, I don't know what it was. But that was less than what I made going overseas. But, all right, so I started that way. I worked with him I think maybe one year, and I went into private practice on my own as a physician.

HIRUKI: In the same city?

NAKADATE: In the same city. He had said that he didn't want any of his assistants to start practice close to him, but because I was an Army man, and so forth and so on, I says, "Well, I'm going to be"—so I was within a half a block of where the clinic was. I started up in some office building, and there was a dentist and another doctor, who was an obstetrician [O.L. Marks]. He was the one that delivered Mary there, at St. Catherine's. So all my kids, one during the war and the other three after the war, were delivered in a Catholic hospital by, I think he was a Catholic physician. I say OB man, but that's what he did most of, OBs, and he was a very good person. I would say that all my kids are all fine, partly because I think they were treated well.

As far as medicine is concerned, then, I worked in East Chicago as a private physician 'til 1949, which, what, was three years? And I said, "It's too hard," because I'm a disabled veteran, a little bit a disabled veteran, and I couldn't get around very well. But I had to go out and make house calls and work in an office, plus make night house calls, even. So I says, "I can't do that anymore, so I'm going to go into anesthesiology." I went to the residency in anesthesiology. This was in a hospital, a veterans hospital in Chicago, Hines VA Hospital, and I got my two years of anesthesiology there.

Then, when I came back, they said the Gary, Indiana hospital, which is a Catholic hospital, needed an anesthesiologist, so I went there for a little bit. But at that time—and the

hospital paid me, all right. After a couple of years the anesthesia board and the anesthesiologists said, “You have to go in private practice, you can’t work for a hospital.”

HIRUKI: What was the reason?

NAKADATE: They made some ruling. I didn’t have anything to do with the ruling. You’d have to go into private practice, have your own office, but still work at the hospital.

HIRUKI: But you weren’t the only one affected by that. Or were you?

NAKADATE: No, there was one other fellow, and he was willing—he says, “The heck with you anesthesia people.” And so I said, “I’ll have to leave.” But I got this position—then, right away the VA called and says, “We need somebody to work in the state of Washington.” Well, so I says, “Okay, I’ll work with the VA.” There, the VA would pay me, see. I wouldn’t have to have an office and somebody to do my collections of whatever I did.

So I ended up right across the river, right across the Columbia River. I’ll think of the name of the town. It’s a nice town. Walla Walla. I practiced in the VA hospital there, and I worked there for a year. Then the VA here says, “We’d like to have you here in Portland.” And I says, “Well, it may be possible.” But at the same time, a Doctor Oyama, who is a pathologist at St. Vincent, he called and says, “Come to St. Vincent and you can practice anesthesiology.”

HIRUKI: How did he know about you?

NAKADATE: Oh, his mother and father were from the same ken [Japanese prefecture] in Japan. And so I knew him.

HIRUKI: Which ken is that?

NAKADATE: Yamanashi-ken. His father and mother were very nice people. They knew my father and mother. And so he knew about me and he knew that I had graduated from Oregon, here, and so he says, “Come to St. Vincent.” So I came to St. Vincent and I worked there at St. Vincent for, what, twenty-four, twenty-five years. I say worked. I gave anesthesia. I was chief there for two or three years, nineteen sixty-something, at the old St. Vincent Hospital.

HIRUKI: And you became chief how many years after you got there?

NAKADATE: Well, I got there in ‘55 and I became chief in ‘61 or ‘62 or ‘63. And then I said somebody else should be chief [laughs]. Chief is a little bit of a tough thing because you had to tell other fellows—and there were eight or nine other anesthesiologists at that time, and they were all good men, except one, who was a lady [Fern Greaves]. She was there at old St. Vincent, on Westover Road, a couple of years before I was there. But as chief, why, you had to do leftover cases, most of them, because you had to assign all the cases, you

know, for people. And some of the doctors would come up and, “I like this doctor, or, I like this anesthesiologist.” And I got to do a lot of the welfare cases, because nobody wanted to do welfare cases [laughs]. But that was all right. I did the best I could for them. And I still—I made a living.

I had to send the kids through school, you know. I had two—they were good students. I say children. They’re fifty years old now, see. Two of them went to Stanford, one to U of O, and the other went to a big school in California [Occidental College]. They were all good students. I got two Phi Beta Kappas out of the four.

HIRUKI: Any doctors?

NAKADATE: One became a Ph.D., the oldest one, and he teaches English. He is a professor of English lit at Iowa State University. And the other one, a lady, is a potter—she’s a master of fine arts. And then the other two are masters. One teaches Japanese and the other teaches mathematics, the one that’s supposed to come here to take care of me. He’s the only bachelor in the bunch [laughs], so he could take care of me.

Those are some very interesting things. All of them—only one, the bachelor, lives in Eugene, taught mathematics at Cottage Grove High School. One daughter lives in New York, in Ithaca, and works in research and development at Cornell University. She taught, I think, Japanese at the University of Washington previously. Japanese, can you imagine? And, of course, the other lady is a potter and a painter, the fine arts.

HIRUKI: Well, you say, “Japanese.” Why is that surprising to you? How did you bring them up? What sort of household did you run?

NAKADATE: Well, they did so well, and they went to different places. I think that—like my son is in Iowa, but he got his Ph.D. at Indiana University and his first job at the University of Texas, Austin. The daughter, the one that graduated from Stanford got her master’s, I think from the University of Washington. And the other one went to a place in California [Mills College] and got her master of fine arts. But none of them went into medicine, you understand.

HIRUKI: Why do you think that is? Did you discourage it?

NAKADATE: They got tired of seeing me work all day, and then sometimes, when I was on call, I’d have to go out at night and work all night, and they wouldn’t see me for twenty-four hours. I think they didn’t like the idea of being a doctor and having to—whatever it is. So they went into education, which is the second thing that I probably would have gone into way back when. It’s kind of interesting. And the young people all like what they do, and I like what they do. They don’t have to be doctors, I mean MDs.

HIRUKI: If you think back to how you were brought up and how you brought your kids up, do you see any difference?

NAKADATE: I think that because they were brought up in Indiana, some of them, first, you see—when they came back to Walla Walla they were only there a year, and the girls were still real young. When we came back to Portland, why, we moved here on the west side, not on the east side. We lived there in Hillsdale, if you know the Hillsdale address, and they went to Wilson High School and to the grammar school that was there [Robert Gray]. They all liked what they—I don't think that any of them had anything special that they liked, but I think they all liked education, and so they became educators, as it were. And, like I said before, none of them went into medicine. I think that we worked, while they were growing up, that they should go to whatever place they wanted to go, university, and they all had good grades. I think I had two 4-pointers and the other two were 3.9 and 3.8. That's not bad. And so they were all good students; when they went to university, or college, they were welcomed because they were good students.

HIRUKI: So I guess it sounds like your wife must have had to spend a lot of time, then, with the children.

NAKADATE: My mother was also a teacher, remember, in Japan before she came here, but a grammar school teacher over there. But here she could teach English and she could teach Japanese. My wife was a master of *ikebana*, and so she was a teacher of that. So my wife was a very talented person, and the young people knew that, that she was talented. All she did was bring up kids, you know. Cook for them and see that they were all right. And when they went to school, why, she knew where they went and helped them with whatever it is that they had to do. By the way, they all had to work at something or other, and in the summertime is when they did most of their work as students, and Mary helped them, we helped them. We didn't want them to think that they can get their education from papa and mama completely [laughs].

And that's why they're good people, good students, and they bring up their young people, I think, real well, the three that are married. Mary and I have five grandchildren, and two of them are university graduates, and the other two I'm sure will be graduates when they get old enough. We have one, a grandson, that is a—he's eleven years old. He'll be twelve in August. But he likes athletics, and he likes baseball, soccer, basketball. And he's bigger than I am and he's only eleven years old. I tell him, "Don't depend on athletics. I want you to be a good student." And he's just my grandson, you understand. I tell him, "I'd like you to get a degree in a university, and I don't want you to go into baseball or football—no football." I say, "Baseball or basketball. You're going to be tall." I bet he'll be over six feet, because he's already five-six. He's taller than I am [laughs].

HIRUKI: Did your kids marry within the Japanese American community?

NAKADATE: My son, the oldest son, got married when he was teaching in Austin, Texas, so he married a, I say *hakujin* [Caucasian] and had his three youngsters in Texas, so they're Texans. Two of them are university graduates already. And my son here, he's the bachelor, and he teaches at Cottage Grove, like I told you, and he's a good instructor. He's

so-called retired now from teaching.

My daughter did pottery and does painting, and she is the one that's bringing up this athlete type. I tell her, "The athletic thing: I know he's good, but I don't want him to think..."

[End of Tape 1, Side 2/Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

HIRUKI: At the end of the last tape, we were talking about the next generation, because when you lived here, Hillsdale was mostly a white area.

NAKADATE: When I moved there I was the first Japanese American, I think.

HIRUKI: And what was that like?

NAKADATE: It was the same as everybody. All our neighbors were Americans, of course, and their youngsters understood, and our kids got along real well with everybody. At Wilson High School they did real well, every one of them. And the people, I would say, accepted me as just part of the group. I know this, that right now there's at least two Japanese Americans living in that area. Dr. Inahara. You probably know of him. He's a surgeon, and he used to live real close to Wilson High School. I think he's retired now, but he was a vascular surgeon, a real good man. But the other person that is Japanese American [Tom and Lillian Toyota] lives about, oh, half a mile from where I live, on the same street that we live on, Sunset Boulevard. I don't know him very well.

HIRUKI: You didn't socialize or...?

NAKADATE: No, I didn't socialize.

But I would say that there may be some of Italian parentage, and I think there are some Jewish people in that area, but I don't know in that area of any Afro-Americans. I know that there are some that live off the way near Wilson High School, because I know that some of the athletes that used to live in that area over there on the east side, in the area of a high school there—I know the name of the high school—but they'd rather go to Wilson High School, and they came. Like, we have a professional basketball player that went to Wilson High School, an NBA player. There are two of them. One [Damon Stoudamire] is in Portland and plays for the Portland Trail Blazers, point guard, and the other one is a point guard in Minneapolis. So they went to Wilson High School here. But they're both Afro-Americans.

HIRUKI: So I guess when you were raising your family, then, the neighborhood situation was very much like when you were growing up, as well, over on the east side?

NAKADATE: On the east side, yes. All *hakujin*. At that time I don't think there were many Afro-Americans in our neighborhood. I think now there are a lot of Afro-Americans in the house where I used to live when I was going to high school and going to medical school.

HIRUKI: Do you remember the address?

NAKADATE: The address was Twelfth and—two blocks north of Broadway. I know the name of the street because I lived in there for how many years. Right now, the house is still there that we lived in, and it's pretty old; it has to be old. The name of the street, I know what it is but I can't think of it [Hancock].

HIRUKI: Maybe it will come later.

NAKADATE: Yes.

HIRUKI: What was the neighborhood like?

NAKADATE: The neighborhood was all people that were all good neighbors. A couple of them—they lived next door to us—were two young men, and I think they both became attorneys. I think a person that lived across the street from us, that young fellow, I think he became a businessman of some sort, I think. And then there's a person that lives here, I think he's related to a person that lived across the street from us by the name of Niedermeyer, but he says he's just kind of semi-related. But I don't think there's anybody in that neighborhood that became doctors. I know that there were some that became educators and, like I say, attorneys. So the closest one must have been a mile from where I lived that went up to medical school at the same time I did.

HIRUKI: And so your family was pretty separate, then, from Japantown or other Japanese Americans?

NAKADATE: Yes. I think that there were no other Japanese-American families in our area. Oh, here's my son [tape stopped].

[End of Interview]

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