



Lesson Three

Haru Inaba Kuromiya Oral History

Before her family was forced to move to the Manzanar Relocation Center, Haru was a student at Riverside Polytechnic High School. She graduated from high school while incarcerated at Crystal City, Texas, and returned to Riverside with her family after the war.

Haru Inaba (HA) is being interviewed by Allison Campbell (AC) of the [Riverside Metropolitan Museum](#)

AC: Can you describe when the family knew they would be leaving Crystal City and how the family received that news?

HK: I don't remember exactly how we received the news. I guess we were told that we were going to leave, so we just got busy packing. My father was in touch with some Riverside families that had already gone back, and I remember looking forward to getting back to Riverside and seeing my friends.

AC: Did you take the train back?

HK: Golly, I don't even remember how we got there. I think we took the train back. I remember a family picking us up, and we talked about my finding a job and things like that.

AC: Knowing that you had just graduated from high school, did you have an idea of what you wanted to do when you got back?

HK: I just knew I wanted to get a job. At that time I don't think I was even thinking of going to college. I d

AC: Can you describe the arrival of your family back at the farm and what your impression was?

HK: Oh my gosh. The house was totally trashed. It was awful. I remember there were no beds. We slept on the floor. I was just really, really angry at the people that had rented our house. It was just a mess.

AC: Had they been people your family knew?

HK: No. We just rented it out to whomever would rent from us at the time. We left in such a hurry.

AC: Were things missing that you had stored?

HK: **Yes, there were. I couldn't tell you exactly what was missing. It was just a mess.**

AC: Was it assumed that your father would go back to farming, or the family would?

HK: **Oh yes, absolutely, right away.**

AC: So what steps did the family take? Did they go out and buy more chickens or – that was what the family _____?

HK: **I guess so, mm-hmm. I left right away to work in a home as a housekeeper.**

AC: A home in Riverside?

HK: **Yes.**

AC: Do you remember where it was and who the family was?

HK: **I can't even remember their name. I didn't stay very long. It was out towards Magnolia. As I remember, it was in the middle of an orange grove, huge, huge orange grove. This gorgeous house in the middle of the orange groves.**

AC: How did you get the job?

HK: **I guess some friends – a lot of us did that kind of work after we came back. A friend must have helped me get the job. I don't remember.**

AC: Do you remember how the Caucasian Riverside community viewed the Japanese families that were returning?

[pause]

AC: So sort of the reception amongst the Caucasian community?

HK: **I don't now how my folks felt, but I went to visit my Caucasian friends. They had kept in touch with me while I was in camp, and they were just wonderful. I remember walking in town by myself, and I saw this friend. She was a Caucasian friend. She was walking towards me, and I thought, oh, there's – I think her name was Eva Jean – oh, there's Eva Jean. I was real excited. I walked towards her and I think she saw me, and she ducked into a store. I really felt the discrimination at that time, that she really didn't want to see me. I was really, really hurt. I know that she saw me and I was very, very hurt that she didn't want to even talk to me. But then as I thought if it later, I thought, well, maybe she had a reason. Maybe she knew someone that had gotten hurt in the war or something like that. I don't feel that badly about it anymore. These things did happen.**

AC: Was your father's business affected at all? I imagine before the war he had Japanese and white clients, obviously the Haradas and different people. Was he able to still run his business and sell the things that your family grew without too much effect from the racists attitudes of –

HK: I didn't talk to him about it so much. I just know that he started up his farm as best he could, and we all helped him. I didn't make much money in those days working as a housekeeper, but I remember I gave him what I could. I think we just pulled together and did what we could.