

Powell Street Interview

Alleyway, tofu factory

Tadao Wakabayashi brings the interviewers to an alleyway where his family ran a tofu factory before the uprooting.

INTERVIEWERS

Your father had a tofuya.

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

You want to see it? [Laughs] I hate to show it to you though ... come on. [Pause] When you see it, don't laugh – promise you won't laugh. [laughing]

INTERVIEWERS

This is where the apartment was, this part in here? Oh, right there.

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

Now, ladies and gentlemen, take a look. [laughing]

INTERVIEWERS

Wow! Is that the same building, the original?

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

Yep! Except just one part is torn down.

INTERVIEWERS

And what was this?

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

My father's tofuya.

INTERVIEWERS

I don't know what that is.

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

Soya bean cake, tofu.

INTERVIEWERS

Oh! So it's a little factory then. Did you get to work here?

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

Yeah.

INTERVIEWERS

You had to work here! [Laughter] [peaking into building]

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

No, you can't open it.

INTERVIEWERS

It's still standing! That's amazing!

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

You'd think they'd come tear it down.

[Sounds of them looking in and exploring.]

INTERVIEWERS

It still smells nice inside. So your family lived nearby?

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

No, remember I told you about the apartment? This is it. It was owned by Dr. Uchida. And Dr. Uchida had a little office in the front.

INTERVIEWERS

Where did your family live?

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

My family, there was a house down built in here and we rented that.

INTERVIEWERS

So just to the west of your tofu place?

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

Yeah, you went that way. Because this was a division right here.

INTERVIEWERS

Was it the same colour, the maroon colour?

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

That's right, they haven't changed the colour of the building, but it's sagging pretty badly isn't it?

INTERVIEWERS

And did you have neighbours around?

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

There was another one, right next to us, the Tanaka Tofuya.

INTERVIEWERS

So you didn't have alleys then; these were streets too?

TADAO WAKABAYASHI

Same width.

INTERVIEWERS

Same width, but this would be So houses were build in the back lane, in alleys too eh?