

HASEGAWA FAMILY

MR. KIRCHNER: Today is January 14, 1980. I, Bob Kirchner, am privileged to interview the members of the Hasegawa family for the NEH Japanese-American Historical Project. We are in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hasegawa at 15234 E. Belmont Avenue in Sanger.

Their home on this farm has been in the family since 1913. The family members present are: Ray Hasegawa and his wife Helen, Peter Hasegawa and his wife Yoshino, Becky Hasegawa Yagyu, and George Hasegawa. Tonight we will record the history of the Hasegawa family whose ancestors were pioneers in the Fresno-Sanger area and record their contributions to the growth and development of this area.

The first member of the Hasegawa family to come to Fresno was your grandfather. Would you tell me what his full name was, his place and date of birth, and his longest place of residency in the United States?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: His name was Kakuzo Hasegawa. We don't know the date of birth. He probably spent most of his life in Fresno.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: There's a grave in Fresno which we can refer to his birth year. Since we were busy the last two or three days, we haven't been able to go down there to get the date.

MR. KIRCHNER: He was buried in Fresno?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Yes. He's buried in the Mountain View Cemetery. There's quite a large family headstone there.

MR. KIRCHNER: When did he leave Japan and under what circumstances?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: The story we got today from a distant relative was that he left Japan as a representative of the Japanese government to investigate conditions here for the Japanese immigrants. It sounded as though he left after the end of the Russo-Japan War, which was around 1904-1905. He must have come here about 1906.

MR. KIRCHNER: Where did he settle, and what did he do for a living when he first arrived?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: We don't have much information at this point about his arrival, but we do know that he started this ranch here and had business buildings in Fresno. I understand he had a banking business with the Japanese immigrants at that time also.

MR. KIRCHNER: So, he arrived here about 1906 and, the ranch has been in the family since 1913? I understand he owned property in Fresno and Sanger area. With the law prohibiting purchasing of land by the Japanese during that time, how was he able to acquire these properties? And how did he develop his business and his farms?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Well, in those days they were able to form companies and purchase the land. Somehow, he was able to get a number of people together and raise enough money to buy the property.

MR. KIRCHNER: You don't know if he had partners or not?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: We understand there's corporation papers which shows the numbers of shares held by several people.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: One member was a citizen of this country, and it may be that this is the way they formed a corporation.

MR. KIRCHNER: It might have been in the name of the citizen of United States at that time, then?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I'm sure it was a corporation--whatever the name was--but it couldn't have been in the name of the citizen, I don't think. But maybe the majority stockholder had to be a citizen, but I don't think so.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I think the relatives were like a partnership in this corporation or company. It was known as Hasegawa Company. At one time, I recall, Ojiisan was the president. Father was the secretary-treasurer, and then there were some uncles and cousins of my father, but I'm not positive.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: In those days, there was the Alien Land Law and Issei, the first generation Japanese, could not own property; therefore they had a Nisei person, who was a citizen, and he was the person who was able to buy the land. But it was a corporation, and it was called the Hasegawa Company.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Although I don't have any facts, but based on what I've been reading, I think the corporation could buy land. It could all be aliens. I think the legislature passed laws later that prohibited this, and at that time they had to bring somebody else in.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: I see.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: My guess.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did he own any other property in Fresno or Fresno County?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Well, he owned the land on the northeast corner of Tulare Street and "E" Street.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Between "E" and Fagan Alley. My grandfather owned a half a block of office buildings on Tulare Street between "E" and Fagan Alley. The second story was a hotel. (They also had meetings of Hiroshima Ken people that had come recently to the Fresno area.) He rented the lower offices to various merchants. And also, in the back of these buildings, he had several apartments which he had rented out. Well, I guess that's about it for the buildings. We don't know how he got them, but he lost them during the Depression. He became old and became very sick at this time, so then he came back to Sanger and lived on the farm to the end of his days.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Ray, I think he still had the hotel though, the upper portion of it at least. He ran the hotel for some time.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: I think he owned the whole thing until he lost the entire property. I don't think he lost it separately.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: What about the newspaper? Wasn't

there a newspaper company?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Yes, there was.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: My dad used to be the editor of that.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Someplace I read that he was an editor of a Japanese paper, but I don't remember which newspaper it was

MR. KIRCHNER: Now, did you know your grandfather?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Oh, I knew my grandfather well. We lived in Fresno. I don't know why, but the family sent me there during the summertime when I was very young. I probably lived there more than the three of you.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: No, how could you--we were all together!

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: All the time? No, my dad was here and sometimes he sent me to live in Fresno.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Yes. Nes and I and maybe you went along. I remember every summer vacation, we used to live with my grandparents--especially my sister and me. Do you remember the time we went on vacation with Ojiisan? We went to Monterey for about a month?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I actually went to Lincoln Grammar School and half a year at Edison High School--the old Edison High School.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: As a first, second, or third grader?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: No, this again would pertain to the summer vacations we used to have. (Doubting voices in background!) I don't know just what that was, but I do remember going to Lincoln Grammar School. We used to call it Lincoln Annex and Edison High School. I don't know what grade or what that was, but I do know that we went there.

MR. KIRCHNER: Do you remember your grandfather? What stands out in your mind most of all as you think about him?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Well, it's a little funny, but when he used to drive he'd get excited, and he would say "right" when he meant left--and things like this. But, I do know that at one time he had a Stutz Bearcat, and as a passenger everytime we went up a hill, I'd have to pump the air into the carburetor or something. And there was an air pump on my side. I think that this type of thing sticks out in my mind more than anything else.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: It had headlights that worked off bottled gas. There was no battery. Of course, it had to be cranked to start.

MR. KIRCHNER: You remember riding in a Stutz Bearcat? How about you, George? What do you remember about your grandfather?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Well, I remember some of the things like Peter did, but I used to ride with him because the car he had, the steering wheel was on the right-hand side. I used to sit on the left-hand side and do the road signals for him. Turn left, turn right, stop, I remember

that. And he also had a few other fancy cars. He had a Studebaker. I don't know what year it was, but it was a very, very fancy car. I went to San Francisco with him one year. You know, it was either a Model T Ford or a Model A Ford. You remember the orange one with the sharp back on it?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Model T with a Holley hot plate--top speed of 40 miles per hour. Real fast in those days, and I ran through a stop sign, and I wrecked it. I got hurt and still carry the scars. So that's the last car that I remembered he had.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: That was in your freshman year.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I am sure he had a Pierce Arrow, too. I remember those headlights on the fenders.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Headlights were very pronounced and molded into the fenders.

MR. KIRCHNER: He sounded like he had a good mind for business.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Evidently he was a very sharp person. He was an official of Japan when he came over--like a senator or something from his area.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: He was a Kenkaijinin from Hiroshima to the capital of Japan. That would be the equivalent to a senator here. That was before he came to the United States.

MR. KIRCHNER: Why would he have come to the United States with the position of responsibility such as that?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: The government at that time wanted to send immigrants to the United States, and he came to investigate conditions here.

MR. KIRCHNER: He decided to stay here instead of going back?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Well, as I understand, he made that first trip, went back and came back later; the second time to stay. Outside of that we don't have too much information.

MR. KIRCHNER: That was quite an ingenious idea to paint that car orange. Do you think that was really true, George?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Yes, I think so--because from the story we have from one relative who used to live with Grandfather, he mentioned the fact that Grandfather was known as the orange king. So I can understand his painting it orange.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: He had quite an imagination for a man in those days--from Japan, too. I remember my mother saying that when she came to Fresno, she arrived in 1906, she knew Grandpa Hasegawa. And she said he was quite a man of the town. She remembers him wearing a top hat in some parade or something. He was very well known.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Wasn't he the head of a Japanese association at that

time?

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: Yes, he helped quite a number of people to get settled. He was sort of a liaison man between the newcomers and the community, I would say.

MR. KIRCHNER: We talked about your grandfather. Let's talk about your father, Shuichi Hasegawa. Becky, can you tell me where he was born, the place of birth, the date of birth, and the longest place of residency?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Let's see now, he was born May 5, 1884. I'm not sure exactly where he was born. It says he was born in Hiroshima Ken, Hibagun Saijyn. His place of longest residency would be Sanger. He landed in Seattle, according to the passport. The name of the ship, it's probably on the passport.

MR. KIRCHNER: How about your mother? When was she born?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: According to the passport, she was born in 1884 also, but she has always said that she was two years younger than Father. The passport is wrong.

MR. KIRCHNER: Any particular reason for that?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: When father was filling out the forms, it was probably much easier to remember his birthdate than his wife's.

MR. KIRCHNER: Your father was one of the most highly educated and highly respected men in the Fresno area. Would you tell me something about his educational background? Where did he go to school--where did he get his education?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: He went to the Tokyo Imperial University. I'm not sure just when he graduated. He talked about his school records being destroyed during the earthquake, but he later found out that they were safe. I also understand that he published or wrote magazine articles for the King magazine. He wrote political articles for the magazine during the time the King was being published.

MR. KIRCHNER: What type of education was he getting--liberal arts, engineering?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Basically, I think he wanted to become a lawyer. I understand he was going to study in Europe, but Grandfather asked him to come to United States.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Wanted to go to Germany. Had studied German. I recall hearing him speak with some neighbors in German.

MR. KIRCHNER: So he remained in Japan while your grandfather came to United States?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: That's correct.

MR. KIRCHNER: When did your father come to the United States?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: As far as we could determine--and according to the passport, he came in June 1912.

MR. KIRCHNER: And he was married at the time? How long was he married?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: He had two children at that time. He must have been married four or five years.

MR. KIRCHNER: Where did he settle when he got here? What did he do for a living?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Actually, grandfather didn't have him run this ranch, but he must have since I was born here, Becky was born here, and Peter, too.

MR. KIRCHNER: You were born in this house. Is that right?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: No, on this ranch.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: The house we were born in was burned, when George was one or two years old.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I had two older brothers, and our concern was to push the Model T out at the time of the fire. This is the recollection I have--running to get the guns and pushing the Model T out.

MR. KIRCHNER: Do you know what started the fire?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Yes, in those days we had a Japanese bath which is usually separated from the house. But my dad put an overhang on it, and in the process of heating the bath, the fire got out of hand, and the house caught on fire.

MR. KIRCHNER: You mentioned a Japanese bath. Ray, what is a Japanese bath, and how does that work?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: The bath is made of redwood--or the tub is made of redwood. Square in shape--and the bottom was made from tin so that the fire could not get at the wood, naturally. And it was the duty of the children to build the fire and heat the water daily. And to get the water into the tub, the water was pumped by hand, another chore for the children.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Let me explain the Japanese bath. The whole family used the same water, but everybody washed before one entered the tub.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: Be sure to make that clear. (Laughs.)

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: All Japanese baths were made the same way--out of redwood.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Not necessarily, some were made out of galvanized tin. But it had a wooden raft-like platform inside so that no one would be burned on entering the tub. In Fresno we had a community bath, where everyone in the block used the same bath. I remember that one was huge.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: It's a Japanese custom to have the men take the bath first. I remember my grandfather was usually the first to take the bath, and he came out lobster red.

MR. KIRCHNER: When did he take the bath--in the morning, afternoon, or in the evening?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: In the early evening.

MR. KIRCHNER: Then after he took his bath, who was next?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Anyone after that. Usually the children went in about that time, too.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: Did the boys have preference over the girls?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I think it was a mixed group.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: Were the wives last?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Usually.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: The unique feature of the bath was that the hot water came up to the neck when you sat down--so that you were warm all over. It's very similar to what the hot tubs are now.

MR. KIRCHNER: I was wondering what size the tubs were, the diameter and the width?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Two feet by four feet, I'd say, probably two feet high.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: These were the individual family baths. They also spoke of a community bath, and George indicated that these were usually huge--especially the Fresno bath when they were living there. On the recent trip to Japan, the many family baths were made of tile.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: Those baths usually had the hot water coming from the faucet. They did not heat the water from underneath.

MR. KIRCHNER: Your grandfather was quite active in civic affairs. It sounds like he was a leader in the community. What do you recall about your father's involvement with civic life and with the Japanese community?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Father didn't live in the city. For a while we moved around quite a bit, and then came back to Sanger.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: After the house burned down, we all moved into Fresno. The children went to school there. I went to 5th and 6th grade in the city, I'm sure. At that time, Father got a job as the editor of Chuka Times. He had an office upstairs--across the street from the Ryan Theatre. I used to watch people going in and out the theatre. I wanted to go, so I asked him for money to go see the movies. He generally gave me a dime which at that time was the price of admittance.

MR. KIRCHNER: Now, he was the editor of the Japanese newspaper. What type of paper, what type of editor was he? Do you recall anything about that?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: I don't remember too much. I was in the 5th grade

then. The paper was written in Japanese. There was no English section. Father stayed there around three or four years.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did he ever use his law background, or practice law in Japan?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Not as such. During the camp time, he made use of his law education.

MR. KIRCHNER: What is camp time?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: During the war years we were put in camp in Poston, Arizona. We were in Camp II, and he was the judge.

MR. KIRCHNER: Now, as a judge, what did he do in camp?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: He conducted the trials, and whatever judges do. I had a good friend, the police chief, so I got to go in and watch. My dad sat during the trials, and he conducted the hearings.

MR. KIRCHNER: In the Sanger's golden anniversary newspaper, 1935 edition, your father is mentioned as the president of the Sanger Japanese Association. Can anyone recall anything about him as the leader of this group?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: He and mother used to teach Japanese school. Then they had a building in Sanger for the school, and the Nihonjin kai--the organization used to meet there. So one time or another, I am sure he was the president.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I remember the time we had a parade. I'm not sure what year that was. I remember being dressed in a kimono and standing on the float. I'm sure during this time or period Father must have been the president. I'm sure it had something to do with Sanger's celebration. Japanese entered floats during the Raisin Day parades in Fresno, and I'm sure Grandfather was very active then.

MR. KIRCHNER: You mentioned your father in the relocation center. What was his reaction to the war? And what were some of his camp experiences?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I guess we really don't know what their reactions were, either Father's or Mother's. We didn't converse with them very much about problems. I remember a questionnaire that was circulated, and he was opposed to it. He advised us to answer yes.

MR. KIRCHNER: What questionnaire was that?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: We were interned in these relocation camps. The government representatives came by to ask us whether we were loyal to the United States, and whether we would volunteer to fight for the government. These were the two questions that had to be answered no, no. These two questions caused a lot of trouble in camp, I don't remember the wording of these questions, but basically they wanted to know whether we were still loyal to the United States. Father advised use to answer yes. Many were said to have answered no, and these were the people who were almost deported to Japan.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I think he realized that he should be interned as an

alien, but we as American citizens should not have been put into these internment camps. He thought it was strange that we were put into the relocation camps. He was opposed to the law that put United States citizens into camps.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: We had a language problem. We didn't speak Japanese all that much. He stood for what was right. I get much the same impression that George did--he wanted us to answer yes, yes. Since we were going to live in the United States, we should be loyal to the country.

MR. KIRCHNER: As a result of being put into camp, did your father have any financial hardship, loss of land, or problems like that?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: During the war years, we were fortunate in having a neighbor who belonged to a Christian church. He agreed to take care of the land while we were away, but on a percentage basis. And I could say now, that he did a very good job, and we were able to hang on to the ranch. We had some mortgage left on the ranch, and they tried to take it away, but the neighbor who leased the ranch, hung on to it for himself as well as for us. So that's the reason we were able to have the ranch today.

MR. KIRCHNER: I understand your father was in a very terrible accident and lost an eye. Do any of you remember how it happened?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Of course we don't know how it happened. But Mr. Maseba, a relative, said that father was driving a wagon drawn by horses. I guess he was coming to Sanger, and close to the railroads they met a herd of sheep which evidently scared the horses. The wagon tipped over and the wheels ran over his head, or something like that, and he lost his eye.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did he have any other sickness or accidents, or other problems that you can recall?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: He became diabetic which eventually caused his death.

MR. KIRCHNER: What are some of the memories you have about his hobbies and travels?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: He was always writing. He wrote many poems and essays.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: He liked to draw, he drew very well. He loved to make a Japanese garden. He made one at the other house, just to the south of here.

MR. KIRCHNER: Do you have any of his written works?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: No, most of his writings were burned. He wrote Japanese haiku, and many of those were published in the Japanese papers.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: He was a very good storyteller. He told stories every night before we went to sleep. Remember the ghost stories he told us? At the end of the Japanese school program, he would tell a story to the audience.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: When we had plays, he used to direct the plays and teach the girls Japanese dances.

MRS. BECKY HASEGAWA: I would say he was very talented in many ways.

MR. KIRCHNER: What kind of stories did he tell?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Oh, mystery stories--he would tell episode after episode, so you wondered what was going to happen next. He told many, many stories, both translated stories as well as Japanese stories.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did he make some of this up himself?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I hardly doubted that--but he could have. But many of them he had read and told them to us.

MR. KIRCHNER: How would you describe his relationship with his family?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I think he was a very dominant type of father. We were the kind that were seen and not heard type of children.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I guess all the brothers had some sort of battle with him at one stage or another. He was hot-tempered.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: That's the way I seemed to remember--he was very stern with us. He didn't like to be contradicted in any way. If there was any work to be done, we had to do it. And that's the reason, outside of George, we didn't get to play football. We had to sneak out to play basketball, and if we missed the bus after practice, we had to walk home. Many times we walked home after practice. He was very stern, but, in retrospect, he was right, and we were wrong.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: How far was it to walk home from school?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: It's still the same distance, except that we cut across the Hanson Ditch. Well, it might be all of five miles.

MR. KIRCHNER: You learned about the right angle of the triangle very fast. How do you remember him, Ray?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: I was the oldest boy, so I don't think my brothers and sister remember this, but I got all the blame. He heaped it on me.

I don't know why, but I had to keep the books on the ranch. Even during the high school days, I was keeping track of the finances. We were barely making enough to pay on the interest and nothing on the principal, so it took a long time to pay up the ranch.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: At this time, the ranch was Hasegawa Company.

MR. KIRCHNER: S. Hasegawa?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: They turned the ranch or changed the Hasegawa Company to a private one, and I became the sole owner at that time. Some time after the war, everything was turned over to my name.

MR. KIRCHNER: How would you describe the relationship between your father to his father? How do you think he would react to this question

if I asked him?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Well, we knew them in later years, and I would say that they weren't on good speaking terms. This is all I can remember as far as their relationship goes, but this is in the later part of our grandfather's life.

MR. KIRCHNER: The reason I'm asking is that he would say that his father was stern much the same as your father was stern.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Well, it's kind of difficult to say, but we had respect for our father. I guess he had to obey his dad more. When my father was asked to come to America, he had no other recourse but to come as he was asked.

MR. KIRCHNER: So your father was doing what he was taught to do?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I think so.

MR. KIRCHNER: It would be interesting to see how your children will answer to these questions.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Just one more thing--my father was so highly educated that he was able to talk back to Grandfather. In our generation, we didn't speak Japanese that well that we barely made him understand what we wanted. As matter of fact, I don't think we made him understand our side of the argument.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: One thing I should say about Dad--he wanted all of us to get an education. We all went to school, not all of us finished but we did go.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did he ever tell you why he wanted all of you to get a college education?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I don't think he needed to tell us why; we knew we needed an education. He knew we needed it to get along in the United States and to better ourselves really. There might have been Mom's influence, too.

MRS. BECKY HASEGAWA: I think it's Mom's influence, too. I remember I wanted to take up psychology, but Dad didn't approve of the subject.

MR. KIRCHNER: Your mother Toyo Hasegawa, can anyone tell me her date of birth, place of birth, and the place of longest residency?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Mother was born in a small town in Shobara, Hiroshima, Japan. Her birthdate is January 28, 1884. My recollection is that she either owned a drugstore in Hiroshima, or she worked as a druggist there.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Place of longest residency would be Sanger.

MR. KIRCHNER: Do anyone of you recollect or heard how she met your father? Or weren't you told?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: No, we weren't told. But it's an interesting story. Perhaps Yoshino can tell us something about that.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: I was told that Grandmother worked at the drugstore and sent her husband through college by working. She was the one who sent him through school.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: According to my recollection, she paid for his meals at various restaurants and not his tuition or anything like that. I was under the impression that the tuition was free at the Imperial University.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: It had to be high marks, for Mr. Maseba said the ratio was one in 500 in those days. It was very competitive, and one had to be invited to attend the school.

MR. KIRCHNER: When your father and mother came to United States, they had two children with them. What were the living conditions for the Japanese families? And with whom did they live when they came here?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I imagine they lived with our grandparents because they called them to the United States. I'm sure they lived with them for a while.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Then they moved over here to the farm and lived by themselves. What the conditions were, I don't remember because we moved after the fire. Perhaps Ray or Peter might remember.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Naturally, they didn't have running water or electricity. And they traveled by horse whenever they went to Fresno. I remember my mother told me that whenever a child was to be born, father would hitch up the horses to get a doctor; and by the time he got back the child was born without any help.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: On my birth certificate, the signature for the surgeon in attendance has Shuichi Hasegawa on it. I remember my mother telling me that they had a midwife to help, but I came too early. So I was delivered by my father.

MR. KIRCHNER: What was the lot of the farm wife, and what were some of the daily activities?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: It had to be real rough. She had to do the cooking, washing, and cleaning. I'm not sure, but I would guess she helped with the oranges. When we were in Tipton, we had lettuce and cotton, and I remember her picking cotton and lettuce.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: Not only that, but she also taught Japanese language school.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: We didn't have running water. I remember as a small child we had to get firewood for the evening bath, as well as pump the water for the bath by hand. It's hard to realize now that we didn't have any of the modern conveniences then. We had no icebox; we used a gunny sack around a frame like a swamp cooler for an icebox. One time, we lived in Lemon Cove and we used to wash clothes in the ditch behind the house. We also got water from there. It was real hard for the woman of the house.

MR. KIRCHNER: Now, you mention you got firewood. Where did you get

the firewood?

MK. PETER HASEGAWA: Twigs, or pruned branches off the trees. We had to scrounge around a lot. That's true of all the Japanese families.

We had to keep the fire going until all the members of the family had their bath.

MR. KIRCHNER: What was her reaction to World War II? And what were some of her camp experiences? Do you know?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Here again, you must understand that a woman obeyed her husband. We didn't get much reaction from her. She followed her husband. She didn't like it, I know.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I know that she was glad that all of us were through with our schooling.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I think the Japanese in those days were brought up to obey the law. So when the law said you had to move, they accepted that. But I don't remember Mom's comments or reactions to relocation at all.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: I think many of the wives, particularly in camp, found free time for the first time--away from all the chores they continually had to do. They no longer had to cook for the family or even do the dishes.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Actually it was easier for them physically. The only uncertainty was where they would live afterwards. What would happen to them if the war worsened to a difficult situation.

MR. KIRCHNER: What are your recollections of your mother's philosophy on child raising and her religious beliefs?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Well, I believe Mother wanted us to get a good education. I think she was religious, but living out here on the farm she didn't have too much opportunity to go to church.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: We went to Sunday school off and on, but not on a regular basis. Whenever we were close by, I remember going to Sunday school.

MK. KIRCHNER: Could that be in Fresno?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I don't remember just where, but I do remember attending Sunday school.

MR. KIRCHNER: How about child raising? Describe her philosophy.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Well, I thought she was quite liberal. Being brought up with three or four boys, the boys were served first, and I was stuck with the chores the boys didn't want to do. She often told me that boys could do many things, but I shouldn't because I was a girl. Other than that, she was a good mother.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I think she accepted childbearing as a natural thing. She attended to Father first. We were fortunate that we had an older sister who made lunches for us, and more or less raised us. My

recollection is that Mother was so busy taking care of Dad that she didn't have time to take care of us.

MR. KIRCHNER: If you had done something that needed correction, would she have corrected you? What were your feelings about discipline and things along those lines?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: All I could remember is that my father getting after us. I think my mother did scold us, but I believe it was left to my father. My father did scold us, but never raised his hand to us or anything like that.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I like to say that I can't remember that I was at anytime angry with Mother--doing something or saying something contrary to my wishes. She was a kind, loving mother. I can remember my dad getting angry and mad.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: As a daughter-in-law, I can remember that she was gentle and generous with her praise, very kind and cheerful.

MR. KIRCHNER: Do you remember any prejudice or discrimination directed at her before, during, and after the war?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I don't think my mother went out too much among the Caucasian public. She was sheltered from this sort of thing. She didn't speak English, so she probably didn't experience discrimination or prejudice. But I'm sure she knew about it because she read the newspaper.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: May I say something. We talk about prejudice and discrimination, but I heard that after the house burned, the neighbors across the street took the family in. I would say that that showed a feeling of neighborliness, and that happened because of the way your mother acted toward the neighbors. I think that it showed that it was not all discrimination and prejudice, but there was neighborliness and kindness in the community towards the family.

MR. KIRCHNER: Two of the sons were drafted into the war. Who were the two drafted?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Peter and I were drafted.

MR. KIRCHNER: What was your mother's attitude during that period? How did she feel about your going into the service?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I think this is true about all mothers. I think she was concerned, but she wasn't opposed to my going, as such. Of course, I was married at the time. I was away, so I don't know. How about you, George?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I'm sure she was concerned, but I believe she was proud that we were in the service. She didn't express herself that way.

MR. KIRCHNER: How did your family fit into the community at large--not the Japanese community--but community at large. Now, I know Yoshino said something about the people who helped you after the house burned down. What about Saturday nights? Did you go into town? Did you go to parties?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: The Japanese families, I think, were close-knit ethnic group. If there were any social activities, it was probably with the Japanese. We didn't do that much socializing with other races.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Well, there was the language barrier to begin with--so by choice they didn't take part in PTA or get involved in school functions all that much. There wasn't that much community life in those days.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did your mother have any social life at all with her close friends?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I'm sure she belonged to Fujinkai-- women's group at church.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: She used to go to church and picnics. Within the framework of the Japanese community she was quite active.

MR. KIRCHNER: You mentioned your father had many talents and hobbies; writing poems and such. How about your mother? What kind of hobbies did she have? What were her talents?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: She liked to do needlework. I remember she told me that she wanted to learn a particular crocheting stitch from Mrs. Wolf who lived across the street. She had a language barrier, but she persisted 'til she learned. She also learned to tat from her.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I think she enjoyed garden work. Remember the huge mums she raised? She also had a cacti garden in the backyard. She also had a vegetable garden.

MR. KIRCHNER: Ray, as the oldest, what do you remember about the family traditions, family recreation, family customs, birthdays, anniversaries, meals?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Well, I remember the first of the year my father cleaned the yard and possibly washed dishes after the first meal. We did "mochi tsuki"--which is making the rice cakes on New Year's Day or prior to that date. Our family and two other families would get together and make batches of these rice cakes.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did you celebrate birthdays in your family?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I think our parents would be considered as non-privileged class, rather poor at times, that if we got one present, we were lucky.

MR. KIRCHNER: Are you saying that your father wasn't building an empire or wealth? He was trying to live day to day?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Yes, we were very poor. Even on Christmas, if we got one toy, we were lucky. I remember an airplane he had hung above my bed, so I could see it in the morning when I awoke. Other than that I don't remember getting too many presents on Christmas.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Our Christmas presents were usually clothing; a pair of shoes or sweaters. I remember getting a sweater.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Don't you remember the games he had gotten? We would read the instructions and play. He generally played with us, then. And as a girl, I always got a doll, year after year.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: The things the family observed were the Japanese customs. My father would visit each Japanese family on New Year's Day, and other fathers in turn would come to our place to say "Happy New Year." This lasted about a week.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: Remember all the cooking that had to be done for that occasion?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: At Japanese school, we always observed the Emperor's birthday. And there were other community activities.

MR. KIRCHNER: How would you describe your mother's relationship with the children?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I think it was very fine.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: As you've heard, all the punishing was done by Father. She never spanked us or put us in a corner or things like that.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I do have fond memories of my mother, she was a kind and loving mother.

MR. KIRCHNER: We're almost finished with your mother and father, unless you have anything further to add to it. I just like to ask one question. As you describe your father, obviously your dad was very bright, and your living was simple-- not one of building wealth. Your father being that bright, was he pleased with his lot or satisfied with his life?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I would say he was a frustrated type of person, just because he couldn't practice law or use his good education or whatever. I knew when he drove the tractor, his heart wasn't in it.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: As I grew up and became a father, I realized what he might have gone through. He wasn't brought up to be a farmer, so it was difficult for him. He had to work hard, and I'm sure he wanted his sons to help him out in all of his endeavors. Sometimes we failed to help, because we were playing, and that could be the reason he would get angry at us.

MR. KIRCHNER: How about your mother? Do you think she was satisfied with her life?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I don't really think she was satisfied. As I understand, her family was a big landowner in Japan. She had a professional job. She came here and had to pick grapes, take care of us, and do the other chores. I don't say that it's a satisfying job for anybody.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: She never complained. I never heard her complain, even when times were difficult.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I think she enjoyed her teaching years. She enjoyed

her students, and that was her one outlet that she truly enjoyed.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I think she had a fairly happy life, especially during the later years. I'm not sure of her early life, that must have been a hardship for her.

MR. KIRCHNER: When your parents first came to United States, two children came with them. Will you tell me about these two children?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: The oldest was a daughter. Her name was Akiko, and she was two or two and a half years old. My older brother named Toru must have been about a year old or so. I probably came over in her stomach, so she used to tell me. I was born in the United States.

MR. KIRCHNER: Then you had a free passage?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: My brother went to pick figs when he was around 11 or 12 years old and became ill at that time. They said he had a liver or a kidney problem. He must have been ill about a year, and he passed away. And my sister got married and went to Los Angeles. She had three children; two boys and one girl. She passed away about five years ago.

MR. KIRCHNER: Ray Hasegawa, would you tell me where you were born?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: I was born in Fresno on January 30, 1914. The building is gone now, but it was in the heart of Chinatown, I presume.

MR. KIRCHNER: And you lived in Fresno County all your life?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Well yes, but for a short time we lived in Tulare County. We moved around for four years; a year in Tipton, a year in Tulare, a year in Lindsay, and a year in Lemon Cove. I graduated from grammar school in Lemon Cove.

MR. KIRCHNER: What are your recollections of your early years? Where did you go to school? Did you attend Japanese school?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Yes, I went to Japanese school in Sanger where my mother taught. I went to Lindsay school and then to Fresno school. We moved around so much that I never had the chance to make good friends.

MR. KIRCHNER: Were you a member of a church or any social organizations? Boy Scouts?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: No, I didn't join any organization during my grammar school years.

MR. KIRCHNER: How about after grammar school? How about your college years before the World War II? Where did you attend college?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: I attended Fresno State. I took turns with Peter. He went a couple of years, then I went back. I came back to work at the ranch, so I never had the chance to finish college. I took up engineering at the time.

MR. KIRCHNER: What is your recollection of the news of Pearl Harbor and about World War II?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: At the time, I was delivering oranges to the Sanger Citrus Association. One of the workers told me that Pearl Harbor was attacked. I asked him, "Where's Pearl Harbor?" I didn't even know where it was. They never treated me any differently than before. They treated me very well even though I was Japanese. They didn't discriminate against me at all.

MR. KIRCHNER: Where did you spend the war years?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: In Poston, Arizona. I went to Poston with the family and stayed there for a year. Later, we were able to get out, so I went to Gary, Indiana to work in the rubber factory. I must have stayed there about three years. Then I moved to Chicago and worked for the International Harvester Company, where I cut steel plates. About this time, the war was over, so I came home ahead of the family.

MR. KIRCHNER: When you got home to California, how were you received?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Well, I don't remember much. But in Los Angeles, when I was looking for a street sign, I ran a red light. The police stopped me. When he realized that I was a Japanese, he said he was glad to see us back, and he was very sorry about what happened.

MR. KIRCHNER: That must have been a good feeling.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Yes, it was. Especially a law officer to tell me he was glad to see us back. I had felt like a criminal when I was taken into the concentration camp.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: Did he fine you?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: No. I don't think he even gave me a ticket--just told me to be careful next time.

MR. KIRCHNER: As an orange farmer, what were conditions like for the farmers then?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: It was very difficult. For one thing, the pipelines were handmade 20 to 30 years ago. When the water ran through them too fast, the pipes would burst. Then, we had to dig around the leads and patch the pipes. So many times during the irrigation cycle we had to stop the pump to patch the pipes. It wasn't efficient.

MR. KIRCHNER: How was marketing?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: No problems in marketing as we belonged to the Sanger Citrus Association, even before the war. All we had to do was take it to the packinghouse and they handled the oranges from there.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Hasegawa Company was one of the charter members of the Sanger Citrus Association.

MR. KIRCHNER: When did you go into almond farming?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: That's another story. I wasn't married at that time, and I wasn't going to get married until I had a place of my own. My

father was very strict, and I didn't want my wife to live under these conditions. Now, after the war, my brother-in-law came to live with us, so I was able to get away and purchase the land.

MR. KIRCHNER: Where?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Close to Sanger, not too far away, an almond ranch. I got married and raised a family.

MR. KIRCHNER: When did you retire?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: I retired in 1973. I sold the ranch. I had the chance to sell, the orchard was getting old, and I was getting tired of farming.

MR. KIRCHNER: Now that you're retired, what do you do for recreation, for excitement?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: I have joined a dancing class, taking disco lessons in Clovis and Fresno. Also joined a dancing club in Bowles. I have been playing bridge for many years, both tournament and contract bridge.

I intend to keep this up.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: He is a Life Master.

MR. KIRCHNER: What is a Life Master?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: You play bridge to get points. Some of the points must be earned out of town. There are sectional, regional, and national tournaments in which bridge enthusiasts can play. An individual player can accumulate 300 points. After 300 points, you become a Life Master. In order to become a Life Master, you would have to spend over \$300 in hotel and travel expenses. I believe this to be true.

MR. KIRCHNER: Money doesn't change hands in these games?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: No, not at all. In fact, we were inspected by the city of Fresno, and they couldn't find any sign of gambling, so they gave us a clean bill of health.

MR. KIRCHNER: Do you belong to any social, religious, or political organizations now?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Not now. I did join the Lions Club. This club met at noon for lunch, and being a farmer, this meant that I had to change before I went to the meetings, and then after I got back I had to change again to work clothes. It wasn't too practical, so I was happy to give it up after a while.

MR. KIRCHNER: If I asked you what were some of the major changes in your lifetime, what would your answer be? I mean major changes in Japanese-American life style. Attitudes toward Japanese-Americans and standard of living, farming--what would be some of the major changes you could think of?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: As a child, I remember we had a house on this farm, but we had a tractor. I never drove a team of horses. I've been a farmer all my life, and the tractor

and the pump keep improving; and we had to keep up with these improvements. For me, farming wasn't very profitable. It seemed like I was always paying mortgage. Finally, I got everything paid up, and I became more at ease. I don't think I ever enjoyed farming or keeping track of the family ranch. But not knowing any other means of livelihood, I bought the almond ranch for this reason.

MR. KIRCHNER: Are you saying that these improvements made things easier now?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: Definitely. I was born before radio became popular. We didn't have the telephone in the early days, or television. It's so much easier now.

MR. KIRCHNER: Anything else you want to put on this tape?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: I can't think of anything else right now.

MR. KIRCHNER: Peter Hasegawa, can you tell me your birth date, place of birth, and where you resided most of your life?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I was born here on the ranch, Sanger, September 10, 1915. During the war years and after, I spent time in Colorado and also worked in Nebraska. You might say the longest residency would be in Sanger.

MR. KIRCHNER: What would you say about your recollection of childhood days and through your high school years?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Not too much. In those days we had to handle orange boxes by hand. We moved so much during my elementary school days. I started with Lindsay School in Sanger and graduated at Lindsay School. I didn't have any childhood friends because we moved so much. That's all I can remember.

MR. KIRCHNER: What was your reaction to Pearl Harbor?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I think it struck us real hard. My first reaction was to volunteer, and I got a nice letter saying we do not accept you or something to that effect. It did shock us, and we were a bit scared to go out.

MR. KIRCHNER: What happened to you during the war years?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Well, we all went into camp--Poston.. There, the family unit broke up. The three boys took bachelor quarters, and George went out early. My memory about that is not too good. I married Yoshino in camp, and then went out to Colorado, worked in the beet fields. And that's another story. It was a very rough life topping beets. I remember coming home for lunch and just rolling out on the floor.

MR. KIRCHNER: Now, you mentioned that in camp you were in bachelor quarters. Are you saying that the family split? Did the family live in different sections, or did they require you to live in different parts?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: No, we were supposed to live as a family unit, as in Japanese style, but we chose to live with just the boys. They had

a small compartments, and we happened to get one. I believe this is the start where we no longer lived as a family unit.

MR. KIRCHNER: What did you do in camp? What was life like there?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Life was easy. I got \$19 a month as a block manager. Later, I went to weave camouflage net for which we got additional pay and additional food. We were able to do what we wanted to do.

MR. KIRCHNER: Were you required to work?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Well, I'm not sure whether we were required to work or not. I think if you wanted to just sit, you could, in your own misery.

MR. KIRCHNER: You were encouraged to work. If you wove those nets, you got extra pay and food. You must've had some recreation if you got married? What did you do for entertainment?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: We played softball, baseball. I don't remember playing basketball. I guess we played mainly baseball. We didn't get to go fishing, that was too far. We went to the rec hall--recreational hall. I guess bunch of boys talked to each other, trying to attract the girls. We had dancing in the mess halls, within the camp.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did you ever get to leave camp for a night or for a weekend? Were you there all that time?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: No. When we got married, we were able to get out. One of my friends was a police chief, another friend was the chief of transportation, and my father was the chief justice; so that I was able to get a car to go to Phoenix with Ray as the chauffeur.

MR. KIRCHNER: While you were still in camp?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Yes, we were able to go out, and Ray drove. Before we left the camp, Ray drove us around that night. They had a party planned for us, which we didn't make. The next morning we left for Phoenix.

MR. KIRCHNER: So you had your honeymoon in Phoenix?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Yes--such as it was. We were refused service in a restaurant. I guess we didn't eat one night.

MR. KIRCHNER: All I can say is--that's all a bit confusing. They refused to let you volunteer they put you in camp, and then let you out of camp for honeymoon. Then they drafted you, and then refused to serve you in a restaurant.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Before I was married, I went out as a contract laborer. Six or seven of us went out to top beets in Nebraska. They loaded us in these freight cars or whatever; it certainly wasn't a luxury type train. We got there in midwinter, everything was iced. The farmer met us in an open truck and loaded us in the back like cattle. We reached the place of employment. He told us to sleep in a bare house--a place with four walls and just a floor-- nothing else, no heat, nothing!

So we slept in our blankets on the floor. That's the way we worked until the contract was up.

MR. KIRCHNER: The only reason you got to go out was that you agreed to harvest the crops?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Right.

MR. KIRCHNER: When you returned home after the war, were you aware of any discrimination shown against you?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Here in Sanger?

MR. KIRCHNER: Yes.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I did encounter a few instances by ignorant people, but outside of that I don't think so. We were here a long time, and all the old acquaintances welcomed us back.

MR. KIRCHNER: You were drafted. What year were you drafted?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: 1944. It was after I had a son.

MR. KIRCHNER: Where did you serve?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I served in Italy with the 442nd.

MR. KIRCHNER: Why did you return to California and get into farming?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I think until you are forced out of place, you really don't realize how dear your homeplace is, and I always wanted to come back. Ray said something about taking turns with me, but I can only remember getting in two semesters at Fresno State. All the rest of the time I worked here. In the meantime, they gave me half share in the ranch. Actually, this was after Ray already got the almond orchard. Since that time, I have been farming here.

MR. KIRCHNER: 33 years or something like that?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: At first, I was working under Ray, and he was paying me.

MR. KIRCHNER: What are the changes you seen taken place? What are some of the major changes in marketing?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Quite a bit of changes, even in farming, have taken place. Ray had put in some steel pipes for irrigation which we still use to this day. We changed the contour of the land. In the olden days, we used to irrigate every which way just to get the water going. Now, we have the water going east and west and a few lines going north and south. Then, I was one of the two early farmers who went into non-cultivation, which made it quite simple. I think that's one of the major changes we made. Recently, we added a frost machine to protect the trees. Much of the work is done mechanically now, such as loading the picked oranges. Life is much easier now.

MR. KIRCHNER: You raise plums now. How did you get into that?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: That portion of the land was always flooded. When we first started, it was a vineyard. The rows went north and south, and when it rained, part of the acreage was in water. It was impossible to grow grapes. The Emperors weren't doing well; and as we couldn't get the cost of production back from it, I pulled them out. Turned the rows east and west, and I put in plums which gave me something to do during the winter months. With the pruning of these plum trees, there was work all during the year.

MR. KIRCHNER: What do you perceive for the oranges and the plums for the future?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: At the present time, it looks very encouraging. We do have years like this year, which wasn't like last year. Last year was a super year. Industry-wise, we are looking for a better future.

MR. KIRCHNER: Have you been busy in social organization and civic activities to any extent?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Yes, in my younger active days. I haven't done a lot but have participated in various organizations. I was a member of Sanger Chamber of Commerce.

MR. KIRCHNER: How about the American Legion?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I was a member of the American Legion for about 20 years and served in various capacity. I also served two years as the finance officer for District 14. I am a charter member of the VFW and Nisei Farmer's League.

MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: He was the first Japanese post commander for the William Nester Post 23.

MR. KIRCHNER: Was the Post the one that used to meet at the Oak Street where the old post office was?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Even before my time, they had bought the place. I'm not sure of the name of that street, but it was across the old Baptist Church. The American Legion wasn't that liked by the Japanese. I wanted to join the Japanese American Legion, but there wasn't any organization that had Japanese Legionnaires. So, I decided to join and go through the chairs. I got to be the commander in 1958.

MR. KIRCHNER: You were the Post Commander in 1958 of the William Nester Post?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: That's right.

MR. KIRCHNER: You served three years--1959, 1971, and 1972 as JACL chapter president of Sanger. What are the objectives of this organization at the local level?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: That's best described by their creed: "Better Americans for better America." I think this creed describes the purpose of the organization. Naturally we may be biased towards the Japanese-American. We're trying to prove that we are good Americans.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: The objectives and activities of the local JACL are to help the Japanese families--such as in times of death in the family.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Yes, one of the Japanese customs at the time of death is to give "koden" (a Japanese word). I'm not sure just what the word would mean in English. When we attend a funeral, we would put some money in an envelope and give it to the family. This is known as "koden." It is sort of insurance type of custom, you might say. We still observe this custom, and also help with the funeral arrangements, if needed.

MR. KIRCHNER: During 1963-69, you served on the local board of Selective Service Board. How were you selected and why did you terminate your service?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Their method of selection is beyond me. I was approached, and I said yes. It took very little time to investigate. I was elected and served only one year, as I remember. I went into land management with a friend of mine, and this took all my time. I was on the road from early in the morning 'til late at night. I couldn't attend the monthly meetings which took half a day.

MR. KIRCHNER: You've been active in Sanger's Sunkist Citrus Organization, Agriculture Civilization Board, Sanger Chamber of Commerce, and you've been a trustee of the United Methodist Church, served as a volunteer for the Red Cross and the Boy Scouts. What type of service has been most meaningful to you? One that you enjoyed the most?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Well, I think more than anything, I learned by serving on the various boards that you cannot do everything your own way. The way to get elected to these various boards or to become a trustee, is to gripe a lot. And before you realize, they're telling me to be one. The one I enjoyed the most, I think, is when my children were in the Cub Scouts, and I tried to help by serving on the various committees with Yoshino's help.

MR. KIRCHNER: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: No, I don't think so, unless Yoshino wants to say something.

MR. KIRCHNER: Becky Hasegawa Yagy, Becky could you tell me where you were born, what year, and where you have resided the longest?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I was born here in Sanger on this farm on October 27, 1917. I lived here most of my school years. Of course, after the war we went into a relocation center. I must have stayed there about two years, then relocated to Minneapolis in 1944. I lived there until October 1979 when I came back to this area to retire. So the place of longest residency would be Minneapolis, Minnesota. Lived there close to 34 or 35 years!

MR. KIRCHNER: And you live in Fresno at the present time.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Yes.

MR. KIRCHNER: What is your earliest recollection of childhood and early school years?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Being next to the youngest, and as my oldest brother said that he got blamed for everything that went wrong, consequently I had a very pleasant childhood. Our parents were very liberal, at least with me and also with George the youngest.

MR. KIRCHNER: Where did you go to school?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Most of the school years were here in Sanger, although in my younger years we moved from place to place attending several different schools. When we returned to Sanger, I must have been in either the 5th or 6th grade in Lindsay Elementary School. Graduated Sanger High School and went to Fresno State College and finished there.

MR. KIRCHNER: What was your major there at Fresno State?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I took up business as my major and home economics as my minor. As Fresno State was a teacher's college, I was interested in becoming a teacher at the beginning, but was encouraged to take other courses. At that time, the teaching field was flooded with new teachers, and there were no job opportunities in that field.

MR. KIRCHNER: What are your recollections of college years?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I recall I had very good times during my college years. The only difficulty I encountered was the transportation, commuting to Fresno State. We drove from Sanger to school.

MR. KIRCHNER: You commuted by car daily?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Yes, with either my brother or with someone else. One year, I drove by myself.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: What kind of car did you have?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: One year, it was Ray's old car, an old dilapidated car that I had to jiggle the battery wire to start it. Basically, they were all second-hand cars.

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: I guess you never had a car you could call your own.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I certainly did not have a car of my own. I was never that fortunate, although the brothers had cars of their own.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did you do student teaching as it is done now?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: No. The war was declared shortly after I graduated, which was a blessing in disguise, as I was able to get away to the eastern area where, I think, the opportunities are much better for girls.

MR. KIRCHNER: How did you happen to go to Minneapolis?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I wanted to leave camp, Poston II, earlier, but my mother worried about where I might go because I was a girl. Fortunately, there was an older girl going to Minneapolis, who had a brother stationed at Fort Snelling. My mother thought it would be safe for me to

go with her.

MR. KIRCHNER: How old were you then?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I must have been 23 or 24 then.

MR. KIRCHNER: And you asked your mother's permission then?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Absolutely. We did, in those days.

MR KIRCHNER: How did your father feel about that?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I think he saw the day that we would have to separate. I couldn't be under their wings all the time. I do believe he was reluctant to see me go.

MR. KIRCHNER: What were your reactions to Pearl Harbor?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Well, I think I was very frightened. The newspaper articles one kept reading made it extremely worrisome. It isn't that I encountered anything, but I kept hearing and reading these terrible stories of discrimination, that it made me scared to even step outside the house. But I personally didn't encounter any discrimination.

MR. KIRCHNER: Well, obviously some girls went to camp and had good times. How did you feel about camp? Did you enjoy it?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I had a good time in camp.

MR. KIRCHNER: What did you do there? Did you work there?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: First, like everyone else, I started in the mess hall, and heard about the various openings in other areas. I thought I might enjoy working in the library, so I applied. Got the job as a librarian with no experience whatsoever, just the college degree.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did that carry over in later life?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: Yes. When I left camp, I thought I would like to apply for some kind of library work in Minneapolis. I did go for a few interviews, but it just didn't work out at the time. I worked at Munsingwear for a few months, when a woman at the YWCA told me about an opening at the Minneapolis Public Library and told me to apply there. I applied and was accepted without too much difficulty. That's how I started and eventually became a librarian there.

MR. KIRCHNER: You know, we talked about your father, about his earlier experiences and education in Japan. I wonder how many families you can find who had four youngsters who attended college in those days.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I think there were good many families that did.

MR. KIRCHNER: All families or in Japanese families?

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: There were good many Japanese that went to college. In the armed services they asked how many attended college and many of them had.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I think the percentage is high. Though, we do not know the exact percentage of most Nisei that did get to go to college.

MR. KIRCHNER: I think that's my point. I think it is very unusual. Would you tell me about your marriage and your children?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I got married quite late in life. I thoroughly enjoyed my work, and I was a bit reluctant to give it up. We have two girls, living in Minneapolis. I pursued my career as a librarian even during the early days of motherhood. Our life was very pleasant, there's really not much to say other than that.

MR. KIRCHNER: Your present career?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I retired at the end of June 1979, and moved out here in October.

MR. KIRCHNER: Do you observe any Japanese customs in your home?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I'm sorry to say that I didn't observe any of them in Minneapolis. Now that I'm in a Japanese community, more or less, I hope to establish some.

MR. KIRCHNER: What changes have you seen as you returned to this area?

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: When I returned for a visit, I was becoming aware that more and more Chicanos were being employed by the stores and other places of business. When we were young, I remember that there was only one Mexican family in our area.

MR. KIRCHNER: George Hasegawa. George, would you tell me where you were born, the date of birth, and place of longest residency?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I was born in Sanger on November 23, 1919. My longest place of residency is St. Louis, Missouri.

MR. KIRCHNER: What are your recollections of childhood and early school years.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Well, I do remember we moved a lot. After we came back to Sanger, I went to grammar school. Life was relatively easy. I remember coming home from high school and working most of the time, either picking oranges, loading the truck, or digging the ditches for irrigation.

MR. KIRCHNER: You mentioned you moved a lot. Where did you move, and why did you move so much?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I believe after the fire, we moved to Fresno and lived with my grandfather. Evidently, they had a parting of ways, and my father was on his own. From Fresno we went to Tipton or Pixley, from there to Lemon Cove. From Lemon Cove we went to Lindsay and then back to Sanger.

MR. KIRCHNER: And you worked for other people?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: My father did.

MR. KIRCHNER: How old were you then?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Well, I started school in Lemon Cove, so that must have been when I was 6 or 7. When I came back to Sanger, I must have started in the third grade.

MR. KIRCHNER: What type of work did your father do?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Farming, sharecropping type, I guess.

MR. KIRCHNER: He was just a regular laborer?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Yes. I would say so.

MR. KIRCHNER: What are some of your recollection of college years prior to World War?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Went to Fresno State for two years, and two years at University of California, Berkeley. I guess that's the best time of my life.

MR. KIRCHNER: At University of California, was that during the free speech movement?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: No, way before that.

MR. KIRCHNER: What was your major?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Civil engineering.

MR. KIRCHNER: Did you graduate from University of California?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Yes, in 1941.

MR. KIRCHNER: In 1941, something else happened, didn't it?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Pearl Harbor.

MR. KIRCHNER: What about Pearl Harbor? What are your recollections about Pearl Harbor?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Well, we were on the way to a basketball game in Bakersfield. It was on a Sunday, we couldn't believe it. We thought that it was a big joke, that someone was pulling our leg. We played the game and came home.

MR. KIRCHNER: You say you were on the way to a basketball game?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: This was a Japanese basketball team, and we were playing a Japanese team in Bakersfield. We were driving in someone's car and heard it on the radio. The announcer said the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. But we just couldn't believe it was true.

MR. KIRCHNER: You had relatives in Japan, close relatives?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: My mother had a brother and a sister, but we didn't know them.

MR. KIRCHNER: You didn't correspond with them very much?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: No.

MR. KIRCHNER: What happened then to you, as far as your career was concerned?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I got a civil engineer job in Texas, but I was unable to take it because of the curfew after Pearl Harbor. Then, we went into camp. From camp, we were able to leave early if we had a promise of a job. So I wrote and got a surveying job in Cleveland. I left after nine months. Worked there for about nine months, then I got another job, a better paying job in Detroit. I worked there about nine months, and then the Army called me. I joined the armed services.

MR. KIRCHNER: While you were in camp, were you able to use your skills?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I was the chief of a party of survey crew. What I did there was to survey the desert for irrigation purposes. We build the ditches and fields to raise alfalfa. We just leveled it off.

MR. KIRCHNER: You made good uses of the land, in other words.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: We surveyed the land and graded it, but I don't think it was ever used for the purposes for which it was intended. It was basically for the Indians, because we were on the Indian Reservation. But I don't think the Indians ever utilized the land as such.

MR. KIRCHNER: Tell us about your marriage, your children, and your family life.

MR. GEORGE KIRCHNER: I met my wife in camp, and we got married before I went overseas. After I got back, we lived in St. Louis and lived there ever since. We have three children, three girls. One is married now, one is working in Los Angeles, and one is finishing college in Los Angeles.

MR KIRCHNER: What is your present career?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I'm the vice-president of the firm I called Herfield and Shifren, Incorporated, a consulting engineering firm.

MR. KIRCHNER: Do you observe any Japanese traditions in your home? Have you passed on any traditions?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: If you say eating Japanese food, that's one thing we passed on--but not much else.

MR. KIRCHNER: What changes do you see in this area as someone who returns periodically?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I see the farmers living in big homes, driving big cars. I think the farmers are much better off now than 30 or 40 years ago. I see big changes in the Nisei, they have better jobs now than before the war. I think the opportunities are much, much better. Fresno is expanding by leaps and bounds. Sanger hasn't expanded much, but changes are in the buildings, much more modern.

MR. KIRCHNER: And you attended Sanger High School? Graduated from Sanger High?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Right.

MR. KIRCHNER: Can you tell me the names of some of the classmates? Do you recall any?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Teddy Giovacchini, Wayne Crosby, there were about 90 in the graduating class. Emma Hatayama was a classmate. She was the doctor who took care of my mother.

MR. KIRCHNER: If you could go back, would you change anything?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I don't know, probably not. I don't like these hypothetical questions because it can't be done anyway.

MR. KIRCHNER: That's just about it. Is there anything you care to add?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: No, not really. I lived away from Sanger. This is a project for Sanger-Fresno area, so I can't really add much to it except my observations.

MR. KIRCHNER: Let's talk about your wife. You met her in camp? And where is she from?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Yes, I met her in camp. She lived most of her life in Los Angeles area, but due to relocation they lived in Porterville or Dinuba area. And it just happened that they relocated to the same camp as we did and to the same block.

MR. KIRCHNER: Now, how about Missouri? Do you have relatives back there? Does she? Or are you there alone?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Well, I'm alone now, no relatives. I had a sister in Minneapolis, but she's in California now.

MR. KIRCHNER: I guess this is about it. Let me just say that I enjoyed it. I learned a lot about your family, and it's an amazing and an interesting family.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: One of the interesting things to know is that someone with my father's education would have come over. He would have had a good career in Japan.

Anyone who graduated from the Imperial University would have ended up in the government somewhere. And my mother, too, was on the wealthy side. There was no point for them to come here. Grandfather told him to come, so he came. Maybe they intended to go back, I'm not sure.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: Most of them intended to go back to Japan.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Grandfather was a strong-willed man, so he probably insisted that he come.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: I don't think they ever accumulated enough capital to go back. The children were born, and we're citizens.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: I think we have to understand that Grandfather was doing very well at that time, and everything was quite rosy. Then Depression came and everything changed.

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: Didn't your father take a lot of representatives from Japan all over to see things?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: Father or Grandfather?

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA: Your father.

MRS. BECKY YAGYU: I think they both did. Anyone who graduated from the Imperial University, Grandfather would bring them over to meet Dad, thinking that he might have been a classmate or had mutual instructors.

MR. KIRCHNER: I understand that your father took one of you or some of you to San Francisco to board a ship. Is that right?

MR. RAY HASEGAWA: It was a training ship from Japan.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: His friend became an admiral, Admiral Nomura, who was Dad's classmate. He invited my dad, Grandfather, and one or two of us. I remember being on that ship, I must have been pretty small, but I still remember that battleship.

MR. KIRCHNER: You know an average person doesn't get invited on a battleship.

MR. PETER HASEGAWA: Another person who came to visit my dad was Dr. Miki, at the time he was the Secretary of Agriculture. He also had the prestige of being a graduate of this college. In Japan it's not a "right," but one has to earn it to go to college. So out of 500 applicants, one person gets to go.

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: The ratio is high. They study and study.

MR. KIRCHNER: Is the school in operation?

MRS. HELEN HASEGAWA AND MRS. YOSHINO HASEGAWA: Yes, it's the number one university, a very prestigious one.

MR. KIRCHNER: Is it like MIT or Harvard?

MR. GEORGE HASEGAWA: It's harder to get in than MIT, because they have so many applicants, you have to be accepted.