

JOHN KUBOTA

MRS. HASEGAWA: Today is November 26, 1979. I, Yoshino Hasegawa, have the honor and privilege of interviewing Mr. John Kubota in his home located at 3459 Illinois Avenue in the city of Fresno. With him is his wife Momoyo Jane Kubota.

Mr. Kubota, we appreciate your participation in the Oral History Program of the Japanese American Project sponsored by the San Joaquin Valley Library System and which is made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

As an active member and long-time citizen of the San Joaquin Valley, in the newspaper field and in many aspects of civic and social life, we would like to record your experiences, evaluations and your future outlook during this interview.

For the sake of record and as required by the California State Library, will you please give us your full name, place of birth, and the place of your longest residence?

MR. KUBOTA: My name is John Minoru Kubota, born August 10, 1911. My longest living address in Fresno is 3459 Illinois Avenue, 93702, during the past 33 years.

MRS. HASEGAWA: To begin our discussion of your life and career, will you tell us how it was that you came to this area to settle and some of the memories of your childhood?

MR. KUBOTA: I was born in Lindsay, California. And when I was 9 years old I went to Japan with my parents and brothers and sisters. Then, in Japan, I finished a four-year course of elementary school. I went in first to first grade, then I jumped to the second grade, and at the end of the semester I attended the third grade. So within one year, I skipped two grades.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you study Japanese here before you went back to Japan?

MR. KUBOTA: No. I did not study Japanese prior to going to Japan. So I can just speak a social word or so. I have a little tough time, but I had one big sister in Japan. She took care of me for the language part.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Your sister, then, was not born in America?

MR. KUBOTA: No, she was Japan-born. I left here in 1920, then I came back after finishing high school there, and I came back to this country on January 1, 1931 to San Francisco aboard the Tatsuta Maru. In Japan, I graduated from Karuma High School.

MRS. HASEGAWA: After you came back to the United States, did you go to school here?

MR. KUBOTA: No, I didn't. I just attended night school for a short time. When I came back in 1931 it was the Depression years. It was pretty hard to get a job.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you come by yourself, or did your family come with

you?

MR. KUBOTA: No, I just came with two sisters.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Are your sisters living here now?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. One sister is living in Utah and one in Denver.

MRS. HASEGAWA: They are quite far from you. Do you get to see them sometimes?

MR. KUBOTA: Last year, I went to the younger sister's husband's funeral, about this time a year ago. At that time, I met all of them. It was the first time since the evacuation.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you have any brothers?

MR. KUBOTA: One brother.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is he still in Japan?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And your parents--are they gone?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. They passed away during the war.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When you came back to the United States, did you settle in Lindsay?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When were you married?

MR. KUBOTA: I married when I was 27. I'm 68, so it was 41 years ago. In March 1939.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How did you meet your wife?

MR. KUBOTA: We lived in the same place in Lindsay where she was born.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you go to the same church, or how did you meet her?

MR. KUBOTA: No, Lindsay is just a small community of Japanese people. Her parents had a little store in Lindsay and we used to go shopping there.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was your marriage the traditional go-between wedding?

MR. KUBOTA: No. My wife's parents and my parents knew each other for many, many years so that was the way we became acquainted.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Why did your parents go back to Japan?

MR. KUBOTA: One reason was that my oldest sister was going to get married, and it was the parents' responsibility. To go back to take care of the wedding is an old custom. She had been living with an uncle for

many years.

MRS. HASEGAWA: At that time, as a young man in Lindsay, did you experience racial prejudice or discrimination and did you feel that the Japanese were treated differently by the non- Japanese?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. The discrimination I experienced was that I went to one of the barber shops, and the man who worked there refused to cut my hair. So I went to the next one, and he also refused. So, finally, I went to the only place that accepted Japanese, the only one place. Later, Mr. Hayashi, a Japanese, started a barber shop. There were many other discriminations. Even when the Japanese owned land and had rights to irrigation, they had to get a special okay to get water from the District.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was that in Lindsay?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. The Lindsay Irrigation District. But it was all right to use their own pump. But, even then, I heard that there was some limitation.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You mean to tell me that the Japanese couldn't get water from the irrigation ditch?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes, because there was not enough water to take care of all the people. But after the Friant Dam was built, there was no trouble. Of course, after the war, discrimination ended.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Since you received this kind of prejudice and discrimination at that time, did that affect your way of thinking or your way of doing business with the non-Japanese later on?

MR. KUBOTA: I think so. When I go to Lindsay once or twice a year, even now, I feel uncomfortable. That's the main reason I don't want to go Lindsay. I do go for funerals or other business when it is unavoidable.

MRS. HASEGAWA: In 1940, you were the President of the Tulare County JAACL. Were you a charter member? Wasn't that a young organization at that time?

MR. KUBOTA: No, I am not a charter member. But I joined the JAACL, and in those days, quite a few Kibei lived in the Lindsay areas nearby. The Tulare County JAACL is composed of Dinuba, Orosi, Visalia, Lindsay, and Delano. Five communities got together to organize one JAACL, and in all these places we had quite a few Kibei who couldn't speak English very well, so we had a Kibei division. I was asked to take on the Kibei division, and I spent about two or three years working with them. And then the people asked me to serve one year as president, which I did.

MRS. HASEGAWA: For the sake of record, there will be lots of people using this tape who don't know what a Kibei is. Will you please explain.

MR. KUBOTA: A Kibei is a citizen who was born in America, sent to Japan when they were very young, studied in Japan, and returned to this country. There were also Nisei who were educated in Japan for a short time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What were some of the key issues that the JACL was concerned with at that time, before the war?

MR. KUBOTA: In those days, the Issei people were not so keen about JACL activities, because in those days the Japanese stand was very, very strong. So, in those days, we got together ourselves and protected our property against those who tried to violate our rights.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was that the main issue in those days?

MR. KUBOTA: That was the main thing. We worked on discrimination, prejudice, those kinds of things and tried to promote good will in the Japanese and American community.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You were like an ambassador between the Japanese and Americans.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. And in those days we also participated in the annual Lindsay affairs, the Orange Festival; and in the Dinuba area, the Raisin Day Parade.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you make floats?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. A small float and a decorated car, that's how we participated.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Before World War II, you served for four years as the President of Heimu Shakai?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. Heimu Shakai. In those days the people, even the Nisei, if they stayed in Japan would have been drafted, so people in that category who could not serve directly in the Japanese Army collected money--one dollar a month-- for the Red Cross in Japan, not for the military purposes. That's why the United States government permitted us to continue that project. If we collected the money and sent it back to the Japanese Army direct, it would have been a different story. That was understood between us and the government. And we were just the Tulare County Chapter. All over California they had the same set-up, even in Fresno.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What happened to the members and the organization when the war broke out?

MR. KUBOTA: Some were picked up by the FBI. They went to a special detention camp. I was a Nisei, so my neighbor always told me that the family has to watch out, since somebody is watching what you do from early morning to late at night. But I knew that. They didn't pick me up.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Earlier you were telling me about some money that belonged to this organization. What became of it?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes, when the war broke out we had a balance of between \$150 and \$200. I suppose we donated it to the American Red Cross.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So, it went to the Red Cross anyway. The American Red Cross! And then in 1941, you were a member of the Tulare County Japanese-American Board. What kind of an organization was that and what was its purpose.

MR. KUBOTA: The Tulare County Japanese Association? It was the nihonjinkai, a Japanese association. The Nisei were still pretty young, so the Issei controlled the whole activity.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And that was composed of all Issei, Nisei, and Kibei. All the Japanese in Lindsay?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What were some of the things that they did?

MR. KUBOTA: They promoted friendship between the Japanese community and the outer community.

MRS. HASEGAWA: It was a social organization?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes, a social organization. The United States government thought the Japanese organization was a branch of the Japanese government. Once a year, whenever a new Consul-General arrived, the Consul-General would make an inspection trip to see how the Japanese community was doing. And, in those days when a child, a Nisei, was born, I think 50 to 70 percent of the people registered the child with the Japanese government. That was dual citizenship. But some Issei people like Mr. Jiketa Nagata would say that that was a foolish thing to do. He would say, "When we live in America my children are all citizens and learn English, and we don't have to go back to Japan. We will stay in America to become good United States citizens." But before the war, I think 50 to 60 percent of the parents, if they made a little money, would try to go back to Japan.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That was their dream to make money and go back to Japan.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. But after the war, they couldn't go back to Japan.

MRS. HASEGAWA: The nihonjinkai that you mentioned earlier, besides being a social group, they took care of funerals and performed that kind of service for the Japanese, didn't they?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. If someone in the Japanese community lost a member of their family, the Japanese Association came around to help with the funeral arrangements.

MRS. HASEGAWA: In other words, this organization was to benefit the Japanese people. They took care of each other.

MR. KUBOTA: One of the main things was that when the Issei people, who wanted to buy land and who couldn't speak English, the Japanese Association hired a capable man. For example, the Tulare County Japanese Association had Mr. Saikichi Shirozawa. So whenever something happened Mr. Shirozawa went to interpret for them. For instance, when a Japanese got a traffic ticket on the street or in that kind of situation.

MRS. HASEGAWA: At that time, I suppose it was necessary to have people like that.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. But now everybody speaks English, so there is no problem.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When the war broke out and when Pearl Harbor was bombed, what was your reaction? What were you doing at that time?

MR. KUBOTA: I was working at the Lindsay Vegetable Association. The Association took care of the marketing of vegetables. That day I was in the office engaged in shipping pole peas back east.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of pea?

MR. KUBOTA: Pole pea. Before the war quite a few people planted pole peas. I would say there were 100 to 150 Japanese pea growers, from Delano to Terra Bella and Lindsay and Exeter and Ivanhoe and Orosi and in that mountain area. On that day, suddenly the radio came to a stop and the first words I heard were, "A special bulletin. A special bulletin." They announced it two times. Then, "The Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor!" I thought it was very bad.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You must have been pretty shocked!

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. Nobody bothered us in this area because we had known each other for many, many years.

MRS. HASEGAWA: There were no acts of violence or anything like that?

MR. KUBOTA: No, nothing.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long was it before you were evacuated and had to go to the relocation camp?

MR. KUBOTA: I was living in the white zone where we didn't have to move. But my parents were living in the west side of Highway 65 and they had to move. In other words, they had to go to the camp. But since we were living in the east side of Highway 65, which was the white zone, we didn't have to move out at that time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have to go eventually?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes, eventually. They changed the rules. The zoning got tighter and tighter and tighter. Finally, all Japanese from California had to move out.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you leave?

MR. KUBOTA: We went into the camp about half a year later.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you remember what month it was?

MR. KUBOTA: June.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where did you leave from?

MR. KUBOTA: From Lindsay. We boarded a SP train and we went to Parker, Arizona. Took almost half a day. We left Lindsay about evening, and we arrived over there after lunch the next day. About 2:00 or 3 o'clock. We could not see outside since all the blinds were pulled down. That was a long trip, especially since we did not know where we were going.

MRS. HASEGAWA: After you got to Parker, what happened?

MR. KUBOTA: When we arrived at Parker, we went to Camp Number Two. The first arrivals were at Camp Number One, 10,000; Camp Number Two, 5,000; and Camp Number Three, 5,000. So, all together, there were 20,000 people at Poston. There were about three or four miles apart between the three camps.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do at camp? What were some of your experiences?

MR. KUBOTA: When we went in the camp, it was so dusty. We went into the barrack and there was dust all over. About this much.

MRS. HASEGAWA: About two inches. What kind of housing did you have?

MR. KUBOTA: Very simple. Just one single wall covered with black tar paper. And the roof was double, because it was so hot. About this much space. About a foot and a half space.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do when you got into this barracks-like place to live? What was it like? How did you feel?

MR. KUBOTA: Oh, I feel disgusted at that time. Then the people who had arrived earlier came down to supply us with the mattress. Not a mattress, but just a mattress cover and we had to put straw into the cover. It was pretty hot, so we didn't need a blanket, just a mattress. So we had to sleep on the mattress. Later they gave us an Army cot. I think that first night I slept outside, because it was too hot. And the people, they all start washing out the rooms and water pressure fell because everybody started using it at the same time.

And some Issei, old folks, told me "Kubota-san," we are going to die here." But the Japanese are smart people, and they made the desert livable. There was so much dust, and we wanted it to settle, so we got water. And within half a year they started planting all kinds of trees, and then within one year flowers were blooming and trees were growing.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What's happened to it since then?

MR. KUBOTA: Right now I heard, I have never been back, but I heard that the Administration Building is still there, and some things are still there. But now all the camp has been torn down, and I think that Indian people are farming and using the pond to raise cotton, sugar beets, and those kind of things.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I suppose until they put up the camp for the Japanese evacuees there was no water there.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes, we had very, very deep wells. But the water was very poor. It had lots of iron.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did people get sick from it?

MR. KUBOTA: Myself, I don't feel right. I felt very poor for half a year, but I got used to it. One became accustomed to it after a length of time, but the water was very poor.

Within half a year the government brought water in from Parker Dam from the Colorado River. Then we started a farm.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did they raise the vegetables the people in camp used?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. First they planted lettuce, Japanese radish, and eggplants, too. In the summer, they planted some watermelons, honeydews, and cantaloupes. So we had plenty of food because we planted several hundred acres, to feed 20,000 people, and everybody got some.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When you first went to camp, what kind of food did you have? Did you have enough food?

MRS. KUBOTA: Yes. When we first went in, the evening meal had already been cooked. Cooked by the people who were there earlier. They had trained--cooks, waitresses, even dishwashers, too. We had a nice meal that night. I don't remember what I had, but it was enough.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Now, while you were there, you had a job to do. What was your job?

MR. KUBOTA: First night we went in, the man from San Pedro area called Mr. Nakano, a very nice man came around to my place and said, "Mr. Kubota, we will have a block meeting to choose a block manager. We need a block manager so that everything will run smoothly." Our block number was 226. The earlier group from San Pedro left for camp from Lindsay. They had evacuated to Lindsay from San Pedro. They had to leave their homes in San Pedro within 24 hours and had moved into the Lindsay area. So we had known them for almost half a year. We had come to the same camp. So we had a meeting, and I was elected block manager. There were lots of headaches. Everything was short, we had nothing; and everything was stored in the warehouses.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You were kind of like a supply man. What were your other duties as a block manager?

MR. KUBOTA: Well, I had to attend the supervisor's meetings. Then I would get information and take it back to the block office and write complaints, the block people's complaints. They needed salt, they needed toilet paper, and et cetera. At that time, nobody was taking care of that part of the work, which took two or three days. We had to decide on who was to be the cook, waitress, dishwasher, and et cetera. We had to take care of the latrine for the ladies and the men. Then after about a week to 10 days the life became routine and we settled down.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That was a big job trying to get everybody to do something.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I suppose if they didn't have anything to do it would have been pretty boring.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. For the Japanese, it's all right. I told them how much I appreciated it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Everybody cooperated?



MR. KUBOTA: Yes, cooperated. The main thing was we had to survive. If they stop the food then that would have been a big problem. The other problem was the milk for the babies, but it was solved. So from my standpoint, we have no shortage of foods. Not number one meal, but it was all right.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have any children of your own at that time?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. My eldest daughter was four or five. After about half a year they started school. Then I became president of the PTA. When I was asked to become president I refused because my daughter was four or five, and she was not even enrolled in nursery school, but everyone wanted me to be president. Mrs. Endo, who is living in San Jose, and other Salinas and Watsonville people were in same camp. I used to be a teacher at Salinas a couple of years, so they knew me from Japanese school. I think they had a meeting and said, "Kubota-san is number one." I served about three years. At that time they said, "We need teachers," so I went to Bob Kanagawa and George Nishimura and I asked them to serve on the teaching staff. They taught for about three years. The others would not teach because they did not have confidence in themselves.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long were you in camp?

MR. KUBOTA: Four years.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you come back to the Lindsay area again?

MR. KUBOTA: In 1946, at the end of the year.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you come directly back to Lindsay?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes, to Lindsay. Only place to go back to.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you experience any prejudice when you came back?

MRS. KUBOTA: We didn't have too much contact with the public.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. We just worked for the Armenian place in the vineyard. This Armenian trusted the Japanese. We went to pick grapes and do pruning for him and for several other Caucasian places. They wanted Japanese workers.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What else did you do?

MR. KUBOTA: I picked oranges and pruned orange trees.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you come back to your own home?

MR. KUBOTA: We stayed at my wife's parents'.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was their house intact when you returned from the relocation center?

MRS. KUBOTA: They had a store.

MR. KUBOTA: Quite a few other people were staying there, too.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Who took care of your father's store while you were gone?

MRS. KUBOTA: A Mexican man, but he didn't turn out too good. He didn't run the store half the time, and I guess he just closed it down.

MRS. HASEGAWA: But the building was there, so you could come back?

MRS. KUBOTA: The building was there.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was it in good shape?

MRS. KUBOTA: Well, everything my mother had stored was stolen. Well, the store wasn't too bad. It was dirty. Most of the things were gone--stolen.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That was a bad time. But at least you had a place to come back to, and lots of people didn't during that time.

MRS. KUBOTA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And you say that lots of other people lived there, too?

MRS. KUBOTA: Years ago they had a rooming house right next to the store for bachelor men. Bachelors would rent a room there. It was a rooming house that my folks had. Some people came back after the war and stayed there, in the rooming house.

MR. KUBOTA: Then Reverend Zesei Kawasaki, the minister of the Visalia Buddhist Church came along one day and said, "Kubotasan, there is a new newspaper started in San Francisco, would you like to be a correspondent for the paper?" And that's how I got into the newspaper business. Hokubei Mainichi was started by the Buddhist organization. Nichibei Times was already there. This Hokubei Mainichi is the former Shin Sekai, The New World Newspaper. And the Shin Sekai was started during the war, and all the employees and those people went back to Japan during the war. So they had no organizer, so the bishop of the Buddhist Church put up \$10,000 of his own money and asked the local ministers to put up \$100 each and they started Hokubei Mainichi. But the paper was for the public, for everybody. I moved to Fresno in 1948.

MRS. HASEGAWA: The reason for that was because you could find more news here?

MR. KUBOTA: That's right. In Lindsay at the end of the Valley, I couldn't do business, so then I moved to 1911 South Van Ness Avenue by the old gate, the entrance to Fresno. By the SP Railroad. That used to be the main highway, you know. 99, that would pass through Van Ness, then would pass through Roeding Park.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you see a difference in the attitudes toward the Japanese of newspapers like the Fresno Bee and others? Do you think it has changed?

MR. KUBOTA: Oh, you mean the Bee? Oh, did they change! Three hundred sixty-degree change, you could say. Now we have no complaints, no

discrimination, no trouble.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What was it like then?

MR. KUBOTA: Before the war? As soon as the war broke out, the Fresno Bee wrote the article--at that time Mr. Uota had a big tomato ranch on the top of the hill in the Ivanhoe area. It was a mountain pointed at the top covered with white caps. From the bottom it looked like an arrow--the Bee claimed that that was direction for the Japanese planes to follow, very childish!

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was anything done about it?

MR. KUBOTA: No. They wrote their own story. Then, one time, the Fresno Bee wrote another article about lots of Japanese moving into this area from the coast. I think there were about 1,000 people who moved in from the coast to Clovis and Sanger. To Visalia, Lindsay, about 200 or 300 from the San Pedro area moved in. Then the Bee wrote, watch out, "This summer all Japanese people are going to move into the Sierra Mountains. They are going to start a fire. They are going to burn all the forests!" As a result, all the Japanese had to evacuate. But now when I go over there, to the Bee Office, they welcome me. They write the news for us. When they were filming "America Monogatari" last year, although I was only in charge of lunch for the crew, and helped with the selection of the site. They thought I was the coordinator with the Japan film company or something like that. In the Bee news article they listed me as being the broadcaster of television, radio, and newspaper!

MRS. HASEGAWA: You do take care of radio and television for this area, do you not?

MR. KUBOTA: That is true, but before the war they wouldn't give us that kind of publicity. Big change, big change. I never find prejudiced articles about the Japanese now.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kinds of articles and what kind of issues do you write about in the Hokubei Mainichi?

MR. KUBOTA: Most of the news, 90 percent of the news, is about activities of various Japanese organizations in this community. And maybe 5 to 10 percent are my own opinions. When I attend a meeting, I interpret my impressions of what went on.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Does your news cover all of Central California?

MR. KUBOTA: Central California between Tulare County to Madera County.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How do you see the difference in the quality of the newspaper from that time and now?

MR. KUBOTA: I think it has improved a little bit.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Just a little bit?

MR. KUBOTA: A little bit. Not too much. The reason why--you know the people who work in the main office in San Francisco are not progressive in their thinking.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Tell us a little bit about your radio and television activities.

MR. KUBOTA: First the radio, Dinuba KRDU, I think is going on to the 32nd year. I began with 15 minutes. I took three records and no commercial. Second time my boss said, "Bring over three records. You play the records and you say something Japanese." Then the third time I got spots from Toshiyuki Drug Store, Okamoto Watch Repair, and Komoto's Department Store.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Advertisements?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes, three of them. They contacted the radio station. Then my boss said, "I'm giving you another 15 minutes, you take 30." Then more advertisement came in and finally it got bigger and bigger and I was given two hours and a half.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you start this? What year?

MR. KUBOTA: 1942

MRS. HASEGAWA: So then your radio broadcasting started about the same time you started your newspaper?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. Then about 15 years later I started KLIP in Fowler.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Are you still working with KLIP in Fowler?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. About 15 years ago. The day Marilyn Monroe, the actress, passed away, that morning I started. That morning I announced the death of Marilyn Monroe over the radio.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's certainly a memorable day.

MR. KUBOTA: The first time I started at KLIP was for three hours. Next week my boss says, "John, take another hour," and I said, "Too much." So, finally, the boss gave me four hours and 15 minutes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Four hours!

MR. KUBOTA: Four hours. I still do four hours, even today. But I have my religious programs at first, I start off with Sicho no ie. Following Seicho no ie . . . . a.m., Tenri Church, at 8:30 Seventh Day Adventist, at 9 o'clock Buddhist program, 9:30 is Clovis Free Methodist Church and 10:00 Konko Church, and 10:30 Jodo Shinshu Shinran Kai. I did that from 8:00 to 5:00. Religious groups, they never quit once they started; that is why I can continue.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is that every Sunday?

MR. KUBOTA: Sunday morning from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's KLIP?

MR. KUBOTA: KLIP, yes. KRDU 11:30 is Saturday.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And at KRDU do you give mostly news?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. Television, we started about seven years ago. I have so many friends in the Los Angeles area. One of the friends called me one day and wanted me to come around. He wanted me to see the television situation in Los Angeles. Like--Sunday evening there were no Japanese in Japanese town. Just Caucasian in Japanese town, strolling around. All the restaurants opened for them, but no business. All the Japanese speaking people were watching television. So you see the situation. You start this in Fresno and everyone will watch. That's why I started in Fresno. Then we started off for two hours. Before I started television program, I was talking to Mr. Ed Otani, and he was saying, "Oh, John, radio no more--will pass, from now on television. All right, you get the station KMPH in Visalia. You go get good time over there. Get the best time." But night time was taken already. And one more thing," he says, "night time costs are too high." So I said to him, "I'll get some cheaper time." So somebody suggested Sunday morning, but Sunday morning there is too much, with church activities. So we started off with a two-hour program, then the Caucasians said, "Oh, John, when you start that TV program, we're going to give you advertisement, a spot." But they never gave us any. There was no response from those people. My wife and I visited 110 stores -

MRS. HASEGAWA: Nobody wanted to sponsor you?

MR. KUBOTA: Nobody. Just the Japanese cooperated. But only the Japanese was not enough. Under these conditions we would lose \$6,000 to \$7,000 in one year. So I announced over the radio that, "I cannot continue the show for two hours. I'll make it a one-hour program." Still there was no support. Then Reverend Gimyo Takemura of Fowler, who was the minister at that time, called me, "Kubota-san, you can't quit, you can't cut down the hours because this is not your program." "Oh," I said, "I started it, so it's my program. Nobody can complain against me." But he insisted that this was a public service. So, I told everybody to call a meeting. He called a meeting and asked me to attend. Seventy-two people gathered at the Fresno Buddhist Church Annex. They were going to help me. So, they promised to help me. So that's how it has been going on.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I see, with private donations!

MR. KUBOTA: So we tried to get 50 percent donations from the people. At this time I needed at least \$60,000. I only have \$30,000 from donations, but I think we can collect the rest. This is the set up at the present time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: This is an important TV program, because so many Isseis who cannot go anywhere can enjoy the program.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. Isseis and many Caucasians are watching, too. The other day, this one Caucasian said to me, "Are you John Kubota? Why did you quit the English subtitles?" So I said, "Not enough money." But at least he pays attention and brings it to my attention. But he will not donate any money. Channel 18 is in the red. So they have auctions to raise money.

MRS. HASEGAWA: As a Buddhist Church member, I understand that you've been very active.

MR. KUBOTA: I was very active when I came to Fresno for the first four

or five years. I collected dues from unpaid members. I went to the most difficult places. But even with Buddhists, it's same thing. You know the generation problem. It should be a generation project. The responsibility should be given to the next generation. One person should not have to take care of the whole thing.

MRS. HASEGAWA: The Buddhist Church is very active, isn't it?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. I can say active because they have 700 to 800 members, anyway. The Christian church is active, too, but some churches have limited memberships.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you attend church every Sunday?

MR. KUBOTA: No, I don't attend every Sunday. I have no time. Just on an occasion I have to go, but I don't go regularly. I can't go. They have a Sunday afternoon regular service at 2:00 p.m., but sometimes I have another meeting, so I can't go.

MRS. HASEGAWA: In 1969, you were appointed to the EOC, the Equal Opportunity Commission, by Mayor Ted Wills. You served as Treasurer of that organization until 1973. What was the purpose of that organization? How do you interpret the purpose of that organization and what role did you play?

MR. KUBOTA: The organization itself started off to help the ethnic people like the Mexican and the black people.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did it affect the Japanese people in any way?

MR. KUBOTA: No. Japanese people don't have the qualifications. I asked several times, but the Japanese do not have the qualifications.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Because they have too much money?

MR. KUBOTA: They say the Japanese are not a minority.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You were telling me that you handled a lot of money.

MR. KUBOTA: A lot of money goes to all these ethnic people. As the representative from the black people in the west area said, "Our people do not have the money to feed the kids in the morning. During the day they are fed in the school, but some very poor families can't feed the kids in the evening, so the money should be used in those particular areas." And one more thing, they cannot afford to build a meeting place, so some of the money went to build a place.

MRS. HASEGAWA: But you said \$5,000,000 a year.

MR. KUBOTA: Five million a year, including the wages, too.

MRS. HASEGAWA: As a treasurer, were you paid?

MR. KUBOTA: No. Administrators were well paid, but the office worker in West Fresno were very cheap labor. Not permanent, just temporary.

MRS. HASEGAWA: But that sounds like an awful lot of money just to feed a few people.

MR. KUBOTA: Every weekend I used to write a \$100,000 check for the West Fresno area.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was that just for food?

MR. KUBOTA: Food, social affairs such as the circus and ice skating when they come to Fresno. In the West Fresno area, the kids don't have a chance to go to see. Summertime comes they have their own baseball league. Sometimes they take the kids to Los Angeles to Disneyland. And sometimes they took the kids to the beach over there.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's what the money was spent for.

MR. KUBOTA: There was big money that we had to give to the Parlier area, Sanger, of course, Fowler, Selma, West Fresno area, a big wide area.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What do you personally think about it?

MR. KUBOTA: I think--50 percent is all right, but 50 percent is a waste of money. That's why I quit. At the Commissioner's meeting, we decided that whenever you gave a check to a particular place you had to get a receipt. Then after spending the money we needed to know what kind of activities the money was spent for. Have to get a report; we requested, but there was no response, no nothing. No reports at all.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is this program still going on?

MR. KUBOTA: I think so, but now I think the budget went down. I think they're very tight now. I think a little over one million dollars now. It's pretty tough now. The government is too easy on them. In other words, they are too spoiled. They don't want to work hard. Sometimes I see 15 or 16 year olds just walking around. They don't want to go to school.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You feel they get too much for doing nothing?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. The American government spoiled them too much. They are given too much. This John Kennedy was the first one. Amayakasu too much. If Ted Kennedy becomes president, they are going to start to spoil them again. The poor blacks want Kennedy. They don't like Carter because he is tight with the money.

MRS. HASEGAWA: They are looking for a handout?

MR. KUBOTA: Too much. They depend on it, you know. The way I look at it, government has to pick. There are people who really need the help. If they are really suffering we have to help them. But some people around here, like a lady I know, she's divorced, but she's getting her money from someplace. The people in this neighborhood, her husband comes around, even if they are on welfare claim they have no husbands, but get pregnant, it's okay. They don't work but they get their money from someplace. Maybe husband is working someplace. I really don't know. There were too many cases like that.

MRS. HASEGAWA: They should be investigated more thoroughly.

MR. KUBOTA: The government, county government especially, they just try

to give them money. The government workers advise the recipients so that they can get more money. If they get doctor's okay or if they give a good reason, they tell them they can get more money. They teach bad things. They should tell them or their husbands to work. Even when I go to Farmer Boy's Market I notice that only blacks or Mexicans have big cartfuls of groceries. Maybe some white people, too. Only Mexicans and black, 90 percent of them buy \$70 to \$80 worth of food at a time, with food stamps. Groceries are piled up in their baskets. They will even buy watermelon for \$4 or \$5 each. But Caucasian lady just watch them buy, they cannot afford it because it's too expensive.

MRS. HASEGAWA: They can't afford it.

MR. KUBOTA: They don't care because it's government money. There's something wrong. When I quit EOC as Treasurer, Joe Williams, the head man, who knows me asked, "John, Mr. Kubota, why do you quit?" I said, "Oh, Mr. Williams, I can't tell you why, but four years is good enough, isn't it?" All I got out of it was an occasional cup of coffee. If I was paid it might have been different!

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then you weren't paid at all? Just cups of coffee?

MR. KUBOTA: No. All free. Even for the Commission on Aging.

MRS. HASEGAWA: From 1974 to 1979, you were appointed by Mayor Ted Wills to the Commission on Aging.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. During that period I was the representative to attend the FCPC, Fresno Civic Participating Commission, FCPC.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did they do?

MR. KUBOTA: This is, more or less, the councilman is elected and under the councilman each committee from the Easton area-- no, no, Edison area, Roosevelt area, McLane area, Bullard area, Fresno High area, voluntarily choose about three persons from each area and they get together under the Fresno City Council. And if they have complaints they take it to the Council. Then at the FCPC conference they take the complaints to the chairman and the chairman takes them to the Council. Some people complain that there are not enough rides in their section. They say, when it rains, "We need a bridge over there." So I was selected to attend the meeting every week, for the commission on the aged.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long were you a representative from the Commission on the Aging to this FCPC?

MR. KUBOTA: I served on that committee three years. "Fresno Community Participating Commission," it's over there on the other side of the baseball ground, that's where the FCPC is located. Nothing but Mexicans and blacks, they just give them work to do, about 40 or 50 people.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That many?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. Some expenses come from the city. All the money comes from the federal government.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you have anything to do with the old people with



this Commission on Aging.

MR. KUBOTA: This commission works for the benefit of the old people. For hot meals, health, entertainment, and that kind of thing.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What do you do?

MR. KUBOTA: I'm just a member of the Commission on Aging. Besides my duty is to take care of the FCPC so they don't give me the extra job since I have to go every week. Then I have to go to the parents club in this organization three times a week.

MRS. HASEGAWA: These are all free services you give?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes, free services. But since I quit this Commission on Aging, I have plenty of time. Even daytime they have a meeting. Sometimes they have a luncheon meeting because nobody attends the meetings otherwise. Everyone eats the lunch.

MRS. HASEGAWA: There is one more thing. Do you play an active part in the Sister City Program?

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. Sister City Program, I was co-chairman 1965 to 1975, that's 10 years. And now it's 1979, so 15 years as co-chairman. But another Caucasian is going to be co-chairman, too. I'm just going to help him out. Assistant chairman.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What does this organization do?

MR. KUBOTA: Promote better understanding. They exchange culture, and they exchange the school program so it's a Sister City Program between Kochi, Shikoku, Japan and Fresno.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Why did they choose Kochi?

MR. KUBOTA: This is a little funny. Kochi has an ocean, we don't have an ocean. Over there they have agricultural town, but they have ocean so they have foreign trade, and fishing industry and Fresno is an agricultural city. It started off--the starting point is very funny. This is the story I heard, and it must be true. About 15 or 16 years ago, one man from Kochi stayed half a day in City Hall at Fresno. He doesn't speak good English, but I think the employees in City Hall helped him with translation and found out that he had visited City Hall 16 years ago. He is one of the promoters of the Sister City Program from Kochi. This man is a businessman (I think he made a trip from San Francisco or Los Angeles), then he stopped by Fresno and tried to get the Kochi Sister City Program started. In those days Fresno already had Lahore, Pakistan and Mormen, Burma, two Eastern region countries, so most of the Councilmen's opinions in those days was that Fresno had enough, because if there was an increase in another Sister City, it would cost more money. So I think the mayor refused this man's proposal. So I think he went home. Next, one Army Major who was stationed in Kochi (I don't know his name, nobody knows the name) came home (back to the United States) and visited the mayor's office, and wrote a letter to the City of Kochi using the mayor's letterhead. The letter the major sent to Japan was not read by the Japanese, but they thought, Fresno likes Kochi. So they sent at least a dozen letters to Fresno, but they were written in Japanese so nobody reads them. The mayor of Kochi says, "Oh,

this is a good chance to start the Sister City Program with Fresno." So in Japan their City Council said okay. And even the governor's office said okay. But the content of the letter from the major using the Mayor of Fresno's letterhead was, in reality, just to thank Kochi City during the major's stay in Kochi City. Many letters arrived from Kochi to Fresno, but the secretaries threw them out without reading them, since they could not understand Japanese. There was a great misunderstanding. Then, in the meantime, Ken Otsubo, an attorney, was attending an international attorneys, lawyers' conference in Mexico. On the way, he stopped by, one morning early 6:45 a.m. Mr. Henderson, who was the mayor and also I think he was a professor at Fresno State University and Ben Nakamura came over to my house and said, "There is a great man coming from Kochi, John. This man is a graduate from Tokyo Imperial University." So I asked them, "What is he coming for?" They said, "We don't know." Ben said. Mr. Henderson asked me to come with him since he couldn't understand Japanese. Ben told me that he could understand Japanese (Hiroshima dialect), but he did not understand Tokyo Japanese, so he wanted me to go with them to meet this great man, Mr. Ken Otsubo. This is how it started. So we all went to meet Mr. Otsubo at the airport (Fresno). When we saw Mr. Otsubo we bowed to him and was so surprised to hear-- Mr. Otsubo asked us, "Are you both Japanese?" So we said, "We are talking in Japanese, aren't we?" And he said, "You look like Filipinos." Is that so. Are we that dark?" Then the mayor asked us, "What are you talking about?" So we explained, and we laughed. He couldn't talk there anyway, and since it was the time that the Fresno Townhouse had just been built I took them to the Townhouse to have breakfast and the conversation started as follows: Mr. Otsubo said, "We wrote to Fresno a dozen times but no reply, so I am not happy." I told him that the former Mayor Selland threw every one of the letters away because of the councilmen's disapproval of another sister city. This is what I heard from the secretary. Then Mr. Henderson said, "I am just a temporary mayor and the councilmen have full power. But why don't you stay at least one week." So the mayor made an arrangement with the councilmen for Mr. Otsubo to stay one week at the new hotel. So Mr. Otsubo stayed one week and went to City Hall every day, back and forth, but there was no progress. So I told Mr. Otsubo, "It's going to take time, because you have to meet many people, one after another, eating and drinking coffee." So after one week he left for Japan. Then after a half-year later, I finally heard from Mr. Otsubo and the Councilmen said, "All right. Okay. It's more expense, but it can't be helped." There were two people against it, but finally half a year later it was okay'd--November 1965. The Kochi people come here every so often and we have gone over there several times.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What year was the Kochi Sister City approved?

MR. KUBOTA: 1965. In November, the City Council approved. Mr. Otsubo came over in 1965, in June, almost six months. Within the Sister City Program right now besides Kochi, we have Toleon, Mexico; Afra, Israel; and we are now contacting with Yerevan, Armenia which is under the control of the USSR.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Are these all sister cities?

MR. KUBOTA: Pretty soon. Armenia (Yerevan) takes several more years, because so many things, security, are tight.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then at the present time, we have five?

MR. KUBOTA: We have five. We are one of the very active organizations. The other day we had 60 people come at one time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's very interesting.

MR. KUBOTA: Yes. We have a high school, McLane is the sister school to the counterpart over there. And Holland Grammar School is the counterpart of one school in Kochi. Right now we have two. We tried to get Fresno State and Kochi University, but the first step is over here, but there is less interest.

MRS. HASEGAWA: This has been very interesting. Anything else you would like to talk about?

MR. KUBOTA: Please ask my wife after lunch. Thank you.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Thank you.

MR. KUBOTA: Oh, by the way. It came to my mind last night, that I was a go-between 25 times (Baishakunin) and it's very interesting, you know.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Tell us about the go-between. What is it?

MR. KUBOTA: For example, when I go all over, you know, papa and mama ask me, "Is there a nice girl that you know for my son?" So I said, "Well, I'll look around, okay?" So this is the way it started. Just about 10 days ago old Mrs. Sumida asked me, "Will you find my granddaughter her future husband?" Just like that, you know. It's the age of the Sansei and yet they ask for go-between. So I said, "You don't have to ask me." Then she said, "Well, you go all over, so please find one for her."

MRS. HASEGAWA: So this kind of an arrangement still exists?

MR. KUBOTA: "Now is the age of the Sansei, so can't they find their own spouse?" I asked Mrs. Sumida. Then she replied, "Yes, she has a boyfriend, but he's in Los Angeles, so it's too far. So I want you to find her one in this area." So, I said, "All right." You see, for Mrs. Sumida's older boy Jack and Uchiyama's daughter, I have been a go-between. When papa was still alive, he never left the store, the customers came to him. Papa-san asked me, "We have a nice boy, can you find him a nice girl to be his wife?" I promised to look around. So, one day, I met with the Uchiyama family and told them about the Sumidas looking for a nice girl for their son Jack. I expressed my thought that their daughter would be just the right person for Jack. Then Uchiyama folks agreed saying, "As long as my daughter says okay, I will trust you, Mr. Kubota." So I went back and check with the Sumidas. The Sumidas agreed because they knew the Uchiyama family. The meeting of the couple was held in Mr. Kimura's (Boy's Market boss) parlor. So both families, Sumida and Uchiyama, agreed to the marriage. But a go-between is not only for the one who doesn't have a mate. About 10 percent of the go-between I arranged was for those people who had a mate already, and needed a go-between in name only.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Earlier you told me that you were a go-between for 25 couples. Had any of these couples known each other before you interceded for them?

MR. KUBOTA: About 10 percent, 15 percent were already engaged. My part was for formality only. I introduced about 50 to 60 percent of the young couples to each other.

MRS. HASEGAWA: After you've introduced them and they are married, do they still come to see you?

MRS. KUBOTA: They send us Christmas cards.

MR. KUBOTA: Most of them are scattered, but we get Christmas cards.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Thank you for the information about a go-between marriage among the Japanese young people.