

HEIJI AND CHIYOKO KUROKAWA

MRS. HASEGAWA: Today is July 29, 1980. I, Yoshino Hasegawa, am privileged to interview Heiji Kurokawa.

Before we get into the interview proper, I would like to have you give us your full name, place and date of birth, and your place of longest residence.

MR. KUROKAWA: My name is Heiji Kurokawa. I was born in Wakayama ken, Nagagun, Nagatamura, Kokawacho, Aza Kodai. Nagatamura is no longer in existence. My birthdate is May 15, 1902. My longest place of residence is Fresno, California.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you leave Japan?

MR. KUROKAWA: I left Japan on March 5, 1921, on the Nippon Maru, a small 9,000 ton ship. That was the last oversea voyage for the Nippon Maru. The sea was rough, and I arrived in San Francisco on March 30, 1921. The voyage took 25 days. I was seasick, but there was a kindly man from Hiroshima who took care of me throughout the trip.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How old were you at the time?

MR. KUROKAWA: Counting as we do in America, 18 years. But, by the Japanese Kazoetoshi, 19 years.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Why did you decide to come to America?

MR. KUROKAWA: In Wakayama we raised kishu mikan (oranges) which were shipped to Manchuria. Mr. Tsujiyama from Ando ken was an exporter of citrus fruits to Manchuria and had encouraged me to get into this lucrative business with him. I was very interested and wanted to go to Manchuria, a new frontier for the Japanese at that time. But my older brother was already in America and wanted me to come to America. Since he was young, he could not be my sponsor, so my mother came, lived here a year, established residence and called me a yobiyose. After I arrived, she returned to Japan.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where was your father?

MR. KUROKAWA: My father came to America when I was 2 years old, so I do not remember him at all. And he died before I came here to America.

MRS. KUROKAWA: His father was a Samurai, during the Meiji era when the Samurai system was abolished. He had no trade or profession, so he came to America to seek his fortune.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What year did he come?

MR. KUROKAWA: 1904, when I was two.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you know what he did for a living?

MR. KUROKAWA: He worked in Visalia at a nursery grafting trees. He died during the influenza epidemic. My brother came to be with Father in 1915 about the time of the Panama World Fair.

MRS. KUROKAWA: When his father died, his brother took his father's ashes to his home in Japan.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What were your plans when you arrived in America?

MR. KUROKAWA: The idea was that I would be exposed to American ways, to learn English, satisfy my brother's wish that I come to be with him and later return to Japan with a fortune. That was my idea in the beginning, but it did not work out in that way. I never returned to Japan to live.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where did your mother and brother live?

MR. KUROKAWA: In Sanger, North Sanger. In those days Japanese could not own nor lease land, so we made verbal contracts with Caucasian land owners and worked as sharecroppers.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you remember who your landowners were?

MR. KUROKAWA: One was of Armenian descent. Bagdasarian was his name, and Mr. Joe Moodey the other was of Centerville, father of Jack Moodey. I was introduced to Mr. Moodey by Mr. Y. Domoto who worked for him earlier.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you operate two farms with your brother? What was his name?

MR. KUROKAWA: Yes, Katsuichi.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you stay there on the farm?

MR. KUROKAWA: About that time I became of marriageable age, so I decided to get a wife and live my own life.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where did you go?

MR. KUROKAWA: We gave up our farms in Sanger and moved to the south side of Butler Avenue to a 45-acre ranch which we leased. We planted strawberries, and when we got a good start, I left the business with my brother and moved to Madera with my wife.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How did you meet your wife?

MR. KUROKAWA: Through a nakaudo (go-between). My wife is from Kings County; Lemoore. I did not know her, but her parents were from Wakayama ken, too, and when I found out that they had a daughter of marriageable age, we became acquainted.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What was your maiden name, Mrs. Kurokawa?

MRS. KUROKAWA: Nishimine.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When you lived in Sanger, what was it like?

MR. KUROKAWA: D.H. Bagdasarian's farm was in Muscat and Thompson Seedless, and there was one section of barley and wheat. It was about six miles north of Sanger on Academy towards Shields and a mile east of Academy.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of farming methods did you employ in those days?

MR. KUROKAWA: There was an old tractor, but mostly by horse and we "giddyupped!" The work was hard, and I thought many times about going to Manchuria, but thinking back I marvel at how we persisted. The automobiles at that time were poorly made. They had four cylinders and the speed limit was 30 miles per hour. So going from Sanger to Fresno, it used to take one hour and some minutes. Before we got a car, we used to bicycle for about two years. We would come as far as Sunnyside and there we left our bicycles at a store and took a streetcar to Japanese town on the West side of Fresno.

MRS. HASEGAWA: On what street was the streetcar located?

MR. KUROKAWA: On Ventura Avenue.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were there just the two of you on the ranch?

MR. KUROKAWA: No, there were many, especially during harvest season from June to September for about three months, many Japanese students who were attending colleges came from San Francisco and Berkeley to earn money to help finance their college education. They also went to Lemoore for the apricot harvest. I also bought apricots from Kings County by patches and packed them in boxes and sold them to the Los Angeles and San Francisco markets. The riper ones we cut and dried and marketed those as dried fruit.

MRS. KUROKAWA: You also had a trucking business.

MR. KUROKAWA: Oh, yes, that's right. I was a farmer, but realizing that shipping and marketing were also an important part of farming, I bought two trucks and shipped my own grapes and peaches to the Los Angeles markets.

MRS. HASEGAWA: In Sanger there were four or five partners who ran the big Round Mountain Produce Company about that time. What do you know about them?

MR. KUROKAWA: Oh, yes. That was about the same time I was active in this business. Mr. Yoshiki of the Round Mountain was one of the people who came to the Sanger area before I did. Mr. Tamijiro Mori was also one of the pioneers in the area. He had a vineyard west of Sanger. In the trucking business, we hauled other people's produce, too, because we did not have enough of our own. Mr. Yoshiki was instrumental in teaching me about that business. Because we could not own land, we took advantage of our Nisei friends' citizenship to buy property in their names.

MRS. HASEGAWA: There were many such cases, were there not? Why didn't you use your wife's name, she is a citizen?

MR. KUROKAWA: That was before we were married. But she lost her citizenship when she married me, an alien.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh.

MRS. KUROKAWA: Yet, I had to go through naturalization to regain my

rightful citizenship, even though I had been born in this country.

MR. KUROKAWA: That's right. A law was later passed to restore citizenship to native-born people.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What year was that?

MRS. KUROKAWA: 1935. I think it was the Cable Act. I lost my citizenship in 1930 when we were married. Through the Cable Act, I was able to regain my citizenship.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were you required to take an examination even though you were a natural born citizen?

MRS. KUROKAWA: Oh, yes. I was freshly out of high school and had remembered some of the governmental structures and procedures from my civics class, so it wasn't too difficult for me.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were you married in Sanger?

MRS. KUROKAWA: Yes, while we were on Joe Moodey's place. We bought some lumber and built a little shack there on his property.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long were you there after your marriage?

MRS. KUROKAWA: About one year and a half. We took two crops. After that we leased the strawberry land in Fresno. After that we moved to Madera, and finally was able to live by ourselves.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where was your Madera farm?

MR. KUROKAWA: It was on Mr. Rustigian's farm, a 160-acre vineyard. I was the manager and foreman and was responsible for the farm for about two years. I acquired a good reputation for being a good farmer, and a Polish man named Dempniack in San Francisco heard about me and begged me to come to work for him. Mr. Rustigian was a good employer, but Mr. Dempniack gave me a much better offer, so I worked for him for over 10 years until the war with Japan broke out, and we were evacuated.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was this a sharecropping deal with Mr. Dempniack?

MR. KUROKAWA: No. I was paid a salary plus a bonus. It was a good relationship. If the war had not occurred, I probably would still be there. Mr. Dempniack was an elderly man, and the understanding was that I would inherit the land when he died.

MRS. KUROKAWA: We were there from 1934 to 1942.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where in Madera was this farm located?

MRS. KUROKAWA: On the north side of the San Joaquin River.

MR. KUROKAWA: Go north on Highway 99, cross over the Herndon Bridge, and then take a road to the right, and about two miles from the highway was my place. About two years ago, for nostalgic reasons, I took our children who were all born there, and drove around that acre, but it has all changed. We could not recognize it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of work did you do on that place?

MR. KUROKAWA: We raised grapes. I employed other workers. I used an International tractor with metal wheels to cultivate the land.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have Japanese neighbors nearby?

MR. KUROKAWA: Yes. In Madera we lived on the east side of Highway 99 where not many Japanese lived, but on the west side there was the Mochizuki Store on the corner of Road 7 and Madera Avenue which was known as Jap Corner. This Jap Corner was not in any way derogatory. Mr. Mochizuki was well loved by both the Caucasians and the Japanese alike, since he was good to all the people in the community. The word Jap had a friendly connotation. Those of us that lived then did not take it in as discriminatory, but the younger generation Japanese today became very upset with the term Jap. There were about 20 Japanese at that time. We came to Fresno quite often.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were you able to get Japanese food, such as tofu at Mochizuki's store?

MRS. KUROKAWA: No, not tofu. We came to Fresno to get that.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was your church in Fresno?

MR. KUROKAWA: Yes. The location of our former Japanese Methodist Church is now part of the freeway. It was on the corner of Kern and "D" Streets. Reverend Yoshioka officiated at our wedding at that church. Because the Methodist Church is governed by the Methodist Conference, Reverend Yoshioka was transferred to the Bakersfield Church after two years. Then Reverend Hayashi came, and I was baptized then.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you begin attending the Methodist Church?

MR. KUROKAWA: After we were married. My family religion was Buddhist under Koyasan Shingon-shu Kobodaishi. So until I came to America, I did not give much thought to religion, but when my mother left for Japan she told me that since America is a Christian country, as long as I lived in this country, I should become a Christian. And since my wife was involved with the Christian church in Lemoore as a youngster, when we were married she wanted a Christian marriage. So, we became members of the Methodist Church. At first we were able to attend church only at Easter and Christmas and on occasions, but we have become more active as the years progressed.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many children to you have?

MRS. KUROKAWA: We have three. Jane Teruyo, our oldest daughter, has two girls Audrey and Karen who live north of St. Agnes Hospital in Fresno. She married James Shoji. She works for the Fresno County Health Department for older citizens. Second daughter is a school teacher and teaches primary classes. She married a Kansas boy Homer Nelson Smith and lives in West Germany. Her name is Esther Hideko Smith.

MR. KUROKAWA: Smith is a common name. Her husband is a school administrator. This is on the U.S. Air Force Military base. He is the principal of the school there. They met at the Tachikawa Air Base in Japan.

MRS. KUROKAWA: Third is Kenneth Masaru. He is an orthopedic surgeon. He's active in the Japanese American Citizens League. He was president of the Fresno JAACL last year.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where were you and what was your reaction to the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941?

MR. KUROKAWA: We were on the farm in Madera. It was Sunday morning. I had taken our daughter Jane and my friend Kimura's daughter to Japanese school in Madera. And on the way back I stopped by the Kimura's home with the intention of stopping for a few minutes, but I stayed on for lunch, and by that time it was the hour to go back to Madera to pick up the youngsters at 3 o'clock when the classes were over. The children had heard the terrible news about the attack on Pearl Harbor at school, so we hurried home to confirm the news on the radio. The very next day the sheriff and two deputy sheriffs came to my home looking serious and forbidding, to search my home. They demanded to see any rifle, pistols, katana, and other arms that we might have. We lived in a two-story house at the time. We lived on the first floor, and used the second floor for storing items that were not in current use. In fact, there were two big trunks among other things. Until the day before we had pictures of the Japanese Emperor and Empress on our living room wall, but we had a call from a friend in Fresno advising us to destroy all pictures that were in any way connected with Japan. We were told that one of the men who was active in the Japanese community had been taken into custody by the FBI. So I immediately took down the pictures and stored them in one of the trunks. So when they demanded that I open the trunk, I went downstairs to get the keys. Now there were many keys on the ring and normally I would have been able to pick the right key, but I was so frightened and my hands were shaking so badly that I just couldn't get a key to fit the lock. I don't know what the sheriff thought but he said, "That's all right. You don't have to open it." I was relieved and grateful.

In those days, it was customary for most Japanese farmers to buy a year's supply of rice in November when the new crop of rice arrived in the market. So I had stored 15 one-hundred pound sacks of rice, two sacks in each raisin sweat boxes stacked eight high. And since we'd heard that because of war, sugar would not be imported from Hawaii, we had about 300 pounds of sugar stored. When the sheriff saw all this food they said, "Kurokawa, with just you and your wife and three children, you shouldn't need all that." They implied that I was preparing to feed the Japanese Army when they arrived on our shores. So I explained my reason for the surplus, and they accepted it. Also, it was school day and our daughter who should have been in school was at home that day because she had a cold. But they were suspicious. Two days later they told us to bring in our shortwave radio and our arms. Later they returned our radio without the shortwave. We had a very high and prominent antenna on the roof of our two-story house because of our shortwave radio, so perhaps they thought we were sending wireless messages to Japan. I don't know. Perhaps the neighbors reported us. But, at any rate, the sheriff was there as soon as war with Japan was declared.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you go to relocation camp after that?

MR. KUROKAWA: We were told that if we moved to the white zone, we might

not have to be forced to evacuate, so we left Dempniack's place and moved to Caruthers to a friend's place which was in the white zone. Fred Taniguchi and his father's farm. They lived on the corner of Highway 41 and Conejo on a big vineyard. He vacated a house for us on another farm, and we were there a few months, but had to leave the area anyway since all of California was declared off limits to the Nikkei. We left for Assembly Center on May 15, on my birthday.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where did you go?

MR KUROKAWA: First to the Fresno Assembly Center, then from the Selma station we were sent to Gila Relocation Center. We had a brand new Dodge, but we had sold it for practically nothing to a Mexican family.

Selma Methodist women served us refreshment and from there we were loaded on the bus that took us to the railroad station. My biggest loss economically was that I had 140 acres of watermelon about ready to harvest. If I had been able to stay another two months, I would have been able to harvest them. I sold it to a Caucasian for less than cost. There was only irrigation to be done at that stage! The man who bought it made a fortune. He did come to the Assembly Center with candy for the children!

MR. KUROKAWA: When we were sent to the Selma station before being shipped to Gila, the Selma Methodist Women's Club were there with tea and cold drinks to see us off with wishes that we come back. I won't forget that scene; it was terribly sad.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did all those who were at the Fresno Assembly Center leave this area from the Selma station?

MR. KUROKAWA: No. We were really scheduled to go to Jerome, Arkansas but my wife's parents who lived in Kings County were old and had respiratory problems. So Dr. Hashiba had kindly made arrangements for us to go to Arizona. So we went together with them to Gila, Arizona.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What were your experiences at Gila Relocation Center?

MR. KUROKAWA: In the beginning, we were advised not to work for the enemy country (America) by the inmates there. There was a great number of Kibei there who were pro-Japan. So at first I didn't do anything, but since all of us were required to contribute time to maintaining the daily chores in order to receive food, I worked in the mess hall. I began as a pot scrubber, but in a short time I was elevated to the position of a cook and finally as the chef!

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you still cook?

MRS. KUROKAWA: He makes very good pancakes.

MR. KUROKAWA: I think camp was heaven for women. My wife learned ikebana, knitting, tea ceremony, and other crafts. Did you do any work?

MRS. KUROKAWA: Yes, I worked in a diet kitchen preparing food for patients.

MR. KUROKAWA: We worked every other day. Thinking back, I think the U.S. Government did treat us fairly in that respect. It wasn't right that we were incarcerated. Psychologically, it was degrading and

economically it was a great loss. This past spring when I was in Japan I was asked to speak to a group about our treatment during the war by the U.S. I told them that for a man to not have enough food for himself and his family it would have been the worst kind of hardship, but even being in confinement facilities, poor as it was, we were provided with enough food. It seems that people in Japan had trouble finding enough to eat during the war.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long were you interned?

MR. KUROKAWA: About three and a half years, including the six months at Fresno Assembly Center.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you return directly to this area after your release?

MR. KUROKAWA: We came to Livingston first to the Grace Methodist Church grounds. There was a parsonage and Sunday School, but there was not enough housing for all the returnees, so we borrowed 10 or 12 tents from the Army. There was about two acres of church property. But since no one had cared for the place while the Japanese were gone, postweeds, which grows about six feet tall grew like a forest. So those of us that returned first cleared the land so that tents could be put up. When the tents were up and ready for habitation, many people from Amache Camp came to live there until they found permanent homes. I worked hard, but before we moved in we decided to come to Fowler to Mr. Hashizume's place. He was my brother's wife's younger brother. My brother and his wife had moved in with the Hashizumes. They had a barn there, so we cleaned that and poured concrete for the floor and moved in. The Ikemiyas of Reedley had come back from Jerome, Arkansas. Mr. and Mrs. Ikemiya and their daughter came to live with us in the barn. We partitioned the living quarters with sheets and made two rooms. We lived together for about three months. They had a place to go to, on Mr. Setrakian's place in Sanger, but they could not move in until the renters moved and vacated their home. We both moved out to our own places as houses became available. The Ikemiyas went to farm in Sanger, and we moved to Livingston. My brother returned to the farm in Dinuba owned by Federal Land Bank near Smith Mountain where he had worked before the war, and later bought it from the Federal Land Bank. So we all became settled and started again to build our fortune.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of work did you do when you went to Fowler?

MR. KUROKAWA: It was agricultural work. We came back, and from September through November we picked grapes. Then we moved to Livingston, after Thanksgiving, to the Hamaguchi's farm. My wife's younger sister is married to the second Hamaguchi boy. Four of the Hamaguchi boys were in the service, and there were no hands to work the land. Howard and David were too young then to work in the field. Mrs. Hamaguchi was alone with 160 acres, so I managed their place for about two years. In the meantime, the boys came home and took over the ranch. So we moved to Madera. By that time we were able to buy the ranch in my wife's name in Madera in 1948, and we were there until 1957.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where was your Madera farm?

MR. KUROKAWA: It was this side of 99. Between 99 and Madera Avenue. About three miles from 99 on Road 30.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you encounter racial discrimination when you first returned to Livingston right after the war?

MR. KUROKAWA: Yes. Besides their farms, the Hamaguchis and the Takahashis owned a dehydration plant where they dried raisins. Mrs. Hamaguchi asked me to go to the renters who had been caring for the farm during the war to let them know that she was back and wanted to manage her own farm. The party was so upset that they threw rocks at me and would not negotiate with me.

Another farmer named Tange, who had a 200-acre vineyard wanted me to manage his farm, too. But I could not get any laborers to work on the Hamaguchi place, let alone another 250 acres, so I had to refuse. The laborers were mostly Mexican. They wanted to work for me, but the Caucasians intimidated them so they would not work for a Japanese. So, during the first pruning season around November and December we had trouble getting workers.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have trouble with discrimination in Fowler?

MR. KUROKAWA: When we were in Fowler, we were laborers so we didn't have that kind of worries. The farmers welcomed us because we were good workers.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have trouble with merchants?

MR. KUROKAWA: Yes. One time during our trip back to California from Gila, we were told that we would not be able to buy automobiles in California. So my wife's younger brother, who lived in Chicago, bought a car and brought it to Gila. On the way home our children would become thirsty and hungry, so at Riverside we stopped at a fruit stand, but they only stared at us and told us they would not do business with the Japanese. We had to go a couple of blocks further where we were able to buy drink and food. Before that we had stopped at Blythe where the shopkeeper brought out chairs for my wife and children and gave us cold drinks. We were obviously returnees with our car loaded down with household goods, but they were very kind. Riverside was the only place that we were made to feel unwanted. I am sure that there were many people who had members of their family in the Pacific Theatre who for some reason or another hated the Japanese.

Going back to the time we lived on Dempniack's place in Madera, when the U.S. Arizona was destroyed by the Japanese Air Force, a man whose son had been killed, came over to my place and advanced toward me with a hard look and both his hands in his pockets. I could only say, "I am sorry." I thought he might strike me, but he turned and left. I felt sorry for the man.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was he a neighbor: Did he tell you about his son?

MR. KUROKAWA: Oh, yes. He said, "My son was killed by a Jap." I think he wanted to let me know.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you farm in Madera after that?

MR. KUROKAWA: Yes. We bought vineyard in Madera after two years in Livingston. Then we bought a tree farm in Reedley near Smith Mountain in

1957.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of fruits did you have there?

MR. KUROKAWA: Peaches, nectarines, and plums. During these years, grapes were not profitable, but tree fruit was in demand. In Madera we raised grapes for raisins, but in Dinuba area grapes matured earlier so we girdled the vines and raised table grapes. We stayed in Dinuba until 1963, the year that President Kennedy was assassinated. Phad three farms in the Dinuba and Reedley area at the time. Since my health was poor, and our son was not interested in being a farmer, I decided to give up the farms. I sold two to James Ito and one to Johnny Kasagian, another shipper who had been the buyer for our farm produce and knew the quality fruit we raised.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many acres did you have?

MR. KUROKAWA: Two 60-acre and one 20-acre patches, 140 acres together. Our home, at that time, was on Floral and Porter on the Fresno County side of the road.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you attend the Japanese Methodist Church in Reedley?

MR. KUROKAWA: No. There was no Japanese church then, so we commuted to Fresno. Until last year we operated a vineyard in Easton area. There was a Mexican family who worked for me for 25 years. But because Fresno city has expanded and many homes were being built, the property value in this area had gone up, so we decided to sell it in 1978. I have done many things during my lifetime! I even had an apartment house.

MRS. KUROKAWA: We had an apartment house on Divisadero Street in Fresno. It was a 15-unit apartment in 1966 or '67. We had a Caucasian manager, but since we were farmers and didn't know how to run a business, the business did not go so well. We traded the apartment with the 40-acre vineyard.

MR. KUROKAWA: Before that I owned an 80-acre palomino ranch, in the Sanger River Bottom. The person who owned the apartment wanted the river bottom property, so I traded for the apartment, then the apartment for this one. I think the 80acre river bottom property made money for the Bonadelles who turned that acreage into a housing development.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Have you noticed any changes in the treatment of Japanese people over the years?

MR. KUROKAWA: Today there is no noticeable discrimination. Everyone treats us in a friendly way. It may be that we, too, have become acculturated to the American way.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you still want to go back to live in Japan?

MR. KUROKAWA: When we were in Japan the last time, a childhood friend encouraged me to return to Japan. I don't mind visiting Japan occasionally, but I have no inclination to return to Japan permanently. Especially since my children are Americans and settled here. They could never get used to the Japanese way.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Are you involved with any organizations?

MR. KUROKAWA: Now that I am retired, community people think that I have more time, so as a result I am busier than I have ever been. I belong to the Lone Star Community and to the Clovis Community.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you belong to the Wakayama Kenjinkai?

MR. KUROKAWA: There is no longer a Wakayama Kenjinkai, because so many people have been disbursed throughout the U.S. after the war. The Issei have become old, and though we were active before the war, we are no longer able to operate in that manner.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of a connection did the Kenjinkai have with Japan?

MR. KUROKAWA: Right after the war when the schools in Japan were not able to obtain papers and pencils, and since we had never been able to contribute anything to our native land since we left, we occasionally sent school supplies to the rural school from which we had graduated as youngsters.

When I went back last year, the people in that rural community remembered our gifts and held a welcome party at the Ujigami Shrine for us. The priest blessed us and gave us a gift. The Kenjinkai sent donations in times of disaster or need. There was a larger group called the Nipponjinkai, an organization that handled passports, immigration problems, and any official matters that came up. It was important to have these organizations since most Issei could not read or transact business in English.

During World War I and during the Manchurian War we sent help to the Japanese government. In fact, my wife's mother saved and collected foil from candy, cigarettes, and other wrappings and sent several balls. She sent them to Japan. When my brother-in-law was in the Intelligence Corps, he found that my mother was on the black list because of this.

My mother said she had not done anything wrong, but evidently the U.S. Government had checked all overseas mail and had condemned her as aiding Japan in her war efforts.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is there some advice you would like to leave to the Nikkei for the future?

MR. KUROKAWA: My will is that all religious groups get together and continue to conduct memorial services and remember to honor and place a wreath for the members of the 100th and 442nd Battalion once a year on Memorial Day. My hope is that the third and fourth generations will perpetuate the gesture. They may say it is unnecessary to honor the dead, but I think revering the ancestors and remembering the past is very important.

MRS. HASEGAWA: In the traditional Japanese way!

MRS. KUROKAWA: I hope the Japanese-American youngsters will study Japanese and, in turn, learn about the customs of our ancestors.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Thank you for taking time for this interview.