

NARRATOR: HIROSHI KUSAKAI

INTERVIEWER: IZUMI TANIGUCHI

DATE: September 28, 1999

IT: My name is Izumi Taniguchi interviewing Hiro Kusakai. Today is September 28<sup>th</sup> and Hiro will relate his experience in the central valley of California.

HK: My name is Hiroshi Kusakai and I go by Hiro. And I like to start with the background of my parents. My father came to the United States in the early 1900's from Japan, and there was a village he was born in was called Taiji in Yokohama-ken and he became I believe because the family had problems paying bills, and he was here to earn money to send back to pay back some debts and sometime before WWII, he settled—he first came to San Francisco. He found work as a domestic, learning how to clean houses and working his way up. He became a butler where he even had a full tuxedo to wait on the tables of these millionaire people he was working for in Mill Valley

And I really don't know when he was married and under what circumstances except that I have two sisters in Japan who I did not know about until I was in my teen years. My mother also was from the same village and she came over, I think he went over, and was married and she came later to join him. They were interned in Fresno Assembly Center along with my brother and I in Fresno County Fairgrounds. And we moved from the Fairgrounds in October of '42 to Denson, Arkansas, which was called the Jerome Relocation Center. And I left the center and my brother did also, but my parents came back. Oh no, my father died in camp which was in Jerome so my mother was widowed and she came back and settled in Fresno.

Before the war, my father was a treasurer with the Wakayama-ken jinkai which was an organization of Central California Wakayama people, and also my parents had us enrolled in the kindergarten of the Japanese Congregational Church, not because they were Christians but there was a Mrs. Aki who did a good job of recruiting people who were on the fence as far as religion was concerned. And my father's occupation was as a—he started out working for his brother-in-law, who was my mother's older brother down in the Herndon area, working a large ranch and he worked as a second-in-command to his brother-in-law and they had a labor camp and they farmed peaches, grapes and I believe it was eighty acres of property owned by Mr. Ben Epstein of Fresno.

Later he moved to Fresno and I think it was in 1922 after my brother was born in 1921, I guess because of the depression and all that, they had the change their occupation. and in the meantime, my brother-in-law, my father and brother-in-law whose name was Mr. Sumi passed away, and I think that is why the change in circumstances, he opened up a laundry on Mono and M Street and it was a hand laundry, and that is what he ended up until evacuation. And I think he participated in the Japanese community. They had a Japanese Association and they were very loyal to Japan because they were raised under the Emperor as a God so every birthday, recognizing the Emperor's birthday, they would hold a celebration at the—what was called a theater on Kern and F, on F Street close to Kern, and they would have a ceremony and he would participate and his job was to open the curtains to show the Emperor's picture. And I think as far as contributing to the community, like all the people in the Fresno city that had businesses, they would always be having to contribute to different organizations because they were business people. Every time there was a donation to be had, he would be asked to donate and he did what

he could in that manner. He was a great baseball fan and he would take his Model-T Ford to Stockton.

I was born in Fresno right on Mono and F Street, and I have a brother who was born in Herndon and he is two years older than I am and he passed away, so I am the lone survivor except for my two sisters who—one is—one passed away and the other one is still living in the former home of my parents, which is Taiji, Japan.

And I attended Lincoln School like a lot of my friends in the neighborhood. And most of the Japanese and Hispanic and Chinese that didn't speak English at home or their parents didn't, were put into a vocabulary class for about three months before we were admitted into kindergarten. It was a league of nations because the community in Fresno at that time was made up of Japanese, Chinese, German, Russian, Italian and the blacks. Most of the time after school, we were enrolled in Japanese, some of us went to Japanese school so our social activities centered around mostly Japanese children. The teachers were very helpful because they were dealing with a lot of second-generation immigrant children. And we felt, at that time, it didn't dawn on us too much the separation of the races except that we were different colors and we had distinct characteristics like the Italians and the Germans and of course, the Hispanic and the black. The Chinese and Japanese, for some reason, we couldn't tell of which race we were.

The parents most of the time—in those days the PTA was not a big item and they probably would not attend the PTA meeting because they had a problem with the language. As far as the school work, the boys were only interested in playing softball and soccer or becoming safety patrol officer because that was a—you could get out of class early sometimes. And also they had, when you got into the fifth and sixth grade, they did

have mimeograph newspaper and one of the better job was to get to mimeograph the paper because you would get excused from classes to work on the paper. As far as participating in athletics, most of my friends, we all went out for basketball and we were too small for football at the level of junior high school, which was the eighth and ninth grade, but most of us did compete in basketball because they had it broken down into the varsity and the middle group called A, B and C. And C class was what most of us fit into. At one time, like my brother's Class B basketball team was a league of all nations because it consisted of black person that was six feet tall and there was a Chinese fellow named Wong, the little Japanese was my brother, and Schmidt, the German Russian, and let's see, an Italian, so we had five different races in that one high school basketball team which is Class B. And most of us were small in stature so we usually ended up in Class C or B through high school. And we were very successful in the classes, the C Class area, although there were a few of my friends that were good enough even though they were not as big in stature, they were able to compete in A Class in basketball and track. One particular person that I know in 1940 or '40—he graduated in 1940, he made the varsity football team and as far as clubs go, I think most of my friends that were smart made the CSF. I wasn't in that category but we were awarded the athletic letters to wear on our sweaters if we wanted to.

I attended Fresno High School and graduated in 1941. Most of my socializing as far as I was concerned, I was a member of the Japanese Congregational Church and we had a basketball program and we would play sandlot football sometimes, and our big rivalry was the Fresno Buddhist Church with the Fresno YBA and we'd have basketball

and football competition on weekends, but most of my teen years, all I remember is, playing basketball at the church ground and participating in track and we did have makeshift sawdust pits and had our own competition.

And the Congregational Church at that time, before the war, sponsored a Boy Scout troop and we had an outstanding scoutmaster and his name was Mr. Ferraro. And the big—the big thing about a Friday night meeting was he would bring hot dogs and all of us would try to eat as much as we could and see who was the biggest eater of hot dogs, because he enjoyed very much all of us kids that were deprived of the West Side to be able to eat hot dogs free and all we wanted on Friday because of Mr. Ferraro. And the Boy Scout troop somehow we begged our parents and we had, I don't know how we raised the money, but we did have a drum and bugle corps. And we did march in the parade and for some reason, after Pearl Harbor, the scoutmaster thought it would be a good idea that since it is too marshaled, so we had better put away our drum and bugle for the duration.

And as far as—I didn't participate in kendo or judo but that was pretty, quite an activity in this area, and we did have a Mr. Kawai who taught both judo and kendo. And of course, as far as other things like swimming, the community pool Frank H. Ball did not get built until just prior to the war and was on the West Side so there was no discrimination, but there was discrimination as far as swimming at Laymouth Pool which was on the West Side. They would not admit any Japanese and people of color into the pool but one exception was Mr. Tom Sidle, we called him "Fish" because he swam so well. He was on the Fresno High swimming team so he got to practice in their pool, although in fairness, Hendrick's pool which was on the—for us it was on the east side of

town, we were able to go swimming there without any exclusion of any race. And I didn't think it was a big deal at the time but now I realize it was a good gesture on their part to allow us to swim there.

And I was one of the lucky ones to have a job at fifteen because a neighbor of mine, Mr. Tsujimoto, was a manager at West Fresno Drug Store, which is a well known store in Fresno at that time, and they had a toy store which they opened up for Christmas in October through December and he asked me if I would like to work there on a Saturday and I said sure, and that was my first job and in those days that is big money, you know, to get a dollar for a day's work because there was no jobs at that time for teenagers. One significant thing was one Sunday and this toy store was in the basement of that building located on Kern and F Street which is now the Nikkei Service Center, I was working in the basement and I went in the morning at eight o'clock and from eight to twelve and not one customer came into the store. And about eleven o'clock or whenever we got the news, somebody came down and said, "They bombed Pearl Harbor." And I said, "What's Pearl Harbor and who bombed it?" And so the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and we were just all in shock (inaudible), then later on we said that is why nobody came to the store to shop. It was quite a shock, and that is when I knew about Pearl Harbor.

And right before Pearl Harbor, I graduated in Fresno High School in '41, I did attend Fresno State College in the fall of '41 and managed to get one full semester in and then started on the second semester and I was going to major in accounting and we did have, I think, we did have a Japanese student club at that time. I didn't get involved in larger college politics but I did get to know a person who later became our assemblyman

and senator and judge, Mr. Zenovich, and one of the things we recalled when I talked to him because I was on the—it was at that time the Fresno State College Library, an area in front, and he said to me the day before we were—the week before we were to go to the assembly center, “You really don’t have to go.” I said, “Okay, George.” Because George Zenovich was his name and I said, “If I’m not here Monday morning, you know I’m gone then.” And every time I meet him, which is not too often, we talk about that.

One thing even—I was taking fundamental speech and one young lady there thought that we were spies, all of us were spies so we should be rounded up and put in jail and our speech professor was really upset, and you know, she said that she was glad there were only eight of us in the class, and he knew and I knew who she was talking about and he was really upset. And the teacher was Mr. McGraw and he used to come to our youth meetings at our church on Sundays and once a year, we’d have him speak to us so he knew us pretty well, the Americans more than Japanese.

As far as a timeline, we had to leave in 1942 so most of us were asked if we wanted to take an incomplete or get a grade that we had. Since my grades were not too good, I said I’ll take an incomplete. And those who had good grades naturally took their A’s and B’s. And I was, so I don’t know much about college life until after the war, and then I went to college and I’m in the sophomore class with youngsters that are four years younger than I am, and all the veterans are in their twenty-five to thirty years of age and youngsters coming in are eighteen years old. So it was quite an adjustment to make going to school and then working and going to school at the same time was a little bit difficult. All during college the only job we could find was laboring in the fields at that

time. There was no McDonald's to work for. So all the job we had was labor work in the fields. Those that were as unlucky, could not find any job at all.

But upon graduation I was lucky enough to find a job with an accounting firm. And the funny part of that was that somebody told me about an opening that he didn't get because they thought he looked too youthful. He had better grades than I did in accounting and he said, "Why don't you go and apply. They are looking for somebody." So I did apply and it was a firm that the owner was a customer of my dad's when he was doing the laundry. The father and son owned the firm with a few other partners and I don't know if that had anything to do with it because I told him that my grades weren't top-notch, but I had a lot of experience in working and all I could offer was I would be there from eight o'clock until five o'clock and put in my hours and as far as accounting goes, it was not my first love. But maybe he was impressed with my father's work or whatever it was. He called me up two weeks later and said I was hired and I was shocked that he did hire me and that was my first job. It was a CPA firm, one of the largest firms in town. So you never know in life who you will meet and what circumstances will turn out to be a good thing. And that was my first job. And throughout my career I just think about things like that—the small things turn into large things. It has an impact on your life.

During college we had a Japanese student club after the war and we had a pretty good turn out. And we even had a statewide college conference and I met my wife at college and I waited until she graduated and we did get married. And we have a boy and a girl and unfortunately, my son had a, it was an accident and he was killed and so the survivor I have only my daughter and our family is very small. And the name itself, there



are not too many Kusakai's around. In fact, I don't know of any in the states and even in Japan, they are very little, there.

As far as the Japanese Town, what it was then and what it is now is quite different. In the old days the only relationship we had with Japanese Town was going shopping at the different stores owned by the Japanese—department stores, and of course Kogetsu-do, was there, and Komoto had the Japanese books and his records, Aki Company, hardware, and then the Japanese barbershops, and our language school was located—it was owned by the Japanese Congregational Church and it was located next to what is now the Union Bank on Kern and F Street. And there were buildings there and Fresno was known as a wide-open town in the old days, which means houses of prostitution were winked at and never raided and we sat on the Japanese school steps and we could look up into the screened porches and the ladies of the night would be sitting there and we would engage in conversation with them. So we grew up pretty fast as far as vice was concerned, and the Japanese language school was right below there and our teachers had a hard time shoing us in and commenting, we shouldn't be speaking to the ladies.

Of course learning Japanese language at that time compared to the military language school in Fort Snelling was quite different. And I learned more in six months at Fort Snelling than I did the ten or twelve years I went to Japanese school. Because most of the Japanese who was taught by, we did nothing but memorization so it was quite interesting to attend a military language school and pick up so much in such a short of time. And as far as military service, I was in camp but I did manage to go out and work before I was drafted, and as far as that loyalty question, we debated it. It was between

my brother and I because my father didn't take part in—we were already—for some reason he left—he was very open and he left us make our own decisions very early in life and he said, that's the reason he said, "I can't—I may not be able to afford but I want you to finish college." He always said, "Once I do that, I think my job is done. It is up to you guys to do what you want." So he was always very open so he didn't—he was not part of the discussion, and my brother and I had no problems with it. In fact, he wanted to volunteer for the Camp Savage but my dad at that time kind of said, "Why don't you wait because I only have two sons and when you are thinking about joining the armed forces you know." I guess he had the Japanese feeling that once you join, we don't expect you to come back. So anything could happen so I talked to my brother and said, "Why don't you wait? We are going to get drafted anyway." And reluctantly, he did not volunteer at that time. Because he was pretty well-versed in the Japanese language so he thought he could help.

But as far as Pearl Harbor, it was really a shock, and I'll never forget Professor (inaudible) from Fresno State, pulled all the Japanese students that he could find into this auditorium and he said, "We feel, I feel bad about it." Speaking for himself, and he said but you know, it is easy to get rid of this problem like the Russians do, by putting all of you in the Pasadena Rose Bowl, the hundred thousand of you and just drop a bomb and wipe you guys out and we wouldn't have your problem. (laughs) And I thought, "Gee whiz, he's got a different perspective than we have." But that's—that kind of opens your eyes, in a big sense we are nothing because a hundred thousand is not a lot of people and in another sense he said he felt very much that the government was wrong.

I was lucky enough to—not lucky, but for some reason, when I was drafted in Chicago, my brother and I were drafted together and we went to Evanston and from there we thought we would be shipped to Camp Blanding, which was where all of the Nisei went, but we were split at that time. He left for Blanding and I was left behind for two days and I ended up in Texas, and that was the start of when they started giving the Niseis a break and moving them into different branches of the services. A friend of mine was able to go to the armor and the medics and anti-tank division, and I forget what other branches they were able to get into. I served—my father died when I was at Fort Snelling. I went to basic training in Texas, then we were singled out to go to Fort Snelling for language school. They did send a sergeant down to interview us and I pretended I didn't know anything about the Japanese language, but they must have a history on us because they gave me an X and they gave a few others on a scale of one to ten, and the ones that really wanted to go, didn't get to go, and people that were reluctant to go, like myself, we were being sent up to—that is how the army works, you know. The men that want to go, can't go, and the ones that didn't care, got sent up to language school.

So from there the war was over by the time I got through school so I spent my time in Japan and Korea. And in Japan I was able to visit my relative and my one sister that was there and it was very interesting traveling through Japan. But a—in camp you were able to have a baseball diamond built and the school and the school P.E. activity, that is where I got to work in P.E. classes. I got to work and I didn't like to leave camp because it was so secure, but when this friend of mine said, "Hey, I got you a job. They pay room and board, and all I have to do is go up there so we got a place to live and we

got a place to eat and sleep.” He said, “Why don’t you go with us?” So there were six of us and we ended up as domestics and janitors and dishwashers at this school, and from there I went to Chicago and then I got drafted and then I had my military service.

But as far as resettling—

IT: Do you want to take a break?

HK: Yeah.

I was in the service and then I came back and to resettle and didn’t have a permanent home because we were renting before the war. So we had—we were not landowners. So what we were able to do is, a friend invited us, more or less strong-armed us, into working at this farm, and we lived in a twenty-by-twenty tar paper shack, resembling the old center so it was like old home week again. But anyway, fortunately, between working and college, I was able to find a job that I talked about previously.

Now if you want to go back and talk about my younger years before the war when I went to Japanese school that I described about where the Union Bank is right now. Growing up, we all lived in the same area within almost a mile square, and my early grammar school years, Fresno was made up of what I thought was Tulare Street on the north and Ventura on the south and maybe D, D or C or where Lincoln School was beyond the west side, and G Street was the border for the east side and we called it, some would say, Japan Town, but to me personally it was always China Town. And the Japanese businesses were located within that area that I described. And on F Street you had restaurants, Kogetsu-do, West Fresno Drug, West Fresno—West Side Garage, and also we had, going way back, we had dry good stores and of course on Tulare Street, we had the hotel and a movie theater, two movie theaters before the war and they were both

owned by Japanese. One was owned, the Ryan Theater was Mr. Nishioka and for a while, the Bryson Theater was operated by Mr. Niwa, who left for the San Jose area for strawberries, raising strawberries. And the Buddhist Church anchored one area, with the Congregational Church south of that. Then the Okinobe Sanitarium and the Japanese Sanitarium also, which is located between Kern and Tulare Street. Okinobe Sanitarium was located Mono and E Street. The Chinese grocery stores were dotted, occupied most of Tulare Street, and also you had the dry good stores, Chinese dry good stores, and the Bank of America was an anchor, too. That was the only bank in West Fresno at the time. So most of the banking was done early on until Wells Fargo moved in and they left also, later on. As far as my childhood during grammar school, most of our shopping, I lived on F and Mono so everything we wanted to buy was within four blocks of where you lived and not too many people had automobiles because they did cost money and it was a luxury item at that time so you could name the people that had automobiles for transportation.

In those days some of the bachelors that lived in hotels or in homes that didn't have real nice baths liked to take baths at a public bathhouse and there were two of them and many laborers that worked in the field would use these bathhouses that were run by Japanese families. And in one particular area there was a barbershop and a bathhouse and then behind them, there was the Chinese gambling places where some of the bachelors—we called them "Blanket Boys" that followed the crops would go and try to make money. We had one particular friend that every time he made money gambling, he ended up drunk, and one time my mother had to drag him inside the house because he

just passed out on our steps and she thought it was disgraceful to be seen that way, but he was a bachelor and all he did was work and gamble because, what else was there to do.

As far as the old Japan Town where Union Bank is located now, they had a pool hall and it changed three different hands between the early thirties to the end of the war, the beginning of the war. But we had noodle shops and barbershops and shoe repair shops and also right on the corner of F and Kern Street, we had Ito Dry Goods and then down the street closer to G Street, we had Masuda Department Store which was mostly yardage and clothing. And Dick's Shoes was an institution at that time. He repaired—at that time Dick Vacant's (??) father repaired shoes and then he added shoes for sale later on, and that place was in the alley close to what is now the old Aki store. That Aki's used to house West Fresno Garage and also forerunner to the Tokiwa Restaurant. So what's his name but he started a Chinese restaurant there. But way back when, before I knew much about it, in the twenties, the whole block was owned by the Kamikawa family and they even had their own bank at one time is what I understand. The Japanese Association had a space, I believe, above the old Bank of America building which is on Tulare and F Street and the building still exists today ,and it housed the dentist in that building, Japanese dentist and the first dentist that I remember—now I forgot his name and he, along with Fuzzy Inada, took over that practice and were one of the pillars of the community and also a good JACL pioneer with Dr. Yatabe, who practiced in the building right above the Aki Hardware Store, I believe, or close to there and what we knew at one time as the Hotel Asia or Asia Hotel or was it Western Hotel? I forget, we are going back more than fifty years, so my memory is not what it used to be.

After leaving camp I got to go to college, and like I said, we had to find a place to stay so the farmer was good enough to find us work on that ranch, and I went to college and finally graduated and got married and started my career and I rented a place in downtown Fresno for fifty dollars a month and it was a one bedroom and in order to wash your face, you sat on the bathtub because there wasn't enough room to move around.

As part of resettling, the only help I had was the discharge. I forgot how much I got, a hundred or two hundred dollars from discharge, but most of that I can't remember. The hardship was in trying to figure out how to save enough money to go to college but because of the military, that made it much easier and I forget what they called it but we used to get so much a week from the military or it was unemployment insurance, I don't know which it was, but somehow managed to scrap enough to get by. I saved some money. Most of us at that veterans, worked and went to college at the same time so I was able to save some money, just enough to get by. And I think my story is no different from anybody else's that were taught that don't buy anything until you have enough money to pay for it. And borrowing money was a no-no and that was impressed upon my brother and I, and the reason my father said that he had to come home because people borrowed from the family and they couldn't pay it back so he said it is a good thing the family went broke, otherwise I would be in Japan and probably in the Japanese army and I would be dead by now. So things worked out.

My father's parents were ship's chandler and that village of Tanji is a whaling and fishing village, and the boat owners would borrow from my grandparents and I guess they didn't pay their debts so I guess that is why I was able to be born in America, and I'm happy about that because one misfortune turned out to be my good fortune.

[new tape]

I'd like to think about what happened after camp was through and what happened recently, going backwards was, I was lucky enough to—I thought I was always fortunate in my career because I only had about three different jobs, and the most important part appears to be when I became fifty-five and changed careers and went to governmental work. I didn't think anybody would be hired at that age but fortunately I was hired and I retired—I was able to retire after working for Fresno County but I went into accounting because at least that way I had a technical skill. I discussed my career with a Mr. Forrest Brown who was my advisor at Fresno State College and I wanted to go into teaching. And I liked history and social sciences but he said, you know at this time it is pretty hard after you get your credentials to be hired by a school district because of your race. He was from Ohio. And he didn't look at it from the California point of view. He said maybe you should discuss this with one of your other advisors so I decided to finish up in accounting because that way they measured you on your technical abilities, so I did finish, you know, like I described how I was able to get a job. I did that for ten years but it became a chore because tax season was always a long, and one thing, March, people don't realize but March 15<sup>th</sup> was a deadline at one time and when they extended to April 15<sup>th</sup> that just made more overtime without overtime pay. Once you get into supervisory and higher earnings, well the earnings were not that high, you get no overtime. So sometimes your junior workers had more pay at the end of the year than you did. And those kinds of redundant and type of work that you did, so people thought I was crazy but I have my CPA certificate and I worked a few years and then I decided somebody recruited me to go into selling life insurance.



And when I was a youngster in grammar school and junior high school and high school, think about different professions and it seems like they had big cars and drove around and wore suits and so it seemed like a good profession as a kid. But it always stuck in the back of my mind. So I did go into insurance and did that for about seventeen years and then I got my CIU which is not quite—it's a designation but not a license. But it was recognized in the profession but then I got a position with the County of Fresno and interesting enough, what happened was that child support enforcement, which meant collecting child support from absent fathers and divorced parents, was transferred into the District Attorney's Office where they had more teeth, and that happened in 1976 and they were looking for an accountant to head the collection unit. And it was a new position and I was able to get that position and interestingly enough, I don't know what happened. It is a difficult situation collecting money and they had just signed a bill now that taking it away and setting up a state bureaucracy to do this collection so I'm a little bit familiar of what goes on in child support collection. That was my career in Fresno County for about five years, then after that, there was a death in the Auditor's Controller's Office, then they appointed a new controller and he asked me if I was interested in becoming his assistance and there was an opening and it would be competitive and he said for me to try. And fortunately, I was picked to be his assistant and that was one of the most important things that happened to me, because this is just the end of my career, and I was thinking of opening up my own practice of financial consulting and doing tax work but more important than that, the mutual fund business and security business was phasing in where life insurance and security sales and financial counseling was changing and it was beginning to become a one-stop shop, and I either had to go into that or be self-employed

or take this job with Fresno County. It was important that we all know the government has a nice retirement plan and it is very difficult in private industry to accumulate enough to have a nice retirement plan.

And then also the experience of setting up—I knew nothing about computers. My son is well-versed in that. So I told the employer when he did the interviews that I always got a free consultant, my son, if I cannot handle any of your computer moves. So that is what—that was the later part of my career.

And then the wartime experience that really helped was knowing there was a bigger world out there. When you live in a small community, and at one time Fresno was the extent of your geography, and then going into the relocation center and seeing how immense this country is. When you live as a Japanese-American in a Japanese-American community, your horizons are limited. People didn't own cars unless you were wealthy. Very few people went to San Francisco or Los Angeles unless it was on business. And just, it just expanded your horizon going into service and going into Japan and so it's quite an impact on your life. And now the different people you meet in the service and also after service, traveling around the country. So the wartime experience is something—the service you may not like but you didn't mind doing it but you wouldn't want to repeat it.

Then settling after the war, coming back to Fresno, many of the old Fresno people—my friends all did come back. So some of the childhood friends that I had, we ended up playing golf or meet at different social functions, and going back to church, we had new church members because we do have people moving in from other areas. And so it was a—interesting to see the makeup. One of the organizations I was active in was

the JACL. And it seemed that it was networking among ourselves. You became an officer and then you picked on your friends to follow in your footsteps. Or you asked them to help at the different organizational things that went on, like picnics. You would pick on them and it was expanding the organization but now with the intermarriages and the different needs that arises, it is getting very difficult to be a racial organization because one of these days, how are you going to define who a Japanese is because some of them may only have one-eighth Japanese blood in them.

My activity was limited during my self-employment here because it was much easier to adjust your time budget and serve. And most of my—I didn't join service clubs because I felt that it was self-serving in a way and most of the people I did see were using it more for business purposes than they did for the betterment of the community. That was my idea about it. But I did join the CPA Society and the Life Underwriters and because that was a write-off, and then the church took up some of that time because my kids were growing up in the community. And we were dispersed at that time because when I bought my house and this is a Cal-Vet and they asked me, you know, you are going into an area where there aren't too many Japanese or Chinese because they had a restriction which was not constitutional. It would be declared unconstitutional at that time but they did ask me at that time, well, there aren't too many people of your race there. But I said, hey, the neighbor is a Mexican next door I went to college with, yeah, you are right there. So if you are going to be comfortable, we are going to approve the loan. I thought then and that was in 1980s and 1990s and some of those things would be a problem. If it is, they would have a problem with the lawsuits.

Anyway, my activity as far as organizations, were with the church and the JACL. Because of JACL, changing my job, my emphasis changed, and I was not too active after I served the year but I was proud to be able to be recognized to receive the Sapphire Pin Award. Other than that and the fact that I was (inaudible) for that. I didn't do too much in the redress and reparations. I did feel like I did contribute.

As far as the future, it is very difficult for our children and grandchildren. Unfortunately, I don't—it doesn't appear that I will have a grandchild unless I adopt one. They—she must be like many of the others, they don't think of themselves as Japanese as we did. They are of—they have a problem with identity and all they want to do is have a good time, hobbies, own a home, and go on vacations. But I'm glad that among the Sanseis and Niseis, we have so many outstanding young people. They are in large Fortune 500 companies and we have people in research and every time I just shake my head and wonder, they tell me about all the scholarship applicants and the grades that they have and I always wonder what happened to my children. I guess the parents weren't smart enough to have ours have grades. But I am very proud to see that every time men of our, men and women of Japanese ancestry doing to well in all fields, not just in business but in arts and other areas where a lot of Nisei didn't think they had a chance to expose their ability in the fields of arts and theater but then that is coming so I am very happy to see that. As far as, well—that's about all I have to say.

IT: Well, this about concludes the interview. Do you have anything else you want to add to it?

HK: No, there is so much. When you get this old, you forget so much but there is not much I want to add to this because my story is no different, I'm sure, than many of my fellow friends that were born in the year that I was.

IT: Well, thank you for sharing your story. It will be available for researchers and historians.

END OF INTERVIEW