

BESSIE EZAKI

MRS. HASEGAWA: Today is September 7, 1980. I, Yoshino Hasegawa, am privileged to be in the home of Mrs. Bessie Ezaki at 40274 Road 32, Kingsburg, California, 93631.

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.

MRS. EZAKI: My birthdate is July 22, 1921. My first name is Aiko Bessie Ezaki, born in Fresno, and my longest residency has been here at this present address.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where and when did your parents come from Japan? Why did they decide to settle in this area?

MRS. EZAKI: My father Sadaaki Ogata was born as a second son to Yuki and Matsu Ogata on November 10, 1873 in Kumamoto Prefecture, 1300 Shimachi, Ryuhoku Machi, Yatsushiro-gun. He came to Hawaii at the age of 22, in 1895, to evade the military draft (Army). There was an opportunity to go to Hawaii on a three-year contract to work in the sugar cane plantation, so he and Mr. Nitaro Nishimura, a friend of Kagami Machi and his neighborhood, signed the contract and came across to Hawaii. He was on Maui Island called Hana District. There he worked for 50 cents a day for three years. Then, he worked in the sugar mill for four years, for a total of seven years in Hawaii.

In 1902 he came across to San Francisco, United States of America. He labored around Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Oxnard. He worked on the railroad in Nevada and Utah in 1907-1908. He told me they served mostly stew with dumplings. In 1909-1912 he worked at "Song Ranch," a 160-acre place. (Sounds like Chinese, I really don't know.) He came through Central California for the first time. He stopped in Fowler and was robbed. He labored in and around Selma, Del Rey, Kingsburg, and Dinuba. In Dinuba he worked for Mr. Kanjiro Mayeda, who had watermelons at the time.

1912-1918, during the good years, he was in Oxnard, working for a Caucasian lady (boss) as her foreman, and he learned to speak English fluently. In 1918, he went back to Japan to see his mother. Prior to his coming across to Hawaii, he was engaged to a girl to be married, which was arranged by the family. Since he did not go back for her, and she had waited for him much too long, she married someone else. He then looked for a wife. He married my mother, Ichi Nakashima. She was 22 years old, and he was 45. She was born on October 9, 1898, the eldest child of 10 of Sadaki and Matsu Nakashima, of 1668 Nishishimo-go, Matsubase Machi, Shimomashiki-gun, Kumamoto prefecture. From Yokohama they sailed first class on the Arizona Maru. The reason for this was that Ichi had a bad case of eye element trachoma, and was not allowed on third class. When they arrived on Angel Island, Ichi stayed behind to care for her eyes, and then was released later. From San Francisco they came directly to Kingsburg to Mr. and Mrs. Ujiro Ezaki's residence and ranch. Sadaaki Ogata had known Ujiro Ezaki previously. The new couple stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Ezaki until they moved to Melin's Ranch which was across the river, west on Avenue 400 about three-fourths miles away from Ezaki's ranch. The following year, 1921, -July 22--I was born. Sadaaki was 46 years old, and Ichi was 23. The Melin Ranch is still

owned by the same family. (Present address is 39978 Road 28, Kingsburg, 93631.)

MRS. HASEGAWA: What are your recollections of your childhood and growing up years? What was Kingsburg like, the area, the people, and the way the Japanese people were treated?

MRS. EZAKI: My childhood was one of many memories, revolving around many people and many places, coming and going, gathering of many kinds, working together with families of many children, picnics, visiting friends, church activities, "mochi tsuki" for New Year's, which was held on Christmas. There were always many children to play with. My mother drove the family car as early as I can remember. She loved odori and singing. She would go to take lessons and dance to the music played by someone with a samisen. At the parties, there was always dancing and singing and drinking, a- lot of merriment. I believe we had moved from place to place more than anyone I know. It was Depression years and times were hard, the longest residency being in Sultana on a farm Father leased. I recall the many days of loneliness I felt, especially when the evenings came; the three of us, my brother and little sister, waited to see the headlights of our folks car to come up the driveway. During the day, we did a lot of things to amuse ourselves. We visited our Caucasian friends and neighbors, picked wildflowers, chased butterflies and dragonflies. We would catch dragonflies and tie sewing string on them and fly them. We played in the stable in the barn, frolicked in the hay, talked to the horses and chickens, waded in the irrigation ditches; up and down after the water was turned off, and caught fish. When the water was in the ditch, we went swimming daily and scooped polliwogs. In the winter months, we'd walk to the neighbor's orange orchards and pick the ones that were left and eat them. We picked the mushrooms off the Vines and collected moss off the vines. Climbing trees was a lot of fun. We had a large tree in our yard. From the top, it was exciting to see far out in the distance surrounding our immediate neighborhood. Left at home without any supervision, we were very adventurous and mischievous. Our constant and loyal friend was our dog, very loving and caring, who never left our side. There were times I was punished by having to sleep outdoors at night. I was comforted and kept warm by this dog. Later on in the night, my father would come to let me in the house to sleep.

The frightening experiences I can remember was the awful and violent noise of the thunder and the flash of electrical lightning which lit up the sky. When the thunderbolts struck, we scrambled back to the house as fast as our little legs could take us and huddled up together and covered our ears. My little sister would cry in fright. I believe in those days, come every summer, we got those violent thunderstorms and rains more frequently.

There were more snakes in those days. We found them in our houses, barn, and in water in the ditches and in the fields. Oh! They would scare the daylights out of me! I hated them!

When we lived in Wasco, we would hear the coyotes all night long. We loved to listen to the Isseis, especially the Issei bachelors who stayed at our labor camp, tell us ghost stories. Every night we would go back for more! We found the stories very thrilling and exciting. However, it made it difficult for us to go out to the outhouse come nighttime. I remember it was Prohibition Era, but folks had ways and means to evade

the restrictions and inspection official raids when they unexpectedly made the calls. I helped Mother make beer and bottled and capped the 25.4-fluid ounce size bottles. I helped Mother with the crushing of grapes to make wine. My father didn't drink much, but Mother always had some on hand to entertain friends when they came to the house.

We lived on this farm until 1931. My sister Shigeko was born here. She was delivered by a man, no midwife. During the harvest, my father kept some laborers of Japanese immigrants with us.

We started school here and attended the Sultana Elementary School. There was no bus service, so we walked to and back from school. The distance was four miles one way. Everyone walked, so we had others join us along the way. We always had chores to do, pumping water into the bathtub was the one we dreaded the most. My brother and I took turns pumping 25 times on the handpump until the water level was right. Chickens to be fed and eggs to gather. Horses--Dad took care of them. The bath was made of steel sheet, actually, it was a tub for olives. We burn fire beneath it to make it hot. There was always a lot of wood to burn; brush and vine stumps stacked high near the bathhouse. Once I was burning the fire for the bath, and somehow the fire caught this pile on fire. I ran in and told the folks, and I knew I had done something terrible. It was the fire that frightened me. I took off into the vineyard as fast as I could and hid under a vine. I was scared! Frightened! I came home when it got dark.

When folks went grape picking, I remember taking care of my baby sister--left under a vine on a wooden tray or in a sweat box. I remember getting up early in the dark and with our car headlights on, we left our home for work, and at the end of the day, it was already dark. Once in a while, as a treat or a reward, Father would stop at the corner store in Sultana and buy us an ice cream cone on our way home. My! Did that taste good!

Another crop we had was dry figs. We helped pick up dry figs in a bucket and fill a box (40 to 50 pounds). All day long, on our knees, we'd crawl and pick up figs. This was done "piece work" depending on how much or how many boxes I filled, I was paid accordingly.

When folks went to work and came home, the bath was steaming and the rice was cooked. The stove was kerosene stove with two burners. In the winter, all the cooking was done over the wood stove. I remember the old kettle steaming on top of the wood stove. Washday was a whole day affair! Especially if there were sheets to be washed. Sheets were put in tubs over an open fire and boiled with soap and water. All the water we used was pumped with the hand pump and carried in buckets to the tub. Soaps were made at home. The smaller items were scrubbed by hand and rinsed in water and hung up to dry. It was hard work and hard on hands and backs. We used bluing agent a lot to make the wash look clean. One incident I remember which happened on Mother's washday was, the wood she was chopping with the axe went up and fell on her forehead. She looked up to see where it went and it landed on her head. She had a nasty gash, and the bleeding wouldn't stop. Luckily, father was home, so he took her to the doctor right away.

In the spring of 1931, my parents decided to try, truck gardening. This is when the moving started. From the year 1931-1934 we had packed our belongings and moved eight times. We went to Yettem, Stone Carol, back

to Yettem, Wasco, Delano, to Dinuba, to Orosi, and back to Sultana where it all started. Parents tried working for others with pea and tomato crops, then embarked on their own--watermelon growing in Wasco, financed by a Caucasian, and lettuce gardening in Delano.

Failed and lost, as there was no price for either crop. Came back to Yettem, from Yettem to Dinuba, to Reemer Ranch where Father and Mother decided to go into labor camp business. We lived here about a year. It was here my father was in a terrible automobile accident which killed his passenger, and he was injured badly. This was a setback; he was hospitalized for over a month. In this business there was a lot of traveling and driving involved. Father, in order to keep these men, sought work, delivered the workers to the farms, and picked them up in the evening. If more workers were needed, he drove to Visalia, Reedley, and Fresno to recruit and bring them back with him. We moved to Orosi; he engaged in labor camp business. Mother did the cooking, and three of us children had chores to do. We kept few laborers all year round. These people were all Japanese immigrants, mostly bachelors. Some would stay permanently, most of them would follow the harvest up and down the state. During the grape season, the influx of these men was greater than other harvests. There were college students that came to earn money during the vacations from the cities. Due to the lack of housing, my father had to pitch a tent temporarily. Indeed, there was quite a demand for these laborers from the farmers during their harvest time.

In 1934, Father bought property in Sultana with a two-story building on it. It was in the name of my present husband Toshikatsu Ezaki, who was an American citizen and of age. This two-story building located in the center of town, was built before the turn of the century in 1800's. It was a former stagecoach stop. A bar and dancehall in its "heyday," which was later converted to a hotel. This location became the permanent residence and business for the Ogata family. My brother Norihide and sister Shigeko and I, the oldest, graduated from Sultana Elementary School. My brother and sister went on to Dinuba High School, and I, in the summer of 1936, went to Japan for Japanese language education.

I left for Japan with a friend of my parents who was to take me to my grandparents' home in Kumamoto. I entered a private school in Kumamoto City. It was a five-year girls high school. Principal was a graduate of Stanford University of California, and he welcomed foreign students from Hawaii or the States. In my class, when I graduated, there were 11 of us Nisei (second generation). Most of us lived in the dormitory and enjoyed each others' company. In this way, we conversed mostly in English, so we didn't forget our first language. I found the Japanese education to be very difficult. At the beginning, we were tutored by a special teacher. End later was allowed to attend the class with the natives. It was a struggle all the way! However, I never regretted this opportunity. I think I was very fortunate to have gained so much through experience and the challenges which enriched my life today. The people of Japan were very understanding; my relatives were nice, too. I was a foreigner, and wherever I went, I was noticed and stared at. I wore the same "sailor collar" (three stripe) navy blouse and a navy pleated skirt. For summer it was white blouse and a navy pleated skirt, as the other 500 students of this school did, but I was different. Was it the shoes I wore or the way I walked? To this day, it remains a mystery. I was on the school basketball team. They really train hard, right through summer vacation.

When the war with China was declared in 1937, fever of patriotic

expression was high and due to the shortage of help on the farms, because the sons had been called to duty and joined the Imperial Army, the school students went out to help with the rice planting. When the large cities of China had fallen into the hands of Japan's Army, there was a victory celebration parade each time. This was held at night, down the main streets of Kumamoto City. Students were allowed to participate and everyone joined in, singing patriotic songs which the bands played, waving the "Rising Sun" flag, and carrying lanterns. There were many banners, too. It was a joyous event. Citizens' loyalty for their country was exemplified! Freshly trained young soldiers were leaving for the front daily, and they held special "send offs" at the Kumamoto City train station.

I came to Kingsburg often with my parents during my childhood because there were many families (seven in all) of my parents' old acquaintances living here. No matter how far we lived away from Kingsburg, my parents came back to visit Kingsburg to visit these families. When we came we visited every family, starting from Ezaki and ending up at Hamada's home. Every family! I do not remember of any prejudice, probably because we were young and not aware of it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was Japanese the language spoken at home? Did you attend Japanese school? Did you have difficulty learning to speak English?

MRS. EZAKI: Yes. Japanese was the language spoken at home. For this reason, I was held back in the first grade for another year. When my brother started school, I was the interpreter with what little knowledge of English I had learned to that point. During our growing-up days, we were always surrounded with Japanese language speaking people, so English was foreign to us, but when my sister started school, she had learned the English from us, so it was much easier for her; she was speaking quite fluently by then. Our parents sent us to Japanese language school and the Buddhist Sunday School from the locality they had moved to. Our longest attendance was at Dinuba Language School and Dinuba Buddhist Sunday School, from Yetttem to Dinuba, distance of 10 to 12 miles one way, my parents drove us to school on Saturdays and Sundays. Many a time, we ate lunch and supper with the Watanabe family who lived in town and operated a general store on the corner near the Buddhist Church. Dinuba Japanese town had a couple of boardinghouses, a pool hall, fish market operated by Japanese families. And there were many friends to play with, so we enjoyed staying in town and waited for the folks to come after us. We played cops and robbers, bandit and samurai (swordsmen), and hide and seek.

We grew up mostly in the Sultana-Dinuba area. I remember kendo (Japanese fencing) was very popular, and even the girls were taking lessons at the Dinuba Buddhist Church. Also for the girls, there was a sewing class taught by a teacher who came from Fresno. She taught us how to draft our own patterns to fit our measurements by using this special square ruler. All these lessons were taught by Japanese speaking teachers. There were always Japanese movies being shown at the Buddhist Church. These movies were shown and narrated by "Benshi," who becomes each character in the story and changed his voice as he switched from one to another. There were five artists in the profession that I can remember; Mr. Ban from Los Angeles, Mr. Kimura, Mr. Namiemon, Mr. Matsui, and Mr. Kawai Toiyo from Northern California.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What were your elementary and high school experiences?

What did you do after school? Did you have close neighbors and friends? Were you involved with extra-curricular activities? Did you belong to the 4-H, Girl Scouts, or church organizations?

MRS. EZAKI: My elementary school years were one of many interruptions due to various changes of residence which amounted to eight from 1931-34. It is hard to remember the teachers' names and the friends made. I can't forget my very first teacher in Sultana, Miss Aileen Johnson, who I had for two years; Miss Oloan, third grade teacher; and Mr. Edward "Red" Costello, who I had for two years when I went back to Sultana. I loved going to school, and we were so healthy most of the time that we hardly ever missed a day! It seems wherever we moved, there were close neighbors, and they were all very friendly and kind to us. Mrs. Tashajian of Yetttem; when I stopped in to see her on my way to school would notice my dress was not so clean. So, she would wash it and press it lightly and hurry me off to school. Besides many Japanese neighbors, there were Armenian and Caucasian neighbors. Occasionally a few Mexicans came to help with the harvest, Out up a tent under a shade of tree or in the grove of trees, and stayed for a week or two. I can't forget how good those tortillas tasted. We watched the mother of the family make a pile of them each morning.

I had two Mexican friends in Sultana; they were brothers and the only family here in Sultana. No blacks at all. There were very few colored people around. Except in Wasco and Delano, we did have bus service. While in primary grades, the games we played were; drop the handkerchief, ring around the rosie, London Bridges, hide and seek, dare-base, mulberry bush, kickball, jumprope. From intermediate we played marbles; hopscotch; Anny, Anny over; baseball; tug-a-war; kickball; volleyball; and basketball. Baseball games were most popular sport. Once a year in May, all schools in Tulare County had a Schools Track Meet held at Mooney's Grove in Visalia. We excelled in every event with our skills if possible, to bring back the winner's ribbons for our school.

After school, even with bus service, we had a long walk home. The sun would be leaning in the Western sky and our shadows slanted before we reached home. Our chores always seemed to be waiting for us. However, to see our dog come to greet us and lick our faces all over was the most pleasing and happiest moment we looked forward to. Chores, some I have mentioned before, but after my parents went into labor camp business, there was bath water to be heated, helping in the kitchen to do, cleaning up and setting the dishes, dishing out the food, after dinner clearing the table and dishes to do, sweeping and mopping up the floor. Floors were all exposed wood, boarded floors, so it was mostly swept with a broom.

My high school years were spent in Japan in Kumamoto City, Kumamoto Prefecture, where my parents came from. I was very lonely and homesick at the beginning. Relatives were all very nice and welcomed me, hut the living conditions were different from home. Many a time, I wondered, "Why did I ever come to Japan?" After six months, things got better, and I had made friends--friends from the States and Hawaii. I lived in the school dormitory right next to the school building. We had a supervisor or manager who looked after us. There was a cook, and we had chores around the clock to help with the cooking and cleaning up. It was good training for young girls. We did our own laundry and ironing. We had study hours at night, "lights out," everyone in bed by 9 PM. Vacation

time in Japan is very short. I made my routine rounds briefly to visit my relatives in the country and came directly back to the dormitory. I hated to "hit the books," as the saying goes, but I was a student, and it was to be expected.

March of 1940, I graduated and went on to a higher school in Tokyo, Japan. It was a girls college in home economics. I attended one semester only, then I entered a Nippon Typist Girls' School in the heart of Tokyo, Nihon Bashi area. I finished my course here and graduated in 1941. I was en-route to Formosa to visit my aunt, but went to visit my relatives in Kumamoto Prefecture. It was during this visit, I received a sad telegram from my father, concerning my mother's sudden death. I couldn't believe it! She was only 43 years old! This telegram changed my plans, and I made preparations to go back to the States.

I lived in Tokyo with my relatives, but already there was a talk in Japan that there was going to be war with the United States and their concern for me to go back home. In my uncle's factory, they made telephone sets, but they were making hand grenades, preparing for war. My brief stay in Japan was a very stimulating and enriching experience.

In 1935-36, I was in the Young Buddhist Womens Association of Dinuba. I remember receiving a beautiful purple "ojuzo" (prayer beads) when I became a member of the Association. I attended a conference in Visalia with my friends, and we took part in the oratorical contest. All this was in Japanese. This organization had basketball tournaments, too. I remember how hard we were coached to make the team. We practiced at the Dinuba Buddhist Church playground. After coming home from Japan, I rejoined the Young Buddhist Association and took an active part in its activities until evacuation. We did a Japanese drama, a play called "Chichi Kaeru," in English "Father's Return." I was given the role of the mother. Mr. James Iwata, now residing in Sacramento and a devout Shinshuist, was the father.

MRS. HASEGAWA:           Please tell about your first work experience after high school.

MRS. EZAKI:    I returned to my home in Sultana from Japan in July 1941. Mother passed away in April 1941. I was 19 years old. My mother left my baby brother Hedeki, a menopause baby only two years old at the time of her death. To care for my baby brother was the reason I came home. My father was getting too old, and my sister was 14, a freshman in high school. Norihide, my brother, was 16. We operated a labor boardinghouse, so until my return, my sister, with an assistant, did all the cooking and grocery shopping. It was really too big of a job for a 14-year old. I took over the responsibility and relieved my sister as soon as I got back. This was my first job. My work started as early as 3:30 AM. In the peak of the harvest season, my father had 50 to 60 workers staying at our place. Most of the time, it was 20 to 30 men. The men took their own lunches, so I had to prepare for the lunch "O Bento" with the breakfast. Breakfast was Japanese style--steamed rice with soybean soup, coffee, toast, and eggs. "O Bento" was mostly steamed rice and "okazu" (vegetables with meat for fish), "okoko" (pickled radish), and tea. Supper was the dinner of the day, so this took a lot of menu planning. If everyone went to work, it was easy for me because I didn't have to fix any lunch, but in this business there were some who stayed home. My responsibility was a heavy load, but I managed. I had an old friend, a man who made his home with us, help me wash dishes and do the pots and

pans. I quickly lost 10 to 12 pounds! I'd go back to sleep after the morning work was done to rest a while. At nights, I was young, so I went to the movies and parties and to the meetings at the Buddhist Church. Dance was becoming popular, so we went to friends' homes to learn how to dance. This was my first job experience. I cannot say I enjoyed it, but it was a challenge I took on myself.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Are there prewar experiences as a young lady that you may care to share? Do you recall incidents of racial discrimination directed at you?

MRS. EZAKI: No, I have tried to recall any racial discriminations, directed to me personally, but I fortunately can only say there was none.

While in Japan, as a student, at school or in the dormitory or in public places, I was looked upon as a foreigner, even by my relatives. This I thought was very strange, and it was hard to comprehend. I was no different from them- brown eyes, black hair, yellow skin. I spoke their language (not as well, but I tried), however, I was different! The impression they had of me, was that I was raised without any hardships of living conditions, in comparison to their standards. They always, unintentionally, classified me as a "foreigner." At times, I was subject to embarrassment and resentment. The truth of the matter is now, I understand, I was a "foreigner."

MRS. HASEGAWA: What are your memories of December 7, 1941? How- did you feel? How did your Caucasian friends and your community react?

MRS. EZAKI: December 7, 1941! Sneak attack on Pearl Harbor! Over the radio station we heard this news at 4:30 PM. It was Sunday, and we hadn't turned the radio on 'til 4:30 PM! We were stunned! Couldn't believe it! Came as a complete surprise! Pearl Harbor was attacked in the morning--6:45 AM! We were bewildered! All ears tuned into our shortwave radio to hear the news out of Japan to find out if this was true. We couldn't believe that Japan would start a war with United States! I can recall my father and other Isseis going around in a daze, uttering words of bewilderment and confused. That day, I noticed, just before noon, there were formations of many airplanes flying over with a roaring sound, so I went out to see, not knowing there was a attack on Pearl Harbor 'til later in the day. I thought it was one of those aircraft maneuvers from the nearby Naval Air Base. I went over to my Caucasian neighbor next door and asked her if she had heard about the Pearl Harbor? She said, "Yes, it's true, Bessie!" I think, deep inside me, I was angered by the sneak attack, and because of my Japanese ancestry I felt a little guilty in some way. I felt embarrassment, too. From that day, we were subjected to name calling such as "Japs," "Damn Japs," "Good Jap is a dead Jap," "Once a Jap, always a Jap," (words of General DeWitt). The Sultana community was made up of people who were blown out of the dust bowl from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, and Missouri. There was a liquor store, a bar in the edge of town. I believe it was the drunks from this joint that would call out, "Dirty Japs," "Hey, Japs, get the hell out of here," and break the silence of the night by their loud voices. Our Caucasian neighbors were embarrassed by repeated incidents of bad behaviors. We were reluctant to go to Dinuba or to the movies for a while. Yes, we were aware of being watched and being discriminated. We were confined closer to home. My father was edgy, short tempered from anxiety and fear. He burned so many Japanese books

and magazines, even my books I brought home from Japan, pictures of the Emperor and Empress, anything from Japan, he took out to burn. I hid our family albums and my albums from Japan under the roof of the pickup truck garage so Father wouldn't find them. On Christmas we usually held "Mochi Tsuki," (rice pounding party), but that year there was none. All Japanese people refrained from gatherings of any size. Afraid of the suspicious eyes of the FBI on that 1942, January 1st, there was no New Year Celebration either. All was quiet, no feast, no drinking. I had made some sushi and vegetable dish "Nishime."

Radios, shortwave radios, guns, weapons, flashlights (certain kinds) were confiscated by the FBI. Father's liquor license was suspended, taken away. I remember seeing a squadron of planes heading toward Pacific warfront everyday, At nights, I heard the roaring of these planes flying by. This made me realize that there was a war raging out there somewhere, and where might their destination of their flight and mission be? Japan was victorious and claiming victory to the fall of Singapore, Hong Kong, and Guam, and Manila. JAACL (Japanese American Citizen League) of Tulare County were on hand to help the Issei immigrants with the new alien registration regulations. They had to register which included a photo of themselves, and this organization assisted with other up and coming events concerning Japanese ancestry. Mr. Harvey Iwata was the president at the time.

On March 7 there was an act of arson. Our car was set on fire in the garage. I remember it was 1:15 AM. I woke up and saw our kitchen aglow. I thought the kitchen was on fire, but it was the garage outside the kitchen window which was on fire. I screamed, "Fire! Fire! Awake, everyone!" Luckily, the water faucet was just outside the garage, everybody helped put the fire out. The fire was out before the fire engine came out. I managed to get the auto license plate number as they drove off and gave it to the sheriff when he arrived. It was arson, because evidence was a can of gasoline thrown on the seat of the car. The arsonist, or the responsible ones of this crime were caught. They were two Caucasian fellows from Orosi who admitted their guilt. Dinuba City Police Chief Mr. Vernon Martin took them to Visalia to the Tulare County Jail. The insurance company took care of the loss and the damages.

March 23rd--the removal of all people of Japanese ancestry from the Los Angeles area and the coast began. Our friends and relatives affected in these areas called us by phone looking for a place to relocate to. My father was reluctant to assist them because of recent happenings, but he went out to his friends with whom he did business (Caucasian and Armenian) and looked for homes to be had. The friends sympathized with his plight and offered homes to rent out, but added that they could not be responsible if any harm should occur. Things were happening so fast down in Los Angeles and Southern California, that our relatives and friends couldn't relocate to our yet "free" zone in time! The evacuation order was issued and they had to pack up and leave--pronto!

March 27th from Dinuba, there were four alien Isseis picked up by FBI and sent to internment camp in New Mexico. They were Mr. Genjo Fukushima, Mr. Kazuma Oda, Mr. Kiriara (who was our neighbor), and Mr. Asada. No one was picked up from Kingsburg area. I was told later by my husband that Mr. John Andrew Croft, who was constable, and the Chief of Police of Kingsburg had said, "No Japanese aliens will be picked up by the FBI as long as I'm here!" "No FBI will come in, as long as I'm

here," He was chief of police for 20 years. We went to the State Theatre in Dinuba to see the movie matinees, but we were segregated -to the side sections and not welcomed in the lobby section. To all San Joaquin Valley Japanese there was a curfew (8 p.m. to 6 a.m.) which went into effect. There was a daytime radius of five miles, otherwise special permit.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What do you recall about the evacuation and your experiences at the relocation center?

MRS. EZAKI: Toshikatsu (Tee) and I, Aiko Bessie, were married on June, the 11th, 1942 in the Dinuba Buddhist Church. We lived with his folks and sister Toshie and Sumiko on the farm, from Los Angeles, relatives Mr. and Mrs. Toyoki Shiraishi and son Shiro had come to live with Ezakis. The Ezaki family had to harvest the cucumber crop, but the watermelon patch was sold to a Dutch man by the name of Vanzante before the harvest began. Our Swedish neighbors for many years Mr. John Cederval offered to take care of the farm. His son Arnold moved into our house. The farm was in reliable hands which was a great relief for us.

August 2, 1942. This was the day we will not forget--the day of the evacuation! We lived in Tulare County, so the Ezaki family, my sister-in-law and her husband Ky Matsuoka, and his brothers and sister (family of eight), Mr. and Mrs. Gentaro Matsushita and family, and Mr. and Mrs. Toyoki Shiraishi and son Shiro, and my folks in Sultana, all left our homes to report to Visalia train depot by 3 p.m. The train did not leave 'til 7p.m. It was hot! The MP's (military police) told us to keep the blinds down. Don't open them! Destination unknown. For two days we traveled on the train. We stopped briefly at a station somewhere. We were served peanut butter sandwiches shortly after the stop. Next stop, we got off the train and like animals, we were told to climb into the Army trucks. We reached our destination in the darkness of the night. Couldn't see anything but light in a building where we came to a halt and parked. We went into the building and signed some papers and were assigned a room in the barracks. The place was called Poston Number III Camp. In the dark, we searched for our suitcases. It was awful! In despair, we agreed to find them in the morning. We were handed out these canvas cots with legs that cross for support on both ends and in the middle. The following day, we were properly initiated to our new home by a dust storm! These barracks we lived in were constructed poorly with boards which had cracks and holes in them. The dust came through and filled the room. It was even in our mouths. Terrible! Never experienced such dust storms like these! The dust came up from under the floor, through the boards, through the cracks and holes in the walls. From the ceiling and around the glass windows. Everyone got busy making the best of things to improve the existing conditions on hand. The walls were quickly lined with paper and holes covered with lids of tin cans. For the floor we ordered linoleum from outside of camp. It was one room for each family. There were no partitions, so we hung up a sheet or a blanket to serve as partitions. The gardeners got busy by putting in trees and grass to make the place cooler and greener. Castor bean stalk was the favorite shrub because they grew fast and provided foliage as well as shade, flowers were grown in front of the barracks and apartments; soon things were getting to look more like home, after all. In Japanese there is a saying which goes: "Sume ha miyoko," meaning in English, "Home sweet home." Camp life was not bad. We were all Japanese. I never saw so many in all my life! First language was Japanese and second was English. We were treated well, although we were

fenced in by barbed wire and military guards were stationed outside of the gates. We had plenty to eat! I won't forget the lamb stew which we were fed so often. Toshikatsu, My husband, got a job as a cook. He worked in the mess hall. He was paid \$16 a month. Ujiro Ezaki, his father, worked in the agriculture department and was paid \$14 a month. My brother was a fireman (\$16 a month). We got clothing allowance per person at \$8 a month. Camp was run orderly and smoothly like any town back home. My husband left in the summer to Cozed, Nebraska to work in the hay, pitching hay and feeding livestock, mostly sheep. My husband and brother both came back in the fall and left again, this time to Chicago.

My husband needed a deferment from the Army Draft Board. He was already classified as 2A from the Exeter Draft Board of Selective Service back home. He went to work in the defense plant "International Harvester" where they formerly made tractors parts, but at this time, they were making Army tanks.

My sister Shigeko and Toshikatsu's sister Toshie left together for Philadelphia to work as domestic help--live-in housemaids. My sister entered beauty school and finished her course and became a licensed beauty operator.

I had my second baby, a baby girl. Sharon Yoriko on January 3, 1945. My husband was in Chicago. Many young men left for military service. We were always sending boys off to the service, bidding goodbye to those leaving camp as "seasonals" or to those relocating elsewhere! Camp was getting empty except for the "Loyal NO NO Group," who were determined to go back to Japan. They were to go to Tule Lake Internment Camp and then he shipped to Japan by the government. We, those of us that were left of Ogata and Ezaki, together left Poston III Camp for Chicago in March 1945. My destination with my father and little brother and our LeRoy and Sharon, was Chicago where Toshikatsu awaited us. Destination for my in-laws was Allentown, Pennsylvania where their son Dr. Toshi Ezaki had a house bought and ready to live in. This ended our relocation life. I think a lot of good came out of our experience in camp. Economically speaking, Issei families with large families, many of growing age, helped in many ways. Also it gave the Isseis an opportunity to rest their bones as well as broaden and open their minds to the Western ways of life and to understand their children more. Up to this point in their lives, Isseis intention was to make it financially and go back to Japan to live. However, this new experience, this Second World War with Japan and the evacuation, their sons going to war to serve their country of birth, were the main decisive factor to become an American citizen permanently.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you return to Kingsburg immediately upon release from the relocation center to your home? How were you received by your community?

MRS. EZAKI: No--we relocated to Chicago and had lived in an Italian community. We experienced incidents of prejudice here. We lived in the back apartment in the basement, but our friends in the front apartment had rocks thrown through the glass window. The owner was Italian. He and his wife were very nice to us. Our friends in the front apartment were Polish, his wife was French. Nice neighbors.

My brother went into the service from Chicago. He was working in the

cosmetic factory. My sister in Philadelphia came to live with us. She worked as a beauty operator. In September, after my father, sister, and brother left for home in Sultana, I left Chicago with our children to visit Allentown, Pennsylvania. Later, Toshikatsu quit his job and came to Allentown. From Allentown on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 1945, with father Ujiro, Toshikatsu, my two children, and I left for a long journey home to California. In Chicago, our Polish neighbor invited us for Thanksgiving dinner. We had three and a half hours time. I cannot forget how windy and cold that day was in Chicago. We arrived home on November 25th by train. We found our farm in good condition. Our house was empty, so we moved in without any problems. All our close neighbors welcomed us home. However, there was hostility, prejudice felt, when we saw signs, "No Japs" posted on store, near our Kings River Store and in Kingsburg town. Only store that welcomed our trade was Justesens on the north corner of Draper and California Streets.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How did you meet your husband? Was your marriage arranged by your parents?

MRS. EZAKI: Our families had been old acquaintances for many years. I didn't know nor seen Toshikatsu on our visits because he was staying at the Fresno Buddhist Temple dormitory 'til he was in the seventh grade. Yes, our marriage was arranged by a baithaku couple who was a very close friend of both families. I never knew Toshikatsu prior to our engagement. He was eight years my senior. Our baishaku couple explained to me the personality and character of this person, his educational background, and about the family. I believe the decisive factor contributed to this arrangement was when Mother wrote to me, while I was in Tokyo, Japan, that if I had come home to California, I would probably wed into the Ezaki family. So, with my father's persuasion, I said, "Yes."

MRS. HASEGAWA: What do you do for a living? You mentioned that you worked as a family unit, please explain. What kind of farming did you do? Tree fruit? Raisins? How did you process them? Where did you market them? Did you dry fruits?

MRS. EZAKI: My husband's name is Toshikatsu Tee Ezaki. His parents have been farming in Kingsburg since Ujiro, his father, arrived to this area in 1913. They purchased this farm on which we live in 1918. It is a property of 20 acres. In addition to this 20 acres, Toshikatsu leased 40 acres next to our farm, owned by Mw. R.G. Smith from 1947 to 1966 when he purchased this 40 acres and sold it in 1974. For a family of nine, 60 acres provided us enough work year around and a substantial livelihood through the years. This 40 acres was all vineyard--seedless Thompson and muscats.

The family consists of his father and mother, his sister, and our family of six. We had only one bankbook, checking account in Toshikatsu's name only. All of us, including the children, worked year around on the farm. Only time we hired extra help was at harvest time. Children came out to the vineyards or orchards to help us even for an hour or two after school. We were in the poultry business for a while, and there was feeding and collecting and cleaning eggs which the children did with Grandmother's supervision. Mother did most of the cooking, washing, while I worked on the farm. The boys at a very young age, learned to drive 'a tractor, so every chance they had, with two tractors on the farm, the boys handled the tractor very efficiently. Of course, there

were minor negligences, such as a vine ripped off here and there by getting too close.

Fruit trees were planted in order to give the children work to earn some money during their summer vacation. We had apricots, peaches, plums, and nectarines. During the fruit harvest, we hired pickers to pick the ripened fruits in a bucket. We packed the fruit right out of the buckets in the boxes using wagon beds or on a stand which were set on the ground near the trees where the picking was done. The peaches were packed in sizes of 80, 84, 72, 70, 64, 60, 56, 50, 48, 42, 40, 36. These figures give the count of the fruits in each box. They are uniform in size, cupped individually in colored cups or pan-a-paks, packed tightly and yet not bruised. Usually the fruit is packed in two layers to each box. As the volume increased, we gave up field pack and packed the fruit in our shed by bringing the buckets of fruit on wagons pulled by tractors. The packers welcomed this change over because of convenience. The packers were paid by the amount of boxes each had packed that day. End of the day, after the last box was packed, the trucking company from Reedley came to pick the packed boxes at the shed. From the shed, it was hauled by the truck to their docks at the trucking company and loaded onto a big truck and trailer to be hauled into the markets in produce business in Oakland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles in time for the early markets which opens for sales at 2 a.m. The markets sold the farmers produce on consignment, the price for that day. The farmers were paid according to the sales made with commission deducted from the sale. The trucking company charged so much a lug for the hauling. Our fruit trees were apricots, peaches, nectarine peaches, and plums.

Raisins, how they were processed--grape picking season starts around the 20<sup>th</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup>, or the last week of August. The farmer hires grape pickers, as much as 15 pickers or more. The grapes are cut by picking knives, and each picker has a pan (a grape picking pan, the size of a large dish washing pan) which holds approximately 21 pounds of grapes and drops his grapes into this pan. When the pan is filled, it is ready to spread on a paper tray on the ground in the designated place where the ground is leveled and sloped smoothly between the rows of vines. The picker spreads his own trays and dumps his grapes from the pan onto these trays. He then spreads out the grapes evenly and neatly, filling in the corners in single layers. The grapes are left alone in neat rows for the sun to dry them naturally. It takes two weeks of good drying weather, warm to hot days in 90- 98° Fahrenheit, 32°-37° Celsius on top side; and next, the grapes next to the ground have to be turned bottom up and be exposed to the sun, with another four to five days of drying, the trays are now ready to be rolled in a cigarette roll, or biscuit roll. This turning and rolling is a physical back straining work because it is done half-stooped and in a bent position. It is hard on one's leg muscles, too. All this work is done piece work; the faster we pick, turn, and roll, there is more money to it. If slow, one's profit is small. After the trays had been rolled and laid near the vine in partial shade, the picking up process of these rolled raisins begins. This process we call, "boxing the raisin," because the dried grapes are now called "raisins." The raisin is shaken out of the paper tray and filled into packing boxes. These boxes will weigh about 75 pounds each when filled with raisins. They use sweat boxes, which will weigh 150 pounds to 200 pounds when filled to the rim. The filled boxes are brought to the shed or yard. Now it is ready to be delivered to the packinghouse or raisin association. We are members of Sun Maid Association, so Toshikatsu is required to get his delivery dates from

the Sun Maid Plant Receiving Station and on these given dates and time, he is allowed to deliver his boxed raisins into the plant. Meantime, all the rolled raisins in the field are boxed and brought to the shed. The plant, upon receiving the raisins, are graded into many classes and given a sand test, moisture test, mold test, sugar test, et cetera. According to the inspection grade and classification, the member (farmer) is paid so much a ton. Here at the plant, the raisin is now ready to be processed for marketing. A Sun Maid member is not paid in full as soon as all the raisins are delivered. The member is paid periodically. The first payment is a substantial amount, the rest by progress payments until the time of the last payment. There is an advantage here, because the members are paid more in comparison to the other packinghouses.

Sun Maid plant was located in Fresno, originated in Fresno with branches in all the neighborhood towns in the horse and wagon days. The raisin was hauled into town and loaded on the freight cars and by freight cars it was taken to the Fresno "mother" plant where the processing was done. After the horse and wagon days, then came the trucks. Farmers who were interested in hauling for Sun Maid Company got the job of hauling in raisins brought in to these branches (stations) by the local farmers. After World War II, members of Sun Maid had to deliver his own raisins to the Fresno Sun Maid Raisin Plant. In 1965, Sun Maid moved out of Fresno and came to Kingsburg, where it stands today; a new modern building on 92 acres located at 13525 South Bethel, Kingsburg. Sun Maid is a name known world-wide for its raisins. On our 40-acre farm, we dried 11 acres of muscat grapes, too. Muscats were picked in wooden trays after all the seedless Thompsons were laid on the ground for drying, so it would be around September 13-15. With the days becoming shorter and cooler, the muscats take longer to dry. Many times, there was interruption with rain scare, usually once or twice when the farmer has to "rain stack" to keep the raisins from getting wet. Once the raisin is wet, the drying process takes longer. There arises additional problems such as worms breeding, mold develops from moisture, sand in the trays which, results in poor quality raisins. After the rain had subsided and the sun is out again, the trays are spread out again to dry normally. The wooden trays are handled, similiar to the same process as the seedless Thompsons. The price of muscat raisins is relatively higher than seedless Thompsons.

Yes, the Ezaki family was engaged in apricot fruit drying, too. We had Tilton and Blenhien apricots. Apricots ripen around the Fourth of July at the earliest. Apricots were picked by buckets and filled in 40-pound picking boxes. The fruit-filled boxes were hauled into the shed by wagon and the cutting is done by women and girls. The fruit is cut with a special cutting knife into halves and laid in single layers neatly on a wooden tray. Nearby, there are fruit cars on wheels which run on rails. The trays are removed to these fruit cars by men and pushed into the smokehouse. In the smokehouse, it is cured by a chemical called sulfur for at least four to five hours. When this is finished, the cars are pulled out, pushed out, and by rails it is taken out to the sun and the trays are spread out singularly in the spacious drying yard. It requires one good drying day. Next, the dried fruit in trays are stacked high to be aired out for three to four days, then it is ready to be boxed into a large sweat box which holds 120-150 pounds of dried apricots. From the packinghouses in the area, the buyers came to the farmers, saw the products, and offered their prices. If satisfactory to the farmer, he agreed to sell to this buyer.

There is a break between fruit harvest and seedless Thompson grape picking, so to utilize this period, we tried Crenshaw melon growing as a family project. It was not all work and no play. When time permitted, off we went to the coast, to the beaches, or to the mountains for a picnic and fishing!

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of work did you do in the packing-house?

MRS. EZAKI: I worked in the packinghouse in 1964-65. The packinghouse owners are fruit shippers who own a large acreage of fruit of their own; pick, pack, and haul their fruit into markets in Oakland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, also to the Eastern Coast by freight cars. Not only do they pack fruit, but the table grapes as well. The packinghouses employ many workers and packers--men and women. They are either paid by day wages or piece work, so much a day. At the time I worked, it was seven, eight, nine cents a lug. If one is a fast packer she would make far more than day wages, especially when the work lasts more than eight hours a day. Depending on the volume of fruit at the time, the hours are either short or long. At the peak of harvest, the hours will run as long as nine to ten hours, ending at around 11 p.m. or 12 at night. The season runs from May into August and September. Table grapes are packed later. So are pomegranates and persimmons. I was a packer. I have a stand with two lugs into which I pack my fruits. The fruits are on a conveyor belt. I am allowed to pack two sizes. I will pick up the right sized fruit off the belt and place them into the lug boxes on my stand. If I pick up a soft or damaged fruit, I will dispose of it on another conveyor belt underneath. These fruit will be dumped into a dump truck and taken back to the orchards to be discarded. Only the best fruit is packed into the lug boxes. There is a floor lady who supervises our packing, making sure the .sizes in the boxes are uniform and tight enough so as not to cause bruises on the skin of the fruits. The packed fruits are stacked in lots and marked. Then the fruit is hauled onto a big truck and trailer which hauls them into the city produce markets in time for the early market sales.

MRS. HASEGAWA: As a seasonal worker, what did you do during the off-season?

MRS. EZAKI: On off-seasons, after the harvest season is over, those of us collecting unemployment insurance are registered to look for some work. We report to the nearest employment office to check with the office once a month. The procedure in obtaining the insurance is--after our seasonal work draws to an end, we go to the nearest Employment Office to open a claim for Unemployment Insurance benefits. There is a week of waiting period until the insurance benefit is issued. The qualifications are to have had the highest earnings in the calendar quarter as the base period exceeding the amount of \$750. This year it is \$900. The employer is required to pay unemployment insurance taxes toward this benefit. I feel that it is a good insurance in that no matter how small the amount, in time when no job is available, it will help get some food on the table. Fortunately, we have our farm, and there is always work to be done here. But, I believe the time will come when the unemployment benefits to a person like myself, with other sources of income besides seasonal employment, will be disqualified from this particular benefit.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How did you get employment at the Del Monte Canning

plant in Kingsburg?

MRS. EZAKI: Toshikatsu grew cling peaches on the farm. He sold the peaches to this Del Monte cannery every year in its productive years. When our children became 18 years old, they sought employment at the cannery and were employed until the public schools and college commenced. This gave them the opportunity to earn some money for their education which certainly came in handy. When the time came for the girls to quit to return to school, I sought employment to take their place, and I worked 'til the season came to close. Since 1967, I sought full employment at the cannery with our children. Cannery season lasts eight to ten weeks. It was a good source of income for we were paid union wages. The insurance carried by the cannery has a good coverage in health benefits. I have 14 years seniority working for this cannery. This cannery was called California Packing Company before the name became Del Monte, but the ownership was the same. It has been in existence since early 1920. There has been a cannery on the same site as far back as 1914 but under a different name. Currently, during the canning season, the cannery operates 24 hours, three shifts with 1400 employees, and 75 full-time employees. The Del Monte Company and the growers in this surrounding area provide the fruit to the cannery.

The fieldman (a representative of Del Monte) contacts the growers and checks the fruit when it is ready to pick; the pickers pick the fruit in buckets and fill the large bins. The bins are loaded on the bin trailers and are hauled into the receiving station. There inspection takes place for split pits, worms, green, over ripe, bird pecks, and undersized fruits. From here, the trucks deliver the fruit to the cannery to be processed that day. When the volume is heavy, the fruit is placed in cold storage until such time the cannery can process them.

In recent years, this Del Monte plant processed potatoes beside the cling peaches. In the last three years, this plant has embarked in the Italian zucchini squash canning, too. My job is called empty can depellatizer machine operator. It is a fourth wage bracket job. I am currently paid \$7.34 an hour. My job is to send the empty cans off the machine onto the cable to the main plant where the processing is taking place. There is an operator for each size can. The 303, 401, 307, or two talls and buffet cans. The 401's are two and a half, which is in most demand.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of work does your husband do now? Does he raise Taro potatoes as his father did until 1976?

MRS. EZAKI: Toshikatsu is semi-retired. He is 67 years old. He now has 25 acres to farm. All the fruit packing is done by the packinghouse, which means we sell the crop to the packinghouse. Apricots--we do not dry them any more, we send the sorted fruit to the markets. Apricots are in great demand. There has not been enough to satisfy the customers. Toshikatsu is not growing Taro potatoes since his father retired completely at the age of 92. We have had Taro potatoes for 30 years, but the bulk of the work was done by the family and Toshikatsu. So when his father could no more work in the potatoes, it was time to quit. The other reason was, the soil in which the potatoes were planted year after year, succumbed to a disease which appeared like a fungus, and the potato crop was a total loss. This "Taro" is a tropical plant. It prefers a sandy and a soil with good drainage. It is an Oriental potato consumed mostly by the Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, and Chinese. Orders

for these potatoes are in demand especially during the winter months about November and December, in time for the holidays. Taro are very attractive plants, used as foliage for landscapes, having the characteristics of tropical plant with huge leaves, large enough for an umbrella when it is fully matured. Another name this plant has is "Elephant Ears." This Taro is a bulb, planted in the spring from the middle of March to April. It requires plenty of fertilizer and water. In the summer it is irrigated daily. A week before the harvest the water is completely turned off. The harvest generally starts about the time we have finished with the raisins, which is usually about the second week of October. My husband has a potato digger equipment which hooks onto the tractor. The digger will bring the clumps of the potato plants to the surface of the ground as the tractor moves forward over the rows of the plants.

I forgot to mention, before my husband can get into the potato patch with the tractor, he first must top the stalks of the plants. These plants are very tall, the leaves beneath the tractor makes the tractor difficult to proceed forward. The clumps are separated into small piles of potatoes to be sorted. The potato is gathered up from the ground into the picking boxes and brought into the shed to be packed in lugs. Filled lugs must weigh 32 pounds. First the potatoes are cleaned, then sorted into three sizes; number one, medium, and jumbo. Two times a week, Mr. Tom Nishimura of Parlier, an owner of a market in Los Angeles, came by with his truck to pick up the Taro lugs to haul to his market. The Portuguese nationalities came to the house to purchase the mother bulbs, the large ones, for their consumption. These people were mostly from the Azores, an island off Portugal. They devoured these potatoes as much as the Orientals.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Please tell us about your family and your children and what is was like for your children going to school in comparison to your childhood?

MRS. EZAKI: Toshikatsu was the oldest son of Ujiro and Toru Ezaki. It is the tradition of Japan that the oldest son inherits the family trade and cares for the parents. In our case, Toshikatsu carries on the farming business and is expected to care for his parents and a sister who is unable to make her living. When I married into this family, the responsibilities were the same as Toshikatsus. Everyone had his and her responsibilities in this family of togetherness. A family unit under one bankbook and one account. Thus our family consists of nine persons.

Our children were brought up and cared for in the presence of their grandparents. I was very fortunate in having a "live-in" babysitter right at home. They were happy children and had plenty of love and care. I was the only disciplinarian in the house.

The two older children were born in Poston Internment Camp, and three were born in Kingsburg. The youngest child is adopted by his paternal aunt and her husband here in Kingsburg. We have two boys and two girls. Their names are; LeRoy Seiri Ezaki, Sharon Yoriko, Joyce Yakoi, Dean Asao.

LeRoy is married to Karen Tsuda, the oldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Tsuda of Fresno. They have two daughters and a son; Teri Julie, Sachi Lynn, and Toshiro Eathan. They live in Covina, California. LeRoy is the chief pharmacist at the Whittier Hospital in Whittier, California.

Sharon was married, now divorced, and has one daughter Stephanie Yoko and a son Christopher Katsu. They live in Clovis, California. She is a Pacific Telephone office manager in Fresno.

Joyce is married to Kent Takao Yamaguchi, the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Takao Yamaguchi of Fresno. They live in Indianapolis, Indiana. Joyce is a dietician.

Dean is married to Francine Morrissette, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Romeo Morrissette of Val des Bois, Quebec, Canada. They live in Sonoma, California. Dean is an optometrist, OD. Francine is a registered nurse.

The comparisons of our children going to school with my childhood is:

1. The convenience of the school bus, rain or shine, right to our driveway which I did not have.
2. There was no language barrier between the parents and children. However, our eldest son went to kindergarten in town, whereas Kings River school did not have kindergarten class.
3. Parental participation and involvement with children's school. Activities, as PTA, health clinic, 4-H projects and programs, sports activities, extracurricular, judo, and music lessons.
4. Convenience of cafeteria service--hot lunches.
5. Television in schools for visual-aid learning is now available.
6. Schools are larger and student body activities are more varied.
7. Children had language barrier with grandparents. We didn't.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Are you involved with any organizations?

MRS. EZAKI: The organizations that my husband and I belong to comes mostly under our religion and our occupation which is farming. We are Buddhists of the Jodo Shinshu Sect and members of the Kingsburg Buddhist Temple and of the Fresno Buddhist Temple and Buddhist Churches of America. Unable to support and house a Buddhist minister, we of the Kingsburg Buddhist Temple are affiliated with the Mother Temple in Fresno which was established in 1889. We receive a minister for all our services and Sunday School from Fresno Buddhist Temple. After World War II, under the Kingsburg Buddhist Temple, we have had Young Adult Association and Buddhist Women's Organization and the Young Buddhist Association which has been terminated. Currently, the Sunday School and the Junior Young Buddhist Association is in existence. I have been fortunate in being allowed to help in the Sunday School since 1950 when the new church building was built and it was dedicated.

Social clubs we belong to are the Kumamoto Prefecture Friendship Club, and the other is "Shigin" (Chinese poetry chanting club) Club, called San Joaquin Kinyu Gin'ei Club. The Kumamoto Prefecture Friends Club consists of a group formerly from Kumamoto Prefecture now residing in this San Joaquin Valley. The first generation Japanese are slowly

departing from the group. It has become necessary for the second generation to be involved and continue to work towards closer public relationships with our parents' homeland. I am a member of the Federation of Western Buddhist Sunday Schoolteachers League which consist of five districts of California; Bay Area District, Central California District, Northern District, Coast District, and Southern District. I was allowed to serve as its president in 1959. Our aim is to dedicate ourselves to learn and impart our spiritual heritage to all ages seeking fulfillment in the Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Attainment of Jodo Shinshu. During my presidency, we were allowed to collect an offering from each student toward the restoration of historical Buddha's birthplace, the "Lumbini" Garden in India. The Bishop's fund was initiated and is in existence today, and a scholarship for a person of any creative talent of art is given. As an active member of the Central California Buddhist Sunday Schoolteachers League, I have held the office of president in 1957. Presently, I am holding office of Recording Secretary, and this coming spring 1981, the Central California District League is hosting a Western Federation Buddhist Sunday Schoolteachers League here in Fresno. I am on a speakers roster for the Buddhist Radio Hour over the Radio KGST and KLIP. I am certainly grateful for all these opportunities which have enabled me to nurture my religious awareness from experiences which came my way.

The other, "Shigin" Club, the changing of the Chinese poetry, is a study class with some socializing. It teaches us beautiful verses written by famous personalities of ancient China and Japan to the present. From these poems, we find the depth of one's courtesy, honor, sympathy, and filial piety; the paths of virtue for human society. My husband and I find it stimulating and interesting. We hope to continue in the study of "Shigin" for it is a heritage to be a part of.

In community affairs, I was allowed to serve on the committee in charge of the Kingsburg Community Bicentennial Celebration in the Kingsburg High School Stadium during the July 4, 1976 observance. The Oriental ancestry had a booth that sold "Chinese-style fried rice" and the Japanese style-beef teriyaki. We made quite a lot of sales that night. The food was sold out before we realized it! As an afterthought, I wished we had prepared for more. I believe in involvement in community activities to promote good public relationships. When an opportunity arises, I am willing to participate in any capacity.

We also belong to the Japanese American Citizen League. My husband has been a One Thousand Club member for many years. Fresno County Farm Bureau, Agriculture Business, Nisei Farmers League was formed to combat the United Farm Workers, and we also belong to the Homeowners Group (homeowners along the Kings River and Golf Course) in this area.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What changes have you seen in the activities and problems of Japanese-Americans during your life?

MRS. EZAKI: The changes in the activities and problems of Japanese-Americans in my life are many. As our living standards became substantial, we were allowed to expand our scope of human relations. Our parents' influence had great emphasis in our lives. They were hard-working people who had endured hardship in their endeavors to instill in us the cultural background, such as religious training and Japanese language education along with the public school system education of this land. Our parents had high regards for higher education. Their emphasis

was "to succeed in the world, one must have education." I remember my father-in-law would tease our boys and say, "You don't like school, you want to be a farmer like Grandpa, work, work, work!" Many of the second generation Japanese-Americans had desires to continue their education to higher learning by entering colleges, but because of the intervention of the Depression era and later the evacuation, their desires were not fulfilled. I believe it is for this very reason that the second generation made it possible for the third generation to fulfill this dream which did not materialize for them. Another reason is the genetic factor in which dwells the motivating drive of ambition and desire to succeed (in competitive spirit), to proceed to excel in given challenges and opportunities which the second generations and third generations have demonstrated by their accomplishments as high achievers. Sanseis and Yonseis, the third and fourth generation, are very outspoken, not "quiet Americans" like the second generation. Many Japanese-Americans now hold leadership positions in society and higher social status. Many hold public offices and are going into government positions. Many are in the professional fields, especially the medical fields and higher positions in their professions. The crime rate of the Japanese-Americans is the lowest of all ethnic groups. Problems which accompany the climb up the economic ladder are subjected to and readily available whether good or bad. Morally, this society is slowly becoming sick. Sex is free, drugs, drinking, and smoking is being taken up by 12-year old children!

Our concern is these fourth generation, the children in schools are targets for drug pushers and are subjected to undesirable friends who influence them. Inter-marriages have been rising considerably in our Japanese-American communities in the last few years. As high as 65 to 70 percent, especially in the last year or two. The crime rate in the Japanese-American surnames have risen and will probably be more. Divorce cases among the third generation is noticeable, and is being accepted. The second generation, there were very few divorces, and with our Issei I can say there was none. I believe economics have much to blame for these divorce statistics.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What social or economic changes have you seen in your local community over the years?

MRS. EZAKI: Fortunately, those of us who have returned to Kingsburg (many had not) to our farms and business from internment camps and elsewhere in 1945, with hard work and sweat, have established substantial security in business and livelihood. We are classified as middle-class people, respectfully paying in our taxes to the Internal Revenue Service. Most of us are living in comfortable new homes and are reaching senior citizen maturity or have acquired that status already and are enjoying the pleasures of our choice; be it golf, fishing, or frequent trips to Reno. Some have enjoyed trips abroad. Among our first generation, widowers are Ujio, my father-in-law, who is 96 years old, and Mr. Shotaro Hamada who is 98 years old, who are the only two male Issei living in Kingsburg today. They are both in excellent health. Both are taken care of and live with their oldest sons in the traditional custom. Both are from Kumamoto Prefecture in Japan. There are 13 first-generation widows, and three second-generation widows among us who have contributed so much for the welfare of our society since their settlement in this Kingsburg community. Today's economics have not shown any growth in our Japanese community since most of our third generation children have sought professions outside of farming and have

established residence in the cities. Currently, there are only five persons out of this five, two have families, and three are not married.

Another area of which I am concerned due to economic changes is religious awareness. As our living standard came up, our spiritual needs have been neglected. Especially, I find it true in our Buddhist group. We do become involved with Temple activities, but the most important spiritual awareness is lacking. Public relations is another area where the Buddhists must put more emphasis and efforts by becoming more involved with community affairs. We are all an ethnic group in one way or another, and getting involved is one good way to improve good, sound public relations with our fellow friends and neighbors.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What do you do to maintain your ethnic identity? Do you observe traditional customs in your daily life or during special occasions?

MRS. EZAKI: I am a follower of Shinshu Buddhist Faith, this, in entirety, is my ethnic identity. Our cultural background has its beginning from Buddhism, Zen or Shinshu, et cetera. It is influenced by Buddhism. One may visit any second generation Japanese-American home and will no doubt find eating utensils, dishes, pictures, needlework, crafts, ceramic, calligraphy, Bonsai, and just countless things which are "things Japanese." The language we speak are expressions from Buddhism, Temple Services, Sunday School, our family altar offerings, memorial service, birthdays, family gatherings, Japanese cuisine, cooking, New Year's Observance, Omochi (sweet rice cake), and et cetera. All these are ingrained and instilled in our daily living by our parents' up-bringing. and education. Traditional customs have been natural to me. What I mean is, there isn't any great effort I must put forward to maintain Japanese customs, so to speak. It is part of me, and it is natural. I appreciate my heritage, my ethnic identity.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What do you see as the future of the Japanese in America as an ethnic group?

MRS. EZAKI: The future of Japanese as an ethnic group will diminish slowly. Future Japanese generations will not be straight or pure Japanese minority. With the high percentage of intermarriages in our present society, the pure blood of distinct Japanese characteristics will become mixed with other ethnic groups and will find its way into the mainstream of the melting pot of all bloods which is after all "America" in the unique sense of the word. In regards to Japanese cultural heritage--unless future generations can manage to maintain to keep ties with their first forefathers' country of birth, which is Japan, by ways and means of contact and keeping communications open, eventually Japan will be completely forgotten. Future generations will come to believe "heritage" is America which can be understandable. The practice of some traditional customs will be preserved and appreciated through higher learning (education) and understanding of humanity and gratitude. I would certainly like to believe this to be true. As for Shinsu Jodo Sect Buddhism, it will not be Japanese Jodo Shinsu Buddhism. This is already changing, it will be international. It has attracted the Western world, and in generations to come, our temples will be filled with future "Americans" and not pure Japanese at all.