

HARUMI. HOSHIKO

MRS. GOTO: Today is June 16, 1980. We are privileged to be in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Torata Hoshiko, 273 West Floral Avenue, Fresno, California, 93706.

I, Terry Goto, have with me Mrs. Naomi Murray who works at the Nikkei Service Center, and she will interview Mrs. Hoshiko in Japanese.

MRS. MURRAY: To begin, may I have your name?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I am Hoshiko, Harumi.

MRS. MURRAY: And where were you born?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I was born in Kumamoto-Ken, Kikuchi-Gun, Hichijo-Machi, Saigo.

MRS. MURRAY: Since coming to America, where did you live the longest?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I lived here at this farm in Fresno County. The Japanese community in this area was called Monmouth. The neighboring community was called Bowles. The two communities often got together for social and other activities. After we came back from the Relocation Centers, the two communities decided to merge and became known as the Bowles community. This takes in the Japanese families living in the Easton and Caruthers districts.

MRS. MURRAY: When did you come to America, and why did you come?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I came by ship to America in March of 1915. I came as a picture bride. Although I had never met my husband-to-be, I knew his older brother in Japan.

MRS. MURRAY: What was the name of the place when you first arrived?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I arrived in San Francisco, and then lived in the Kerman area for two years. And in 1917, we came to this farm in Monmouth.

MRS. MURRAY: What type of work did you do for a living in America?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I helped my husband in his work on the farm. And, of course, I did the usual housework, cooking, and washing clothes. I had to be taught to keep house in America, because everything was so different here.

MRS. MURRAY: When did you get married?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I arrived in 1915, and as a picture bride we were all married in San Francisco. There was a priest there, and all the picture brides that arrived were married together there. There were many there, and we all lined up to get married.

MRS. MURRAY: Was it a Buddhist ceremony or a Christian one?

MRS. HOSHIKO: It was neither. I don't know whether it was a Christian ceremony or what, but the minister said something about marrying this person and I said, "Yes," and that was it. Then my husband brought me

home, and he called his friends over and had a sort of celebration.

MRS. MURRAY: Have you ever been back to Japan?

MRS. HOSHIKO: Yes. I've been back once, but it has been a long time ago. I have forgotten what year it was, but it was shortly after we returned from the Relocation Center.

MRS. MURRAY: Are all your children married to Japanese?

MRS. HOSHIKO: Yes, they are all married to Japanese.

MRS. MURRAY: What are your children doing now?

MRS. HOSHIKO: My daughters help their husbands, and I guess they are housewives mainly. One of my daughters is working in a hospital office. My son is farming 120 acres of vineyard. For many years he had peaches and nectarines, but only has grapes now.

MRS. MURRAY: Where are your children living?

MRS. HOSHIKO: My son Harry lives about a mile away from here. One daughter Toyoko Arakawa lives very close to here, about three miles away. Another daughter Yoshiko Yamagiwa also lives in the Bowles area. We have one daughter living in North Fresno, Toshiko Hata. Our oldest daughter Noriko Yamaguchi lives in Seattle.

MRS. MURRAY: Have you ever experienced any prejudice since coming to America, either before or after the war?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I don't believe I have ever encountered any bad experiences. The people have been extremely kind to us. I could say that I haven't had any such experiences. Even after the start of the war, people were good to us. And after we came from the Relocation Center, the neighbors came over to welcome us back and asked if there was anything they could do for us.

MRS. MURRAY: Have you seen any changes in the community?

MRS. HOSHIKO: At the time I first came here the people here, both Japanese and American families, lived in small, modest homes. There was no electricity, so we used lamps. It was not just the Japanese families, but the American families also lived the same way. There were no paved roads yet. People traveled by horse and buggy. Our cooking was done by wood stoves which were very popular at that time. Many Japanese homes had outdoor cooking areas, and they cooked their rice on a "kudo." I had a wood stove and considered myself very fortunate.

To do the laundry, I had to first boil the water, put it into the washtub, and wash the clothes on a washboard. The family wash was done in this manner, and the family increased in number every few years. I raised seven children. Besides, we employed three Japanese men to help on the farm, and I did the cooking and washing for them. Slowly these conditions improved.

Oil was poured on the county roads, and we admired the improved streets. Electricity was beginning to appear at the various farms, and we, too, got electricity. Later, gas and butane were available, and we purchased

butane and got a new stove. Still later, we purchased a washing machine. The Japanese homes were improving steadily, and we started to go out more.

When my children went to the elementary school, there were no buses, so they walked two miles to attend school. When we first arrived here, my husband did not have citizenship, so he could not purchase this farm. An American friend helped us to form a corporation, the Starlight Vineyard Company, and my husband purchased the land in the name of the company. Later, the farm was transferred in name only to a Japanese friend's son who was over 21 years old. Then when our oldest son became of age the land was changed to his name.

Just as conditions were improving, the children were graduating from elementary school and high school and life in general was easier, the war broke out. And we thought that everything we had worked for would be gone. When the time for evacuation came, we asked an American friend who we trusted the most to take care of the farm for the duration of the war. Our furniture and automobile were stored at another American friend's home. We first went into the Fresno Assembly Center at the fairground where we stayed less than a year. We were transferred to the Jerome Relocation Center in Arkansas.

MRS. MURRAY: How large was the farm, and what did you grow?

MRS. HOSHIKO: When we first moved here, we purchased 40 acres and many years later we bought the adjoining 40 acres, so we had a total of 80 acres. We grew mostly grapes, but we also had apricots, peaches, and nectarines. While the trees were young and not bearing fruits, we had some vegetables and also some strawberries. We lived on the original 40 acres, and when my oldest son married, he and his family lived on the other 40 acres. We now have only grapes.

MRS. MURRAY: Did you belong to any clubs?

MRS. HOSHIKO: There was an organization called "Nihonjin Kai" (Japanese Association) to which my husband belonged and was very active. He also was active in the Bukkyo Kai. He also helped to establish the Monmouth Japanese Language School. I was a member of the "Monmouth Haha-no-Kai" and the Fresno Bukkyo Fujin Kai. Because of the language barrier, we were not active in the local PTA. However, we attended all of the school programs and activities in which our children participated.

MRS. MURRAY: Your husband was active in these organizations. Please tell me about him.

MRS. HOSHIKO: Yes, my husband was active. I had my hands full taking care of little children all coming one after another, and I stayed at home. My husband was very interested in the future of the young people's social and educational movement. Locally, there was the Bowles Seinen Kai, and he served as its president. They organized a baseball team and practiced baseball on Sundays in a neighbor's pasture. Young men's organizations were formed in other areas in the Fresno County, and a league was formed. They had baseball and sumo tournaments. It was not too good to just have social activities, so they began to practice making speeches in Japanese, and had oratorical contests.

At that time, there were many outstanding young men in the neighborhood, and the Bowles Seinen Kai was well-known and worthy of praises. My husband was young then, perhaps in his 20's. As he grew older, he served the Seinen Kai in an advisory capacity and devoted more time to the Nihonjin Kai. They sponsored many traveling lecturers who came from San Francisco, Los Angeles, and some from Japan. About this time my cousin from Los Angeles came to live with us and work on the farm. We had another friend helping us, and they all worked very hard. Because we had this added help with the farm work, my husband was able to attend the Nihonjin Kai meetings which were sometimes held twice a week.

MRS. MURRAY: How did he receive this award?

MRS. HOSHIKO: It was in agriculture. He received it from the Dai Nippon No Kai. The certificate states that it was awarded in recognition of his work in helping to get the Japanese community established.

MRS. MURRAY: And was this award given by the Emperor of Japan?

MRS. HOSHIKO: Yes. It was given to him in the Emperor's name. We are very grateful. If we were in Japan, we would not be in a position to receive any awards, but in America it is possible to have the opportunity to establish Japanese language school, to organize young people's clubs to promote activities, and to be active in the Japanese community.

MRS. MURRAY: What is Mr. Hoshiko doing now?

MRS. HOSHIKO: He has had a stroke, and my husband cannot do anything now. He has worked very hard in his youth, and so I try very hard to make his life easier and without much pain.

MRS. MURRAY: How long has your husband been ill?

MRS. HOSHIKO: It's been over nine years.

MRS. MURRAY: How old is Mr. Hoshiko?

MRS. HOSHIKO: He is 90 years old.

MRS. MURRAY: And how old are you?

MRS. HOSHIKO: Well, I'm five years younger, so I will be 85 on my birthday in November.

MRS. MURRAY: You look so healthy!

MRS. HOSHIKO: I am very thankful that I am able to take care of my husband.

MRS. MURRAY: Yes, it would be difficult if you became ill.

MRS. HOSHIKO: It would be hard to ask the children to come and help, because they all have their own families. It would be a sad case if I was hurt or unable to do the work, so I'll have to stay healthy for his sake.

MRS. MURRAY: Is there anything else you would like to add about your

husband?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I may overdo it, and it would become a story of praises.

MRS. MURRAY: He was a very good husband?

MRS. HOSHIKO: Yes. Everyone envied me because he was very considerate and good.

MRS. MURRAY: You have seven children?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I had eight children; three have died. My third son Mitsuo died when he was a few months old. My youngest daughter June Yabuki, who lived in Bellevue, Washington, was coming to Fresno for a vacation with her husband and two daughters when they had an auto accident. My daughter died in the accident. Our oldest son Sumio had heart problems and died of a heart attack. The oldest and the youngest of our children have passed away and now, we have one son and four daughters left.

MRS. MURRAY: How many grandchildren do you have?

MRS. HOSHIKO: We had 15 grandchildren, but Mark had a fatal accident while skiing, so there are 14 grandchildren left. We now have four great-grandchildren.

MRS. MURRAY: How old would your oldest son be if he were living?

MRS. HOSHIKO: Well, he died when he was 59 years old, and that was about four years ago.

MRS. MURRAY: He was still young!

MRS. HOSHIKO: It was his third heart attack, so it was inevitable.

MRS. MURRAY: To change the subject, do you still observe the Japanese customs on birthdays, wedding, and funerals?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I seldom go out now, but haven't all this changed somewhat? Many still follow tradition, but now they have dancing at the wedding receptions. In our family, we have had special celebrations for the 60th, 77th, and 88th birthdays for my husband.

MRS. MURRAY: Do you think the funerals have changed?

MRS. HOSHIKO: All the Issei still have the same funeral services that they had in the past. I guess English is spoken now at the funeral services. But, usually, there is someone who speaks in Japanese; otherwise, I don't think the customs have changed.

MRS. MURRAY: The Issei have endured the hardships at the beginning and now the Nisei and Sansei are having more leisure and comforts. Can you tell us about these conditions?

MRS. HOSHIKO: In those days, the children have seen and have understood their parents' hardships. They obeyed us and helped us admirably. Also, we constantly told our children to study hard and become worthy American citizens. So they studied hard throughout their schooldays. In the

mornings before the girls went to school, they did the housework and made the lunches. In those days we could not afford to dress our girls in very many pretty dresses. I think the Nisei are intelligent people and have made outstanding contributions to the American society. The Sansei probably do not know the hardships of their parents as they were brought up with luxuries. The parents must have worried whether or not the Sansei would turn out all right, but there is no need to worry. The Sansei are doing very well in schools, both scholastically and extracurricular activities.

MRS. MURRAY: Do you suppose it is because the Issei have struggled so much in the early days?

MRS. HOSHIKO: I don't think for a moment that just because the Issei had to endure so much hardship that the present generation is taking life easy. Rather, I feel that they are continuing to work hard as their parents did. The only thing I regret is that there are only a few who are continuing to work on the farms. Most of the Sansei go to college and find work in the cities.

MRS. MURRAY: Today Japan has similar situation. Many are not going into agriculture, but are going into large cities like Tokyo. I guess there aren't too many farmers these days.

MRS. HOSHIKO: I received a letter from my nephew in Japan, and he states that his son is cultivating a mountain and growing oranges.

MRS. MURRAY: Thank you for this interview.

APPENDIX

It was "Tora-doshi" (the year of the tiger), and on February 15, 1890, a baby boy was born in Kumamoto-Ken, Kamoto-Gun, Kamoto-Machi, Sho. He was the second son of Saichi and Sueka Hoshiko, and they named him Torata.

When Torata Hoshiko was 18 years old, he told his parents that he wanted to go to America to study. His father tried to make him understand the hardships he would face and the difficulty he would have in learning English and establishing himself in America. No matter how discouraging his parents were, he was determined to go to America and be successful.

He sailed the Pacific and arrived in San Francisco in April of 1908. He first lived at a boardinghouse and went to school, but his money did not last very long. He then worked for room and board and went to night school. But, for financial reasons, he had to quit school and work full-time.

He spent the next few years doing seasonal farm work in the Sacramento and Los Angeles areas. Then one day he told his co-workers that he was leaving Southern California and heading for the Fresno area, because he had heard that Japanese families were running their own farms there. He felt that the only way to become a successful farmer would be to have his own land and settle down and become a family man.

Thus, he arrived in the Fresno area on a hot July day in the year 1912. He first rented a place in the Clovis area and learned to grow grapes and peaches. He was now ready to settle down and wrote to his parents asking them to find a suitable picture bride.

In March of 1915 Harumi Masunaga, age 21, arrived in San Francisco, and they were married. He brought her home to Clovis, and shortly after that they moved to a farm in Kerman. In November of 1917 their first son was born. About a month later he heard of a 40-acre ranch for sale, so they moved by horse and buggy to this farm on Floral Avenue in the Caruthers District. This is where they settled and reared their children.

The land had mostly alfalfa and some peaches and grapes. The following year, he planted grapes and peaches instead of alfalfa.

As he got acquainted with the neighborhood, he learned that the first settlement of Issei in this area was established in the early 1900's. They called the settlement Bowles. As the Japanese community grew, there was need for a meeting place, and the first hall was built in 1914. Then in 1918, the Bowles Young Men's Association was formed, and the following year he was elected president of the organization.

The 1920's were spent in promoting various activities for the Young Men's Association. Men's clubs were formed throughout Fresno County, and the YMA League was formed. He became the president of the league in 1924 and was instrumental in holding a sumo tournament as a fund-raising project. This event was held annually for many years.

The money raised from these tournaments was used for educational and cultural programs. Visiting lecturers were invited from San Francisco and Los Angeles as well as Japanese professors. In 1927, he took a group of young men on an educational tour of California. They visited various cities and met with Nisei and Issei leaders, farmers, businessmen, and professional men. In 1928 he received a gold watch from the league in appreciation for his contributions.

His family had grown in number, and he now had six children; two sons and four daughters. The older ones were attending Alvina Grammar School. In 1926, he helped to establish the Monmouth Japanese Language School.

While his children were growing, he devoted much time to the Japanese language school. In 1931, the Central California Japanese Language School Board was formed, and he served as vice-president for four years. In June of the same year, his fifth daughter was born.

He was now becoming more active in the Nihonjin Kai (Japanese Association). He had served on various committees from the early 1920's and was district representative. In 1934 and 1935, he served as the president of the Fresno Japanese Association. During this time he also became active in the Fresno Buddhist Church.

In 1937, he received the "Meiyo Shojo" (certificate of honor) and "Mokuhia" (red lacquer ceremonial "sake" cups) from the Dai Nippon No-Kai, in the name of N'ince Morimasao. The following year the Fresno Japanese Association presented him a silver loving cup and a certificate of appreciation in recognition of his years of service. He also received the same from the Central California Japanese Language School League.

It was also in 1938 that he made his first visit back to Japan. He had worked very hard for 30 years before he was able to return to see his family and relatives.

During World War II, he and his family were evacuated to the Fresno Assembly Center where he was block manager of "F" Section. From there he went to Jerome Relocation Center in Arkansas and served as block manager of Block 29. He also served as the treasurer for the Center Canteen.

When the Relocation Centers were closed, he returned to his farm in Monmouth. After a few years, he retired and his sons took over the farming and also purchased another 40 acres. Prior to his retirement, he built a new home.

The 1950's were the transition period. He served on the Board of Directors of the Fresno Buddhist Church until such time as the board members became Nisei. He then served on the advisory council. He also served as an Issei representative to work with the JAACL on their various projects.

In 1960, he received two awards. One was from the Dai Nippon No-Kai, in the name of Prince Takamatsu, he received the "Ryoku-haku-ju Ryuko-sho" (green and white ribbon medal). The other was from the Japanese Foreign Minister, Fujiyama, Aiichiro, he received the "Meiyo Shojo" and "Mokuhai."

In 1967, at the office of the Japanese Counsel General in San Francisco, he was awarded by the Dai Nippon No-Kai in the name of Prince Takamatsu the "Kohaku-ju Ryuko-sho" (red and white ribbon medal.)

Then, in 1968, at the residence of the Japanese Counsel General in San Francisco, he was decorated by the Japanese Government and received the Sacred Treasure Fifth Class. He was enjoying his retirement and then one day in 1971, he suffered a stroke. He has been confined to his bed at his home ever since that day. He is grateful for the care he receives from his wife and family, and lives each day in gratitude.