

MR. AND MRS. MINORU MASUMOTO

MRS. HASEGAWA: Today is May 8, 1980. I, Yoshino Hasegawa, am privileged to be in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Minoru Masumoto at 19410 East Sumner Avenue, Reedley, California, 93654.

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

MR. MASUMOTO: My name is Minoru Masumoto. I am called Fred by my Caucasian friends. I was born in Hayashi, Mitamura Takata-gun, Hiroshima-ken. I was born on January 15, 1903, and my place of longest residence is this farm in Reedley where we now reside.

MRS. MASUMOTO: My name is Fumiyo Masumoto. My birthdate is January 15, 1915, and I was born in Reedley and have lived here in Reedley the majority of my life.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What year did you leave Japan, Mr. Masumoto?

MR. MASUMOTO: I left Japan in 1917 and arrived in San Francisco on November 14, 1917. It took me two weeks to cross the Pacific Ocean. The ship was the S.S. Siberia. It was a good ship but rather small. I came here on that ship.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Why did you come to America?

MR. MASUMOTO: I came here to join my father who lived in Sacramento.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What was your father doing in Sacramento?

MR. MASUMOTO: He was a farm laborer. He died in 1924 in America.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Will you tell us about your mother?

MR. MASUMOTO: My father and I talked it over and decided to remain in America permanently, so we called my mother to America. And then my father became ill and died on September 7, 1924 in Sacramento. He was only 45 years old.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did your mother come to America?

MR. MASUMOTO: I wonder what year it was. I can't remember the exact year. She stayed in America for quite a long time. My twin brothers were born here. One of the twins died here.

MRS. MASUMOTO: She went back to Japan because she wanted to see her aging father before he died.

MR. MASUMOTO: My father's death changed our plans entirely. My mother died in Japan, and so did my brother.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many brothers did you have?

MR. MASUMOTO: I had four brothers. Some of them I haven't seen. All of them passed away.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You said you had twin brothers. Did they live in America, too?

MR. MASUMOTO: They were here, but one of them died here. My mother took the other one to Japan, and he died there. This brother had a bruise on his leg caused by being hit by a baseball when he was in grammar school. We did not pay too much attention to the bruise then, but when he went back to Japan, it got worse, perhaps because the climate was different, and he died from the bruise.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did he die right after he went back to Japan?

MRS. MASUMOTO: Yes, not long after his return.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many children did your mother bring with her when she came?

MR. MASUMOTO: She didn't bring any children. She came by herself. I remember that I had an older sister who died in Japan when she was 16 years old. After her death, I developed a dislike to live in Japan and began to think about going to America.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How old were you then?

MR. MASUMOTO: About 14 years old. I came to Sacramento when I was 14, and my father insisted that I go to school, so I went to school.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of school did you attend?

MR. MASUMOTO: I went to a grammar school. It was a big school. After a while, I skipped several grades for I was 14 years old, and I was doing well. I tell children who are learning Japanese to study hard. If I had studied English hard enough, I may not have been farming like this. Before I left Japan, I was in a special class and studied very hard. After I came to America, I worked on learning the English language.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long did you attend school?

MR. MASUMOTO: I attended school for about two years. By then I was 16 years old and began to think about calling my mother from Japan and renting a farm with my father instead of wasting time in school. My father agreed with me, finally, so we called my mother from Japan.

Bad luck continued to happen. My mother became very ill (in the ship or right before the trip). I told myself not to be discouraged by all those mishaps that occurred in our family. I had an impossible ambitious dream, it was to go to a foreign country and work hard with my family and make money to purchase our own farm. Now, I realize that the things I had in my mind weren't wrong, that my dream came true.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you come to Reedley right after that?

MR. MASUMOTO: No, I stayed in Sacramento for about two years and then went to Sanger.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you purchase a farm in Sacramento?

MR. MASUMOTO: No. I was working on a farm. After my father died and my mother went back to Japan, I came to Sanger and eventually got married. I had been in Sanger for quite a long time before our marriage. I think I came when I was 21 years old. And there I joined the YMA (Young Mens' Association) in Sanger.

There was a YMCA consisting of Buddhists in North Sanger and another YMA in Sanger town. Not knowing which I should join, I went to the YMA in North Sanger with my friend. We felt a little absurd for we were young men of 21 or 22 years of age at that time, and there were only old people there. So then we went to the YMA in town where Mr. Tsutomu Nakagawa was in charge and decided to join that one.

Even a person like me who was not skillful was entrusted little by little in many things. Because of the increasing number of Japanese children, it was decided in 1924 to found a Japanese school. I was asked to teach when the school was created and taught Japanese for about 10 years.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many children attended Japanese school?

MR. MASUMOTO: There were about 120 in Sanger.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So many? How many families were there?

MR. MASUMOTO: I don't remember, but most families had five or six children.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where did you live in Sanger?

MR. MASUMOTO: I was working at a citrus farm which was on a hill by Round Mountain. I was a foreman there.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Who was the boss of that farm?

MR. MASUMOTO: Mr. Yoshiki was. He had a store in town, too. It was called Home Groceries and was located on "L" and Seventh Street by the Japanese Hall.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When was the Japanese Hall built in Sanger?

MR. MASUMOTO: The Sanger Hall had been owned by a family before the Sanger Japanese Community bought it. And then, since the number of Japanese students were increasing, we extended the back of the house into classrooms. Everybody helped to build it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is it in use now?

MR. MASUMOTO: It is still there. When I was there the other day, I longed for the days of the past. In those days I got acquainted with your father-in-law Mr. Hasegawa. His wife, who was a very kind and thoughtful person, passed away recently. They taught also.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you marry Mrs. Masumoto?

MRS. MASUMOTO: We were married in 1932 in Sanger.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How did you meet?

MRS. MASUMOTO: We met through the arrangement of a matchmaker.
My friend introduced him to me, and my parents told me to accept the arrangement. In those days women couldn't say no to their parents.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where were you living at that time?

MRS. MASUMOTO: I was living in Reedley. I was born there.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What is your maiden name?

MRS. MASUMOTO: It is Matoi.

MR. MASUMOTO: The strange thing was that we found out after we were married that her aunt and my family are somehow related.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long did you live in Sanger after that?

MRS. MASUMOTO: We lived in Sanger until World War II began, then we were evacuated to Poston. After camp closed, my parents invited us to come to Reedley to live. We accepted a contract to work at a farm in Reedley for two years. When the contract expired, we were in a position to purchase the farm where we worked. We were fortunate to have a nice boss who wanted to sell the farm to us, only. Since then we've been here.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of work were you doing in Sanger besides being a teacher at the Japanese School?

MR. MASUMOTO: I was working at an orange packinghouse. I was a foreman there and was doing many different kinds of work at Round Mountain. Since I was teaching, I was asked to be involved in many community activities and to serve as secretary for the Doshikai (Friendship Club). The position had been occupied by Mr. Mori who was recently honored on his 100th birthday in Sanger. I took over Mr. Mori's job as secretary. When he handed me the secretary's minutes, I found they were copies of my newspaper columns.

I was working as a reporter for the Shinsekai and Nichibei newspapers. At the time of the evacuation, I undertook a very difficult task. The president of the Doshikai, at that time, came to my house when it was dark. There was a curfew enforced so he didn't want to be detected entering my home. So he turned off his car lights when he was quite a distance away from the house. He delivered the news about the evacuation which was received from Fresno. And that evening, I hand stenciled a mimeograph master in Japanese and duplicated it. The members of the committee delivered the copies to the mailboxes of each Japanese household late that night to let everyone know about the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

In those days, very few Japanese people owned a telephone, so we couldn't communicate by telephone. We were aware that we weren't allowed to use the mailbox, but there was no other way to deliver the news. So we walked to each Japanese house in the evening, about 11:00 or 12 o'clock.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was anyone arrested?

MR. MASUMOTO: No. We were lucky that no one was interned. My wife felt uneasy over the fact that I was working for the Doshikai and also for the Japanese School, so she burned all the books and records.

MRS. MASUMOTO: In those days, there was a 20-40 Kai which was sending relief money to Japan in times of disaster, and I burnt its records, too, for fear of discrimination. I was afraid of being separated from our four children. But, in Sanger, no one was interned. In Reedley, there was more prejudice with war hysteria; however, Caucasians there were nice to the Japanese after we came back from camp. Our boss was waiting for us with a house in readiness to welcome us.

MR. MASUMOTO: I think I've had very close association with the Japanese Language School. I remained a trustee member. When we were evacuated to Poston, I began by teaching the Japanese language to my children, and then found myself teaching nearly 30 children. I had to decline requests to teach more children for I didn't think I could handle more than 30.

MRS. MASUMOTO: He borrowed the materials for the Japanese Language classes from the library in Poston where Mrs. Kazato was working. We couldn't bring any Japanese books into the camp, so we enjoyed the books he borrowed from the library that he used as textbooks for his classes.

MR. MASUMOTO: It's been about 55 or 56 years since I began to teach the Japanese language.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What level of schooling did you finish in Japan?

MRS. MASUMOTO: In Japan, I finished the eighth grade, and then went to a special class.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did many people who came to America know Japanese well enough to teach?

MR. MASUMOTO: Well -

MRS. HASEGAWA: There were not many Japanese language teachers, were there?

MRS. MASUMOTO: No, it wasn't like that. There were Japanese schools everywhere.

MR. MASUMOTO: There were other teachers.

MRS. MASUMOTO: Most people hadn't intended to stay in America permanently, they planned to take their children back to Japan with a Japanese education. Therefore, there were Japanese schools everywhere, even in small towns. They thought that their children needed Japanese language skills as well as English language skills when they took them back to Japan. That is the reason many of the Nisei handle the Japanese language well.

MR. MASUMOTO: In those days, I was a member of the Doshikai and also was taking part in the 20-40 Kai and helping Yobiyose seinen. These were young men who were called from Japan by their family members who had settled in America. Mr. Araki in Fresno is a Yobiyose seinen, also.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Isn't he a kibeï?

MRS. MASUMOTO: No, he is not. Kibeï is a person who was born in America and went to Japan and came back America.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What is the 20-40 Kai?

MR. MASUMOTO: In Japan, men who were between 20 and 40 years of age were drafted into the Army. So it is a term that was used for Japanese soldiers.

MRS. MASUMOTO: We collected little sums of money from everyone and sent the money to Japan every month to help the soldiers. But most people who took part in the 20-40 Kai were interned. FBI agents followed and took them away without questioning. I know a person who came to Sanger from the coast. He brought his wife and grandchildren with him for his son had been taken to jail on the coast. He was working with us. FBI agents followed him and found him, and all he was allowed to do was to change his working clothes while the agents watched. He wanted to finish matters that were needed to be taken care of, but the agents said no to him. Besides living in a new town with the man of the house being taken away, it was very difficult for the remaining family members. But Sanger was a good place because any person who took part in 20-40 Kai was not interned.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When Pearl Harbor was attacked, where were you, and how did you feel?

MRS. MASUMOTO: We were working in Sanger. The attitude of the Caucasians toward Japanese changed right away, for the worse.

MR. MASUMOTO: But in Sanger there were sympathetic feelings toward Japanese among Caucasians. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, it was a great shock to me as a Japanese. I had a feeling that we wouldn't be able to stay alive. But in Sanger, the Japanese people were not treated poorly and the Caucasians, especially those living near Centerville, were very good to us. Of course, we didn't do anything wrong to them. The attack of Pearl Harbor was a great shock regardless of whether one country was right or wrong. After a while, I began to feel that we would be safe, even if we remained in America.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you go to camp?

MR. MASUMOTO: It was in 1942.

MRS. MASUMOTO: I think it was about June.

MRS. HASEGAWA: From where did you go to leave for the Relocation Center?

MR. AND MRS. MASUMOTO: From Sanger.

MRS. HASEGAWA: From Sanger Railroad Station?

MRS. MASUMOTO: Yes. A Caucasian neighbor took us there. The Caucasian patted our shoulder and said to us that he would believe that Japan would win the war, and we would come back.

MR. MASUMOTO: At that time, people who were not in town, such as Domotos of Centerville, Hasegawas, Kanagawas from the foothills, Kakiuchis and Gotos all went with us.

MRS. MASUMOTO: People in town went to Gila, too.

MR. MASUMOTO: Highway 180 was the dividing line. My wife went to the WRA office to ask whether or not we could go to Reedley where her parents resided and live with them, for they wanted us to go to the same camp.

MRS. MASUMOTO: No, my parents thought they wouldn't have to go to the camp because Reedley was in a White Zone. We began to consider moving to Reedley with our four children. I went to the WRA Office in Reedley to get clarification about the White Zone. They revealed some confidential information about the White Zone to me. They said, "Reedley was in the White Zone now, but Reedley would be included eventually for evacuation and people there would be sent to Poston, too." They suggested that we leave from Sanger for camp. We were evacuated in June or July, and people from Reedley were brought in August to Camp III, Poston.

MR. MASUMOTO: When I think about it now, I think that young people today are fortunate and lucky. In those days when we came from Japan, we only earned \$2.50 a day whether it was summer or winter. Looking back, we wondered how we could have worked in the dark of winter. We had to work by feel and not by sight. Everyone was engaged in hard physical work.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of work were you doing?

MR. MASUMOTO: Everyone was doing the same thing. In winter we worked in the fruit orchards. There weren't too many jobs available in those days. Most Japanese men were living in the boardinghouses in town.

Since I was going to school, I didn't worry too much, and I was taking life rather easy. But most people were experiencing very difficult times. There were no families with less than five or six children. They had to work very hard. I know a person, he is still living in Sanger, who told us that he and his family had come from Guadalupe for a vacation. He pitched a canvas tent by the river, and they cooked their meals in this enclosure. They had daughters. We thought he was a whimsical person, but later we learned the truth. His business had ended in failure, and he couldn't pay his bills, so they decided to sneak away from Guadalupe. He just couldn't feed his family any longer. A local Japanese farmer felt sympathy for him and let him and his family live in one of his houses after he had the Caucasian who was living there move out. Some people were not getting enough to eat.

Nowadays, there is not a single person who can't afford to eat. In those days if you became ill, and you were admitted to a county hospital, you felt fortunate. Not everyone was able to be hospitalized.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What were you doing for your social life?

MR. MASUMOTO: There was nothing.

MRS. MASUMOTO: That was the reason that there were many groups. People got together and enjoyed each others' company. There were programs on special occasions. Those kinds of activities were the only enjoyment we experienced.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of programs did you have?

MRS. MASUMOTO: Some people sang songs and some wrote dramas and others acted in them.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Weren't there Japanese movies that you could attend?

MRS. MASUMOTO: There were movies. There were more people who took the movies to various places than there are now.

MR. MASUMOTO: On Tenchosetsu (Emperor's birthday) it was very lively.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do?

MR. MASUMOTO: We got together and some people sang songs and some presented dramas after they spent a long time rehearsing.

MRS. MASUMOTO: Some people from Yamaguchi Ken in Reedley came to assist in the programs. The Yamaguchi Kenjin in Reedley, and the one in Sanger were very close so that when we came to Reedley we were comfortable with each other.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do in camp?

MR. MASUMOTO: I was a teacher at the Japanese School.

MRS. MASUMOTO: Yes, and he was a block manager, too.

MR. MASUMOTO: At first everyone in camp agreed to send one person from each family to the mess hall to work. I had to go to cook, since my wife was busy with our young children. I had never cooked, but after a while I was promoted to chef. I was asked to be the Block Manager and after that I was asked to work in the fire department. I served as captain even though I didn't know anything about fighting fires. Just before we left the camp, somebody set the theatre on fire. Most people wanted to let it burn rather than letting it be ruined by Caucasians after we left camp. But a person by the name of Mr. Plumb from the Fire Protection Department started to fight the fire by himself. He called my name and said, "Come, Fred, and help me!" It was very dangerous for him to fight the fire by himself, so I ran to help him even though I was having trouble with my leg. I tell my wife that I did a good job then, but I would be able to do that now, because I'm an old man.

MRS. MASUMOTO: Because of that experience when our neighbor had a fire, my husband volunteered to help to put the fire out. It was over 30 years ago. This place has changed and people who were living there have passed away. Their barn was destroyed by the fire.

MR. MASUMOTO: When we returned from camp in 1946, Mr. Sasaki, who was president of the Kyogikai (Reedley Japanese Community) asked me to address envelopes for mailing notices to the members. Since then I have been serving as the correspondence

secretary for the Kyogikai. Now I'm the president as well as the correspondence secretary.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long have you been serving as president?

MR. MASUMOTO: I've been serving as president since 1968.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many members are there in the Kyogikai in Reedley at the present time as compared to the number in those days?

MR. MASUMOTO: There are many more now. The Kyogikai exists only as a name that owns the property where the Nikkeijinkai activities are conducted. The Kyogikai was incorporated under the name of Nikkeijinkai two years ago. The name was changed because it was very highly taxed as a profit organization. It was founded in 1916.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Why did the Kyogikai own such large amounts of money?

MRS. MASUMOTO: They did not have money. But when the authorities examined the books, the Kyogikai happened to have money that had been collected as maintenance expenses to pay the property tax and liability insurance. People donated \$5 to \$10 a person to pay those expenses. So the Kyogikai was forced to pay taxes as well as the penalty. After that incident Mr. James Kubota, the late deceased lawyer, advised them to found a new club, so the Nikkeijinkai was founded.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How much property does the Kyogikai own?

MR. MASUMOTO: There is a lot there--the hall and the Gakuen building.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Doesn't that building belong to the Buddhist Temple?

MRS. MASUMOTO: No, it doesn't. It's been used by the Buddhists and Christians. It is for the people of the Reedley community. Only the side of the building where the Buddhist Temple is located belongs to the Buddhist Temple.

MR. MASUMOTO: The organization called the Bukkyo Shitokai, Buddhist Believers Assembly, existed for a while after we came back from camp. It was not a Buddhist Temple. After a while they decided to build a temple. There was a serious conflict between the Buddhists and Christians when the Buddhists decided to build their temple next to the hall that the Christians were also using. I am probably the only person who has remained as a cabinet member since we came back from camp. So, I am probably the only one who knows the circumstances about this matter.

Mr. Kitahara helped to settle the problem between the two churches.

MRS. MASUMOTO: The Christians purchased their own church. In the past they couldn't afford to own their own church, and the Buddhists rolled away their shrine when the Christians needed to use the hall.

MR. MASUMOTO: The Kyogikai used to own all of the property. They later sold about half of it to the Buddhist Temple. The Japanese school was located where the Sunday School is at the present time. The building

of the Buddhist Temple was completed in 1952. Reverend Kimura, who resides in Fresno now, served as the first reverend. The Japanese school began at the same time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you teach at the Japanese school then?

MRS. MASUMOTO: No, not in Reedley. He was asked, but he was too busy with the farm.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of produce do you grow on this farm?

MR. MASUMOTO: We grow plums and persimmons, astringent persimmons. We have some sweet ones, too.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you sell these persimmons?

MRS. MASUMOTO: Yes, we do.

MR. MASUMOTO: The persimmons are good sellers.

MRS. HASEGAWA: To what market do you sell your produce?

MR. MASUMOTO: Los Angeles. But I am retired completely this year. I decided not to do anything from this year on.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of plums do you raise?

MR. MASUMOTO: We have many kinds; Red Santa Rosa, Kelsey and Frontier. We have a few of each.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you have grapes, too, other than those you mentioned?

MRS. MASUMOTO: Yes. We have Thompsons here.

MR. MASUMOTO: We only have six acres of grapes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many acres do you have all together?

MR. MASUMOTO: When we first purchased the farm, we had 50 acres. Mr. Ito wanted to purchase the land beyond the ditch, so we sold it to him, for it was troublesome. So, we have the rest, about 35 acres.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You have been living on this farm since 1946?

MR. MASUMOTO: Yes, we have. First the grapes, black kind, were planted, and then we pulled them up and then we planted trees.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many children do you have?

MRS. MASUMOTO: We have five children, three girls and two boys.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What are their names?

MRS. MASUMOTO: The oldest one is Kenneth Sadao, he is a dentist. He has one boy and one girl and lives in Fresno. The next one is a girl, she lives in Chicago. She's Kathleen Takasaki, and she works for a company. The next child is Irene Hirata. She lives in Los Angeles and

is a nurse who gives injections, her specialty, at Kaiser Hospital.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And the fourth one?

MRS. MASUMOTO: She is Evelyn Asato, also a nurse, who works in a doctor's office and lives in Monterey Park in Los Angeles.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many grandchildren do you have?

MRS. MASUMOTO: We have eight grandchildren.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did all of your children marry Japanese?

MRS. MASUMOTO: No. The oldest son is married to a Caucasian. The youngest son, who was been working Guarantee Savings Loan for quite a long time, is a bachelor yet. His name is Sam, and he lives in Fresno.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Who will take over this farm?

MRS. MASUMOTO: The oldest son will. Sixteen years ago he suggested that we retire, rent out the farm, and live in Fresno and have a good time. He purchased the packing tables to make our work easier. He also purchased a tractor with soft seats because he said that would make it easy for Daddy's body. Because the work became easier and more comfortable with new equipment, Dad has kept working. But this year we hired workers and we just supervised them. Then after my husband had the flu my son turned the farm operation over to someone else completely.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many Japanese families are there in Reedley?

MRS. MASUMOTO: There were only 70 families before the war, but now the number of Japanese families has increased to more or less 260. People who were called pioneers have passed away, one after another.

MR. MASUMOTO: I thought that the 50th Anniversary of the Kiogikai was an appropriate time to write a book to record the history of the Japanese people, so I had a pamphlet published.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is there anything about the history of the Japanese community before World War II that you would like to discuss?

MR. MASUMOTO: There is a great difference between the Japanese community in those days and in recent years. Most of the Japanese in those days thought only of going back to Japan after making some money. No one thinks that way any more. The change in this purpose alone is a great difference. The old Japanese people drink coffee and eat bread nowadays feeling that they have been Americanized, but in those days if you drank too much coffee, you were called an American dog or spy, and people were told to be circumspect toward you.

I think that Sacramento has changed very much from the time that I came from Japan. I haven't gone back there in spite of the fact that I do not live very far from there. We have an account with the Sumitomo Bank here. The reason for that is that there was the Nippon Bank in Sacramento when I lived there. This bank invested in rice fields in Colusa, and when it rained very hard, people were afraid the bank would go bankrupt. Because of this fear, a committee was formed, and they went to the Yokohama Specie Bank in San Francisco, which was the predecessor

of the present Tokyo Bank, to appeal for help.

The manager Mr. Kojima, who had a great interest in art, did not take them seriously, although they tried to persuade him of their seriousness. Instead, he recommended that they enjoy the drawings he had there, and, subsequently, they grew angry. So, finally, they went to the Sumitomo Bank who offered to help the committee.

I can't forget how happy I was to learn that the small amount of savings that I had saved when I was a young man of 17 or 18 was protected by the Sumitomo Bank. I laugh about this very often with my wife, but I am grateful to the Sumitomo Bank. When I see Mr. Kawai, the present manager of the Fresno Sumitomo Bank, I tell him about that incident which happened a long time ago.

The Nisei are very fortunate compared to the Japanese of the olden days. Most Japanese lived in poor houses. If you compared their houses that seemed grand in those days to those the Japanese live in now, those houses would be considered dilapidated shacks. They were made of boards that were nailed together.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When you were sending your children to school, weren't you both working very hard on the farm?

MR. MASUMOTO: When our oldest son went to Reedley College and wanted to go to USC to become a dentist, we told him that we would support him as much as we could, and we both worked very hard.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you still observe some traditional Japanese customs?

MRS. MASUMOTO: No, we don't observe many, although one is the good custom of offering Kodan at funerals. We give a small amount of money even to people we don't know very well, hoping it will help the family during the time of bereavement. Reedley Japanese people are especially charitable. Everyone in the community is notified about a death and is requested to attend the funeral if it's possible, whether or not he knows the person.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you have any other memories to share with us?

MRS. MASUMOTO: No, not really.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I understand, as I listen to your memories, that you did not experience any prejudice. Is that right?

MR. AND MRS. MASUMOTO: Yes, that's right, we didn't.

MRS. MASUMOTO: Caucasians treated us kindly. They placed themselves in our position and told us not to worry. There are no Caucasians around here whom we especially feel we would consider as bad. The wife of our oldest son is a Caucasian, but she tries to understand my broken English and treats me well.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Perhaps you didn't experience prejudice because of your benevolent attitude toward others.

MRS. MASUMOTO: That may be so.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Thank you very much for sharing your many interesting experiences.

MR. AND MRS. MASUMOTO: You are welcome. We thank you, too.