

ALICE HIRATA

MRS. HASEGAWA: Today is August 20, 1980. I, Yoshino Hasegawa, am privileged of interviewing Mrs. Alice Hirata at the Fresno County Library at 2420 Mariposa Street, Fresno, California. Mrs. Hirata's address is 344 South Oak Drive, Reedley, California, 93654.

Before we get into the interview proper, I would like to ask Mrs. Hirata what her full name is, her date and place of birth, and her place of longest residence.

MRS. HIRATA: My full name is Alice Hatsuye Hirata. I was born in Lindsay, California on August 22, 1914. My longest residence is 40 years in Parlier.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you have any recollections of where your parents came from, and if they have related any experiences to you about their first entry into the United States? How they settled here.

MRS. HIRATA: My parents are from Kumamoto Prefecture, Hotta Gunn, and Kuwachimura Shirahama. Father came to America in 1904 and my mother in 1913. Father owned an orange grove in Lindsay with another partner, and that was dissolved. Later he moved to Del Rey, Kingsburg, and settled in Parlier.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did they settle in the Parlier area?

MRS. HIRATA: We were living in the Kingsburg-Parlier area, then bought a ranch in Parlier in June of 1937.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Your mother came in 1913. Was she a picture-bride?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. They were mostly picture brides in those days. It was arranged through their parents in Japan. They came from the same prefecture.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What are your recollections of your childhood and your growing-up years?

MRS. HIRATA: My recollection as a child's growing up years were to study and to respect teachers. The whole Japanese outlook at that time was to get ahead and not to be afraid of physical labor. They were persistent, and they progressed so fast that our Caucasian friends started to snub us. So, at that time, all the activities were centered within the Japanese community. This was in Del Rey.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What was Del Rey like during those days?

MRS. HIRATA: My parents owned the ice cream shop, and it seemed as though it was a busy town. Then there was a train station nearby. The trains were coming back and forth, and we thought that was something different, because we came from Lindsay where everything was so quiet on the farm.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you come to Del Rey? How old were you?

MRS. HIRATA: In 1920. I was about five.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then did you live in Del Rey a long time?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. We lived in Del Rey, moved into the country, and then I graduated from Rosedale School. I attended Sanger High for a year and a half then moved to Kinsburg.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have the ice cream store all that time?

MRS. HIRATA: No. One half of the West Side burned down, so we were forced to move into the country. That was a frightening experience!

MRS. HASEGAWA: Half the town burned down! It's never really been rebuilt then, has it?

MRS. HIRATA: Not to the capacity as I remember it. It's a small town.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were there lots of Japanese there then?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. There were quite a few Japanese. Most of the Japanese congregated within the nucleus of the community because they didn't separate too far. Even if they did, they tried to get close to the Japanese community.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you remember what kind of ice cream they had and how ice cream was delivered out there?

MRS. HIRATA: As I recall, they delivered with an open truck with a heavy canvas cover on top. It's not as sanitary as it is today, and the only flavors we had were chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry; the strawberry was artificially flavored. Then my folks served Nabisco with a dish of ice cream-- those were the cookies that were mostly the mainstay and popular at that time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did the customers come in to eat the ice cream or did they take it home?

MRS. HIRATA: Some took it home. Some sat and ate and visited at the little tables, cute wrought iron tables, you see those once in a while today. I think people had more time to visit in those days.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

MRS. HIRATA: I have two brothers and one sister. There's four children in the family.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where are they now, and what are they doing?

MRS. HIRATA: My next brother Harris Tanaka is in Parlier farming 80 acres, and he has two children. My other brother's name is Teddy, and he's working for Alameda County Assessor's Office. My sister Chizuko is married to a carnation grower and has three boys. They live in San Pablo. She is married to Harry Mayeda.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you remember how Japanese were treated in those days?

MRS. HIRATA: Once in a while we used to feel they didn't even want to look at us. It was something different, I couldn't even explain it. As if they felt we were inferior, and that we didn't know anything. Whatever they felt, it showed in their bodily actions.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was there anything at grammar school that might have bothered you? The teachers were all right?

MRS. HIRATA: The teachers were fair to everyone, because there were some nationalities within the group. That part wasn't bad at all.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was Japanese the language spoken at home?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. We spoke Japanese, and we attended Japanese school also.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long did you go to Japanese school?

MRS. HIRATA: At the present day, I guess we'd call it junior high. We went on Saturdays, taking our sack lunch. We were dismissed about 2 o'clock. The teachers were coming from Fresno Buddhist Church.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have a Japanese community hall there where you met?

MRS. HIRATA: We met at a Japanese hall that was within the city, and then the teachers didn't know how to start, so they finally divided us into different groups because of age differences.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How do you mean, different groups?

MRS. HIRATA: They thought the older ones should go into certain groups, and they'd give us a different type of a lesson. As the time passed, the teacher had the students divided into three classes or groups.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What were your experiences during your high school years?

MRS. HIRATA: During our high school years, we were more to ourselves, and we would congregate on the lawn for lunch. We didn't participate much in school activities. That was in Kingsburg High School where I was attending at that time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You didn't have too much social activity or intermingling with the Caucasians?

MRS. HIRATA: No, not at that time. It's different than the present day.

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

MRS. HIRATA: Oh, that's very interesting! My very first work experience after high school was to help on the farm, picking fruit for meager wages.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Your father was on a ranch then?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes, he was working for a Caucasian man, and during the summer there wasn't much that he could do, so he said he'd hire us so we went to work on his farm.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you go with your friends to work, or did you go

by yourself?

MRS. HIRATA: No, with my family. As soon as school closed, the first thing we picked were Wickson plums. Then all through the fruit season picking and cutting peaches and also picking grapes toward the end, in 110 degrees. We would turn around, the grapes were already coloring.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then, after you worked in the field, what did you do?

MRS. HIRATA: Then I attended sewing school for about six months in Parlier, a little sewing school conducted by a school teacher, and she, herself, had learned this trade from the Frank Wiggins School of Trade in Los Angeles. The reason I didn't attend trade school was that the folks didn't permit it at that time. No girl was supposed to leave home at that era. So we learned sewing from her. Being a Japanese school teacher, it was very difficult to comprehend, especially in drafting patterns. The time was unwisely spent, because we were unable to pursue that line.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you find it very difficult to transfer from English to Japanese all the time?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes, I find it difficult. One gets tongue-tied and twisted. I notice when I meet my older friends and they speak Japanese, I have to pause a second.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I was just wondering. You had more English than Japanese because you had gone through high school, and I just wondered how the transition was for you.

MRS. HIRATA: I think we were much more bolder then. When we were growing children, we weren't afraid like we are now. Now we would stop and think, "Are we putting the words in the right sentence?" You communicated differently, but transition went smoothly.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were you married before you went to camp?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do after you went to sewing school? Did you start to sew for other people?

MRS. HIRATA: No. That's just for our benefit. Most of the mothers had the feeling that we should know how to sew.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have any social activities among the Japanese? How did you meet your husband? Were there places where the young people could meet?

MRS. HIRATA: We met through both parents.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was it an arranged marriage?

MRS. HIRATA: Both of the parents knew each other through the community, so that was the way how we met.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Would you call that a baishaku-kekkon?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. At that time I would say no. However, ours were in name only.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That was the cultural or traditional way?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes, traditional at that time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were there any social activities for you?

MRS. HIRATA: Not at all.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Not at all? That doesn't sound like a very happy childhood?

MRS. HIRATA: At that time our living was a bit different than today. I doubt if anyone could ever understand unless one goes through that situation. My husband was a farmer, and he had his mother and father, in-laws, so I had to serve them at the same time. My in-laws lived with us.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were there other in-laws in the family besides the parents?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. We had a brother and a sister. We had to work outside our ranch in order to send the brother through college, university, and the pharmacy school. And then my sister-in-law went to college. It's completely different than today, living with the folks. My duty was to serve, obey, clean house, cook, and get ready for the next day. That went on and on each day from 3:00 to 11:30 at night.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You mean 3:00 in the morning?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. Because I had to prepare meals and have everything ready.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Didn't you have any help? Didn't your mother-in-law or your sister-in-law help?

MRS. HIRATA: No! That's the way it was. We were there to serve. Yome (bride) was supposed to serve!

MRS. HASEGAWA: How, long did that continue?

MRS. HIRATA: Even in the relocation center, as long as my in-laws were there!

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did your father-in-law go to Japan? Was it before the war?

MRS. HIRATA: No, it was after the war. He went in 1953 and returned, and then in 1958 decided again to return to Japan. He died September 2, 1970.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did your mother-in-law go to camp, too, with you?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: All of you went to camp together?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. We lived in one barracks also.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So you had your own farm.

MRS. HIRATA: Yes, in Parlier.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was your mother-in-law ill?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. She had high blood pressure (hypertension). In those days the bride was supposed to serve. They weren't satisfied either way, whether you go out of the way and do it, or you don't, it still remains the same. So I recommend no two normal women should live under the same roof, because it's very difficult.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What were you doing when you heard about Pearl Harbor, and what was your evacuation and your camp experience?

MRS. HIRATA: At that time, my mother-in-law happened to be hospitalized in Reedley with a slight stroke. I stayed through the night. In the morning I decided to go grocery shopping. Unknown to me, I entered the store, I felt uneasiness immediately because everywhere the shoppers were staring and the clerks were cool, and it was a most eerie feeling. I can't explain it. On my way home I happened to turn on my car radio and lo and behold I was shocked after hearing what was going on. That's how I found out!

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then what happened with your mother-in-law in the hospital?

MRS. HIRATA: We had a family doctor, Dr. Charles Traver, who said we could take her home in four days. I think he understood what the sentiments were and for her to go home and take care. In the meantime, she got well slowly; then I started packing for camp.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do with all your household goods?

MRS. HIRATA: Most of the household goods were put in one room, and we padlocked the door.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were those things still there, intact, when you came home?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. They tried to break in. We had neighbors living in the house. When we came back everything wasn't taken care of. Even the house and the shrubs were going wild. We had to trim everything, so it was just like starting all over again. But we were fortunate enough to return to Parlier.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What was your camp experience?

MRS. HIRATA: Since it was a presidential order, we accepted it and started packing with a feeling of uncertainty. We were living in the so-called "White Zone" so the coastal people started moving into our area. But, somehow, we knew we had to evacuate. As for our camp experience, in Gila Center, we were in an enclosure, and our freedom was deprived. Therefore, I felt that we were in a prison. We thought we had

absolute rights as a citizen to remain in our homes, but our rights were infringed upon, so it brought back memories of anguish, bitterness, and anger.

MRS. HASEGAWA: From 1942 to 1945, you left camp to work in Idaho as a seasonal worker. Would you please tell us about that experience?

MRS. HIRATA: We wanted freedom to live as a normal citizen, so we left Gila Center in May 1943 to a sugar beet farm in Malta, Montana. Much to our surprise, it was back-breaking work! We returned to the center after fulfilling our contract. George worked for the Internal Security as a warden, and in June 1942 he left for a metal refinery in Hammond, Indiana and worked in different areas within the refinery. His intention was to call us out of the center, but due to unhealthy circumstances, he decided against it. So, for five more months, I had to serve the in-laws by washing, ironing, cleaning the barracks and no extra time for myself.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When you went out the first time, did your in-laws go with you?

MRS. HIRATA: No. Just us and Byron, our son. Byron had to attend Malta Elementary School a little while. It was very difficult for him because camp-life schooling was a little different from outside school. Byron had to study hard in order to be with his class.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How old was he?

MRS. HIRATA: He must have been six years old.

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

MRS. HIRATA: In the sugar beets? Oh, it was back-breaking work. We had to dig, pull, cut, and load. We thought it would be an easy job, but it wasn't. Anything to get away from camp, I thought!

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did your husband mean by "unhealthy conditions" in the refinery?

MRS. HIRATA: The metal refinery in Hammond, Indiana, uses something powdery which was in the air. I remembered him coming back with all yellow shirts, especially around his neck. The air was sooty, smog-like, and dingy. I guess they'd breathe it and their pores would open with perspiration. At that time it must have been a presidential order, that they make that certain thing. Health-wise, I was very worried and concerned, but it turned out all right.

His brother-in-law had written telling him the West Coast was going to be opened, so he returned to the center again. That's the way we came back to California.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How did you get back, by train?

MRS. HIRATA: By car. My husband purchased a car in Phoenix, Arizona. Then we returned to California February 1, 1945.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then all three of you came back to Parlier?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When you got back, how were you received by the neighbors and community?

MRS. HIRATA: We found our neighbors and friends very antagonistic and unfriendly for quite a while. In fact, one neighbor, a lady we thought of as a friend, even slammed the door in my face when I went over to visit and told her that we were back.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is she a friend?

MRS. HIRATA: No, she died after that of cancer.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were there many incidents like that?

MRS. HIRATA: I recall another incident like that. People who were supposed to be the family's best friend did the same thing, didn't pay any attention to us. In fact, their son had died in the service, and why she put the blame on us I don't know. I believe narrow-mindedness had overpowered her thinking. So we were very cautious after that.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Will you discuss your farm work and activities since you returned to Parlier? What kind of crops you raise?

MRS. HIRATA: We worked very hard from early morning to late dusk, and those were the extra lean years. So we both worked outside our farm in order to send our brother to University of California to pharmacy college and a sister to Reedley College. We raised grapes and peaches and except for harvesting, we did our own work.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I can't believe that you had to do all that!

MRS. HIRATA: Oh, yes, we did! And it was all manual labor.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do with your grapes? Did they go to packinghouses or to the wineries?

MRS. HIRATA: The grapes were made into raisins, and the peaches were sent to the packinghouse.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long did your mother-in-law live after you came back from camp?

MRS. HIRATA: I believe about one year. She finally expired of cerebral hemorrhage March 31, 1946.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Would you care to tell us about Byron and Kathy?

MRS. HIRATA: Our son Byron is currently employed at United States Department of Agriculture in Salinas and Santa Clara Valley and is the director for the two areas. He's married and has two children, and he plans to send them to the university in whatever field they choose. His aspiration, some day he hopes to return to Central California.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you think he would want to come back to your farm?

MRS. HIRATA: No. We sold our farm in 1978. As for Kathy, she was killed

in an automobile accident on December 28, 1965. She was one girl who never gave us one bit of worry and made friends very easily. And she took a very active part in everything she did. She was a church organist and just loved to help people.

MRS. HASEGAWA: She was a blessing all right. Would you like to discuss your involvement with the various organizations in your community?

MRS. HIRATA: First of all, I joined the Japanese Methodist Church in Fresno in 1948. I taught Sunday School and took an active part in Women's Society of Christian Service for many years. Then in 1956 we transferred to Parlier United Methodist Church because Kathy wanted to be among her friends. There she was an organist and leading the young people's group there. She took an active part in county-wide young people's Christian youth group. And she was Chaplain for three years. I was on the Altar and Flower Committee, and Communion Steward for 17 years for Parlier United Methodist Church and was very active in United Methodist Women and served in many capacities there. And also taught Sunday school for six years. George served on the Pastoral Relations and Nominating Committee for many years and as Benevolence Treasurer for four years.

MRS. HASEGAWA: The Study and Civic Club, what is that?

MRS. HIRATA: That's more of a civic organization. We have an antique section. Religion, that's some of what we study.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is that for the city of Parlier?

MRS. HIRATA: No, in the city of Reedley.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh, I see. What kind of activities do you have?

MRS. HIRATA: We meet once a month and have a social hour after the meeting. It's a regular business meeting with different programs each month. We're affiliated with the Women's Federation of America.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What might be one of their projects for the improvement of Reedley?

MRS. HIRATA: The club ordered and placed the organization emblem at the entrance to Reedley on three sites on an organization display board. A small group attends all the legislative meetings within the city. The members are getting older now, so the younger members are getting busy to help with the activities. The officers all attend meetings in Fresno and different areas because it is a member of the California Federation of Women's Clubs.

MRS. HASEGAWA: The objective of the club is to improve Reedley, is that it?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes, Reedley. And to stimulate and broaden our mental horizon, to promote sociability, and to increase the attractiveness of the city.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Would you like to tell us about your husband's trusteeship for the Parlier Unified School District?

MRS. HIRATA: George had served two terms as trustee, from 1956 to 1964 for the Parlier Unified School District, and served for eight years. The Board succeeded in building a new elementary school on three sites: Central, Tuolumne, and Mendocino, and also a new high school. His other associations are as non-active member of the Farm Bureau, Sun-Maid Growers, and Parlier Japanese-American Citizens League.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you retire, and what are your plans now that you are retired?

MRS. HIRATA: We retired in 1975, and my plans are to find simple pleasures and to lead a disciplined life, to read classics from Homer to modern times, to enjoy music, and to continue volunteering for the Hospital Auxiliary and Blood Bank.

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

MRS. HIRATA: They're running for public office much more than before. They're taking a more active part in Lions and Rotary and school board--community affairs, some are even in newscasting. I would like to say that the Japanese-Americans are in every field of profession and occupation.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What do you do to maintain your Japanese ethnic identity?

MRS. HIRATA: Nothing special to maintain ethnic identity. But we do have some ethnic attachments, make goodies for New Year's, and our daily life has an interesting international flavor.

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

MRS. HIRATA: I believe the ethnic group will surely and slowly lose their identity because of the mixed marriages, which is so prevalent today.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What do you think of mixed marriages?

MRS. HIRATA: I think it's fine as long as they get along. At this present day there's an epidemic of divorces which I think isn't good for our society. For those who have children, it works hardships, especially for girls who are attached to their father, it takes them a long time to overcome this separation. And if the father should marry again, this child will have to go through another trauma to welcome the new mother, for father. I believe they go through very sad experiences.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You were telling me about your hobby of music. Tell us about that--how you became involved with it.

MRS. HIRATA: I just love music, that's my background. When my daughter started to take piano lessons, I thought I'd keep up with her. Whenever she's through, I can start practice. It's one of those things that when you are an adult you don't have that much time to practice because there's other things that take its place. I plugged along and played by ear. My daughter kept on playing and practicing and had a most wonderful instructor Mrs. Helen Hasegawa. Kathy was very proficient in everything

she did in her music field. She was the envy of many of the youth group because she had talent for speaking and talent for music, any type of music. She enjoyed playing. She was just a very active person. I would still prefer, if time permits, to take up piano lessons.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You do play, though.

MRS. HIRATA: Very little, because of my lessons in between. I finally lost my self-taught method.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh, that's too bad.

MRS. HIRATA: I guess I should continue, but since she passed away, I just haven't touched it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is there something else you would like to add to this interview? Something you might leave for the future?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes. In 1979 I was awarded an etched crystal cake dish and Honorary Life Membership from the Reedley Hospital Auxiliary, and in June 1980 I was honored with a 5,000- Hour Pin.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What is a 5,000-Hour Pin?

MRS. HIRATA: A service pin. Since I've been volunteering for 15 years, that was my recorded time. I didn't volunteer for any awards, but through forced circumstances, I got into volunteering, and I've been a member ever since and have enjoyed being a volunteer. It is most rewarding.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you join the Auxiliary after Kathy died?

MRS. HIRATA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How often do you go to the hospital?

MRS. HIRATA: Since I am an AM Service Chairman for the past 15 years (that's the morning service), currently I am training and supervising other volunteers who spend at least two hours a week. I go one day a week, sometimes more.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What kind of work did you do as a volunteer at the hospital?

MRS. HIRATA: The Sierra Kings Hospital Auxiliary was founded with the purpose of promoting and advancing the welfare of the hospital and assisting patients and hospital personnel and developing good public relations, carrying on fund-raising activities to help purchase equipment for the Reedley Hospital, and to provide scholarships for students working to pursue health-care careers. So, once a year, we have a fundraising project.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How do you do that?

MRS. HIRATA: Some years we have luncheons, and other years we have had Christmas boutiques and all the members make different items; such as, wreaths and table decorations. And we all get together and sell all handmade items. We usually rent a building like the Community Service

Center or a church social building, whatever we think gives warmth to the people who come to support us. So it's an ongoing thing from year to year, but we really enjoy it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: It sounds like a very worthwhile project.

MRS. HIRATA: Yes, it is. It's a worthwhile project, indeed.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where is the new hospital?

MRS. HIRATA: It's located on the north side of town on West Cypress Avenue. A nice little community hospital. Would you like to hear about the Blood Bank?

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh, yes, I would, very much.

MRS. HIRATA: Millions of Americans give blood, and that's a gift of life, because they know sometimes life depends on that gift. This blood comes from one source--people! And countless individuals are alive today because someone took time, overcame their fear, and realized the importance of giving blood. So our Blood Bank, the Sierra Kings Hospital District Blood Bank, has been set up by securing individual and group memberships and it is affiliated with the Central California Blood Bank of Fresno, a nonprofit corporation serving Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Madera, and Merced Counties. Any organized group within the hospital district may join, but each member/group is asked to have representation on the Board of Directors of the Sierra-Kings Hospital Blood Bank. Their part is to recruit donors for the scheduled five mobile blood drawings each year. I am a chairman of the Board of Directors and supervise all physical aspects of the Blood Bank drawing. I've been a chairman for 12 years.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Someone told me the other day that the more blood you give, the body will manufacture fresher blood. Is that true?

MRS. HIRATA: That is true. I have been told that. Better circulation could be a plus factor in preventing heart attack. The main thing is to get the community or the public to come out to donate blood and to encourage others to become voluntary blood donors. Three experts have been quoted as saying that people with "thick blood," over a 48-percent concentration of blood cells, can reduce their chances of suffering a stroke or heart attack by donating blood regularly. So we now have five mobile drawings; we used to have four.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Just in the city of Reedley?

MRS. HIRATA: Within Reedley we are having five now. Luckily our community is behind us 100 percent, so it really works out very nicely because they try, and that's all we ask for. And have different people turn out each time. Sometimes we have 156 donors listed to our credit, and sometimes we have 200. We're proud of our giving to the community at large and to the Central California Blood Bank.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, that's wonderful! I think, as you said, there's a fear of giving blood. The public has to be educated.

MRS. HIRATA: Yes, they have to overcome those fears, I think. That's part of it, too. Unless a person really needs the blood, I doubt if

they'll ever wake up. It seems that way. If someone in their family is ill, and needs blood, somehow they decide that it isn't so bad after all. Until then, they fear it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: There are some people that cannot give blood for some reason?

MRS. HIRATA: Oh, yes. They have to answer the questionnaires. There's quite a few questions they must answer honestly.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's just voluntary information, and you can't prove it, can you?

MRS. HIRATA: No. But, on the whole, they are very honest with themselves. Besides, after we draw the blood in the community, that blood goes back to the Fresno Blood Bank and goes through different blood testing processes, so it's very safe.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is there anything else you would like to add to this interview, any more activities?

MRS. HIRATA: I was one of the charter members of Parlier JACL which was founded on August 25, 1935. I have also been involved with 4-H. Our club was organized in 1948 or '49, and I was a volunteer leader for two years at Ross School District in Parlier. We met every Saturday afternoon teaching the girls to sew and to cook, and the values of good nutrition.

Fifteen girls were enrolled, and we also participated in the County 4-H Fair. I think that's about all. I think we covered it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, that's very nice. Thank you so much.

MRS. HIRATA: You're welcome!