

HISASHI HAYAKAWA

MR. BOETTCHER: Today is September 7, 1980. I, Keith Boettcher, am privileged to be in the home of Mr. Hisashi Hayakawa of Hanford. The address is 12125 Tenth Avenue, Hanford, California, 93230.

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

MR. HAYAKAWA: My full name is Hisashi Hayakawa, my place of birth is Hanford, and the date was July 24, 1913. The place I've lived longest is 12125 Tenth Avenue, Hanford.

MR. BOETTCHER: I would like to hear about your parents' experience. Could you tell me how your father came to America, and what his early experience was here?

MR. HAYAKAWA: My father Rokusaburo was a railroad man in Japan, in Kanagawa Prefecture. He came to America in 1900 to be a businessman. He was born in 1872. He first came to San Francisco. Mr. Uchida came over first as a "scout" and established a place to live, then four men came together from Japan. My father took over a contract picking cucumbers at Eden. At Eden my father buried one of the first Japanese workers to die in America--that was Dad's first experience with a funeral.

Finally he came south from the Bay Area, and he had a contract to raise sugar beets for so much a ton in Salinas, right after Spreckels built that plant in Salinas. As soon as he got started there, the San Francisco earthquake split the ground there wide open, and it was on the east hank of the Salinas River, so in that incline the water gushed out and washed everything down the Salinas River. Wiped him out and everybody else. He said he went through there on the railroad three years later, and they had to fence up by those cracks because there was still water oozing out, three years after the San Francisco earthquake.

He had to eat, so he joined the railroad for a while, because he had no place to go.

MR. BOETTCHER: On the sugar beet deal, did he rent the land, or was it crop-sharing, or was he a foreman for somebody, or what?

MR. HAYAKAWA: So much a ton. They gave him the land to work, and he raised the beets for so much a ton. They were looking for somebody to be the straw boss. My dad had to pay all the labor and everything, and he'd get so much a ton when he'd get done. If you make out, it's all right, but after you got it planted and then are washed out, you can't do anything.

MR. BOETTCHER: So he took the risk, and he lost.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, he lost. He said he lost his pants, so he joined the railroad gang and went back and forth a little while just to figure out what to do next.

MR. BOETTCHER: Where did he work on the railroad?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Along the coast, between Santa Barbara and Salinas. He

talked about Pismo and Oceano and along there-- all the clams they could get for nothing, just pick them up in those days. That's what they ate over there, they cooked them. The railroad crew had plenty of clams to eat in those days.

So then the grape season in Fresno started, so he joined a few boys, and they ganged up, and they came to Fresno. They landed at the old Gordon ranch in Lemoore to pick grapes. It was owned by Douglas and Thorn. It was called the Gordon Ranch, but it was owned by Douglas and Thorn. This is the funny part of it--there were two cousins owning the land, one was Douglas and one was Thorn, and Thorn's first name was Douglas Thorn. It's confusing! They also had the Kings County Nursery, and about 1910 they asked him to come to the Hanford area and work for them as a nurseryman because our family knows grafting and budding. His father did it, and he did, and I'm the third generation--it's been in the family. So he took that up and stayed there until about 1920.

Actually, the ranch where he first came was in Lemoore, then he moved to Hanford to the Kings County Nursery on Lacy Boulevard and stayed at the tank house until 1912.

MR. BOETTCHER: There were other Japanese in this area that worked for a nursery, was that the same one?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Takedas? They had their own nursery. Then he bought a shack on the ranch of this California State Senator, J.C. Irwin, a ranch rented by Douglas and Thorn. My folks bought the shack with the understanding they could move it off whenever they wanted. So, the Senator had some land there he wanted to get rid of, but they didn't like it because it was too close to the railroad, and they had hobos in those days. So they bought something further away. I was still a baby. When I was horn, that's when this Escheat Law went in. So they suggested my folks put it in my name, with my parents as guardians, and that's how we got started.

MR. BOETTCHER: Were you the first Nisei in your family?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, but I've got two older brothers which were born in Japan.

MR. BOETTCHER: When was your father married?

MR. HAYAKAWA: He was married long before he came to the United States. He was married when he was working for the railroad in Japan.

MR. BOETTCHER: When did he bring his family over?

MR. HAYAKAWA: In 1912, they brought the two boys over. I was horn in 1913. He worked here for twelve years first until he had some place to settle--to have the prospect of making a living. You can't make enough money in a railroad gang to have a family. In Japan he was doing pretty good because he was working all through the railroads, in the roundhouse and all around.

MR. BOETTCHER: Where was that first land he purchased?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Right over on Eleventh Avenue, south side of Hanford.

MR. BOETTCHER: What did he raise there?

MR. HAYAKAWA: They raised nursery trees to begin with, on contract for Douglas and Thorn. Then went into strawberries, but he never quit contracting the trees; fruit trees and grapevines.

MR. BOETTCHER: He would sell to the orchards being developed in this area?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes. Douglas Thorn did the selling. They'd put in an order for so many certain variety trees before Dad would start budding. Peaches, apricots, plums, and different varieties of plums.

MR. BOETTCHER: What about your earliest memories? Was he in the nursery business when you were born?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes. I imagine before I was able to walk, Mother would put me in the baby buggy, and she would wax the trees while my dad was grafting. But I think I'm going to be the last because I haven't got any children, so that's the end of that grafting and budding business. I've got nobody to leave it to. It takes a long time for a person to learn that kind of thing. You can't just learn it overnight.

MR. BOETTCHER: So you had a long apprenticeship. What were your earliest memories of the town here?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I used to like to see the old fireworks. They used to have the Fourth of July display during the day. They shot paper flags and objects like that up in the air, not lights like today. They did it at the Courthouse Park in Hanford. And the auto races around town. They used to put bales of hay on the corners of the streets, and the automobiles would race on city streets. That would be around 1915 or 1916, around the time of the Panama Pacific Exposition of 1915. My brother went to that, and I've got pictures of it. I was too young to go.

MR. BOETTCHER: So the cars they raced were the really old ones.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Oh yes, but they were racers. Cut-down and hopped-up Model-T's. Overhead valves and things like that.

MR. BOETTCHER: Where did you start school?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I started what they call the old South School, which is Lincoln School. They moved it because the freeway took it out, and they moved it and call it Lincoln School now. They one thing that bugged me there--I was the only Japanese in that particular class, first grade. The majority were Mexicans. They couldn't speak English either.

MR. BOETTCHER: Could you speak English?

MR. HAYAKAWA: No, I was poor, and I've talked to some of the Italian boys that still have businesses, and some of them spoke pretty good English, and some of them didn't. But they could speak Latin, so they had the advantage over me and the other boys. Besides, they had morning and after school class to teach Spanish-English, which I as the minority of one, didn't have the opportunity for!

MR. BOETTCHER: This is an interesting point, because so many of the Nisei came from Japanese-speaking families at home, so there you were starting school.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Well, I knew a little bit of English. My brother already went to grammar school. You're going to interview the Omatas?

MR. BOETTCHER: Yes.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Well, the oldest girl and my brother, I've got a picture of them at that Central School, where Civic Auditorium stands now.

MR. BOETTCHER: Is this Tsuneko?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, Tsuneko, and my brother is in there, and I forgot who else, but I've got a picture of them.

MR. BOETTCHER: So you managed to learn English at that school? Do you remember any teachers' names?

MR. HAYAKAWA: As far as I know, my first teacher was Mrs. Hickey, then I was transferred the same year to Mrs. Vanderburg.

MR. BOETTCHER: And you were the only Japanese in your class?

MR. HAYAKAWA: At that time, later there were more.

MR. BOETTCHER: You mentioned the Omatas. There were just a few Japanese children in the area at the time, right?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes.

MR. BOETTCHER: Could you tell me a little about your brothers?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Eiji, he's around here someplace, he was born in Japan in 1900. And there was another brother about three or four years older than Eiji.

MR. BOETTCHER: So, at this time there were three boys in the Hayakawa family?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, and one girl. The baby is a girl. She, Chiyo, was born in 1916. My oldest brother never did go to school in Hanford; he went to Fresno High and to Fresno State College. He stayed in Fresno and went there. He went by the name Joe. He attended the schools in Fresno about 1919 or 1920.

MR. BOETTCHER: What did he study there, what did he do with his education?

MR. HAYAKAWA: He never did use his education! He was working with a newspaper in Fresno. There was a weekly Japanese newspaper in Fresno. He was with them.

MR. BOETTCHER: Might it have been Chukka Times?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Chukka Times or--I forgot, anyway they changed the

name two or three different times. He worked with them collecting advertising and things like that. Then he went to Chicago, and then he got picked up by the FBI during the wartime and got into Staten Island because he contracted a Japanese pavilion to serve tea in 1933, I believe during the World's Fair in Chicago. He said, "I took charge of that. I was the sole manager of the tea garden there." So he got picked up by that as a Japanese agent.

MR. BOETTCHER: Had the government of Japan sponsored this tea garden?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, and he managed the whole thing, and he was a Japanese citizen at that time. Since then he got his American citizenship. Now he's retired in Japan. So he was in Chicago in 1942, then he settled in New York after the war, before he went back to Japan.

MR. BOETTCHER: And Eiji?

MR. HAYAKAWA: He farmed with me until he had the stroke. You saw him outside. He can't talk real plain because his left side was paralyzed.

MR. BOETTCHER: What about your sister?

MR. HAYAKAWA: She's married and in Japan. She's a secretary for people who manufacture bowls, wooden products for world trade. You can see these decorative plaques and fish on the walls of the room here. Anyway, she's a secretary for them. She travels back and forth over here, but a lot of times she doesn't stop in. She'll go to New York before she'll stop here. She's in a million-dollar business that I don't know nothing about. They're living in a different world than I am, as far as money is concerned.

MR. BOETTCHER: I'd like to finish up with your family, and then we'll go on here. How did she meet her husband? Did she marry a Japanese national? She's a Nisei.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, she's a Nisei. After graduating from school, she went to Japan with my folks in 1935. My mother and dad wanted to take a trip, so in 1935 they went over there. She had already graduated from high school in 1934, and she went over with them. She wanted to study over there. So she and my mother were over there, and then the last letter was my mother had gotten sick, and before I knew it, it was Pearl Harbor.

MR. BOETTCHER: So your parents and she were over there during the war time.

I've found that there is a difference in the acculturation of people, depending on whether they are Buddhist or Christian. Did you or your family belong to a church?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I was raised as a Christian. My parents joined the Japanese Presbyterian Church here in Hanford after they came here. Now they have consolidated with the First Presbyterian Church. At one time, it was called the Japanese Presbyterian Church.

MR. BOETTCHER: So you might have been "Americanized" sooner than some other Japanese?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Well, for one thing I had quite an advantage especially when they had a test or something they would always have little things out of the Bible that a person who was a Buddhist wouldn't know, and I knew. I even have a little trouble with my wife about certain things because I know more Bible than she does, so -

MR. BOETTCHER: You've done a little study or went to Sunday School?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I trained to be a Sunday School, but I've never taught one class, so anyway I know a little bit more than people who just went to church.

MR. BOETTCHER: Was this church a Japanese church?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, where it stood is where the Sunset Garage stands now, that lot.

MR. BOETTCHER: So in the teens and 20's there was this Japanese Presbyterian Church.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Oh, it was way before that. I can remember ever since I was a baby they always had the church. Upstairs was a dormitory. A lot of people stayed there overnight. The hotel would be full, and they'd rent a room and stay there. I've forgotten what they charged.

MR. BOETTCHER: Who would those people be?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Naomi Tagawa, her mother had the charge of it before they started the laundry.

MR. BOETTCHER: Who would stay there?

MR. HAYAKAWA: People who came out from the country. A lot of them wanted to come out Saturday and stay over and go back Sunday. It would be full.

MR. BOETTCHER: So they came into town on Saturday and did their shopping, stay overnight and go to church on Sunday.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Well, some did and some didn't, I would say, that would be more like it to tell you the truth! (Laughter.) I think Naomi's mother would feed them if they wanted to be fed. She was in charge. They lived there before they started the laundry.

MR. BOETTCHER: This dormitory, would it be at the church?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Right upstairs, and downstairs was the church.

MR. BOETTCHER: This would be all Japanese people?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes.

MR. BOETTCHER: Was there a Japanese Kenjinkai here in town?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, there was. I'm Kanagawa-ken, so I didn't, we didn't belong to any of them. I think there were about three families in town here from Kanagawa-ken. Kumamoto had it, Kumamoto had a big one in Hanford. They had what they call the Japanese Association, too, at that

time. The last Japanese Association secretary was Mr. Hirazawa, and I think the last president was Mr. Sam Habara. I think it faded away after that, a few years before the war. It got so there was no necessity for a Japanese Association.

MR. BOETTCHER: What was the purpose of the Japanese Association? What did it do?

MR. HAYAKAWA: They signed, for example, my brother was a Japanese citizen, so in order for him to be free of the Japanese draft the Japanese Association had to send a paper into the Japanese government to get a deferment. They took care of all those things.

MR. BOETTCHER: So they would communicate with the government of Japan. Did they register births?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes. They'd go up to the courthouse with people who couldn't speak English and register for them, and things like that.

MR. BOETTCHER: Was there a Japanese language school, did you attend?

MR. HAYAKAWA: From about 1919, when I was six years old. I went after school. When I changed schools and went to a country school it was only Saturdays.

MR. BOETTCHER: Was this run by the church or the Japanese Association?

MR. HAYAKAWA: No. At first, in the beginning they had it in the church, but they finally drifted away, and they built their own. Tsuneko is here, she can tell you more about it. I told my dad, "You're wasting your money sending me there. It's not helping me anyway." But he thought it was. But when I got old enough, I just quit, because why waste money on it? But my sister took it up, and she was, at the last, the assistant teacher there. While she was going to high school, she taught all the little kids Japanese.

MR. BOETTCHER: Why do you think it was so important for Nisei to learn Japanese?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Well, they wanted us to be able to correspond. I can correspond, but my grammar isn't there. Because I picked up too much. I went to school, but that didn't help me any because that was learning how to read and write and I didn't like that.

MR. BOETTCHER: So you can speak.

MR. HAYAKAWA: I can speak, but they turned me down for an interpreter. Among the common people I'm all right, but my grammar won't pass. I'm talking California Japanese!

MR. BOETTCHER: You're not talking Tokyo University Japanese!

MR. HAYAKAWA: For example, after my nephew in Japan graduated high school, he came to America, and in four years he graduated Hanford High. He joined the Navy, and five years later he went back to Japan.

MR. BOETTCHER: He joined the United States Navy?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, he's a United States citizen, but his grandmother was caught in Japan during the wartime. And when he went back to Japan, all his friends told him, "Gee, your Japanese is poor."

MR. BOETTCHER: I've heard that a lot of Issei planned to make some money and return to Japan and hoped their children would be able to speak Japanese when the family moved back to Japan. Did your family ever talk about ,going to Japan?

MR. HAYAKAWA: No. He liked to take a trip, but he never did talk about moving back. At that, he had property, too. We still have it in the family. My sister has it, we had to transfer it to her. MacArthur was going to take it away, because my dad was living here in the United States could own land there and let somebody else farm it, so we had to change it to my sister's name, had to transfer it to her.

MR. BOETTCHER: Let's go into her experience. Your mother and your sister were caught over there?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, they were there during the war, and my cousin, and we could not correspond with them. We couldn't get any letters through, so we lost track of them.

MR. BOETTCHER: Your sister was an American citizen. When did they go back to Japan?

MR. HAYAKAWA: She went back the last time right after Treasure Island, so it was 1939 the last time she went back, and my mother went in 1938.

MR. BOETTCHER: They were staying over there a few years. Was your sister married or going to school?

MR. HAYAKAWA: My sister was studying over there, and my mother was visiting relatives. And she wanted to stay there a while anyway because she still had a sister living.

MR. BOETTCHER: So what were their experiences during World War II?

MR. HAYAKAWA: My sister said they had a Japanese agent over there following her around during the war time. But they said it was a neighbor, and she knew about it, and he slacked off on the job because he told her! (Laughter.)

MR. BOETTCHER: That's strange, because if she had been in America, she might have had an American FBI agent following her around. And then you, of course, lost track of them.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, the last letter we got, my mother had had a stroke. That was just before the war.

MR. BOETTCHER: You mentioned that in 1935 the family bought this place here?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Well , I bought this place, because I was over 21. And that's where I had a lot of trouble with those interpreters in the center, because they didn't know that

at age 21 you're on your own. I raised heck with them. I had to say, "Write down what I tell you, not what you think!" They didn't know the technical legal terms! I was a little older, and they had those young kids. If the Issei ever had any trouble, it's not the government's fault; it's one of those girls or boys interpreting. They should be blamed; the ones who were writing out in English what they were told in Japanese. These kids had just graduated high school in that time.

MR. BOETTCHER: What did you farm here in the 1930's? What was here?

MR. HAYAKAWA: It was bare land when I got it.

MR. BOETTCHER: Did you have any problems of discrimination when you purchased it?

MR. HAYAKAWA: No. There were papers I had to fill out, but nothing else. But the thing that really worried me so much, was that I bought another 80 acres about three miles south of here. I think that was in October, first part of October of 1941. Then Pearl Harbor happened on December 7th, and I had to move out, and I wondered, "How in the heck am I going to make my payments?"

MR. BOETTCHER: So tell me a little about that. You were farming here on your own from 1935 on. What did you plant then?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I had fruit trees, apricot orchards, and vineyards. Since it was bare land, at the beginning I put in grain and cotton. I didn't put any orchard on this 40 acres until after I built my house here.

MR. BOETTCHER: So you were able to make a living from this land; 100 acres here, and 80 over there.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, and then Pearl Harbor came, and oh, that was really -

MR. BOETTCHER: Where were you when you first heard about Pearl Harbor?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I was on a committee spotting airplanes. I was head of the telephone communications. Way before Pearl Harbor I was a volunteer electrician for the telephone system. It was like a civil defense committee. We were supposed to call in when you saw a plane and tell which way it was traveling and how high. That was for any airplane. It was a month or two before Pearl Harbor when I was elected to that committee. So then, on December 7th, a neighbor came and said, "Our telephone's down and there's war! We're being attacked!" At that time the telephone line, it was a privately-owned "farmer's line," and the post had rotted, and it was down and tangled. I wasn't taking care of that line at that time, but that particular line that happened to go to the spotting station was all tangled up and nobody had fixed it. And here they say there's a war started, and we can't get through. So I'm the telephone man, and they come running out there to tell me that. That was about one o'clock in the afternoon. That's when I first heard.

MR. BOETTCHER: Did they treat you any differently then, or did that come later?

MR. HAYAKAWA: They knew me. There was no trouble. I took care of all the communications for them, keeping up the line and moving it. They were used to family phones. So later we jumped wires and put a telephone in the trailer house. I took my own telephone over there and put it in. We finally got everything going. Finally they let us all off after the situation got bad. Not the people around there, but others. I don't know why; some of the people on the committee were Italian citizens.

MR. BOETTCHER: But the Japanese-Americans were off the civil defense committees. When were you removed from the civil defense committee?

MR. HAYAKAWA: About February, I would say.

MR. BOETTCHER: When did you first realize that things were going to get worse for Japanese-Americans?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Well, before that, I was warned by a banker that the whole suspicion was growing. I was warned by him in February. He told me all about the evacuation and everything, before it happened. So I had heard about it early. I didn't know whether it was going to pan out or not, but I knew about it. I was warned.

MR. BOETTCHER: What about removing the radios from the people and things like that?

MR. HAYAKAWA: They said we had to turn in all the contraband. This was bare land, and we had trees here, so we had dynamite to blow out the stumps, so I took that in. The sheriff came out a few days later. Some people went to Tulare Lake and had turned a boat over, and they got drowned. They couldn't find the bodies. And they didn't want to store dynamite in the sheriff's office, they wanted to get rid of it, to pay us cash for it. So they took it out to the lake and used the excuse of shaking the lake up so the bodies would surface. They said that was the closest dynamite they could find. So they erased it from the list of things confiscated. The sheriff's office gave me the cash over the counter. They used it, and that was the end of it.

MR. BOETTCHER: What about the other things--gradually you heard about evacuation. How did it effect you?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Well, I was getting a little leery and prepared for it. I figured that when that time came, I'd get by some way.

MR. BOETTCHER: You were still a single man at that time, right? So how did you get the word? Was there a notice in the paper that told you to report?

MR. HAYAKAWA: No, I was in town everyday working on preparing to lease out this property I had, doing this transaction. I had to do something with this property. They had an office there in the auditorium, and I was in and out of there. That was the Army's office. I had some judgment for some hay, which I couldn't collect, so they helped me out on that. They helped me get all my cash together.

MR. BOETTCHER: I heard that right away it was illegal to do business with citizens of Japan, so an Issei farmer might have trouble collecting payment for some of his crops he sold.

MR. HAYAKAWA: I was a citizen so I never had that problem, but I had to carry a birth certificate with me to prove it.

MR. BOETTCHER: But you did have time to arrange for your land to be leased?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, they gave us enough time. Then I got everything straight--what I wanted to sell, I sold. I was having trouble trying to collect payment for some hay I'd sold. I went through small claims court, and they kept on fooling around with the thing, and they didn't pay me.

MR. BOETTCHER: I wonder if they thought they could delay until you were gone?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I think so. So naturally some government man went over there, and it shook him up, and I got my money. I got that straight.

MR. BOETTCHER: Were there any local people that acted negatively towards you?

MR. HAYAKAWA: No. They didn't bother me. But I was afraid of a neighbor because two neighbor kids died at the attack on Pearl Harbor. So after the war I was afraid they would have some bad feelings, but no. They came over and talked to me. I didn't have trouble at that time. Some people are prejudiced against one Japanese and not another. That's the funny thing. The former owner of this property, his younger brother, was prejudiced against the other Japanese people, but anytime he was by here he stopped in to talk. And the Japanese neighbor over there said, "He's prejudiced, he won't talk to me." So that's a mystery to me. Some people are that way. This was after the war. They had gotten along all right before the war.

MR. BOETTCHER: So, eventually, the evacuation did affect you. Did you go to an Assembly Center?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, I went to the Fresno Assembly Center at the Fairgrounds, and then to the Jerome Relocation Center in Arkansas. And then to Gila River in Arizona when they closed up Jerome. I went into Fresno Assembly Center in May 5, 1942, I think it was. I went to Jerome around the end of October, October 31. I was in the clean-up crew, one of the last to leave Fresno.

MR. BOETTCHER: Any comments or your reactions about the evacuation?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Nothing much, but I was busy as soon as I got there. I was a plumber. I just picked it up, because I'm a jack-of-all-trades. As soon as they got a sewage disposal plant built, they elected me foreman of that plant. A big, modern, up-to-date plant. That was the biggest plant any relocation center had in Jerome, Arkansas, and I was taking care of it.

MR. BOETTCHER: So you earned \$19 a month doing that.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, and using all the tools.

MR. BOETTCHER: You were about 30 years old and were single. So why

did you go to Gila River?

MR. HAYAKAWA: They were closing Jerome to use it as a prisoner of war camp, so they moved all the people out of there. We volunteered to move to Gila River about June 3, 1944. I stayed in Gila River about nine months. I worked in the electrical shop taking care of the refrigeration there. I didn't know too much about it, but they broke me in.

MR. BOETTCHER: Any other comments about being in camp or about the way things were run?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Well, one thing, being a maintenance man, and all that, you're a privileged character. They didn't have a curfew for a maintenance man even in the Fresno Assembly Center. Any emergency or thing that needs looking after, you can go out, and they can't stop you. You could eat in any mess hall. I was a privileged character.

MR. BOETTCHER: It wasn't such a prison atmosphere for you, but more like a job?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes. I wasn't paid much, but I could move all around and look at all the plumbing in the hospital any time I wanted, then go in the kitchen and eat! (Laughter.)

MR. BOETTCHER: What about the food there?

MR. HAYAKAWA: There wasn't such great food, but in the hospital kitchen there would be some food, and we could eat.

MR. BOETTCHER: Then what about Gila, you were there from the middle of '44?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I think in 1945 I was getting tired of that monkeying around business, so I went to look for a job where you could be out on a farm and drive a tractor and all of that. I went where they found you a job. Living quarters were the problem. I had gotten married while in Jerome, so I was worried about living quarters. So I found they had a job where they'd give you living quarters. It was driving tractor, milking cows, and all that, and so it looked all right in Colorado. And so I came back and then went back there to work. It was a place called Kersey, close to Greeley, Colorado. I stayed there until after the atomic bomb. I think it was September 12, when the boss said work is getting slack, and he knew I wasn't permanent.

MR. BOETTCHER: So in September 1945 you had the opportunity to return to the coast. Did the boss suggest you return to the coast?

MR. HAYAKAWA: No, I had told him from the beginning that sometime I was going to take off to go back home one of these days, because I owned the property already. If I come here I can always find a place to live, even if I have to live under the roof of a barn.

MR. BOETTCHER: Your home was leased out?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, it was, but I could always find a place somehow. So I wrote back and just ,before I left, my brother and my dad were already back here at the Lucerne Winery. They opened that up for labor, so they were working up there. So they told me I'd have a roof and a

place to sleep and a job there. I wasn't just buying a pig in a poke, but I knew where I was going. So we came back and went to my father-in-law's place first.

MR. BOETTCHER: So you got married in Jerome. What was your wife's maiden name?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Florence Nagata.

MR. BOETTCHER: Did you know her before Jerome? Was she from this area?

MR. HAYAKAWA: She's from Tulare, but we didn't know each other before the war.

MR. BOETTCHER: I think it's interesting that people were in relocation camps or concentration camps, and yet life goes on, and they start a marriage or start a family under those conditions. You have to be optimistic.

MR. HAYAKAWA: That's how it was, we just got married. We get kidded about it.

MR. BOETTCHER: So then you came back to Hanford and worked for the winery?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Not exactly; I was picking grapes. The boss came down and gave me other duties, and had me taking crews here and over there. He was sending me all over. He had me going around in circles. I was netting paid, but it took me away from all the grapes. "Get a team over there. Hook up the wagon." I had so much work.

MR. BOETTCHER: It sounds like he trusted you.

MR. HAYAKAWA: Naturally, because I knew English. The rest of these women couldn't speak English. I was counting the boxes that each person picked, because they knew I could read and write.

MR. BOETTCHER: So how did you get back to this place?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Some Saturdays when we didn't work, we'd come over here and see how things were. The lease was just about up and then the house got empty, the older house, so I could move in over there. The person who had the place leased wanted to terminate his lease as soon as I moved in. The lease was quarterly, and he wanted to end it that quarter, so I took him up on it, and he didn't have to pay that quarter's rent. I had no problem. But what really scared me was at the beginning when I went into the Fresno Assembly Center, the person I had it rented to goes and has a heart attack and dies. That really had me scared. He was single, so his parents took up the lease, or his mother did, and gave it to the youngest son. So they continued paying the rent and it worked out all right.

MR. BOETTCHER: So you've continued farming here. Do you have any children?

MR. HAYAKAWA: No, no children.

MR. BOETTCHER: You've mentioned you're retired, did you sell the other farmland?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes, we sold it about 1976, so we just own the land around the house here. At the time I sold, I had grapes and apricots and cotton, but the year I sold I didn't even raise a crop of cotton.

MR. BOETTCHER: What about the changes you have seen in farming and in this community over the years. You mentioned that even after the war you were using horses?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Yes. We changed over after the war, but we couldn't get tractors right away, so we used them and the horses finally died; we got tractors, and they were hanging on, and then the horses finally died.

MR. BOETTCHER: Did this area where you live used to be way out in the country?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Oh, yes. If you want to know, back in the 30's we had a deputy sheriff who took care of the night shift. And he lived a mile east of here. When he was going home in the morning, he could pull out his six-shooter and shoot at coyotes where all these houses are right now. If he saw a coyote he'd take a shot at it. We had badgers and coyotes, but a lot of those things are gone now.

Another thing that's changed, the inflation is really catching up with you. The price I sold my land for seems too cheap now. They can turn around and sell it and make a big profit.

MR. BOETTCHER: Have the crops grown changed? You mentioned you grew hay?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Hay was the oldest, then came corn and then the cotton. Now they're going into field corn for silage which is something new. They used to use sorghum corn for silage in the 30's. I know because I've studied animal husbandry.

MR. BOETTCHER: Oh, I didn't ask about your education.

MR. HAYAKAWA: I've never been to college, but I've been taking in years of night school classes.

MR. BOETTCHER: What about the change in treatment of Japanese people. You said you personally didn't really face a lot of discrimination--or problems with neighbors. Any comments on the change from the anti-Japanese times in California? Now the Japanese people are well respected and trusted?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Years ago, it was pretty bad in the Livingston area, wasn't it? I've seen the "Get rid of Japs" billboards as photos in Japanese papers, years ago. I could read that in the paper--I can't read Japanese, but that was in English.

MR. BOETTCHER: Do you maintain any special Japanese customs or traditions?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I've been keeping some of those things like making

mochi, but it got to be too much trouble to line things up to do it. So I stored my mill, my usu, on a pallet near the house here. But somebody broke a lock and stole the bamboo mat and the steamer and all that. I don't know who had the idea to steal that. But I've still got the bottom and another usu.

MR. BOETTCHER: Has your brother Eiji lived here also all these years?

MR. HAYAKAWA: He came to Hanford in 1912 and moved in here after he had his stroke. His son is involved in data processing for Universal Pictures. The amazing thing about the white man who gave him the job, that man worked for Capitol Records, and the son was working for Capitol Records and happy there. Then about six months later this man sees him on the street and says, "Hey, I need you over here at Universal Pictures." So the son saw the job offered bigger pay, and he said, "The thing's too good. I can't turn it down!" So he's doing well, and he hardly knew that white man, and he hasn't seen him since. My nephew was a lucky boy.

MR. BOETTCHER: Do you think there's something important about Japanese culture or Japanese heritage that you'd like to see the Sansei continue?

MR. HAYAKAWA: Nothing much, I don't do too much of it, except for some of the food. They've got Japanese restaurants, and they continue that, eating Japanese foods. More and more stores are selling Japanese foods. I think maybe the Sanseis don't like to cook, but they can use a can opener, so they'll continue that way. In the meantime, the white and even the black people are going into Japanese food. I've even known a colored friend who married a Japanese woman from Japan.

MR. BOETTCHER: What do you think about the Japanese marrying outside the Japanese race?

MR. HAYAKAWA: I'm not educated enough in that line to give any comments, but I still feel sorry for some of the Yonseis, like this boy I know who is from a black and Japanese marriage. He looks just like a Mexican kid. I took him for a Mexican kid. That's something that really surprised me. I can't say too much, because in my wife's family I've got lots of nieces and nephews who are from mixed marriages.

MR. BOETTCHER: Do you belong to any organizations, Japanese or not?

MR. HAYAKAWA: No. There are some that give lifetime membership, but I'm not active anymore.

MR. BOETTCHER: Well, I thank you Mr. Hayakawa for this interview about your life in Hanford.