

MICHIO AND JUNE TOSHIYUKI

MRS. HASEGAWA: Today is August 10, 1980. I, Helen Hasegawa, am privileged to be in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Michio Toshiyuki at 2772 West San Jose, Fresno, California, 93711.

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

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Michio Toshiyuki.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you have an American name?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: William.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Has it been registered as William?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: No. Reverend Fukushima used to call me Wilhelm. It might have been because we lived in a German neighborhood. Even my mother, the few English words she knew, spoke with a German accent.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where and when were you born?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Fresno, 1908, September 12. We have lived the longest in Fresno.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: My father-in-law used to tell of how Mich, who wasn't supposed to be born for another two months, upset the well-organized plans for the opening of the first drugstore by his entering this world prematurely. And you can imagine what a difficult time his mother had in caring for this tiny infant. There was no such thing as incubators or preemie care. Father-in-law often expressed gratitude and wonderment that this child grew into manhood to be able to carry on the drugstore.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What was the first home you remember?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: The first home I remember was on "F" Street, between Inyo, and Mono. Next we moved to the same street where your family used to live--"B" Street--801 I think. From there we moved to "F" Street between Ventura and--one street over--I don't know what the name of that street was. After that we moved to 414 "E" Street.

MRS. HASEGAWA: In each case did you own your home?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, my dad did. We never rented.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then after "E" Street, what happened? You moved again, I know.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, that's when war started.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: No, no, that's when the highway came through, so that was after the war. After the war, we moved to Kearney, up to then we were at 414 "E".

MR. TOSHIYUKI: That's right. The freeway came right through where we were.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And then you were at Kearney Boulevard for how long?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: About 13 years. Then we moved here.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And you've been here how long?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Eleven years.

MRS. HASEGAWA: June, would you like to tell us a little bit about yourself?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I was born in Salinas, California on August 27, 1914. And I went through all my school years and graduated high school in a small country town called Gonzales. And then we moved to Fresno to join a relative of ours who had a restaurant. My father, up to that point, had been farming, but since he had a family of only daughters, farming had become very difficult, so he was encouraged to come to Fresno.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What year was that?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: That was the year I -graduated from high school, 1932.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do from then until you married Michio?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Actually, I met Michio during that time that we were in Fresno helping our relative in that restaurant. And we were here for about a year, then my father decided to move to Los Angeles, so Dad worked and my mother worked, and I did, too. In fact, in those days, the pay scale was just one dollar a day. I cashiered in a small restaurant; it was a cute little restaurant, a Japanese-owned restaurant. And then my father decided that city life was not for him. We all knew how unhappy my father was in a big city, so we packed up and moved back to Salinas.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How long then did you live in Salinas before you married Michio?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Let's see, we got married in 1934. We had corresponded and had baishakunin, but we had already decided that we wanted to marry. Then we waited until Mich finished pharmacy school, and after he passed the board, we got married.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I was so very much impressed by your wedding! Our own church was too small, so the ceremony was held in the German Zion Congregational Church on 258 "E" Street. Such flowers! Then the reception was held in what was at the time, the West Side Garage, which was right across the street from your drugstore. The transformation of that place was a wonder to behold!

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Backdrops covered the walls, painted with ceremonial designs, and potted plants from San Francisco Floral Company really made the place look different. Mr. and Mrs. Kamenno, (he was the Fresno correspondent for the Nichi-Bei Times of San Francisco) who were one of the baishakunin couples, spent months and months planning every detail.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You carried out a Japanese wedding tradition by changing your apparel during the course of the banquet which was the

formal Kaiseki Japanese dinner. You changed from your wedding gown into a beautiful Japanese kimono -

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Did I? I don't remember, except that I do recall that Mich's mother had wanted me to wear a kimono. You see, in those days, all our wedding plans were made for us by the older folks. The guests were their friends or business associates. It's unlike these days when the young people make all their own arrangements.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Some couples write their own vows, I hear. And they have gotten away from all those lengthy congratulatory speeches. Well, going back to your wedding reception, you somehow disappeared, only to come back again, this time in a beautiful peach colored gown. I think you changed once again, into your going-away outfit.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Oh, yes--we caught the train that evening for San Francisco, and the next day took a boat for Vancouver. Oh, how seasick I was, for two days. But after that, I enjoyed the beautiful ride all up the coastline.

MRS. HASEGAWA: We digressed a bit, but I think it was interesting to see how our parents carried out some of their old customs in this new country of theirs. Since this is going to be primarily a history of the Toshiyuki family, Mich, I'd like to record the part that your parents had in developing West Fresno with his business. If you can recall some of the early days it would be very helpful. To start, could you tell us a little bit about your own early history now, and bring us up to date until the time you were married? What schools did you attend?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, I went to Lincoln Grammar School, Edison, Fresno High; then I went to USC.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So many of the young people at that time went two years to Edison then transferred to Fresno High. Is that what you did so that you could go to an accredited high school?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: In fact, there was no high school at Edison at that time.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Edison was just a junior high. There was only one high school in Fresno, anyway. You went there yourself, Helen.

MRS. HASEGAWA: During those school days, did you have any feeling of being discriminated against?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, once in a while, you got that kind of feeling--a few incidents, that's about it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Can you recall any of those incidents?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, they called you a Jap--that kind of thing.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Nothing very serious.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Nothing very serious--except calling names.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Another thing though, where you grew up there were the Germans, Russians -

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Where I grew up, I knew all the German kids, we were friends, as far as that was concerned. But every once in a while, for instance, when I went to Fresno High School and met some other Caucasian kids around this north side of the city, then you got this different kind of feeling. They looked at you a little funny, not the same way as the group I went to school with--German kids. Then they called you "Jap," and many times during the school competition, like sports, you got ahead (of a certain guy) and if they felt a little slighted, they said things like "Jap."

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: How about the relationship you people had with the Chinese young people in those days?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, Chinese people--most of us didn't get along too well. Not like the people get along today. I really don't know why, but I remember one time when we had a real bad fight with the Chinese kids and Japanese kids. We had a BB gun and all that kind of stuff. But, that's during our grammar school days, so I don't recall too well, but, I know we never did get along too well with the Chinese kids

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Was that because the Chinese town was very active?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, the Chinese were very active. I think they were here in Fresno before the Japanese, so when the Japanese got in here there was a little jealousy, I guess.

MRS. HASEGAWA: It must have given them unwanted competition. Now, during that time do you recall Japanese town as it used to be? Your father had a drugstore, and how about all along Kern and "F" Streets?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Mostly Japanese owned the stores along Kern--from "G" Street to "E"--two blocks--and a few along Tulare, though the Chinese were more dominant along that section. And "F" Street was mixed with Japanese and Chinese.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: More Japanese on "F" Street?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yeah, I guess so. Small stores, barbershops, restaurants.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What influenced you in deciding to become a pharmacist?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Because my dad had a drugstore, naturally!

MRS. HASEGAWA: Can you tell us a little bit about that drugstore? How did you help him?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Basically, sweeping the store, keep the store clean, delivering every once in a while if there was any small deliveries to do. As I grew to go to high school, my dad had about four drugstores at that time. First drugstore that he owned, beside our main store, was Tokyo Drug, which was located on Tulare Street between "G" and "F" Streets, and next we owned a drugstore on Van Ness Boulevard, Van Ness and Divisadero, there on the corner, used to call Curve Pharmacy.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh, Curve, because it curved around the corner.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Then just before I went to college, I think in '29, my dad owned a drugstore at Ninth and McKenzie; there was a small shopping area around there. They used to call that McKenzie Drug. Then I graduated, and during the Depression, lost practically all the drugstores but two; Tokyo Drugstore and the main store.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: You father had also started -

MR. TOSHIYUKI: My father had also started a manufacturing pharmacy. We had all the equipment in Tokyo Drugs, and during that time, I think Johnny Caudillo was running the store, and he used to do a lot of the manufacturing.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When you say manufacturing, just what would that be?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Oh, preparation, all kinds of things like cough syrup, liniment, stomach medicine; all that kind of stuff. And, then I remember, I used to deliver all of those to the grocery stores around the neighborhood. About that time, my dad began to widen his wholesale, so he bought himself a panel. Mr. Horibei, we used to call him Number Eight because he had number eight written on the panel, and he used to go into the country selling all the preparations. He used to be a barber.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When I saw Machan recently, she said to be sure to ask Mich about "Jim's Medicine."

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Oh, yes, we used to call it "Jim's Preparation."

MRS. HASEGAWA: Your father's name was Jim?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Headache medicine, stomach medicine, cough syrup -

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: And most widely used was "Jim's Liniment"; all the athletes used to use it. In fact, the City College and city school, mainly for their track teams.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: In fact, my dad got this mix, and he started to sell all these preparations to McKessons; it wasn't McKesson at that time, it was -

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Langley Michaels.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How interesting! I don't think anyone knows this part. Well, all this helping your dad made you want to go on in pharmacy, and what university did you attend?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: University of Southern California.

MRS.; HASEGAWA: It was unusual for Niseis to go there, too. And then you passed your State Board.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, in 1933.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Now, you mentioned your father manufacturing all these

linaments, headache powders, and so on; was he a pharmacist?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: No, he never was a pharmacist.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How did he -

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, you had to have a pharmacist in the drugstore, so you hired one, and I think that was--well, I can't remember back that far.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So, he had a regular pharmacist with him. I just wondered.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: I think my dad had the very first pharmacy in Fresno, or the second. Floyd Lynn had a drugstore on the east side of the tracks, and we were on the west side. I can't remember, it was a race between our store and Lynn's store. I don't know which was first. Anyway we were one of the pioneers on the West Side.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Absolutely. In fact, your father was a pioneer in Fresno, I would say, as well as in the drugstore business! Right now, I think we ought to go back and find out when your father and mother came, approximately.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: As close as I can remember it was 1901, your mother said. They both came together.

MRS. HASEGAWA: From where did they come?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: They came from Yamaguchi, Japan, and they ere already married. In fact, both of them were teenagers. They were really young. I think my father-in-law was 17, and Mother-in-law was very young--15 or 14. And they came to America because her older brother Mr. Nitta was already in Parlier, and they came there. Both of their parents were very much against their leaving the country, so my father-in-law said that he was determined to make good. It seems as though the Toshiyuki's had a country store in Yamaguchi, so business was always natural with my father-in-law, but because he didn't have any money when he came, he often told us about many incidents where he not jobs without being able to speak any English after coming to San Francisco. In those days, when they came to hotels, the jobs that were available were jobs of working in homes of the wealthy San Francisco residents, so every job that he got, he told them he had a wealth of experience cooking, houseboy, gardening, whatever. He told so often about how when the mistress would say, what do you need in your kitchen, he would order sacks of flour, then experiment in the kitchen. Then before he knew it, he would run through 100 pounds of flour. There were so many funny incidents that he told us about, but what impressed me was the determination they had. It sounded as though they were up in the Bay Area about two years, then they came to Fresno. And by that time, they had a little money, and he started a jewelry store.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: He started a jewelry store on Tulare between "F" and "G" Streets. It was a small jewelry store, and he was running it for about, I don't know how long, and I remember he told me they had a robbery there, and most of the jewelry was stolen, so naturally he was discouraged. Then around 1900 or so, two Nippon buildings around the corner of "F" and Kern, east side of the street and west side, were

built, so my dad leased a corner on east side, Nippon Building, and started a drugstore plus jewelry department, a small section and drug department.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I remember stopping and admiring the rings and necklaces when I was a youngster. Did you say that your father built those Nippon buildings?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: No, he didn't build them, a corporation built them. I think it was a corporation of about 10 or 20 persons who had interests in it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So, then your father was one of the first ones to occupy the corner. Did your parents ever go and live with Mr. Nitta in Parlier?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: No. They were very interesting people. They even started a little Japanese restaurant, too, didn't they?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: I can't remember that.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Your mother said that she used to cook, and Mr. and Mrs. Itanaga helped them, they had a little restaurant. I recall her mentioning two restaurants. I don't recall whether they owned them, or whether they had gone into business with other people.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Now, the Itanagas were relatives, weren't they?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, Mrs. Itanaga and Grandma Toshiyuki were first cousins. Then your father's drugstore, he was already manufacturing--was Tokyo Drug first or was it West Fresno?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: West Fresno.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: And the name, Ten-sho-do?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, it was West Fresno Drug by English name, and Japanese name was Ten-sho-do.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: And Ten-sho-do was the name of the jewelry store he had on Tulare Street, too, right? And, then I guess he used it at his own store, too, because among the Japanese it was known as Ten-sho-do.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Can you tell us what that means?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I don't know. Though there is a Ten-sho-do store in Tokyo, Japan, and that is a jewelry wholesale place, so it may have something to do with jewelry, I guess, but, anyway, my mother-in-law used that name.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did he start the Ten-sho-do in Los Angeles for your uncle?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, my dad's brother was working for him in Fresno, and somehow they didn't seem to get along together. He went to Los Angeles. My dad helped him start a drugstore over there because he wanted him to be able to support himself.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Your father and mother were very busy; what happened when you came along and your brother Lewis? Can you tell us when he was born?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Lewis is four years younger--1912. He was born in April. He was born on Tencho-Setsu, the birthday of the Emperor.

MRS. HASEGAWA: After you went to USC, Lewis followed, and so you both became pharmacists. So then you worked in your father's store, and he did not have to hire anybody anymore.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: No, I took over after that.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I recall that that West Fresno Drug, or Ten-sho-do, used to sell Japanese art goods, so it was quite a large store, not just a drug and jewelry.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: I can't remember when he started the art goods store.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: He leased the store on "F" Street where the Nikkei Center is now, and then you had the Japanese art goods on the main floor, and then your father remodeled the basement, and you had the toy department down there because when we married, that toy store was already there.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: He could have started that when I was at USC, because I don't remember seeing the art store when I was going to high school. We had the drug only store and jewelry store, so it must have been started when I was going to USC.

MRS. HASEGAWA: He employed quite a number of people, didn't he?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: During Christmas time. He had a bookkeeper Mr. Takagi. He was the main person taking care of the art department. He was doing all the buying, and I don't know whether he had anybody else working there.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Mr. Tsujimoto. He was there before I came. He did all the buying for the toy department. Then you had Karl Nagata, the pharmacist.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: He was there after Mr. Fuller retired.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Karl was one of the earliest pharmacists around here, right?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, among the Niseis.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Are there any anecdotes or incidents about your parents that you would like to tell us?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I think an interesting thing is about your father and his contribution to baseball.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: He was a lover of baseball. The Japanese Fresno community wanted a baseball team, so they started a very small baseball club called the Fresno Athletic Club--FAC--and my dad was very interested in it. So after the local team was organized, a few baseball teams in Orosi, Dinuba--a few of those small towns were also organized.



They used to play baseball every Sunday. All Japanese teams. They were good! Three or four outstanding players from Hawaii, who happened to be working in Fresno during those years, joined the FAC, such as Mr. Fred Yoshikawa, Mr. Ken Zenimura, Eddi Tsukimura, and Mr. Sakata. So, they started to play, and then our team became one of the better teams, and their fame spread, so that other players from Hawaii joined this team. I remember one year they even invited Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig to come over and play them. So they did. And most of the Issei baseball fans remember that they had Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig play. We have a group picture and movies.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I remember when I was growing up in Salinas, one of these teams the Salinas Taiyo team used to dread, was Fresno. Fresno was known to be one of the really good teams.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: After they got organized, they played teams in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Salinas, and San Jose. My dad was right on top of baseball. He sponsored our Japanese Athletic Club to Japan one year-- that's when Takizo Matsumoto was on our team, and he had contact with the baseball teams in Japan. They got together, the businessmen and community, and sponsored the team to Japan. I don't remember what year that was.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, it might come back. It would be very interesting to have that picture of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig towering over the Japanese players for the project files.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, that one is such a prize!

MRS. HASEGAWA: You said that your father took movies of some of the activities. That was quite early for anyone to have a moving picture camera. Almost unheard of, wasn't it?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Of course, it isn't a very good one, it just shoots all over, you know. Didn't your father sponsor a football team, too?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: No. During the high school days, remember, Kik Taira, Cookie Kawai, Isosuke Kawai, and myself, and Hiro Yamamisaka, and a few others, made up a football team.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was it a Congregational or Buddhist church team, or a community team?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Just community--we liked to play football.

MRS. HASEGAWA: The young people were very active athletically, weren't they? Going back to the Fresno Athletic Club, did they have their own playing field?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Oh, yes, they had their own baseball field on California Avenue near--I can't remember exactly where.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I can remember going to it. They leased the property.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: It would be out near Edison School.

MRS. HASEGAWA: There were poppy fields, it seemed so far away, slightly hilly, all open. Now, about your mother? Can you recall some things

about her?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: She was ill most of her life.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: She always worked in your father's store though. She was a very good business person, I remember, very very, sharp. And, her illness came while you were at the university.

MRS. HASEGAWA: She was ill for a long time. What caused her illness?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: She had a heart condition, so she was more or less an invalid ever since my wife and I were married. After that, I was so busy at the store, we were open from 8 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night, seven days a week with one day off in the whole year-- which was New Year's.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So, June helped in the store during that time? And she also took care of your mother?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Cooking also. She went home at noon to cook, then came back to work. We lived only six blocks away, so we were able to go home and eat and come back. Lewis helped me, too, because we were both working, so we took turns going home to eat and coming back.

MRS. HASEGAWA: In the meantime, you had children. Would you like to tell us about your children?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Barbara was our first child. What year was it? I can never remember.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: 1935.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Then we had Mosie, six years later. We were certain that this baby was going to be a boy, so had Ross picked out. We named her Ross anyway!

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Before we had Barbara, we already had Satoru, Mich's little cousin.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So, June, you were kept busy taking care of your own little family, taking care of your mother-in-law, and helping at the store. What a busy life!

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: It was. Then in those days, we had such long hours at the store.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did you adopt, so to speak, two little boys?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: We adopted Satoru when he was two years old.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: You and I took over after we were married.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Who was taking care of Satoru 'til then?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Grandma took Satoru after the accident. But Mich's cousin Aiko Toshiyuki was living here and helping my mother-in-law, because she was not very healthy, so Aiko was living at the house, then after we were married Aiko went back to Los Angeles. So, actually,

right after I came home from our honeymoon, I took care of Satoru; he was just shy of three. Then Masumi came to us--he's the older of the two. Masumi was with his father after his mother was killed in the accident, until the year of evacuation. His father died of a cerebral hemorrhage while we were in Assembly Center, so Masumi lived with a family in Parlier until he evacuated with his family to Gila, and then a year later he came to join us in camp.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do with your store when the war broke out?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: During the evacuation, naturally, we had to pack up all the items in boxes, and we had to store them in a warehouse. I first came back myself; main reason, I wanted to reopen the store.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do in camp, and which camp did you go to?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, we went to Jerome, and I was a pharmacist there, and we stayed there about two years, then we moved to Rowher, and I was a pharmacist there, too. After the West Coast was open, I came to reopen a store in Fresno, and I found a little store in the Nippon Building, so I got the lease. Then I went to the wholesale houses here I did all my business before the war to make sure I could have an account with them, and they agreed, so I had no problems. But, one of the wholesale houses more or less told me I couldn't have an account since I was Japanese. It was a notion wholesale...

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Sundries. The ironic thing was you had helped him when he was starting out before the war. That really hurt.

MRS. HASEGAWA: He probably hurt himself more by refusing.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: After that, I got started, and I went to the government warehouse to pick up my merchandise which were in the boxes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: This was a government warehouse place?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: First, Mich, remember you had stored it in a private warehouse place?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, then during the war this building wanted the space--someone wanted to get in, I guess, so, we had to make arrangements to store it with the government warehouse. So, that wasn't too much trouble. We had a family friend, a Hakujin friend, who was in insurance business, and he did all the footwork. We had no idea where it was, all I knew was that we had to re-store all our merchandise. We had had insurance with him for all of our store life, then he was a family friend of ours, anyway, so he helped us to relocate all the merchandise in the government warehouse.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You were one of the fortunate ones, then, from the standpoint of business?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Right, because we didn't have any damage, no break-ins or anything.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: We did have a few boxes missing, but what else can you do, no way of proving what was there.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So, then you opened this new little store?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Then, when you go from such a big store to a small store, there is no way of putting in this merchandise, so, I got friendly with a person who took care of the warehouse over there, and I was very fortunate that I was able to take a few loads at a time. Most of the merchandise I had was hard to get because it was stored before the war--like Oriental art goods, watches, razor blades, metal things, clocks, jewelry--all kinds of things which were still scarce, so it was no problem getting rid of it. That's how I got rid of all the merchandise I had stored.

Then in the meantime, there was a store right next to us, on the corner, opposite side of where we are now.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: The Ito Dry foods Store was there before the evacuation, but during the war it was occupied by a little grocery store--a Mexican grocery, and his lease was going to run out. The reason we couldn't get back into our original store was because it was being run by another drugstore. The International Drug had it, and all the time we were in camp, he had that place. The Nippon Building owners said that we could get it back eventually, but we had to wait until his lease ran out. So in the meantime, we moved over to the corner where the grocery store stood.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, Dr. Taira came back and started to open his office, so we were getting lots of prescription calls and were quite busy. I figured if I had to wait four or five years to go back to my original place I might miss out on a lot of business. So, I talked to Mr. Okuda, and he said, "Why don't you buy out her lease?" So, I did and they said, "Yes, we'll sell the lease," so I was able to get into the corner.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: We had two stores before we finally got back to our original store location. In the meantime, it got quite costly, didn't it, because each time -

MR. TOSHIYUKI: But, we were doing good business at that corner, it had real potential, so, I figured no problem. And, when I moved into that corner my business got better, bigger, and in only three years the lease across the street would be up. So, I asked Mr. Okuda, and he knew that I wanted to go back to the original building, so he gave me permission to have the lease, but I had to buy that lease out, too, and then after we got in there, we still had the lease on this side that wasn't exactly expired, so we had to pay the rent there plus the main space. But, we rented out that store, so that was all right.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: In the meantime, you had three in university.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: All this time, my children grew and started college. Mas was the first one; he graduated from high school and went to Fresno State first. Then after two years, he went to USC to study pharmacy. Two years later, Satoru got out of high school, and he also chose to go into pharmacy, so in two years we had two to support at University of Southern California, which wasn't easy. When Masumi graduated, and Barbara decided on USC we still had two there!

MRS. HASEGAWA: So, Father's- alma mater, and uncle's -

MRS. TOSHIYUKT1 And actually, Mich's cousin of Los Angeles also went to USC.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You had a big responsibility!

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Plus the fact that then Mich's mother gradually got bad, and during Satoru's years at USC and Barbara's is when her health really began to fail, so that was quite a big endeavor at that time, plus the fact that we had to make the move from 414 "E" to Kearney Boulevard. That really came all at one time!

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Within two years we moved one, two, three, four times.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Counting the stores, you mean?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, stores and the home. When you look back upon it sometimes, you wonder how we managed.

MRS. HASEGAWA: But you did, and now you are out here enjoying a relatively peaceful life.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: In spite of all the things we have gone through, I think it makes you much more grateful for the things that have come out of it. At this point, I think that your biggest feeling of satisfaction is that the children -

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Turned out the way we hoped them to.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, what you had hoped for them. Both of the boys are pharmacists.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And have their own little families, and your own daughter Barbara is married. Would you like to tell whom she married, and what she is doing in the line of what she studied for?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI : She is married to Harry Huey, Chinese Nisei, with whom she went through all schools, from elementary on. He is an architect and is now serving as a county supervisor. Actually, when she decided to go into occupational therapy, at that time it was such a foreign thing to us, that we really questioned whether that was a good move or not, but somehow she was determined. At first, she thought of going into pharmacy also, but we felt we should discourage her. The boys said it wasn't an easy role for a girl, because the competition for positions, at that time, was still very hard.

MRS. HASEGAWA; Did we get when she was born--what year?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: She was born in 1935. One of the reasons that occupational therapy appealed to her she says, is that she helped me take care of Grandma a lot, and she realized how important it was to really know how to care for someone who was ill. During her two years at Fresno State when she was getting her pre-academic work out of the way, I think occupational therapy had just come in, and this was working with cerebral palsy children. She was determined, and she's been with the work since, between her three children.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Who did she marry?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: She married Harry Huey. She went through school with him--from elementary school on.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Would you like to tell us about Mosie? What did she major in?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: In education.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: She taught for a while before she got married. She was teaching a year before she got Married, and then she taught three more years. She went to San Jose State--Fresno State the first two years, then San Jose.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Whom did she marry?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Dick Mayeda, and they have two girls.

MRS. HASEGAWA: So, all told, including your two adopted boys, how many grandchildren do you have?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Eleven grandchildren.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Of course, we consider Brenden our twelfth, my late sister Sumi and Tom's grandson.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did your mother die, Mich? She was an invalid for a long time, even when you moved to the Kearney home. She had a nice set up, as I recall, because you had a breezeway and then a separate apartment for themselves though that was a beautiful set up. They lived close by, but enjoyed the privacy of their own apartment, so to speak, and you had your own home for your own immediate family. Did your parents ever go to Japan?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, they did. Mother died in 1953, but long before that ---

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: They went to Japan three or four times. Of course, they went to Japan for business reasons, too, as they did a lot of buying for the store, art goods. However, one year Grandpa went back for military duty. He was called back for the Japanese-Russo War. When he and Mr. Gross -

MR. TOSHIYUKI: You know, that was a funny thing. Mr. Gross was a German-Russian during the so-called armistice, just before peace was signed, this Mr. Gross and my dad were just about to meet each other when word came that the war was ended. They shook hands over there on the battlefield, wherever that war was fought! Then they separated, and Dad went to Los Angeles, and Mr. Gross went back to Russia. We never knew that Mr. Gross, who was living in Fresno, was this same man. They met each other as Mr. Gross was a customer, and when Dad and Mr. Gross happened to talk. Then they realized they were the two who were ready to shoot each other!

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Isn't that something? And then he was a neighbor. He lived on Collins, and we were living on "E" Street. The two became the closest of friends. In fact, one of his sons worked for the Chronicle for years, and Grandpa said this son had written an article about these two aliens from different countries who had met on the battlefield, and

then met in Fresno. That was one of the pet stories that Grandpa used to tell. We'd hear it practically every New Year's.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, that certainly is one you want to keep alive! Now, I'm glad we are getting it recorded on tape for the Japanese American Project.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: That's been so vivid to you, but, of course, that's because you and the Gross boys were friends.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, we were close friends.

MRS. HASEGAWA: After your father came to America, he was called to Japan to serve in the war?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes. I don't know what their orders were in Japan, but anyway he was called back for the war, but fortunately he didn't have to be out on the battlefield too long.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did your mother do during that time?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: She went back with him, didn't she?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: I guess so, I don't remember,

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you ever go to Japan, Mich?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: In 1977.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I don't recall if I liked it or didn't like it, but I like it now. No way of comparing.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: The sad thing was that he had hoped to visit his family home, but he had no relatives there. They had left Yamaguchi during the war and relocated in Hiroshima. So, now, the only ones are his cousins that we've never kept in contact with, so we had no way of finding them. That's one thing that we regretted, that we didn't know more specifics about the family. Then in the meantime, his uncle, who survived both Dad and Mom, had died also, so we have no way of really finding out.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then your father did have other brothers besides the one in Los Angeles?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: He had another brother in Japan. And, his mother had one younger sister in Japan, but she had also died.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, we have followed your family as they have grown and from the time that your parents came over as teenagers which is very unusual!

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Another thing that's interesting is that so many of the Isseis had gone back to Japan to marry and bring their wives, or picture brides had come, but in this instance they both came, and like mother always used to say, "Kodomo ga futari, two children, together," she always used to say they were, really.

MRS. HASEGAWA: They succeeded beautifully.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: She really worked very hard to help support Grandpa and his endeavors.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And your father lived for quite a while after Mother died.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Grandma died when she was 69, and Grandpa lived to 90. After Grandma died, Grandpa went to Japan, and he stayed there until several years before he died.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did he get Social Security by then?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, he did. Even though in those days, he hadn't put into it, so he got a very nominal amount.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How did he support himself in Japan?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: He had his own funds, and there were times when Mich sent him extra, but he was able to support himself. Of course, when he went back to Japan to stay, his nephew was there, but he lived in his own apartment, but he lived near them. When he came back, he lived up in San Francisco with his nephew's wife and her son for several years.

But, then later he came home to Fresno.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you recall any prejudice your parents might have experienced during the time they were in business?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I don't recall their saying any damaging things. One of the things was, when Grandma and Grandpa opened the toy store, it was apparently one of the larger toy departments in Fresno.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: And, one of the department stores or the businesses downtown tried to keep us from doing business at night.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: One of the best-selling items was wheel goods; tricycles, scooters, bikes, and so that department was very popular and was very busy, and the fact that we remained open in the evenings was the big drawing card. So, the businesses downtown began to complain. Prejudice in that respect was keenly felt.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Whenever another group feels threatened or economically pressured, there is jealousy that comes into the picture and shows in subtle forms.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: And, when war was declared, we were intimidated, not threatened, but the word came to us that anything that was made in Japan, was going to be -

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Confiscated or destroyed.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I remember Grandpa going to the lumber yards for lumber to make wooden crates about four feet long, and the first things we took off the shelf were the things made in Japan which were beautiful art goods.

MRS. HASEGAWA: During the entire war you stayed in camp, and June you had the children to look after. Did they go to school there?



MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, they went to school in camp, and academically they kept up very well. The children used to come home with this Southern drawl, you know, from their teachers in Jerome, Arkansas, and then there again, our youngsters were very impressionable at the time-- at the age where they did that. And they also reported that these teachers first started looking down on them, to them and all the Japanese children, but before long, since our youngsters had gone through the California school system, they apparently were ahead of the ones in the South, so I remember the children coming back and saying the teachers sure didn't know much.

MRS. HASEGAWA: My, what a reflection on their educational system!

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: And I think a lot of teachers probably did a lot of homework after that!

MRS. HASEGAWA: Were these teachers white teachers?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, and then quite a few of the Niseis were teaching, too, but I don't know whether they were actually schoolteachers.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Before the war, you know, the Nisei were not accepted generally as schoolteachers, so this is where they were actually to use whatever training or education they had, because the government needed them. After the war, many Nisei became bonafide teachers and paved the way for others.

Now, your children were among the earliest of the Sanseis, weren't they? There weren't very many Sanseis at that time.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: No, Barbara was a Sansei, but Mas and Satoru were Nisei. Mosie was too small, she wasn't in school yet, because she was just a baby when we went into camp.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's an interesting little sidelight into the teaching situation in camp.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: That's right, especially in Arkansas. After the years, they began to know the Japanese, and it became a very nice situation, but at the beginning, you know, like everything else, they had their minds made up about the Japanese. This was true of the hospital administration, too. They sort of looked down upon the Japanese. Then as time went on, they gained respect.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, the war, horrible though it was, gave Niseis and Sanseis all kinds of opportunities to prove themselves to become worthy, productive citizens.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: It was a sad thing, and it was too bad it had to go this route, but it has happened.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Have you noticed changes in the treatment of the Japanese people now, as compared with prewar days? For example, in your business world?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: As far as business is concerned, in the drugstore, not too much difference.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: You mean you haven't suffered any hardship.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, very few customers did come back to us because when we left my store, that corner was occupied by another drugstore. So, when we came back, we had to start all over.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Actually, we didn't have many Caucasian customers.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: And those that were there had moved away in the meantime, so they went to the closest drugstore they could find. When we came back, West Fresno wasn't what it used to be. Mostly Latin people and black people started to live around here, so naturally the German-Russian townspeople all started moving to the north side of Fresno.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And Japanese people started to move too, so the make-up of your customers began to change.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: That changed, yes. But, as far as you serving your community there, and the relationship between you and your customer, that part remains the same.

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

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: First of all, I think that the community at large accepting us as individuals began to show possibly a few years after we got back, because I think it was Hugo who had submitted my name--I don't know what the procedure was, but--I was the first Nisei in this area to be on the Fresno County Grand Jury, for example. But, at that time, being an older Nisei, I was really intimidated. I thought, "Oh, good grief!" you know, but now in the group of the 19 jurors whose names were picked at the end, I couldn't have been with a more helpful, cooperative, friendlier group than I had ever met. One of the dearest persons, and I will never ever forget him, was Emory Ratcliff. He was the gentlest man, and the kindest person who literally took me by the hand to show me the way that we were to be, and he made a point to let me know that we are all going to learn together kind of thing, and because of it being a county grand jury, there was a young man from Coalinga, and I think to him, you know, he looked at me as an Oriental. Then as time went on, his attitude changed, and I think that he got to be one of my closest friends. But that again, was really the way Emory Ratcliff handled the whole thing, and that was really an experience that I will never forget, because it opened my eyes from being in this little comfortable shell that I was always in you're afraid to try new things, you know.

And then through our own church, through UCC, through the San Joaquin Association, there again, doors opened, and we were able to take advantage of them, and you began to realize that we are just as good as the rest of these Caucasian people; that in our own way we are an important person who can help. Nothing gets really a whole until you have this help from these individuals on the outside. And that was another eye opener to me. And then in the meantime, the Service Clubs. Wasn't it, Mich, when you people were first being considered for joining the Service Clubs, was it the Kiwanis Club, they didn't want Japanese? So you people started your West Fresno Rotary Club?

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was it the Kiwanis? We should be careful.

MRS. TOSHITUKI: I think it was the Kiwanis. Your names were turned down, so the whole group decided to start one of your own. I think the names were submitted for membership.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: That was myself and somebody else. Our names were up to decide whether they would accept us or not, and they turned us down. So, they figured they would just ban Kiwanis and join Rotary. That happened. The Chinese were in there, and we couldn't understand why we were rejected. So, the whole board decided not to join Kiwanis, and we formed the West Fresno Rotary. I was a charter member with Dr. Taira, Jin Ishikawa, and Robert Yabuno. The rest joined later.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have other nationalities in there, too?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Oh, yes, Hakujins, Italians, a few Latins, Chinese, Germans.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: There's one incident right after we came back from relocation camp. When I started to open the drugstore, another fellow named Oski Kono opened up a dental lab at the same time.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: He was from Alameda.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: As it happened, he was a great golf player, and I was a golf player, too, so in a few months' time when everything at the store was under control, I said, "Hey, let's go play golf." I picked up my clubs, and he did, too, and we went to Fresno Muni Golf Club here, and when we went to sign in to pay the fees, they wouldn't let us sign.

MRS. HASEGAWA: This was a municipal course?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes, right here at Riverside Golf Club, so we asked why we weren't accepted. Obviously, we knew it's because we're Japanese, and I guess we were the first Japanese who wanted to play there, so Oski said, "We're gonna see the mayor!" So we came home, made an appointment with the mayor and went to see him.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Who was the mayor at the time?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Mayor Leymel. He was so shocked we weren't able to play in a municipal golf course that he called the pro office here, and told them they better accept these people, so we were able to play.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Good for Mayor Leymel! I remember him as being a cadet teacher at Fresno High. I think Dr. Taira had him as a teacher. Well, that was really a face-to-face confrontation! That is good! So, even if you loved golf, you had never ventured out to play in a municipal course before that?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Oh, yeah. I'd been playing golf before camp days.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where did you play?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Same place.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I think it was this pro that was that way, because

before the war they were able to go--Dr. Kawai, and Lewis, and -

MR. TOSHIYUKI': Played practically every Sunday.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: But, this was after the war. But, then, another thing, you know, Helen, was after we came back, and when Mich opened that little store which was just about where Bob Yabuno's optometry office is now--there was one night that someone threw a rock or coke bottle through the window.

MR. TOSHIYUKI: That was the time when all the Japanese came back to California and people were shooting into Japanese homes--during that time they threw a Coca-Cola bottle into our store window and broke a few windows.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: There was a note on there.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you remember what it said?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: "Go back, Japs," or something to that effect. About that time, there was shooting into the Sakamoto home, so I imagine it was the same group.

MRS. HASEGAWA: They certainly hadn't heard of the courageous work that the 442nd had done.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: They were probably illiterate people.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When Mark, your nephew, dropped in just a while ago, he said that in the real estate development he is working on, he has noticed that the Japanese are starting stores just all over Fresno, and that's certainly a change in the economic picture. And socially, too, the Sansei are building homes in almost any area, as far as I know.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Probably has a lot to do with our heritage, too, because I'm sure that no matter where the Japanese have their home, they are really neighbors that the neighbors are proud to have, no one has done anything to be ashamed of or anything. They are readily accepted into the community. Well, for example, Mark says that when names come through at the office, and they know it's a Japanese name, they want him to go out and contact them. They know they are good people, so that's something that we should really be proud of. I think it shows that we are all responsible people.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That is a big responsibility for the future generation to continue.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I know, I keep telling our grandchildren that. What you are enjoying today is because of the integrity of your grandparents and your parents, so you have this responsibility for your future.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Going back to the golf clubs, many of the Nisei have joined country clubs, too, haven't they? And politically, we have people from our Nisei group who are in government. Is there anyone from the four-county area you can recall who might have ventured out politically?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Well, we have a few judges, don't we, and mayors at one time, and people who have gone onto the city and county staff. It

would be really interesting to get the statistics. Like Ernest Morisita, he's in the county, and your brother Hugo on the Public Defender's staff

-

MRS. HASEGAWA: Have you ever been connected closely with any Japanese organizations, for instance like religious or social, business, political?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Pharmaceutical Association, affiliate member of Rotary, UCC, Bukai, and NCCF.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: JAACL, as a supporting member.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you go to Japanese school when you were young?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Yes. It didn't help me very much.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have your children go to Japanese school?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: All four children; Mas, Barbara, Satoru, and Mosie.

It helped some. As far as that goes, Barbara spoke beautiful Japanese when Grandma and Grandpa were alive as she was with them so much, but the minute she went to school, she lost it. She still remembers some though.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What about culturally, did you keep up some of the Japanese traditions, do you still observe some? Almost everyone observes New Year's, they try to make Japanese dishes.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Well, when Barbara was born, remember in those days the Issei people observed Ohinasan, and for years, Mich kept up the custom, and then we donated it to our church. And so, he would put up the Ohinadan every year, and then, of course, when we used to have it at our home, we used to invite the different schools to come that day, so that used to be quite a thing at home and later at church. It's too bad that we aren't doing it now, but after the girls have grown up, we have no occasion to do that.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Yes, I remember the special little doll festival days we used to have at church and invite different church groups.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI; Those were our dolls that we donated to the church. I remember that because I used to help Reverend Ozaki put them up every year. And then, as far as cultural things, not because of Mich or I, but because of ojiichan and obaachan, both of the girls took classical dancing, so I think we did a lot to bring a lot of joy to the grandparents in that respect, because they performed every year.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Whatever happened to the dolls?

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: We have it--we still have it. But it's so cumbersome. They're in big boxes. Someday we should perhaps do it at the church again.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Yes, it was a very happy occasion when we observed Girls' Day at church and all our church girls, little and big, dressed up in their beautiful, colorful kimonos.

Most of the people that I interviewed, still keep up the koden custom

for funerals. Do you have any idea how it started in America, or is it a custom from Japan?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: It is a custom from Japan.

MRS. HASEGAWA; Someone said the reason it spread so rapidly here was because so many of the men in the early days didn't have families, and so friends rallied around to help defray expenses. And now, even though many have families and close friends, the Nisei still continue that custom.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: I think it's a beautiful tradition really.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I hear that the funeral parlors directors really like to serve the Japanese because they know that the bill will be paid promptly.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: And, then, I think that now, as people are getting a lot more comfortable, the koden that is received is usually given in form of donations to different churches and organizations, and I think this is another beautiful thing that has come from it. And another thing, the Sanseis are continuing it.

Tell her, Mich, how you were baptized. I think that's such a cute story.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You're a member of the Japanese Congregational Church?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Well, all kids should be baptized, so it's nothing special.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: But not the way that you were! This was at a picnic, wasn't it?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: Hugo Okonogi was baptized by the river, I think so. I'm pretty sure--at any rate, I was baptized by the river.

MRS. TOSHIYUKI: Grandma used to be so proud telling us how Mich was baptized--was Lewis baptized at the same time?

MR. TOSHIYUKI: I can't remember, I know I was.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I remember our church went once a year to the San Joaquin River at Herndon under Reverend Fukushima's ministry. The whole congregation looked forward to the church services by the river, and to the remainder of the day picnicking, running relays, splashing, wading, cutting open the watermelons that were being chilled in the river.

This has been a most interesting interview, and I learned so much about your parents that I had never heard before. They certainly contributed much to the growth of early day Fresno! Thank you both very much!