April 9, 1994

FILE

Maiji,

Here's a couple of pictures that I've had made for you and your collection. The originals are/were in an old Yasui family photo album that belongs to Yuka. Do with the photographs whatever you wish.

The first one, which shows a great many of the Hood River Nikkei community, was taken on November 11, 1928. I don't know the reason for this gathering, but I'm guessing that it might have had something to do with the dedication of the Hood River Japanese Community Hall, located on West Sherman Street (Avenue?). To me, it looks like this picture was taken at that location. However, you might ask old timers like Shig Yamaki, George & Harry Tamura, Harry Iwatsuki, and others, because they grew up with this now defunct building too.

The hall was built around 1927-28, about the time that the Reverend Isaac Inouye came upon the scene. My recollection was that the hall was never really completely finished, in the sense that flushing toilets were never installed inside. I believe that we had to walk to gender-segregated outhouses some 50 yards down the hill from the hall, as late as 1941.

There are a fair number of people shown in this photograph who are still living in Hood River—people like the Tamura, Yamaki, Tamiyasu, Iwatsuki, Yasui, Tomita, Asai, Sumoge, and Watanabe descendants, and probably a whole lot of others.

The other picture, which I think was taken around 1935-36 (I'm judging from the apparent ages of a lot of people that I knew/know), was taken in front of the old Hood River Congregational Church—which we always called the Riverside Church (don't ask me why, because it isn't that close to the river, as you know). I think that this was a gathering of young Nisei Methodist Church members.

In those days, even as late as 1936, Nisei generally still went to the Japanese ethnic churches. There's a lot of reasons why that was so, but that's a subject in itself. Anyway, the Methodist Church then was called the Methodist Episcopal Church, and they had a young people's division. I don't remember what that youth division was called, because I was too young to be a member of that group. However, the ethnic M.E. churches had annual, or semi-annual, gatherings, which was called the Young People's Christian Conference (YPCC).

I have no idea what they talked about, but this was a big thing in the Hood River Yasui family. There are a lot of photographs in our collection which show all kinds of M.E. church gatherings.

You will probably recognize a lot of the "young people" in this photograph, because of course most of them were from Hood River. But I also recognize people from The Dalles, Dallesport, White Salmon, Salem and Portland here too. Min is on the extreme left; Grandpa 'Chop' is standing on the extreme right—the guy with the bushy hair; Michi is the round-faced young girl in the middle. Oh, this is a fun photograph. I see Eiko Yamaki Tadakuma, Min Asai, George Tamura, Mits and Mas Takasumi, Suma Tsuboi, Harry Iwatsuki, Yoshio Sumoge, and Taro Asai.

Have fun with these pictures.

Howard