Guide to the Issei Oral History Project in Watsonville Collection

ARS.0081

Language of Material: Japanese
Contributing Institution: Archive of Recorded Sound
Title: Issei Oral History Project in Watsonville Collection
Creator: Nakane, Kazuko
Identifier/Call Number: ARS.0081
Identifier/Call Number: 759
Physical Description: 3 box(es) 37 audiocassettes ; 15 folders of transcripts
Date (inclusive): 1978-1983

Abstract: The Issei Oral History Project in Watsonville was created by historian Kazuko Nakane in preparation for the book Nothing Left in my Hands: The Issei of a Rural California Town, 1900-1942. Interviews were conducted by Nakane from 1978 to 1983 with fifteen Japanese-American residents in Watsonville, California. The collection contains the original audiocassettes of these interviews and their transcripts in English.

Stanford Archive of Recorded Sound Stanford University Libraries Stanford, California 94305-3076

Access
Open for research; material must be requested at least two business days in advance of intended use. Contact the Archive for assistance.

Publication Rights
Property rights reside with repository. Publication and reproduction rights reside with the creators or their heirs. To obtain permission to publish or reproduce, please contact the Head Librarian of the Archive of Recorded Sound.

Source
The Issei Oral History Project in Watsonville Collection was donated to the Stanford Archive of Recorded Sound by Kazuko Nakane in 2009.

Preferred Citation

Sponsor
This finding aid was produced with generous financial support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Scope and Contents
The Issei Oral History Project in Watsonville was created by historian Kazuko Nakane in preparation for the book Nothing Left in my Hands: The Issei of a Rural California Town, 1900-1942. Interviews were conducted in Japanese by Nakane from 1978 to 1983 with fifteen Japanese-American residents in Watsonville, California. Located in the Central Valley, Watsonville and the surrounding area is overwhelmingly agricultural, and farming is a major topic discussed in the interviews. Other subjects include the impact of anti-immigration legislation, relocation camps during World War II, and the difficulty in maintaining relations with family still in Japan. The collection contains the original audiocassettes of these interviews, as well as transcripts in English.

Bibliography

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Oral history
Japanese Americans -- California -- Watsonville -- Interviews
Immigrants -- California -- Watsonville -- Interviews

Audio Interviews 1978-03-29 - 1983-02-10
Creator: Nakane, Kazuko
Physical Description: 37 audiocassette(s)
Yoshito and Kimiyo Kadotani 1978-05-29

Creator: Kadotani, Kimiyo
Creator: Kadotani, Yoshito

Summary of conversation

Interview of Yoshito Kadotani and his wife, Kimiyo Kadotani. It is mostly a biography of Yoshito, with brief contributions from Kimiyo. Yoshito Kadotani was born in July 10, Meiji 36 [1903] in Yashiro, Oshima-cho, Oshima-gun, Yamaguchi Prefecture to Taro Kadotani (father) and Hanako Kadotani (mother). (Names given as First name, Last name.) Yoshito came to the United States with his mother when he was 4 years old to join his father, who worked as a gardener in Watsonville, CA. Yoshito's family relocated to Santa Cruz when he was 5 years old, and has lived there ever since. Yoshito has two younger sisters and a younger brother, who were all born in Santa Cruz, CA.

Yoshito's younger sister, Kiyoko Okahara is married and lives in Japan. Yoshito's younger brother, Kiyotaka Kadotani, is in the United States. Yoshito's youngest sister, Mieko Fujimura, is in United States. From age 6, Yoshito attended Laurel Elementary School in Santa Cruz until he returned to Japan at the age of 10. He came back to United States when he was 19 years old in 1921 and graduated from Santa Cruz High School on Walnut Avenue in 1925.

There are 24-25 Japanese families in Santa Cruz around this time. There was a correspondent who wrote a column about Watsonville in the "Shinsekai" newspaper in San Francisco. His name was Samonji Takeda.

Yoshito started as a gardener, then worked as a landscape designer. On Feb. 22, 1942, with the United States at war with Japan, Yoshito was taken into custody by the FBI, the head of the local police department and a sergeant who came to Yoshito's house in Santa Cruz. Yoshito was the clerk of the Japanese Association in Santa Cruz at that time.

The head of the Japanese Association in Santa Cruz, Mr. Tsumoru Kai, was also taken into custody. Yoshito's younger brother, Kiyotaka, who was visiting Mr. Kai by chance, was also taken into custody but later released since he had citizenship. From Santa Cruz, Yoshito was sent to North Dakota, then Louisiana, then Santa Fe, New Mexico.

During his time in Camp Livingston, Louisiana, he met Kazuo Sakamaki, who is famous as the first prisoner of war. In the Santa Fe camp, Yoshito applied to join a road work project in Idaho and was accepted. After a hearing, he was released in April 1943 and returned to Arizona, where his sisters and brother were living. He then went to Chicago to work at the Family Welfare Office of the local internment camp. He returned to Santa Cruz after the war.

Yoshito married Kimiyo in March 12, 1949. They have two adopted daughters. He received his U.S. citizenship on Feb. 14, 1956.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Watsonville (Calif.)
Santa Cruz (Calif.)
North Dakota
Livingston (La.)
Santa Fe (N.M.)
Chicago (Ill.)
Ōshima-gun (Yamaguchi-ken, Japan)
Fujimura, Mieko
Kadotani, Shizutaka
Sakamaki, Kazuo
Kadotani, Kathleen Kazuko
Kadotani, Kotaro
Kadotani, Hanako
Okahara, Kiyoko

Interview, May 29, 1978 1978-05-29

Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)
Shizuko Kajihara 1978-04-30
Creator: Kajihara, Shizuko

Summary of conversation

Mrs. Shizuko Kajihara was born on May 25, 1906 (Meiji 39) in Kure city, Hiroshima prefecture. She was raised by a relative on her mother’s side since her mother died when she was 6 years old. She came to the United States on Feb. 4, 1924, soon after her marriage in Japan. She arrived in San Francisco and came down to Los Angeles on the Tendo-maru. She lived near LA with her husband and his parents. Her husband was growing vegetables. Mr. Kajihara was born in 1900 and came to the United States in 1916 since his father called for him. His father went back to Japan to bring his wife and Mr. Kajihara’s brother to the United States. Mr. Kajihara returned to Japan in the fall of 1923 to get married. It was an arranged marriage by Mrs. Kajihara’s uncle’s uncle. Mrs. Kajihara was only 17 years old when they got married on Nov. 24, 1923. In LA, they borrowed the name of a Japanese who had U.S. citizenship to rent 30-35 acres of land, on which they grew tomatoes and lettuce. Their oldest daughter is Yasuko, who was born on November 12, 1925 and currently lives in LA. Their second daughter, Teruko, passed away on May 24, 1972 due to acute pneumonia. Their oldest son, Eiji, died when he was 2½ years old. Their second son, George, was born in November, 1932. Their 3rd daughter, Setsuko, was born on July 27, 1935. She passed away when she was 4 years and 9 months old. Their 3rd son, Bill, was born on July 2, 1939, and lives in Watsonville. Their 4th son, Ronald (Masao is his Japanese name), was born Feb. 16, 1942. Their youngest daughter, Sandra (her Japanese name is Toshiko), was born in camp on July 25, 1945, and is a nurse in San Jose. Their 5th son, Robert, was born Feb. 26, 1948, and lives in Texas. They moved to Camp #1 in Poston, Arizona on May 17, 1942. Mr. Kajihara worked as a cook during this time. After camp, they stayed in Glendale, Arizona for a year then moved to Texas and farmed in Presidio in the lowlands. They cultivated cantaloupe in the summer. They came to Watsonville at the end of July 1953 and worked on a strawberry farm. Mr. Kajihara died in 1972.

Translation note
Please note that the summary of conversation is based on the transcript of this interview as no audiotape exists in the collection.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
San Jose (Calif.)
Poston (Ariz.)
Glendale (Ariz.)
Presidio County (Tex.)
Kure-shi (Japan)
Kajihara, Setsuko
Kajihara, George
Kajihara, Yasuko
Kajihara, Bill
Kajihara, Teruko
Hattori, Kathy
Kajihara, Robert
Kajihara, Eiji
Kajihara, Sandra Toshiko
Anonymous (see privacy note) 1978-05-07

Summary of conversation

This is a biographical interview with an male interviewee who specially asks the interviewer to keep his name anonymous in the book the interviewer is working on. The interviewee’s wife joins the interview as a bystander half way through.

The interviewee was born in Meiji 32 [1899] in Kuga-gun, Yamaguchi Prefecture. He came to the United States to join his parents, who were cultivating strawberries in Watsonville, in 1914, when he was 15 years old. He has a younger sister and a younger brother, who were both born in Watsonville. He worked as a houseboy for a year, then helped on his father’s farm. A friend in Watsonville arranged a meeting between him and his wife’s sister, who lived in Japan. In 1922, he went to Japan to meet her, and they decided to marry. Her family is from Iwakuni-shi, Yamaguchi Prefecture. He was 22 years old, and his wife was 18 at the time of their marriage. In October 1922, their first son was born. Two years later, their daughter was born. He began his own farming business at the age of 25, growing lettuce in Watsonville. He saw Yoshie Fujiwara, the famous tenor singer, perform at Toyo Hall at 55 Union Street. He also saw Hibari Misora perform there. His first-born son is in the U.S. Army stationed in Hawaii. His first-born daughter is married to a farmer named Oba and lives in Gilroy. Their second daughter is in accounting. He was sent to Camp #1 in Poston, Arizona, then to Salinas camp in April 1942, and released in September 1945. He remembers his camp director very fondly. Camp #1 was overcrowded. He worked as a foreman of a road construction crew. His wife worked at the kitchen. His son was drafted, and in order to avoid fighting Japan, he went to Military Language School after his six months of Army training. Later, he went to the Philippines as a translator. Upon release from camp, he worked in Monterey’s Cannery Row.

Privacy note

This interview was conducted with a Mr. Masao Kimoto and Mrs. Kimoto. However, at 10:21-11:10 of this interview, Mr. Kimoto specifically asks the interviewer to keep his name anonymous and not to use his real name in the book the interviewer is working on. To this request, the interviewer promises his name will remain anonymous when used in the book.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Iwakuni-shi (Japan)
Poston (Ariz.)
Misora, Hibari
Fujiwara, Yoshie

box 1, cassette 3
Interview, May 7, 1978 1978-05-07
Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

box 1, cassette 4
Interview, May or June, 1978 1978
Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

box 3, folder 3
Transcripts
Physical Description: 1 folder(s)

Tokushige Kizuka 1983-02-10

Creator: Kizuka, Tokushige

Summary of conversation
Mr. Kizuka interview Tokushige Kizuka was born on May 22, Meiji 34 (1901) in Yasu-mura, Asakura-gun, Fukuoka prefecture to Tokube (father) and mother. His parents left Japan to live in Watsonville, CA when Mr. Kizuka was six years old. His parents had an apple orchard with Mr. Matasaburo Mine, his brother-in-law. Mr. Kizuka lived with his grandmother and a younger sister. Mr. Kizuka joined his parents at the age of 17 in 1917 on board of Tenryu-maru, arriving at San Francisco, then went through immigration process for three days at the immigration office in Angel Island. His younger sister had passed away by then. He worked at his father's apple orchard. He was married in 1923. He was married his relative (not blood-related) and has one son and one daughter. He began managing his own lettuce farm in 1927, after purchasing his own land right around 1926 or 1927, as he was certain he would not go back to Japan. Since he had to sign the lease, he hired a local lawyer (Mr. Son, Mr. Hogan) who he remembers very fondly. He became active in the Japanese Association around 1929. He build a Japanese School in his property which lasted right before his evacuation during the war. His farm was managed by his children and his wife while he was in the camp. Mr. Kizuka was a member of "Heimushakai", which is called as "Hoshikai" in Watsonville. He was taken to the internment camp since he was a member of kendo.

TAPE 2: He applied his citizenship after it was allowed in 1952. His brother-in-law, who was a commissioned officer in the Japanese army, encouraged his return to Japan, and his parents suggested to send Mr. Kizuka's children to Japan to get educated there, Mr. Kuzuka had no intention of separating from his children; he did not want to his children raised without own parents like he did.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Angel Island (Calif.)
Yasu-machi (Fukuoka-ken, Japan)
Asakura-gun (Japan)
Kizuka, Tokube
Mine, Matasaburo

Interview, February 10, 1983 1983-02-10

Physical Description: 2 audiocassette(s)

Interview, February 10, 1983: Interviewee's Copy 1983-02-10

Physical Description: 2 audiocassette(s)

box 3, folder 4

Transcript

Physical Description: 1 folder(s)

Shuro and Masa Kobayashi 1978-03-29 and 1978-04-17

Creator: Kobayashi, Masa
Creator: Kobayashi, Shuro

Summary of conversation
Mr. Shuro Kobayashi was born Nov. 25, 1886. His family owned a dry goods store (gofukuya) called Aburaya in Shimotsuma-shi, Ibaraki prefecture. Mr. Kobayashi was the youngest son. He had two sisters and three brothers. Two brothers came to the United States. His oldest brother, Kyutaro Nakamura, was adopted by another family. The second brother's name is Minekichi Kobayashi, and the third is Eizo Kobayashi. His brother-in-law, a member of the Ibaraki prefectural assembly, called him "Shuro" (守郎).

Mr. and Mrs. Kobayashi had just celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary three days prior to the second interview.

Mrs. Masa Kobayashi (maiden name: Kujirai) is from Shimotsuma-shi, Ibaraki prefecture and comes from a family of well-to-do landowners. Mrs. Kobayashi was sent to Tokyo for her education. Her father later lost his fortune in the stock market.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Shimotsuma-shi (Japan)
Koga, Sumio, Rev.
Hattori, Kathy

Interview, March 29, 1978 1978-03-29
Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

Interview, April 17, 1978 1978-04-17
Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

Interview, March 29, 1978: Interviewee's Copy 1978-03-29
Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

Interview, April 17, 1978: Interviewee's Copy 1978-04-17
Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

box 3, folder 5

Transcripts
Physical Description: 1 folder(s)
Hoy Lew 1982-05-05
Creator: Lew, Hoy
Summary of conversation
Interview conducted at interviewee's home. The entire interview was conducted in English. Margaret (Mr. Hoy Lew's wife) was also there and sometimes assisted with the interview.

Hoy was born in Taishan county, Guangdong, China. Birthday: Sept. 29, 1896. At the time of the interview, he was 85 years old. Hoy came to the United States in Dec. 1912 at the age of 16. He arrived in San Francisco and stayed on Angel Island for 11 days. Hoy thinks he was lucky, since he knows many people who had to stay on Angel Island much longer than that, some as long as a year. Hoy came to the United States with his father, who had been living in the United States but went back to China to bring Hoy with him. Mother was still in China, and joined them in the United States later. Hoy has three brothers and one sister. His old brother was already in the United States. His sister and two younger brothers were still in China. They all came later to the United States, and eventually Hoy had his entire family with him. Hoy hasn't been back to China since. Hoy moved to Watsonville in 1913 after staying in San Francisco for a few months. When Hoy came to Watsonville, there were only about ten Chinese families there. Hoy's father had a grocery store that supplied Chinese groceries to the community. Hoy's father's grocery store was among the few of its kind. Hoy worked at his father's store. In the Watsonville and Aromas area, there were about 20 apple-drying plants owned by Chinese people.

About Hoy's experience at the apple-drying plant. They gathered second-grade (bruised) apples from apple-packing plants. During 1920-23, due to the depression, more than half of the small apple-drying businesses closed.

About the gambling house/ Hoy doesn't know much about the gambling house, nor the prostitution houses. He talks about how the Chinese community shifted from farming to owning small businesses such as grocery stores.

He received his US citizenship after WWII.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Watsonville (Calif.)
Angel Island (Calif.)
San Francisco Bay Area (Calif.)
Taishan Xian (Guangdong Sheng, China)

Interview, May 5, 1982 1982-05-05
Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

Charles Leong 1982-04-15
Creator: Leong, Charles
Summary of conversation
The interviewee, Charles Leong, describes the history of downtown Watsonville, CA. Mr. Leong was born September 4, 1911 in San Francisco. His parents are from China. They moved from Oakland to Watsonville when he was 4-6 yrs old. They lived on Corralitos Road. Mr. Leong stayed in Watsonville until 1929, when he was 17. His family worked at the apple drying plants. Chinese gambling houses were big businesses in Watsonville and he used to go there at night.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Chao, Vincent

box 3, folder 6 Transcript
Physical Description: 1 folder(s)
Miteru Mano 1978-05-05 and 1978-05-10

Creator: Mano, Miteru

Summary of conversation

Mrs. Miteru Mano was born Meiji 26 (1893). Mr. Kojiro Mano was born in 1886. Mr. Kojiro Mano was working in a produce store in Fresno, CA and passed away in 1956. Mrs. Mano came to the United States when she was 21 years old. She didn’t receive any formal education in Japan. She is 86 years old at the time of the interview. Her maiden name was Matsuo, and she was from a farming family in Tamana-gun, Kumamoto prefecture. She had four brothers and a sister. Mrs. Mano was the only member of her family who came to the United States. She did so via an arranged marriage as a so-called “picture bride.” As Mr. Mano was already in the United States, Mrs. Mano traveled alone. After joining her husband, the two picked grapes in San Luis Obispo, where they had five boys and five girls. They were sent to camp in Tule Lake, CA for three years. They were allocated for four rooms and she recollects no hardship during this period. After being released from camp, they went to Fresno, CA.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Fresno (Calif.)
Tamana-shi (Japan)
Mano, Kojiro
Hattori, Kathy

Interview, May 5, 1978 1978-05-05
Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

Interview, May 10, 1978 1978-05-10
Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

box 3, folder 7

Transcript
Physical Description: 1 folder(s)
Chizu Matsuoka 1982-05-04

Creator: Matsuoka, Chizu

Summary of conversation

Mrs. Chizu Matsuoka was born in Kurouhara, Sente Village, Kaho-gun in Fukuoka Prefecture on February 16, 1902. Mr. Matsuoka’s father-in-law and her father are cousins. She received an education equivalent to present-day junior high school in Japan. After graduation, she left for Hakata and worked as an apprentice nurse at a hospital in Fukuoka-shi during the day. She took classes to be a midwife at night. After passing the test to be a midwife, she began working as an apprentice nurse in the hospital at a Mitsubishi coal mine. After she passed the test to become a nurse, her future husband came back from the United States and they got married. She was 23 years old then. It was a rather late age for a woman to marry in those days. Since they were relatives, their marriage was arranged by their parents before her future husband came back. In order to avoid the draft in Japan, they hurried to get married and left for the U.S. at the end of January or beginning of February, 1924. Mrs. Matsuoka’s husband, Tonai Matsuoka, was born November 15, 1892 (Meiji 25). He also finished his kotoka education in Japan. He was called by his parents in 1908 at the age of 16 to the United States. In Watsonville, Tonai operated "Yokohama Laundry" on Main Street in partnership with other Japanese. Mrs. Matsuoka received a license to be a midwife in 1925. She was the only Japanese among the examinees. She opened a maternity hospital at her house. Mr. and Mrs. Matsuoka had two children. At the time of the war, they were 15 and 12 years old. They were all sent to Camp #2 in Poston, Arizona. She worked as a doctor’s assistant in the camp. They came back to Watsonville in 1945, where Mr. Matsuoka started a gardening business. Both of them received citizenship around 1954 or 1955.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Poston (Ariz.)
Kaho-gun (Japan)
Matsuoka, Tonai

Kumajiro and Fuji Murakami 1978-05

Creator: Murakami, Fuji
Creator: Murakami, Kumajiro

Summary of conversation

The interviewees are Mr. Kumajiro Murakami and Mrs. Fuji Murakami. Mr. Kumajiro Murakami was born March 3, 1881 to a farming family in Saga-mura, Yamaguchi prefecture. He left Japan at the age of 17, and lived in Hawaii for five years. He had seven brothers and sisters. He was the second son. He came to Hawaii with his friends and worked on a sugarcane farm. However, due to unsuccessful farming, he came to Watsonville to join his older brother and a brother-in-law, who were growing strawberries. Their parents arranged their marriage on May 13, 1909. Mrs. Fuji Murakami was born April 21, 1888, also to a farming family in Yamaguchi prefecture. She had four brothers and sisters. Mrs. Murakami is the second daughter. She came to Watsonville when she was 21 years old. They had five children together (two boys and three girls). The grey strawberries in Watsonville. During the war, since all of their children were married and not with them, only Mr. & Mrs. Murakami went to Salinas and then to Poston, Arizona, Camp #2. One son was drafted as a soldier, while the other son left early for Chicago. After camp, Mr. and Mrs. Murakami went to Chicago to join their son for two to three years. After that, they returned to Watsonville. They recollect that thanks to the police presence and pro-Japanese American neighbors, their house remained the way it was. They resumed growing strawberries.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Poston (Ariz.)
Toshi Murata 1978-05-17 to 1981-01-23

Creator: Murata, Toshisuke (Toshi)

Summary of conversation

The interviewee's name is Mr. Toshisuke Murata. Mr. Murata changed his name to "Toshi" Murata when he became a naturalized citizen of the United States. Mr. Toshisuke Murata was born Jan. 10, Meiji 40 (1907) in Hidaka-gun, Hidaka-cho, Ikeda, Wakayama prefecture. His father, Yasutaro Murata, was a rice farmer. His mother's name is Riki. All together, he has seven brothers and sisters. He was the youngest son. Four of them came to the United States. Mr. Yasutaro Murata arrived first in 1906 or 1907, around the time Mr. Toshi Murata was born. Mr. Yasutaro Murata worked in Castroville, CA as a farmer, growing sugar beets and peas. Mr. Toshi Murata came to the United States in 1921 at the age of 14. He was sent to the Angel Island immigration office and stayed there for one night. Mr. Toshi Murata's mother never joined her husband and sons in the United States. His older brother, Shigeru, came to the United States four years before Mr. Toshi Murata to join their father. His other brother, Masazo, also joined his father in the United States. Two of four sisters came to the United States and married here. Mr. Toshi Murata's father returned to Japan in 1923. After that, his brother and Mr. Toshi Murata moved to Watsonville to join their other relatives. He was only 16 or 17 at the time, but already determined to settle in the United States. Mr. Toshi Murata went to Salinas in 1936. Before that, he drove a truck in Watsonville from 1929 to 1932. He married his wife, who was born in Salinas, in 1941 – the year the war started. They don't have any children. When the war began, Mr. and Mrs. Murata, along with Mrs. Murata's parents, her two sisters and her younger brother, all moved to the temporary camp in Salinas for two months. Then, they moved to Camp #2 in Poston, Arizona. They came back to Watsonville in 1945 and worked in the apple orchards packing fruit. After that, he was employed at a lettuce company. He received his American citizenship in 1952.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Salinas (Calif.)
Poston (Ariz.)
Hidaka-chō (Wakayama-ken, Japan)
Murata, Shigeru
Murata, Masazo
Murata, Yasutaro
Murata, Riki

Interview, May 17, 1978 1978-05-17

Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)

Interview, January 19, 1981 1981-01-19

Physical Description: 2 audiocassette(s)

Interview, January 23, 1981 1981-01-23

Physical Description: 1 audiocassette(s)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>box 3, folder 10</th>
<th>Transcripts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Description: 1 folder(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kokuho Nakamura 1978-05-07

Summary of conversation

Birthday: Dec. 25, 1898 (Meiji 31).

He is the second son of four sons. His eldest brother, Nakamura Heikichi, is 8 years senior to Kokichi. His two younger brothers are Iekichi and Harukichi. There’s a six-year age difference between Kokichi and Iekichi, and another six years between Iekichi and Heikichi. There were several other brothers, but his mother suffered some miscarriages and some of his brothers died very young. His parents fished and farmed. Kokichi came to the United States for the first time in 1919. His eldest brother came to the United States four years before, when he was 27 years old. He came because there was no work in Kagoshima. His other brothers soon followed, along with about 120 people from his hometown. His eldest brother came to downtown Los Angeles. Since he couldn’t speak English, he worked as a gardener and went to night school to learn the language. He was still gardening when Kokichi came. Kokichi lived in Kagoshima Prefecture until he was 12 years old, when he went to Taiwan. He finished school in Taiwan. After that, he taught in Taiwan until he turned 17. Then, Kokichi became ill and went back to Japan.

After he recovered from his illness, Kokichi came to the United States at the age of 19. He didn’t speak English. He got a job as a truck driver at night and took acting lessons during the day, so he didn’t have time to go to night school like his brother. From 8 a.m. until noon, he attended acting school. At 1 p.m., he loaded the truck. At 6 p.m., he brought the cargo to the market and worked until midnight. From midnight until 3 a.m., he sold his goods at the market. After that, he went home to sleep, waking up in time for his acting lessons. During those times he slept very little. On Saturdays, he slept until 9 am and then taught in a Japanese Saturday school. On Sundays, as he’s a Christian, he taught in Sunday school. That was his life until he got married 10 years after he arrived in the United States. He got married in Japan in an arranged marriage and at the time of the interview they had recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Los Angeles. His wife was from the town next to his hometown and didn’t have any reservations about coming to the United States. But since Kokichi was into acting, which is not known as a stable job, her family was worried about her. His wife is 8 years younger. At the time of the interview, she was 77 years old. When she married Kokichi, she was 21 or 22. She went to school in Japan, Kokichi came to Los Angeles via a ship called the Kasato-maru. At that time, only 4,000-5,000 Japanese were living in Los Angeles. There was an active Japanese association that held picnics, New Year’s gatherings, etc. The second time Kokichi came to the United States, he was with his wife and used a ship called Shungyo-maru. They heard the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor from the radio. Rao Shinpo and Kashu Mainichi also reported the news. After Pearl Harbor, they left for Denver for the voluntary evacuation with their two daughters, ages 11 and 9 at the time.

At the time of the interview, the older daughter was 50 and living in Los Angeles, where she owned a flower boutique. The younger daughter was 48 and living in Watsonville. As there were no Japanese groceries available in Denver, he and his wife started a business to supply Japanese food (fermented bean paste, soy sauce, etc) to the camp. They hired 100 Japanese people to work with them. Most of them either lived in Denver or moved there for the voluntary relocation. He also hired people from the camp who were from the same hometown. On his most profitable days, his business made $4,000 per day. He didn’t experience any prejudice in building his business and has never experienced prejudice at all in the United States. He stayed in Denver from the beginning of the war until the end, altogether 5-6 years. In his experience, the camp was very good. They fed the Japanese whatever they needed, and some loved it so much they later said they wished they could go back. In his opinion, camp life was luxurious. Every three months or so, the wife of President Roosevelt came to visit them. However, Poston Camp No. 1, compared with other camps, was not very good. They offered no mush or fruits for the meals. The food service was not good. It was the Japanese food servers’ fault. They did not distribute food equally, and as a result, the meal situation was very bad. Kokichi’s company only provided food to the camp. He never got involved with clothing. After the war, he took $5,000 from the government as compensation. With the $5,000, he went to the Watsonville. He had lots of childhood friends there, and heard strawberry farming was profitable. He didn’t make any money, so he opened an import/export business. As Japan was so poor, he went to Kagoshima and created a Satsumayaki (Satsuma pottery) company to ship pottery to the United States. It didn’t do well. Then, in Kumanoto, he created a togarashi (hot pepper) company, and it was successful. His business attitude is to respect whoever he is dealing with and not to put too much weight on making money. This attitude comes from his faith. He turned to Christianity when he was sick in Taiwan and his faith helped to heal him. He

...
Interview, May 7, 1978 1978-05-07

Physical Description: 2 audiocassette(s)

Frank Sakata 1981-01-19 and 1981-01-28

Creator: Sakata, Frank

Summary of conversation

Interview of Kyuzaburo Sakata, a successful farmer and a businessman by his son, Frank Sakata. The interviewee, Mr. Frank Sakai, went to school in Lompoc, CA. He finished grammar school and high school in Watsonville, then majored in economics at San Jose State College. This interview is about his father, Kyuzaburo Sakata. Kyuzaburo Sakata was born February 4, 1885 in Hidaka-gun, Wakayama-ken. Kyuzaburo passed away on Aug. 23, 1971, at the age of 86. In 1908, a Jewish business friend gave him the name Harry, so he began to use the name "H.K. Sakata" on some occasions. Kyuzaburo was the oldest son among three brothers and two sisters. His family farmed and fished. He asked his parents to let him go to the U.S. and they gave in when he was 15 years old, allowing him to go to Steveston, British Columbia, Canada to join his uncle. He stayed with his uncle for two years, then came to the United States in 1902 to join his fellow villagers in Lompoc, CA. He was a common farm laborer at first. Later, he became a partner with his two of his cousins and farmed with them on a share arrangement. They did well and were able to buy twenty acres of land before the Alien Land Law was enacted in 1913. He married a sister of one of his cousins in 1910. Her name is Tomie Ishida Sakata, and she was born in May 1892. At the time of their marriage, he was 28 and she was 20. He sold the land to an American man at an excellent value. His two cousins went home to Japan with quite a substantial amount of money. Kyuzaburo then relocated to Watsonville in Dec. 1917. He received legal advice from attorney Guy C. Calden suggesting that he could circumvent the land law by forming a corporation. The L & M Company was organized, bought land, and began farming in 1918. Their association lasted until Mr. Calden’s death. Kyuzaburo had business partnership with M. A. Travers from 1925 to 1937. He became a citizen in 1953, one year after it was allowed for the Japanese.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Poston (Ariz.)
Lompoc (Calif.)
Steveston (B.C.)
Hidaka-gun (Japan)
Sakata, Harry
Sakata, Kyuzaburo
Tomie, Ishida Sakata
Travers, M. A.
Sakata, H.K.
Calden, Guy C.

box 3, folder 11

Transcript

Physical Description: 1 folder(s)
Mr. Shikuma was born in 1907 in Monterey County. This interview is mostly about his father, Mr. Unosuke Shikuma, who was a successful businessman. Mr. Unosuke Shikuma was born in Shinjo-mura, Yamaguchi-ken. He was born April 13, 1884 (Meiji 17). He came to the United States when he was about 18 years old. He went to Christian Mission School, where they taught English to Japanese people in Watsonville. He worked as a strawberry farmer.

Mr. Unosuke Shikuma was taken by the FBI to the local police station for questioning in March after the war broke out. Since everyone had to leave for Poston, Arizona, they transferred their businesses to their Italian partner, Mr. Tomasello, with whom they farmed before the war. Mr. Unosuke Shikuma passed away on Jan. 4, 1965.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Shikuma, Unosuke

Interview, January 29, 1981 1981-01-29
Physical Description: 2 audiocassette(s)

Interview, January 29, 1981: Interviewee’s Copy 1981-01-29
Physical Description: 2 audiocassette(s)

box 3, folder 12

Transcript
Physical Description: 1 folder(s)
This is an interview with Yuki Torigoe. It contains her biographical information as well as that of her husband, Bunkichi Torigoe. Yuki Torigoe was born on Feb. 19, 1896 (Meiji 29). She was 12 years younger than her husband. Bunkichi Torigoe was born July 16, Meiji 17 (1884) in Kurashiki, Okayama prefecture. Bunkichi, the first-born son, had a younger brother and sister. He came to United States when he was 15 years and 7 months old. He arrived first in Vancouver, then came down to Seattle and went to North Dakota to work for the railroad. After that, he moved to San Francisco, where he worked in a kitchen assisting the cook. When he was about 20 years old, he moved to Watsonville. The following year, Bunkichi started a grocery store called "Hokoku Shokai" in Salinas with five or six Japanese friends, which eventually went bankrupt. During this period, Bunkichi taught himself to repair watches, bicycles and motorcycles. When he was 23, with the bankruptcy of the "Hokoku Shokai" grocery store, he opened his own grocery store. He sold bicycles and motorcycles and fixed watches on the side. He managed the store by himself. His younger brother and younger sister came to U.S. as well. Yuki Torigoe also came from a farming family. They cultivated igusa, which they used to weave "kaen," or Hanamushiro (goza mattresses). Yuki has one older sister and one younger brother in Imai, Kibi-gun, Japan. Bunkichi was a relative, although not a blood relative as Bunkichi's grandfather was adopted into the family. Yuki came to the U.S. by herself when she was 18 years old in 1914. She had never met Bunkichi before their marriage. Bunkichi was 30 years old at that time. Bunkichi had been married before to a mail-order bride. Yuki and Bunkichi had four children, two boys and two girls. The oldest daughter was born in 1915 and their second daughter, who lives in Japan now, is named Toyoko and was born in 1917. The oldest daughter teaches Japanese in Castroville. Their oldest son, Setsuo, was born in 1918 and is a dentist in San Jose, and their second son, Kenji was born in May 1926 and is a dentist in Campbell. Due to the bad economy, Yuki went back to Japan in 1918 when she was 23 years old and took three of her children to get them educated. Setsuo and Yuki went back to the United States after two years, but the daughters stayed behind in Kurashiki with Yuki's parents. After they graduated from Katahira kenkyuka women's high school, Yuki called them back to the U.S., since Yuki's father passed away. Setsuo went to university in St. Louis, and war broke out during his third year. Bunkichi was taken to an internment camp in North Dakota immediately after Pearl Harbor since he had sold guns. Yuki, her two daughters and nieces, and friends all went to voluntary evacuation in Colorado in February, 1942. They went to Daiko Danchi ranch in the country. Their second son was 16 years old and still in high school. After he finished high school, he was drafted to fight in the 442nd Regiment. Their older son, Setsuo, was in dental school in St. Louis for two years, then opened his practice in Colorado. They were still in Colorado after the war ended. Yuki came back to Watsonville in 1948 to find everything in their store stolen. They did not submit a claim of compensation to the U.S. government since Bunkichi said it was too hard to list everything he had lost. They opened a new store in 1948 in Watsonville. Bunkichi managed his store (Torigoe store, on Main Street) until his death in 1970. He received his US citizenship in 1952. Yuki didn't receive hers, since she still had land and a house in Japan.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Kurashiki-shi (Japan)
Salinas (Calif.)
Hattori, Kathy
Koga, Sumio, Rev.
Torigoe, Setsuo
Torigoe, Toyoko
Torigoe, Bunkichi

Interview, April 26, 1978 1978-04-26
Physical Description: 2 audiocassette(s)
Eiko Tsuyuki 1978-04-05

Creator: Tsuyuki, Eiko

Summary of conversation

The interviewee is Mrs. Eiko Tsuyuki. Her father, Takejiro Okuhara, was born in Kumage-gun, Yamaguchi prefecture, to a family of farmers. Being a second son, he didn’t have any land of his own, so he went to Canada, where he worked for a lumber company. Mrs. Tsuyuki was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada in 1903 but was sent to Japan for her education at the age of 5. Since her uncle and aunt had no children, they took care of her and raised her. Her uncle is her father’s twin brother.

She had no memory of her mother, Katsu Tsuyuki, who died in Vancouver when she was 9 years old and still living in Japan. She has one brother and one sister who passed away by the time of the interview.

Mrs. Tsuyuki went to United States when she was 18 years old, in 1921, when she married. Her first husband, Kyosuke Kishimura, was born in Kuga-gun, Yamaguchi prefecture. Mr. Kishimura came to Japan to get married and to take his wife to the United States. The marriage was arranged by a go-between (baishaku kekkon). Her neighbors, the Matsumotos, arranged the marriage.

The couple went to Watsonville, CA in 1922. He packed apples in the winter and, in the summer, he worked on Mr. Unosuke Shikuma’s farm in Watsonville. Mr. Kishimura was a half-share tenant farmer and grew strawberries and tomatoes. In April 1942, they went to a temporary camp in Salinas. On July 4, 1942, they were sent to Camp #2 in Poston, Arizona. Mr. Kishimoto and Mrs. Tsuyuki had two daughters. During their stay in camp, Mr. Kishimoto, who had angina pectoris, died after suffering a heart attack. Right after her husband died, her older daughter, who was 20 years old, moved out of camp by herself and worked on the East Coast. After she found a job and worked there for a year, she came back to camp to take her mother and younger sister (Yukiko, age 12 at the time) to the East Coast with her. Mrs. Tsuyuki then took the family to Detroit, where she worked as a domestic helper for three years. Mrs. Tsuyuki’s older daughter was engaged to a man in Watsonville, which is why they returned there. Mrs. Tsuyuki’s second marriage was after the war in Watsonville. Mr. Tsuyuki had been a bachelor for a long time. His daughter, Mrs. Miura, asked Mrs. Tsuyuki to marry him.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Kumage-chō (Japan)
Hattori, Kathy
Koga, Sumio, Rev.
Tsuyuki, Yukiko
Shikuma, Unosuke
Kishimura, Kyosuke
Tsuyuki, Katsu
Okuhara, Takejiro
Ichiro Yamaguchi 1978-05-05

Creator: Yamaguchi, Ichiro

Summary of conversation

Interview was conducted in English. The interviewee is Mr. Ichiro Yamaguchi. Mr. Yamaguchi was the first son. He was born in Watsonville on July 21, 1908, and grew up on a strawberry farm. During the war, he went to Oregon to join the Sakatas, who had a ranch there. Mr. Yamaguchi’s father, Masaki Yamaguchi, changed his first name from Otokichi since his uncle (Otokichi Kajioka) had the same name. He came from Fukui-ken in Japan and was partners in the J. S. Kosansha (Kosansha was one of the Japanese farmers’ companies). Masaki Yamaguchi came to the United States in 1900. Masaki Yamaguchi’s marriage was listed in the “Shinsekai” newspaper. He owned a car after 1915, which was rather early. Masaki began growing lettuce after World War I. Ichiro and his brother helped their father before and after school, and by working so hard they both got pneumonia. Masaki gained US citizenship in the same year he died, at the age of 100. Ichiro’s mother, Shina, became sick when Ichiro was around four years old and went to San Francisco Hospital (then Stanford hospital). She went back to Japan, and died there when Ichiro was about 8 years old. She took two daughters (Ichiro’s sisters, one a baby and other 2-3 years old) with her. Ichiro’s aunt and uncle took care of them. When Masaki became sick, Ichiro was 17 or 18. Since Ichiro and his brother couldn’t farm on their own, they quit the farm when their lease ran out and went to work for their uncle as regular employees. They called their sisters from Japan to take care of their sick father and worked on the side. After six or seven years of illness, the father got better and lived another fifty years. Ichiro went to Carlton School. He was the first Japanese to go there. After Pearl Harbor, they were moved to Salinas Assembly Center and then were sent to Poston, Arizona in July 1942. In Oct. 1942, they went to work harvesting sugar beets in Nebraska. Ichiro’s wife stayed in the camp. He worked for Mr. Kyusaburo Sakata. Then, after the war, his brother, several of his brother’s relatives, and Mr. Toshio Matsushita, bought the land from Mr. Sakata. They lived in Oregon for 11 years. They came back to Watsonville in 1955. He grew strawberries for a while, but went almost bankrupt. Then, he worked for his neighbors, who were produce growers. After working for them for 2-3 years, he went into gardening in about 1963 as there was more money in gardening.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Poston (Ariz.)
Yamaguchi, Otokichi
Kajioka, Otokichi
Yamaguchi, Masaki
Sakata, Kyuzaburo
Yamaguchi, Shina
Matsushita, Toshio

Interview, May 5, 1982 1982-05-05

Physical Description: 2 audiocassette(s)

Interview, May 5, 1982: Interviewee’s Copy 1982-05-05

Physical Description: 2 audiocassette(s)