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## Interview with Mae Sakasegawa

Mae Sakasegawa

California State University, Monterey Bay

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Interviewee: Mae Sakasegawa  
Interviewer: Theresa Eckert & Stephanie Grijalva  
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Duration of Interview: 01:17:03

**Theresa Eckert** 00:03

March 7, 2011. We're in the home of Mae Sakasegawa. I'm Theresa Eckert.

**Stephanie Grijalva** 00:10

I am Stephanie Grijalva.

**Theresa Eckert** 00:12

And we're just going to talk a little bit about Mae's family and her experiences here and in Japantown in the Salinas area before the war. So, could you tell us, just to get started, could you give us a little bit of background on, you know, your grandparents and your parents and how they came to be here in this area?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 00:33

Well, my paternal grandparents came from Hiroshima, Japan. They first went to Hawaii and stayed there one year and worked in the sugar beets—sugarcane. And then they came over here to Salinas, because they heard that Spreckels Sugar Company was looking for sugar beet workers. So, they came over here. And they worked in the fields for a while until they had enough money left to build a boarding house. And they built the boarding house, and my grandmother did the cooking for these Japanese workers that came over from Japan. They had to have a place to stay. They were all men. There were no ladies coming over at this point. So, and then later my grandfather did a lot of other things. He had a strawberry field, strawberry ranch, and he had a confectionery. And, let's see—well, later on, you know, the issei, the first generation, were not allowed to buy land, and they were not allowed to become citizens. So, when my father was born, in 1904, my grandfather was able to buy land through my father's, you know, being a citizen of the United States. So, that's how they started to acquire land, and they acquired some property in the Lake Street area, where Japantown and Chinatown is now.

**Theresa Eckert** 02:10

Do you remember what the address of the boarding house was?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 02:14

Yeah. My grandmother's house was right next—yeah, well, it was part of the boarding house, because she cooked in her house, and the boarding house was upstairs, and down below was a grocery store and a drugstore. But yeah, my grandmother's house was 19 Lake Street. And they had a hall built next to her house, which was the Japanese Hall, where troops from Japan came and performed on the stage there. And they also had Japanese movies. And they had a balcony, and they had a huge stove in the middle of the place to keep the place warm. And I remember my grandmother going there after the movies and sweeping out the place. [laughs] But she was quite active, my grandmother. She taught me a lot of things. She was a great cook to begin with. She had this spread every New Year's on her

huge table of all the Japanese goodies you can think of. And she invited anyone in town to come, and they all did come and have good Japanese food and a little bit of sake. [laughs] And it was a happy time, New Year's. They celebrated New Year's quite extensively. It was one of their big holidays.

**Theresa Eckert** 03:47

Was that a big time for family to come together or just the community as a whole?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 03:52

The whole community did New Year's. And every family—each family had their own thing. Even today—last New Year's I made all that stuff except, you know, not quite all of it, because you can't get some of that stuff anymore, but I did a lot of the traditional dishes. Maybe about ten different dishes. And I had my grandkids come and my other friends come over, and we had a good time eating all that food. And my grandkids love Japanese food too, you know, even though they don't—well, they're learning how to cook it, but they love Japanese food, so that's nice. And this is through my grandmother, because she taught me how to cook, and now I'm teaching—my girls know how to cook, and then my grandkids are learning how to cook, so this is nice. Keep the tradition going. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 04:45

What about your grandparents on your maternal side?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 04:49

Oh, they came from Yamaguchi-ken. Ken is a prefecture in Japan. Hiroshima-ken is a prefecture, and they came from Yamaguchi-ken, I think which is close to Hiroshima. They came to Salinas, and they had a boarding house too. I guess that was the thing to do in those days, if you knew how to cook and make a few dollars till you get started. And then they moved to [unclear] where he farmed for—I forgot the name of the family there. He farmed vegetables there. And then he moved to Gonzales. And then he moved to Watsonville. And in between Watsonville and Salinas, he did his celery. And he won first prize at the state fair. He was very proud of that, my grandfather. We weren't that close to them, because they lived in Watsonville, and we were closer to our paternal grandparents, because they lived in town here. And I spent a lot of time with my grandmother, because there was four of us. My mother had four of us all a year apart. So, I was the oldest, so I stayed with my grandmother off and on until grammar school. And I remember walking back and forth to Lincoln School. We used to walk in those days, even when we were little too. [laughs] It was pretty safe to do so. I mean, no one thought anything of walking all the way from Lincoln School to Lake Street. It was kind of a long walk, but it was safe.

**Theresa Eckert** 06:27

Would you walk with other kids who lived on Lake Street or—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 06:31

No, I just walked by myself. We had skates too. We used to skate home. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 06:38

[laughs] The whole way?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 06:39

Oh, yeah. It wasn't too bad. We were pretty self-sufficient in those days. I remember on Lake Street, you know, there was a lot of boys. We would grab sticks and play swords. I was a tomboy. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 07:02

[laughs] Who do you remember playing with on Lake Street?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 07:04

I remember playing with Atsuo Fukuda, who was the barber's son across the street from us. The Fujino kids. They had the market, meat market and vegetable place. And Onitsukas, who had a dry goods store. Let's see, Kay Endo. She used to be Endo. They had a—her father had a restaurant and pool hall, and a boarding house in the back, and a bar. So, and those were some of the people I played with most of the time, when I was at my grandmother's. What else do you want to know?

**Theresa Eckert** 07:56

Did you ever do sleepovers with them, or did you just, you know, play during the day and then go back to your grandma's?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 08:01

Oh, we never slept at each other's houses. We never did that like they do now. You know, you have your sleepovers now all the time for birthdays and whatever? We never did that in those days. I don't know if other people did. Did they? I don't think so, huh? Do they? I think it's more, you know, more—

**Theresa Eckert** 08:22

More contemporary?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 08:23

Mm-hmm. I think so. My grandmother had a religion called [unclear]. She also belonged to the Buddhist church, but this was a Shinto thing. She also had a Shinto shrine. She had a Buddhist thing, and she had this other religion, which was called [unclear], and have you ever heard people say [speaks Buddhist chant] and they would chant? Well, she had a little shrine in her living room, and I used to beat the sticks for her, and she would chant, you know. That was kind of nice, I thought. She had an alligator purse, a nice little baby alligator purse, and it had two claws like this. And we used to play with it all the time, and that was her pride and joy. She loved that little purse. And my aunt has it now. It's still here. [laughs] My grandmother, when we—this is getting a little ahead, but my grandmother, when we went to camp, we didn't know where we were gonna go. We didn't know where they were gonna send us. My mother thought—my mother and father thought we were gonna go way up north someplace where it was gonna be freezing cold. So, they brought us, you know, they bought us boots, and they bought us wool jackets, and my grandmother had on her beaver coat. [laughs] And then we ended up in Arizona where it was 110 degrees. [laughs] I don't know what she did with her fur coat. Oh, my grandmother. Yeah, she was my favorite grandmother. She was really a nice lady. She was so good to us.

**Theresa Eckert** 10:13

How did your parents meet?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 10:16

Ah, let's see. I don't really know. They didn't have any clubs then. The JACL didn't come until later. I really don't know. I never asked them. [laughs] Yeah, I have no idea.

**Theresa Eckert** 10:34

Do you remember them talking at all about, like, courtship or any of that?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 10:38

No.

**Theresa Eckert** 10:39

No?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 10:39

No, no. [laughs] Let's see.

**Theresa Eckert** 10:50

Do you remember the inside of your grandmother's boarding house at all? What that looked like?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 10:55

Yeah, my grandmother's boarding house was upstairs on top of the stores. Later on, they quit that boarding house, because she had income from rentals. My grandfather bought a lot of land, and my father bought a lot of land. So, they, you know, didn't have to do the boarding house anymore. I have a silk picture over there that—this man from Japan came, and he stayed up in the boarding house. I remember that. When I was about five, I think. He painted these silk paintings—I mean, paintings on silk, and I was lucky to acquire two of them. My mom left them to me. My grandmother left it to my father, and then my mom left it to me. So, I have couple of these nice silk paintings. He came in his Japanese clothes, you know, from Japan, because most of us, even the isseis, never dressed in their kimonos and native clothes. Right away when they came over here, they were in American clothes, overalls, and, you know, whatever. But I think, like, in Hawaii, a lot of them just had some of their traditional clothes. Maybe it was different working in the sugarcane and the sugar beets, because sugar beets you were in the dirt, you know. That was a lot of—that was hard work.

**Stephanie Grijalva** 12:27

Do you remember anyone else that came in?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 12:30

Came where?

**Stephanie Grijalva** 12:31

To the boarding house?

**Mae Sakasegawa 12:32**

No, that was just a part of their thing. My grandmother retired from that, and she just retired, and she played this game called Hana. It's called flowers, and it's little cards. Actually, they gambled, you know, with coins. She went—they had—she had friends all over Main Street and Soledad Street who had businesses, and she would go every afternoon—not every afternoon—but she would go and play Hana. And I would go with her sometimes. They would play in the back room, back of the stores. And I would be playing with her money and, you know, [laughs] she'd treat me to a ice cream or something. I just sat with her while she played Hana. She went all over town playing that. She loved it. So, and then she also liked to gamble. There was a Chinese man called Shorty Lee, who is Wellington Lee's father. He used to have lottery tickets, and he used to have him in his jacket. [laughs] And my grandmother, she would have a dream the night before, and she'd dream about maybe a rabbit or something, or something else, and then she would pick her lottery ticket according to that. It was kinda interesting.

**Theresa Eckert 14:00**

Did she ever win?

**Mae Sakasegawa 14:01**

I don't know. [laughs] I never found out what she did. But she was—yeah. My father was a farmer. He was a rancher. He farmed on—let's see, what road was that? McCormick Road, in the Graves district. It's about, what, three miles out of town. So, he grew lettuce over there. And then he also had businesses in town. So, we were fortunate to be able to go to town school, because he paid taxes in town. So, we didn't have to go to this little tiny school out there in the Graves district. It was a one room schoolhouse, you know, those days. So, I went to Lincoln School from the very beginning, from kindergarten through sixth grade, and Washington Junior High and then high school. Graduated, and I went to a couple years of Hartnell. That's all the education I got, because of camp, you know. It interrupted everything. Let's see. My sisters and brothers—I have a brother and two sisters, and my brother went into the Air Force in the Korean War. And then when he got out, he got his education that way. He went to Berkeley, UC Berkeley, and he got to be an architect. My other sister and I and—the three girls didn't get to go to college. We just—I just had two years of Hartnell. My father wasn't in a position to send us at that point, because we just got out of camp. So, we didn't get to go to college. But that was okay, you know. I have no regrets. We have a whole bunch of cousins now. I married Roy in 1950. He's a Sakasegawa. They had nine children here. So, they're pretty well scattered all over now. We had a funeral to go to the other day. One of the Sakasegawas, she passed away, and a lot of the cousins and relatives were there. It was nice to see them. It's like a reunion, but it's a funeral, you know. [laughs] It gets that way, huh? But the Sakasegawas are all over the place. They're mostly boys too. So, that's why they're Sakasegawas, you know. And I have seven grandchildren. I have one half-Jewish, half-Japanese boy. And the other two are half-Caucasian and half-Japanese. And my last four are half-Filipino and half-Japanese. So, I have an international family, which is really nice. [laughs] I enjoy these kids so much. They're so great. And so, my son's son had a baby, so now I'm a great grandma. Yeah, and expecting another one in September. So, we're real happy about that. I have a little blue-eyed, great-grandson. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 17:30

[unclear] your uncles and aunts on your—did you have it on both your mother's and your father's side? Were they mostly in this area as well?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 17:41

Mm-hmm. Well, most of them were in Watsonville. They were in Watsonville. And the others were here in Salinas. My uncle, the youngest one, was my father's brother. He had a soda fountain at one point. Then later he was a barber, and he ended up a barber on Lake Street. Yeah. Excuse me. He had a barbershop right in my grandmother's house. They tore down a part of her house in the front and built him a barbershop there. So, that's—everybody knows my uncle. He was a good barber and—

**Theresa Eckert** 18:25

What's your uncle's name?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 18:26

Lloyd. Yeah. My other uncle was a farmer on Blanco Road. He grew lettuce.

**Theresa Eckert** 18:36

Both on your paternal side, right?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 18:38

Mm-hmm. My other cousins in Watsonville—my other uncle, he was a gardener. And my other uncle, Harry Shirachi, he was a baseball player. He went on tour to Japan and everything. He was a pitcher. And he ended up in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Isn't that great?

**Theresa Eckert** 19:06

Wow.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 19:06

Yeah.

**Theresa Eckert** 19:07

So, how many years did he play baseball for?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 19:12

He said when he was a young boy, he didn't have a baseball. So, he used to get rocks and throw it at sticks to get his pitching arm, [laughs] you know. So, that was a long time, I guess. Yeah. And then he opened a grocery store in my grandmother's building with my other uncle. And they had this grocery—

**Theresa Eckert** 19:36

What was his name? It was Harry—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 19:40

Harry Shirachi.

**Theresa Eckert** 19:41

Harry and—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 19:42

They called him Tar Shirachi, [laughs] because he was so dark, I guess. I don't know. And the other uncle was—they called him Spiggs [?] Okamoto. And they were related through marriage, of course.

**Stephanie Grijalva** 19:50

What's the name of their grocery?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 20:00

S&O Grocery Store, Shirachi and Okamoto. I have a picture someplace of me standing next to their delivery truck. I used to—you know, my mother used to buy all her groceries there. Not all of it, because it was a small store and they had a meat department too, and a vegetable section. And she used to buy her stuff there. And I don't know how my mother exist—my mother did all she did. She was nineteen I think when she got married. She had four of us, and she lived on a ranch three miles out. And she did all the washing like this, you know, outside. They had no hot water in the building, in the house. So, she had to warm up all the water on a wood stove, and she had to bring the wood in to make the stove, you know, hot. And they had a Japanese bath, which is wooden, and then they had metal underneath it, and they would put firewood under it and make the water hot. And they had a wooden rack at the bottom of the bathtub, so your feet wouldn't get burnt. Well, my mother had that thing going every day with wood under it. You know, she had to get the wood and get under there, and because the farm worker had to have a bath every day, you know. So, we had dinner every night at home, and she also fed the farmworker every night. So, I don't know how she did this. She grew a beautiful flower garden. She used to bring flowers to the Buddhist church. She loved to garden. That's where I get my gardening from. She loved gardening. She had all kinds of flowers in her yard. We used to water for her. We used to earn our nickels. She later worked for—my mother and father got divorced when—just before—right after I got married, or right before. I can't remember. Around the time I got married. So, my mother went to work for a paint company. She was a consultant for, you know, paint, wallpaper, paint, and all that. She loved her job. My father took over the Lake Hotel, and he was running that. And he had a pool hall underneath the Lake Hotel. And there was a restaurant, Japanese restaurant, next door to that, underneath the hotel. So, there was two businesses under the hotel. And then the hotel was all the second floor. This was built after they took that Association Hall down, where they had all those, you know, plays and things I told you about. So, this was built then. And then after we came back from camp, in 1965, I think, he built that other little building next to it. So, we still have those two buildings. That's about all we have left. He had a lot of land across from the Buddhist church. And I think he kind of donated the land for the Chinese. I don't know if it's a school or what is its Chinese—they have their meetings, and they have their—

**Theresa Eckert** 23:35

The Confucius church?



**Mae Sakasegawa 23:36**

Yeah, in the Confucius church. Yeah, I think he did. And, you know, since the issei couldn't own land to build their Buddhist church, they had about seven of the young men get together and buy the land for the Buddhist church.

**Theresa Eckert 23:59**

Were most of the friends that you had before the war, were they mostly within the Japanese community? Or were they kind of from just around the area?

**Mae Sakasegawa 24:09**

Yeah, because we went to Lincoln School, and we had friends there, but we didn't socially, you know, do anything with them at all. There was a lot of discrimination in those days. People didn't mix too much. My father got along with a lot of people. He had a lot of friends. But we never went to other people's homes besides the Japanese homes. In fact, when we came back from camp, there were discrimination lines, like, right here. This was past Hartnell, I think. We couldn't—any Japanese or Oriental couldn't build a house in that area. They were not allowed to be there. So, my husband came here and talked to Mike Hughes. He was a great guy. He's a real estate guy. He had the house across the street. And since my husband was a veteran, he was able to buy a house here. And so that opened up the whole place for the Orientals, which was nice. So, there's a lot of Oriental people. Of course, you know, anyone can do that later on, but at that time, we weren't allowed to buy houses in this area or other areas of town. But it opened up. So, that was nice. My husband, Roy, I married him in 1950. But prior to that, he was drafted in the United States Army in August of 1941, before Pearl Harbor. So, I think they were drafting people kind of sensing this war coming. So, after Pearl Harbor, they didn't know where to put him, you know, a lot of these Japanese recruits. So, he was at camp. What's that camp down south? Well, anyway, he was down there. He was at Fort Ord. Then they moved them to Gilroy someplace. And then he said he was guarding the coastline. Imagine [laughs] having a Japanese guard the coastline. Oh, well, anyway, then he got in with the 442 bunch. He went to Fort Snelling, Georgia, I think, and they got training there. And then they went over to, by ship to—[unclear] in France. No, Italy. And then they went to France, and they fought there. And that's where they lost a lot of boys there rescuing the Lost Battalion from Texas. And my husband said—well, he got wounded there, so he got to come home. But we went for two reunions there. And those French people, they treat you like heroes. I mean, they lined the streets with the emblem of the 442, you know, and they have monuments there, and they treated us to banquets. And it was so nice to be treated like that. The little kids would come up to you, you know, and shake your hand, because they did liberate those towns through France there. When he got home, he started to farm. He was doing green onions. He grew green onions, and he had a shed where a lot of the Japanese ladies would come and bunch onions into little bunches that you see in the grocery store. He did that for a while. Then he grew beans in the back, and then he had a chance to farm a piece of land on River Road in Salinas. He had about 275 acres. But he hired, you know, people to—and he grew for companies like Bonanno. Bonanno was a real good company that used Japanese farmers when they first came back. He was real good to the farmers, whereas a lot of other farmers wanted us out of Salinas. That's why, you know, we were kicked out, because according to the Yuki story, they wanted us out because we were getting to, you know, up in the world, I guess. So, we got kicked out, but we came back, and we're fine. I wrote a book about the first-generation Japanese. This book was started years ago by a group of JACL seniors, and

it went on and on and nothing happened. They acquired, I think, five thousand dollars or something like that for a fundraiser. And they were just sitting there and sitting there for years. And then so Mickey Kubo and I, we picked it up. All the prior history was lost. We don't know who had it. So, we had to start from scratch, and we contacted these families, and we tried to contact as many as we could, because they were scattered all over the United States now, from camp. So, we had seventy-nine families we were able to interview, and we didn't interview them. We just acquired their pictures and their stories. And then I edited it and compiled it and my ex-daughter-in-law, my son's former wife, she and I—she did the artwork and the typesetting. And we did really well on that, I thought, considering that she moved to Virginia, and we had to do everything by Federal Express and email, but we got the job done in April of last year. So, we're—I'm happy to have been able to do that, to keep the history of these pioneers that came over here from Japan, because they're all gone, you know. There's not even one left, and the second generation is now going, you know. They're in their eighties and nineties now, and they're slowly passing on. So, you have to get the history down when you can, otherwise it's gone, and it's lost forever. So, I'm glad I got just a bit of history here. There's all kinds of books out, I'm sure, but this is for the Salinas Valley, and if you read the book, it applies to any family that was evacuated during the war all along the West Coast—California, Oregon, and Washington. We were taken off the West Coast. And first we were put into little assembly centers. And then I think we stayed there in the rodeo grounds, hastily built barracks. Some of us were in horse stalls.

**Theresa Eckert 31:28**

How long were you there for?

**Mae Sakasegawa 31:29**

I think three months—April, May, June, July. I think first of July, we went to Poston Arizona, because while we were there, they were building these barracks in Arizona. So, the people in this area, Monterey Bay area, we all went to Poston Arizona, which was on the Indian reservation. It's the Colorado River Indian Reservation, and there were three camps there—camp one, two, and three. And I think camp one was, like, people, like, in San Francisco or that area. And camp two is people in this area. And camp three was probably more inland, like Fresno and that area. So, but that was only one camp, Poston. There was ten camps in all through the West.

**Theresa Eckert 31:38**

What was the rodeo grounds like for you?

**Mae Sakasegawa 32:25**

The assembly center? It was terrible. We were in a room about this big, you know, us, my grandmother too, because she was a widow. We had no privacy. We had to go to latrines. We had to go to a mess hall to have our food. But I do remember some good things, like Mr. Peavy, who was a gymnastic instructor at Hartnell. He would come over and give a demonstration, you know, and then they started a baseball team. I played baseball. I don't know, it was only a few months [unclear]. And then our principal at the Washington Junior High—I was an eighth grader, and it was April when we left, so I was supposed to graduate in June. She came in and gave us our diplomas, so that was nice. Let's see, what else? And then in July we moved to Poston, which was really hot. We got there on a rickety old train and a rickety old bus from Parker to Poston. And when we got there, people were fainting all over

the place, because it was so hot. People were passing out wet towels to put on our heads, passing out salt pills. And then we got into this barrack. Same as assembly center, you know. Cots with nothing else. Just a cot and bedding probably. I can't remember. And we—the first night when we went to the mess hall to have dinner, we had a sandstorm, and if you don't know what a sandstorm is, it's a big cloud like a fog coming in. The winds just whip it right in, and it covers everything, every inch of you. Everything in the barracks, and everything in the—food in the kitchen was lost, you know. So, I don't even know if we ate that night. I can't remember. [laughs] That was the first night we were there. When we were in camp, we did a lot of things. My father played golf. They made a golf course in the sand. We went fishing, and we had a creek close by from the Colorado River. We went hiking to the mountains and picked, I think they were called—it was during Christmas time, and they had white holly up there with berries on it, so we used to pick that. We had a swimming pool. They built a big, huge swimming hole. So, we used to swim. I played baseball. I was—I think I was a outfielder.

**Theresa Eckert** 35:22

Were the Sakasegawas there as well?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 35:24

Yes. We were in block 220, and they were in block 214—213 or something like that across the firebreak. So, yeah, that's where Roy visited his family when he was in the Army. [laughs] Yeah, he had his Army uniform on, and he visited his family in camp. Can you believe that?

**Theresa Eckert** 35:46

Do you remember seeing many soldiers come in to visit their families?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 35:51

No, I don't. No, I don't.

**Stephanie Grijalva** 35:54

Did your husband talk about his experiences when he visited his family in his uniform?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 36:01

No, he didn't. No, because they—these guys, they didn't talk too much about their war experiences. Like, we didn't talk too much about our camp experiences either until people started to ask us all these questions. [laughs] Anything else you want to know?

**Theresa Eckert** 36:22

Oh, all sorts of stuff. [laughs]

**Mae Sakasegawa** 36:24

Okay.

**Theresa Eckert** 36:27

I wanted to go back to the pool hall that was underneath the boarding house. And what do you remember—like, what did that look like? Was it really bright and colorful?

**Mae Sakasegawa 36:39**

No, the pool hall was underneath the hotel. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert 36:42**

Oh, underneath the hotel? That's right.

**Mae Sakasegawa 36:43**

Yeah. No, it wasn't bright and colorful. It was just—I don't know how many tables he had there. Maybe three. It was small. And he had all kinds of people go there, but mostly Japanese. You'll notice in the map of the Japantown that there were a lot of pool halls, and a lot of barbershops, and a lot of—what else was there a lot of? Restaurants. And there was a bathhouse, you know, because they were pretty clean people even coming out from the fields. They had everything in their own little community. Their own dentists, doctors, tailors, beauticians, anything you wanted, it was right there in this little community. And they didn't commingle with a lot of other people. They didn't commingle with Chinese or the Filipinos or the Caucasians. You know, they would just have their own little place where they were comfortable, you know. So, they stayed there and did their business in the middle of Japantown. My grandmother would go out. There was no underpass there before. It was just a railroad track. We'd cross the railroad track and go on the other side, and I remember we used to buy some groceries on the other side too, on Main Street. The lower end of Main Street, there used to be a—but Main Street used to be a small place. I mean, there were just a few houses behind Main Street. You know, there weren't too many. It was a pretty small town then, and we were able to walk anywhere safely. Not anymore. It's too bad, huh?

**Stephanie Grijalva 38:37**

What's different now?

**Mae Sakasegawa 38:39**

Would you let your five-year-old walk alone anywhere? That's what's different. [laughs] Yeah, I was thirteen when I went to camp, and my father left for Chicago. You were able to leave camp after about, I think about a year, and go east, but you couldn't come back to the West Coast. So, my father went to Chicago, and he would send us, you know, food that we couldn't get in camp. Food in camp was awful. Speaking of food, you know, whenever we had mutton stew, we could smell it. The whole block could smell it, so the chef would, in the front, put peanut butter and jam for us, and bread, for us kids. It was nice. We couldn't eat that stuff. Anyway, my father would send us food. You know, real treat, like bacon and salami and things that would keep, you know. He would send it to us in camp. And then he went to Denver, Colorado, and he got a job there. So, he pulled us out of camp. And so, in December of '45, we—I think it was—no, '44? We left camp and went to Denver, Colorado, and stayed there for a year. And we stayed in this terrible hotel. It was run by a Japanese man, but it was, you know, a place to stay. It was a little tiny place, and there was, you know, seven of us cramped in there. You know, it was pretty hard. But we stayed there a year, and we went to high school there. The high school was about seventeen blocks away. We would walk home sometimes, because we didn't have any money to take the bus. We didn't like that school too much, because it wasn't high ed, you know. Like, it was more on the low ed side. So, I don't think we learned too much. Speaking of school and camp, we had a lot of volunteer Caucasian people that came in to teach us. We were happy to have them. There was a lot of

Japanese teachers too, you know, because they did go to college before the war. They had what they call a core class, and we would just take all the classes in one core class. Like algebra, history—everything was in one class. So, I think that's why I was lacking in my education, you know. Then I came back to Salinas when I was a senior in high school. So, I just spent one semester here, and I graduated. And then I went to Hartnell for two years. That's my education. That's it. My—

**Theresa Eckert** 41:43

You seem to have done well with it.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 41:44

Oh, well, I did have—I did work for credit unions. I worked for Monterey County Veterans Credit Union. Well, first I worked for Shipping Point Inspection where you did a lot of typing for produce. Then I worked for an attorney for a while. Then I worked for the credit union, and then I worked for the Teachers Credit Union. Then I opened my own store. I had a fabric and—I had high end fabric and sewing machines. And I ran that for twenty-nine years, which was a long time. And then I retired, and my daughter did it till 1999, and we closed the store. It was too much for her. She had four kids too, and it was too much. We did enough. And people still ask us and, you know, we see them in the grocery stores. They say, "Why did you close your store?" [laughs] You know, it's nice to see our old customers. Talk to them. Because it was a long time, twenty-nine years. And then my husband and I, we decided to add to this house. So, we had—this house was very small. It was 1400 square feet. It was a ranch type house, long house. So, we decided to build an upstairs for the grandkids that were always in and out. So, they would take their shoes off and run upstairs and have a good time. So, we built that upstairs in 1997. So, we doubled our—not doubled, but we got a lot more room up there now.

**Theresa Eckert** 43:35

So, when you came back from the camps, like, as far as how you interacted in the community and what types of things, like, how you were treated—how was that different?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 43:48

Well, you know, they had the Bataan Death March, and a lot of the Salinas tank people were there, and so there was this animosity in Salinas. And we would go into some stores, and they would just snub us. They wouldn't wait on us. Restaurants were the same. Doctors were the same. This Dr. Lawler, he was wonderful. He took all the Japanese in. A lot of people wouldn't have anything to do with us. Even in school, you know, it was hard for us. I do remember one incident where I had this girl, you know, call me a Jap and, you know, made me real upset, but my mother had to go and talk to the principal about that. [laughs] But yeah, we did okay after that, though. I mean, people kind of, you know—so what was the question? Let's see, I forgot. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 44:43

[laughs] Like, your interactions, like, before you went away to camp with people outside the Japanese community, and then just how they changed after you came back from—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 44:54

Oh, yeah, we had one restaurant on the corner there, on Main Street, where they waited on us. So, we always went there for coffee or, you know, not dinner, but, you know, just if you went on a date or something, you had to go someplace. So, I know some department stores wouldn't wait on us, but some did. We had a lot of good friends too. My father had a lot of good friends who opposed us going to camp. I mean, but they couldn't do anything, because it was President Roosevelt's edict to send us to camp. So, what could these friends do? They couldn't do anything. But when we came back, we stayed on top of the grocery store, in my grandmother's place, and we slept in what was the boarding house. So, it was handy to have that to come back to, because a lot of people didn't have a place to come back to. They had to go to the Presbyterian Church or the Buddhist Church and stay there. So, we stayed there. We slept up there. We cooked downstairs. [laughs] It was kind of hard, and then, let's see, then my mother and father got divorced. So, then everyone was grown and gone already. So, it was okay.

**Theresa Eckert** 46:21

How many rooms were in your grandmother's boarding house?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 46:25

Oh, not too many. I think—one, two, three, four—six or seven. Yeah.

**Theresa Eckert** 46:33

What did the inside look like? I mean, was it plastered, or was it just boards? Or was it—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 46:39

I can't remember that. I can't remember what it looked like. I just—no, I can't even picture it. Sorry. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 46:46

[unclear] that you lived there? [laughs]

**Stephanie Grijalva** 46:50

Do you know any families that had a male that was taken away right before the internment camps?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 46:57

They had what taken away?

**Stephanie Grijalva** 46:59

The males or, like, the fathers or uncles or—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 47:02

Oh, yeah, a lot of the fathers were taken away before camp, because they were supposedly leaders of the community. And they thought they might have ties to Japan or something. So, they separated the fathers and put them in different camps. And so, eventually they were able to join their families into—

**Theresa Eckert** 47:26

Poston?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 47:28

Poston or wherever they were supposed to go. So, yeah. Roy's father was in Poston, though he didn't get taken away. I think it was more or less the leaders of the community that were taken away. As if they would do anything bad, huh? But yeah, that's what happened.

**Theresa Eckert** 47:56

Do you remember the general, like, feelings, and, I mean, was it anxious? Was it, like—what were the general emotions that were kind of being experienced at the time, you know, where you were going through the process of, you know, being told to report in to the, you know, armory, and then from the armory to the rodeo grounds, and then finally after three months to the camps in Arizona?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 48:18

Well, you know, I was thirteen. So, my father and mother probably could answer that question better. But, you know, they're not around. As a thirteen-year-old, my saddest thing was leaving our pets. You know, we had four dogs on the ranch. They were really dear to us. And that was the part that I think hit us the hardest when we were that age. I was the oldest, and my youngest sister was only about eight, I think. I think she was eight. No, maybe she was—yeah, maybe she was eight or nine. So, and then to leave our friends, you know, in school. Just taken out of our classroom and just, you know, brought to camp. That was not—that was kind of sad. And we had a—you know, we had a comfortable home. It was a ranch home, and it was, you know—my father fixed it later so my mother had a nice stove and, you know, a nice washing machine and everything like that. But to go from there into these barracks was pretty hard. And we were only allowed one suitcase. So, each of us had one suitcase to bring to camp and had to leave everything else behind. Everything. So, that was difficult.

**Theresa Eckert** 49:53

Did you help your mother pack?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 49:55

No, she did all the packing. My father left—he had a extensive gun collection, because he was a hunter. I mean, he liked to go hunting ducks. I think they did a little deer hunting, but not much. I think it was mostly ducks. He belonged to the local ski club where they shot clay pigeons. And they went to New York once, six of them, to participate in a shootout. He loved the guns, and he had really nice guns. He had, you know, it was—the stock was metal, and he had it inscribed with pheasants, and, you know, birds, and it was really—he had beautiful guns. And he had those stored with a real nice friend. So, he was able to keep those. So, they took our radios away. We had a piano, so my mother had to store with them too, the friends that we had. We were offered ten dollars for our piano. And, you know, people had cars they had to give up. They were offered, like, a hundred dollars. You know, people took advantage of these poor people. It was terrible. They knew we had to leave everything behind. So, they just came in like little, I don't know, little—well, they just came in and took advantage. [laughs] That was not nice. But it's war hysteria, I guess. I don't know.



**Theresa Eckert** 51:29

So, you did have friends here in the community that were willing to, like, help store things for you—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 51:34

Yes.

**Theresa Eckert** 51:35

—and then help you reestablish yourselves when you came back.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 51:38

A lot of us did. A lot of us didn't. A lot of people didn't. So, my father was a town person. So, he knew all the people. And being a farmer, he knew some other Caucasian farmers. So, it was okay for him too, but I do remember all the things they threw in the slew, you know, like Japanese scrolls, which were really nice. They just threw them in the slew. They threw my grandmother's, you know, she had this little—you remember I told you the shrine and those gongs and those things? They just threw them in the slew. They didn't want to be caught with them. Sometimes people were getting shot at because they were Japanese, right before the war—I mean, right after the war. And once we were home and my mother was in town shopping—I guess it was a weekend, and the four of us were home—and the shot came right through the living room, and we just didn't know what to expect. I mean, we just—my sister crawled to the phone and called my mother and my father. They came home, and it was a hunter hunting across the slew. And he was hunting—he was shooting a duck in the water, and the bullet glanced up from the water and hit our house and broke our glass and came right through our house. It's a wonder it didn't hit one of us, you know. But that was—it didn't happen to us. [laughs] Yeah, it was kind of scary in those times a little bit, I think. We didn't go out. I know my mother didn't go out too much and stayed home for a while. A little scary time, because people were calling us derogatory names and stuff.

**Theresa Eckert** 53:33

How many families came back? You know, you said that you had managed to make contact with seventy-two families.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 53:39

Those families didn't all come back.

**Theresa Eckert** 53:41

Yeah. How many of those—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 53:42

Came back? I don't know how many families came back. Not too many, and then a lot of them that came back left again too. So, I don't know. I don't know anything about that. Sorry. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 54:05

So, I think that that's good as far as mine. You have more?



**Stephanie Grijalva 54:12**

I am really curious about your New Year's celebration.

**Mae Sakasegawa 54:16**

Oh, [laughs] yeah.

**Stephanie Grijalva 54:19**

Would you be able to tell me the process that your family went through as far as cooking and then—

**Mae Sakasegawa 54:26**

Well, we made our own sushi. You know, I make the kind that's got inari, which is, like, soybean cake, which is hollowed out, and then you put the rice inside. You've eaten those probably. I like to make those because they're easy. I don't like to make the other rolled up kind because they're harder, and you have to cook all that stuff and put it in. So, we—my daughter bought those. [laughs] But we bought mochi at the Buddhist church. They pounded the mochi there, and then they sold it in little packages, so—they'd come in little, like, little cakes and we bought those, and I made this ozoni, and you kind of melt this—you boil some water and you melt this mochi in there, and then you put it into this little bowl. And then in the meantime, you have this whole big pot of vegetables cooking in this broth with—I don't know what you—let's see, kamaboko is like a fish cake, and Japanese potatoes, and Japanese bamboo shoots. Japanese daikon, which is a big radish. And I stewed this in this, and then I poured it over this. And we had, you know, for New Year's, we had a bunch of Caucasian people here too, and Filipino people, and they all liked it. They all had, you know, a little bowl of it. So, they like that. And then we had chicken teriyaki, which, you know, you go to restaurants and get that, and beef teriyaki. And we had this little bowl of black beans. My grandmother used to cook it for days, but I just bought a can of it at the grocery store. It's very tasty. It's good eating. You have to eat some of it to have good luck for the next year. So, that's a Japanese tradition. What else did I have? I had, let's see—nishime, which is a whole bunch of vegetables that I [unclear]. And I cook it and then I put it in a big platter. And this is all vegetables. And then I had salad, cucumber salad. And I had pickled radishes. [laughs] I can't remember everything we had now. We had tempura things, and we had mochi ice cream for dessert. Do you know what mochi ice cream is? You do? Do you? Oh, I have to give you some. [laughs] It's pretty good. I forgot some of the other things we had. We had a whole table full of stuff. And people brought stuff too. My daughters brought stuff. Whenever we have a barbecue—I have a barbecue once a year here, and we invite a lot of friends, and we have about fifty people here, and everybody brings something. So, all I do is supply the wine and the meat.

**Stephanie Grijalva 57:44**

Your daughter has a vineyard, doesn't she?

**Mae Sakasegawa 57:45**

Yeah. [laughs] She brings me the wine. That's nice. People ever want to tour a vineyard?

**Theresa Eckert 57:52**

I love touring vineyards. [laughs]

**Mae Sakasegawa** 57:54

Oh, okay. Maybe we'll go someday. How's that? [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 57:58

Sounds like a plan to me. [laughs] So, when you were a kid, just—did you guys decorate the boarding house for, you know, celebrations and stuff like that?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 58:07

No, we didn't grow up in the boarding house.

**Stephanie Grijalva** 58:10

It was men, right?

**Theresa Eckert** 58:12

Just all men there?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 58:13

No, when we were growing up, they were all gone. I mean, my grandmother had already quit doing the cooking and the boarding house. So, we never got in touch with—there was that one man that came from Japan that did that painting. He's the only one that I know of that stayed there. I don't know any boarders going there. No, I don't think so.

**Stephanie Grijalva** 58:42

What were some of the dishes that you used to do as a child but that you weren't able to do this year?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 58:51

Oh, I don't even know what you call it. [laughs] There was a dish called konnyaku, which is like some rubbery stuff. [laughs] My kids don't like it, so I don't make it, and she had this other—in those days, she had to get this big block of dried fish, and she had a little box with a blade in it and a drawer in the bottom, and we used to shave it, and then they got the shaving and made this, you know, sauce from this broth, from this shaving. But now they have it in little bags, so we just stick it in, [laughs] and we don't have to do all that work anymore. Makes it a lot easier. We have a Japanese store in town here called Tokyo Foods. She carries a lot of things. But if you want to go really shopping, you go to San Jose and go to that market over there, and they have everything, but she carries a lot of things here in the little store like that. Yeah, she's from Japan. She married an American. So, I like to cook Japanese. I make a real good chile verde too. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 1:00:13

Maybe next interview we'll just do dinner. [laughs]

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:00:15

Okay. [laughs] That'll be fun.

[Interview ends. Cuts to footage of Mae Sakasegawa talking about family photographs and paintings around her home.]

**Theresa Eckert** 1:00:24

And then also I forgot, because we'll have you sign the release too, so that we can go ahead and archive the material.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:00:34

This is my kindergarten class. I must have been five years old, and the teacher—forgot what her name was—but there are people that lived on Lake Street. This is a Tsuzumi and Imai. Tsuzumis had a dry goods store. Imais had a bathhouse. I don't know who that is. But this is Janice Kitamura. They had a ranch. And that's me. And that's [unclear]. They had a ranch right on Main Street before the war. Second grade—no, first grade. She's the principal, Ms. Decarli, Mrs. [unclear]. And that's me. And that was some of these—that's the boy that lived across the street from us. His father was a barber, Atsuo Fukuda. And I think that's Willie Fujino, who had the market. And this is the second grade. And that's me right there. This is John Ottone. His son had a restaurant that's called—it's on South Main there—The Great American Restaurant, or something.

**Stephanie Grijalva** 1:01:51

Oh, Elli's?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:01:52

Elli's, yeah. His son has it, just John Ottone. And I think was [unclear], the Chinese girl. She was my good friend. Third grade. This is me right there. And this is [unclear], the Chinese girl. Ms. [unclear], our teacher. This is fourth grade. That's me right there. There used to be [unclear] Kodani, Alice Taguchi. This is [unclear], and that's Chin, Martha Chin. And she was Leong, Mildred Leong. Willie Fujino [unclear]. Janice—that's my sister-in-law now, Doris Sakasegawa. Going on to the fifth grade, that's me right there. Kodani, [unclear] Kodani. That's Doris again. [unclear], Martha. These are Chinese girls. This is Willie Fujino, [unclear] Imai. Because, I mean, they're all the same kids I grew up with. Sixth grade. See, they had—Lincoln School had grades, but they had also A, B, and C. So, I was in the b class up to here. In the sixth grade, they put me in the A class. So, I had a whole different group of friends in my classes, because these are the kids I grew up with. But in the sixth grade, they promoted me to the A class. So, I had different friends here. But some of them I still was—Janice is still here, and this is Warren Ahtye, who is Wallace's brother. You met Wallace, right? Yeah. And this is the seventh grade. That's me right there with Virginia Lee. She's Chinese. This is a Filipino girl. I forgot what her name was. And this is [unclear]. Her father had the Presbyterian Church Japanese school. This is my eighth grade. Ms. [unclear] is the one that—we couldn't graduate eighth grade, because we were at the Salinas Assembly Center. So, she came in and brought us our diplomas into the assembly center. So, these are all the kids that we didn't get to graduate with. All the Japanese kids here were already in the assembly center. So, those are my school pictures. [laughs] When he was courting me. [laughs]

**Theresa Eckert** 1:04:54

Now how did he give you that picture?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:04:57

We got engaged. The night we got engaged, he gave me the picture. He gave me—what did he give me? A wristwatch and this? I forgot. Anyway, I used to own a fabric shop and sewing machine shop. So, we had a mechanic that serviced our machines, but we had to learn how to service them too. But I was a small dealer, so I always won the trips to go to different countries, because my quota was so low. So, I got to go—this is to Hawaii. I got to go to—let's see, I went to Switzerland twice. I went to France. I went to Portugal. I went to Bahamas. Mississippi River Cruise. What's that island off of South America between—it's in the Caribbean there. I forgot what that was. My daughter took that trip. But it's been fun selling sewing machines and stuff.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:06:08

And so, who was with you in the picture there?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:06:11

Those are the president of Elna and the distributor, I think. My husband Roy. That's my little grandson.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:06:23

Oh, those blue eyes. You did say blue eyes. [laughs] And then you had mentioned too your silk painting from your friend.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:06:32

Oh, yeah. I have one here. This is—I love this one, because it's so simple, but it's—see, it's got the cherry blossoms, and look at that butterfly. [unclear] how dainty that butterfly is.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:06:55

So, why did he paint those? Did he just paint them as—it was a hobby or—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:06:59

No, he was a painter, and he came to Salinas to probably demonstrate his paintings.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:07:08

And do you remember his name?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:07:10

Sukido. Mr. Sukido. These are my high school graduates. [laughs] This is my oldest. So, they were so young here, and then this was on our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. I took that picture. But, you know Cook's Photography here in town? Ken Cook? He took all these, but his father took my mother and father's wedding picture. [laughs] So, the other paintings over here—this is my favorite one. So, this one here is the Sakasegawa one, and this is the one that belonged to his mother. It's two different families. I forgot what the—mother's name was—I forgot.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:08:13

How is your aunt doing?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:08:16

Dorothy? She's back into rehab at Pacific Care here, but she's a lot worse off than my other aunt. You know, Fumi, she had a stroke too, but she got well right away, because I took her to the hospital within three hours. But, see, Dorothy, we don't know how long it took to take her there, because if it's after three hours you lose your—

**Theresa Eckert** 1:08:36

It's a lot harder.

**Stephanie Grijalva** 1:08:37

How long ago—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:08:39

For Dorothy? Oh, two months maybe.

**Stephanie Grijalva** 1:08:45

So, right around her birthday?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:08:48

Yeah, her birthday is January. Yeah, maybe. Yeah, she was quite knowledgeable, huh? [laughs] These things were given to me. This is a rice field. These are farmers eating rice balls, and his wife is serving him tea. That was given to me. And these were made by a Japanese lady in Japan, and these are supposed to be precious. I didn't know how precious they were until someone told me. She did all this by hand. See all the detail in that? And this is supposed to be—my brother-in-law gave it to me from Japan. I think it's, like—Shishi is like a dragon, I think, or something like that. It's a dance that they do. And this is a samurai. My grandkids broke this. [laughs] They were playing ball in here. This is my grandmother's. They call it Jubako. It's tiers of boxes that they bring to—and then they have a—call it—well, anyway, they wrap this scarf-like thing over it, and they carry it for lunch too, you know, different places, parks, and cherry blossoms and [unclear]. So, that's supposed to be a nice one, because it's got that gilded stuff on there.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:10:28

It's very pretty

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:10:39

This is a game they call Go. You're supposed to line up five in a row and stop the opponents from the five in a row. It's very—it's like chess, you have to really think—

**Theresa Eckert** 1:10:52

You can get through, huh?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:10:53

—way ahead. Otherwise, you get caught, you know, before the other has five in a row. So, my grandfather used to play this all the time. And this is the other game that I was telling you about, called

Hanafuda. These are the cards that my grandmother played with. See, they are all about flowers and everything.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:11:18

Oh, how pretty. Are they wooden?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:11:21

No, they look like some sort of composition.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:11:25

Oh, okay.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:11:31

Yeah, so that's what they did. And then, of course, my grandfather had an abacus, because they could go faster than a calculator on this. So, that's the abacus. This is—like, you know we play badminton here? But they had these little balls with the little feathers on it, and they would play, you know, throw it to the other person or the person would throw it back. And that's what this is. It's a kind of a bat.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:11:58

Did you play that as a child?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:12:00

No.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:12:00

No? [laughs]

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:12:01

I played badminton in junior high. That's about it. I'll show you that other thing.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:12:15

How old was he when he painted that?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:12:17

I don't know, maybe thirty, maybe older. I don't know. I don't know how old these kids are anymore. [cuts to footage of painting on wall] Do you need help? Got it? [cuts to footage of different painting] I don't know. I just liked it. I had the fabric store at that time, and it reminded me of all the different fabrics or something.

**Unknown** 1:12:47

What did Roy say when you started hanging up all the paintings?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:12:50

Oh, he didn't care. He got kind of used to the ones downstairs. He hardly ever came upstairs. This is mostly the kid's place. So, that, and then this one here. Oh, this one here—my brother-in-law was Roy's sister's husband. Back east, he was a art instructor in a private girls school. And he taught painting. So, he did this of the Japanese girl, and he gave it to me. It's more modern. I'll show you this real nice one that I like. That's got about forty layers of paint on it. Do you like it?

**Theresa Eckert** 1:13:39

Yeah.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:13:39

Do you like? Oh, I just wondered if other people liked it too.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:13:42

It has a lot of patterns and textures in it. That's interesting.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:13:49

Also, I just like two artists—Hokusai, and what was the other guy's name? Hiroshige. Those are the two I liked the best. I think these are Hiroshige, and the more [unclear] ones are Hokusai.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:14:10

What's this picture right here?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:14:14

That's—I don't think that's in the book, but that's Roy's family.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:14:17

Oh, okay. So, which one is he? Where's he at in the lineup?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:14:24

Here.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:14:24

Right there?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:14:25

Mm-hmm. This is my father and grandfather. My grandfather looks like my—my father looks like my grandfather.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:14:37

Very much so. Very much so. And so, this is the one that would walk you home from school and give you treats?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:14:45

No, he didn't walk me home. I walked home by myself, and he would be home. He had a stroke, so he had a cane and everything, so he couldn't do that. But, excuse me. And I must have been pretty young there, huh?

**Theresa Eckert** 1:15:09

So, these were your—

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:15:11

Paternal.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:15:12

—paternal grandparents. How old were they when they came to this country, about? Do you know?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:15:23

I could look it up. I have the year they were born. So, we could kind of figure from there, right?

**Theresa Eckert** 1:15:27

Figure it from there. Yeah.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:15:31

This map here is nothing to do with them, but I got this old map from Rand McNally, which I was really glad to get. And I put all the places that Roy and I traveled to.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:15:43

Oh, I see them. I didn't notice it.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:15:47

[laughs] We put little pins where we've been. We haven't been to a lot of places. We, you know, he got so he couldn't travel, but we went to quite a few places. We didn't get to go to England. We wanted to go to England, but we never got there. He never wanted to go to Africa or Egypt. So, I said okay, but he wanted to go to South America, but we never got there either. So, our place is right here in Central America, Costa Rica. Right there. Costa Rica has ocean on both sides.

**Theresa Eckert** 1:16:27

It's a lot of places. A lot of pins.

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:16:33

Yeah, we went to quite a few places. [cuts to footage of military hats laid out on table] So, that's his hat from there.

**Unknown** 1:16:38

Could you repeat what it was?

**Mae Sakasegawa** 1:16:41



This is his 442 hat. Their motto was "Go for Broke." And this is from the Spreckels Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was a member over there too. Because after they get back, they go to—I'll show you this picture. You don't have to take this.