

## PREFACE

Although the Japanese have contributed greatly to the economic and cultural growth and welfare of the Valley, little has been done to acknowledge or to record that fact.

Success Through Perseverance: Japanese-Americans in the San Joaquin Valley, is an attempt to record the social, cultural, and economic history of the Japanese-American immigrants and their descendants in Fresno, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties. The primary purpose of this collection is to gather, from people who have witnessed or participated in the development of the San Joaquin Valley, information that will help scholars to place the role of the Japanese-American in perspective in western American history and to record their experiences.

Men and women from diverse occupations and geographical areas within the four counties were interviewed by people who were familiar with the background of the subjects. The result is the preservation of the intimate knowledge and unique experiences of over 140 people from rural and urban communities. Issei pioneers and Nisei who have lived in these four counties prior to and after World War II have been interviewed for this collection. Because the Issei men had to work several years in America before they could afford to marry, their brides were often 10 years or more younger. The Issei generation is passing on, there are more Issei women remaining than Issei men. The Issei women were the stabilizing factor in the settling of the Japanese in America. It was through their influence that Japanese schools and churches were established so that their children could take their places proudly in American society and still retain their Japanese cultural heritage. In the final analysis, Issei men who succeeded were those who had the encouragement and support of their women.

The interviews for this project were solicited through the Japanese and English language newspapers in the area. Volunteer interviewers' workshops were conducted in six key locations throughout the area. Many of the interviewers were long-time residents who were acquainted with the subjects.

The interviews were conducted in Japanese and English, depending on the interviewee, but all transcriptions are in English. Transcriptions of the original tape recordings were reviewed and edited by the subjects before being released. The original tapes have been erased or returned to the interviewees or their families.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the interviewees, interviewers, transcribers, and translators, who are listed at the end of each interview. Without their dedicated efforts, this collection would not have been possible.

Particular thanks are extended to the Administrative Council of the San Joaquin Valley Library System and especially to Mr. John Kallenberg, Fresno County Librarian, and to Mrs. Marie Marley, Project Executive Director, for their constant support and to the National Endowment for the Humanities for providing the funds for the Project.

The interviews collected here have not been refined into an organized history; rather, they are the raw material from which the reader may draw his own conclusions about the history of Japanese-Americans in the San Joaquin Valley. Because each person and each interview is unique,

there is no attempt to group the interviews by subjects discussed. The interviews were divided into volumes covering Fresno County (95 interviews) and Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties (24 interviews). Interviews are arranged alphabetically within the volumes.

Keith Boettcher  
Yoshino Hasegawa