

Poston Oral History
 Misako Shigekawa
 July 16, 2012
 Transcribed by: Jenel Ronn
H – Interviewer
M – Interviewee

TC	SCRIPT
00:00	<p>H: "Alright, this is an interview with Misako Shigekawa on September 19 in Santa Ana, California by Heather Koga. Also present at this interview are Wayne Koga, the cameraman, and Marlene Shigekawa um Misako's daughter. For the record, do I have your permission to audio and videotape your interview?"</p> <p>M: "Yea."</p> <p>H: "Yes, okay. Please state your name and its spelling."</p> <p>M: "Oh its Misako Shigekawa. M-I-S-A-K-O S-H-I-G-E-K-A-W-A."</p> <p>H: "When were you born?"</p> <p>M: "Uh, 1-2-[1909]."</p> <p>H: "And where were you born?"</p> <p>M: "In Los Angeles."</p> <p>H: "K. From what country did your family originally immigrate to the United States?"</p> <p>M: "Japan."</p> <p>H: "And who were the first members of your family to come to the California area?"</p> <p>M: "Th-they were the first w-well they first went to San Francisco area an-and then they came down to. In fact they lived in La Habra at the time I was born but they had to go to LA where the hospital and doctors were. That's where I was born there, LA but actually, they lived in La Habra."</p> <p>H: "That's where my grandma lived. When did they arrive?"</p> <p>M: "My father came in 1898. He never went back to Japan."</p> <p>H: "Why did they come to California?"</p> <p>M: "Well, it's a long story. My father was in the diplomatic service and he uh, oh, h-he went as a government [inaudible] Russian Chinese war. He [inaudible] don't know that much about it. I think the fly over Korea into Japan and China, I think. So uh, what from I can remember, he was gone when the war [through] those days uh, different countries had ships that went around the world and he was traveling and they uh when he was in China he contracted malaria so when he came to San Francisco he had a malaria attack. So he went to the hospital and they couldn't wait for him so she ship went on, they left him here. Well so meanwhile, well when in San Francisco, he uh met friends there and uh uh you know worked late so worked like house boys you know, those days they have m-uh-men did all that you know, they do the cooking and they uh these wealthy people would uh have teach him how to clean house and teach him all these Japanese you know people to do. So well in fact [laughs] you know grandpa, my father, uh knew his friend who was working for Mrs. Stanford, Stanford University, and um he had uh he died, but before he died, he started late in Stanford University because his only son passed away quite suddenly. Well the story my father tells me is that that um he had he was in the gold Russian mining business at the time [railroad] you know, and they hired all these Chinese immigrants. They didn't hire them, they brought them over from China so when they got through with them, a lot of 'em were killed in mining explosions and my father heard the story that they did that on purpose. They [didn't know what to do] with the Chinese immigrants. So Leland, Stanford's father you know, felt guilty about the whole thing so he started a [lean] in Stanford University."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
08:42	<p>M: "Here about those carved birds? That they made in Poston they sold 'em to [inaudible] I have I have one, oh you, you took that other one [background noises] you hear about it in Poston? Oh, this is the blue jay [talk over each other]. Someone started and they took wood uh off of egg boxes that were sent in to, shipped into Poston, and it was a it was a some type of wood, wasn't plain pine or whatever so somebody artistic started uh copying birds from the National Geographic you know, they have a lot of bird pictures in there and they took a corking saw then they'd cut it out and then they would sand and sand to get the shape you know. And then some of 'em they look like ceramic, they did a real, you know, good job. So my father did it as a hobby and this, this is you know, they weren't as good as some of 'em but then my father did the carving and sanding, my mother did the painting. You know, and we sold, they sold a lot, you know. But uh at one time, you familiar with LA, the [books], in LA? They were selling them there for 20 dollars. The-the ones that are very very nice you know, it was so well done it was like porcelain, they were so pretty."</p> <p>H: "I would buy one [laughter]."</p> <p>M: "So, you know, I saw it at one time shopping or something, I went up asked them where'd you get that, she said she bought it [books] in LA. And it's just like a ceramic pet. And they had all kinds of uh, this is a blue jay but uh they red robins and hummingbirds and every kind of bird and you know, they're very uh, I had that framed, I shoulda, I had a frame that I kept that one of these- you, you would- I think it's up at the house isn't it?"</p> <p>[Marlene: "No, I have it."]</p> <p>M: "You took it home? Yeah."</p>
10:42	<p>H: "What do you remember most about growing up in California?"</p> <p>M: "Oh, [laughs] California."</p> <p>[Marlene: "The horse. She had a horse."]</p> <p>H: "Oh well, from high school I went to SC and then when I graduated, I worked for a in LA at at [Rikso Drug] for a while and then I was offered a job managing a drug store. And so I did that for [inaudible] [San Pedro], and I managed it for quite a while and then my folks bought the place and I ran it for 9 years until war broke out. And then we got, you know, had to leave to be interned so, we went to Poston and and then my husband's family's from Anaheim so they had an orange grove so we were able to, the house was still there, they had it all you know, uh boarded up you know so the neighbors took care of the place so, so I've been in Anaheim since what, 40... 45. The year war see, ended in 45 didn't it? So we came back to Anaheim in August I think war ended in July or something?"</p> <p>[Marlene: "August."]</p> <p>M: "Was it?"</p> <p>[Marlene: "After, after Hiroshima. So we came after [talk over each other]."]</p> <p>M: "Yeah, anyway."</p> <p>[Marlene: "End of August, 45."]</p> <p>M: "Hey, did you ever sit down about the, you still have those newspaper clippings that I gave you when they sued the Western Defense Command. You know, they don't bring that out, you don't hear about it do you? But the newspapers is true. See there were 20 uh Nisei citizen group that were gonna sue the Western Defense Command uh Commander [DeWitt] was head of the Western Defense and they were gonna sue for uh interning us without due process of law. So my husband, and there were several and they all dropped out and the E-uh-what's that union? U-u"</p> <p>[Marlene: "ACLU."]</p> <p>M: "Yeah. They put out the money and they got the lawyers and t-took them to court. And uh finally there were only 3 left, a doc-there was a lawyer, and a dentist, from up north and daddy. Um they sued the Western Defense Command. Well, [DeWitt], there was no laws that he could do anything about it so he resigned."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
13:04	<p>M: "So and then another major came it was a third one finally and then, you know they kept fighting back and forth [laughs]. My husband told 'em, said something and he-the c-commander said well we should've had you guys on our side. Well I said [laughter] wasn't our [laughter] our you know, why we were there, I said you [put it, put it] you know, so anyway. They didn't issue any they couldn't decide what to do said well, go back to your camp and something will happen; we'll let ya know. And that was in April or something, I think and in July, [after this fight], they opened up the coast. You know, cause they were afraid, cause there's that, there's the due process law they couldn't, that was illegal. Now, you know, with Reagan, you never can do that now. Cause it's illegal to uh deport people without due process of law. See so, you know its funny nothing said about that so we had he had his first page in LA Times Examiner and uh uh we kept the papers and I think [Gerry] made a slide of them didn't he? She still has the newspapers. Front page of LA Times and Examiner, both. All the articles, you know about the court trial. But, but it never has come up has it? Nobody paid any attention to it at the time. Cause that was 40-cause you were born in 47."</p> <p>[Marlene: "44."]</p> <p>M: "44. We came back when you were just about 2, almost 2."</p> <p>[Marlene: "A year old."]</p> <p>M: "[Gerry] was 4."</p> <p>[Marlene: "No, I was, we-I was less than a year."]</p> <p>M: "Yeah, you were a little baby yea. [Gerry] was 2 and you were just real small."</p> <p>[Marlene: "Yeah."]</p> <p>M: "Yeah, they were both born in Poston."</p> <p>H: "Wow. Well, I'm gonna ask you some more questions about before you went to camp. What are some of your earliest memories of attending school?"</p>
15:03	<p>M: "I don't know. Well I had a rough time I know because there was a lot of discrimination when I went to school you know, and we were uh there were no other you know Orientals around those days in that area. I know, you know, we never could join clubs, you know, they never asked us to join, you know um cause we were Orientals I guess and even [SC], it shows what changes, you know. When we went you know, we couldn't join you know sororities or you know, we were never invited, and so we had our own uh organization you know. Japanese uh you know, it was like a group uh and so we used to have our own uh socials that way, that's how it was you know I mean there were uh but if you uh were real good uh they kinda accepted you to they sig, what is it that uh... what sorority do they have? But they we never had a social nothing at SC when I was going and that was 19 uh 27, I graduated in 1930. But now, my nephew went to SC he became president of the Trojan club which is the highest men's organization of SC campus. That shows how much huh? You, you know, you would never dream that here we couldn't you know. And then not only that uh uh, Ken Nakazawa who's the uh secretary of the Japanese Consulate at the time war broke out and his wife, he taught Asian uh s-uh [ringing noises] who's that?</p> <p>H: "[laughs] perfect timing."</p> <p>M: "She's supposed to come out and join me [laughs]. What was I saying [laugh]."</p> <p>H: "Oh, we were talking about SC, I was gonna ask you um, you said you graduated there, you got a degree?"</p> <p>M: "Yea, in Pharmacy."</p> <p>H: "Pharmacy degree. Okay."</p> <p>[Marlene: "We were talking about that ambassador and his wife."]</p> <p>M: "Oh yea, uh, so this secretary of the Consulate taught Asian History or something at SC and so uh, uh, his wife was our sorta sponsor, in our group, you know. And so during the war, you know, I mean during the time my husband's suing the Western Defense Command, they looked up all our background, both of us and the only reason they considered me an illegal alien..."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
17:29	<p>M: "... because I was friend of the secretary, secretary's wife. Cause they were connected with the Japanese Consulate I was an illegal alien."</p> <p>H: "Even though you were..."</p> <p>M: "And, and then my husband [4F] because [laughs] he, he worked on a tuna, you know, fishing boat and they, they were accused of uh trying to uh trying to imp-uh provide oil for the Japanese warship. It's and so, after trial then my husband had the lawyer get all the copies from the other and all that was in there, that's how we found out that they [said all those things]. So here, my two brothers were in the service, my husband's brothers, two were in the 442, and then [Sam], my brother and sister, one of them was an illegal alien while the others were in the service. And it's just how stupid people are doesn't [make sense]."</p> <p>H: "That was really stupid."</p> <p>M: "See, like uh, [Uncle Milton], my brother-in-law, he said he uh, and my other brother-in-law and then who else is in from the family? There were about 9 of our family were in the service. But my husband and I were enemy aliens. You know it's hard for you people to understand that isn't it?"</p> <p>H: "It is."</p> <p>M: "People get so hysterical they don't think things through. Like you know, I hate the democrats because well, you know, he's the one you know the 9066 that's why he, and he didn't have any right to do that you know cause he said that it was illegal wasn't it. But nobody paid attention to it at the time."</p> <p>H: "It's that hysteria."</p> <p>M: "Uh huh, just hysteria. And oh, I know, an-another thing you know, James Roosevelt, the president's son, uh was against what his father did. So one day I went to a wedding anniversary and these people were related to the uh uh... you know that New York family..."</p> <p>[Marlene: "The Rockefellers."]</p> <p>M: "Rockefeller. So uh, they, they lived New York and uh so these people had a reception in Beverly Hills so, my husband and I we wanted to go and James Roosevelt was there. Cause he came, he lived in California, Newport Beach [from what I understand] he, he didn't get along with the rest of the family. You know, so he talked to us and he talked to daddy, that he said his father made a big mistake and he was always against it. James Roosevelt told us that. You know, we met at uh [Debbie] you know, I think it was when [Sam] was in their wedding anniversary or something and he was there cause to the [do uh the Rockefeller]. The father is related to the Rockefeller family wasn't he? S-s-so, they were friends. All this happened you know it, and oh it was terrible those days but you know they did things without thinking, illegal things happened. Ya know, they took everything away from us you know, my drug store I didn't even have time to pack everything. You know, so we just left it. Not only that, they kicked us out of [their gaze] to move out so they said uh, you could come back in next day cause Army had to come in with guns and everything they were, you know, running all over so we went back the next morning and I left some of my good clothes and some other things locked up; somebody had broken in and stole everything. And my mother, grandma, had a collection of uh Japanese dolls and uh they couldn't get 'em into the car in the truck you know so she was uh, my brother was going back to pick it up, they woke up broke into it at night stole everything. You know, these people thought they had access to everything just because the war is how many [thousands] away from here and they thought that you know, they could just take over. And then like at first, people trying to move and they could take their like pianos and you know appliances, first they gave them good price and and they were offering 20-25 dollars for a piano, stove, so these people got real upset. They said they'd leave it rather than sell it. Ya know, what could they do with 25 dollars?"</p>

TC	SCRIPT
21:46	<p>M: "And so after you know, everybody moved out somebody got a hold of all those things. And people too, I heard were, they got worried after the war, they took all the cash out the bank and they buried it and they and some of 'em couldn't get it out of there. See those things, I know it happens but you know, i-it doesn't, you don't hear about it unless you're involved in it you know. It it you know, [laughs] so like you know, most of so many Nisei are democrats you know and I said and my father wasn't couldn't know it, but he was such republican cause when he grew up, democrats really said Jap Jap and they discredited Japanese people you know, in the days that we grew up. And republicans are more conservative so my father couldn't know it but he, you know he studied English so he always was a republican so I'm still a republican you know, because I feel like, you know [laughs] like that's why I said they put us in camp why do you want to be a democrat you know [laughter]."</p> <p>H: "I can completely understand that."</p> <p>M: "You know Bush is, they're the ones that actually got things straightened out now they can't ever, can't ever happen again, be interned like that anymore. We got letters and then we got a little money out of it [laughs]."</p> <p>H: "Yeah, I'll be asking you about that a little bit later."</p> <p>M: "Only 20,000 dollars now is 20,000 dollars nothing [laughs] to what we lost, you know. We, for being spending what almost 4 years in camp, that's what they paid us, 20,000."</p> <p>H: "There's really no amount that they could've given that would of made up for it. Um, gonna ask you another question about before uh internment um, can you tell me about your friends? Any friends you had?"</p> <p>M: "Oh yeah, I had a lot of friends and I went to church, I had church friends and you know, [Loshi], she was a friend from church and she used to uh, church friends you know, kept like this girl kept writing to me back and forth from camp you know, and so a church member, Christian people, said to ask her why she want to keep in touch with me. You know, that's all, you know [things like that you wouldn't think it's funny]. Remember uh, our neighbors uh told us that her neighbor had to throw out all the zories and Japan made goods all in the trash in the block. So my other neighbor went and picked 'em all up [laughter]. Cause it said made in Japan, you know, uh oh what was her name uh [Pete's] wife, [Pete Thayer's] wife, she told me that."</p> <p>[Marlene: "Oh, I forgot."]</p> <p>M: "[Laughs] Uh, she was our neighbor [Serena], she said this lady [inaudible] you know zories, because of Japan and now zories they have [laughing] she said in everything, she had dishes and everything made in Japan, this neighbor's throwing it all out. So this other neighbor picked 'em all up [laughs] she told me. She says [laughing] she's an old friend you know, so she was it doesn't make any difference to me, she went and picked them all up [laughs]."</p>
24:48	<p>H: "Did you have any friends that were different uh ethnic backgrounds?"</p> <p>M: "Uh, not, not really. Cause those days uh when I grew up, there weren't very many you know, especially Japanese there weren't very many around. I was always the only Japanese most of the time."</p> <p>H: "But you, you had other people you associated with that were..."</p> <p>M: "In church you know, I had a [Caucasian] friend that I still... but they're all gone [laughs]. All my friends have passed away."</p> <p>H: "So, when you were younger, when you were growing up um, what kind of foods do you remember eating?"</p> <p>M: "Wh-well we um, my father wanted us to be American you know, so he wouldn't let us use chopsticks when we grew up. So I learned to use a fork before I used the chopsticks [laughter]. And you know, he wanted us to be American you know, uh and that food so we ate you know, we didn't have well you couldn't get Japanese food because my mother cooked I remember you know, things but..."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
25:47	<p>M: "... you couldn't buy ya know, Japanese food. So we ate, you know, regular food."</p> <p>H: "Like what kind? What would you have for breakfast, lunch, and dinner?"</p> <p>M: "Oh just average, you know. Cereal, eggs and whatever, meat [laughs]. And my mother uh learned how to cook you know so uh she kinda uh to learn in English, she worked for families learning to cook so there she worked for nice ladies, they taught her how to cook so."</p> <p>H: "Oh. Do you remember like a sp-a special dish dish that she knew how to make, anything?"</p> <p>M: "Oh I don't remember [laughter]. We didn't starve anyway. And people ask us, this girl called from the [Rafu Shimpo], a [Pacific citizen], she wanted to know how things were during the depression. And I said well, uh everybody you know, was having a rough time. She says w-w what did, I says I don't remember feeling that I was deprived of anything. Everybody was in the same boat. You know, we ate and I don't remember like people talk that don't know say depression, depression but uh, like you know, we had enough clothes and I don't remember starving or anything you know, but they talk so much about it that that I don't know what her name, she was somebody from the [Rafu Shimpo] of the [Pacific citizen] called me you know, the article was in the, did you see the article? Her picture was in it too. It's right there isn't it? [Rafu Shimpo the pacific cit-] it's somewheres."</p>
27:24	<p>H: "We'll have to take a look at it in a little while."</p> <p>M: "Uh huh, yeah. You need to see it, the [Pacific citizen]."</p> <p>H: "Well you said you ate mostly American food then, did you ever eat any Japanese food do you recall when you were growing up?"</p> <p>M: "I guess what my mother tried to cook I guess. Stir-fry everything, they call it stir-fry now because of [laughing] you know [laughter]. Japanese [laughing] I think. I don't remember [laughs]."</p> <p>H: "Did you have a favorite food that you liked?"</p> <p>M: "Oh, not really. Everything, we ate everything [laughs]."</p> <p>H: "Did ya ever eat outside of the home? Did ya ever go to any restaurants or anything like that?"</p> <p>M: "They didn't have 'em those days."</p> <p>H: "Not really?"</p> <p>M: "[Laughs] I remember though when they had a grocery store, they sold ice cream cones so my father always wanted us to go to church, Sunday school, so I think we had to walk a mile or 2 so there was a little grocery store so we were supposed to take our nickel for the offering so my brother and I stopped and bought a nickel ice cream cone [laughter]. So he [laughing] found out about it and then we got scolded. So next Sunday we had to take 2 nickels to Sunday school [laughter]. I remember always, we just couldn't, we had to have ice cream cone and it was a nickel imagine. And we were just little kids [laughs] so we ate our ice cream spent the nickel so my father [laughing] we got, we had to give 2 nickels next week."</p> <p>H: "So did ya get in trouble for that?"</p> <p>M: "Yea, we got in trouble [laughter]."</p> <p>H: "I bet. Um, when you lived in the home so, your parents home, what kinds of things would you do? What kind of activities?"</p> <p>[Marlene: "You had a horse didn't you, mom?"</p> <p>M: "Huh?"</p> <p>[Marlene: "Horse, your horse."]</p> <p>H: "You had a horse?"</p> <p>M: "Oh yes! Um, when we lived in La Habra, my, I used to love horses; he got me a small horse. And then so I couldn't get up on it so I had to have rope with a box tied on it so I could get on the box and then I get on the horse and then I pull up the rope and then tie it on the on [laughs] when I get down, I lower the box you know and I, yeah, I always loved horses."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
32:53	<p>M: "Yeah, uh huh. I-I've done everything under the sun [laughter]. In craft and whatever, I made wall hangings, plant hangings, what else did I do? I made that little; show her that little doll I made [laughs]. Uh, I made all kinds of things I made, I sewed at craft shows and I just love to do that. In fact I came here and I did some [night caps] and things with the people here. You know, these women aren't very clever [laughter]. So like [Valentine] I made a little..."</p> <p>H: "Teach 'em a thing or two."</p> <p>M: "Ya know, they so, but I don't do it anymore. I did when I first came here but my hands are getting real bad now arthritis."</p> <p>H: "Well when you were younger, you said your family attended a church, what kind of church was it? Do you remember the name of it?"</p> <p>M: "Well my mother was a a... Epi- Episcopal Church. She went to mission school in Japan, she was a Christian before so my father was uh born and uh raised as a you know, Buddhist but he never carried through, he didn't like it. You know, he went, he never attended church but my mother was quite active in church. Whenever I mean as she grew up and we came to this area, then there was more you know, uh more Japanese and they had churches so she was went to church whenever. She was quite um, grandma went to that uh West LA uh Japanese Church there..."</p> <p>H: "Um, the church that your family attended, where was that located?"</p> <p>M: "Uh, that was in West LA."</p> <p>H: "West LA?"</p> <p>M: "Uh huh."</p>
34:22	<p>H: "Did your family [talk over each other]."</p> <p>M: "My in-laws were uh they were active in Holiness, Holiness, Holiness Church. Both of my in-laws were very active in church."</p> <p>H: "Did your family observe a day of rest?"</p> <p>M: "Day of rest? Uh yea, they would Sundays they never worked. Grandpa always wore a white shirt and tie up [laughter]. He was really at dinner huh? He never, after working the ranch, he came sit down; he always wore a white shirt didn't he? He'd have dirty pants on but he always wore a clean [laughing] white shirt sit at the dinner table you know [laughs]. And then he always said prayer. One time, grandma pray, you remember, she prayed so long, these kids got restless and they start laughing and they crawled under the table [laughter] remember one time [laughter]. Grandma prayed so long and the kids, she prayed in Japanese and they couldn't understand her so they start [laughter] and they crawl under the table. She really, she'd bless everybody in the whole family all over, everybody huh?"</p> <p>H: "I bet you can appreciate that now thought huh?"</p> <p>M: "Yea, I mean the kids didn't appreciate, bless them so but you know, and she'd pray on and on and on [laughter]. Remember that time? [Laughs] cause she was saying it in Japanese and they couldn't understand the prayer [laughs]."</p>
35:47	<p>H: "Did you guys ever do any activities together as a family outside of the home? Take any trips anything like that?"</p> <p>M: "Oh yeah. As kids, we traveled a lot didn't we? Our father, you know well not you know, mine did, after we got married we did a lot of traveling but before that of course, everybody had to work for a living so we couldn't travel any place you know, when I was growing up but after I grew up we did a lot of traveling."</p> <p>H: "So you said your father developed farmland but he never actually owned a farm or anything like that?"</p> <p>M: "No, no, he worked for the bank."</p> <p>H: "So did he, would he go to an office or anything like that or he just traveled around?"</p> <p>M: "No, he just reported I think, yea just reported to the bank I think."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
40:38	<p>H: "We're gonna move onto your wartime experiences. Um, where were you when you first heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?"</p> <p>M: "Oh, I was in uh [East at Turner Island]. Well in fact, that morning, just a sec, that was on a Sunday. I was going to a shower for uh...oh he became a came out a major out of the service uh Aiso? John Aiso, he was a judge. I don't know where he came from but he graduated [inaudible] college and he was a a became a judge finally but uh, he was married this distant relative of mine and they were having a shower out there we went out. So December, I got all dressed up and those days we wore hats and gloves you know, so I was going out to get on the street cause I was going to [get a street car]. So I was goin' and I got stopped because [laughs]. I guess the MPs were told to pick up any suspicious character. So they had guards all around this lot, you know how lumberyards are, there's a lot of space? So they're picking up Mexicans and Filipinos and and he made me go in and here I had gloves on and all dressed up and I had a coat with the fur on it and I was and they told me to go in there. So I was a real mad you know, so finally, the MP was sent around with guns you know so finally they had [Mike in] and he came up to me and he says why are you [bored], you don't belong here, get outta here, get outta here! And he let me out right away, you know. And then they serving him with all these dirty people and I was on the corner, you know? I felt, ya know, they picked up all this scum and they threw me in there with 'em. MPs ya know, they're so stupid they get a young fella they don't know."</p>
42:24	<p>H: "You were all dressed up and they thought you were suspicious?"</p> <p>M: "Ya, uh huh. Something, maybe a spy or something they threw me in [laughs]. Anyways, the minute after I came he talked to me right away cause I was standing, you know. And he says, you don't belong here, get outta here he says go home. And so I never got to the shower so my uh relative, uh she'd already had her gown and everything but he had, he was a reserve so he got called to service. He became out a major finally you know. You know John Aiso, he's quite a well known judge."</p> <p>H: "Well, when you heard about the news of the b-bombing of Perble-Pearl- excuse me Pearl Harbor um, what did you think, how did you react?"</p> <p>M: "We didn't believe it. None of us did. And then, you know, to think that everybody was scared to death and they thought that every illegal alien was gonna do something so they were all that's why they were afraid that, why would we? You know, they were scared to death, you know, to get out alive, you know and here it was just the next not, way how many thousand miles away where the place of the war was and they you know. So I think to this day, they've never convicted anybody of espionage. Have they? I think that once something is that happened bad is that a Caucasian was involved he, something but I don't think they ever found anyone that uh did any espionage, anything. I don't they ever did you know, that's what they were afraid of. But do you think they would do that? The idea of, they were afraid to death. Cause we lost everything you know, and-and they really like uh, uh Japanese people are different like the Mexican people, they're always faithful, they're always send money and that but uh most Japanese people they came here to make a living. You know, they didn't depend on the government. And and they you know uh like my father could, wanted his citizenship but it was in 57 I think when they said that uh Japanese- you could be naturalized right? Right, 57? So by that time, my father, 80 something years old he says when he wanted it, he couldn't have it he says I don't want it now [laughs]. Cause he was retired, what can he do at 87 anyway, he doesn't need to you know, he's said so. But my uh father and mother-in-law uh uh took and got their natural citizenship. My, my father said, he said, when I wanted it I couldn't have it. So he says, you know I mean it was no use to him by that time he says he didn't apply for it didn't get his citizenship."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
44:57	<p>H: "Did you talk to your parents about the news about Pearl Harbor? Do you know what their reactions were?"</p> <p>M: "Well, of course I uh, uh, I got married before that so you know, they were, they were living in uh, uh, let's see, they were living in uh... see we weren't living together so you know it was just the shock and we didn't know what was gonna happen and you know, then they went to Manzanar cause they moved they were in the LA area. And we were in Orange County so we had to go to Poston. See so uh you know, we got separated you know, but..."</p> <p>H: "How did the war between the US and Japan affect your everyday life?"</p> <p>M: "I don't know [laughs]. It was terrible [laughs]. Cause it you know, cause we weren't free to do anything we were in camp."</p> <p>H: "Oh, about camp, how did you feel when you were going to- when you found out you were going to have to be relocated?"</p> <p>M: "Oh well we, well you know, in a way we thought maybe we'd be safer. You know because we didn't know what was happening around here. Cause Army, you know they were all over the place you know um trucks with guns you know everyplace you went practically."</p> <p>H: "How did you...[talk over each other]."</p> <p>M: "We went, we went by train from Anaheim to Arizona and that morning the president of church you know, president of church in Anaheim, they just came out 4'oclock in the morning served coffee, doughnuts, you know cause you're out there in the cold getting on the train you know, the city of Anaheim some of the people came out and criticized them. These ladies, you know, came out..."</p> <p>H: "Christian charity and they're being criticized [talk over each other]..."</p> <p>M: "Criticized for helping out the Japanese."</p>
46:37	<p>H: "Um, how did you feel when you heard about the house- the house arrests and the searches? I'm sorry the house searches and the arrests. Did you know of anybody that had their house searched or, or arrested?"</p> <p>M: "Oh, I guess a lot of 'em were you know, they searched uh, especially those that belonged to like Japanese uh uh Chamber of, you know they had what Chamber of Comm- you know those organizations. They searched those people like I'm sure and they picked 'em up. You know, they took 'em directly to the special camp. Where was it they took em? They took 'em to [not one of the main ones], they were taken to a special internment camp. All the people you know [that was like a Japanese]"</p> <p>[Marlene: "Department of Justice"]</p> <p>M: "Uh huh, a private like a Japanese you know schoolteachers and people had to do with Japanese organizations that are like uh they picked 'em all up and they, they were some of 'em they picked 'em up and they never saw their family for a long time. You know, they just picked 'em up as they were. You know, they couldn't even s-s-uh say goodbye to the family, they just took 'em put 'em in. Where was it not Wyoming but one of those"</p> <p>[Marlene: "New Mexico [talk over each other]"]</p> <p>M: "They took but they, some of 'em finally [graduated some of 'em came out] but some of 'em stayed all through the war all."</p> <p>H: "How would you characterize the relationship between Japanese and non-Japanese Americans in California during the war?"</p> <p>M: "I dunno cause we didn't see, you know, we didn't I-I most of the people I think uh you know uh, wanted us to stay outta California. Cause they took over everything, farming businesses all you know, I don't think they wanted them to come back."</p> <p>H: "And so you were married before you went into camp correct? What year were you married?"</p>

TC	SCRIPT
48:30	<p>M: "Where was I married?" H: "Uh, what year?" M: "Uh, not let me see, 1940, 40, yeah 1940, 41, yeah cause [Gerry] was born yeah 40 yeah 41, 40." H: "Can you describe your feelings when you first heard that you would be relocated?" M: "Well it was bad [laughs]. We didn't know what was happening. We didn't know where we were going you know. In fact we didn't know because they had the shades pulled on the trains and they took us, switched here and there and got put us on the bus and they at [Parker]. And they took us in here it was, by that time it was about late in the evening..."</p> <p>Audio tape cuts out: 49:10 – 50:20</p> <p>END SCRIPT</p>

Poston Oral History
 Misako Shigekawa PART 2
 July 17, 2012
 Transcribed by: Jenel Ronn
H – Interviewer
M – Interviewee

TC	SCRIPT
00:00	<p>H: “Uh [Linda Todd] has joined us. She’s a another daughter?”</p> <p>M: “[Laughs] Yes, she’s my baby [laughter]. 63 years old baby [laughter].”</p> <p>H: “You look very young. You don’t look 63 [laughter]. Okay um, we were discussing the daily life at the camp and we’ve already discussed housing um, what were the meals like?”</p> <p>M: “Oh [laughs] meals. When they couldn’t get anything we were eating spaghetti and rice. So my mother hated spaghetti [laughs] and then one day they couldn’t get any food in so they had uh neck bones you know and then we had neck bone, boiled neck bones for days. And one time somebody high jacked the uh freight train to bring in uh milk so all the babe- so somebody you know, cause outside they were rations you know in those days. And they stole the milk train so there wasn’t any milk for a long time you know, I mean till they got you know some food. I-I remember that. Then spaghetti and rice no vegetables. Finally you know uh, Japanese people are ambitious, they started raising kinda [called regular], raising their own food so by the time we left, we had a poultry ranch, and you know a lot of the homegrown vegetables. See the thing was, the government wanted them to do that so that, see that was Indian reservation land the government leased it so they were supposed to return it so they thought we would, the Japanese would [build up] and have them move in. But they’re lazy, they moved several hundred people as the people left, they wanted to live in teepees and have everybody feed them. And so it never worked out that’s why they tore everything down they thought it was all mesquite there, sand and mesquite and uh like the Japanese people got smart and they you know, you ever heard of mesquite? It’s real hard wood they can make different things uh, some of ‘em made beautiful furniture and then and then somebody got smart they found jew-gems out there so uh, they got the I guess they got the government or the project [okay brought] their equipment in and made rings and didn’t you have a earring or something? Uh, you know, they made rings, earrings, and you know and they were beautiful stones huh? Didn’t I give you earrings or something? And they sold them you know, so Japanese people are ambitious, they just you know dug up you know and like they sorted wooden boxes, this wood that they made these birds out of the ends of egg cartons...”</p>

TC	SCRIPT
02:40	<p>M: "...that they shipped in and they, somebody got smart, you know, and they were all busy doing something. You know, uh like teaching, they had classes and then sewing and then you know uh to keep busy but of course I had my son and then two years later I had her. So I didn't do [laughs]"</p> <p>H: "So your 2 children [laughter] 2 chil-2 of your children were born in camp?"</p> <p>M: "I was raising my kids and I didn't ya know uh do much of anything."</p> <p>H: "What was that process like uh having children inside camp? Did they have a hospital there?"</p> <p>M: "Well, my son was the one, she's the fist born but the first born baby there, they didn't have a hospital so they had the barracks set up and [laughs] I got acquainted with anyway. Everybody was peeking in the window watching the delivery [laughs] can you imagine peeking in lined up at the window watching the delivery? The first baby that was born there, see they didn't have everything quite ready so they just improvised one of the rooms and then the hospital went up so uh you know, everything was, for four and a half years you know, it was really uh it's too bad that somebody couldn't have moved in and you know made something of it because it was it was quite nice you know; hospital, schools."</p> <p>H: "So it was something like a small city?"</p> <p>M: "And school is why the own people taught you know, the teachers all took over from there. The outside people that came into teach or whatever they some of 'em uh most the Army was doing the cooking and all that managing everything but the you know the Niseis all took over all that eventually."</p> <p>H: "You said it was like a small city? [Talk over each other]."</p> <p>M: "Independent it was independent, they had a canteen and they took care of the getting the stuff to sell and they took over everything finally at the end."</p> <p>H: "Did they, did the Japanese people have like their own kind of community police?"</p> <p>M: "Well see they had volunteers like uh my husband, [fortunately] you know they had these openings, he volunteered and then he had about 30 boy I don't know how many policemen he had they all volunteered the, the fire, you know uh, the firemen and all that they were all volunteers eventually they took over everything around the whole camp."</p> <p>H: "Was there much of a need for police and fire departments?"</p>
04:51	<p>M: "Oh yea, plenty, you know. Of course they always had the fence and the guards all over with guns you know at night and you know [laughs] my husband said they'd try to come in and find girls, you know the army camp was just 2 miles away they had a station there and they were still there you know, watching I mean they were [the Carver] was out there [laughs] anyway um. Then they started sneaking in liquor, the army guys, you know, putting it in trunks to come in at night and sell 'em so my husband got called and he had to catch the army guys and report them. You know, cause they couldn't have liquor so some of 'em you know, they'd pay any kind of money you know they'd sneak in at night, the army, and they'd think they could get away with these army fellas trying to make money. And things like that."</p> <p>H: "Did you have a job there?"</p> <p>M: "No, I didn't work at all."</p> <p>H: "What did uh, you or your husband, as a family or with your in-laws, what did you do for recreation?"</p> <p>M: "Nothing [laughs]. I didn't do anything. Well they had different things, at night they'd have, they had benches and they'd have shows uh you know, big uh screen out in the wide open you know, they'd sit on the little old wooden benches that uh, you know the men built and we'd have movies at night but I never went to the movies."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
06:13	<p>M: "I think [laughing] [Gerry] got lost and he and there's a canal there and oh they had the whole police department looking for him and all of a sudden he says maybe he's at the show. So he got up on the speaker he said anybody seen Junior? They used to call him Junior. Somebody says oh here he is and he had sneaked into the movie with some kid and was eating candy or something somebody's- [laughs] he was so mad he had the whole police force looking for him. He was only about 3 years old and he took off. And [laughs] so he said oh somebody oh here he is cause they knew him you know, policeman's son so everybody knew who he was and he said he said oh hi daddy [laughter] and I was in the hospital with her. So my husband didn't tell me cause it worried and one of the nurses came and told me I hear your son got lost and I thought I got all upset you know I was in the hospital having her and I got all upset and then, and then finally you know he came and told me that you know he took a shower and he told this man to watch him and the kid got away [laughs]. They thought he got drown in the canal had them search the canal and oh they went all the neighbors and nobody- you know here he was at the movie [laughs]."</p> <p>H: "Did you attend a church when you were at the camp?"</p> <p>M: "I did once and a while. When they started you know, they had barbeques, they had you know services, ministers you know finally, they had everything, you know church and that's why [Yoshi] I think her father started at one of the churches there. Her father was a minister so."</p>
07:58	<p>H: "Any other additional thoughts about camp that you'd like to share?"</p> <p>M: "[Laughing] I don't know. A lot of crazy things happened though."</p> <p>H: "You can tell us."</p> <p>M: "[Laughs] I don't know."</p> <p>H: "You can tell us a crazy story."</p> <p>M: "A lot of 'em these people have never heard cause you know, I-I- you know I was home so I hear all these stories and oh I know he'd have to raid poker parties [laughs] men would [coughs] they weren't supposed to but they'd sneak and play [coughs]. He could probably tell you lots of things you know at that time. One day two girls got in a fight cause one girl was uh trying to break up her family it was sister to the guy some girl, the two of 'em got in a fight and they were rolling in the dirt, pulling each other's hair [laughs]. He had to pull 'em apart [laughs]. And one day this man said that said that he was having problems so he went to see him and he said his wife beat him up and so he was hiding behind a cardboard box in the corner of the room [laughs]. Somebody said there was a big fight you know, they get you know, a lot of things like that happened they get couples got mixed up you know they're you know how they do when they get so enclosed in so much that they you know, they..."</p> <p>H: "Kinda get on each other's nerves."</p> <p>M: "Yea. Some of 'em just had a sheet between the you know their beds you know."</p>
09:27	<p>H: "So after you were uh released from camp, do you remember when that was when you were released?"</p> <p>M: "See uh, we came out in 45... musta been August yeah cause you were real small, she doesn't remember."</p> <p>H: "You said you were there for 4 and a half years?"</p> <p>[Marlene: "No, three."]</p> <p>M: "No, four. Three and a half uh a little under four years."</p> <p>[Marlene: "42 - 45."]</p> <p>H: "Okay. Um when you were released what did you do? Did you come back to California?"</p>

TC	SCRIPT
10:02	<p>M: "We loaded up what few things we had in our barrack and we came back, you know to our old home. At least we had a place to go to."</p> <p>H: "How did your life change during the war?"</p> <p>M: "It changed? It changed, I don't know [laughs]. I-it was horrible for a while because there's not a destination, and uh, for a while we had to stand in line to buy meat, you know in the markets like [alpha beta] but fortunately, the manager of the Anaheim, Anaheim [alpha beta] went to school with my husband so he was real nice to us, we had to stand in line for meat uh I had to go and so finally my two brother-in-laws came back from the service, his sister was attending uh where'd she go? Temple? She came, graduated, came home. So there were his folks, me with the two kids, and the boys came home both boys, so and then his sister so finally, my husband and I were feeding 'em all. And so he'd go to work and I'd go to buy groceries every day because I had to have at least we went through a loaf of bread, a dozen eggs, we could, we couldn't keep all that, we just had ice in the refrigerator those days and we didn't have you know those ice. So I had to go shopping every morning to buy food to feed them. So one day I thought, nobody gave me the money except what my husband brought home. So I decided I'm not gonna go shopping today I-I was so upset that I had to do it, nobody offered to go. So I didn't go, well we didn't have much to eat that night [laughs]. We had eggs or something only [laughs]. I never forget that, I just got mad I said I don't wanna go shopping anymore and the days that she was born, I went to shop with grandpa and I felt kinda bad and I was pregnant so I went by the doctor bout 3 o'clock he said I think you better go to the hospital. So I was shopping that day for the family. So I don't know what they did when I was in the hospital having her [laughing]."</p> <p>H: "They probably managed somehow [laughter]."</p> <p>M: "Managed someway [laughter]. But my poor husband worked so hard to feed the whole gang and then we lived, you know we wanted to move on cause I had the 2 kids but you know, they wouldn't rent to you know, [Nikkeijin] people then and so uh then the uh newspaper boy, they wanted caretaker you know, of her house and I don't, we didn't tell the parents we were looking for a house we knew we had to get out of there but you know, they would, you know, they said the job was taken or something, you know so finally uh, he finally started trucking oranges from Anaheim to uh San Francisco to send overseas. He'd get up 4 in the morning, make a trip and come back you know and so he worked with this man that he went to school with so he had this home that he had rented out but he said there were you know, [yoopers, okies] and he said they were way behind in rent. So he evicted them and let us you know, have the house so we were lucky. [Girls], remember the house we lived in? And uh, we lived there for 9 years and I was saving every time I had extra money I had a savings account I put in 5 dollars, 10 dollars a month or something. It took us 9 years to save 5,000 dollars too buy a home. So we start looking course to couple places we went you know, we find out they would sell to [Nikkeijin] you know, uh, so uh finally we went you know, once we bought, we went there and the salesman was really nice so I said you think we could buy this house? And he looked at me kinda funny. So we told him you know, well you know, we were turned down. He says well I didn't know anything about it. So he went back to the office he says, called us in there, no Mexicans or Japanese, Orientals. So, so he told 'em so they decided that was wrong so they crossed it off. So he came back and he says well I inquired your neighborhood and and you know uh like him, he was in the service he said, he said [laughs] he said hell no, who cares who he is he says, I like Japanese better than some other. [Inaudible] and the next neighbor, it it was a [cottage] and my husband happened to know them from school."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
14:18	<p>M: "Well anyway, these people more or less knew so they sold us the house. We had to fight. And we were gonna take it to court but they, you know they knew that wasn't right that was in the clause itself uh the uh I think it was one of the big, one of the big you know, realty companies they had that clause in there. And we had to fight for it. But then the neighbors were real nice and we didn't have any problem but uh, like [cottages] and then the neighbor's father they grew up in the area so he didn't care he's so, but you know we finally moved but you know they just kinda uh wasn't too good about even letting us look at houses. They didn't want any you know, but we we broke the ice and you know, another couple Japanese couple moved down the street and you know, we didn't have any problem, they were all very nice to us. But boy, it was kind of rough. But then uh my husband grew up in that town, so he gradually you know, got back in with them you know, so we got settled down and they were all good to us you know, after."</p>
15:30	<p>H: "What are your memories about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?" M: "Oh, I, oh. Well, we knew a lot of people in that area so they had to do something I guess [laughs]. But we went back to Hiroshima; we traveled all over Japan and uh let's see, when what year was it? We went there and its all cleaned up. You never know they even got a monument like uh when we went, [here] you know where they bombed, its still ya know, we saw spots but it's still the way they bombed it but in Japan they cleaned the whole thing up there was no sign. And that whole place was bombed out. You know, they had a monument there. You know uh, [Shingshou], my cousin took us there we had a tour of Hiroshima and you'd never know. I thought maybe you know, we'd see some but nothing. It was all cleaned up. That shows Japanese people are ambitious you know they, they want keep the memory and forget about it so that's the monument is all that's there. It's all cleaned up. It's amazing you know, when there's nothing there! It's all cleaned up, you never even know."</p>
16:34	<p>H: "What was your response when you heard that the news uh- excuse me, when you heard that the war was over?" M: "Oh, well we were at camp of course you know. We were all excited. Then they said we could leave you know. But the sad part of it was so many of 'em didn't know what to do. They had no place to go and some of 'em had saved money but some of 'em you know, didn't have money you know. Like we were fortunate because uh we had orange groves so uh you know, you know how packed when picking oranges when you don't pick your oranges so they had accumulated the income from the oranges and uh, saved that for us. And took it to my in-laws so we had you know, we were able to get along with it and he had picking up product, picking what you get check from the packinghouse so we you know, we didn't starve because my husband worked. So finally he went commercial fishing for a while cause that was a lucrative job at the time and then uh he was looking for engineering job cause that's what he wanted to do. So our neighbor's brother was a he was a manager of the... construction so he started working there. He started out with working [laughing] in out in the field so he got mad and so this man came out he said what's the matter he said I'm not gonna work out here in the dirt. So they gradually worked him up so he ended up having a good engineering job he worked for that company, traveled all over United States. That's all he'd want, we finally got started living normally [laughs]. And then from there he went to work for aero jet, you know, jet propulsion, and then he when they finished the job, I didn't know that but ya know they did the second phase of the first uh flight to the moon. Some part they did and didn't ya know, it was secret so he didn't tell us until he died, one of the fellas he worked with told me about it. You know that uh, what's his name uh, uh..."</p>

TC	SCRIPT
23:23	<p>M: "... Chicago my brother and sister were there and then [Heto] was there huh? But he went finally to Camp Savage to do the interpreting. And my brother was in the Air Force here Air Force base even and I'm an illegal alien isn't that stupid? [Laughs].</p> <p>H: "Was there ever any resentment between the non-interned and the interned Japanese that you know of?"</p> <p>M: "Any what?"</p> <p>H: "Um, any resentment or animosity?"</p> <p>M: "Oh I don't think so. They took it pretty well. We just say [speaks in Japanese] [laughs] that's the way it goes. Make the best of it. And I think you know [Nikkeijin] people were worried to struggle to get back but some other people probably didn't say may not have done that. You know, they're willing to make a living and start over. Don't you think so? Like your parents everybody started working and tried to make the best of it. What makes me so mad is Spanish people come in expect the government to give medical aid and you know and they spend the money eating and everything but they're, you know, they want everything given to 'em. I don't know, I..."</p> <p>H: "Just can't relate huh? Because of what you've been through right?"</p> <p>M: "Yeah. Uh huh I mean, they don't have any ambition and they're how many generations five or six generations they can't even speak English? You know they hire people here that are green card people because I asked this young girl; she speaks perfect English, if she's helped with medication. So I said where did you go to school? Did you go to high school here? She says no, I said well where did you come from? Mexico. And all these places hire these kinda uh you know use outta those people. And it is scary because those kinda, now this, they've turned this, you know I don't think they're supposed to do that. They're supposed to have a nurse in charge. But these girls that come from Mexico, half of 'em you can't understand, and they're giving out medication?"</p> <p>H: "That could be dangerous."</p> <p>M: "It's scary! Really. You know, and they run the places like this you go every place they only get paid 9 dollars an hour. You know, it's really uh pitiful. Well it's their fault see they don't educate themselves so what kinda work can they do? They can't read hardly and half the time I can't understand 'em. Now these [inaudible] you know, [inaudible] ladies have a fit. You know, like I can kinda make out but they can't understand any of 'em at all. I think that's how they run these businesses so that's all like I say, I never recommend anybody to come here. I've talk to 2 or 3 ladies and they feel the same. There's no place to go so they stay here but they never recommend anybody to come here."</p>
26:27	<p>H: "Um, what do you recall about the McCarran Walter Act?"</p> <p>M: "The what?"</p> <p>H: "The McCarran Walter Act."</p> <p>M: "[laughs]."</p> <p>H: "Um, what interest did your parents have in the possibility of becoming naturalized citizens? I think you already discussed your father."</p> <p>M: "Yeah. They figured well, at their age you know, they were almost well 80s, late 80s, they figured well, why should they go? [Laughs] But, then like I said my in-laws got it. You know, they decided they would do it."</p> <p>H: "Um, well were your parents alive for the enactment of the redress?"</p> <p>M: "What?"</p> <p>H: "Were your parents still alive when there was the enactment of the redress? Money?"</p> <p>M: "No, th-they were dead. Yeah, no, they weren't alive then."</p>

