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These are slightly edited transcriptions of interviews conducted by the Center for Oral History, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. The reader should be aware that an oral history document portrays information as recalled by the interviewee. Because of the spontaneous nature of this kind of document, it may contain statements and impressions that are not factual.

People are welcome to utilize, in unpublished works, short excerpts from any of the transcriptions without obtaining permission as long as proper credit is given to the interviewee, interviewer, and the Center for Oral History. Permission must be obtained from the Center for Oral History for published excerpts and extensive use of transcriptions and related materials. Transcripts and cassette tapes may not be duplicated or reproduced by any party without permission from the Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, 2560 Campus Road, George Hall 212, Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96822.

This project is supported by the Hawai‘i Foundation for History and the Humanities under an appropriation by the Hawai‘i State Legislature.
DEDICATION

The collection of transcripts in these volumes is
dedicated to all of the people who have their roots in
Kakaako.
We wish to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the following people whose work and ideas were directly responsible for the success of the Kakaako Project.

Research and Interviewing

Gael Gouveia
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Francis Zane

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We are grateful to the many other dedicated and sincere people not listed here who have contributed their time, energy and talents to the Project and to this publication.

Most of all, we thank the former residents of Kakaako, without whom this project would not have been possible.
INTRODUCTION

The Ethnic Studies Oral History Project (ESOHP), established by legislative appropriation in January, 1976, was created to record and preserve interviews with individuals who have recollections of events, personalities, and places that would be of value to the community, teachers, students, historians, writers, and researchers.

Special effort is made to record history told by the working men and women of all ethnic groups who made Hawaii's land productive, who overcame differences between ethnic groups, and whose efforts to better the quality of life were realized through struggle and hard work.

In its first year of operation ESOHP interviewed 43 individuals from Oahu's North Shore plantation communities of Waialua and Haleiwa. Kakaako was originally selected as the site of a subsequent project in part, to provide contrast with the rural plantation lifestyle found in Waialua and Haleiwa through collection of information from individuals residing in a more urban setting adjacent to downtown Honolulu.

Library and newspaper research yielded scant documented information about Kakaako (refer to Kakaako Chronology, p. 1), reinforcing the validity of an oral history project there to supplement existing documentation.

In 1978, Kakaako, just Waikiki of downtown Honolulu bounded by King, Punchbowl, Ward and the waterfront, comprised 600 acres of prime real estate with a tax value of $400 million. Redevelopment of the deteriorating area under Act 153 of the 1976 Legislature calls for joining "the strengths of private enterprise, public development and regulation into a new form capable of long-range planning and implementation of improved community development." Census records for 1970 indicated a population of 837.

The area which was rezoned from residential to industrial in the 1950's, currently houses small businesses and urban industrial establishments, most of which would be displaced by high costs when redevelopment takes place. Raymond Suefuji, executive director of the Hawaii Community Development Authority, suggests that Kakaako can be "a community, a place to live, work and play with parks and schools, pedestrian and bikeways." Shortly after the turn of the century, Kakaako was such a community, housing numerous residents, small stores, stables, blacksmith shops, churches, schools, and parks.

In the 1920's, Kakaako, according to a Honolulu Star-Bulletin account, was one of the city's earliest residential districts housing the poor, pauper,

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1Waialua and Haleiwa: The People Tell Their Story (9 volumes), available through Hawaii State Library System.
3Ibid.
working class, laborers, seamen, cannery workers, laundry people, iron workers, longshoremen, truck drivers, fishermen and county workers. Portuguese, Hawaiians, Chinese, Japanese and a few Filipinos resided in Kakaako. Census records estimate a population of 2,640 in 1920. By 1940, Kakaako's population numbered more than 5,000 residents. Rezoning in the early 1950's generated a rapid decline in population, as people moved away to outlying areas.

Preliminary interviews with several long-time former residents of the area indicated the existence of strong personal ties between individuals and to the community of an earlier day. Some signs of these ties remain. The Kakaako Community Association, formed by residents in 1949 to re-establish the Japanese Language School, still meets annually though its present membership no longer lives in Kakaako. The Kakaako Sons Barefoot Football team active in the 1920's through the 1930's also has annual reunions.

Following initial research, the ESOHP formed an advisory committee made up of former Kakaako residents including Eleanor Heavey,* Keisuke Masuda, Esta Pung,* Joseph Pung, Kichisaku Takahashi, Ed Toma, Reizo Watanabe, and Francis Zane. The advisory committee shared their own Kakaako memories, helped to identify potential interviewees, and provided project direction assistance.

The project staff completed further research and subsequently developed a chronology and a guideline questionnaire. Three interviewers then went into the field to begin gathering information from former residents about the community, ethnic relationships, and the lifestyles of 1910-1950.

Upon completion of 11 preliminary interviews, the ESOHP staff summarized and began to evaluate interview content. A decision was made to further delineate the emphasis of the project, to focus on the interaction between individuals in the areas of organized sports, organizations (cultural, religious, community, and political), and in neighborhoods (the particular areas within Kakaako in which an interviewee lived). A total of 26 long-time former residents, one large land owner, and the daughter of "Mother" Margaret Waldron, a Pohukaina School teacher, were interviewed.

Kakaako has produced a proportionately high number of well-known individuals whose roots stem from Kakaako, including University of Hawaii President, Fujio Matsuda; District Judges Frank Takao and Kenneth Harada; politicians Sandy (Matsuno) Holck and Andy Anderson; entertainers Sol Bright, Gabby Pahinui, Don Ho, Iolani Luahine and Danny Kaleikuni, and other notables too numerous to mention, of whom residents of Kakaako are proud.

However, it is the unsung heroes of Kakaako, including the laundrymen, machinists, firemen, housewives, cannery workers, and lesser known entertainers who are the subjects of these oral history interviews. The individuals of many ethnic backgrounds included in this project have contributed to the development of Hawaii's history. Their oral histories reflect individual contributions within families, through work and community service. It is those stories that ESOHP has documented.

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*Since deceased.
Interviews with the 28 individuals in 39 separate sessions were conducted between September, 1977 and June, 1978. The interviews produced 55 hours of tape and 1183 pages of final-typed transcripts which are bound in two volumes in alphabetical order.

The chronology and the project questionnaire used as a guideline for interviewing are located in the appendix. A photo section includes photos of each interviewee as well as historic photos provided from interviewee's personal collections. An index and a glossary of foreign terms are located at the end of each volume. A map of Kakaako which indicates the locations of important places circa 1927 is also included at the end of each volume. A biographical summary which includes a "time line" or brief chronology of significant events in the individual interviewee's life precedes each interviewee's transcript. The "tape number" on each transcript corresponds to the number of the tape from which the interview was transcribed. The original tapes may be listened to at Hamilton Library Hawaiian and Pacific Collection.

All interviewees were encouraged to read their transcripts and to make any additions or deletions they considered necessary before signing the following legal release:

In order to preserve and make available the history of Hawaii for present and future generations, I hereby give and grant to the University of Hawaii Ethnic Studies Oral History Project as a donation for such scholarly and educational purposes as the Project Director shall determine, all my rights, title, and interest to the following: Tapes of interviews recorded on (date), Biographical information dated ________, Notes of untaped conversations (date).

Minor editing was done by the ESOHP to make the transcripts easier to read. The staff made no changes to compromise the flavor or authenticity of the interviews.

A few interviewees made grammatical or syntactic changes in their transcripts. Several interviewees attached lengthy additions or explanations. These changes have been incorporated into the final transcripts in parentheses ( ). ESOHP staff insertions for clarity are bracketed [ ]. These transcripts represent the statements which the interviewees wish to leave for the public record. The published bound transcripts are available for public use through the Hawaii State Library system, at the University of Hawaii Hamilton Library, and through the ESOHP office. Researchers, writers, teachers, students, and the general community are encouraged to use the materials in other works. Permission for use is in copyright page.
The ESOHP staff believes that understanding the contributions of Hawaii's multi-ethnic working people will foster within individuals a positive ethnic identity and an appreciation of the proud heritage of all Hawaii's people.

Chad Taniguchi, Project Coordinator
Gael Gouveia, Research Coordinator
Henrietta Yee, Administrative Assistant
Vivien Lee, Research Associate

Honolulu, Hawaii
September, 1978