BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Emma Manouaokalani Kaawakaauo, 59, state clerical worker

"[At the Lalani Hawaiian Village] our commencement which we call an 'uniki involved various types of costumes. The first thing that we wore were holokus. We did a number with holoku. After the holoku was the grass skirt. Then after the grass skirt was the ancient hula."

Emma Manouaokalani Kaawakaauo, Hawaiian, second of three children, was born in 1927 in Honolulu, O'ahu. Her mother, Emma Manouaokalani (Kaeo) Kaawakaauo, was a long-time teacher at Waikīkī Elementary School. Her father, Elias Kahoohuli Kaawakaauo, worked in the printing rooms of the Honolulu Advertiser and the Paradise of the Pacific magazine.

The Kaawakuos lived in the Hamohamo section of Waikīkī for more than thirty years. Emma Kaawakaauo learned the hula and entertained at the neighboring Lalani Hawaiian Village. She attended Waikīkī Elementary School, St. Andrew's Priory, and a junior college in Iowa. She also attended Waikīkī Japanese-language School for one year.

For the past thirty years, Kaawakaauo has been employed by the Territory/State of Hawai'i. She currently holds a position with the Department of Transportation.
MK: This is an interview with Emma Kaawakauo at her office in Honolulu, O'ahu, on April 11, 1985. The interviewer is Michi Kodama-Nishimoto.

So, for today's first question, I think I'll start with your family background. I'd like to know what your father's name was?

EK: My father's name was Elias Kahoohuli Kaawakauo.

MK: What can you tell me about your father's family's background?

EK: He was born on Moloka'i in Wailau Valley. That's on the northeastern side of the island. The family originally came from the Big Island on the Kona side. They were part of the Great Mahele of the land that was assigned to the families in the 1840s or so. They went to live on Moloka'i.

He lived in the valley until his parents died about, oh, I guess, he must have been about five or six years old. After they had died, he was sent to live on the east side of the island with an aunt. She raised him.

But I guess because of the occurrences in his life, he lost his speech. Unable to speak. As he grew older, he didn't go to school because of that. So what he did is, he worked for his aunt.

They had a poi factory on Moloka'i. And what he'd do is, he'd help make the poi and then deliver it. I guess working around animals, in particular the horses or the donkeys, somehow or other, helped bring his speech back.

I guess by the time he was ten or eleven, they sent him to Lahainaluna School which is where he got interested in the printing trade. He stayed at Lahainaluna [School]—was it three or four years.

But in the meanwhile, this family, this aunt, they moved to Honolulu. Lahainaluna was a boarding school. So, during his holidays in the summertime, he would commute to Honolulu and live with them.
I guess, by the time he was about thirteen or fourteen, because he was also very talented with his hands, carpentry work, they were building a brand-new home in Honolulu. They said, "Well, you are not able to go back." He was prevented from going back to school. They felt that he was more useful helping here in Honolulu.

By that time, he had an older sister who was already married and had a family. What he did is, he ran away. He ran away from the family and went out to look for work. He was going in town, looking for work, and he met this man who happened to see him on the street. That was how he went to work for the Advertiser.

He was about fourteen or fifteen [years old]. And then, he went to work as a custodian janitor and pretty much stayed there from that time on.

MK: And now for your mother, what was your mother's maiden name?

EK: My mother's maiden name was Kaeo. Her family, going back, oh, three or four generations prior to hers, were from Waikīkī. Her parents . . . Let's see how I'm going to do this. Gee, do you want explanations about her mother and father?

MK: If possible. Since they were long-time Waikīkī residents, it would be interesting to know.

EK: Yes, uh huh. My maternal grandfather was from the Big Island, I guess, from the Kohala-Kona side. I don't know very much about his family life. But their family came to Honolulu.

Apparently, he did well at school. He went to Royal School. I guess, these students, somehow or other it's been explained to me, that students who were picked to go to Royal School were supposed to be talented and more than above-average intelligence. He went to Royal School.

I don't know what grade level they went up to, whether it was the eighth grade. But he was supposed to go on to Japan to go to school. This was during the time of King Kalākaua. But he didn't want to leave home, so he turned that down.

My grandmother went to the [St. Andrew's] Priory. Let's see. She went to Kawaiaha'o Seminary, and the Priory. I'm not certain whether she graduated or not. I don't know how high the grade levels were, whether it was just to the ninth grade.

She came from a family of ten children. It was during an epidemic in Honolulu that half of the family was taken by illness--her parents and four of the children. So there were six of them left.

An older sister, who happened to be the oldest child, helped raise them with their grandfather--her maternal grandfather. I'm not certain whether there was any relationship between the then-royal
family but they were wards of Queen Lili'uokalani.

Of course they lived in Waikīkī. So that part is very... Because at the time, I guess, Queen Lili'uokalani was going through difficulties. She never talked about it. It was very difficult for us to get any background on her life.

She'd just sometimes casually mention that "the queen didn't let us do that," or "we had to get permission from the queen." But no further explanation beyond that.

Of course, they were prevented from speaking Hawaiian. I'm not sure just about where in that. So we never got to learn Hawaiian from her.

Those were the two. My grandfather was, oh, something like a clerk--a law clerk with the police department. I don't know anything further than that, other than her own grandfather.

MK: Whereabouts in Waikīkī did your mother's family live?

EK: They lived in, at the time when I was small, I can remember they lived on Lemon Road. In fact, right across the street from where the village [i.e., Lalani Hawaiian Village] was. See, the village was from Kalākaua [Avenue], then Lemon Road was your first street. They lived back there.

MK: Were they nearer to the Kapahulu [Avenue] side or the Paoakalani [Avenue] side?

EK: Paoakalani side.

MK: Earlier you mentioned that members of your mother's family were wards of Queen Lili'uokalani. As wards, where did they live?

EK: Well, this would go back, actually, to my grandmother's family. So I'm not sure, but they lived in what is 'Āinahau in Waikīkī. That's the area that's close to the present Ka'iulani Hotel. But just exactly where in 'Āinahau, I don't know.

Whenever the queen traveled, you know, when she went from island to island, they went with her.

MK: I'm wondering if there are any other remembrances that have been handed down to you about their life with the queen?

EK: Hmm. Very, very limited. Actually, several members of the family tried to get her to talk because I'm quite sure she had a great deal to tell, but I don't know. I sometimes felt like she and my grandfather were still living during the years of the monarchy. (Chuckles)

He even spoke with a British accent. You know, "To-mah-to" and "You caun't do that." That sort of thing.
MK: I was just curious. Ethnically, what are you?

EK: Well, we always say we are pure Hawaiian. But I learned from my aunt, my father's sister, that we have Spanish from his side of the family.

I guess it shows in some of the members of my family. My sister is fair and my brother is. You know, when they bleach out, they're quite fair. My father had a sister who was very fair and a brother who was very fair. But he doesn't recognize that.

He says, "I don't recognize that. I'm pure Hawaiian!"

(Laughter)

EK: My [maternal] grandmother looked like she was Chinese. I had asked her one time, because she had a huge photo of her grandfather and he looked like he was Chinese. She was insulted. I mean, not because of the Chinese but because we were inferring she wasn't pure Hawaiian. It could have been any other racial extraction. So we just say we're pure Hawaiian.

MK: Oh, that's really curious. Let's see, I think I should also ask you about your mother, herself, you know, where she grew up, and what she did in her early life.

EK: Let's see. My mother was the oldest child of her family. I think she was the only child for about maybe four or five or six years. She was kind of the baby of Waikīkī. All of these families that were in Waikīkī had a very great deal of warmth for her.

She went to Waikīkī School, then to Central Grammar School, which was the only intermediate school at the time. And then, from Central Grammar, she went to McKinley High School, and then to two years at Normal training [i.e., Normal School].

Her first teaching assignment was on Moloka'i which is where . . . . No. I'm sorry. I'm reflecting back, because I said that's where she met my dad. She may have met members of his family because he was already living in Honolulu.

Her first year of teaching was on Moloka'i. She went horseback riding one day and fell off the horse, so that ended her teaching career on Moloka'i. She was sent back to Honolulu. Then the next year, she went to 'Aiea Elementary School, and then the third, year at Waikīkī [Elementary School] where she remained until she died.

MK: What year did she pass away?

EK: She passed away in March of '62.

MK: Later on, in the interview, I'll be asking you about your mother's long career at Waikīkī. Now getting to yourself, when were you born?
EK: I was born in February, 1927.

MK: At that time, you told me that the family was living at Hamohamo Road.

EK: Yes.

MK: Where did the family live prior to that?

EK: After my parents got married in 1924, their first home was in Cunha Apartments. It was located on what is presently Kapahulu Avenue near the corner of Lemon Road and Kapahulu Avenue. Let's see. How do I want to put that? Before my brother was born in 1925, they decided to purchase a home. Just before he was born, they moved to Hamohamo Road.

It was a home that the Ahakuelo family was living in. They had been living in that home for twenty-five years. So I think they built the home. I don't know the circumstances as to why they had moved but they moved elsewhere. My parents bought the home. At that time, I remember my dad saying, "It was an exorbitant price of $5,500!" (Chuckles) Then of course, I had an older brother, and myself, and a younger sister.

MK: I know that earlier you mentioned that your parents lived in the Cunha Apartments. What do you remember about the Cunha Apartments? I know that you never lived there, but did you ever see the Cunha Apartments after you came onto the scene?

EK: Yes, I did, mainly because it was right across the street from the park--the [Honolulu] Zoo and the [Kapi'olani] Park. They were little, what you might call cottages. I can recall this because we have photos. Maybe I should have brought the photos for you to see, because my brother was on the porch. Oh, wait a minute, he wasn't born yet!

Well, anyway, (chuckles) they were very low to the ground just about a step or two with a little porch, what they might have called, in the front part. I guess, the front bedroom extended out to the porch. Just little cottages.

MK: About how many of those cottages did the Cunhas own?

EK: Gee, this would be a guess. But I would say there were about four. Two next to each other and two in the back. That would be just a guess, though.

MK: What do you remember or recall being told about the Cunhas who owned the Cunha Apartments?

EK: Hmm. Not very much. But I'm uncertain as to whether they owned any other land in Waikīkī. But of course, where those apartments were, they owned that land.
MK: Later on, your family purchased their home on Hamohamo Road from the Ahakuelos for $5,500. I was wondering, what was the size of that lot?

EK: The lot was fifty feet by one hundred [feet].

MK: And from whom did they purchase the lot and home? From the . . .

EK: Whether any company was involved? That, I was never told and I never asked. (However, some years later my parents mortgaged our home with Territorial Savings and Loan, so this may have been the company involved.)

MK: Thinking back to your childhood days, would you describe for me that home on Hamohamo Road? What it looked like?

EK: Our house was built high. You had to climb about eight stairs to get up to our front porch that faced the mountains or the ma'uka side. We had a combined, what we called then, a "parlor." We call a "living room" nowadays. And a dining room. That was the main room in the home.

There were three bedrooms, and a bathroom, with a kitchen. My dad, because he liked carpentry, added a washhouse out in the back. I think he may have added a bedroom with that, I'm not sure.

At the time that my parents moved to the home, there were every kind of Hawaiian flower growing in the yard that you can think of. Roses; 'ilima; of course, hibiscus. Gosh, what other flowers?

I think one of the reasons the home was built so high is that we had a spring below, underground. We had three huge mountain apple trees in the front yard. That was one of the reasons that I think the trees grew there, because of the spring.

And at the back on the side, there were two mango trees. And in the back, three huge mango trees. So, there was fruit plentiful at some time of the year to eat. My dad planted some papaya and pomegranate trees in the back yard, too.

In the front yard, under the mountain apple trees, were what we call the lau'a'e. It's a type of fern. The front, our hedge, was of various colored hibiscus plants. On the side, we had four o'clock blossoms. (Chuckles) If anyone knows what that is. Somehow or other, the flowers would wilt, seemingly at the hour of four, so they were called "four o'clock blossoms." And pikake plants on the side there. It was a lovely, you know, big yard.

MK: How about any livestock kept on the property?

EK: We had a dog that was given to my brother on his first birthday. He was called "Poi Dog" because (chuckles) we weren't exactly sure what he was. He lived to be thirteen.
MK: Healthy dog.

EK: Actually, he just died of old age. So he, kind of more or less, grew up with the family. He was also a neighborhood pet. He went and visited various homes at certain times of the day. He also went to Ibaraki's and Aoki Store to get a bone.

(Laughter)

EK: I just came to think of that. He went swimming every day. He loved the ocean.

MK: Oh, he did?

(Laughter)

MK: That was a really nice description of your home. Now, starting with your block, where you lived at Hamohamo [Road], next to the Parkers, could you tell me who your neighbors were, say starting with the Parkers going down Paoakalani [Avenue], down onto Cartwright [Road], and up again onto Kapahulu [Avenue], and up again on Hamohamo [Road]? And if you can remember anything outstanding or something that comes into your memory about the families, can you share that information?

EK: About the neighbors? Say, beginning from the Parkers, they lived on the town side of us. They had a younger daughter who was my age. So, actually, we were playmates. I went to their home quite often to play with her. Then the Purdys lived next to the Parkers fronting Paoakalani Avenue. The back portion of their home.... Oh, I just happened to think of something. The back portion of their home was right next to our back part. Something just occurred to me, but I'll go on from here. Their children were much older than we were, so there was no play, as far as that went.

Then next to the Purdys, was the DeRegos family. Mr. DeRegos was the custodian of Waikiki School. So, we were, oh, I would say close to them because of my mother being at the school.

Then going off of Paoakalani [Avenue] on Cartwright Road, the Matsuzawas family lived next to the DeRegos. They had a daughter who is maybe a couple years younger than I. But she was a childhood playmate in growing up.

Next to the Matsuzawas was a camp, what we call a "Japanese camp". I remember the Sasaki family, not too clearly. Of course, the Kosaki family lived there. But the one family that I do remember was the Tomomitsu family, simply because they had a son who was my classmate.

Then after the "Japanese camp," there was a Duarte family. I'm not certain whether they were next door or beyond that. But the only other family that comes to mind on that street, is the Rasmussen family. They lived at the corner of Cartwright [Road]. Their property fronted both
Cartwright [Road] and Kapahulu Avenue. Would you prefer that I go right around the block?

MK: Yeah. You can come right around the block in the ma uka direction.

EK: Next to the Rasmussens as you go along Makee Road, then you turn the corner onto Hamohamo, was an empty lot. I remember the empty lot because we used to go and play (chuckles) in that lot. Then there was the Jackson family who lived in the next house.

Next to the Jackson family going town side was the Japanese camp. The owner of that Japanese camp lived right next to it. You mentioned her name.

MK: Asukas?

EK: Asukas. I remember that family, not their name because I knew the spouse of the daughter. Those are the Komatas.

Then beyond the Asukas, were some cottages that were owned by the Ewaliko family. The first family was the Makuakane. They were a Hawaiian family. Then back of them, were the Kawaguchi family. I may have got that twisted, but two families. They were duplex homes.

In the next duplex was a Thompson family. Alec Thompson family. And then an older daughter of the Ewalikos lived in the other. There was another little home on this Ewaliko property. I don't remember the name of the family. But a son, who was about the same age, was named Noburo. We use to call him "Nobu." That's the only thing that I can remember about that.

Of course, the Ewalikos had their family home on that. There were a couple of daughters that were close to my age that I got to know better during my junior high school years.

Next to the Ewalikos was the Williams home. Then we're back to where we're at.

Across from our home was the Yamashige family. Actually, they lived in Japan and rented their home. They had two homes there. Unusual as it is, the family who lived in the front house, their son was a playmate of my sister's. But I can't remember their family name.

(Laughter)

EK: All I remember, his name was Masaru. (Laughs) Then there was another family that lived in the back. Then next to the Yamashiges was the Richards family.

Next to the Richards home, on the corner of Hamohamo [Road] and Paoakalani [Avenue], at the time when I was growing up, was another
Japanese family living there. But I can't remember their name. That's unusual because she was another playmate--someone who I played with. But they lived there just for a very, very brief short while, and they moved elsewhere. After they moved, there was a Macomber family that lived there. Then they moved. This was about the time I was in upper elementary [school]. Someone bought the property and built apartments on the property.

MK: And as you go up Paoakalani [Avenue], what families lived there?

EK: Going up Paoakalani [Avenue], the next family was the Punohus who lived in their home. Next to the Punohus, were a Kaeo family. No relation to my grandfather. That's unusual. I think I'm saying that now, but as far as I knew they were not related. Then next to the Kaeos was the... Oh gosh, I can only remember their daughter's married name.

MK: Would that be the Joys or the Bishaws?

EK: The Joys, Mrs. Joy was a Punohu. After her parents died, the home went to her. Yeah, that was it. I can't remember the name of that family on...

MK: I have the name of a Kiakahi family on that block?

EK: Right! Yes, that was it. Kiakahi. Very active politician--well, very active in politics I would say.

MK: He was a politician?

EK: Not a politician. He was unusual that he was the only Democrat in a sea of Republicans. (Laughs)

MK: In Waikīkī?

EK: All of the families that I knew of, my parents were very strong Republicans.

What I remember about Mr. Kiakahi was that when [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt, I guess, in '32 was running for president, he was the main supporter. He would stand on the corner of the street up on Kalākaua [Avenue] and sing, "Happy Days Are Here Again" with his huge lau hala hat, and talk about President Roosevelt. I remember that sitting across the street on the beach and watching him. (Laughs) Funny, all these things are just...

MK: They're coming back to you?

EK: Yeah, they're coming back. (Chuckles)

MK: Then next to the Kiakahis, then?

EK: Next to the Kiakahis was a Japanese family that owned...
I don't remember their name. I think, what they did is, they built homes and rented them out. I remember that because eventually my grandparents moved into one of their homes up on that Kāne'loa [Street]. Next to that area, where these two homes were, was the Lau family. Then the school, Waikīkī [Elementary] School.

MK: Now, if we go down one, two, blocks down to the Cartwright Road area.

EK: The Cartwright Road area on the seaside of the DeRegos, was the Akaka family. It was a huge—I think they had three lots in that. So I would say their home was almost like, maybe, 250 to 300 [feet] so it was a huge. . . . Was a lovely home and big yard.

MK: What occupation were the Akakas in, so as to have that sort of property?

EK: I don't know, because their children were already grown. So we very seldom saw them. They had a fence around their yard with a hedge. We just went by and just admired the home.

Next to the Akaka family was the DeFries family. They had a daughter was my same age. We were in the same classroom at the elementary school. Beyond that, I don't recollect too much.

MK: How about on Lemon Road?

EK: On Lemon Road on the seaside back of the Akakas, at the time that I was small, was the Lorch family. Also, one of the daughters was my age and a classmate of mine.

Next to the Lorches was a home where my grandparents were living at the time that I was born. I remember that home.

Then beyond that, there's a mixture of families I can only remember the names, not necessarily where they stayed. There is the Karratti family. There is a Spencer family.

I think there was also a Lono family, because Mrs. Lono had a kindergarten. She was a teacher. She had her own private kindergarten. That's where I started school, actually. I forgot about that, too. I started my kindergarten, which was unusual at the time, because usually you just went to school in the first grade.

MK: Where was Mrs. Lono's kindergarten?

EK: It was on Lemon Road, just back from the corner of Kapahulu [Avenue] and Lemon [Road]. She had a two-story home. What she did is, she turned the upstairs into the school, and they lived on the ground floor.

MK: How many children did she take in as students back then?
EK: Gosh. I would say, because it was in their home, I would say ten to a dozen children. No more than that. But very faintly, you know. Some of my classmates then went on to Waikiki [Elementary School], so I could remember them but I don't remember the names.

MK: What remembrances do you have about going to that kindergarten?

EK: Very nice memories. I liked school. (Laughs) Very nice memories of the school. I remember the room—the main room. I guess you might call, our classroom. It was open but screened. You know, the whole area was screened.

Well, actually, I went there in my first... See, I was four at the time that I started school. Maybe because more parents were interested in sending their children, she eventually moved to Kaimuki. I remember just going to school there for a while. When she moved to Kaimuki, she had what we called then "a banana wagon," which we call a station wagon. They went around picking us up and taking us to school.

Funny, when you're a child, some of the things that you remember. Sitting in the front [seat] and, you know, because your eye level is on the dashboard you're up like this. You can see the sky and the trees. The thing I remember about riding in that car is that she lived in the area where Lē'ahi [Hospital] is. Very high. So going up hill, I can remember the car going this way. (Laughs)

MK: Going up and down hills.

EK: (Yes,) sitting there and seeing (the front, the dashboard going up and down). Isn't that funny? It's all (laughs) coming back.

MK: I bet you haven't thought about these things in years.

EK: I haven't. My gosh.

MK: Well, I'm still going to keep you back in your childhood days. Now, as you go down Paoakalani [Avenue] and you're down to the corner of Paoakalani and Kalākaua [Avenues], what can you tell me about that frontage of Kalākaua [Avenue]?

EK: Well, the Lalani Hawaiian Village was located fronting Kalākaua [Avenue] and on the side of Paoakalani [Avenue]. I took hula lessons from Lalani Hawaiian Village.

I don't recall how it was that I went to the village, but I do know that the owners were Mr. and Mrs. (George) Mossman; Mrs. Mossman was a colleague of my mother's. They both taught at Waikiki [Elementary] School.

At about the age of eight, and this is an aside as I was trying to remember how long it took. I think I remember starting, it took a year. Now, maybe that's longer than I think, but it took a long
while for the hula lessons.

Their oldest daughter--Mr. Mossman had children from a previous marriage. They were all grown at the time. So, his oldest daughter was my teacher. She was a student of 'Iolani Luahine. She was very strict with us.

I think at the time that we started our class, there may have been about, oh, anywhere from eight to ten students in the class. But I remember my first class because I didn't expect it to be the way it was. I expected to go in and at least learn a hula dance, but we didn't.

I don't recollect whether it was just once a week that I went or twice. I think more likely, it was just once a week. But for the first two months, this is a guess, we had to exercise. They were exercises mostly in limbering up the body. Most of these lessons, we'd come away from it feeling sore the next day. That part (chuckles) I can remember. Then I think I was ready to quit (chuckles) 'cause I felt if she's not going to teach us any hula, what's the use.

The first thing that we started learning were the ancient hulas. And I understood why it was that we had to go through all of this.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: Okay, you can continue.

EK: The types of exercises were knee bends and just all the kinds of exercises to limber up every part of your body. I think it took at least a month to a month and a half, we just went through this. Nothing else.

We started learning our ancient hulas. A lot of it was, oh, it's hard for me to describe, unless I get up and do it. But that was the first part that we learned. I would guess that possibly it took about an additional two to three months. So the first six months was just concentrated on the ancient hula.

Then from that, we were introduced to what was then known as hapa-Haole hula which involved our use of the pebbles. Oh, for Hawaiian, I don't know--the pebbles, the bamboo, the gourd and the ipu. And all types of hulas. The songs were both Hawaiian and the then popular hapa-Haole songs.

As I learn from the clipping, we graduated actually a year later, you know, in January. Our commencement which we call an 'Uniki involved various types of costumes.
The first thing we wore were holokūs. We did a number with a holokū. Then after the holokū, was the grass skirt. Then after the grass skirt, was the ancient hula. We had material outfits that were unusual type of material but they were hand-painted. Then the fourth costume was the ti-leaf skirt. We were taught to make our own ti-leaf skirts. The top part was real tapa that had been handmade.

What we did, these various costumes were various dances and as we did them, there was someone I think it was Mrs. Mossman, who told about the song that we were doing and who told the story of this song, about the hula.

MK: And who attended the commencement?

EK: The commencement, were families and people in the neighborhood. I think each of us were given so many people we could invite. It was at night.

MK: And what were your own feelings about learning the hula and graduating from the Mossmans' Hawaiian Village?

EK: Well, as I said in the beginning, I was just wondering whether I wanted to continue because of what we had to do, but in my reflection back, for a period of time, the hula was considered not a cultural thing that it is today.

In fact in some segments of the community, in your church if you will, and some of the schools, even if I may mention this, at Kamehameha [Schools], the hula was very much frowned upon. So in reflecting back, I thought it was unusual that my parents who were, I would say, maybe a little bit old-fashioned, allowed me to take hula lessons.

And I think, perhaps the reason was that they cared very much for the Mossmans and were close to them. It just seems that perhaps Mr. Mossman was trying to bring back the Hawaiian culture at that time.

I do know, this is a very faint recollection from someone, I don't know who, but he was offered by the Hawaii Visitors Bureau at the time, to be a part wherein they could work together in bringing him, perhaps, more clientele, more customers, but at a cost.

I think he had to change some of the things, maybe not so old-fashioned, tried to modernize more of the things that he was doing. Of course, he turned them down because of that. This is just a faint recollection about that.

But the village was very interesting. There were grass huts in a, oh, I don't know whether you'd say a compound area, but in front of each of the grass huts was someone who was doing poi pounding. I also remember there was a little taro patch by the hut. I don't know how they did that, 'cause you have water [wetland] taro and you also have dryland taro. There was a gentleman pounding poi.
There was another area where feather lei-making was going on. They even had a cloak of feathers in the hut. The huts were made so that you could go in into them. And there were others where kapa clothing was being made. I guess lei-sewing also.

But one of the interesting things about their entertainment... Maybe I better go back and say after we graduated, I entertained with the Hawaiian Village.

But I guess you might say, the highlight of the program was the finale. What it was, on the ocean side of the stage in the village was a miniature volcano. It was made of lava rock. They had placed a mound of it. In the back was a huge stump of a tree. On this stump, their oldest daughter, who was my hula teacher, did a dance for Pele, I would say, or to Pele.

A member of this Punohu family, who lived above on Paoakalani [Avenue], worked at the village. He simulated a volcano by being on back side of it, you know, away from the audience, and putting kerosene in his mouth. There was a torch just below the top of the volcano. He blew that, you know, spit out that kerosene, and that was your flash of fire.

MK: Oh no!

EK: You know, I remember that after. That was the dance. He was very good at it, to some extent that we'd hear, after the dance was over, he'd be reprimanded by the daughter. "You did it too well tonight!" Her skirt would be singed (laughs) in the front. But it was very, very effective.

She wore a ti-leaf skirt and her top part was red. It was like a blouse, you know, with sleeves. She wore--what is the leis that they make today? Isn't that awful?

MK: Haku leis?

EK: Haku, on her head, then around her neck, you know.

MK: What kind of dancing did you and the other girls do at the Hawaiian Village?

EK: While we entertained, we used, on different times, we'd either use the grass skirt or the holokū. Every entertainment night we always use the ti-leaf. One night we'd use the holokū and the ti-leaf. Another night the ancient hula and the ti-leaf or the grass skirt and the ti-leaf so there was always...

MK: What was the clientele like back then?

EK: Most of them were tourists, people who were visiting Hawai'i either from the Mainland or foreign countries. In particular, during the summer, we had the military, especially the navy, sailors, when
ships were in at the time.

MK: How often would these shows go on?

EK: During the regular year, it was every Saturday night. Saturday night was always the night we went. But there was also once during the weekday night. I can't recollect whether it was a Wednesday or Thursday night. But it was during the week, during a school night actually.

MK: What was the pay that you received for entertaining?

EK: Isn't that funny? I can remember the pay because maybe it was the largest, but we used to get five dollars. I think, maybe, when we started it might have been less. But we would get five dollars for a night. It would be just the one show.

MK: What were your feelings entertaining and being paid at that age?

EK: Very good, but the money went into a bank account.

(Laughter)

EK: My parents opened a bank account, so I really didn't get to spend it. They would give me an allowance. But the money did go into a bank account because I had a bank book.

MK: I've heard from other people that this Mossman Lalani Village also used to have Hawaiian students coming in to learn certain aspects of Hawaiian culture other than the hula. To your knowledge, would that be an accurate statement?

EK: I would say yes, but I'm not— isn't that interesting—I'm not too familiar with that. The Mossman home was just filled with Hawaiiana. In fact, not only Hawaiiana, Polynesian from the rest of the Pacific.

I remember, that summer that I--- no, this isn't in the summer. This must have been after I had graduated. She and her older daughter went on a trip to the various—they went to Samoa, Tahiti. Gosh, all of the Polynesian-related islands. They went on this cruise.

And she came back. I remember when she came back, she had all sorts of things from all of these places. They were placed in the home because the house was so big. I think, when people came and went on tours through the village, they also went into the home and were shown these. I remember they had a lot of feather kāhili, too.

MK: You mentioned tours through the village. How were they run?

EK: Either Mr. or Mrs. Mossman conducted these tours or members of their own family, one of the daughters. They were taken through and cultural things were explained about, again, the poi, and the
tapa making, and the kapa quilting and the making of leis and all of the--whatever things that were Hawaiian or what we call today Hawaiiana culture.

This is another thing I forgot about this fellow Punohu who did the volcano. He was, I think, considered the best coconut tree climber in the Islands. The village had a lot of coconut trees, and they were quite tall. I guess they were there for quite a while. But he could manage, no matter how windy it was. As if he were walking on the flat ground, he would just literally walk, instead of grasping with his legs and arms and then pulling his body up. He would just walk up that tree. I've never seen anyone else do it quite like how he did it. I don't know how he did it, but he did.

These tours were planned around, I guess, people if they were interested, they would come in for the tours. But most of the time the tours were included with the entertainment, the program, and the luau.

The food was prepared right at the Mossman home. Cooked at the Mossman home. The pig was cooked out in an imu in the back, right in the back area where the food was made. All of the part where the imu was uncovered and the pig was all part of that. They were witness to the... Reflecting back, it was a very nice memories of that part of my life.

MK: As you look back, what do you think of the Mossmans themselves? Mr. and Mrs. Mossman?

EK: I remember them very, very, very fondly. In fact, when I was in the upper elementary grades, Mrs. Mossman was my classroom teacher. Maybe that wasn't too good because (chuckles) I think she let me get away with things that ordinarily I don't think an elementary child should get away with.

Mr. Mossman was Scots-Hawaiian. He was very fair. So actually if you didn't know him, you wouldn't know that he was Hawaiian. He didn't have the Hawaiian look. But they both spoke fluent Hawaiian.

That's another thing I meant to mention. They encouraged the people, especially who worked there. Whenever they conversed, it was in Hawaiian. So they would [speak Hawaiian] while they were talking especially when guests or tourists were there.

I remember my parents--my father spoke fluent Hawaiian. My mother understood it very well but couldn't speak it as well as my father.

I remember now that I reflect back, they [the Mossmans] conversed in Hawaiian. Their oldest daughter also spoke it fluently. But I think the others, for conversation purpose, maybe it was just a front, but they would always converse to each other in Hawaiian.

MK: That's interesting.
EK: But I never learned. (Laughs)

MK: I'm glad you told me a lot about the Hawaiian Village because I was very curious about that Hawaiian Village. And now as we, say, cross Paoakalani Street and we're still on Kalākaua Avenue, what do you remember about the storefronts there?

EK: Well, there was a grocery store. It was Ibaraki Store. Let's see. Next to it, I remember a beauty shop or a barbershop in that area. There was also a cleaners. And Tahara's Restaurant.

Actually, for my part, the only time I went to eat in Tahara's or so I say, allowed to, given money to eat, was when I went to the beach.

So what we did is, we'd go to the beach in the morning. It was practically an all-day thing. We'd have money to go across the street, and go to Tahara's, and have lunch.

MK: In those days, what kinds of things did you get at Tahara's?

EK: They made the best pipi kaula. (Laughs) The Hawaiian food, I mean, all their food was 'ono. But in particular, their Hawaiian food. I mean, for me, that's my remembrance.

But of course, they made things like the saimin and your stew. You could either have your stew with poi, rice or macaroni.

[Laughter]

EK: They also had cakes that they made themselves, homemade cake. It was delicious. (Chuckles)

MK: And then, next to Tahara's?

EK: Next to Tahara's, oh, I'm sorry, I'm remembering. There was another home on Paoakalani between the Purdys and the DeRegos. They owned that store next to the Taharas.

MK: The Banzai Cleaners?

EK: Yes!

MK: The Harakawa family?

EK: Harakawa? That's awful for me not to remember because their daughters, I went to school with their daughters at the Priory. (Laughs) I mean they were a couple of grades above me. But that's right, both girls went to the Priory. That's right, the Harakawas. So there was another home in there. Was that the name of it? Banzai Cleaners?

(Laughter)
EK: Next to the cleaners, there were several things but I remember a restaurant being in that area which was right next to the Aokis. I'm uncertain whether there might have been a little shop between the Aokis and the--but of course, the Aokis I remember perhaps more well because my parents shopped at Aoki's.

MK: In those days, what kinds of things did your parents and others shop for at Aoki's?

EK: Well, compared to today where we have our freezers and we have our frozen foods, we pretty much shopped at least every other day. Because your food, you know, you would have to consume the food within a couple of days, anyway. So, I remember the butcher. They had a butcher. Well, that's what we call him--the meat [man].

It was very personal service. You know, you can go in and he'd open--they had a little freezer where they kept the meat. He'd let you--well, my mother not me--go in and pick off. "You want this part?" and he'd cut it off and put the rest back in. (Chuckles). It was meat that was cut for you at the time.

I'm not sure the Aokis had, well, I'm not sure whether they went to Waikīkī [Elementary] School. I don't know. That was how my mother knew so well so many of the families in Waikīkī School. Because the children, if they didn't go to a private school, or they didn't go to the Catholic school, St. Augustine, then they went to Waikīkī [School].

MK: She would know them and their families then.

EK: Yes, uh huh. She would know them and their families. Actually, the Aoki family, because we shopped . . .

MK: Let's see, as you go up ma uka of that whole frontage, what would be in the back there?

EK: They had their family home in the back. And above that, were some--I think there were Japanese camps or Japanese families. I'm not certain whether the Aokis owned some of those homes.

Then there were--oh, this is another memory I remember. It was a little laundry up in that, just above the Aokis. They were owned by Chinese. I shouldn't forget that. That's where my father took his laundry, his shirts.

But I remember about the Chinese laundry. They used to, (chuckles) I guess, that's the way it was done in those days. They’d put the water in their mouth and what we ordinarily would sprinkle with our hands, they'd swhitt!

MK: They just shoot spray out from their mouths?

EK: Uh huh [yes], while they're ironing, you know. I also remember
after, I guess, their work was done—you know, we'd go by at certain hours of the day—they'd have their little opium pipes. Interesting little contraption.

MK: What did it look like?

EK: It was about a foot, maybe longer than that. But it curved down, oh, I would say just about a quarter of a circle. It went into a little—the end part of it, what we call the pipe, curved up. They would have a little container, like a little bottle, with some liquid in it. You would see this liquid almost like coffee perking, you know. Then you'd see the... But that's the way it was, it went down like that.

We'd go by and we'd say, "Oh,"--I forget what we used to call, some of the things we used to call, "Ah Sook," or, "He's relaxing with his pipe!" Then we'd go say, "Hi!" and we'd just go walk right by.

MK: Chee, that's interesting. Then as you moved more mauka?

EK: Move more mauka, then there was the parochial school, Catholic school. Above that, the only name that I remember was the Harris family. They were a half-White couple. They had their little home almost like a cottage. They took care of this area. I'm not certain whether they owned it. But it was nice apartments that were built sort of in the Tudor-style of architecture.

I guess this area as you begin back here, let's see, 'Ohua Avenue, there were sidewalks. I like to mention that because 'Ohua Avenue was the last street that had sidewalks in Waikiki. Going towards the park was just--well, the streets were paved but there were no sidewalks.

I guess, this was just the beginning of going from that area down towards the hotel area that, when I was growing up, most of the families were half-White families. These people, most of their children went to Punahou School. So it was just as if there was totally like another world. I guess, the social and the economic level was [different], my feeling. So we really never went through that area very much. Remembering that.

But beyond that area which is what we call 'Aina hau, where presently the (Ka' iulani) Hotel is, all of that back area was empty lots. I liked going down that area because they were filled with date trees. We'd go down and play but I wasn't supposed to go there.

MK: You went. (Laughs)

EK: I remember going through that neighborhood and looking on either side at all these nice houses. (Chuckles) Yeah, so that was a totally, just like a different area.

MK: So 'Ohua Avenue and the area town side of it...
EK: Town side of it. All of that area, most of them were half-White or Caucasian families. In fact, if I remember, all of the children there went to Punahou or other schools or parochial schools.

MK: Would you remember some of the names of the families that lived in that area?

EK: Let's see, there was the Peterson family. They went to Punahou. Either Punahou or the elementary school level. Now this is, later years, they went to Thomas Jefferson School, you know, the English-standard [school].

There's the Olmos family. O-L-M-O-S. Some of them went to Punahou, and some to public school, to Roosevelt eventually. Gosh, there weren't too many. I didn't... Not very many people in there. I just happened to remember these particular families because my brother when he went to Punahou, knew, in fact, played with some of them.

MK: Gee, that was an interesting observation that you made. Now, going back to your old neighborhood, some people have told me that there used to be a stream that ran through the block bounded by Paoakalani, Kalākaua and 'Ōhua [Avenues]. At the time you were a little child, was that stream still in existence or was it covered up?

EK: The portion by Paoakalani [Avenue] was covered up. I don't ever remember a stream. That's interesting. All I know is that whenever it rained, we had literally a lake on Paoakalani. It was always flooded, all the time.

But I'm uncertain whether this stream was the stream that was located on the park/zoo side of what is now Kapahulu Avenue. Because that part of the stream I remember. There were--was it bulrushes?--that grew in the stream. And then there was a little wooden bridge that we could walk over in order to get to the zoo. We used to go and catch fish with a net and put them in a little bottle. Bring them home.

That's another thing that I remember about the zoo besides visiting was that the animals. In particular, the elephant who was at the zoo, whose name was Daisy, and a lion. They're almost like an alarm clock. Certain hours of the day, you know, we'd hear the trumpeting of the elephant or the roar of the lion. You could almost stake your time--look at your watch, it's the same time every day. So, yeah, remember going to the zoo, too.

MK: You know, as young children back then, what did you folks do for play or amusement in the neighborhood area?

EK: Well, when I was very, very small, my play area was mainly in my yard. My father built us swings from the mango tree in the driveway. We didn't have a car when we were growing up, so also our play area was in the garage.
Let's see. These were some of the things that were more or less homemade. We would cut up. I shouldn't say "we," this would be more my brother would cut up the inner tube tires, and they'd make guns in order to shoot out of the broom handles. He'd go and find old bicycles and the steel rims of them, he'd get a piece of wire and we'd roll the thing along, play games like that.

Of course, there were marbles. It would be five holes, dig holes in the driveway. We'd play with that. There were jacks, you know, as we got older. We play jacks with the ball and jacks on the porch. We'd make bean bags. Go out and collect koa, from koa plant the little seedlings. And make bean bags out of those. Sew them. There was what we call a tamarind tree. The fruit from it when they were green, it's just like a glue.

What we'd do is, we'd go--I can't recollect where that tamarind tree was. Either at the empty lot next to the Jacksons or near the Ala Wai [Canal]. But we'd get these. We'd get the cream cans and the part that wasn't opened, we'd put the tamarind on our feet and put the cans and walk around, see who could stay up the longest without falling down.

(Laughter)

EK: Or we'd have the broomsticks. Make a stand, a little stand for your feet, and we'd walk. This would be about a foot off the ground. We'd walk with those. So these were all, more or less, homemade types of games that we played.

Of course, there was the school area. When we were very small, Waikiki [Elementary] School had a principal who loved flowers. The Waikiki School, every year, won first prize for the May Day lei. Then the principal retired.

Our new principal, I think this was when I was in the fourth grade, was someone who believed in physical education. So all of the flowers went and grass was planted over. She built all of the jungle gyms, the swings, everything that children needed. Actually, as we grew older in upper elementary, that was our playground.

MK: Also, living in Waikiki, how about the beach and ocean areas?

EK: My first recollection of the beach area is being taken to the beach by my grandmother. At the end of 'Ohua Avenue, there was a little--not exactly a hotel, but it was on that beach area, and it was built, a portion of it, over the ocean like, over the beach. In front of this area was this little square of, I guess, it was built-in or they might have gotten coral and built around. So, it was like a pond. Most of the children learned to swim in this little pond. I remember being taken to the beach by my grandmother, learning how to swim in that.

My grandfather loved to fish. I can remember going at the end of
Kapahulu Avenue. The way Waikiki was, there was not much sand. Most of the area from 'Ohua [Avenue] or the Aoki Store was—no, where the Banzai Cleaner was—all the way out to the park, were huge boulders. There was no sand around that.

At the end of Kapahulu Avenue, that's where he went fishing. There was this stepladder that went down from the top of the street down there. There just a very—oh, I would say about two feet of sand that somehow or other, collected in that area.

I can remember going to the beach with him 'cause he'd go fishing very early in the morning. I guess, he would come up and pick me up. We would go down. I would sit either on top or down at the bottom of the ladder while he went squiding. 'Cause it was all reef in that area. There was no swimming. Very fond recollections of my grandfather.

MK: How about 'opihī and limu picking in those days?

EK: Limu picking, yes. But not 'opihī. If I understand right, the 'opihī grows at the edge of your reef in deep-water areas. So Diamond Head. I had an uncle who was a fisherman. My mother's brother. That's where he used to go and get ('opihī). It has to grow from deep water. So, it's very difficult getting it.

MK: I was wondering to what extent did the families in Waikiki rely on the ocean's bounty in that area?

EK: Gosh, not very much. Not in that part of Waikiki. Because actually there weren't—you could get either squid or wana—you know, that's the [sea] urchin with the spike—or lots of limu because there was a reef all through there. But fish for eating, not very much of it. You have to go either towards the Diamond Head area or on the other side going towards the Leeward side.

MK: I was wondering, I've heard of a candy man and manapua man and some other peddlers there. What are your recollections?

EK: Oh, yes. Yes, that's right. They used to come by. Walk, you know, all on foot, with these huge cans at the end of a pliable piece of wood that extended over their shoulders, with the rope on either end. He'd call out, "Manapua," and we'd dash home, get some money, either at the house, or from whoever was home, and we'd buy manapua, right.

Oh, and this is another thing that has to do with the beach. My dad, one of his hobbies was making surfboards. I forgot about that. Because, I guess, of his interest in carpentry, perhaps from school, he knew his wood and his lumber very, very well. He used to make boards out of redwood. He made them. That was his extracurricular activity, I might say. So every Saturday, that was what he would do. He'd go down, after he'd purchase the lumber from the lumberyard, he'd come home. It would just be a rectangular piece of wood like that. About four to six inches thick. Then he would do it, carve
out the board.

MK: What would he do with these boards after they were made?

EK: Ah, actually, he would give them away. That's another thing. I have fond recollections of going surfing with my dad when I was small.

MK: You were surfing too?

EK: No. Funny, I didn't remember this. It's only when he mentioned it to me. He said that I would be at the bottom of the stairway in the front, with my bathing suit on, of course, and a towel, waiting for him to come home from work.

Oh yes, surfing. He would experiment. He experimented with what they called "hollow board." It was a board about fourteen feet in length. There were two pieces. What he did was, he glued them together in the inner part. So, it was like a miniature boat, actually. His surfing area was at the foot of 'Ohua Avenue. We would go down. He'd prop the board up against the sea wall. He would just look around. I mean, I remember this. I never knew why he was doing it. He would look around to see where the best waves were. Whatever the direction is, we would either go out towards Diamond Head, directly out or towards the Royal [Hawaiian Hotel].

I remember surfing. This was when I was very small. What he'd do is he'd put me on the board. His chin would be right on my 'ōkole, my rump, so that I wouldn't fall off. He'd paddle out. He'd go way out. Once he'd stay out there.

I guess he knew the ocean. I'm not sure whether it was an inherited thing, but we would catch one wave and we would ride all the way into the beach. Of course, it would have to be high tide because you had a lot of reef out there.

MK: How crowded was it back then?

EK: Not really that crowded because whatever visitors or tourists we had, they didn't swim in this area. They were down towards the Royal [Hawaiian Hotel] and the Moana Hotel.

MK: You know, I've heard about the Stonewall Gang of that vicinity. What do you remember about this Stonewall Gang?

EK: Actually, not very much. But that Stonewall was the wall fronting the group of stores on the other side. At the bottom were these boulders. Not very much actually.

MK: Going back to the peddlers. I know that you knew the Matsuzawa family. I was wondering if you could share some of your recollections of the elder Mr. Matsuzawa.

EK: Yes. Mr. Matsuzawa, had, well, it was a cart on two wheels, wheels
with spokes on either side. The top part, it had a little roof. I'd say it was maybe about six feet in height. It's unusual, the only thing I remember was shave ice, but I know he had other things like candies and maybe some.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 13-47-1-85; SIDE ONE

MK: Okay, you were talking about the items that Mr. Matsuzawa sold.

EK: Yes, on his little cart. It was parked in their garage, their family garage. He would go daily, take his cart, you know, on foot, go down to the park. The streetcar system ended, the terminal was in the park. This was where he would park his cart, at that area.

My recollection of him was that in the various flavors that he had for his shave ice, whenever he used a bottle up, he always left some at the bottom and either at the end of the day, or the end of the week, or some time during the week, he would put all these together and give them to me. (Laughs) Especially the strawberry. (Laughs)

MK: And what would you do with all of that?

EK: Mix it up with milk. You know, make a milkshake.

MK: You were telling me the other time that you used to have over-the-fence conversations with the elder Mrs. Matsuzawa.

EK: Yes, over-the-fence conversations with Obā-chan. She did the family cooking and the rice was cooked outdoors on her little--it wasn't a stove. She had these huge rocks, not quite boulders. She placed a grill between these two boulders. I guess there was some corrugated iron placed against the back fence for protection. But she would cook the rice in the wooden Japanese container. I remember her cooking the rice, and also making, not spiced cabbage.

MK: Pickled cabbage?

EK: Pickled, oh, that's the same as spiced. But the pickled cabbage, she would put these in the container with some kind of mixture or whatever it is, seasoning. These would be kept in that little container with a wooden cover, and a huge stone would be placed on that to compress them down.

Every day at the same time, I knew when she was going to be there cooking her rice. If I wasn't there, she always would go, "Ima!" (Laughs) I guess it was easier for her to say "Ima" instead of "Emma." So, "Ima!" and I would go and sit on the fence and just chat with her while she cooked, even though her English wasn't all that well. But I guess, if you really liked communicating with
someone or talking, you'd find a way of either hand motions or broken pidgin. But very fond memories of her.

MK: What do you remember, in general, about all these different Japanese families?

EK: Well, other than going to school with many of the children from especially families in the Japanese camps, there was a close tie 'cause most of these parents were Issei or from Japan. Somehow or other, they got along very well with my mother since she was a schoolteacher.

They kept in touch with her, whenever they needed some advice, whether it had to do with school work for the children or anything that she could do in either introducing them to certain sorts of institutions maybe or she was able to help them.

But the time I recollect that she really did do something was when the war started. Because many of them were Issei and consequently non-citizens, she was able to vouch for them, shall I say. Through some commitment on her part, she organized classes of English to teach them English. They did that. But there was always some contact with the various families in the Japanese camps.

MK: Where did she teach them English or set up that school?

EK: It was at the Waikīki [Elementary] School in one of the classrooms. I think she used her own classroom.

MK: Would you know what the attendance was like for those English classes?

EK: I would say, they would be anywhere from about ten, if I remember. Of course, these were held after school, you know. I think they worked out rather well.

MK: Interesting. I sort of found out what the children used to do together in the neighborhood. But what did the parents do together in the neighborhood in terms of community-type activities or informal type activities where moms and dads would get together, if at all?

EK: Actually, not very much, unless someone had a birthday party like a year old baby luau or there was not all that much community social interaction. It may have been at the level of the school. Your PTA [Parent-Teacher Association] activities or whatever kinds of funding, you know, like a carnival. School held carnivals. But in my recollection, very, very little of that community activity type interaction.

MK: How about visiting between families?

EK: Let me go back and explain, maybe, the personalities of my parents. My father, he was very congenial, but not really a mixer. My mother
was very sociable. She loved mixing with people. But besides her school, she was also very active in church activities. So whatever time she wasn't at school, there were other activities away, so not really that much. I don't even remember her, you know, going to someone else's house and chatting away. Not all that much. If she did, it was if she were in the yard and the neighbor was in the yard, and they would chat over the fence. But I don't remember her ever going to visit neighbors.

MK: What church was she a member of?

EK: We were members of the, very long name, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. It almost sounds like the Mormon Church title, which is without the "Reorganized" in the title. But my mother, actually, joined the church when she was in her teens. Brought her family in. Converted my father before they were married.

MK: Was there a branch in Waikīkī?

EK: No, there wasn't. The church that we went to was in Makiki.

MK: For today, I think, I'll end here. I want to thank you for today's interview.

EK: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW
This is an interview with Emma Kaawakauo on October 24, 1985 at her office in Downtown Honolulu, O'ahu. The interviewer is Michi Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay. For the first question, I'm wondering, what school did you attend?

EK: My first school was at the kindergarten level. It was a private school called Mrs. Lono's Kindergarten. It was located right on the corner of Kapahulu Avenue and Lemon Road. I went to that school at that particular location, I think, for one year. And because the school was expanding, Mrs. Lono moved out to a larger home in the Kaimuki area. I went to school in that area, my gosh, possibly for another year. I only recollect that I started school very young at four, so I may have been in school for two years before going on to the first grade in public school.

MK: What public school did you attend?

EK: I went to the Waikiki Elementary School which was located right across from our home on then Hamohamo Road.

MK: At the time you were attending Waikiki School, what did the buildings and the grounds of Waikiki School look like?

EK: Well, the school was actually a large (rectangle). The buildings were on Hamohamo Road or Kūhiō Avenue and Kāne'oa Road. They were at the edge of both streets. At the time I started school, we had a principal who loved flowers, so all of the grounds were well landscaped with (many varieties of) flowers. We had to be careful when we played (laughs) not to get into the flower beds and everything. But otherwise, the whole center area was grass, and the only structure in the grounds was the flagpole. (Waikiki School) won many prizes, especially during the May Day (City Lei Contests each) year.

MK: How many classrooms were there?
EK: Oh, this will be a guess. It went from first grade to sixth grade, of course. There were, I would guess, about either twelve or thirteen classrooms. That's a guess. I'm trying to remember and count.

MK: And then, what kind of buildings were there at the school?

EK: There were all on ground level and a step up from the ground. Of course, they were wooden buildings. In fact, we called them bungalows.

MK: In those days, you mentioned your principal. Who was she? And what type of person was this principal?

EK: Her name was Mrs. Mabel King. Mr. King was Haole, or Caucasian. She was part-Hawaiian, a very attractive woman who dressed very well and had a lovely home up in Nu'uanu Valley. Well, as a child, (I would say she was) not really accessible. I can't think of another word. You know, she was not a person to whom you would go up and hold her hand. She was sort of distant, and you kind of respected her at a distance.

MK: If you could, tell me about the teachers that you had at Waikīkī Elementary School from first grade on up.

EK: Now that I reflect back, I think I went to the first grade at Mrs. Lono's because... Yes, I did. I went to kindergarten and the first grade at Mrs. Lono's. My second-grade teacher was a Mrs. Perry. As I reflect back, I think most of (my teachers) were already grandmothers. Their children were grown and had their own families, so I would guess they were possibly women in their forties, late forties, or into their early fifties. (Mrs. Perry was) very outgoing. I mean, you could go up to her. In fact, she kind of made an effort to bring out the shy students. A good teacher.

My third-grade teacher was what we called in those days a spinster teacher. She was in her fifties. She was Hawaiian, Miss Poaha. Very strict disciplinarian, but we also learned a lot from her. My fourth-grade teacher was a Mrs. Pomeroy. I think she was younger because she had children my age. (She was outgoing and) talkative. In disciplining us, she (usually) yelled at us (laughs) and (we got) the ruler if we needed it. In those days, teachers could (use a ruler, unlike today). My fifth-grade teacher was a Mrs. Chinn. She was Chinese. She was very active in the Chinese community, entertained a great deal. Her husband, let's see, Mr. Chinn, I think, was a CPA [Certified Public Accountant]. So, they lived comfortably well. I would rate all these women as good teachers.

My sixth-grade teacher was younger. I think she might have been in her late twenties or early thirties. I think the year that I had her was her first year at Waikīkī. So, I do recollect that her teaching was a little different. It seems that we were doing more things. Possibly because having been a recent graduate of the
University of Hawai'i, there was more that she could offer us than just the usual. So, of all the teachers, I think I really enjoyed her the most.

MK: What was her name?

EK: Mrs. Akahoshi.

MK: Looking back on your days at Waikīkī Elementary School, what stands out in your mind about your school days there?

EK: At Waikīkī?

MK: Mm hmm [yes].

EK: I'm sorry. I'll get your question. I have to backtrack. I made a mistake. Mrs. Chinn was not my schoolteacher. My fifth-grade teacher was Mrs. Mossman, you know, from the Lalani Village. I guess I remembered Mrs. Chinn because she took care of the Girl Scouts. That's what it was. I had joined the troop. We went to her home quite a bit.

What do I remember most? Well, one of the things I remember is that I liked school very much. Summer to me was just the interim where I played, but I always looked forward to the time when school would begin in September, in the fall. I enjoyed school, reading, or anything that had to do with learning. Playing, my goodness, was just, I guess, the usual things that you do, play during your recess periods. I think after, let's see, (the fifth)... I can't recollect, but it was either the (fifth) or the (sixth) year, that a new principal was assigned to the school. Mrs. King had retired. Her name was Miss Rankin. She was a physical education person. She believed in recreational playground activities for the students, so she completely changed [the school grounds]. All the flowers (in the playground area) went. Not all, some of them near the bungalows were kept. But wherever they might have been in the way of the kids, she got rid of them and just planted grass. We had a lot more activities--volleyball, baseball, dodge ball, whatever we could play. She put up (a lot of metal equipment), I don't know what they call 'em now days, but we used to call them "jungle gyms." So, that, she had activities after school when she would be the person [supervising the children]. There was a change there. But I enjoyed my elementary school years.

MK: To what extent did your mother and father influence your attitude towards school?

EK: (Perhaps most of all it was the inferred sense, feeling, if you will, to do your best in school. Our home, our life was a comfortable one and everything we needed for school was given without any question. And doing well in school came easily for me. My parents' principal presence were as teacher, and as parent participant.)
Well, actually I never saw my mother that much, even though she taught at the same school. But I don't know whether it was her decision that she was never to interfere. If there was (any) kind of disciplinary [action] or reprimanding, she felt the teacher and the principal [should do it]. I don't ever remember her being included if we had to be disciplined—my siblings, an older brother and a younger sister. My father participated in the Parent-Teacher's activities. In fact, for several years, I think he was president, but that was his way of being active in school activities.

MK: What kind of activities were the parents and teachers responsible for through the PTA?

EK: Well, I think it was mainly money-raising functions. We used to have school carnivals, more so when Miss Rankin became principal. I guess it was to raise money for some additional things that the school would need, other than what they would get from the department. It was mostly that.

MK: Tell me about those school carnivals. I've never really heard about them that much.

EK: Gee, maybe I shouldn't call them carnivals. I mean, there weren't the rides that we have nowadays. It was just—let's see, what are some of the things I remember. I think I remember where you throw a baseball or a ball to hit the pigs, or whatever they had up there, and you'd win prizes. I think they had darts, too, throwing darts. Or I guess things that you would have like in a family party. Most of these booths were either in the cafeteria, which was a combination of cafeteria and assembly, what they call cafeterium nowadays. Oh, I have to revise (about the classrooms). Not all of the school rooms were (a couple of steps off) the ground. Some of them were (higher) off (the ground in one building with) a veranda in the front of the classrooms. So, some of these activities were held in these areas, set off like little booths. They sold homemade things. One of the teachers who was a close (family friend and who) taught the first grade, made cakes, cookies, puffed rice (squares and) divinity fudge. So, these were some of the things that were sold. Whatever they could cook or make.

MK: How did the children participate in these— I guess you would call them school bazaars, carnivals?

EK: Well, other than selling tickets, most of the activities, actually, were done by the parents, (as well as the) preparations.

MK: I was wondering, you've mentioned these bazaars. How about at other special times like Christmas, or Easter, or May Day, or July 4th? How did the school celebrate these events?

EK: Well, for Christmas, I don't remember a total school function. It was more within the classroom. Actually, the only time I remember (an all-school) activity was the May Day program. They had the
usual queen and the princesses, you know. But for the other, I
don't remember having anything like a Christmas pageant, other than
just having something in the classroom.

MK: That May Day, you said, was more or less like the usual thing, but
what actually happened at a May Day celebration back then?

EK: Well, particularly when Miss Rankin came, the May Day program was
combined with physical education activities. It was held around the
flagpole, which (had a) circular (base,) a foot to eighteen inches
off the ground. It was large enough so that there would be sufficient
room for a court of people to be on, the queen and the princesses.
There were flowers growing around the edge. Each classroom performed
some kind of, either calisthenics activity or whatever, it was
their choice. But she combined these with the May Day program. I
guess maybe that's the reason I remember it.

MK: As a student of hula, did you ever perform hulas at the May Day
celebrations?

EK: My gosh, I don't ever remember dancing, performing the hula at
school. My goodness, I have to stop and think. I may have, but at
the moment, I don't remember wearing a hula skirt. If I did dance,
it might have been in a holokū. I have to stop (chuckles) and think
about it. (If it were dancing on May Day, it would most likely be
May Pole dancing. Also, remembering back, Miss Rankin taught many
of us tap dancing which we performed at school assemblies and PTA
meetings. I think we also danced at the bazaar-carnivals.)

MK: That's kind of curious. Now let's see. You mentioned Girl
Scouts. Tell me about your Girl Scout troop at Waikiki.

EK: I think I joined the Girl Scouts in the ... It wasn't a Brownie.
See, the Brownie is the--I don't even know, but it's at a younger
age. I think I joined the Girl Scouts, it must have been in the
fifth grade, because I went to summer camp for two years. So, I
think I joined in the fifth grade. This Mrs. Chinn, one of the
teachers, was our scout mistress. We met--was it once a week?--in
her classroom. And if we were not in the classroom, then we met at
her home. She would just pack all of us into her car. Or if we
needed an extra car, Mr. Chinn would be our chauffeur (chuckles).
Yes, and going through the usual thing of, my goodness, earning
badges, and getting to a certain level, and advancing. But isn't
that funny, I just happen to think of it. But two summers after my
fifth year and my sixth grade, I went to camp. The camp was down
at Pearl City. That was fun, now I remember (chuckles).

MK: Who were some of the other girls from the neighborhood that were
members of your Girl Scout troop?

EK: I don't remember. Isn't that funny? You know, the thing of it is,
the only students I remember are those who lived in the neighborhood.
I remember some names, family names. (Let me think a moment. ...
But if I recall correctly, there were only four other girls at Waikīkī School from the neighborhood and just one was a Girl Scout. Two were Mormons and had their church youth activities and the other, my classmate, had family chores to do.) I knew that there were children who lived in the Kapahulu area. But chumming around and having a close girlfriend or anything, isn't that funny? I think I was kind of a loner, I'm not sure (chuckles).

MK: You seem to have been active, though.

EK: Yes, very active, but you know when you grow up, you have a girl chum or someone that you . . . I had that, it's not unusual, when I went to the [St. Andrews] Priory.

MK: Well, let's move on to the Priory, then. Why is it that you decided or your parents decided, someone decided, that you go to the Priory?

EK: Well, the decision was made by my parents. They asked me if I wanted to go. I must have said yes, because I went. But this is an aside. Mrs. Parker, our neighbor—oh, that's right. Actually, my girlhood chums were my neighbors. (Chuckles) And they didn't go to public school, they went to the Catholic school, St. Augustine. Her daughter and Lokelani (Richards), we were all in the same age and the same grade level. Lokelani went on to Sacred Hearts (Academy). Vesta Parker was going to go to Kamehameha. She had been accepted. Mrs. Parker was trying to get my parents to let me go to Kamehameha. She came to ask me and talk with me, but I didn't want to go. I don't know, because in those days, you didn't commute. You lived on campus, boarding. I didn't want to go to a boarding school, to live away from home. But my grandmother went to the Priory. (Also, two cousins from my parents' families.) Other than that, I really don't know how they picked the Priory, because it wasn't a school that I had heard of or known of it and went to my parents and said, "I would like to go to the Priory." It was just that they said, "We would like to send you to the Priory. Would you like to go?"

MK: Among your neighborhood friends in Waikīkī, were there some that also went to the Priory with you?

EK: Well, they were at the Priory, but they were older. These were the two daughters of Mr. (Harakawa). They owned (Banzai Cleaners) down on Kalākaua Avenue. Their home was on Paakalani right next to the Purdy home. They actually had been students in my mother's room, and they went to the Priory from the seventh grade. So, I don't know. It may have been that my mother may have been keeping in touch with them. I don't know, but I do remember that they were at the Priory. I think they may have already been in high school when I went.

MK: Then, at the Priory, what kinds of memories do you have in terms of their teaching techniques or what you learned from the Priory?

EK: Well, number one, I learned I hadn't been studying very hard (laughs)
in public school. The adjustment was rough because their curriculum was very (heavy)--even at the seventh-grade level, it was English, science, mathematics, (foreign language, religion, etc.). It was a total change. I was talking with our (office) secretary because her little girl goes to parochial school and has just changed from one school to another, so I was reminiscing with her. I said, "You know, I had to go to summer school after my first year at the Priory." I said, "In those days, when you went to (summer) school, the kids said, 'Ooh, you dumb.'"

(Laughter)

EK: Summer school isn't what it is at present. But I remember having to go to summer school and kinda doing it without (chuckles) letting too many people know. But otherwise, I liked going (to the Priory), made many friends, which again I just see them occasionally if I'm shopping here or around. But yeah, it was a very new adjustment for me. (Chuckles)

MK: Then how about teen activities that you participated in while you were at the Priory?

EK: Well, actually, there was not all that much, because of the principal we had.... I have to say something about Sister Rhoda, my mentor. (Chuckles) She had just recently been (assigned) to the Priory. This is not from my talking with her, this is just finding out about things indirectly. I understand that she had been a college professor before she became a nun. I'm not sure whether she had had a family of her own. It was just someone who had become a nun later in years. Well, anyway, she completely changed the curriculum of the Priory. Prior to that, (the Priory emphasized) preparing the girls for marriage, to becoming wives, mothers. She completely changed the curriculum. It was academic. It was college preparatory. Actually, she was, I would say, one of the reasons, maybe the main reason, that I discontinued my hula dancing. Because I was still dancing on the weekends and during the week, and when you have homework every night in every subject, and you have to carry your books home every evening, it was rather difficult. So, I stopped dancing when I was in my (mid-year) part of my seventh-grade year.

So, somehow or other, I don't know what it is, but she saw something in me. I was little bit taken aback with her personality. Very strong like. You know, a very tall person, (assertive and commanding). But she kind of turned me around and said that, "You've got the capabilities if you really wanted and worked for it to go on beyond high school." So, actually, she was the person who had the most influence in my life in my junior high and high school years.

MK: Let's see, I know that you graduated from the Priory in 1944.

EK: Right, uh huh.
MK: So, you were at the Priory during the war years.

EK: Yes.

MK: How did World War II affect school life at the Priory?

EK: Well, let's see, the war began in December of '41. All of the school systems closed down. We, however, went back to school in--December, February, January--in February. Now, I don't recollect what the other school systems did, but we went back in--it may have been February or March, sometime during then. But most of the schools ended their school year in June. We went to school during the whole summer. There was no break. There was just a week break before school began in the fall. I mean, (Sister Rhoda) felt that we had to make that up, the loss of two or three months. So, what we did is, we went on a morning-afternoon schedule. The lower grades went in the morning, and we went to school in the afternoon. I think some of the buildings at the Priory were being used (for the war effort) through the Episcopalian Church, but we went to school (through the) summer. The other kids had been let out for summer, and we went to school (chuckles) all summer, grumbling, with just the week's break between the two school years.

MK: I was wondering, how did World War II affect life in Waikiki? Like your family's life or the neighborhood life?

EK: Well, my parents--my father was a--what do they call them? Wardens.

MK: A block warden?

EK: Yeah. He patrolled the area at night. And my mother, I think, when they set up either a Red Cross unit or whatever, one of them was at Waikiki School. So actually, in the first few weeks, maybe even (the first two) months, my parents were not at home. My grandmother lived (in the next) block, so we stayed with her in the evenings. Then (my parents) would come and get us, and then we would go home and go to bed. So, I think that went on for, yeah, the first maybe two, three months.

MK: As a teenager then, what were your thoughts about the war?

EK: Not really much because actually we were indirectly participating in the war before the U.S. (entered). It's just occurring to me, my eighth-grade teacher was born and raised in England. Because England had been in the war at least a couple of years before we did, we were knitting for Bundles for Britain. Yeah, so we were (knitting "Balaklava" helmets). This is what the men wore underneath their helmets. (These were mainly for warmth) and all you could see was an opening for the face, and it'd come down (to the shoulders). So, she taught us how to knit, and now that I think of it, that was some of the activities that we did. Gosh, did we do some Red Cross work, too? Isn't that funny? You know, when you called last week, I didn't even stop to think, "Now what am I going to say?" Just
until you walked in.

MK: (Laughs) Don't worry. Oh, so you were sort of participating in the war effort.

EK: Yeah, indirectly, now that I recall. This was in the eighth grade. Right, because I was in the seventh from '38 to '39, and the war began for England in September of '39, that's right. We heard about England and Great Britain a great deal. She talked with a British accent, too. Very, very good teacher, though.

MK: Back in Waikīkī, with your mother at the Red Cross station and your father as a block warden, what were relations like among the people in the neighborhood? There were Japanese, Hawaiians, part-Hawaiians.

EK: (First of all, my parents were very proud they were Hawaiian and each had become, through hard work and much personal effort, a highly skilled printer/news composing room supervisor and schoolteacher, respectively. But encompassing this pride was also the deep sense and belief that each individual regardless of racial descendancy is no better or no worse than other individuals. Relatives and members of both sides of the family did not all feel this way for there were a few with very strong anti-Japanese feelings. Somehow our parents were able to instill in us this deep sense and belief in racial equality. I do not recall that any of us kids ended lifelong friendships or turned down making new friends because of the war.)

MK: I know that you graduated in 1944. At that time, what were your hopes or plans for your own future?

EK: Well, isn't that funny. All during high school, I knew that I was going to go to college, but there was nothing definite like saying, "I'm going to go to this school and I'm planning for it." It was just like it happened. See, we were either academic in school or commercial. Isn't that funny, there were just the two fields of study. If you were commercial, then you were going out into the business world, either in the clerical or secretarial, or some form. Actually, most of the (commercial) students, my classmates, (who were able to find employment or be placed in office positions were already working during the second semester of our senior year). Most of them remained or advanced within that position, (and retiring from that position). Training (at the Priory) was very good. You know, the office practices and everything.

Then, on the other hand, there were the academic students. Subjects that ordinarily most high schools didn't have, we had in school (four years of English, mathematics, literature, science, foreign language and, of course, religion). Sister Rhoda, actually, originated the early admissions (program) because students from my class--there were two, (straight)-A students--went to the University [of Hawai'i] part way during the second semester of our senior year. No, wait a minute. I guess it was the complete senior year. That was the first time I had ever known of (the early admissions program). So,
all of us who were academic (students) took the test at the University. I was fortunate. I passed.

But in the meanwhile, the gentleman who was the minister of the church (our family belonged to,) wanted us to go to our church-affiliated college which was in Iowa. (I had already been accepted to the University.) So, there was arm-twisting, tugging, and pulling. So, I was making my decision, making up my mind in July or August of that year to go to college in September.

MK: What were your feelings about going to this Iowa college?

EK: I really didn't want to go. (For me, going to the Mainland meant going to a land of White people or Haoles. I am a Hawaiian with very dark skin and I was fearful of being mistaken for a Negro or colored person. Though the church college was in Iowa, church headquarters were situated in Missouri, a border southern state and our traveling group was to stay in Independence, ten miles outside of Kansas City, for two weeks before going north to college.) I think it's kind of important, (at this time, for me to backtrack). Would it be all right?

MK: Sure, sure.

EK: (These strong though subdued feelings of inferiority of color had been with me from childhood. Perhaps because my brother and sister were relatively fair-skinned, color-of-skin always seemed to be dragged into our usual childhood sibling rivalry, especially with my brother. Our arguments or kid-fights always ended with my being called a "nigger." My means of getting back at my brother was to demand that I get or receive anything he was given--toys, skates, bicycle, even money--and to excel in school. You see, he was so sickly during his pre-school and early school years that he was kept back a year in grade school. And when he eventually went to Punahou--at the recommendation of our family physician because of its excellent physical education program--he had to repeat his sixth-grade year. Though we were almost two years apart in age and because I had started school so young, we were graduated from high school the same year. So our sibling rivalry continued through our teen years.

(My sister, who is five years younger than I, of course, was never involved in these kid-fights but my resentment toward her may have been because she was even fairer than my brother--my grandmother thought the nurse at the hospital had made a mistake when she brought this Haole baby to my mother. These childhood resentments and animosities grew and remained into our adult years. And sadly, because it has taken so many years, we did not get to know and become closer to each other until after our father's death in December 1978.)

END OF SIDE ONE
SIDE TWO

EK: (Ironically, my brother was the person who began helping me rid myself of feeling so inferior. Unfortunately and to his great disappointment, he did not pass the entrance exam to UH [University of Hawai'i], so after graduation he worked for one of the inter-island shipping companies, then enlisted in the army in November that same year, 1944. We were able, while he was on furlough, to spend our first Christmas away from home together with relatives in Independence, Missouri. I can recall one special occasion when we went to a concert in Kansas City. It was the first time I had ridden a public bus, for when we stayed in Independence earlier before going on to school, we went from place to place by car. And in those years the Black people, or colored as they were called, still sat at the back of the bus. I remember feeling very apprehensive as my brother had declined using our relative's car because of gas rationing. When we got on the bus, there was only one empty seat near the front and quite a few at the back. He guided me to the one front seat and told me to sit down. The woman seated on the inside edged herself closer to the window and hugged her overcoat tightly around her body. I felt all my fears coming true and moved away from her leaning against my brother who was standing by my seat. I remember looking up at him, seeing him smiling down at me and suddenly feeling so safe and secure.

(When we got to Kansas City, we went to a restaurant near the municipal auditorium where the concert was to be held. Again, I began to feel a bit apprehensive, but again, my fears were short-lived. He asked for a nicely situated table for two and we had a lovely dinner and spent a little more than an hour dining, talking and getting to know one another. I'm not sure, but I think because he was in the army and in uniform, no one dared ask us to move to the back of the bus, or deny us service at the restaurant. The concert was most enjoyable, the guest performer was Benny Goodman, my brother's idol. You see, he had played the clarinet in the school band during his junior high school years.)

MK: By the way, what was the name of the college that you went to?

EK: It was Graceland College, and it was a junior college, two-year church-affiliated college.

MK: What were you majoring in at that time?

EK: Well, actually the major was known as liberal arts, but it was eventually to go into sociology, in particular social work.

MK: And then, you came back in...

EK: I came back in '46 and went to the University.

MK: There at the University, what did you concentrate on?
EK: Well, I don't know whether "concentrate" is a very good word because I didn't and I flunked out that first year to the very, very grave disappointment of my parents because failure was not in their vocabulary. (Actually, I was not concentrating and seriously attending to my studies.) And even efforts later on to go back. Well, I remember my mother and I going up to the Dean's, at the time, Livesay's office up in the (administration) building (Hawai'i Hall), to try to get me back. I did get back in, managed to keep average grades, but I was functioning below my capacity. So, I never have finished actually.

MK: So, after that experience, I have in my notes that you entered your work life.

EK: Yes.

MK: Tell me about the work that you've done since '47.

EK: Well, during the year after my first year at UH, I was able to get a position with a private kindergarten. This was at St. Mary's School. So, I was teacher's assistant. Because I have some musical background, I had piano lessons when I was growing up—oh, I didn't mention that—I took care of the music and teaching the children songs and dances, and whatever, as part of their activities. Then I helped the regular teacher in doing some of the other learning activities for the children. I enjoyed that and stayed with it for a full year. No, it was for two years, actually. Yeah, '47 to '49.

MK: Then, what made you stop doing that?

EK: Well, in the meantime, I had decided to go back to school and try to really make an effort to get my degree. I went back in '49, but from '49 to '51 was it?—I left at the end of that last semester when I would have gotten my degree in the spring. I decided to leave. I was all right. I didn't flunk out this time.

(Laughter)

MK: Then, at that stage, what did you do?

EK: At that stage, I literally bummed around for a while for part of the year. I guess school was out. I left that first semester. First semester usually ended in January then. And so, in June I got office work with the church that we went to. I worked in the office for about, was it two or three years? That was secretarial, clerical work.

MK: Since 1955, you've been in government service.

EK: In government service, uh huh.

MK: In what capacities have you been with state government?

EK: It's all been in clerical work. Actually, before I came into government
service, I wanted to go to business school for a secretarial (course). The only (commercial or business course) I had had was typing in high school. That was because we got caught one day playing a game of marbles when we were supposed to be in our chemistry class. I guess, we were stopped from going to that class, and I just took a course in typing. So, I signed up to go to Honolulu Business College beginning in the summer. It was on Fort Street at the time, which is now Fort Street Mall. I liked it.

(The secretarial course began in June and I remained till the end of July, and did quite well. I was not self-supportive and my parents had to pay for my schooling. I think they felt because I had made no real and serious effort to obtain my degree, spending more for an eighteen-month secretarial course was a waste of money, time and effort. Also, at this time I think my sister was thinking about continuing her education in nursing school, after a year in college and working in a hospital a year or more. My father felt I should be earning a living by finding a job. I took a civil service exam, was placed in a clerical position with state government and have worked in three departments over a period of twenty-six years.)

MK: I'm going to switch over to your mother's career now. She was a teacher at Waikīkī until her death in 1962.

EK: Yes.

MK: What grades did she teach and what was her specialty in teaching?

EK: Well, as far as I knew, while she was at Waikīkī School, it was always the sixth grade. I think it was only that grade level. Somehow or other, I don't know whether she was set aside for that, but she got all of the students whom other teachers found difficult to handle. So, all who had behavioral problems were sent to her. Somehow or other, she (was successful with these students and) managed to involve and to keep in close touch with the parents of these children. She managed very well at doing that.

MK: What was your father's work through the major portions of your life?

EK: My father was a printer (for forty-six years). He was with the Honolulu Advertiser for (thirty-four years and Paradise of the Pacific for twelve years. He worked for the legislature during the 1959-60 sessions in a senator's office. Then in the early summer of 1960 he applied for a civil service position and was accepted as a custodian in the public school system at the age of sixty-two. He worked for eight years and retired at age seventy only because it was mandatory.)

MK: I know that in 1959 your family left Waikīkī.

EK: Yes.

MK: Why was that?
EK: (The background is a bit complicated and there is much I don't know but I'll try to piece things together. Sometime in the latter 1950s, before 1959, my parents were approached by a couple of people who represented a group who were interested in developing property in Waikiki. During this time, I think it was not an unusual occurrence, for many areas within Waikiki were beginning to or had changed into non-residential areas. Well, it seems that these people obtained, I believe, a five-year option to develop our property and my parents were compensated for this option. In this five-year interim which included 1959, we moved out to the Niu Iki home on Kalaniana'ole Highway with the understanding that the Waikiki property would be developed. This did not come about as planned. So, from October 1959 to the summer of 1960, our Waikiki home remained unoccupied. Since my mother taught at Waikiki School, she naturally was able to make a daily check on the home and property. It wasn't until mid-summer of 1960 when my brother and his family were assigned for army duty in Hawaii that the Waikiki home was occupied. They remained and rented the home from my parents for a year and eventually moved to assigned quarters at Schofield Barracks in the summer of 1961. Immediately after they moved, the Jack Bishaw family (née Peachey Ewaliko) became the new residents and lived there until the property was to be developed, finally, in the mid-1960s.)

MK: Going back to the time that your family left Waikiki, did your family sell their property or lease it?

EK: (The property was developed, and not sold, through someone who had casually stopped by our home in Niu Iki. He brought up the subject of developing property and seemingly because my father liked his personality after meeting with this man several times, my father had total confidence in him. Eventually agreements were made and documents were drawn up. My first full knowledge of what was taking place was when we all met at the savings and loan institution to sign the documents—my father explained a little to me of what had transpired and what we were going to do. I asked to read the documents before signing and when doing so, realized that there was no way we could meet the mortgage payments, stipulated in the documents, once the property was developed into apartments. I attempted to caution my father and suggested that our family lawyer be brought into this. He became quite angry and refused to even consider this so I dropped the matter and went along with him by signing the documents. Construction began in 1965 and the buildings were completed in the summer of 1966. It was a struggle managing the apartments and keeping them occupied, and we had to sell the apartments including the property by 1968. It was a loss both financially and emotionally, but it ended a two-year struggle and worry. We finally did go to our lawyer, sometime in 1967–68, but it was already too late. All the documents were legal and binding.

(But this did not end our dilemma. In filing his income tax returns for 1968 and 1969, even though he went to a reputable tax service, somehow or other the entire amount he had received for the Waikiki property was not entered on these tax returns. So by 1971, he owed...
an amount in back taxes and penalties for which he had no available cash to pay. And the only means for payment was to sell the Niu Iki home on Kalaniana'ole Highway. Through a relative who was a realtor with the largest real estate firm in Hawai'i, we were able to pay the back taxes and penalties and eventually sell our home. We moved to our present residence in Mō'ili'ili in October 1972 and my father lived there until he died in December 1978. The tragedy for my father was not owning land in the final years of his life, land he had worked for all his life. The tragedy for he and I was that we were not able to communicate, and hence, we could not truly confide in one another.)

MK: I guess there are very few people who actually own their land in Waikīkī.

EK: Yeah. Well, I think the Ewalikos still own . . .

MK: Mm hmm [yes], the Ewalikos have been quite fortunate.

EK: And the Baders.

MK: The Baders. They've been fortunate.

EK: They've been fortunate.

MK: I guess it's such a complicated matter when you're dealing with land.

EK: I think the Richards sold their land.

MK: Now as you look back on all your years in Waikīkī, what do you think about Waikīkī as the place that you lived and grew up in?

EK: You know, it's very interesting that you should ask me that question. Prior to the time in spring of this year before we started the interviews, I'd occasionally go into Waikīkī. It was usually mostly just to walk along and sit at the beach, or to go to an occasional movie, or go out and eat somewhere in Waikīkī. Just to walk around. And I enjoyed that. I don't remember ever saying that, "Oh, I don't like the way it is now compared to the way it was before." It was always the idea that I accepted the change. There were some parts of Waikīkī that I didn't . . . I mean, you'd never find me in that area. But generally speaking, it was acceptable to me. All the highrise and all the change.

But you know, after we had those interviews, the first time I had to go out to Waikīkī--it was for something--and I got off the bus, and I was walking around. And you know, there was a bit of resentment. I caught myself. I said, "Now, how come you're feeling this way?" When I went home, I told my sister about that. I said, "You know, it's because I've been reminiscing all this time with the interviews about Waikīkī the way it used to be." And I had to laugh. Isn't that funny? I haven't--have I been back since then? I don't
know. But I'm just wondering whether when I go back this time, how will it be. But it was very interesting. I was thinking, "Gee, this place looks awful." Oh my, it was not necessarily the negative side, but it wasn't positive. I had to catch myself. I said, "Gee, that's the first time I remembered feeling that way." 'Cause I always accepted the change. If a new hotel was coming up, I says, "Oh, it's better than it used to be." But yet, we have groups, in particular the Hawaiian groups, who are against the change. I thought that was interesting. I said, "Oh, Emma, I think it's because you've been going back into your childhood." (Chuckles)

MK: That is interesting.

EK: But, I think generally speaking, I don't mind the change all that much really. In a sense, it's just like, "Oh, I remember Waikīkī when, and it's part of me. It's too bad that's not a part of you." That kind of attitude now. So, I said, "Gee, when I get back, I must mention this, to (chuckles) . . . ."

MK: That is really interesting. Well, I think I'll end the interview here. I really enjoyed interviewing you.

END OF INTERVIEW
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