

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Emiko Matsuo Ueno

Emiko Matsuo, eldest of six children, was born to Umesuke and Masae Matsuo in 1926 in Hale‘iwa, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i.

Her father, an immigrant from Yamaguchi-*ken*, Japan, graduated from high school in Japan and attended Hilo Boarding School where he acquired English-language skills. Her mother, a Hawai‘i-born nisei, attended sewing school and beauty school.

Umesuke Matsuo was involved in sales and taught at the Hale‘iwa Jōdo Mission Japanese-language School. Masae Matsuo did sewing and hairdressing as businesses.

By 1932, the Matsuos had moved to Nīnole on the Big Island of Hawai‘i, where they hoped to teach and prosper at a newly-opened Japanese-language school. With a small population base, its inferior location, and a competing school, the prosperity they hoped for did not materialize. By summer 1941, the Matsuos moved and began teaching at another Big Island school in Waiākea Uka.

With the outbreak of war, Umesuke Matsuo was removed from his home, initially detained at Kīlauea Military Camp, and later sent to Sand Island Detention Center and various facilities on the U.S. Mainland.

The Matsuos, without the economic support of their father, relied on welfare and income earned by Emiko. By late December 1942, the family, too, was being sent to the Mainland.

The Matsuos were held at Jerome War Relocation Center in Arkansas. In 1944, Umesuke Matsuo who had been held in Montana, Texas and Louisiana rejoined his family.

From Arkansas, because of Umesuke Matsuo’s expressed desire to return to Japan, they were sent to Tule Lake Segregation Center in California.

From Tule Lake, with no intention of following her father’s plan, Emiko joined the Cadet Nurse Corps in Illinois.

At war’s end, the family opted not to go to Japan. Instead, they returned to O‘ahu where Umesuke Matsuo eventually worked in maintenance at the Moana Hotel and Masae Matsuo worked in the linen room at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

Emiko, now retired from nursing and federal civil service, resides on O‘ahu. She and Norman Ueno raised three children.

Tape No. 57-18-1-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Emiko Matsuo Ueno (EU)

‘Aiea, O‘ahu

November 14, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN) and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: Okay, we're ready to start. This is an interview with Emiko Matsuo Ueno. This is session number one. It's November 14, 2012. We're in 'Aiea, O'ahu, Hawai'i. The interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

We're going to start with a real easy question first. What year were you born?

EU: Well, my birth certificate says I was born in 1926.

MK: Where were you born?

EU: I was born in Hale'iwa.

MK: I want to start off with your mother. Tell us about your mother, Masae Naramoto.

EU: She was the second of eight daughters. Her father was independent planter I presume, because he didn't work for the [sugarcane] plantation. Her mother was a housewife.

It was interesting that Grandfather was really one of those rigid Japanese males, I guess. He just—you know—did his thing. He came home and he was the king of the house. I do remember my mother saying that when harvest time came, he would come home late at night on his horse with a bag of coins. Since he had eight daughters he would have bolts of material so the girls can have clothes.

My mother was the one that ripped apart the old dresses and sewed up clothes for all the girls. She married earliest, before her older sister. I guess she had a pretty good life. She had some really hard knocks, but. . . .

MK: In what area did she grow up?

EU: She grew up in Kalaoa, right above Pāpa'ikou. After their house burned down, they had to move further on up the hill—I guess they had a real hard time, because he couldn't work. He had diabetes, I guess. His leg was gangrenous and he was bedridden. They really had no income. This was after my mother married, but when we went up to visit, the younger sisters would be washing—doing laundry—for the Filipino neighbors. Khaki shirts, and work shirts and work pants. They really worked hard to make a living.

Do you want to go into her married life? Because she was sixteen when she got married.

MK: Before we get into that, I'm curious, what part of Japan did your mother's father and mother come from?

EU: (Her family) came from Ōshima in Yamaguchi. I think they were farmers.

- MK: You mentioned she was the second oldest of eight girls. She married young. I was wondering, what had you heard about her educational experience up to that point?
- EU: She evidently went through sixth grade. Obviously she couldn't read or write very well. So, my dad—when he married her—left her in Honolulu and he was teaching at Hale'iwa. He sent her to sewing school and beauty school and (pause) she was just like any other student. Just going to school. She lived with her relatives, (the Naramotos). They lived in Mō'ili'ili. She was there for four years. She said there were no beauty shops. She would have appointments to different wealthy families in Mānoa and Nu'uano and carry her little curling iron, because in those days they didn't have permanents. Go to their homes and do their hair and makeup, I guess when they were going to go to some engagement. Then when she was twenty, Dad decided to bring her to Hale'iwa where he was teaching at the Jōdo Mission Japanese[-language] school.
- MK: What if anything did your mother say about being in an arranged marriage so young?
- EU: I guess in those days it was normal. Your father says you're going to get married and that was it. The same with my dad. The grandparents made the arrangements I guess.
- MK: Now I think we can go over to your father, Umesuke Matsuo. Tell us where he was born and his family background.
- EU: Dad was born in Murotsu, which is a little seaport in Yamaguchi-ken [prefecture] in the Seto Naikai [Seto Inland Sea]. He had to get there by rail from Iwakuni and catch a bus or cab down to the point. It was in the southern point of Hiroshima Bay. His father had a little shop, because when we visited (pause) Murotsu one year. . . . My aunt still lived there and she operated a little fishing camp. They had a little pier going out because it was a fishing town and the fishermen came stay at that inn. They had a house in town and the first floor looked like it was some sort of store. Upstairs was the living area. It was a nice little place. The backyard was a little garden and an upstairs (living area). Dad was left there (with his grandmother). He was born in Japan—and his parents came to Hawai'i. My grandfather worked for his aunt who lived in Pāpa'aloa.
- His aunt was a widow and she had quite a large house with store above. She had some land. She only had one daughter, (Hana). There was, I guess, an arranged marriage for Hana-san. Hana's husband was a *yōshi*. He took the Okamura name. Hana passed away and left three daughters and a son.
- So, Grandfather worked with the delivery and all that for a while. I don't know how long he was in Japan—I mean in Hawai'i, but he was there long enough for my dad to get out of school. I don't know how much schooling Dad really had, but I do know he got out of high school (in Japan) and came to Hawai'i. Grandfather wanted him to learn English and send him to (public) school, but they kept promoting him and he didn't learn to speak or write. So he sent him to Mr. Lyman's boarding school in Hilo. He must have been there [Hilo Boarding School] a couple of years and he learned to speak and write. In fact, he had beautiful, beautiful writing, handwriting. He learned different cultures and food, whereas my mother was strictly Japanese. But my dad, he'd eat anything. (Chuckles)
- MK: Maybe you can elaborate the different cultural things he adopted. Like what foods did he eat?
- EU: Oh, he ate everything. He had Filipino food, Portuguese, and American. In those days purely Japanese people didn't eat cheese. But you know, he had to introduce my mother to all these different foods, and she was so young that she had to learn how to cook anyway. I guess it worked out pretty good.
- MK: I think last time you mentioned that your father also golfed?
- EU: Oh yes. (Laughs) I don't know where he picked it up, but I know that the first time I saw him golfing was after we had moved from Hale'iwa to Nīnole. He took his cousin Don Okamura, who was still in high school. He took him out and taught him how to golf because his grandmother didn't want him to do rough sports since they thought about him

going to medical school. His hands were important. So, he played the piano with my dad. Dad played by ear. Two of them would sit down at the piano and the house would rock. (Chuckles)

Don was really quiet and he was quite handsome boy. He later went to the UH [University of Hawai'i] and when he got out he went to University of Michigan and got his MD, and then he did his ophthalmology in Boston. Subsequently he married a nurse there and practiced until retirement. He retired to Florida. But I have no idea of his family. My mother kept track of them—you know she used to go visit when she went on trips, but I have no idea how many children he had or anything.

MK: For your father, so he grew up in Japan and in the Big Island. He went to the Lymans' boarding school. There was an arranged marriage when he was how old?

EU: He must have been about twenty.

MK: You mentioned that he arranged for your mother to go to sewing school and beauty school. How come?

EU: Because she was so young. He felt that she was just a child, right? So he thought since she was making clothes for the family and whatnot, she had a talent, so he sent her there. I guess she wanted to learn the beauty thing, hairdressing and things. She was always very clever with her hands.

MK: Your father, what did he do for a livelihood at that early stage?

EU: He was a language teacher at the Jōdo Mission Japanese School in Hale'iwa.

MK: Okay. Now, you were born in Hale'iwa in 1926. How long did you folks live in Hale'iwa?

EU: I think we lived there till I must have been about seven.

MK: What do you remember about the home that you lived in in Hale'iwa?

EU: We lived in a little green cottage overlooking the bay where the fishing boats and—you know that small boat harbor right there. I remember wanting to swim. Just run across the street to the beach. It was just down there. They used to have a raft anchored in the middle. It must have been about a hundred yards from shore. It was, I think, an army beach, because every week we would see trucks coming down from Schofield [Barracks] and the place would be filled with soldiers swimming. I don't know where I learned to swim. It was just a dog swim I guess. I used to swim out there and I was. . . .

MK: Very young.

EU: Very, very young. When I got tired I would look for the rope that anchored the raft, because it was anchored to the shore. So, I knew there was something that I could hang on to. You swim out there and swim back. Nobody said anything. My mother never, ever thought that I shouldn't do that. Nobody. (MK and EU laugh.) When I think about it, I think, my goodness, I was so little. I swam all the way out there.

I remember one year there was a tidal wave and we were rather high up compared to sea level, but the wave had come in and gone around the back of the little hill because the restaurant is low, right? Way up and around in back and there was a fish pond back there. So when the wave receded, I remember all these women running out and picking up all the fish. It's about the only thing I remember except walking to school.

MK: What school did you go to?

EU: Hale'iwa.

- MK: Would you remember anything about your school experiences there?
- EU: No, I really don't. I don't remember anybody, except by. . . . I guess. . . . The Jōdo Mission priest, Mr. [Buntetsu] Miyamoto, had a son. The Miyamotos had a son, David it was. (He was) in the same class. But that's the only person I remember from those days.
- MK: Earlier you mentioned a restaurant near your home in Hale'iwa?
- EU: There was a little restaurant right at the river. Then there was also another large—I guess it was a store that sold knickknacks and almost like fast food. When the soldiers came down they used to go there. But, that was closer to where the park is now. I don't remember when, but I know my dad was there managing (it at one time). I remember going there.
- MK: So in addition to being a schoolteacher, he was involved in this business?
- EU: Yes, and he was also selling things. Salesman-like. Real silk socks, you know? Men's socks. He'd sell that. He was involved in savings and loan, I don't know. He was just into all sorts of things. He had a car. Must have been a Ford. The thing that I remember most about riding in that car was one summer, he got a bunch of the girls from (the Japanese) school, my mother and I, and went up to Kawailoa and picked mountain apples. Came home. That's about the only thing I can remember.
- One time, I guess when Grandfather was here with Grandmother, they had one son born here. Uncle Harry. I think Harry was sort of raised in Japan too after they went back to Japan, but he came and lived with us. He went to Leilehua High School. He had an old jalopy and he was commuting to school. He was a pretty good football player. Uncle Harry knew Tommy. . . .
- WN: Tommy Kaulukukui?
- EU: Yes. I guess they were—Uncle Harry was from Leilehua, so they (knew each other). So when Uncle Harry graduated Dad had wanted him to go to university [University of Hawai'i]. He said since you know Tommy, he said you (should) to school. Uncle Harry said no. He had imposed enough. So, he went back to Big Island and he worked for the Okamura store. I think that was the happiest time of (my mother's) life up till then. She was. . . .
- MK: In Hale'iwa?
- EU: Mm-hmm [yes]. She had friends and I know there were always some people in either doing their hair or dressmaking.
- MK: So in Hale'iwa, she was sewing and doing hair as a business?
- EU: Yes. At home. People would come in.
- MK: You mentioned that your father was a Japanese-language schoolteacher in Hale'iwa. For what school did he teach?
- EU: The Jōdo Mission. They had a school.
- MK: What grades did he teach?
- EU: I don't know. I do know that he taught *kokugo*, which is Japanese—I guess—reading and writing.
- MK: How about yourself, you were in Hale'iwa only a short time, but were you also a student at your father's school?

EU: No.

(Laughter)

MK: How come?

EU: I really don't know. He just sent me to public school. But he never. . . I guess maybe I did, but I don't remember going. (EU and MK laugh.)

MK: And you went to the public school . . .

EU: In Hale'iwa.

MK: . . . in Hale'iwa.

WN: But what language school did you go to?

EU: Well, I remember going to my dad's classes (in Hawai'i Island). Very strict. He always had Japanese magazines and he had. . . One thing I remember—and I really enjoyed—he had this library of volumes of Japanese literature from children's tales to adult, and it was all cloth-bound. It was just volumes. Couple of shelves. I read like mad.

MK: In Japanese?

EU: Yes. He had his couple of magazines and my mother had her Japanese one, so we did do a lot of reading. Nothing else to do.

MK: So that reading that you did, was that in Hale'iwa or later on when you were on the Big Island?

EU: Big Island.

MK: Big Island. When you mentioned that you would go to your father's classes, was that more on the Big Island and not in Hale'iwa?

EU: Yes.

MK: Okay. Maybe we can find out why it is that your family moved from Hale'iwa to the Big Island.

EU: My parents never, never mentioned anything about why they moved. Although, the first thing that you would think about was instead of being a teacher hired by someone else to have your own school and run it the way you wanted to, and he had the opportunity to (pause) get what he wanted. He thought it was a real good deal that he and my mom would teach. It was funny because she only (went to) sixth grade but she taught grades one to six. In those days, Japanese-language schools were very fundamental. You just learned to read and write, but no conversational Japanese. It was strictly by book. "This is *hana*."

MK: Where in the Big Island did your family move?

EU: We moved to Nīnole, which is on the Hāmākua Coast. It was a little isolated spot that the school was in. The public school was adjacent to the Japanese[-language] school. We moved to this really broken-down building (at first). No electricity. The only running water was in the kitchen. It was really dark and gloomy because it sat on a hill. It had gigantic trees on the hillside. I guess they call it scrub brush oaks. You know, the oak with the flowers that looks like a scrub brush. And, eucalyptus trees. I remember playing under the trees and in those days you didn't have toys, so you (made do) with leaves and seeds (coughs). I remember cleaning up the kerosene lamps for lighting. I cleaned the [lamp] chimneys with newspaper. Filling it up with kerosene. But I don't remember

- cooking or anything like that. The only thing I did was play. (MK and EU laugh.) That was my job.
- WN: You were the oldest yeah?
- EU: Yes, I was the oldest. My brother next to me was born in Hale'iwa, but the rest of the siblings. . . . The rest of the four were born in Hawai'i [Island].
- MK: So four were—one brother was born in Hale'iwa, and . . .
- EU: The rest yeah.
- MK: . . . four siblings were born in Hale'iwa.
- EU: Oh no, in Hawai'i.
- MK: In Hawai'i. In Nīnole.
- EU: Yes. It was a big disappointment for my parents when they moved there, because what was offered to him didn't materialize. He was promised they would build a new school and student body of so many. When he got there, they did start building. However, the Buddhist church in Honohina—which was the next village—decided they would build a school too. So, when they built the school, the majority of the student body went to that school, because it was the bigger town than Nīnole which is just a bunch of plantation camps. Dad was left with a poorer section of the area, whereas Honohina had the small businesses and a church. So, the parents of his school really couldn't afford the salary they had offered him. Every year they would have a fundraiser and he would donate practically half his salary to cancel off the debts. (Laughs) He didn't get it and he never got it back. I used to wonder, "Why is he donating so much money when we don't have any money?" (EU and MK laugh.) Now I realize that he was just canceling the debt.
- MK: You mentioned that Nīnole was a smaller community than Honohina. What did Nīnole have?
- EU: Nīnole had a little post office. I remember a little store—Nishimoto Store—there, and that's all. There were camps, plantation camps. Two of them I think. I don't know that-- there were one, two, about three schoolteachers who had come out from Nīnole that had homes there. There was a garage. That's about it. (Chuckles)
- MK: You mentioned that your father's school was going to be near the public school?
- EU: John M. Ross. John M. Ross School. We were sort of across the street diagonally from it. There was a little gulch and on the right side closer to Nīnole than we were and Honohina was on the other side—the Honohina school was built. So, we were on opposite sides of the little ravine I guess, and the public school was across the street from Dad's school.
- MK: You described to us what the place looked like initially when you folks moved to Nīnole.
- EU: The old school you mean?
- MK: The old school there. You said---the home. The home that you lived in in Nīnole. What was that like as you spent your youth in Nīnole?
- EU: The initial home that we moved to was actually just an extension of the school. Two large classrooms that we used as a living facility. There was a little pond—fish pond—with a bridge over it. The kitchen was separate. It was really primitive compared to what we had in Hale'iwa. I think it was a big blow to my parents, and especially after finding out that the student body was not even half of what they expected.
- Mom is there, but she had nobody. She didn't have very much. People didn't come to her to have dresses made or anything because you know, plantation workers naturally

- wouldn't let anybody do hair. Until we moved to the newer school. I know the postmistress, Mrs. Nishimoto, used to come over and have dresses made or have her hair done. But, other than that, there was really nobody that she. . . . Although sometimes she would have somebody come in and they wanted something made. So she started a sewing class on Saturdays for the students that wanted to come on Saturday to learn drafting and sewing. Then she had another class for Japanese clothes—making kimonos. That was the only extra income we had.
- MK: At that point when you folks were at Ninole, your mom was also teaching?
- EU: Well, yes. She had to. Because Dad couldn't do the whole thing by himself from first [grade] to twelve, so she took over one to six. I don't know how she did it with her educational background, but she must have read. I do know that she had several pamphlets of programming or grade-school level songs that you could teach, and dances. I remember it had a yellow cover that she'd go over—especially on special occasions. They had to produce a program and she had to have all the dances and songs and everything ready, because the older kids didn't care. Most of the older children didn't care to come. So, for the younger children. She did it. It was amazing, because the PTA was so poor. They couldn't afford to buy costumes or even donate it. My mother, if she wanted to have a Japanese dance, would have to tell the kids to bring in so many rice bags bleached white. So they would bring them in and she would cut and sew Japanese kimonos and then she would dye and stencil them to match. When they got on the stage they're all looking real nice because they were all in synch. She was very clever, and she never had a piano lesson but she had to pick her way through.
- MK: So there was a piano there then?
- EU: Yes, because the school, they had to have New Year's, graduation, and the emperor's birthday celebration, and they had to produce a program. So, they had a piano there.
- MK: These programs, how many people would—who would come? Who would come to these programs?
- EU: Other parents. Parents. I can't remember how many.
- MK: The parents.
- EU: The schoolhouse was two large classrooms with extension on the back where Dad had his office, and a work area where he had his mimeograph machine. They didn't have any money to buy printed tests or anything, so he would stencil. Each test that he gave from grade one to grade twelve, he had to make a stencil and run it off.
- MK: My goodness.
- EU: I think they were very depressed—my parents were. After being so carefree and financially secure, I guess when they were going to move to Hawai'i it was during the big depression, so they lost all their savings in the savings and loan. They were starting new and they had high hopes. Nothing materialized.
- MK: You mentioned that your father would teach from grades seven through twelve.
- EU: Twelve.
- MK: Did it seem like he had a lot of students?
- EU: Not really. I remember sitting in the classroom and it must have been maybe fifteen or twenty students. That's about it. The younger classes had more. More people from one to six. My mother taught the younger kids and Dad taught the older.
- MK: Now I'm wondering about you and your siblings. Did you folks attend? Did you and your siblings attend your parents' school?

EU: Mm-hmm. Yes we did.

MK: What was that like, being the principal and teacher's daughter?

EU: Well, to me, reading all the different magazines and the books that Dad had, the textbooks were a piece of cake. (MK chuckles.) It was really fundamental. I would be maybe really bored and I'd be reading something else (tucked) in between the textbook. My father would come down and gave me a whack for not paying attention. He was very strict and he also taught *kendō*. So, every week the guys would move the chairs back and he would have them come and he would instruct them on *kendō*.

MK: As a girl, could you participate too?

EU: I did. (Laughs) I went to tournaments. It's pretty good in the beginning when you're a beginner, but as you age the boys got really strong right? So you were really pushed around. I remember going to tournaments and there would be a sprinkling of girls in the tournament, and different teachers had their daughters learn too. I got to know a few of them.

WN: So, you would compete against boys?

EU: Yes.

WU: Wow.

EU: Because—you had to be real fast, you know. Not do real dramatic things, you know you have to do the tricky ones to win. I mean when they pushed you, you would just fly. You can imagine if you were (pause) even twelve, if you got a partner who was sixteen and you were twelve and a girl, you really got beaten up. Black and blues all over. You had those thick gloves, but then they would miss and maybe hit your upper arm. You know you're hit.

MK: How did your mother take to all of this?

EU: Well, she must have been really, really depressed. All these kids, naturally, there's nothing else to do right? She had all these kids and trying to do her work and everything. (When she was) really depressed, she would go out and dig in the vegetable garden. She used to go and dig and it would get dark and maybe raining. I'd call her and she wouldn't come in. I think she must have been really, really frustrated. She loved Easter lilies. Every year she'd plant these bulbs that she saved from the year before and she'd time it so at Easter, we just had rows of lilies blooming. Different things, it was amazing what she produced. I guess she came from a farming family. She knew when to plant things.

MK: I was just curious, what religion did your family follow?

EU: Well, actually we were not very religious. Dad naturally, his family was a Jōdo Mission and he had taught at the Jōdo Mission school. But, when we were in Big Island, I don't remember going to churches unless it was to some funeral or get-together on my mother's side. I remember going to Honomū. I don't remember, it was very seldom that we went to church.

MK: Earlier you mentioned how busy your mother was. She had all those children, she was teaching classes and sewing, she had a garden to tend to. As the eldest daughter in the family, what were your responsibilities?

EU: My responsibility was getting up—I mean there's no alarm clock or anything—but I have to get up and make breakfast. I had to sweep and mop the living room and the porch that we had in the house, before school, which was not bad during grade school. But for intermediate and high school we had to catch the bus. That came real early in the morning because they had to transport us to Laupāhoehoe. It was just a mad rush in the morning. Many times I didn't have any lunch money, so I'd have to scramble in the

kitchen to find something to bring for lunch. I remember sometimes there would be nothing. If it was right after New Year's, the *mochi*. So I'd fry some up and put *kinako* on and take it for lunch. I very seldom had cash to buy lunch at the cafeteria.

MK: How about your siblings?

EU: As I say, I was so self-centered that all I remember was when I was free after school, I'd have to come home and cook rice outside. (We had a wood burning fireplace) and if my mother had given me instructions I would start dinner. But, I was so busy and I have to go to school. That was after I came back from public school, you do that and then go to . . .

MK: . . . Japanese[-language] school.

EU: . . . Japanese school. Come back, and by the time my mother had dinner ready. So, I had no time to play with my siblings. Only thing I remember is on weekends, all I know is I always had a kid on my back. (Laughs) In the *obi*. I couldn't go anywhere, but there weren't any places to go, really. The only time that I left the house alone was to walk to the post office, which was about a mile or so away and back. Other than that the kids would be playing ball. The little wooden thing.

MK: Oh, *peewee*?

EU: Yes, we were playing that, and if I wanted to join in I have to join with somebody on my back.

(Laughter)

I was so. . . I was really tied up and many times I thought I must be a stepchild because I had to do so much.

MK: By the way, what was the age difference say between you and your siblings?

EU: Well, my brother was three years younger than I. Two years---no a year later my sister was born. Maybe a couple years later my brother. Then Jan was born a couple of years later. There was a little break and Carol was born. So, maybe all in all, ten years difference in our ages. But they were so babyish compared to what my parents expected out of me. I had to babysit all the time. (The next oldest sibling was) my brother and he wasn't babysitting because you know Japanese boys don't do those things. So, I was the babysitter for all the little ones and I guess I was very resentful that I couldn't play or do anything if I wanted time. I had to grab a book and go hide in the bushes.

MK: When you say grab a book, what language were you reading?

EU: Both. Because, I remember in grade school, we didn't have a library. But, when we went to Laupāhoehoe they had a library. Every night I had my arms full of not only schoolbooks, but library books.

MK: What elementary school did you go to?

EU: John M. Ross.

MK: What do you remember about those days at John M. Ross?

EU: I remember the principal was Mr. Kamakaiwi. He was really nice. He was big and very soft-spoken. He was quite musical. He used to lead us in songs. First thing in the morning we'd all stand outside and pledge allegiance to the flag. Then have a songfest. He would lead us into song. Then we'd start our day. I don't remember much about curriculum or classmates or anything, because as soon as school ended I had to go home and do my thing at home. I really had no social contact with school friends.

- MK: But in that school, what kinds of kids were at that school?
- EU: Most of them were plantation workers. Very few kids with parents who didn't work for the plantation. The only other people were schoolteachers, shopkeepers, maybe mill workers. The supervisors and whatnot.
- MK: How about the kids from neighboring Honohina? Where would they go to school?
- EU: They went to John M. Ross.
- MK: They went to John M. Ross?
- EU: And then we all went to Laupāhoehoe [School], because Honohina was the end of the school district. I think on the other end it was 'Ō'ōkala. It was a long school district, so it was a long bus ride to and from school.
- MK: Like you mentioned, in the Japanese-language schools, your mom would help put on these programs. How about at John M. Ross? Were there programs that you participated in there?
- EU: I never, never remember having a program. Did we have a May Day program?
- MK: Or Christmas?
- EU: Maybe they did. I don't remember a Christmas one.
- MK: From what grade did you go to Laupāhoehoe?
- EU: Intermediate.
- MK: Intermediate?
- EU: Yes, from seven to twelve.
- MK: From your home to John M. Ross, you walked?
- EU: Mm-hmm [yes].
- MK: How did you get to Laupāhoehoe?
- EU: We had a bus, school bus. He couldn't transport all the kids at one time. I guess there were row seats—four rows of seats length-wise. He couldn't get everybody on, so he'd take one load up to Kapehu. Come back and get the rest of the kids and drive down to Laupāhoehoe and come back to Kapehu and take. . . .
- MK: Oh.
- EU: They didn't have enough buses. There was another bus system on the other side in 'Ō'ōkala. Because Laupāhoehoe was so far from all the outlying districts.
- MK: What do you remember most about your years at Laupāhoehoe?
- EU: The only thing I really remember is we got to school so early in the morning, walking around the sea coast there. That's the only thing I remember early in the morning.
- MK: How about the teachers? Any stand out?
- EU: Yes. Mrs. Brown was there?

- MK: Mm-hmm [yes]. Your advisor teacher.
- EU: She was our English teacher, she was. . . . Her husband was—I guess—manager for Pāpa‘aloha. She was a really, really warm person. So, I think she made it easier for me to get reading materials.
- MK: I see.
- EU: She was really nice. In fact, I think after I came back from nursing school one day, I don't know who the others were right now, but a few of us went to visit her. She lived in Mānoa then. She was so happy to see us. We had a really nice relationship with her.
- We had another teacher, Mr. Kawahara. His family owned the garage in Nīnole.
- MK: Oh, Sam Kawahara.
- EU: Lloyd.
- MK: Lloyd. Lloyd Kawahara.
- EU: Yes, yes. He married another teacher. What was the name? Tan. T-A-N. What was the first name? [Peace] But, he got married after I graduated. Miss Tan used to teach social studies and he was. . . . It's a funny thing—now that I think about it I must have been such a brat. (MK and EU chuckle.) He went to USC [University of Southern California] and he came back and he started teaching. It was fine, but his speech was not very good. (MK and EU laugh.) He'd make some grammatical errors that were really funny. One day I pointed it out and I'm thinking it is terrible of me. He must have been really embarrassed. (MK and EU laugh.) When I think about it, "How did I say such a thing to a schoolteacher?" One day he decided he would give a quiz—surprise quiz. Everybody was moaning and groaning. So I said instead of moaning and groaning let's go on strike. So I just walked out. The class followed me out. (Laughs) The poor guy. I was terrible.
- MK: You instigated a strike?
- EU: Yes. (MK and EU laugh.) And we didn't get any feedback afterwards. Nothing happened. I was really terrible.
- WN: (Laughs) Plus you were younger than your classmates right?
- EU: Yes.
- WN: You were like two years younger because you skipped grades when you were younger.
- EU: I wonder sometimes how I had all the nerve to do all those things. I guess I was so resentful of the life I was living that I was rebellious.
- MK: I was wondering, you skipped some classes. How were you as a student?
- EU: In those days, I think many of the schoolchildren didn't have all the resources I had. There was no TV. There were a few radios. Still, I don't think they really could have competed in any schoolroom of a city school. I was reading extensively. Anything. Anything that was written, I would read. I had some sort of reading test and I scored real high. Then the teacher said, "She must be real smart." I wasn't. It was just that there was no competition.
- MK: I'm wondering too, with your mother being nisei—raised in the islands—and your father although being born in Japan, he also went to public school and boarding school. How helpful were they?

- EU: Actually, I think they were too involved in day-to-day survival that they didn't have time for us really.
- MK: I was wondering, what language did they speak with you?
- EU: Mostly Japanese. Mostly Japanese. Of course they both spoke English, but I guess it was easier for them to speak Japanese.
- MK: Going back to your school days at Laupāhoehoe, I was wondering, in terms of extracurricular activities or social activities to what extent did you get to participate?
- EU: Actually, they didn't have too many social activities. But, what they had I rarely got to go to them. Except when the teachers and Mr. [Elvis] Rhoads said, "You must attend. . ." They would somehow get my dad to say okay. I never met my schoolmates—classmates—out of the school yard. Dad had a car but very few others had cars then in the country.
- MK: How about organized club activities or anything like that, or yearbook or. . .
- EU: Nothing.
- MK: I think though you had a story about Mr. Rhoads and how he somehow convinced your parents to allow you to go to something?
- EU: Mm-hmm [yes].
- MK: Talk about that. How did he do that?
- EU: I really don't know. It must have been pretty sneaky because I didn't know how they did it. Really, because Mr. Rhoads must have gone to my parents, because I know my parents would never go to him to ask what's with this. I remember staying with him when we had the senior play. I told him, "I don't think I can be in the play, because I can't get here."
- Mr. Rhoads said, "You're going to stay at my house, so you don't have to worry." I don't know how they came to that conclusion.
- MK: So you stayed over at Principal Rhoads's house with Mr. and Mrs. Rhoads?
- EU: Yes, and their son. I forget what his name was. He had one son. Stayed over there.
- MK: And you were able to be in the senior play?
- EU: Yes. (Laughs) Whatever.
- MK: What was your role in the senior play?
- EU: I remember going out there and I was supposed to have a mouse trap in my hands and say something. You know what a mouse trap looked like, so I had to figure it out. I made one out of cardboard and carried it out.
- (Laughter)
- It was really a nothing role.
- MK: But he really wanted you to participate.
- EU: Yes, he wanted me to get to know people because I really didn't know anybody. Even in the classroom.
- MK: At that time, you went through your years at Laupāhoehoe. What were your aspirations?

EU: I really didn't have any. As I say, I was so resentful and rebellious. I didn't want to go to school. I wanted to work and do something for myself. I was coerced into going to school.

MK: Tell us how it is you ended up going to the University of Hawai'i.

EU: My mother told me, "Let's go to Honolulu and look for summer jobs," since we needed money so badly. So, we hopped a boat and came up. We stayed with my aunt who lived in Pālolo at that time.

She told me, "Mr. Rhoads wants to see you," on the first day. She said, "You better go and see him."

So I traipsed up to the University. He was trying to get me to register for admission. I didn't want to go to school. So then, he and the dean of women—I don't remember who she was, but they kept on talking to me. Then, finally I said I don't know what college to apply to, what I should do. He said, "You don't have to worry about that. Just maybe enroll in pre-nursing and if you don't like it you can change over. Since this is registration, you can just do it."

I said, "I don't have any money with me." (Chuckles)

"We'll wait for you. So, go back and get the money." I had to go back and they did everything there.

I had told them, "I don't have any money to live on." So, I know my parents couldn't afford to board me.

So they said, "We have found a job for you. It's schoolgirl [live-in household assistant] for this couple on Lowrey Avenue which is very convenient to UH." They paid twenty-five dollars a month. Just helping with breakfasts and clearing up the kitchen. Then, go to school and maybe do the laundry and a little babysitting. So I said okay. That's how I ended up there (chuckles).

MK: I was curious, how come Principal Elvis Rhoads of Laupāhoehoe was in Honolulu at the UH at that time?

EU: Well, I think he and my parents must have connived something. I really don't know. All I know is my mother told me, "You have an appointment with Mr. Rhoads."

MK: When you went to Honolulu at that time, was that like the first time you went to Honolulu or had you gone—come to the big town—before?

EU: All I know is, when we lived in Hale'iwa, my dad used to take my mother back to Big Island every year to see the family. She always got deathly sick—seasick. As soon as she got on the boat, she used to flop on her bunk. And we (my brother and I) were jumping around (the stateroom).

(Laughter)

Every year we did that. Other than that, I don't remember living or visiting Honolulu. So, when we came out, my mom had some relatives that she stayed with. But I don't remember going to see them. One day she said we have appointment to see, and somehow she was related to Mrs. Makino. Fred Makino was a publisher of . . .

WN: *Hawai'i Hochi*.

EU: Yes, *Hawai'i Hochi*. They had a home on Kuli'ou'ou. Beautiful home with a tea garden and tearoom. We went there and had lunch. Mr. Makino really liked my mother. I remember Mrs. Makino saying, "Mr. Makino wanted to see you, Baby." (Laughs) She call her Baby. She was so young when they used to see her. That was an experience. I

- had never seen a mansion. Sitting there at the dining room table and looking out on the ocean. They had a telescope. It was really something.
- MK: Somehow there was a relationship with the Makinos.
- EU: Yes. Mom never mentioned that, because I know there weren't relatives on my father's side. It was my mother's side. I don't know what the connection was.
- MK: And they would refer to her as "Baby"?
- EU: Yes.
- MK: That's something.
- EU: That was an experience.
- WN: Do you have any recollections of Mr. Makino and his wife?
- EU: No, I really don't know, because I wasn't curious as to who he was and what he did. I guess he was a rebel too. He even went to jail for standing up for. . . . I often think about them because my parents are buried at Nu'uaniu. He had—he's there, too. In the circular . . .
- MK: At Nu'uaniu Memorial, yes.
- EU: Yes. "Oh, there's Mr. Makino."
- MK: So, going back to the story, I think I forgot to mention or ask, what year did you graduate from Laupāhoehoe?
- EU: Nineteen forty-one.
- MK: Nineteen forty-one. So, when you entered the university, that was the fall of '41.
- EU: Summer of '41. And fall.
- MK: You mentioned you were a schoolgirl for a family that lived on Lowrey Street. What were their names?
- EU: The Bauchams. I don't remember his wife's name. They weren't very warm and outgoing, so I didn't feel really close to them. I just did my thing and he drove me to school. He went off to work, and I don't know whether he was in insurance or what it was. I never did find out.
- MK: What was it like for you? I mean, leaving home and living in a Caucasian household in Mānoa?
- EU: Well, I had a little cubbyhole attached to the garage and the laundry room. That was the first time I had a room of my own. We had a three-bedroom house in Hawai'i, but with all the kids. You know, we all had to bunk in together. I really enjoyed having my own (laughs) space.
- MK: Your own room.
- EU: My own space, but it was very cold. It had a concrete floor, and I did have a little rug by my bed. Just had a bed and a little—almost like that—chest with the fold-down. And that's all there was in the room. Just those two pieces with the lamp.
- MK: So you had your bed, you had something like a secretary bureau that you could fold down the top, and a chair.

- EU: No chair.
- MK: No chair?
- EU: No chair. (MK laughs.) Only just a little stool.
- MK: A stool?
- EU: To sit on.
- MK: Since that place that you were living in was sort of detached from the main home, how would they call you if they needed your work—your help?
- EU: Well, they knew that I could do the morning chores. Then, I always went up and set the dining room table for them and helped whatever cooking that had to be done, which wasn't much. She had most of the things done. Then I did the dishes, and that was it.
- MK: Even things like setting a table—were you already familiar with what would be expected in setting a table?
- EU: I guess so. I never had any problem. Because, well she had a set thing. She had a table, and she had a centerpiece. So, all I would do is move the centerpiece and put the pad and the tablecloth. Just dinner setting. Afterwards I would just put everything away.
- MK: For yourself, when it came to mealtimes did you . . .
- EU: Oh, I ate in the kitchen. They ate in the dining room and I . . .
- WN: It was the couple and anybody else living with them?
- EU: They had two sons.
- WN: Two sons.
- EU: But they were little. They weren't school age yet.
- WN: So, did you have to babysit them too?
- EU: Sometimes during the weekends, if they had to do something I'd play with them a little bit, but I really didn't have to do too much. All I did was—besides helping the little bit in the house—I did the laundry for them, which I did during the weekends.
- MK: Were there other household help too?
- EU: No.
- MK: Just [you]. . . .
- EU: Yes. And, actually it was a really small house. I had a real nice living room and the dining room area and I think two bedrooms.
- WN: Did they have parties too?
- EU: I don't remember. I don't remember any parties.
- WN: So you had basic chores like laundry, and you helped cook, set the table.
- EU: Not really cook, but just help.

WN: Oh, she cooked. She did the cooking.

EU: Yes.

WN: And you washed the dishes and stuff.

EU: Mm-hmm [yes].

WN: And you played with the children.

EU: Sometimes.

WN: So, for that you got room and board.

EU: Yes, and then twenty-five dollars. So that's what I did.

MK: How far did the twenty-five dollars go?

EU: Not very far. (EU and MK laugh.)

MK: What did you spend it on?

EU: You know, weekends they didn't expect me to be there. So, bus fare. My aunt's home—on Sundays she had open house, so all her husband's bachelor brothers and sisters and I would just congregate in Pālolo and have dinner. So, I know my cousins there quite well. They were all below school age then—three girls. I was much older, but I feel of all my cousins, I feel really close to them, because I used to see them every Sunday.

But, on Saturdays, sometimes I used to meet with one of the girls in my English class. She was very interesting. She—the Japanese girl—her father [Iwao Frederick Ayusawa] was a diplomat. So, she had traveled worldwide and she spoke French fluently because she went to school there. She had come to Hawai'i on some sort of scholarship to Punahou. I guess to learn more English, I don't know. But she spoke fluent English. She was a beautiful girl. Wavy hair and. . . . She was---right now you would call her. . . .she wasn't really the type to dress and behave like who you would think. You know, what they would be doing. She was always dressed like a hobo. Oversized shirt with a belt and pants, and this was in '41 now.

(Laughter)

She never wore any makeup, and she was so pretty. Tsuyuko [Ayusawa]—she and I were kind of misfits in the class. Because, I was (so young), she was beyond English 101. (MK chuckles.)

WN: It was very refined.

EU: Yes. And real small group. Goofy that---we had one schoolteacher. We had one guy—he must have flunked during his freshman year so he was retaking it or something. There was Robert Sato of Sato Clothiers. He had just graduated from Keio [University], and he was taking that class, I guess to relearn English before he went to Wharton [School of Business, University of Pennsylvania]. There was Tsuyuko, and there was me, and a few others. It was a really diverse class that was small enough but I couldn't care less who the others were. I was so disgusted going to school.

Our instructor [Charles Bouslog] was such a wonderful person. Here he had this group, he must have been wondering, "What have I got here?" The conglomeration of so many different people, different age groups in English 101. When I think about it I think, "Gee, it must have been quite an experience for him too." (MK and WN chuckle.) So, sometimes I would hang out with Tsuyuko. . . . I couldn't compete with her because she had all the money and she was living with—who she was living with? But all I know is she slept in a house across the street. So what was that?

- MK: Across the street. . . .
- EU: You know, what's the street that crosses Mānoa? Mid-Pacific is here. (Taps on the table.) There's a--I don't know what new building there is. . . .
- WN: Oh, Maile Way?
- EU: I don't know. But anyway, she was up there.
- MK: And she was a diplomat's daughter?
- EU: Yes, so I was wondering whether that was the [University of Hawai'i] president's house. Where is the president's house located?
- MK: It's on. . . .
- WN: That was Atherton. I think that was the Atherton family house right before. . . .
- MK: Yeah.
- WN: That's on Kamehameha Avenue.
- MK: Yeah.
- WN: But as you're going up University Avenue . . .
- EU: It's on the left.
- WN: . . . on the left there's a Maile Way here and then there's Mid-Pac . . .
- EU: Atherton House below.
- WN: Yeah, Atherton House is below.
- MK: So it was across from Mid-Pac, it was on the left . . .
- EU: Sort of. Because where the street ends where the university starts. I don't know what building that is right now because they're all new buildings.
- MK: Probably George Hall was at the very top as you go up University Avenue.
- EU: Where was the original triangle?
- MK: The quadrangle? Hawai'i Hall. . . . Crawford, George, Dean.
- EU: Yes.
- MK: Yeah. So she was. . . .
- EU: Well, there's another newer building over there at the corner now.
- WN: Business Administration.
- EU: It was across from there. Anyway, she lived there. So I don't know whose house that was.
- MK: But you used to hang out with her?
- EU: Yes.

- MK: (Laughs) Interesting, and Bob Sato was in your class?
- EU: Yes. I don't think I ever had a real good conversation with him, because he was so much older you know?
- MK: Yeah, yeah.
- EU: Everybody would seem older except Tsuyuko and I were about closest in age.
- MK: What other classes were you taking back then? English. . . .
- EU: English and, what else did I take that summer? Chemistry and microbiology I think.
- WN: This is sort of like a pre-nursing curriculum.
- EU: Yes. Maybe because it was all set for pre-nursing, whatever you took.
- MK: How were you faring generally? That was your semester right before war started.
- EU: Yes.
- MK: How were things going for you being a college student?
- EU: Well, I don't think I did very well. I didn't flunk, but you know, so-so.
- MK: You kind of adjusted to life there?
- EU: Yes, I think I guess so. No other thing to do really.
- MK: By that time when you started your schooling, had you made peace with the idea of going to school or. . . .
- EU: Not really. (MK and WN laugh.) You know, so the only thing that saved me was hanging out with Tsuyuko. Before the semester—summer session—ended, before summer session ended she told me that her father was pressuring her to marry some (pause) offspring of the royal family or something. She mentioned somebody but I don't know who he was. . . . But anyway, she was seeing him and she was so cosmopolitan and so I guess he being in the diplomatic corps. . . .
- One day I went in to see her and she was packing. She said, "I have to leave." Her father had told her you have to come back, business. There was a ship. I don't know what ship it was, and she had to get on it. So she packed up and left and I've never seen her again. One day, after I came back from nursing school, I was working at Kaiser and I happened to see Mr. Bouslog. He said that was a fun class and this and that, and I said yeah. We both said, "I wonder what happened to Tsuyuko." We were wondering what in the world could have happened to her, because we never heard anything after that. I guess that's one mystery I'll never find out, but he had never heard from her either. He had sort of kept track of me, but we never found out where she. . . . [Tsuyuko Ayusawa, married Leopold d'Avout, the fifth duc d'Auerstaedt.]
- MK: Wow. So, in '41 you're on O'ahu going to school, and at that time when you were going to school your parents were living where? Still . . .
- EU: In Big Island.
- MK: Still in the Big Island. In Nīnole?
- EU: Well, I never knew about it, but I guess when my mother brought me over to Honolulu, they had had an offer from another school in Waiākea Uka. Camp Six, I think. They never said anything to me, so they just packed up and went there. This was in '41. So it

- must have been during the summer, because by fall they had the school going. When I came home to Big Island in January, they were already living in Waiākea Uka, so I never went back to Nīnole.
- MK: Before we get there, so your parents and the rest of your family, they were at Waiākea Uka in '41 before the war. In our previous conversation you also spoke of your family also having some property in Mountain View?
- EU: I don't know how he got it, but he must have put a down payment on a tract of land in Mountain View, right above—between Mountain View and Glenwood. It was owned by a Mr. Oshiro, who must have had a large tract of land over there, because when we took the right going *mauka* from the highway, we had to go about a quarter of a mile to where my dad's property started. It was at the corner. There was a railroad track where the road ended and our property was right across the track. Shipman Ranch was on the left.
- Mr. Oshiro lived further on closer to the main highway. But I don't know his first name or anything. My brother and I could never find that place (after the war). We tried it when we visited. It's just a road and we go in, but things have changed so I don't know. I would dearly love to see that place again. It just had a little old shack on it.
- MK: So that property just had an old shack on it?
- EU: Yes, it was a two-story thing. It was actually two rooms on the bottom. The kitchen and dining room area and a little area I guess they must have used it as a living room but what my dad did was since he didn't have money to buy beds or anything he'd cut a whole bunch of grass—dried grass—put it down and covered it and so we all bunked downstairs. (MK laughs.) Upstairs had beautiful wood floors, but usually it was too cold to sleep up there because it got mighty cold up there even in the summer. You'd get up and your breath came out in steam. So, we usually just bunked downstairs on this huge platform (EU and MK chuckle.) It was a fun place to be.
- MK: Was it just the weekend place that you folks would go up to?
- EU: Weekends and vacations. We were up there the first chance as soon as the school closed doors, we just packed up and went.
- MK: You were telling us that the Shipman Ranch was adjoining it?
- EU: Right next. Yes. Usually we didn't see any cattle. It was just sort of pasture land. It was very deceptive when you looked. "Oh, this is a meadow." When you actually go into even on our side of the property, it's all hammocks. Because you know when the cattle walk, they had certain trails that they follow I guess. There were bunch of little stacks and then the cattle would run around and so the water would all sort of stagnate and it would be muddy, it would be softer and you'd get deeper. It wasn't very pleasant even if you did try to walk through there. You'd think, "Oh, this is a nice flat land."
- MK: It's not.
- EU: It isn't. There would be trees growing. 'Ōhi'a trees.
- MK: You mentioned that sometimes during roundups or something you would see the cattle being transported or rounded up? Tell us about that—what you'd see.
- EU: We had a little balcony on the second floor. We always climbed up there to watch them get the truck in with horses and men. They would get on their horses and go out into the forest. They had to lasso the cattle that they wanted to sell. But (the cattle were) too wild and so strong that they would lasso their horns with two ropes and tie it to one of those 'ohi'a trees. *lehua* or whatever. They would be bellowing all night long—the cattle. Just like hearing a steam engine train. It would thunder all night long. We would hear it.

The next day, the cowboys would come back and have the two ropes on the horns and guide the cattle down to the truck. To get those cattle on the truck was really hilarious, because here there were two cowboys and they have the cattle facing the ramp. One would get down and grab the tail and squeeze the tail and just grab it. Actually it would hurt, so the cattle would shoot up (into the truck) and then they'd tie it down and bring another one down. But it was really hilarious you know. Dangerous too I guess. So we were told, "Don't you dare get down from here." That was really a fun experience now that I think about it. During one of the camping trips we took to Kawaihae we saw a cattle truck come down (to the harbor) and the ship (would be) anchored out (in the bay). The cowboys would swim the cattle to the ship and they'd have a sling and hoist it up. I guess that's the only way they got beef out of Big Island (those days).

MK: You just mentioned camping trip to Kawaihae. Your family would go camping?

EU: Well, my dad—every once in a while he'd say let's go, and Mom would stay home, but the older kids would go. Didn't have any tent or anything, but in those days we had a really old—I think it was a Durant. They don't make those anymore, but you could flip the seat in the back and the front seat over and you'd have a fairly level space. We'd all crawl in. Some would sleep outside. Maybe weekend or vacation a few days. I remember once we were at Kawaihae and once down near Captain Cook I think. That was beautiful down there. Then when we get good and dirty we'd go to Hōlualoa where one of my aunts lived. Kimura is there. We used their *furo* and come home. We had a couple of camping trips that were really fun.

MK: So you were related to the Kimuras of Hōlualoa.

EU: My aunt married Robert. But they lived so far away that I don't really know my cousins from there.

WN: Is that the *lauhala* shop? The *lauhala* shop. The Kimuras?

EU: Yes. My aunt used to weave too. She learned after she got married.

MK: I'm wondering, shall we stop here?

WN: I wanted to ask one more question. You said you had these responsibilities growing up because you were the oldest daughter. Did your mother try to teach you or want you to do sewing?

EU: Well, we were so busy. I know one year I had mentioned something about it but I never had time. By watching I could draft a basic dress. My mother who I would say in those days. . . . School kids just had playing, [word unclear]. I would look at—we had some catalogs coming. Mail order catalog. So I used to say, "I want that." So she'd look at it and she drafted it. So, when I grew up I always felt clothes didn't fit well, because my mother always (made mine). She was very clever. When there were sailor pants, wide bottoms, or those high-waisted dresses at one time, when I saw them I said, "I want one like that." So she would make me one.

WN: So that was never one of the aspirations though, to sort of be a seamstress like your mother was?

EU: I was never that interested in doing that. But, I picked up enough that one time when we were first married we were so poor. I didn't know what to do for Christmas for the kids. My two oldest, I did make matching pajamas for them. You know with a ruffled collar. Aloha shirts for my husband. I drafted and made. But, I was never really into it. I could do it, but. . . . My older daughter would say, "Mom, what do you think of me asking Grandma to make me a dress like this?"

I'd look at her and I said, "Not the way you're thinking. With the material you've got it's not going to work." She would be so rebellious. She was a very rebellious child.

She said, "Oh, but you can."

I said, "No, with basic dressmaking that's impossible to do." She's a real good seamstress now. (MK and WN chuckle.) And craft person. She's really terrific. Knitting and. . . .

MK: Well, why don't we stop here, and then tomorrow we'll be continuing. We're right about near the start of the war.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 57-19-2-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Emiko Matsuo Ueno (EU)

‘Aiea, O‘ahu

November 15, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN) and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: We’re going to continue with the interview and I’ll tape an intro first yeah?

This is an interview with Emiko Matsuo Ueno, session number two, on November 15, 2012. We’re in ‘Aiea, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i.

Before we continue chronologically, I just wanted to ask you some questions about your parents’ involvement in the Japanese community of Nīnole. How active were they?

EU: Really not that much, because the parents—most of them—couldn’t read or write—I don’t think. They were contract laborers to work in the plantation, so actually there was no real communication. There was only the one family that he [Umesuke Matsuo] was intimate with going back and forth, that’s all.

MK: Because the larger community of Nīnole—you were saying they didn’t read or write that much. Did your father or mother play a role in writing letters . . .

EU: Yes.

MK: . . . or sending communication to the consulate on their behalf?

EU: Yes. They came to ask Dad to register (their children’s births). So, every year the consul used to come around and visit.

MK: When it came times to like the—Emperor’s Birthday—or New Year’s, Boy’s Day, Girl’s Day, what did your parents do?

EU: We usually had a program at school. Of course you know for New Year’s and especially the emperor’s birthday, he would open up the cabinet that he had. The pictures I guess of the emperor and empress. And then read the edict from Meiji—Emperor Meiji. That was the traditional ceremony I guess.

MK: That portrait of the emperor, that was in the school building?

EU: Yes. But it was not---it wasn’t on display all the time. Only during the special occasions. Open up the door and there’s a little shallow alcove.

MK: When you say that they would have a program for *Tenchōsetsu*, what basically was the program?

EU: Well, *Tenchōsetsu* was not something that you really had to have plays or you know, songs or anything like that. You just---I guess the Japanese anthem. . . . He gave a little talk—speech. I don’t know what all they did because we weren’t (laughs). We snuck out. (MK laughs.)

MK: So the plays and songs, those are mostly for . . .

EU: Like graduation or—I don't know what else that they had but I know Mom (put on programs two or three times a year).

MK: Another thing we didn't cover with you was sometimes when we interview nisei, when they speak about Japanese-language school they mention their ethics classes within the school. What was that like at your time?

EU: Well, I don't know think we had a textbook that we all had to study, but mostly in my case it was my daily evening duty to sit while my dad drank his sake. (Laughs) He had to have sashimi every night with his sake. He would lecture me about you know, everything.

(Laughter)

I would sit there and this would go on for over an hour. Finally I'd tell him, "Dad, you're wasting my time. Mom's time. We could be doing so much around the house without listening to you every night." He'd get so mad at me but it was a nightly thing that we had to just sit there. The other kids would just eat and go, but I have to sit there and listen to all his sermons (laughs).

MK: What would he lecture you about?

EU: Everything. Mostly ethics. The dangers of sex. All those different parental concerns. Just go on and on every night. (EU and WN laugh.)

MK: Your siblings though would eat and go off?

EU: Yes. (Laughs) Because they were younger and just ate and left.

(Laughter)

I had to stay there because I had to clean up afterwards.

MK: Another thing I realize I didn't ask you about was you mentioned that you had an uncle from Japan who stayed with you folks.

EU: Yes, but he was born here. I guess he went back with the folks and then came back again after, but he was a real good athlete. He finally died of a football injury. After leaving high school, he was working in Pāpa'aloa and I guess he organized some football teams and he died of a hematoma. He had a head injury.

MK: This uncle returned to Japan prior to the war or he . . .

EU: No, he came here long before the war. He was here when we were in Hale'iwa. He never went back to Japan.

MK: But he had been educated in Japan?

EU: No.

MK: No?

EU: He was---I don't know whether he went to grade school or not but I remember that when we were in Hale'iwa he was in intermediate went to high school.

MK: For your family itself, were there any travels between Japan and Hawai'i during your youth?

- EU: No. Never did. I know Norman—my husband—was going back and forth with his parents, but our family never did. It was only after the war.
- MK: Just one more thing about that pre-war period. Was your father ever involved in collecting funds or materials to support the Japanese war effort in China?
- EU: No. In fact I think he—one time he mentioned, “Here I’m interned and I helped sell war bonds.” He was very upset. I think that’s the one reason he wanted to go back to Japan after the war.
- MK: So he helped U.S. war bonds.
- EU: Yes. (Chuckles)
- MK: I can understand his feelings. Now, we can move on.
- When it came to December 7th, you were already on O’ahu.
- EU: Right.
- MK: What do you remember about that day, December 7th?
- EU: That was a Sunday, so there was no school. We had breakfast. And while we were eating, Mr. Baucham had the radio on. This was about seven o’clock in the morning. He said, “Oh my God,” you know.

Then we heard the lawnmower next door. A navy officer lived there with his wife. He ran out and he [Mr. Baucham] says Pearl Harbor is being attacked. So, that guy just ran in and changed to his uniform and took off to Pearl Harbor. The wife was really frightened too so she came over and stayed (with us).

Mr. Baucham’s brother and wife lived near Punchbowl somewhere. They had to leave. There was some kind of gun embankment or something up in Punchbowl, so they came over. They were in the house, and so Mrs. Baucham had to run down to the grocery store and get food because we were going to have a bunch of people.

Late that night, our neighbor came back. All oily. By the time he got to Pearl Harbor his ship was down. I don’t know what ship he was assigned to, but other neighbor in the corner was—I think his name was Mr. Leahi, if I remember. They were schoolteachers and they had a place down in ‘Ewa that they went on the weekends. He came back late and the story he told was where they were living they could overlook Pearl Harbor. It was shallow, and they saw a plane go down in the shallows. He and his son were wading out to see and what they could do to help. Before they could reach there, I guess all the ammunition started exploding so they had to dash back and say, “We better get out of here.” From ‘Ewa, I don’t know how they got back to Mānoa, but they said they couldn’t come along Kam[ehameha] Highway, because all the fighting going on. I don’t know how they got home, but they got home real late.

- MK: With all this going on, what was in your mind?
- EU: Well, actually (chuckles) I don’t even recall—everybody was shocked. I only thought about you know, “How about the water supply?” Gather water and doing things to hopefully prepare for something strange to happen. The radio was going on and shells falling here and there in the city. I guess they were all anti-aircraft shells.

I remember on Sunday—no the following weekend, my uncle was estimator for E. E. Black. They were constructing some buildings in Hickam. So he just bundled all the kids and said, “I want you guys to see this.” He drove us down and so we saw all the burned ships and it was quite a sight.

- MK: Because you are Japanese ethnically but American, how did the people around you treat you at that time?
- EU: No difference. I don't remember any slurs or anything like that.
- MK: Your uncle that was an estimator with E.E. Black, did he continue in that position?
- EU: Mm-hmm [yes]. He was I think really trusted because he originally was on Big Island and he was told to come over to O'ahu to do the estimating here. He had a pretty good position I think.
- MK: So, that was December 7th and the days progressed. How were those early weeks of the war for you? How did it affect your life?
- EU: Actually, we were just too scared to go out or anything until the following weekend. I went down to see my aunt and uncle. On the way, I kind of remember seeing one of my classmates. She lived around where the old [Honolulu] Stadium was. She said one of the shells fell close by so they were just frantic. They didn't know where to go. We chatted. Actually, I wasn't that affected because we were way in Mānoa and didn't hear anything.
- WN: Were the classes at UH [University of Hawai'i] canceled?
- EU: Yes, because the boys were all into the ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] right? So they were mobilized and poor guys—poor boys really. They probably---how they knew how to shoot a gun? They were guarding and can you imagine an eighteen-year-old trying to patrol down in Waikīkī on the beach with the barbed—they put all that barbed wire there.
- WN: So you missed out on the finals. You didn't take any exams or you didn't continue with your classes.
- EU: There was no school. I mean the boys were in the VVV [Varsity Victory Volunteers] and all that. It was---there was nothing—nobody—at the university.
- MK: So when did classes resume for you?
- EU: Well, I never did go back, because I was waiting around waiting around and my mother was sending me letters. It didn't sound right, so I decided at the end of January to go home and see what was happening.
- MK: I see. So after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, how soon did you find out what was happening with your family back home on the Big Island?
- EU: When I went home. The end of January. My mother never told me. She never wanted me to worry.
- MK: So, were there letters or any communication?
- EU: Well yes, she wrote. But, I just felt something was wrong. She never did mention that Dad was interned or anything like that until I went home.
- WN: Do you remember what you thought when you went home and your mother told you?
- EU: Here they had just moved there that summer. After I left they moved up to Waiākea into this old school building. They had this nice-sized building where they lived. So, I just caught the bus. He drops me off. I look up the hill and here's this building and there's another building. There're soldiers all over there. I was just shocked. I didn't know what was going on.

Evidently the army had billeted (soldiers in the school building). I guess they were field artillery. Now that I think about it, there must have been field artillery units because it was a small unit, and because the schoolhouse had only two classrooms. The CO [commanding officer]—I never met him but my mother said when the army decided to come control the building, the CO told her that her cottage home was (off limits), that none of his men would be allowed to step over to her home. He told her don't worry. Because he knew she had all these kids.

So then, he asked if—since he knew that she had all these sewing machines, if one of the men could come and mend the uniforms, because they didn't have any sewing machines, so this guy could tailor uniforms or mend rips and stuff. My mother said okay. He was allowed, but nobody else except the cook. The cook used to bring long Spam in a can. In those days the military their Spam in blocks this long.

WN: About two feet long?

EU: Yes.

WN: Wow.

EU: Because they opened the can and they had to feed hundreds of people.

WN: It was long like this?

EU: Yes.

WN: How wide?

EU: Long and not wide.

WN: Oh, the same.

EU: You just. . . .

WN: Oh wow.

MK: Oh my goodness.

WN: How do you open a can like that? (WN and MK laugh.)

EU: I think they just opened one end and . . .

MK: Slip it out.

WN: Oh, I see. I see. So it's like a tube.

EU: Yes.

WN: Oh boy.

MK: So the cook used to---what did the cook do?

EU: Every once in a while he'd bring some over to help Mom with her food budget I guess.

MK: Did he bring anything else over too besides the Spam?

EU: I don't remember, but that would be the most handy thing to bring over I guess.

MK: So this unit that was billeted there, what did they actually take over then? What parts of the property did they take over?

EU: Just the schoolyard—schoolhouse. That had the toilet. I don't know what they did for a shower, they must have rigged up a field shower.

MK: When it came to actual living quarters, did they live in the schoolhouse or in tents?

EU: They lived in the schoolhouse.

MK: You were saying it was kind of a small unit.

EU: Yeah, because it was only two—in those days the classrooms were maybe twenty-by-twenty [feet] or so. The officer probably had a cubbyhole somewhere. Then they had to have the cooking facilities and stuff, so actually, I don't think there were too many people living there.

MK: So when you came home, you were kind of surprised.

EU: Oh, I was shocked.

(Laughter)

I traipsed up the hill. And my mother was telling me all these things. I said, "You don't have any problems with all these men over there?"

She said, "No, the commanding officer is really a gentlemen and he promised we would be safe here." I felt (pause) a shock really.

MK: As time went by, did they stay there a long time?

EU: I don't know how long they stayed, but I do know that after I started working they were still there.

MK: They were still there.

EU: But I don't remember if they were still there or left when we were. . . .

MK: Taken.

EU: I was so. . . .

MK: So since they were there for kind of long time I was wondering, would you strike up conversations with the men?

EU: Yes. Once in a while when I came home, and I go out on the porch some of the guys would start a conversation. They were always very, very polite. We talked and they kept on saying across the street there is this plantation camp with some Japanese, some Filipino families. They couldn't speak very well (chuckles). They were surprised that I could converse with them. They asked me questions and some of them were really nice. During those days there were a lot of draftees and not homeless or people that wanted to escape jail sentences to join the army. A lot of them were very nice and I had no problem.

MK: These were all boys from the Mainland?

EU: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: I was wondering, what did you folks talk about?

EU: School. What I was doing and you know, their families and just chitchat. They never tried to come up on the porch or anything. They stayed on their side and we just had a conversation. It was kind of nice. Nothing to do (chuckles) you know in the country.

MK: By the time you came back then, what did your mother tell you about your father? What had happened to him?

EU: She told me that she had not gone up to Mountain View to our summer place, but Dad had gone up with some of the kids. He had a radio but he hadn't turned it on. Mr. Oshiro who lived down the road came up and told him that Pearl Harbor was being attacked. So he hurried, packed up and went home. He told Mom, "I'm sure you know that they are going to come and get me." Because first, he teaching Japanese, second, he had contact with the consulate. Third, he taught *kendō*. So he said, no way.

Mom said the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] came about midnight—that night was Sunday night—and took him away. She didn't know where he went to until much later that he was at KMC [Kilauea Military Camp].

MK: What details did she share with you about the time the FBI came and took your father?

EU: Actually, she didn't say anything, but she was just overwhelmed with all this happening and loss of income. No income. She couldn't even keep up her sewing school because everyone was afraid to come to the house. She had nothing.

MK: Like you were saying, she couldn't run her school because they're too afraid to come up there. How did people react to your father being taken?

EU: Actually I didn't know anybody there. So, I don't know, but I have a feeling that even some of my mother's family—she had practically all her relatives on Big Island—just shied away. Afraid of being friendly or whatever, I don't know. I don't remember any of my relatives coming to visit when I would go home.

MK: So up to that time until the time you got a job, how was your mom managing?

EU: Well as I say, she was on welfare. So, I guess she had enough to feed the children.

MK: You came back in late January 1942.

EU: Yes.

MK: What happened then when you came back? Well, we'll back up a little bit. How did you come back?

EU: Oh, I took the plane. Because there's no ship. There were all the submarine scares and whatnot.

MK: Was it easy to get transportation back to Big Island?

EU: I don't remember; I just know that I caught the plane. That was my first plane trip too, back in [19]41 not too many people flew right?

MK: So you're back home at Waiākea with your mom and siblings. What happened then?

EU: As soon as I had the interview with National Youth Administration and she offered me a job, I went down to Pu'umaile.

MK: How did you end up going to the National Youth Administration?

EU: Well, the social worker gave me a great big lecture about not doing anything for my parents. My mother was on welfare and all the children and you know, what are you

doing, just sitting around. So I said, “I wasn’t home. I didn’t know all this had happened until I got home.” But I said, “I certainly don’t want to go on welfare. I want to work.”

So she said, “I’ll find you a job.” The next day she came to me and she said, “I have a job for you as a soda jerk at the soda counter at the drug store.”

I said, “I think I can do better than that.”

(Laughter)

I don’t know how I had all the nerve to do what I did at that age. So I told her I think I can do something better. So, I don’t know where I heard about the National Youth Administration, but I went down to Hilo on the bus. I spoke to the administrator and I explained my position. I said I have to find something to do, but I said I don’t want to do something that was nothing. So, I said, “Perhaps if I could get into your program,” which was I don’t know how long the program lasted—the training period—but at least I could find something that I could tolerate. Maybe become useful in my life.

She said, “Well, since you have credits in pre-nursing,” she said, “and your family situation. I’m just going to give you a job and you can get on-the-job training.” She was very understanding. I felt that looking back, everybody I had had to perhaps go for help or seek an opportunity were very, very helpful to me.

MK: Where was this job that she . . .

EU: This was at the tuberculosis sanitarium called Pu’umaile Home, which was located at the end of Keaukaha Road. It’s right on the seashore. The road came to the hospital parking ground and beyond was just rocks and surf. It was a beautiful place.

MK: What was your work there?

EU: It was very simple. I had to learn sterile technique. Gowns. We had to all wear gowns and masks. I guess first I worked in pediatrics, so I wasn’t really allowed to do changing of dressing because some of them had bone tuberculosis. They had drainage and. . . . But, the rest just bed making, giving baths where they couldn’t go to the shower, tidying up the place. Simple things you know. Gradually—we weren’t allowed to give medications, but when we felt that somebody needed some cough medicine or shot of codeine or something for the cough we would call the RN [registered nurse]. Each shift there was one RN for all the wards.

It was really simple work. I tried to tell Mom I really didn’t need sixty dollars because all I needed was maybe clothes and bus fare, because the meals were all free. But, my mother said no, she said you keep the money. I think, thinking back since she was on welfare, if I had helped her then the welfare would not have given her the full payment. It’s just like Medicaid business. You pay what you can. But if you have a house, you’re going to have a lien on the house for whatever Medicaid paid, because the state pays the bill. So the state has a lien on the house. So it’s just like a reverse mortgage I guess.

MK: So in your mom’s situation, because she was receiving welfare you think she did not want to take any funds from you.

EU: Yeah, I think that’s the reason she

MK: At the time you were working at that hospital, were you still living at home?

EU: No. We had a nice dormitory. Two in a room. Twin beds. We had a beautiful view of the ocean. Typical dormitory.

MK: Working in a TB hospital, were you at any time worried about being exposed to TB?

EU: No, I didn't feel---I felt if I take the precautions that we were told to do, there were nurses aides there, they were umpteen million years old. So, I don't think that was any of my concern.

MK: Were there other young girls like yourself working there?

EU: Yes, I don't know what their family background was or why they decided to work there but. . . . Let's see, my roommate was a girl. She was really pleasant. Maybe a little older than I.

Dormitory life didn't really bother me. We had Portuguese girls and Filipino girls and all kinds. Hawaiian. Part-Hawaiians.

MK: Who were your supervisors? The doctors there?

EU: Yes, there was a Dr. Chang who was the medical director. I don't know who the chief nurse was. There was only one RN that circulated the whole hospital, because the rest of the work was done by the aides. So she did all the medications. Which wasn't much in those days. Maybe cough medicine. If it was real bad, some codeine. That's about it. Somehow I remember that they didn't believe sunshine was good for tuberculosis, so patients never went out. They were always indoors. Can you imagine living like that?

MK: And you were working with children, yeah?

EU: Yes. Then later on I was—but the thing I remember most was when one night working somebody started coughing and I went there. She started hemorrhaging. She just hemorrhaged to death while I was standing there. One of the older nurses came and we had to clean her up and take her to the morgue. I thought, "Oh my. I don't know if I can stand this business." Because it was so sad. A young person just---nothing could be done those days.

MK: You were still a teenager.

EU: Yes, I was sixteen I think. So, it was. . . . I guess this is what I have to do. But I don't know how long. If we hadn't gone to the relocation camp, I don't know how long I would have stayed there. Whether I would have decided to go back to Honolulu and find work or what I was going to do. I had no ambition besides living day to day.

WN: I was wondering, you were working in a hospital during the war. Were there---do you remember any kind of regulations in terms of blackout or anything like that?

EU: Oh yes.

WN: I mean in the hospital.

EU: Yes. We had to close all the blinds and no lights. When we work at night, flashlight. We had to work with flashlight.

MK: When you were off duty, what did you folks do?

EU: What do girls do (chuckles) when they're out of school and working? I used to go home every two weeks and stay overnight. During my day off. I didn't know anybody in Hilo because I was raised down in Nīnole. Some of the girls knew (some boys), so once in a while we'd go for a ride. Gas rationing, right? We'd rent a car (chuckles) and as soon as we hit Hilo from Keaukaha my aunt lived on Kino'ole Street. They don't have it anymore because they have that park or whatever—the civic center and stuff. There's this river that came up around and it's right there by the road that goes to the volcano, and Kino'ole came down to meet it.

My aunt lived there at that time. They had a nice home and boat house to go out on the lake or river or pond or whatever you call it. It was a real pleasant place. It was cool with

- big trees. I remember going there and swimming. It was kind of scary because that place was just filled with seaweed growth. I was always afraid it was going to tangle my legs. They had lots of fish in there. *Koi*. Black *koi*. One year a farmer that lived on the other side had ducks and watercress and stuff, and he was cleaning out the section that he was living near, and he caught a *koi* that was—the body was bigger than the man’s thigh. It was just huge. Can’t go swimming around there.
- MK: Sounds like a monster *koi* (laughs).
- EU: Yes. I mean passing Kino‘ole and oh boy. I’m ducking and I had to slide down so nobody could see me in the car.
- MK: Oh, you didn’t want your aunt to spot you.
- EU: And there was this Miyamoto Store on Kino‘ole, and my other aunt used to work there. There were two places I’m not going to show my face, otherwise they’re going to tell my mother what I was doing. Then we’d go up further and there’s the homesteads. Well, my uncle Uemoto who (was in) Pālolo at that time, had a family on the homestead over there. I’d duck again. It was so funny. It was just hilarious you know. Then we’d drive up to the volcano and sightsee. Oh boy, gas is getting low. Whether they had enough gas to get back to Hilo (laughs).
- MK: Oh no (chuckles).
- EU: It’s on an incline all the way down. Well not all the way, but you go down and flatten up and go down. Just push everything in neutral. It was really funny. It was really fun.
- MK: You folks were young. You folks were young and having some fun.
- EU: Yes.
- MK: Oh my goodness. And you did have a lot of relatives.
- EU: My mother had seven sisters. Of course they weren’t all married. At that time—besides the one, two, three married, four was my mother. The rest of them were still younger and working. My youngest aunt was only a couple of years older than I. Eight children. The age difference.
- MK: All this time while your mom is with the children back at Waiākea Uka, you’re working at the TB hospital and living outside of the home, what did you folks know about your father?
- EU: Well, Mom kept on corresponding with him. She’d tell me he was going to Sand Island [Detention Center]. Then she said he went to the Mainland. I don’t remember, he went to so many different interment camps that I don’t remember which one he went to first. But I know about three or four different places.
- MK: So, originally he was taken from his home and he went to Kīlauea?
- EU: Mm-hmm [yes]. [Kīlauea] Military Camp.
- MK: And then to Sand Island. And then to Mainland camps. What if anything did your mother share with you about what your father was experiencing then?
- EU: She actually didn’t say anything to me. She didn’t want to worry me or something.
- MK: When he was at Kīlauea Military Camp, did your mom ever get to see him there?
- EU: I don’t think so. She never mentioned.

MK: When were you told that your family—your mother and siblings and yourself . . .

EU: Had to leave?

MK: Yeah.

EU: I don't remember exactly when, but it must have been late summer. Around there.

MK: Was it a choice? Was it a choice for your mom to go or not go?

EU: I believe it was. I think the military convinced her that she would be closer to Dad. She would be—not be on welfare. She would be having housing and food and stuff. Mom was just isolated too in a new community. No support from her family, because Dad didn't have anybody except my uncle Harry. So, I think she was at her wit's end what to do. But she decided she would go.

When they came and approached me, I said I didn't want to go. That officer kept on talking to me and saying that I was underage, so legally you have to go. I said I'm independent. I'm living away from home and I'm earning my own living. So finally they said if you can find a legal guardian, we could let you stay. That left me in a quandary, because I knew my mother's family were reluctant to even contact my mother. So, I asked my uncle Harry if he would agree. Uncle Harry had married and he had a slew of kids, so he said he couldn't be responsible for me because he had this growing family. If he was my guardian perhaps they would expect me to live with him since I was not of age. He couldn't see that.

I didn't know what to do until the medical director Dr. Chang said he had heard about my situation and he said, "If you really want to stay, I'll sign for you." It just made me feel real good.

But I told him, "When I think it over, if my own family can't accept the responsibility, I don't expect you to do it." So I decided that I would go. There were some hard decisions that had to be made.

MK: When you say that the officer spoke to you—military officer? It was a military officer?

EU: Yes. Because all the transporting and overland journey, it was all army personnel.

MK: When you were going through all this, what did your mother say to you?

EU: Actually, she didn't say anything. She just left it up to me—what I wanted to do. I guess when I said I'll go then she kind of felt better I guess. When we got on the interisland ship in Hilo to come to Honolulu, she just felt she had to be strong. When we got to Honolulu it was Christmas Eve. So we were all herded into the immigration station. Locked the gates—the front gate. The thing I remember most is my aunt (in Pālolo). She bought Mom a beautiful, beautiful coat, a heavy wool coat from Liberty House. She had bought it for Mom, because it was winter. She was the only, only relative that helped Mom. I really was thankful. She had been so nice to me too, having me over for dinner every week when I was going to school.

MK: Backing up just a little bit. When it was time for you folks to leave Waiākea Uka, what did your mom have to do? What did she pack up? What did she have to get rid of?

EU: Well, she could only take clothes. Right? So, the sewing machines, I guess she gave some to the relatives. I know she had a beautiful *tansu*. It was a really nice piece. It was part of her dowry I guess when she got married she had this beautiful *tansu* and she had all these kimono and *obis* and stuff. She gave the *tansu* to my youngest aunt. Boy, after the war I really wished that I could have gotten it back. (EU and MK laugh.) She had to dispose of everything that she had because she didn't know any better. We packed up clothes anyway.

- MK: How about the library of books that your parents had?
- EU: I don't know what happened to it. In fact, we had a whole set of *Encyclopedia Britannica*. When I think about it, "Gee, how did Dad think about buying a set of *Encyclopedia Britannica*." But, all that is gone.
- MK: How about the property at Waiākea—on Mountain View?
- EU: Well, with all those things (going on) and Mom didn't even think about that, I don't think. But, later on—after the war—I asked her, "What happened? Did we lose it because of back taxes or nonpayment of the mortgage?"
- She said when she got in contact with Mr. Oshiro and explained what happened and why she would not be able to pay whatever she was supposed to pay, he said, "Since you're not going to be here, I'll take back the property and reimburse you for all you paid." I thought that was really nice of him. So she had a little nest egg. I don't know how much because I knew they couldn't afford very much. That was one thing [for which] I was always grateful (to Mr. Oshiro).
- MK: So, your mom had to pack up clothing. Did she take a sewing machine with her?
- EU: I don't think she did. I don't remember seeing anything in our barracks. I know that in the beginning she was helping in the mess hall. Later, she and a couple of other women who were seamstresses got one of the barrack rooms and they sewed. People would order material from Sears or whatever. Then they would . . .
- MK: They would sew?
- EU: . . . sew it for them. So, I don't think she had her own with her.
- MK: You mentioned that you folks were all herded into the immigration station. At that point did you know anybody else?
- EU: No.
- MK: No?
- EU: I didn't know anybody.
- MK: What were conditions like?
- EU: In there?
- MK: At the immigration station, what was it like?
- EU: It was nothing. It was cold. We had nice Christmas dinner. Orange and hot dog and that was it (chuckles).
- MK: Because it was Christmas, was there anything Christmassy?
- EU: It was a war! Everybody was on rations, right? So you couldn't even go out and buy shoes because if a shipment didn't come in, there were no shoes to sell in the stores. Same with clothes. So, when you saw something you had to have a coupon.
- MK: And grab it quick.
- EU: If you have the coupon and the goods were there then you could buy it. But, if you didn't have a coupon that's too bad, you couldn't buy. Some foods. I never cooked, so I don't remember using coupons and things like that because all my meals were furnished.

- MK: When you folks were at the immigration station, were families allowed to stay as a family unit at the station?
- EU: Actually no, because the families just gravitated together to sleep in bunks close together. No assignment. When I think about it it must have been like a bunch of cattle in a pen.
- WN: You're the oldest—second oldest—of eight girls in the family.
- EU: My mother was.
- WN: Oh, I'm sorry.
- MK: She is the oldest.
- WN: You're the oldest, yeah. So of your siblings, how many of you were actually—how many of you actually went to immigration station and then to Jerome?
- EU: All of us.
- WN: So then, how old was the youngest?
- EU: Carol was---she must have been about three years old. I can't remember exactly how old she was. She was just a toddler.
- MK: Your next siblings was just three years younger than you. Your brother.
- EU: Yes.
- MK: Then it went down the line.
- EU: Yes.
- WN: How many?
- MK: Let's see.
- EU: There were six of us.
- MK: Yes.
- WN: Oh, six of you. Okay.
- MK: So there were six.
- WN: I would imagine that your mother really depended on you for different things.
- EU: Well, but you know I was not very much help for her. Because I was so resentful I didn't care what anybody thought or anything. I just went my own way. Now I think about it, I really was a bad daughter.
- WN: Do you remember---I know you helped—when you were growing up you helped with your siblings. You know, taking care.
- EU: Yes. Because there was nobody else to do it.
- WN: Yeah, but I was wondering during this ordeal at the immigration station and so forth, do you remember having to do things like babysitting or taking care of . . .

- EU: Not in the immigration station, because the younger kids—my younger brothers and sisters—kids that age they're very flexible. They were running around playing with the other kids. The baby Carol was always with Mom. So you know, I didn't have any responsibilities.
- MK: So what did you do at the station?
- EU: Nothing. Nothing to do. We were there such a short time. It was after Christmas and we just boarded the *Lurline*.
- MK: How was the *Lurline* voyage?
- EU: It was a troop ship. But, every family had a stateroom. We had a cabin boy. We were all issued life vests. So, the kids would come in and just plunk on the life vests and sleep. During the day they're off playing. It's amazing they make friends so easily. There weren't that many girls my age. I really can't remember anybody my age.
- MK: With your mother being nisei and bilingual and you being fully capable of communicating in English, were you folks ever asked to help communicate or anything like that? No?
- EU: (When my mother married an alien Japanese, she lost her citizenship. It wasn't until 1952 that she went through application and regained her U.S. citizenship.) I think the older generation really felt fear. Especially since their husbands were gone. I think they just clung on to their family. So, I don't remember on the trip going on the *Lurline* or on the train to Arkansas that the women talked to each other. I don't remember.
- MK: How about your mother? What did you notice in her face or her emotion? What was her emotional state?
- EU: I really don't know. I think she was just living on nerves. I guess she didn't know what was going to happen. She didn't know where they were going. We were never told that we were going to Arkansas. Just herded onto the ship which was kind of nice. We had the stateroom. Of course we had to go to the dining room—the cafeteria. That was an experience.
- MK: Tell us about it.
- EU: America: Women and children first, right? Those poor GIs, they were lined up from the door of the dining room down the hallway up the stairs down the other. They were all standing in line. Us, we just walked in. We just walked in. We were only women and children on board. So, I don't know how many of us were—how many were in the group. Do you think there was about three hundred in the group?
- MK: I don't know.
- EU: I really don't know. But anyway, we just traipsed right in and had our meal and leave, and then the men could go in. The guys in the back had to wait hours to eat. One time we--a bunch of us, some of the boys and some of the girls, were just dying to have some candy. We knew they had a PX [post exchange] on board the ship, so we just coerced our cabin boy to take us down there so we could buy some candy. He finally said okay. He said, "Everybody, you have to hang on to each other. Don't look anywhere, just look straight ahead. Don't lose (your balance), you just have to hold onto each other and follow me."

So we go down the hold past the cabins and down to where the guys were all bunked. It was just terrible. I felt so sorry for them. The ceiling is not that high aboard ship. The bunks were four levels. There were about this much space between each. You can barely walk through between the rows. We had to walk through, and people would be stretching their arms out, you know? Pulling at you. It was horrible.

- WN: Who were these? You're talking about . . .
- EU: American soldiers.
- MK: The GIs?
- WN: American soldiers, oh.
- EU: Yes. I guess I don't know how come there were so many going back to the Mainland, but I guess maybe they were. . . .
- WN: They were probably . . .
- EU: They were shipped over someplace else or what, but you know there were just a thousand on that ship. I mean, submarine scare. Of course, *Lurline* was a civilian ship, so we had military escort ships. We went to San Francisco, then to Oakland. Then we were herded onto the train.
- MK: You know, here you folks are. You folks are these Japanese-American kids and mothers being transported on a ship together with all these American military.
- EU: No, but then they were below decks. We were in cabins. When I think about it, that's the U.S. No matter what, it's women and children first. Because, we were treated---of course you know it was not luxury, but compared to what the troops were confined to. . . .
- WN: The troops were probably on their way to Europe.
- EU: Probably, but I mean because at that time the Pacific theater wasn't that. . . .
- MK: You know, you had mentioned to us earlier that your mother used to get seasick.
- EU: Yes.
- MK: How was she on this *Lurline*?
- EU: Nothing.
- MK: Again nothing.
- EU: Nothing. You know, during the time that we were in Nihoa, she used to get real sick and she couldn't move. We couldn't touch her even. As soon as she left the islands, she never had an attack. So, I don't know whether it was some allergic reaction or what it was. But, she never had another attack like that. It was strange.
- MK: Your siblings, how did they fare?
- EU: I think they had a good time. (Chuckles) They were always off somewhere.
- MK: Yeah. And you folks ended up---where did you end up? You went on the ship. You ended up on the West Coast where?
- EU: Oakland.
- MK: Oakland.
- EU: We got on the train and we had to pull down all the blinds on the windows day and night. We had to---we were assigned helping in the kitchen car and the dining. . . . Of course you know, most of the girls and stuff, we didn't do heavy cleaning.

MK: So you were assigned some work on the train?

EU: Oh yes.

MK: What were you assigned?

EU: Well, I was in cleaning up the dining room. So after each meal when everybody was fed, we would then go with buckets of hot water and Clorox—it smelled like it—to scrub all the tables and benches. You know, we did some grumbling because we never did that before. Soldiers would say, “Here you are getting free transportation and you’re grumbling about. . . .” Some of them were not very sympathetic, but a lot of them were really nice. They just talked to us like we were human beings (laughs).

MK: So while you were assigned some work, how about your mom?

EU: I don’t think so because she had—Carol was so little.

MK: Then when you were not doing your assigned work in the dining room, where were you?

EU: Well, everybody sort of—when we got on the train—sat down on the seat, right. So all your—not the bags of clothes but—whatever you ended up as carry-ons, you just left on the seat when you went to eat so you came right back. Some of the boys had ukes and start singing.

MK: Children are children yeah, so what were your siblings doing? Were they playing on the train?

EU: Yes, I think they were because I don’t remember. I really don’t remember what they did, because the kids they were running all over the place.

WN: So you must have felt like you were one of the older ones.

EU: Uh-huh [yes].

WN: So when you guys went down to get the candy and everything, you were probably one of the oldest going down there.

EU: Yes. Because, when we reached camp and school started, they were all going to school and I was practically the only one not in high school. That’s why I decided I’ll go to school too, so I went and took a dumb old American government course. I thought oh well, and decided I’ll go work.

MK: Before we get there, you were on that journey to Jerome. What do you remember about that train ride? The curtains were pulled, you were assigned some work in the dining area, your siblings you think were running around, Mom was with Carol, what else do you remember about that journey?

EU: I remember---there’s only one toilet right? For each car. So that was a hassle. I remember there was some men (on board). A doctor Kawahara—[E.M.] Kuwahara from Hilo, the optometrist. He pulled out his cigars from his cigar box for one of the kids who had to go move her bowels. Couldn’t use the bathroom. I thought that was really really nice of him.

WN: Wait, what did he do (laughs)?

MK: What did he do with the cigar?

EU: I think he stuck it in his pockets, I don’t know.

WN: Oh I see. So, she used the cigar box as a toilet.

- EU: Yes, he gave her the cigar box. He took the cigars out.
- WN: Oh, okay. (Laughs)
- EU: I thought that was really nice of him.
- MK: There was only one facility. One toilet facility for . . .
- EU: Yes, for I don't know how many that train car. . . . There were a string of cars.
- MK: So you remember that.
- EU: I remember that because I thought that was really nice.
- MK: And Dr. Kuwahara had children. I think he had a daughter about . . .
- EU: Yes. Two.
- MK: . . . your age. A little . . .
- EU: Minnie was I think a little older than I, and Lillian was quite a bit younger. But, I saw Minnie one year after I came back from nursing school. She was working at the gift-wrap counter at Liberty House. We had a nice chat. She was married but I don't remember what her name was.
- MK: So, had you known Dr. Kuwahara prior to that?
- EU: No.
- MK: As the train passed through towns, any opportunities to look out?
- EU: Just peek.
- MK: Just peeking?
- WN: You peeked.
- EU: Yes. When we were near a town or something, I'd peek to see what town it was. If they have a sign. I remember Barstow. I remember Needles and Salt Lake City. Oh well, we're getting somewhere.
- WN: When you say "peek" it was because the shades were drawn?
- EU: Yes, so we kind of bend the shade a little to peek out. I guess they didn't want people to see us.
- WN: It must have been cold in there? In the train car.
- EU: It was warm.
- WN: Oh, you had heating.
- EU: Yes, because everything was closed. The whole car was packed. So, it was kind of smelly. So, it was kind of nice. Usually at mealtime it was out in the country, so they had—it was just like a baggage car with double sliding doors that opened up (for the dining car) so we could just sit on the bench and breathe in fresh air. That's the only time we really looked out. But they didn't open the doors unless it was country country.

- MK: First time you're on the Mainland. What did you think during that time? What was in your mind?
- EU: You mean on the journey?
- MK: Yeah, you saw the towns' names as you're proceeding.
- EU: Well, we didn't know where we were going, but I could track where we were in the country by the names. We were in Nevada, we were in Utah. . . .
- WN: It's an hour and a half now.
- MK: Okay, should we keep on going a little bit more? Jerome?
- WN: How are you? Are you okay?
- MK: How are you?
- WN: Do you want to take a break or. . . .
- EU: You want some tea?
- WN: Yeah, you want to end here?
- MK: Yeah, why don't we end here, and if we could come back one more time?
- EU: Oh, okay.
- MK: Would that be okay with you?
- EU: Yes, that would be okay.
- WN: You sure? Is that okay?
- MK: Is that okay?
- EU: Yes.
- WN: You know why, your knowledge is so—your recollections are so detailed.
- EU: You know I was thinking, one of the girls that was in camp, she married a 442[nd Regimental Combat Team] boy. The same company that my husband Norman was in. That Company L. Of course Norman went to Savage later, but Mabel married Wally Kawamura and she lives in Wai'alae-Kahala. He was a contractor. Mabel went to hairdressing school I think and I used to go (and have) my hair done a long time ago. But, I haven't seen her for (extended periods to live in Okinawa and Japan). Kind of lost track.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 57-24-3-12

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Emiko Matsuo Ueno (EU)

‘Aiea, O‘ahu

November 21, 2012

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN) and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Emiko Matsuo Ueno. It's November 21, 2012. Interviewers are Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. We're here in 'Aiea, O'ahu. This is our third session with you.

We're going to start by asking you—you know when you were leaving the islands for the Mainland, tell us about how you got your coat. You told us how your mom got her coat. How did you get yours?

EU: You know, I really don't remember. All I know is I was handed this coat. It was—now that I think about it—really a spring coat. It wasn't a winter coat. It was I don't know how much wool there was in the outer shell, and it just had a lining. I guess rayon-satin lining. It really wasn't a winter coat. However, I didn't even have a spring coat, so. . . .

(Laughter)

It was a big help.

MK: Who supplied the coat?

EU: The Red Cross did.

MK: How about your siblings? Had they received things?

EU: Well as I say, I don't remember that portion. I must have been a very selfish person. I really don't remember very much about my siblings until I came back from nursing school.

MK: Moving on to Jerome. When you got to Jerome after the ship ride, the train ride, what were your first impressions?

EU: Well, it was---I felt like it was the end of the world. We got off the train onto the bus and into the center to the block where we were (billeted). Evidently, the way the administration did it was put each shipment sort of together. So, we were primarily in two blocks, 38 and 39. I was in 38. It was a corner block. Corner barracks. Each block had these deep trenches for drainage because southern Arkansas near Louisiana was mostly swampland. Because of the Mississippi [River]. The block is here and there's this moat around it. You had to cross the water on planks. There were two-by-twelve planks. I think two. And no railing. You know, it's going to sag right? So it was quite bad in the winter because it's slippery with ice and. . . .

So anyway, we got out and they showed us our unit which was an end unit—the end units were larger rooms than the middle units. So, we walked in and I don't know who they were but they had started a fire in a space heater. There were just cots there. It was---oh my goodness how are we going to keep this up? At least they started a fire for us. But

when they left and we were alone, the fire died down and we didn't know what to do. Eventually we learned how to keep the fire going. It was quite an experience. We found out we had to keep a tea kettle or pot of water on the space heater because the air would get so dry. The walls were tar paper covered with drywall, but no insulation. So, it was quite cold in the (winter). It was very depressing.

MK: How was your mother reacting to all this?

EU: As I say, we never really, really talked, because she was so busy taking care of the younger ones and worrying about everything, I guess. I was just off on my own. When I think back it was really, really selfish of me. But, I was never a good correspondent. Even when I was away in school my mother would write, and maybe I would answer. Maybe when she wrote two or three times, and I'd send her a note. Poor woman, she really had a hard time.

MK: You were saying that you folks were in Block 38. By that time were you familiar with any of the people in your block?

EU: No. We just sat there and I guess everybody was trying to keep their family together. I really don't remember people being close to each other until much, much later.

MK: When that time came when you folks did get closer, what do you recall about the people there?

EU: I really don't have any feelings about it. I didn't feel real close to the older people. One family---Betty was about my age so I got to know her and her brother, but not her mother. One of the families living there was the Muraokas, and she was a registered nurse from Kaua'i. So, I knew her from working in the hospital. But other than that, I don't remember even talking to the older people there.

MK: When you think back about life in the camp, what was like daily life there for you and your family?

EU: In the summer it was hot and humid but (coughs) it wasn't like winter (coughs). Excuse me. It was just getting up in the morning. Going to the mess hall to eat. Mom usually used to bring back the meal for my youngest sister because she was so little. It must have been terrible trying to keep a little child away from the space heater. You know, you could fall and get really burned. I know some mothers really fed the whole family at home, because they didn't like the idea of sitting down on picnic benches in the mess hall and eating, and you never knew who was eating across from you or on the side of you. If you didn't get there early, then your family was separated because there's only so many seats. There was one family from California. I don't know what they did for a living before they came in, but they were—their table manners were terrible. They just gobbled. Everybody didn't want to sit, especially across from them, because you just lost your appetite.

(Laughter)

Breakfast and usually you're supposed to go to your own mess halls for meals, but since I worked and different shifts many times I didn't go to the mess hall because I was at the hospital. That's why working away from your particular portion of the camp, I didn't get to know the older people. Because they were primarily, well people from the Mainland—many of them farmers—used to go out of the center and work or bring back things for the family. So, I think they had a better life than we did because most of the people that were (in our block) were not farmers or laborers. I think it made a difference in the way each block functioned.

MK: You mentioned your mom used to bring back food for your little sister. How about the ones in between?

EU: I think they were just running around wild. (EU and MK laugh.)

- MK: When it came to things like taking baths or using the bathroom, how was that arranged for you folks?
- EU: Well, it was a community. In the center of the block there was this mess hall and the bath and laundry areas. So, the kids would just go off on their own to take their showers. There were just showerheads put on the walls. So, I don't know what they did. They must have been pretty dirty. (EU and MK laugh.)
- MK: So not much privacy then with just showerheads.
- EU: Oh no. No privacy at all.
- MK: You mentioned that you were doing work.
- EU: Yes.
- MK: What kind of work were you doing?
- EU: First, going there I didn't know what was available. They had a high school, but I was out of high school. So, I thought nothing to do so I just went and started to take one of the postgraduate courses. It wasn't (chuckles) interesting really because they were all younger students and I was thinking very different. Especially the kids from the Mainland that went to school, and the kids from Hawai'i were—we were kind of looked down I think by the Mainland people that were already there. The school had all the kids from every block; most of the kids from Hawai'i spoke pidgin. Right? I think they were kind of looked down. I really can't say because I wasn't there long enough, but I felt they thought that we were a little more ignorant than they were. I don't know, because they could speak better. Then I decided to go to work at the hospital.
- MK: You know, you were saying you took some classes. Postgraduate, post-high school classes. What were they in?
- EU: I just took American government. I thought this is not for me, so I decided to work.
- MK: Where did you work?
- EU: At the Jerome hospital.
- MK: What were you assigned to do?
- EU: Since I had been a nurse's aide at Pu'umaile, they just gave me a job as a nurse's aide. Since I knew isolation technique, I was put into the medical ward where we had the medical patients and we had a small area for contagious diseases. There were a couple of TB [tuberculosis] patients and typhoid. I think when I was there I only saw in the contagious ward just one case of typhoid, which was kind of pretty bad I think because you think in an area where medical services and health services were not that great, that typhoid there must have been some contamination in water. But, it was pleasant. You did your thing and we just had the nurse's aides taking care of the daily routine. We had a ward clerk that did all the ordering supplies and helped the doctors when they came. We had one RN [registered nurse] who supervised the entire hospital for a shift. That nurse actually traveled the entire hospital to give the medications because we weren't allowed to give injectables. So she was responsible for all that.
- MK: This RN, was she one of the internees or. . . .
- EU: Well, as I say Mrs. Muraoka was. There was another nurse, Miss Hashida. I don't know where she was from. I don't remember anybody else right now.
- MK: How about the doctors? Who were they?

- EU: Dr. [Y. Fred] Fujikawa. I think he was from the Mainland. He was a medical—on the medical service. And then there was Dr. Abe. I think he was from the Mainland also. Dr. Ikuta who was in our shipment who was a ENT [ear, nose, and throat] specialist. I cannot remember—I don't remember any other doctors' names.
- MK: You know at this hospital, could a whole range of conditions be treated?
- EU: Well, we had to. They had the medical service and the surgical service and outpatient.
- MK: How did you---what were your thoughts on the hospital itself? Having worked elsewhere, how did it compare?
- EU: Well, actually it wasn't too bad. It wasn't the greatest facility, but it was adequate.
- MK: Like you mentioned that there were a few TB cases. A typhoid case. What other types of conditions did people come with?
- EU: Oh, in the medical service? Well, kidney problems. Cancer. We had every other medical illness that you can think of.
- MK: With so many of you in the camp, I was wondering were there ever outbreaks of like whole masses of colds or flus or anything like that?
- EU: I don't remember any great emergencies like that. I think because the food wasn't that great, but the ingredients were excellent. We had a variety of ingredients that each mess hall (received). The chef could devise his own menus. It didn't vary. Every week it was the same. We had oysters every week. Can you imagine? But you know, you have that every week and you get sick and tired of it, because if you were home you could even just grill it or eat it raw. Usually it was deep fried here. You get pretty tired of it. I don't remember them serving any lamb. We had very little fish. It was mostly beef.
- MK: Was it more American cooking? Asian cooking? How was it prepared?
- EU: It depended on the chef. Usually breakfast was American. Lunch I guess it was up to the chef what he wanted to prepare. The cooking service was all internal within the block. Somebody in the block I guess knew a little bit more about it. Then the women would get jobs helping with the preparation and cleanup.
- WN: Were the cooks Japanese?
- EU: Yes, because they were internees. People in the camp.
- WN: Oh, okay.
- EU: But, I suppose the head honcho that did the ordering was not an internee. So, we certainly didn't have any Japanese-type ingredients. I guess people from California knew people who could send them different condiments.
- MK: Like *shōyu*?
- EU: Yes, and stuff like that. And *miso* and things like that. So, everybody would—I don't know about the other blocks but in the Hawaiian blocks they would sort of save Japanesey things because the 442[nd Regimental Combat Team] boys used to come over every weekend. And to feed them something locals couldn't get anyplace else.
- MK: You mentioned that because you were working I guess sometimes you ate in a different mess hall from your family, were there some mess halls that were considered better than others?
- EU: I really couldn't say. (MK chuckles.) Hospital food is hospital food right?

MK: So you ate in the hospital?

EU: Yes, because we were working during the day.

MK: Oh, I see.

EU: You would have to have lunch there or if you were working an evening shift you had to have dinner there.

MK: Since you were working in a hospital, were you also quartered there too? Like sleeping?

EU: No. During day shifts and afternoon going to work for the three to eleven shift you walked. We were closest to the hospital, which was a couple of long blocks. But the ones on the other end of the camp really had a hike to get to work. We had ambulance pickup service for people leaving the evening shift at eleven. They would drop them off. Also, at the same time pick up—before taking them home—pick up the incoming shift.

As I said, one time they decided to discontinue that service. I don't know what the other girls thought, because we never had any contact with them. I know a lot of them lived far away. I don't know what those girls thought or did, but I was about the closest because there was nothing between the hospital and Block 38. I made a big fuss and I went and I demanded that the service be continued. I was promptly fired. If you don't like it. I said I don't like it. I refused to do that. So I said I quit.

MK: What was your concern about not having that service? You were saying you were kind of close.

EU: Yes, I was about the closest to work, but I felt it was not right to ask young unmarried woman to walk blocks and blocks. Even my walk was kind of spooky because it was a storage area that I had to walk past. But what about the others that were maybe a mile away from the hospital? I said I can't do it. She said that we were spoiled. Here we were housed and fed and demanding a service. So I said, "You can keep the job. It's not worth it." Immediately afterwards the chief nurse called me and said if I would reconsider. I said not the way the situation is.

She said, "What if we reinstated the service?"

I said, "If somebody can just arbitrarily discontinue a service and another person say yes the service can be continued, what's the guarantee?" Right? So I said, "No, I don't think I would be happy working." She really needed people working in the hospital. I said, "If it was day shift, I don't mind walking." She said that there was an opening as a ward clerk—you did all the ordering and taking care of the doctor's office orders. So I said it's fine with me if it was working days. So I started working as a ward clerk.

MK: How much were you being paid as a nurse's aide?

EU: Well, everybody got paid I think it was fifteen dollars a month. All the workers, the cooks, farmers, and laborers and stuff. But the professional people got nineteen dollars (chuckles). That was all the teachers and doctors and RNs. So, that wasn't that great really. Four dollars' difference.

MK: You were saying you were concerned about your safety and the safety of other unmarried young women walking.

EU: Yes.

MK: I was wondering, were there bad activities happening? Anything criminal or illegal or things that would cause you to be fearful?

EU: No. As I say, we were sort of insular being in the block. I don't know what activities the other blocks, because it was like a city. People way over on the other end were total

strangers. Even among the hospital staff—the small group that I knew—I never heard of any criminal activity.

MK: Or like assaults or anything like that?

EU: No, I never heard of anything like that. All the years I was in Jerome. I don't know about the other centers. I do know that at Tule Lake [Relocation Center; Tule Lake Segregation Center since 1943] we were really afraid. In Jerome, I never felt fear.

MK: Were there sort of like the equivalent of a policing force or anything in Jerome?

EU: You know, I don't remember. I do know that there were sentries posted on I guess the corners and the gate. I never really went to where the gates were or the fence was, so I really don't know.

WN: Some people that we interviewed about Jerome, they said they don't remember seeing fences.

EU: They don't?

WN: Do you remember a fence around?

EU: Just the entrance, because we never had a chance to go. It was small. There were snakes (chuckles).

MK: I was wondering to what extent did you feel like you were sort of imprisoned? Restricted? How did you feel?

EU: There were restrictions. For instance farmers, I guess they could go out of camp and maybe work for other farmers outside and things like that. In my situation, Dad was in an internment camp, whereas most of the California people had their spouses in camps. So we were more restricted.

When Dad was in Camp Livingston [in Louisiana], Mom had to apply to go down to see him. We were directed at the gate to catch a train down to Alexandria. They had hotel reservations for us and transportation to the camp. Even I went down to see my dad in Camp Livingston, I really didn't see anything at all except seeing him in his camp. We did have dinner at the hotel restaurant which was really something because I went there and didn't have much money. But I was just craving for asparagus and crab. (MK and EU laugh.) I had a salad, but the others I don't know what they ate but I know it wasn't—well they didn't have any Japanese food. They kind of looked at me. (Laughs)

MK: So that time, that was the only time you went out of Jerome?

EU: Yes. A lot of girls did when the 442 boys were (at Camp Shelby). The USO [United Service Organizations] would sponsor a trip for the girls to go down to [Camp] Shelby and attend a dance for a weekend or something, but I never got to go.

MK: You mentioned that you went to Camp Livingston with your mother?

EU: No, just myself.

MK: Just yourself?

EU: Uh-huh [yes].

MK: To visit?

- EU: And there were other people that were visiting so there was a group of about four or five of us that went down, but my mom and I couldn't go anywhere and leave the kids. When she went she came back, then I went down to see him.
- MK: So your mom went once on her own? And you went once on your own?
- EU: Yes. But the younger ones never saw Dad for years till. . . . From [19]41 to [19]44.
- MK: Was there a specific reason for you to go visit your father at Livingston?
- EU: No. We just decided we wanted to at least see him. He wanted to see us too.
- MK: You're traveling with a small group to Livingston. How did other people react to seeing this group of Japanese?
- EU: I really don't know, because we didn't have any contact really. All the reservations were made.
- MK: What was it like seeing your father, not having seen him for so long?
- EU: It's hard to find something to really talk about when you haven't seen somebody for so long and everything was so uncertain. I don't remember any subject that we talked about. So it was probably just, "How is everybody doing?"
- MK: What was the room like that you met your father in?
- EU: It was just a room.
- MK: Any change in your father's appearance?
- EU: Well, I think he looked a little more carefree after all the hard times they had in Ninole. Here he was; no family to worry about. I mean, actual [word unclear] or making a living. I don't know what he did in Livingston, but as I say at one camp they had a softball league and he was diving for a base and got hit by somebody. Knocked unconscious. I said, "Oh my God, I hope Dad's okay." When he was in [Fort] Missoula [a Dept. of Justice internment camp] they were having a good old time taking care of a golf course and having free playtime (laughs).
- MK: So he was in Missoula; he was at Livingston.
- EU: I know he was in Texas too. I don't know where else he was.
- MK: What communication were you having with your father?
- EU: Just my dad and mom were corresponding.
- MK: So from that correspondence you knew about the time he worked at a golf course or you knew about his getting injured in a softball game?
- EU: I don't know how I got to know about it. As I said, communication between my mother and I were not that great either. So in passing she mentioned it.
- MK: I was wondering, you worked at the hospital. How about your mom?
- EU: My mom, I don't know what she did in the beginning. Well, at first she was not working, but I kind of remember her saying something about the mess hall. Not that long. First thing I knew she had this one room in one of the barracks. Had an order desk that a woman—one of the other women—took orders for the catalogs. Like Sears [Roebuck and Co.]. They also had sewing machines. So Mom and a couple of other women used to sew. I guess people asked them to make dresses. I don't know. It was funny, when I see some

- pictures I see her and the other woman in suits. In front of there. Working there. So I guess they really did a lot of work.
- MK: You went to Jerome with a spring coat.
- EU: Right.
- MK: As time went on, how did you folks deal with clothing needs?
- EU: Oh, we had a clothing allowance. I think it was about fifteen dollars a month or something like that.
- MK: So you could get. . . .
- EU: But, I don't know what I did with the money, because Mom took care of all our clothing needs. I know she made me a beautiful wool plaid skirt. Really heavy wool.
- MK: She made a heavy wool plaid skirt for you?
- EU: Yes. I wore it for years. It was pleated all around.
- MK: Wow.
- EU: It was in a brown and tan and orangey plaid. It was a real beautiful skirt. I wore it all through nursing school during the winter.
- MK: You mentioned the 442 visiting and how the girls at Jerome sometimes would go out to Shelby. You said you had not gone, but when the 442 came to visit, were there opportunities for you to go to dances or anything with the 442?
- EU: Yes, because as I say Mary Nakahara was really responsible for all the activities. Chiyo Ogata who later married Mary's brother was quite active too. Chiyo worked as a ward clerk, so I knew her quite well. She would say, "Well, let's go to the dance."
- MK: Where would you folks have these dances?
- EU: Actually it was very convenient for me because it was just in the next block. We just crossed the road and it was on the other side. It was really nothing to just run across and go to the dance. When the boys were there, everybody was trying to help, getting things they might want to eat. The 442 baseball team used to come often and play against boys in camp. While the 442 were in basic (training) before they went overseas, it was a really, really good thing for the people in the Hawai'i blocks. Many of them had relatives. So, you know the feeling in camp was much happier when they were there.
- MK: For you, were you familiar with any of the 442 boys from the time you were on the Big Island?
- EU: No.
- MK: No?
- EU: I got to know several of the boys well because Mrs. Muraoka the nurse had two nephews (in the 442). Naturally I got to know them and they were really nice guys. I met lots of guys at the dance. So when I look back and I look at the roster of the 442, "Oh my goodness he passed away too."
- MK: These were like dances.
- EU: Mm-hmm [yes].

- MK: How'd you folks get the music?
- EU: I think they were playing records, because in those days they didn't have any tapes or DVDs.
- MK: And no band?
- EU: No band.
- MK: What were your thoughts on the 442?
- EU: A young girl with all these men you were never a wallflower (chuckles), that was for sure, you know. It was really fun. We all looked forward to the weekends to see them. A lot of the guys were coming every weekend. I don't know how they afforded it 'cause I know the baseball team came on the military bus, but most of the guys hired taxis. Four or five of them would chip in and come.
- MK: My goodness.
- EU: But that was a fun time for the girls (EU and MK laugh).
- MK: I would assume some romances?
- EU: Beg your pardon?
- MK: Some romances began at that time?
- EU: Yes.
- MK: That's something. So how long did you and your siblings and mom stay at Jerome?
- EU: We were there until the middle of 1944. My dad I think was released to come back to join us around that time in '44.
- MK: So he came to Jerome?
- EU: Yes, Jerome. And since he elected to go back to Japan, in [19]44 we were transferred to Tule Lake [Segregation Center].
- MK: How long was your father with you folks at Jerome? Just a short while before you folks went to Tule Lake?
- EU: I don't remember how long but it wasn't too long. Several months I guess.
- MK: To have a father in the household again when you didn't have one for a long time, how did that affect the family?
- EU: As I say, I don't know about others. But, it really didn't make that much difference to me because by that time I felt very independent. Dad probably felt he couldn't really influence me.
- MK: You were saying that your father had elected to go to Japan. What were your thoughts having to move to Tule Lake and everything?
- EU: Well, I didn't want to go, but I felt I had no choice. Because, my relatives in Hawai'i didn't want the responsibility of me. I felt I should stick with the family. I just wasn't happy, that's all.
- MK: Would you know what your father and mother's thoughts were about going to Japan?

EU: My mother never expressed her thoughts. But she was married to him and she had to go where he goes and stuff. When I made arrangements to leave Tule Lake I told her and she said, "What is your father going to say?" You know, leaving home and stuff.

So I told her, "Whatever he says, I made the arrangements and I'm leaving." So the next morning at breakfast my mother had brought food back. I just told him. I said, "I'm leaving camp in September." And this was in June.

He looked at me and he said, "What are you going to do?" Because you know, if you left the camp where were you going?

So I told him I made arrangements to go to school.

He says, "If you're going to school, okay." That was it. My mom was flabbergasted. She thought we would be having a great big fight, but he just said if you're going to school it's okay. I guess he must have had second thoughts then, because when—I don't know when the decision was to be made to actually go to Japan or go back to where you were—he elected to come back to Hawai'i, I was shocked that he changed his mind. Because he figured as I figured, "What am I going to do when I go to Japan?" I knew he didn't have any resources in Japan. My mother had nothing because her family was rice farmers on a little island off Yamaguchi. I knew his home was in a small fishing town, so I couldn't see what I could look forward to doing. I guess he felt the same way too. What was he going to do to. . . . So he just elected to come back to Hawai'i.

MK: So right now you've just told us how you left Tule Lake to go to nursing school and how your father later on changed his mind about going to Japan. I want to move you back a little bit and I want to find out from you what life was like when you folks were at Tule Lake for your family and yourself.

EU: The weather was cold. The feelings were really high, "Japan's going to win and we're going back to Japan. We don't want to stay here." I think the boys had to make up their minds whether—all the young people I guess—whether they wanted to surrender their American citizenship. There was a questionnaire saying do you pledge allegiance to the United States and so forth. A lot of them just said no. They didn't want to be drafted. So, I put yes because I didn't want to go to Japan. I never told anybody—the younger group—of my decision. I questioned a number of them whether if they had said no and were really going to Japan. I said, "Do you have Japanese citizenship?" Many of them didn't. So I said, "Do you realize that if you repudiate your American citizenship and you don't have Japanese citizenship, you don't know how they are going to accept you there. You're going to be man without a country."

They just laughed at me. They said, "What about you? Your family's going to Japan."

"Well, one never knows." Luckily, the people that I said that to kept their mouths shut. Because, apparently if the really, really radicals that went around camp thought you were sympathetic to the U.S. they would beat you up. Especially if they knew that you went to the relocation office wanting to go out. You were a target.

MK: So how did you manage to go to the office and arrange for your getting out?

EU: As I say I decided to go to that high school—postgraduate shorthand class. Something, some skill.

MK: So you took a shorthand class?

EU: To do something. And the shorthand teacher was really sympathetic. She said, "Why don't you go?"

I said, "I'm afraid for my family. They would get hurt."

She said, “I’ll let you off early and it’s near lunchtime and everybody will be at the mess hall, so. . . .” And the classroom was close to the relocation office. I went there and spoke to the officer there. A lot of people were leaving camp and they were offered jobs at—like in Chicago they had the Revlon company and they would be assigned to boxing the goods and stuff like that. I guess it would have been difficult to find a nurse’s aide job. I figured that out, and she said, “What about this [United States] Cadet Nurse Corps?”

Because I told her, “I don’t have money. My parents certainly don’t have any. I would be on my own when I leave.” I’d have to find something that I could make a living.

So she suggested, “How about this Cadet Nurse Corps?”

MK: So you put in an application. (MK and EU laugh.) But you were actually very fearful of what might happen to you if other people found out you went to the office?

EU: Yes, yes. There were two girls—sisters—and the boyfriend of one of the girls that we were supposed to leave together. I don’t know what jobs they had been doing but they were going to Chicago also. And I had to go to Chicago to transfer to Kankakee. They were very secretive. They hadn’t told anybody they were leaving.

MK: So, at Tule Lake, the feelings were more toward Japan?

EU: Oh yes. They were all gathered there from the different camps. All the people that had expressed the wish that they wanted to leave were all sent to Tule Lake. It was just a hotbed.

MK: What was your father’s role in all that at Tule Lake? What was he doing?

EU: He was one of the people that ran the Japanese[-language] school system over there (chuckles). There were other Japanese[-language] school teachers and all the Buddhist priests and so he insisted that I go to Japanese[-language] school. This Japanese[-language] school was geared to grade twelve I guess. Unlike the language schools here, they also had courses in geography and history and ethics. I was lucky; I could read newspapers and books fluently. My dad in desperation, he was teaching me that the difficult Japanese *kango* where there was no *kana* and you would have to skip back (and forth). I forgot what the name is. We were into that. When he told me I had to (go to school) I didn’t want to study. So I took the fifth-grade tests. You had to be tested. I knew I wouldn’t have to bother about studying or anything. The teachers were not that great—they weren’t really teachers I think. They didn’t have any experience. I was always butting heads with them on what they said or how they did things. So after one final confrontation I just told the history teacher I quit and walked out. I guess Dad was just tearing his hair out.

(Laughter)

I told him I just can’t stand it. I just can’t stand it because everybody else was so meek. I was just loafing and that’s when I decided to go to—take the shorthand class and do something.

MK: Did you work at all at Tule Lake?

EU: No.

MK: No?

EU: No because I was so disgusted. (MK and EU laugh.)

MK: How about Mom?

- EU: Mom didn't work either. Especially you know Dad was home. She had more things to do at home. Bring food home for him. You know how older generation is. Cater to him.
- MK: Oh boy. So, do you have any more questions about Tule Lake?
- WN: Just a---did you see a difference in atmosphere comparing Tule Lake to Jerome? Where there more *kibei* or was there more Japanese at Tule Lake?
- EU: Oh yes. Yes. It was definitely. Anything American was frowned upon by everybody it seemed like. So I had to keep my opinions to myself. My folks knew, but. . . .
- WN: So in Jerome it was more I guess an American-centered atmosphere.
- EU: Yes, and people were trying to get out and do something. So there were families leaving. Especially the Mainland groups. The whole families would move out or the younger members would be moving out. I don't remember any Hawaiian teenagers leaving.
- WN: Yeah, I was going to ask you. Did you think you had the option to leave at Jerome . . .
- EU: No.
- WN: . . . that you had at Tule Lake?
- EU: No. I don't think I thought things over that much. Because Dad wasn't home and I felt my mother needed support which I didn't give (chuckles).
- WN: So when your dad rejoined you at Jerome and then you folks went to Tule Lake, did you feel more I guess secure in terms of a family?
- EU: No. I just felt real lonely I think because the time for going to Japan was getting nearer right? And I didn't want to go.
- WN: The decision to go to Chicago, was there a requirement that you had to have something lined up like a job or school before you could go?
- EU: Yes. Relocation—that was the main purpose of the relocation office. To move whoever wanted to leave at least have something lined up that they wouldn't be left jobless or homeless. Maybe in a hostel. The government did try their best I think to remedy that. Because that must have been a horrible job trying to find companies or areas that would accept Japanese.
- WN: Were you aware of the different areas that were considered desirable places to relocate to?
- EU: Actually, no. But, in my case there were two options and they were both in Illinois—in Chicago, and in Kankakee. Cook County would have been a better school, but being in the slums of Chicago I didn't feel that my mother would feel good about me being in that environment. So, I just told the officer, "I think I better decide on Kankakee even if it's a small school and away from Chicago."
- I didn't know what to expect of the people there, but when I got there I found that there was another Japanese girl from Hawai'i in my class. But, she and I didn't get along. There was another Japanese girl from Florida. They were not relocated. She was a very introverted person whereas the other girl from Hawai'i was—I don't know, I just didn't like her. (MK and EU laugh.) She was loud and she didn't have any manners really. Then there were some older classmates that were Japanese but they were Mainland girls and I never really got to know them.
- MK: Before we get more into your being in the Cadet Nurse Corps, I wanted to ask—the war with Japan ended while you folks were at Tule Lake.

EU: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: When news of the war's end and Japan's defeat reached the people at Tule Lake, what was it like?

EU: It was really a revelation. People just swamped the relocation office to go out. It was amazing. Some of the guys asked me, "Have you been to the relocation office?" They said they were trying to get to here or there. I wasn't making any move or saying anything, so I said I already have plans to leave in the early part of September.

And so [they said], "What kind of job?"

I told them, "I'm going to school. I got a scholarship."

"When did you do that?" You know, make the arrangement.

I said, "In June."

So they said, "How did you know the war was going to end?"

It was kind of a stupid question but I said, "I just decided that I wanted to leave. I have all the arrangements made." I don't know how many of the people in the block in Tule Lake actually went to Japan or came back here with their families. I have no idea about it. I do know that there are several families that were there and they came back (to Hawai'i).

MK: How did your father and mother take the news?

EU: Of what?

MK: That war has ended and Japan was defeated.

EU: I really don't know. I really don't know. As I say, I was surprised when I found out later that my folks had come back. They never told me. I was in school and they never wrote me that they were going back.

MK: When you first signed up—applied to do the Cadet Nurse Corps—what did you know about it?

EU: Actually, only in general I knew that I was going to get free tuition. Free room and board. Free laundry of my uniforms that were issued. Free set of clothing, your winter suit and for work purposes the woolen cape. What else? Also, if you wanted during the last six months of your training—to go to the Indian reservation to help with their health program or to a veteran's hospital. Also to stay in active nurses for two years. That's all I knew. But I figured that was enough. Oh, and a stipend was twenty-five dollars. Fifteen dollars the first six months or so, then twenty-five dollars. I don't know if we got a raise in the last six months, but I had to buy all my (off-duty) clothes.

Those days nurses had to wear white shoes and white hose and caps, and your school pin. You go to a hospital and see somebody and you know she's an RN because she's got a cap and a pin that showed you graduated from a certain school. Each school had a different style of cap. I mean, some were little ruffled old thingamajigs or some plain. The way they folded the cap and stuff. Each school had their own pin. So you look at somebody and you knew, "Oh she's not from Hawai'i," because you knew Queen's and St. Francis had their caps and so if you had something else you knew she was RN from the States.

MK: So you would get a certain cap and a certain pin from the school that you would graduate as a nurse?

EU: Well the school pin you had to purchase when you graduated. It was a necessity really.

- MK: When you started working you would continue to wear . . .
- EU: The school cap. The school cap and the school pin.
- MK: Oh. I had always assumed that . . .
- WN: They're all the same.
- MK: That they were all the same. (MK and WN laugh.)
- EU: No, each school had their own.
- MK: That's interesting.
- WN: Gee, now that they don't wear caps anymore I'm just wondering what do they do now?
- EU: I know. The one thing that I know they made great progress. However, you go to hospital and you don't know who's a doctor, who's a nurse, who's a nurse aide. Who's the janitor.
- WN: That's pretty. . . .
- EU: I think that's terrible. From the patient's standpoint, I often wonder who is this person. I mean not who, but what is this person. If a doctor, oh well. But the nurses. . . . A lot of the personnel you meet are not registered nurses. Very few registered nurses. Most of them are medical assistants or registered nurse's aide or just plain nurse's aide. They all have their parameters.
- MK: But you can't tell by looking at what they're wearing.
- EU: Looking at them you don't. With my eyesight the way it is, I can barely make out the names, much less what their position was.
- MK: So when you first went to Kankakee, were all the girls like you having had some previous experience or various backgrounds?
- EU: I don't think so. I don't think so. So I had an easy time.
- MK: You mentioned that there was Japanese from Hawai'i, Japanese from Florida. How about the rest of the girls? All. . . .
- EU: Some were not from Kankakee but outlying towns. There were a few that were closer to Chicago like Joliet and St. Charles and Batavia.
- MK: What was the name of the school?
- EU: St. Mary's School of Nursing, which is defunct now. They don't have a school of nursing there anymore.
- MK: How big was your class?
- EU: Our class was very small, because it was a small hospital. So I think we must have had about twenty or so.
- MK: I had read somewhere that the Nurse Cadet Corps recruited Native American Indians and African Americans—blacks. Japanese Americans. In your particular class was . . .
- EU: No.
- MK: No Indians, no . . .

- EU: No blacks or anything. We did have an incident. I mentioned earlier about the black technician and one of our girls in class that was in the Women's Army Corps. She was expelled from school for acting against having blacks around.
- MK: So the person who had objected to having a black technician, she was expelled?
- EU: Yeah. Immediately. Our director of nursing for the school, Sister Mary of the Angels, was highly intelligent. She was not a warm person, but she was very compassionate. I think she was an excellent, excellent director of nursing.
- WN: What was her name again?
- EU: Sister Mary of the Angels.
- MK: Being Japanese American and coming into this community right after the war, how were you treated?
- EU: Well, you're so busy. You get up and—being a Catholic institution—go and have breakfast and you'd have to go to morning prayer. Then you go to work. We usually had to work seven to one and four to seven, which are the busiest times—getting the patients up and the treatments up and evening meal and getting them ready for bed. So then, in between was classes. So, it was practically twelve-hour day. Usually ten or eleven [hours]. You were shifted from so many weeks in one service and another service. You have to learn different types of treatment. We really didn't have time for anything else. Of the people in the community, I didn't want to make waves, so I never did really go out and try to—the only time I'd have was grab a snack at a cafe or going to town and couldn't buy a dress right? Only got fifteen dollars to live on. (MK and EU laugh.) I put away a dress on layaway maybe and take about three, four months to pay for it. There was just no time. But the patients didn't seem to mind, because I think with the older classmates they were sort of used to seeing an Asian in the hospital. One time somebody asked me if I was Spanish. That shows how rural that place was. The doctors were all—everybody was the same. We didn't feel any (discrimination), at least I didn't.
- MK: In terms of the training, when you look back on the training at St. Mary's, what's your evaluation of how you were trained?
- EU: Being in a small hospital, I don't think we got as much practical experience in a greater variety of illnesses. You know what I mean?
- MK: Small, so yeah.
- EU: We were a hospital—the only hospital in maybe fifty miles area. Chicago was a little further. We were about fifty miles south of Chicago, but you know they were all rural communities. So, you didn't have that many. The population wasn't that great. I think we had sort of a well-rounded curriculum. Went to St. Louis for three months for mental health care.
- MK: Were there certain services that you liked more or liked less?
- EU: I really enjoyed the medical wards better. As I said, I don't think I was that great a nurse. (MK and EU laugh.) I really got along with all the doctors and all that, but I was more into—I would like to try to diagnose before the doctor would give the diagnosis (chuckles). You know what I mean? Things like that, because I think I'm not that soft. You're a soft person (MK laughs.) wouldn't you say?
- WN: Hmm. (WN and MK laugh.) Umm.
- EU: Well, I don't know. (WN and MK laugh.)
- MK: Okay.

EU: I was more assertive. So, I feel probably would have done better in another type of work.

WN: When you say soft, do you mean like you weren't compassionate or caring enough?

EU: No, it's not that, but it's just the way, perhaps, I expressed myself. Because I'm the type that if I think I'm right or I did the right thing or made the right decision, I'll stick by it. I don't care if the doctor says this or who says that. If I think this is right for me. . . .

MK: Too bad you couldn't just become a doctor.

EU: No, I don't think so. (MK laughs.)

WN: You'd have been a good doctor.

EU: Beg your pardon?

WN I think you would have been a good doctor.

EU: No. (WN laughs.) I don't know. I was sort of pushed into the medical side from high school.

MK: At the time that you left the camp, what options were there? You found this, the Cadet Nurse Corps. What other options were there?

EU: Actually, none. After, around graduation or after, Sister Mary sat me down and asked me what I was planning to do, because right after graduation the class just stayed at the hospital and worked, because we didn't get our state board exam yet. Until state board (exam was) passed, we couldn't go get other jobs at the hospitals. So, she said after we passed and got our RN, she said, "What are your plans?" And she said she was hoping that I would agree to stay there and she would hire me as one of the staff, and make arrangements for me to go to Loyola [University] and finish up and get my degree. She said she would like to have me work as one of the instructors.

So I said, "Sister Mary, it's really—I really appreciate it, but I feel I have to go home." I had no idea what was happening here and I knew that my folks had nothing and what in the world were they doing. Because, they never said anything about what they were doing. So, I told them I really appreciate it—talking to me—I just can't see it. So I had to come back—continue working after state board so I could make enough money to get passage home. I didn't get home until spring of [19]49.

MK: So you graduated in 1948 though?

EU: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: When did you work at that VA [Veterans Administration] hospital? You were . . .

EU: Oh that was six months before that?

MK: Oh, six months before you graduated.

EU: Graduation.

MK: What was that like?

EU: That was really fun. I was assigned to [Edward] Hines [Jr.] [Veterans Administration] Hospital, which is in Maywood, right in the suburbs of Chicago—west side. It was a rectangular building four-stories high. It was just a box. If you stood at one of the central hallways and looked, you could see the exits on the far end of the building and it would be about this big, the door. I swear—not a quarter mile but close to it. It was huge.

MK: Huge.

EU: Four stories. So lot's of times I would be working way over on the fourth floor on the far end—G ward. To eat, you had to get down four floors, go through the central area where the cafeteria was, so it was a hike. Also during World War II there were a lot more survivors—wounded veterans—than other wars I believe. A lot of paraplegics. So on the grounds, which were quite extensive, they built a temporary hospital called Vaughn General, which was exclusively for paraplegics. So we circulated so many weeks in medical, cardiac, or orthopedics, paraplegics. It was quite an experience.

MK: You have so many patients there. You were telling me the story about how one time you had to administer something. Tell us that story.

EU: Which one?

MK: Something about you were supposed to give a particular patient something and it. . . .

EU: Yes. It was in the orthopedic ward. We had about sixty patients in one big room.

I think some water or. . . .

WN: Oh, thirsty.

EU: Where was I? Oh yes, the sixty patients.

MK: Yeah, you had sixty patients in an orthopedic ward.

EU: Yes, and you know not much, many drugs that you give orthopedic patients. Go in the ward and some of them would be up in wheelchairs and some would be walking on crutches. The medication was—actually everybody had drugs, especially penicillin. It was the same dosage. So you go in and they're not in their beds. So you yell out their names and somebody would say, "Yo!" You go there and give them the shot, and then they'd laugh and say he was so-and-so, you know. (MK and EU laugh.)

So I would locate the other guy and I'd give him the medicine because dosage was identical. The patients all knew what they were supposed to get, so they weren't stupid.

MK: They were having fun with you (laughs).

EU: Yes. They had nothing to do in those days. No recreational facilities. All they had was their bed and the guys around them. They'd go for treatment or surgery or whatever. I asked one kid. He was a really handsome young man, but very short. He walked with a limp, so I asked him, "How did you get hurt?"

He said he was in the navy aboard an aircraft carrier, and he was one of the deckhands that worked around the cable that stopped the planes. You know when they come down?

MK: Yeah.

EU: Before they went over the other side there would be a cable to . . .

MK: Keep them. . . .

EU: As a final stop. He said the cable snapped. He said all he knew was when he looked he didn't see his legs. So he said, "Oh my God, I lost my legs." It had fractured them. Fractured especially his right (leg badly). I guess it was close to his (hip), but they took care of it. Somehow I guess it didn't heal well so he had operation after operation and one leg was short. Can you imagine? He said, "Oh my God, I don't have my legs." That was one funny story to me. It was real sad too. He was such a cute little boy.

- MK: But gee, working in a VA hospital so soon after the war, you must have seen all kinds of cases.
- EU: Actually, no. Because, by the time we were at the last year of our nurse's training, the initial wounded were either becoming chronic or dead or discharged.
- MK: So three years later. . . .
- EU: Yes, so there were chronic cases.
- MK: How did they react to you? You know, some of them maybe came from the Pacific theater and they see a Japanese.
- EU: I never felt anything. Even when we (pause) went to paraplegic ward I never felt that any of those guys. . . .
- MK: I was curious about your experiences because I had read about two cadet nurses who later on worked in a VA. They were Japanese American and some patients reacted badly toward them.
- EU: Is that right?
- MK: So they were shifted to another hospital.
- EU: Oh.
- MK: But in your case it was okay?
- EU: I guess I was just lucky. I don't remember any instance of feeling that, except the one instance in St. Louis when we were down there for our psychiatric experience, I think I told you about it.
- MK: What happened there?
- EU: A bunch of us girls decided—it was in summer so it was hot—we would go swimming in the pool at Forest Park. So we all traipsed up there and bought our tickets. When I handed my ticket to the attendant, he mumbled something. So I asked, “What did you say?”
- He said, “The manager reserves the right, but you can go up on balcony and watch your friends swim.”
- So I said okay. So I stepped back.
- The girls all said, “What's going on?”
- I told them, “Oh, I'm going to watch you guys.” Then they realized that I was denied entrance.
- So they all said, “We're not staying,” so we all packed up and left. That was the only incident I can remember. Even the journey from Tule Lake to Chicago right after the war. Not even a month after the war. Never had any, any experience you know. So many times. It wasn't really a bad experience I don't think. I could have just brushed it off until the girls decided they were. . . . I don't remember any of the girls that I studied and worked with having anything against me. If they did, they had hid it real well. Of course, I wasn't close to all of them because we all were different personalities.
- MK: While you're out there in Kankakee, what's happening with your family in Hawai'i?
- EU: Our communication was so terrible. I am terrible with that stuff.

(Interview interrupted for EU to serve refreshments, then resumes.)

MK: What was your family doing? They returned to Hawai‘i and where did they live?

EU: Well, they had no place to go really. The school was gone, right. Dad had worked as a teacher at the Jōdo Mission school in Hale‘iwa when he was younger. So, the Jōdo Mission in Honolulu gave them a cottage—one of their classrooms. They had a language school there too. And I guess some other families—I don’t know—but my folks were allowed to live in one of the cottages.

MK: So they made do? They lived in a classroom. They lived in one of the classrooms. What did he do for work?

EU: Actually, I really don’t know, but I do know that my mother found a job at the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] in the linen room. She took care of all the sending out the laundry and when they received the linens back she’d check and mend them. When they had new employees she had to fit their uniforms. She had a stable job.

Dad decided that he would go into—not vending, but he used to import little things and bought a truck. He used to service different stores. I guess little stores. But, when they had that [177-day] longshoremen’s strike [in 1949] his business was just gone, so after that he decided to work in Moana Hotel as one of their maintenance men because he was so handy with fixing things. Plumbing or electricity or whatever—leaky pipes. My mother worked evenings and I remember Dad used to work shifts.

But he was a really avid golfer. (MK chuckles.) Nothing was better than going out to the golf course. I remember him going to the door in the morning with his gear and tell my mom, “I’m going now.” She would smile and say have a good game. If she didn’t, he’d turn around and come back to the door, [and say] “I’m leaving now,” until she sent him off.

He was a really short man. He’d go to the Ala Wai [Municipal Golf Course] and just pick up a game with anybody who was around. Naturally they all betted right? So here’s this little old man, never had a long drive but drove short and straight. He always hit the fairway. His green was really good. He never had to dig in his own pockets for his green fee or his nineteen-hole beer or anything. (MK and WN laugh.) He used to go every day. Can you imagine? Not on the weekends I guess, but you know during the week, every day. He was sort of a free spirit.

MK: Eventually though they no longer lived at the Jōdo Mission, were . . .

EU: Yeah, because when I came home they were still living there. That was spring of [19]49. Of course with me coming back and trying to go to work—I found work at Queen’s [Hospital]—it was just not possible. So, they found a house in Kapahulu. We moved there and I think it was a newly built home. A large living, dining room, and a pretty large kitchen and three bedrooms. One bath. I guess they had the stove and refrigerator in—I don’t remember buying. But we didn’t have any dining room table. Or living room. So, I went to a secondhand store and I bought this since we were seven or eight in the family. We couldn’t have a little table and four chairs. I bought this table. (EU knocks on the table.) This table is solid. The tabletop is about this thick. It’s solid.

MK: Is this the table that you bought?

EU: For a hundred dollars. I bought this table. It has leaves that extended from here to the chair. It seated eight comfortably. Ten if necessary. The chairs you could hardly lift it. It was so solid. It was carved back with a *lauhala* seat. The seats were huge. Huge chairs, with two arm chairs. It was only a hundred dollars, and I thought, “What a bargain.”

(Taping is interrupted, then resumes.)

- EU: . . . moved to Kalihi. They brought it along, but they took the leaves off, because the family was smaller. They just stored it. Didn't do very good. The chairs were too large for the house, so they were outside in the sun. I think we lost all the chairs. So, just this table was left. It went from one---I don't know who else all had it. My sister had it for a while. Then when we moved here I had a smaller table, so we switched (laughs). I've been trying to refinish it but, I can't get very far with it.
- MK: What a neat story though—this table.
- EU: Yes.
- MK: This is the actual one you bought.
- EU: It was at least fifty years old when I bought it. It's been in our family for over fifty years. (Laughs) Can you imagine?
- MK: Make sure your daughters know the story.
- EU: Well, I want to get rid of it.
- MK: Huh? (Laughs)
- EU: It's too large. Too heavy.
- MK: It's beautiful. What a story.
- EU: All my furniture—I have a Chinese coffee table there. It's carved on top. When I saw it in Okinawa, it was in a storefront of this—not a gallery, but he used to sell paintings. He had this in front of his store. A table to prop up his artwork. Okinawa roads are all crushed coral on the side roads. So fine white coral. (The table) was just caked white. But I thought, "This looks interesting."
- So, a friend who was sort of a homesteader—he lived in Okinawa, working in Okinawa after the war—says, "Don't look so interested. Otherwise you're going to pay more."
- MK: But you got it?
- EU: I got it for, I think I paid twenty-five dollars for it. I took it home.
- MK: Originally your parents were at the Jōdo Mission classroom. Eventually they were able to get a house in Kapahulu yeah? You said Trousseau Street. Was it Trousseau Street? Trousseau?
- EU: Mm-hmm [yes].
- MK: I was just wondering if your parents ever shared their thoughts on their World War II experience. Nothing?
- EU: Nothing.
- MK: Did your parents ever talk about their prewar lives as something they missed? No.
- EU: Nope. Never ever. It was just something I think they must have felt depressed or. . . I do know that they had a happy life while they were in Hale'iwa. They had a happy life after they retired. I know they really enjoyed (retirement)—they were into tours. My mother when she retired, went to somebody at the hotel and they made an itinerary for her. She told them that she wanted to go to the Mainland, and she wanted to—she didn't want to fly because that way she would miss so much. So she wanted to either bus or train, whichever was convenient, to different parts of the U.S. One of them was Boston, because one of Dad's cousins was practicing medicine there. So, they made an itinerary.

Of course she was a retiree, so she had discounts at the Sheraton hotels. But you know, Sheraton hotels are not the cheapest.

MK: So she went cross-country?

EU: They went cross-country. Imagine Dad—well they both spoke English and understood but two old fogies. I mean, they had never traveled on their own before, and she made friends that she corresponded with. She was only a sixth-grade graduate, but she loved to write letters. She wrote journals of her travels. She made friends and she corresponded with people, which I thought was kind of amazing.

MK: For yourself, when you came back you started working at . . .

EU: Queen's [Hospital].

MK: . . . Queen's as a nurse?

EU: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: In 1950 you got married.

EU: Yes. I met my husband through my sister. They had a bowling group. I didn't bowl, but I met my husband there.

MK: So you married Norman Ueno.

EU: Ueno, mm-hmm [yes].

MK: When did the children come? I know you have two or three children.

EU: Yep. My oldest one was born in June of [19]51. My second one was born February of [19]53. My third one was born May 1958.

MK: You continued with your nursing?

EU: No. Actually when my first one was born, I left nursing, because I felt my mother was working. She wasn't financially able to stay home and babysit. When I figured out all the expenses, it was more economical to stay home with the baby, so I stayed home. Then I had my second one, so I stayed home some more, until 1955. Then I worked part-time at this office.

MK: Somewhere along the line you also worked as a office nurse for Dr. [Homer] Izumi?

EU: Yes. I started part-time, then full-time. I was with him since [19]55 to. . . I think we did go to Kaiser for a year, but after that we left and (pause) we started a new office in King Center Building. I told him, "You know when we move to King Center Building we're going to be on appointment basis."

He laughed and he said, "You think you can do that?" And we did.

MK: All people didn't make appointments before that?

EU: They used to call, well if they came in doctor would say to come back in two days or a week, they would be on the book. Other than that it was usually that day. They would walk in or call in and say, "I got this terrible cough," or something.

I'd tell them to come in around a certain time, "I'm busy right now." So lots of times they had a very long wait. So I told the doctor, "It's ridiculous not having a formal appointment basis." So, I managed.

- MK: Prior to that, that was how a doctor's office was run? Not with appointments but just coming in? Very interesting.
- EU: I thought his practice was very interesting because in the beginning he was at Kula, Kula San[atorium]. He had a lot of Maui patients. When he moved here, a lot of the Maui patients' families were here, so he had sort of a nucleus of people he took care of. Some patients' families were three generations.
- MK: Yeah, Dr. Izumi's name is quite well known. Dr. Izumi's name is quite well known.
- EU: Yes, well he was sort of a controversial figure too, what with Kaiser fiasco that they had, while I think he was really overworked they didn't realize how to manage HMO [Health Maintenance Organization]. Plus, the number of people who would subscribe to the Kaiser plan. . . .
- MK: That was a new thing.
- EU: Yes. You know, the doctors here were violently against Kaiser coming in, so they were like pariahs. I had a doctor stop me one day and say, "I hear you're going to Kaiser with your boss."
- I said, "Yeah."
- He said, "Are you going to wear pink underwear? You know Kaisers love pink."
- I said, "You have no business talking to me like that. Besides, I wouldn't even stand for it if you were paying for my bread and butter." I was so angry with him. Nice young Japanese surgeon, I knew him when he was an intern. (Chuckles) I mean, I'm sure no other nurse ever spoke to him like that. I told him he had no business talking to me like that.
- MK: I guess later on you left the nursing profession and you went into civil service?
- EU: Mm-hmm [yes].
- MK: So, when you retired totally from work, what did you retire from?
- EU: From the federal service.
- MK: As a . . .
- EU: You know, I just had to go from one place to another (as my husband went to work in Okinawa for five years and after two years here, left for Japan for five years). Usually the job openings would be entry level. I work up one or two grades, and then pull out. Then look around for other jobs. So, the last job I had I went in as an entry-level [worker] at Pearl Harbor Navy Public Works Center. It was in the transportation department. I had no idea of transportation because the other areas I had were kind of interesting. I was a receptionist at the chapel. I worked with the chaplain. They're human beings. (Laughs) Then, VA. Then in Japan I worked in engineering contracting. It was really a very interesting job. It's not an exact science. (Laughs)
- MK: You were in different areas.
- EU: I know. Then when I got sick and tired of my boss. I moved to be a secretary at the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Center. Then when my husband decided to come back here and the job offered was in transportation. I would go back to read every file in the cabinet. It was interesting. Very interesting. I had opportunities to study different reports some of the transportation offices didn't know. They were so old-fashioned they wouldn't read any of the computer printouts. One guy who was transportation officer at Hickam Fire Department stopped over one day, "You folks get new vehicles every year—replacement vehicles. How can I get a replacement for some of my fire department vehicles?"

So I asked him, “Do you file this particular report?”

He said, “What’s that?”

I said, “That’s one of the usage reports that you file.” Based on that, I said, “There’s a determination on whether you are eligible for a replacement vehicle for what you have.” He had never heard of it. Some people are so ignorant on their jobs. You think you go to a job and you’re not an entry-level like I—just a little lowly clerk. They’re running a division or department. They don’t know their own regulations.

You got to go?

WN: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: Let’s see, any last thoughts that you’d like to share? (Chuckles)

EU: I think I talked myself out.

MK: Okay. (Laughs)

EU: You want some more tea?

MK: Yes. I’ll just have a little bit. Thank you. That’s good; thank you.

Thank you for the interview. (Pause) I bet you didn’t think you had this much to share.

(Laughter)

WN: Can I ask you the final wrap-up?

MK: Why don’t you ask that?

WN: Go ahead. Go ahead.

MK: Okay, maybe one last question. What made you say “yes” to share your remembrances about internment?

EU: I guess it’s old age. You know, you sit at home and have nobody to talk to except the dog. I don’t have access to easy transportation. I hate to rely on and be eligible for Handi-Van. But, I just don’t feel comfortable. I have an application form but I never filed them. My daughter’s very accommodating. She takes off most of the time when I need to do something. She has busy periods like the beginning of the year—the first three months—I don’t ask her for help during that time. I don’t expect her to help me, especially in the summer because she’s single. Other workers have families and they like to go on trips, so she doesn’t usually take off. Holidays, she doesn’t take off before the holidays because she figures they probably want to prepare like Christmas Eve and Thanksgiving, so she usually doesn’t take off. Right then and after. But maybe the Monday afterwards. So I kind of have to say I’ll call you back later. (EU and MK laugh.) I have to ask her about her schedule.

MK: You’re very considerate.

EU: My daughter, she’s very considerate of her fellow workers.

MK: Do your grandchildren know about your wartime experiences?

EU: I don’t think so. In fact, families are funny. You know, you talk about something, here-she-goes-again business. So, I don’t think Michael [EU’s grandson] really knows. A couple of times he was surprised because he said he was on the *Survivor* program, so I

told him, “Take care that you don’t get any heat rash. You know your grandfather had heat rash from top to bottom of his body (and hospitalized) when he was in India.”

He said, “Oh, he was in India?”

I said, “Yes, during the war.” I’d give him a little rundown of his military experiences. But, unless something comes up like that, we really don’t talk about it.

MK: After all these years—it’s been decades—since internment, what are your thoughts on having been interned?

EU: Actually, that’s life. You have ups and downs. You have to make the best of it, that’s all.

MK: That’s a good ending. Good ending.

END OF INTERVIEW

Unspoken Memories:

Oral Histories of Hawai‘i Internees at Jerome, Arkansas

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa**

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