

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Thelma Izumi, 73, retired store and tavern owner

*"We had a bench outside the store. So, lot of times, people come over there, have a drink of soda, and talk story. After school the children come around, buy soda, and candies, and seeds. Those days a package of crack seed was only five cents, so they sat around and share the seeds."*

Thelma (Nishimura) Izumi, Japanese, was born on November 23, 1911, in Kapapala, Hawaii. The sixth of eight children born to immigrants from Kumamoto-ken, Japan, Thelma grew up in a plantation community where, she, too, worked in the sugarcane fields after completing the sixth grade at Kapapala School.

At the age of twenty-one, Thelma came to Honolulu for sewing lessons and soon after married "Dyke" Yukito Izumi, whom she met through the efforts of a nakōdo, or matchmaker.

In 1934, Thelma and "Dyke" operated the T. Izumi Shoten, a store in Kalihi Kai originally founded by "Dyke's" parents, Tamanosuke and Oda Izumi. Six years later, they remodeled the store, renamed it Dyke's Market, and managed it until 1971. From 1947 to 1965, they also operated Dyke's Tavern--a restaurant, bar, and catering service--located next to their store.

"Dyke" Izumi passed away in 1975. His widow, Thelma, is now retired and resides in Waikiki.

Tape No. 11-24-1-84

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Thelma Yoshiko Izumi (TI)

January 11, 1984

Waikiki, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Thelma Yoshiko Izumi at her home in Waikiki, Oahu on January 11, 1984.

Okay, I'm going to begin the interview by asking you about your early life. Can you first tell me when you were born?

TI: November 23, 1911 in Kapapala, Hawaii.

MK: Can you tell me where Kapapala was located?

TI: Kapapala is located about five miles away from Pahala.

MK: What kind of community was Kapapala?

TI: It's a small community. I don't know how many people. They all work in a field--cane field, you know.

MK: What did the houses look like in Kapapala?

TI: (Most of the homes around our place, the kitchen was built on dirt floor for safety of the building because we use firewood for cooking. Then one step up was the dining room with kerosene stove which we use to bake bread and things. Then another step was our living room with two bedrooms on both sides.)

MK: How were the houses arranged in Kapapala?

TI: Well, some were in camps [of] about maybe twenty-five homes. But my place was kind of out of the way, more on the (mountain side), that the neighbors are maybe about 500 feet away or more. (Those houses were built later than ours, the houses were small. They had kerosene stove, so most of them use to cook rice outside in kama with firewood.)

MK: In the area that your family lived, who were your most closest neighbors?

TI: Was Hawaiian people.

MK: I was wondering, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

TI: Three brothers and five sisters, altogether.

MK: What number child are you in the family?

TI: I'm (pause) sixth.

MK: What were your parents' names?

TI: Seishichi Nishimura, my father; and Fude Nishimura, my mother's name.

MK: What do you remember about your parents' background?

TI: Well, they were hardworking people. We had a vegetable garden, where we helped. They used to work hard, day in, day out. My father used to go way down Pahala about five miles away. Pack the vegetables on a donkey and he used to go and sell over there.

MK: What do you remember about their coming over from Japan?

TI: (My father came from Kumamoto, Japan. He was married and had my oldest brother when he left Japan. Since his parents were dead, he didn't have any brother or sister, so he wanted to come Hawaii to see if he can find something he likes to do here. I guess he begin to like Hawaii so he had my mother and brother come over. After they came over, he purchase a property in Kapapala where there was a mud flow, so the soil there was very rich and good for farming. The sugar cane around our place was the best, they were very big. Lots of juice, too. That's why my dad decided to farm, and raised the children over there.)

MK: I think you mentioned that your father came in 1899 and your mother in 1902.

TI: Yes. That's right. (My father came on October 12, 1899 on Toyo Maru. My mother came on July 15, 1902 on Peru Maru.)

MK: What ken did they come from?

TI: Kumamoto-ken.

MK: You came from a big family.

TI: Yes. (A family of ten.)

MK: Could you describe for me the kind of family life that you had in Kapapala?

TI: I guess we get along with all the brothers and sisters. We didn't have

(much) fights. We worked together. (If we did go out, we always use to go together.)

MK: What kind of work did you have to do as a child?

TI: Well, I used to help in the garden. Plus washing for the family, ironing, all those things. When I get older, then I started to work in a cane field for the plantation.

MK: What kind of work did you do in the cane field?

TI: We used to call it "hō hana." (Laughs) Hoeing. (Those days we worked about ten hours a day rain or shine and our pay was only seventy-five cents a day. Children nowadays will never believe this when we tell them the story.)

MK: What was the plantation company's name?

TI: (Pause) It's the (Hawaiian Agricultural) Plantation.

MK: You mentioned that you have to do the ironing and the washing. Can you kind of describe how you have to do that in those days?

TI: Washing all by hand. Scrubbing by hand. And ironing, we used to have that charcoal iron, which we (must) blow sometime to (chuckles) strengthen up the fire. Sometimes, we used to drop on the floor, burn the floor (chuckles). We had so much trouble with those kind of iron. But eventually, we got used to (because there wasn't any other type of iron. We had no choice).

MK: When you were little, what school did you attend?

TI: Oh, I went to Kapapala School.

MK: Can you describe for me what kind of school it was?

TI: Was just a small school. I don't know, maybe about two, three hundred (student). Had about five teachers, I think.

MK: Who were the teachers in those days?

TI: I can't remember the teachers' names. It's been so long. I forgot the names of them. (But, one particular teacher Mrs. Boyd lived in Naalehu. I remember her because I use to go to her house to help her sometimes.)

MK: Were they Japanese, haole . . .

TI: No, no, no.

MK: . . . Hawaiian?



TI: Was Hawaiian and some (part-)haole teachers, too.

MK: What do you remember most about your school years in Kapapala?

TI: Well, nothing much. Because, those days, (there wasn't much activities. We use to play baseball, volleyball and things.) Right after English school, we used to go to Japanese school. (I think we had Japanese school for two hours. Sometimes we reach home almost dark because we walk to school and walk back home. About four miles every day to and from school. After the plantation harvest the cane, we use to cut across the field so we can reach home faster.)

MK: That Japanese school that you attended, what was the name and about how many students attended it with you?

TI: There wasn't too many. Let's see, maybe about 100 or 150, I guess.

MK: And what was it called?

TI: Kapapala Japanese School.

MK: What type of Japanese education did you get at that Japanese-language school?

TI: Well, reading and writing. Regular Japanese teaching, (speech, math, history and other [subjects]).

MK: When you weren't at school or when you weren't at home working, what types of activities did you and your sisters and brothers have for play?

TI: (As far as our brothers and sisters, we use to play marbles and cards. We girls play bean bags and jacks. We had lots of peach trees so during peach season we climb up to pick peaches. When summer comes, sometime we go up the mountain where my father had another farmland on top of the mountain. It use to take us about one hour to walk up there. Then my father use to build fire and broil us fresh corn for us to eat. After that we pick some ti leaves and we use to slide down the hill. Sometime we use to take our friends, too, and they use to enjoy the trip. We had lots of peaches up there, too, and they were sweet.)

MK: I notice that you went to school up to sixth grade. What were your feelings about stopping school at sixth grade?

TI: Well, I wanted to go more, but then, in those days, we can't get (extra) money. Plus, the parents don't allow girls to go to Hilo or any other place, so we have to be sacrifice, and stay home, and work.

MK: So, after you stopped going to school, how did you spend your days?

TI: Just stay home and help the parents. Working in the vegetable garden

and house work; (taking care of my younger sisters).

MK: That vegetable garden that you mentioned, what types of vegetables?

TI: All kind of vegetables. Beans, and even had pineapple, too. Cabbage. Spinach, burdock, tomatoes. (Onions, potatoes, celery, radish, turnips. We had fresh strawberries, too, and lots of bananas.)

MK: And you mentioned that your father used to sell them in Pahala.

TI: Yes.

MK: How was the vegetable gardening business in terms of supporting the family?

TI: (I guess my father use to do enough to support the family because everything was very cheap. Talk about vegetable, my father use to make the best takuwan. He use to sell them in Pahala. Those people just wait for my father to come. His takuwan was very famous. I wish I had learn from him because takuwan business goes real well even nowadays. After my older brothers and sisters finished school, they work for the plantation to help my father.)

MK: At age twenty-one or twenty-two you came to Honolulu. Can you tell me why you came to Honolulu?

TI: Well, that's Oriental style. We had to know some kind of sewing or something, see? So, that's how I came out to take some sewing (lessons). Making kimonos and stuff.

MK: Where did you learn this sewing in Honolulu?

TI: At my relative's place on School Street; (from Mrs. Nagao).

MK: Was it a school type of situation?

TI: No, no, no. Just a (relative).

MK: So, when you came down to Honolulu how did you support yourself while you were living here?

TI: That, my parents send me money.

MK: And then, not too long after that, in 1933, you got married to "Dyke" Yukito Izumi. Can you explain to me how this marriage came about?

TI: (Laughs) While I was sewing, I had matchmaking over there. (Laughs) (Mrs. Saito and Mrs. Nagao arranged a meeting for us.) That's how I met him.

MK: Who was the matchmaker?

TI: It was Mr. Saito and Mr. Yamaguchi.

MK: Can you explain to me how a match was made in those days? The steps involved?

TI: Well, Mr. Saito was the salesman going around selling materials and things. So, he used to come up to my family's place. Then, he (was) a friend of the Izumis, too, so that's how they got together (chuckles). They arrange a meeting for my husband and myself (at a School Street home. Mr. Saito came in first, introduced my husband to the family and me. I was shy, I couldn't see him too much, but anyway I serve them tea. Mr. Saito tries to have me sit with them, so he ask me all about myself: what I was doing back home and about the family. The day we got married I didn't remember how he [TI's husband] look like because I only saw him once that time.)

MK: How did that meeting go? How did you feel then?

TI: Well, I haven't met him before and I don't know what to do, what to say.

(Laughter)

TI: But then, well, everything went all right, I guess. A few days later, they want me to answer whether I was interested in him or not. The same thing with my husband, too, so we both agreed. That's how we were (chuckles) matched together. (And I am happy I married a nice man and a good father, too.)

MK: What were your feelings about getting married then?

TI: Well, the parents---you know, Japanese style, (they think girls at age) twenty is old. So, well, since I (met) a good man, I thought I might as well get married. I'm glad I got the right fella.

(Laughter)

MK: Your husband is always referred to as "Dyke." Can you tell me why he's called "Dyke"?

TI: Well, according to him--I asked him several times--he said he (use to play all kinds of sports like baseball, football, and those days) everybody had the nickname. Since Japanese (eat) daikon, they call him "Dyke." You know, shortcut, "Dyke." And that name came real famous. (The children around there, they even use to call me "Mrs. Dyke." Most of the people knew him as "Dyke.")

MK: I was wondering, up to 1933, what was your husband's background? What do you know about your husband's background?

TI: (My husband was born in Kapaia, Kauai. He has four brothers and five sisters. Ten of them. And he is the sixth child. At the age of

twelve he came out to Honolulu and with the family lived in McInerny Tract. Then later they moved to Kalihi Kai where they had a business. As he grew older he worked at Libby cannery during summer. From what I heard from his mother, he was a very hard worker. Those days were real depression times. His parents donated a thousand dollar butsudan to Honpa Hongwanji, so he got worried and he even took a pick and shovel job until his mother found out. Heard his mother cried and beg him not to do that kind of job.)

MK: That store that you mentioned, can you tell me what the original name of that store was?

TI: Yeah, that was T. Izumi Shoten.

MK: What were your in-law's names?

TI: They were Tamanosuke Izumi and Masa Izumi.

MK: Could you explain to me how they started the store?

TI: Well, they had a store in Kauai, so they are business people. When they came out to Honolulu, they did the same thing. (They lived in McInerny Tract, looked around for a place, and they found a place in Kalihi Kai, so they build a store there.)

MK: When they gave the store to you and your husband to run, was the arrangement between you and the in-laws a lease or a buying arrangement or a gift?

TI: That was a gift to my husband and me. And I'm really thankful for that. They gave us a real good start. (Made it easy for us and I can never forget their kindness.)

MK: You mentioned it was located on Republican Street. Can you give me the exact address and the exact location?

TI: That's right on the corner of Kalihi and Republican Street. (At that time it was 1711 Republican Street. Around 1972 after the Kalihi Kai district improvement, our address became 298 Kalihi Street.)

MK: In those days, what did people think of that location for a store?

TI: Well, that was the only store around, so I guess people was happy with that nearby store. (Convenient for them to shop.)

MK: Can you describe for me the size of that store?

TI: I really don't know what size. It's a pretty nice size.

MK: What kinds of goods did you sell in the store?



TI: Was groceries, dry goods, sundries, just about (everything) at the start.

MK: At the start, where did all these goods come from?

TI: Lot of them from Japan. Some are from over here (and Mainland).

MK: Who were the wholesalers?

TI: In those days, (that was Ah Leong Store, wholesale store, that carried eggs. American Factors Ltd. T.H. Davies & Co. Fred Waldron Co. They were the main wholesalers.)

MK: In those days, how did your store buy the goods from the wholesalers? Were there salesmen or how was it arranged?

TI: (There were salesmen, too. Sometimes we call up when we need them in a hurry. Most of the goods were delivered to us.)

MK: Can you tell me who worked in the store?

TI: Oh, we start off with my husband and myself. Just two of us. For several years. (During 1930s were depression, so my husband got the City and County job. About 1939 we extended the store to twice the size of our old section and opened a liquor and meat department, then we had some help.)

MK: What type of work did your husband do for the store?

TI: Everything. Bookkeeping plus store job, everything.

MK: How about yourself?

TI: Well, I did the same thing. (Chuckles) (Take care the store, housework, everything. Order the goods.)

MK: What were hours back then for your husband?

TI: Oh, we used to open up the store six o'clock in the morning and I'm pretty sure was till eleven o'clock at night, (so he had long hours. He use to go out about seven a.m. to three p.m. After that he help in the store to closing time.)

MK: I've heard that in some family operations, they have to work before the store opens and after the store [closes].

TI: Yes. After we close up the store, we clean up. Get it ready for the next day. Stacking up goods. (Check what to order for the next day.)

MK: In those days, where were you living?



- TI: It's the building right above the store. Store downstairs and the living quarters upstairs.
- MK: Since you were living and also doing a business in that area, you must have known the neighborhood pretty well. Can you describe for me what the neighborhood looked like in that vicinity?
- TI: When I first got married, it was still a kiawe bush. Just few houses here and there. Gradually, people come in, build up.
- MK: Who were some of the families that lived in that area in the 1930s?
- TI: (They were Medeiros, Watanabe, Ching, Silva, Fukuhara, Sakai, Sakamoto, Mersberg, Tsuchiya, Honda, Kimura, Yoshizaki, the Souzas.) Very few Filipinos (at that time). There were (some Chinese. Lots of Hawaiians and Portuguese people.)
- MK: For your customers, what type of customers did you have?
- TI: I had (same). Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, lot of Portuguese people.
- MK: Where did most of these people live?
- TI: About two, three blocks away, (from our place).
- MK: In those early years, how did you get customers to come to your store?
- TI: Well, they just come over (chuckles) (because it was convenient for them. We use to deliver groceries for them, so that made it easier for the people. Just a corner store, no advertising those days.)
- MK: Oh, no advertising?
- TI: I guess they go to the closest store.
- MK: Besides just the selling of goods to the customers, what other services did you provide for them?
- TI: Well, we used to give them credit, (that made it easier for them. Those days no stores compete each other like nowadays. As long as you treat [customers] nice, they use to come back).
- MK: How did your credit system work at your store?
- TI: Well, those days, was all right. (People didn't use to buy much like nowadays, so the charges were small.)
- MK: Can you explain to me how someone would buy on credit from your store?
- TI: They buy on credit and every end of the month, they used to pay off

the bill.

MK: Was it possible for a customer to carry a balance over to the next month?

TI: Yes. Small balance. Not too much.

MK: How was this credit system enforced?

TI: Just trust each other, you know. We don't check on anything (as long as they had jobs). (Chuckles) (Just about fifteen dollars or twenty-five dollars a month. Most of them pay cash. We didn't give credit to anyone come from away, just to steady customers that patronize our store.)

MK: In those days, if someone wanted to buy on credit, they would come in and just mention their own names and they could buy on credit?

TI: (Those days, everything was so cheap, so they didn't run the bills too high. Most of them ask for credit just few days before payday, so it's only a few dollars.)

MK: Who would you give credit to, though?

TI: (To people that's been giving us the business. They ask to give them credit when they ran out of cash. I don't mean everyone that came to the store can get credit.)

MK: For your store, did it do okay with this credit system?

TI: Oh, yes. Because we (didn't) have too many expenses those days. (We tried to limit their credit. Give credit to people who had good jobs. Lots of them, we refuse to give credit because they were not steady workers.)

MK: I've noticed that some neighborhood stores become something like social centers where people gather to talk, maybe have sodas, sit down. How about at your store?

TI: Oh, yes. We had a (bench) outside the store. So, lot of times, people come over there, have a drink of soda, and talk story. (After school the children come around, buy soda, and candies, and seeds. Those days a package of crack seed was only five cents, so they sit around and share the seeds.)

MK: How about competition?

TI: Those days, there wasn't any competition at all.

MK: No stores at all in that area except yours?

TI: Yes. Because other stores were kind of far, so there's no competition.

(Things were very cheap those days, so no one believe in cutting prices.)

MK: What other businesses were in that Republican Street area?

TI: (I don't remember any business close to our place. They were about four to five blocks away.)

MK: Can you describe for me what most of the houses looked like in that Republican Street area?

TI: Old-fashioned type. Two, three bedrooms. Very small houses. They all look alike, (low houses with a small porch in front).

MK: How about the families living in those houses? Were the children very small yet or grown up?

TI: Oh, yeah. There were (grownups, teenagers and small younger children of all ages).

MK: What types of occupations were most of the people engaged in that came to your store?

TI: I guess lot of them was Libby cannery (workers). Libby cannery is about two blocks above our store. (Del Monte cannery, Pearl Harbor workers, City and County workers, office workers, carpenters.)

MK: In those early years in the 1930s when you were working in the store, what were your feelings about having the store and working there?

TI: At that time I didn't (have any business experience, so I tried my best to learn from my in-laws while they were here. That was my only interest at that time so I'll be able to carry on the business).

MK: Did you enjoy the work?

TI: (At first I was kind of shy, but after I learned about the goods and prices, I wasn't nervous, so made it easier and I enjoyed doing business.)

MK: What did you enjoy about it?

TI: Well, I don't know. I guess, meeting people and get (myself) involved in the grocery store. (Getting to know all the customers and make friends with them and gain their confidence.)

MK: In those years when you and your husband were just starting out, what were your goals or your husband's goals?

TI: Well, was to improve the store as much as we can (to make the parents

happy).

MK: I notice that in 1940 the name of the store was changed?

TI: Yes, to Dyke's Market.

MK: And about that same time, the store was expanded.

TI: Yes.

MK: Can you explain to me how this came about?

TI: Well, my husband was the type that he like to build up his business, so he (worked very hard. He wanted to improve and give a better service to the people of Kalihi).

MK: When he enlarged the store, what did he add inside?

TI: Well, little more groceries, plus a meat department, which we didn't have before. Meat, plus the liquor (department and we hired two workers as the business got better).

MK: In those days, how difficult was it to start selling fresh meat and liquor?

TI: I guess was easy, because there wasn't any liquor store or a meat market nearby. (Liquor business was good because there were Hawaiians and Portuguese people [who] use to drink a lot.)

MK: With the meats being sold now at that store, how did your work change?

TI: Oh, yes. We (had) to slice the meat (with handsaw early in the morning to get them ready in the showcase. Take care of) vegetables and all kinda fresh things. So, kept us going. (People were happy that we started a meat department, so they didn't have to go to town for meats.)

MK: How about the liquor business?

TI: Oh, liquor was good. Especially during the war years.

MK: When World War II came, how did that affect your business?

TI: Oh, was very good. (Lots of people that didn't drink liquor get the permit so they can buy for somebody, their friends, who needed extra liquor.)

MK: What happened that made it good during those years?

TI: Well, the groceries were limited. There was a time limit for us to sell liquor, too. From six to about ten. (Liquor was ration just



one bottle of whiskey a week. They use to line up for blocks waiting for our store to open. They wait from about five a.m. for us to open six o'clock in the morning.)

MK: Was that every day that people would be lined up?

TI: No, that was, I think, once a week, we could sell liquor. So, that's when they used to line up. (We could hear them talking from our house because we lived above the store. They calling, "Dyke, get up, open the store." They buy and save them at home whether they needed or not. Maybe they buy for some friends or future use.)

MK: How was the liquor rationed to the people?

TI: There was so much a gallon a week. Just like a bottle for a week or a case of (beer) for a week. (The liquor commission issued a card to purchase any liquor for people over twenty years of age. We stamp the card with date of purchase and type of liquor.) So, was pretty busy. One have to check the card (to see if they had purchased for the week. And two person do the writing and one collect the cash. We continue to ten o'clock.) My fingers used to be really sore.

(Laughter)

TI: (But when the money comes in so much, you'll forget the pain and be thankful for the business.)

MK: How about other foods? Were they affected by World War II rationing?

TI: Yes, it was ration[ed], too.

MK: So, how did that affect your store?

TI: Well, we sold a lot, but then was pretty hard because (the goods didn't come in very often. Especially the rice, we had some problem because some people use to say that we are hiding the rice and give only to our friends. Sometimes we had to sell to the army people stationed in Kalihi, too.)

MK: When you say it was rationed, was there a limit as to how much you could get from the wholesaler?

TI: Yes, (because there wasn't enough shipment coming in).

MK: How were the hours of operation at your store affected by the wartime situation?

TI: The hours wasn't too bad. Although we used to close a little earlier than ordinary time. (Before gets dark, we had to close. During war years was blackout. Even our homes, the windows had to be blacked out so the light can't be seen from outside.)



MK: How about your customers? Any change in the composition of your customers?

TI: No, I don't think so.

MK: By World War II, you had two children. One born in 1938, one born in 1944. How did you manage to take care of your children and work at the store, too?

TI: Oh, yes. That was pretty hard. I left the children [Fred and Elaine] upstairs, you know, alone. I have to come down and do the work, too. (When) time to feed, I have to run up and feed the baby, come down again. (Chuckles) That was kind of hard. (I pity the children because they didn't have much attention.)

MK: By that time, what were your in-laws doing?

TI: Oh, they were up in Japan already.

MK: You mentioned that to do the selling of the liquor, one person had to fill out the card, one person had to do the sale, one person had to take the cash and everything. Were there others at the store working?

TI: There were four of us. And I had a few working girls. I think I had two hired hands by then. [They were] (taking care the grocery department.)

MK: So, with the four of you, that's yourself, your husband . . .

TI: My husband, my brother-in-law and his wife. Four of us worked in the liquor department for the day. (Few years before the war, my husband's brother and his wife join us and form a partnership because my husband and I were getting too busy. Instead of hiring more people we decided to let them come in partners with us. Until then he [TI's brother-in-law] was working at Bishop National Bank.)

MK: You mentioned your brother-in-law and his wife. Where were they living?

TI: They were living right behind the store. (The family lived in the back adjacent to the store so we all work together.)

MK: For your family then, where you had your children and your husband, what was family life like for your storekeeping family?

TI: I think was hard for the children and hard for us, too.

MK: Can you explain?

TI: We can't give them a real, you know, love, yeah? So busy. In other words, they grew up themselves. (Chuckles) (Many times they needed me, but being so busy I neglected them, but thank goodness they grew up to be good children.)

MK: How about when there were holidays? Did the store observe holidays?

TI: No, very seldom. Only New Year's, I think, we used to close (when my husband and I was in business alone. But after we became partners with the brother, we use to take every other Sunday off so we can take our children and their children to a movie or to the beach.)

MK: And so, for New Year's Day, what did you folks do to relax?

TI: Just stay home (with the children and enjoy the holiday).

MK: What types of New Year's activities did you have? Foods or. . . .

TI: Yeah. Just regular Japanese style food, you know. Invite some of the customer friends (and relatives). That's about it.

MK: Since you folks were keeping a store and you had customers, you became friendly in the neighborhood with many of your customers?

TI: Yes, mm hmm.

MK: I know that in 1949 there was a longshoremen's strike. How did that affect your store?

TI: Yes. Lot of things were short. So, we have to ration (some things), too. Can't give them too many, so we used to give so much to a person. Especially the rice. We had the hardest time (with) rice. You know, some people grumble that I'm favoritism giving to the Japanese (only). We (had) little complaints, but then, was all right. (We use to give about five pounds to everyone so they will last longer. Instead of selling twenty-five pounds at a time.)

MK: That was the only problem during the '49 strike?

TI: Yes, mm hmm.

MK: By the time we got to the 1950s, were there any changes in the store? Improvements or. . . .

TI: Oh, yes. From that on, I guess, more stores build up and had little more competition.

MK: So, what did you and your husband do to keep up with the times?

TI: Oh, we (had) to have specials every weekend. So, that's (why we got together with some storeowners and form a group. We can purchase the goods [together] and cheaper to advertise [together]. The co-op was called Green and White Stores.

MK: You're talking about the Green and White Stores Cooperative?

TI: Yes, mm hmm.

MK: Can you explain how that worked?

TI: Yes. (There were about twenty stores throughout Oahu. Every week we meet together and discuss about our week sales, and what to put out on specials. Then one person take care of meat advertisement, one take care groceries, and another, vegetables.)

MK: How about the buying of goods wholesale? Was that done together, too?

TI: (Green and White Store buy them in volume. Then each store buy what we want with a special price.)

MK: How about inside your own store? Did you change the inside?

TI: A little.

MK: What did you do?

TI: Rearrange, you know. For the specials, we had to have a special place. Stack up lot of extra special things.

MK: How about changes in the help?

TI: Yes, I had a few helps. I think about two (sales girls), I think, (and a butcher).

MK: But in the '50s, still family-operated?

TI: Mm hmm [yes]. About 1947 right after the war ended, we made a new building alongside the market. We called it "Dyke's Tavern," where we served food and drinks, so at that time we had about thirty workers.

MK: By the 1950s, did you notice any change in the customers? Different types of people moved in?

TI: Yes, mm hmm.

MK: What did you notice? The change in the customers?

TI: Well, new people came in, and was pretty hard from there (for the grocery store). New customers come from other places, you know. They start to complain about the prices and stuff, so was kind of hard after that.

MK: How about the credit giving? Was that. . . .

TI: Yeah, credit, some of them was all right. We got stuck with some people, too.

MK: So, even in the '50s, you were still giving out credit?

TI: Yes, few. Not too many, (only to steady customers. Since we had specials, we decided to do cash and carry business).

MK: What competition did you have in that area by the 1950s?

TI: Oh, by then, there was quite a few stores around, too. So, (they cut) price on things.

MK: What were the names of some of the stores in the Kalihi area that competed?

TI: There was Nakamura Store, Fuji Store, and Alicia's (Store, but they were all right until Foodland opened at the Kalihi Shopping Center. That's when the business started to fall a little).

MK: How about other businesses? Were they coming up in the 1950s in that area?

TI: Gradually it was coming in, mm hmm.

MK: What types of businesses do you remember coming up at that time?

TI: Well, those monkey pod business, plumbing supplies, (Kaaawa Farm, poi factory, papaya factory, construction company and roofing company.) Some trucking company, and all those (other business).

MK: By the 1950s, Kalihi Kai was being industrialized, yeah?

TI: Yes.

MK: They were bringing in small industries. How did that affect the neighborhood?

TI: (For our tavern,) I guess the business was better. More (industrial workers drop in for lunch and liquor. Especially after work they come in for drinks. Paydays were very busy. They come in with their paychecks which we use to cash for them. Some of them use to spend all the week's pay.)

MK: How about for the families living there? What were the effects?

TI: Was all right, I think, those days. (Sometime few neighbors use to complain the music was too loud. That was about all complaints we had.)

MK: Were you acquainted with any families that moved out of the area as the area got industrialized?

TI: Well, I haven't seen very much of those people. (Few people call me that were really close with me. We talk about old times. Most of them, I lost track since I moved from there. Some of them seem happy with a quiet neighborhood, but they miss our store because



when they ran out of something, they can walk to the store. But where they are now living they can't do that.)

MK: By the late 1950s, Kalihi Shopping Center came up, and by the early 1960s, Kamehameha Shopping Center came up.

TI: That's right.

MK: How did these shopping centers affect business?

TI: Yeah, they affected, because I had quite a few customers from Kalihi Valley. So, those people rather go to the closest stores like the shopping centers, so I lost out some customers.

MK: How about with the Kalihi Shopping Center? Foodland moving in there. How did that affect?

TI: Yeah, they affect little (so I lay off my helpers. And I take care the market by myself and one girl).

MK: What were your feelings as more of these shopping centers started developing and chain store food markets started developing?

TI: Well, we thought we have to compete, but then it's pretty hard to compete with big stores. We still kept on with (some) weekly specials (but later I cut out advertising).

MK: In your opinion, what do you think made people continue coming to your store and other--those little stores--back then?

TI: I don't know. They trusted (us) or something, I guess. (Chuckles) (They use to buy some things from me but go to supermarket for the specials which they advertise. I guess neighborhood stores are convenient for them to shop.)

MK: What kinds of shopping did they do in your store back in the '50s?

TI: All the can goods, rice, vegetables, meat. (At that time I use to order meat from wholesale market all sliced so I don't need any butcher.)

MK: So, after the shopping centers developed and chain food stores came up, did you notice any change in the types of things people used to buy from the store?

TI: Yeah. They didn't buy too much as they used to before, you know. They cut down a lot. (Mostly small things that the supermarket don't advertise they use to buy from us.)

MK: So, it did affect . . .

TI: Yes, mm hmm.



MK: You continued running the store in the 1960s.

TI: Yes. (By myself because by the 1960s we had leased the tavern to Marian Harada. My husband had a light heart attack, so he wanted to relax.)

MK: By then, the new generation of people, yeah . . .

TI: Yes, (some younger generation, too).

MK: . . . since you started in the '30s. What change did you notice in the neighborhood?

TI: All the new people came in, so, well, kind of different.

MK: What kinds of new people came into the neighborhood?

TI: Younger people working nearby and I guess, lot of them were working Pearl Harbor. (Many type of jobs open there during those years,) so I guess those people moved in. (The construction workers, poi factory, guava juice factory workers. Lots of Filipino people moved into Kalihi area.)

MK: How about the old-timers that you knew back in the 1930s?

TI: Well, quite a few people moved out from there. Lot of them are still there (because they own the property and don't want to sell. I think it's because Kalihi is very convenient place, close to town, too).

MK: Would you know why some of the old-timers moved out?

TI: (People moved because Kalihi Kai became industrialized and got noisy, plus the property became very much in demand. I guess some people sold and moved to a better residential district.)

MK: In 1971 or 1972, you leased the store?

TI: Yes.

MK: Who did you lease it to?

TI: To this Mr. Choy. Korean people (from Korea).

MK: Why did you choose to lease the store?

TI: Oh, we were getting old already and we thought we like to relax a little (and enjoy ourselves).

MK: Since 1971, what's happened to the store?

TI: It's still running. They kept the same name--Dyke's Market.

MK: Still under the same leaseholder?

TI: Yes.

MK: Mr. Choy?

TI: Choy, mm hmm.

MK: What are your feelings about having had the store for so long?

TI: Yes, I miss(ed at the start, so I use to go there to help and show them what they wanted to know. I introduced them to my customers, ask them to continue the business with the new owner. I experienced a lot of things in thirty-eight years of business.)

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: What are your feelings about having had the store for so long?

TI: (After so many years in business it feels good to retire. There was some wonderful memories which I treasure. If I was younger I am sure I will try again.)

MK: If someone were thinking of opening a store and going into that same sort of career, what would be your advice to that person?

TI: Right now, I think it's not really good. There's too many big stores around. (But if the business run by just the family, then it's all right. I'd advise them to try.)

MK: How about your own children? Was there any thought of having them continue with the business?

TI: Yes, we wanted (our) son to take over, but then he didn't want that type of business (at that time because he know how hard we worked all those years. So after he graduated college, he decided to do something else).

MK: Now that we've mentioned your family again, while your children were growing up, you told me that they attended Puuhale (and Iolani) Schools.

TI: Yes.

MK: In your opinion, how was Kalihi as a place to grow and raise children?

TI: Those days was all right. No problem at all. The neighbors were good. No crimes or anything. So, was very good. (People use to say Palama and Kalihi district were bad but the people around was very nice.)

MK: I know that your husband was very active in the Puuhale P.T.A. [Parent-Teacher Association].

TI: Yes.

MK: Could you recall some of his activities as a P.T.A. member?

TI: (Yes. My husband served as the Puuhale School P.T.A. president for seven years. After our son left for Iolani School and our daughter to Island Paradise, he was still with Puuhale P.T.A. The members didn't want him to leave so kept electing him, but after seven years of service, he decided it's time to give others a chance to serve as a president, so he had resigned. While he was president, he had conducted a carnival and with that money, they purchased a merry-go-round, swings and sliding boards. He asked the City to build a volleyball and basketball court, add a screen for the auditorium and pave the garages for the teachers.)

MK: I also know that your husband was active in the Kalihi Nippon Go Gakko.

TI: Yes.

MK: Can you recall for me some of his activities with the Kalihi Nippon Go Gakko?

TI: Yes. When we got married--well, (ten) years later--the school was closed because of the war [World War II]. After that, (the property) was just left alone (without care). Right after the war, my husband seen a sign over there for sale. So, when he seen that, he went to see the mayor and whoever in charge. (But they couldn't help, so they hired a lawyer, Mr. Hiroshi Sakai, and they fought for about ten years (and) finally got the place back. (Mr. Sakai, Mr. Sakamoto, Mr. Miura, Mr. Koto, and my husband worked hard together to get the place back. So now the property is leased to someone with a nice building there.)

MK: Where was this school located?

TI: It's on Republican Street. Few houses away from my place.

MK: Would you remember the name of the sensei who taught there?

TI: (I can't remember the teacher's name. There was about four other teachers with Mrs. Honda. The principal was Honda-sensei.)

MK: I heard of another Japanese school--Toyo Gakuen?

TI: Yes. That was further up.

MK: So, who were the students that attended the Kalihi Nippon Go Gakko?

TI: Oh, neighborhood children.

MK: Another community activity that your husband was, again, very active in was the Kalihi Businessmen's Association.

TI: Yes.

MK: He was the president in 1950?

TI: Yes.

MK: What do you remember about your husband's activities in that association?

TI: Well, they tried to do the better for the Kalihi people, so they tried all kinds (of improvement).

MK: What were some of the things that they fought for, for the community?

TI: (For Kalihi Tunnel, garbage pickup twice a week, mail pickup twice a day, and a lot more things.)

MK: Like the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Associaton]?

TI: Yeah, YMCA and all kinds. [They fought for] Kalihi (Kai district, for brighter street lights, Farrington Auditorium, [Farrington High School] swimming pool and more.)

MK: I think for that, we can look at the record that your husband wrote.

TI: Yes. It's all in there, uh huh.

MK: I'm going to turn to the topic of Dyke's Tavern. Can you tell me when Dyke's Tavern started?

TI: Oh, that was 1947, I think.

MK: Can you tell me what were the circumstances surrounding the starting of Dyke's Tavern?

TI: Well, everybody start to encourage him to build up a bar over there. (So we build a tavern there because) there wasn't any bar around the place (where people can get together. So we applied for liquor license. We had to send a letter to all the homeowners living within 500 feet when we apply for liquor license. Nobody protested, so we got our liquor license and started the business.)

MK: What sort of services did the tavern offer to the customers?

TI: Food, (and drinks). And catering (service).

MK: What kinds of foods did the tavern prepare?

- TI: We had Chinese food, Hawaiian food, American food.
- MK: For the catering, and for the cooking, and for the serving, who did you have as employees?
- TI: Yeah, we had some Chinese cooks, Japanese fry cook, and had girls hired for waitress job, (and bartender).
- MK: How big an operation was the tavern?
- TI: Oh, I think, at one time, we had about thirty people working, (so was very busy).
- MK: What were the hours of operation back then?
- TI: Was somewhere from eight o'clock to about midnight, I think, (until we started a cabaret. Then we were open to three a.m. daily).
- MK: What was your role in the tavern?
- TI: Help around, cooking and serving. Everything. (Chop vegetables and meats. Help serve food when busy during lunch hours.)
- MK: How did you manage doing the store and the tavern at the same time?
- TI: Well, I had someone in the store. Hired hand in the store, so whenever the kitchen (was) busy, I run in the kitchen. Or (when) short of waitresses, then I go in there, help them out.
- MK: What were the most popular foods at your tavern in those days?
- TI: I guess the Chinese food used to be real famous.
- MK: When was the most busiest time?
- TI: Oh, was lunch hour (and evenings during showtime).
- MK: What types of customers did you have?
- TI: All types. All nationalities, (working people).
- MK: Where did they come from?
- TI: Some of them used to come from Hickam and Pearl Harbor, (cannery workers, construction workers, factory workers.) We used to deliver (to) Pearl Harbor (on Fridays. They use to like our gau gee mein for lunch. We use to have about 100 takeout orders, so lunch hour use to be very busy).
- MK: I notice that in 1959 Dyke's Tavern received a cabaret license?
- TI: Yes.



MK: With that cabaret license, how did it change the tavern?

TI: Well, during the day, it was all right. Regular. But at night, (we had) cabaret (license), so altogether different. People coming to see the show. First we had the local talent like singing, dancing, all those. And later on, we got some girls from Japan, import Japanese singers and dancers, (so then was very busy. Later we added Samoan fire dancer and strip shows and roller skate dancer.)

MK: How was that [Japanese singers and dancers] arranged?

TI: We had someone in Japan that send us the girls.

MK: What were the public's reaction to Dyke's Tavern . . .

TI: Oh, they [were] real happy about it. Because when they want to see show (before), they had to (go) out in town to see (show of any type). But then our place was (the first to have a cabaret license down in Kalihi so people were very happy).

MK: How many people could Dyke's Tavern hold?

TI: I think was about four, five hundred people.

MK: How busy was the tavern?

TI: Oh, was very busy.

MK: So, in your opinion, of the two businesses--the market and the tavern--which one was doing better?

TI: Well, I guess the tavern.

MK: If the tavern was doing well, why is it that you folks still continued doing the market?

TI: (Grocery store had been doing enough business, too. Dyke's Market was the original business that gave us a good start and [because of it we] were able to build a tavern. So we like to save as long as we can.)

MK: You continued operating the tavern till 1965. What happened in 1965?

TI: Oh, we lease it out to Marian Harada from Wahiawa. She took over the place.

MK: As of now, what's the situation with the tavern?

TI: We still have it rented out.

MK: To the same person?

TI: No. Different person now.

MK: Having run the tavern for a long time, what did you think about the tavern . . .

TI: Oh, that was kind of rough. Lot of work involved, yeah? I'm glad I got rid of it.

(Laughter)

TI: (The hours are long, too).

MK: You've been doing business in Kalihi for a long, long time--1933 till 1971 for the store, and then for the tavern up till 1965. As a business person, what do you think was the major change in that area of Kalihi for businesses?

TI: Well, the business has fallen down a little. The supermarkets moved in and some people moved out, so the grocery business became slow.

MK: As you look back on your long years that you've lived in Kalihi, what are your opinions of Kalihi as a community to live in?

TI: Right now, I think it's not too good a place to live, I think.

MK: Why is that?

TI: (Laughs) It's more industrial and too much noise, I guess. I think, the people are trying to move out (to residential areas).

MK: How about when you recall the early days in Kalihi? What made Kalihi a good place then for you?

TI: Well, those days, there were no problem at all. No robbery or, you know, all kind trouble then. Although Kalihi was known as a bad place, to me it was all right. (We hear of some fights like any other places, but the people were nice. People were very friendly.)

MK: Now, as you look back on your life as a storekeeper and tavernkeeper, what are your feelings about your life and career?

TI: (When I think back through all those years of business, it was hard for me at times, but I had experienced a lot of things through those years of my life. I have no regrets. As far as business is concerned, we sure work hard, but I think business careers are fine.)

MK: I don't know if you ever had a chance to talk about Kalihi with your husband, but could you recall any statements your husband made about his life in Kalihi or about the area?

TI: (Yes. I recall my husband saying that he was happy that he had a chance to help the Kalihi people. How he help take politicians go from house to house, introduce them. When Bank of Hawaii and American Security Bank open a branch in Kalihi, he help the managers go around

to get new customers. I guess he lived there most of his life so that's his home, and) I guess because he was known, too, and people respected him (for what he did to help the people of Kalihi. Some people use to call him, "mayor of Kalihi." He really wanted to see Kalihi improve and make Kalihi a better and respectable place to live.)

MK: Is there anything else you'd like to leave for the record about yourself or your husband?

TI: (I think I said enough about ourselves.) I hope these (young) people will do the same as we went through. (I only wish the younger generations will work together and keep Kalihi a decent place where we all can remember for years to come.)

MK: Thank you for today's interview with me.

TI: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

[Note: The following is a biographical summary of "Dyke" Izumi made available to the ESOHP by Mrs. Thelma Izumi.]

#### "Dyke" Yukito Izumi

"Dyke" Yukito Izumi was born and raised in Kapaia, Kauai on May 6, 1912. He first attended the Lihue Grammar School, then came out to Honolulu at the age of twelve years. He first moved to McInerny Tract near School Street and went to school at Kalihi-Waena. He later moved to the Kalihi-Kai area on the corner of Kalihi and Republican Street and finished the seventh and eighth grade at Kalihi-Kai Grammar School.

At the age of seventeen years, he went to McKinley High School in 1929 and graduated in 1932. He got married to Thelma Yoshiko Nishimura from Hawaii on October 21, 1933. In 1934, his father and mother, Tamanosuke and Oda Izumi, gave their store to "Dyke" and his wife Thelma. The store was called T. Izumi Shoten, located at 1701 Republican Street.

Six years later, "Dyke" and his wife remodeled the store, doubling the size to fifty foot frontage. The new store was named Dyke's Market, featuring a complete line of fresh meats, dairy products, frozen foods, a produce department, drugs, sundries, liquors and a complete line of canned goods.

In 1947 "Dyke" formed a family corporation called Izumi Brothers Ltd. dba Dyke's Tavern and Dyke's Market. Dyke's Tavern featured a restaurant, bar, and catering service serving American, Hawaiian, Japanese and Chinese foods; also presenting music and dancing on Fridays and Saturdays.

The frontage of Dyke's Tavern has added another fifty foot frontage with a total of 100 feet, including Dyke's Market and Dyke's Tavern.

In 1959 a cabaret license was granted to Dyke's Tavern featuring Japanese shows imported from Japan. At that time, a cabaret license was the most difficult license to be granted by the Honolulu Liquor Commission.

In June 28, 1965 the Izumi Brothers leased the Dyke's Tavern to Miss Marian Harada of Wahiawa for twenty-five years. The business was called Rainbow Lounge. And in November 1, 1971, Miss Marian Harada sold her lease to Drinkwell Inc. dba Club Nabi for twenty years.

The officers of Izumi Brothers Ltd. dba Dyke's Market and Dyke's Tavern are as follows: President - Masaru Izumi, deceased, Vice President - Thelma Y. Izumi, Secretary - Matsue Izumi now being replaced by Doris T. Izumi because of her stroke, and George K. Izumi replacing his father Masaru Izumi.

In view of his business "Dyke" has always found time to contribute to community activities. Some of the highlights are as follows:

1. President - Puuhale P.T.A. 1943-1950 seven years
  - a. City and County Parks and Playground constructed a macadamized volleyball and basketball court.
  - b. Conducted a carnival with the proceeds used to purchase a merry-go-round, swings, and sliding board equipments.
  - c. Purchased radio and audio equipment for the school.
  - d. New screen for the auditorium.
  - e. Paved garages for the schoolteachers.
2. President - Kalihi Business Association 1948-1949
  - a. Increased memberships from twenty to eighty.
  - b. Scheduled meetings in various locations so that members could freely express themselves for the good of the association.
  - c. Created a Who's Who column in the Advertiser identifying the members with the kind of business they are in and their locations.
3. President - Kalihi-Palama Community Council 1951-1952
  - a. Parent organization total membership about 20,000.
  - b. Instrumental in acquiring the Kalihi Tunnel, Farrington Auditorium, and swimming pool. Legislation passed.
  - c. Created a center for employment.
  - d. Recognized the youngsters of today who will be the leaders of tomorrow by creating sport and educational centers.
4. President - Green and White Stores 1952-1959 seven years
  - a. Organized twenty medium neighborhood stores scattered throughout Oahu to buy in volume and advertise weekly sales in the Advertiser and Star-Bulletin so as to compete with the supermarkets.
5. President - Oahu and Restaurant Dispenser Association 1952
  - a. Rezoned entire membership in their respective areas and held meetings in their respective areas.
  - b. Made them feel at home so that they freely expressed themselves and played a direct part in their association whether big or small.

6. Adviser and Board Member - Kalihi YMCA 1952
  - a. Helped to raise sufficient money in our community to attain our goal for the construction of a new YMCA building.
7. President - Kalihi-Kai Home Owners Association 1954-1956
  - a. Got better and brighter street lighting facilities.
  - b. Passed legislation for improvement district.
  - c. Got garbage pickup twice a week.
  - d. Got two deliveries and pickup of mails morning and afternoons.
8. Creator and Adviser - Kalihi Young Men's Club 1956-1958
  - a. Set age limit of membership - fifteen years or over.
  - b. Set goal of making Kalihi a better, safer and wholesome place to live.
  - c. Reduced juvenile delinquency 35 percent.
9. President - Kalihi-Kai Japanese School 1956-1972 sixteen years
  - a. Regained possession of land and school from the state after it was given to the state under duress and coercion.
  - b. Accumulated enough funds so as to construct a recreation or day care center in the future.
  - c. Planned a membership drive to revive the Kalihi-Kai Japanese Language School.



# **KALIHI: Place of Transition**

**Vol. I**

**ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL  
HISTORY PROJECT**

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