BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Lily Yuriko Hatanaka

Lily Yuriko Hatanaka, oldest of four children, was born in 1924 in Pāʻia, Maui.

Her nisei father, George Hideo Takakura, was the bookkeeper at Maui Motors, Ltd. Her nisei mother, Masako Takakura, ran a small bakery that grew out of her love for baking.

Lily Hatanaka grew up in Wailuku, Maui. She attended grades 1–8 at Kaunoa School, followed by grades 9–11 at Maui High School. In 1941, with the encouragement of her parents and an invitation from an uncle, she went to live with relatives and enrolled at San Diego High School for her senior year.

A few months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Lily Hatanaka and her relatives were incarcerated at Santa Anita Assembly Center, a horse-race track converted into a camp. Although attendance was suspended for her and other Japanese American students at San Diego High, she received her grades and diploma after sending in required schoolwork.

In September 1942, Lily Hatanaka and her relatives were moved to Poston III in Arizona.

She was allowed to leave the war relocation center in 1943 for schooling in the Midwest—first at St. Xavier's College for Women in Chicago, then Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. She graduated in 1947.

After a short time in Los Angeles, she returned to Hawaiʻi where she obtained her teaching credentials and began her career as a teacher in the islands' public schools. She retired in 1976.

She and husband, Thomas Hatanaka, raised two sons.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Lily Hatanaka (LH)

Honolulu, Hawai‘i

December 14, 2009

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

(NOTE: Throughout interview, dog barks intermittently.)

MK: This is an interview with Lily Yuriko Hatanaka. This is session one on December 14, 2009, in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, and the interviewers are Michi Kodama-Nishimoto and Warren Nishimoto.

So, Mrs. Hatanaka, we're going to start with a series of interviews with you, and we're going to go way back to the time you were born and also way back beyond that. But first of all, what year were you born?

LH: Nineteen twenty-four.

MK: And where were you born?

LH: I was born in Pā‘ia Hospital on Maui—it was a plantation hospital. Everybody went there.

MK: And how many siblings did your family eventually have?

LH: There were four children. I was the oldest, and my brother Isamu, and my sister Kiki, and my youngest sister, Ruth.

MK: We'd like to hear a little bit about your mother, Masako Seki. If you can, try to go back as far as you can, in terms of what you know about her family.

LH: She was born in Kahuku, where her parents were working for the plantation. After her father passed away, they moved to ‘Āiea. They went there because they had family friends, people who came from my grandmother's village—so they stayed there for a while. That's where my grandmother was teaching Japanese. She had sent her oldest son back to Japan to live with her relatives and a sister. They were educated. . . . My mother never really knew her sister at all, because they were sent so early. But my uncle came back after a while, and he opened Royal Grove Cleaners—it's in Waikīkī—and was a very popular place, and he did very well. But my mother and David struggled. The pay wasn't that good. So finally, she decided to take them all back to Japan. They went to visit her brother, who was a very wealthy man. But he had eight children and he built a house big enough for his family, but couldn't accommodate them. So they stayed there for a while, and she managed to work. But it was still such a terrible struggle. She thought that coming back to Hawai‘i would be easier, so they came back—my mother, her mother, and David.

MK: Where did your mother grow up?

LH: She grew up in Honolulu, and she worked—by this time, she was old enough to work—and she worked for—[she] must've been about fourteen or fifteen—and she worked for a Japanese doctor who had an office on Fort Street, I think. She managed to pull the family together, with my grandmother teaching Japanese[-language] school. They managed. But this time, David was finished with eighth grade, and then he went to California because there was an uncle there. I don't know how he ended up in Hollywood, but he went to Hollywood High [School] and graduated from there and became a seaman. By this time, my mother was almost eighteen, and somebody said that they would like to *ōmiai* her [arrange a marriage for her]. So she thought—her mother—that was a good idea. So she went to Maui, met my father, and they had their *ōmiai*. But he wanted to go to school so badly, and he had to come home because his mother said, "Come home, I need you." His father was not a very good man. He was a gambler, and he drank a lot, and he didn't do much to support them, so she needed him. So he came home to work at the plantation.

MK: Now, before we get into their *ōmiai* [arranged] marriage, I'm going to back you up, little by little. Now, I was wondering, what kind of an education did your mother receive?

LH: She went to the public schools in Honolulu, and she graduated from the eighth grade. They couldn't afford to send her to high school.

MK: You said that your grandmother taught Japanese-language school. So, in terms of Japanese-language training, how much and where did your mother receive . . . ?

LH: Just from her mother. She didn't have much time to go to school, except to go to public school, and then to work as soon as she could.

MK: I know during our last [unrecorded] interview, you told us about your, I guess it would be your grandmother, your maternal grandmother, and how your maternal grandmother was educated in Japan. Tell us about that.

LH: Her father was a village chief, and he felt his responsibilities very heavily. He said, "After Meiji"—the Meiji Restoration—"everyone should be educated." And that it meant not only men and boys, but it should be everyone. So he said, "You will go on to high school."

She said, "No, I can't. I'll be the only girl there. None of the girls are going to go on after sixth grade," which is the required elementary education.

He said, "No, you go on. Times have changed. You have to go with the flow of time. Go." She cried every day, but she graduated from high school and she managed to learn the language. Then she fell in love with this man, who hadn't even gone to eighth grade. He had the required sixth-grade education. But he was a handsome guy, so they eloped and came to Honolulu. He found a job with the Kahuku Plantation, and that's where they lived. Then the accident happened on July 4th—somebody, in their enthusiasm, threw a stick of dynamite. It landed near him, and killed him. It took him almost four days to die, it was so terrible. Luckily for my grandmother, she had Japanese school education. She could teach Japanese school, but the pay was not very good. That's when she decided, "We'll go home, and my brother will help me out." But when they got there, it wasn't that easy.

MK: Where was home for her?

LH: Home is Shimonoseki in Fukuoka [prefecture]. It's a very tiny village.

MK: That’s an interesting family background.

WN: When you say “they eloped,” in those days, with your knowledge, what does it mean to . . . ?

LH: They were recruiting all of these plantation workers, and most of them came as single men. But my grandmother and her lover came together as a couple. Nobody else did, I don’t think, because the rest were all picture brides.

WN: So, eloping, in essence, means they got married and left without parental consent.

LH: I don’t know the details, but I have a feeling they might have, and they might not have.

(Laughter)

MK: But basically, they got married without parental consent.

LH: That’s right, because her father was so terribly disappointed with her. He wanted someone better than just a laborer.

MK: Now, we want to shift to your father, George Hideo Takakura. Now, if you can go back in time and tell us about the Takakura family background.

LH: Okay, this is in Pāʻia, Maui. My grandfather was what they called *teradaiku*, which is temple carpenter, which meant that he was highly skilled. They made many, many cabinets and things, and they didn’t use nails—they just pieced things together. But because he was so skilled, the plantation people assigned him to do furniture building for the plantation people and the managers and for the offices. And so, he did. In his spare time, he had built a little room—a workshop—and he used to make things for people and for his house. I don’t know if he sold them or not. I hope he did, because he was such a gambler—he needed money. (Chuckles)

MK: So your grandfather, your paternal grandfather, was a *teradaiku*, and worked in the carpentry shop at Pāʻia Plantation [later part of the Maui Agricultural Company]. Tell us about the family that he came to have.

LH: Okay, and they had five sons—my father was the oldest. Then there was his brother, Jimmy, and Francis, and Kazuto, and the youngest was Theodore.

MK: What year was your father born?

LH: Nineteen-oh-one [1901].

MK: What do you know about your grandmother?

LH: There’s not much I know about her. My mother said that when they visited Japan, she came from a very, very poor family. Did you ever see the film—they ran it on Japanese TV for a while—*Oshin.*

MK: Mm-hmm [yes].

LH: My mother said that she came from a house just like that. Oh, so very, very poor, dirt poor. (Dog barks.) But she was a picture bride. Her first husband died, and his best friend was Jitsutaro Takakura, and they got married. So my father is the son of her first husband, and his name was Okamura. But he took the name Takakura, and then there were four other boys. During those

days, they didn't go to the hospital. They didn't have anyone to help them with babies. They just did it themselves, and their neighbors would come to help. It's simply amazing how they managed. But there, she had five sons.

When he graduated from Pāʻia School, the three of them—Takaichi Miyamoto and I don't remember the third man—but the three of them were educated by the engineer, and I cannot remember his name. But he was so kind to them—he taught them every day. They would work for the full day and he would have classes for them. He said, "Boys, you just must go on to school. Don't waste your mind. Go on, find a way to get to school."

So my dad asked his parents. They said, "We need you. We have to have your help."

He said, "Let me have some time to go to school." So he managed to stow on a freighter. He got on a freighter, and there were so many kind people (on the freighter). They would get food for him. They stowed him in the hold, and they would bring food for him, and they helped him sneak off the boat when they got to California.

MK: So your father went to California as a stowaway?

LH: Yeah, as a stowaway. See, these people helped him find a way to get on board.

MK: You mentioned that your father went to Pāʻia School, completing the eighth grade. After he completed the eighth grade, was he working at the mill?

LH: Yeah, he was working at the mill. But that's how he was taught by this engineer. So I don't know how old he was by this time—maybe fifteen, or even older by this time.

MK: So he stowed away on the boat, ended up in California, and what happened then?

LH: His uncle, Jitsutaro's brother, lived in California and had a farm. So he went to stay with them. He found his way to school, and he said, "I have to go to school." They found Manual Arts High School for him to go to, and he found two other guys from Hawaiʻi. They rented an apartment, and they all worked and went to school.

MK: You know, those two other guys from Hawaiʻi, were they the same two guys from Maui or different?

LH: [Takaichi] Miyamoto was one of them, but I don't know who that third person was. I threw away that album, I think, because I can't find the album. There's a picture of them in their apartment, studying at the table and one having a meal. I'm just so sad that I don't have that.

MK: So they went to school, and worked.

LH: Worked their way. So my father worked in a flower shop and delivered flowers, and various other kinds of jobs. Got his driver's license so he could help deliver. Then when he finished at Manual Arts, they gave him a scholarship at Stanford University. He said, "The only to way to make that work was to get a houseboy job."

They said, "Go see if you could find a job." Then he went to Pasadena to see if he could find a professor who needed a houseboy, but there was nothing available.

WN: You mean Palo Alto?

LH: Yeah, Palo Alto, I'm sorry. Then he came back to LA, turned the scholarship over to Manual Arts, and he said, "Can't find anything." So they said they'll change the name to [U]SC [University of Southern California]. He went to SC. He could manage that, because he could manage the transportation, he could stay in this apartment with these two other friends, and do a part-time job. He was there for two years, and then his mother said, "Come home, I just need you so desperately." He begged, he begged, he wanted to be educated so badly. She said, "Please, I need you." So he came home and he went to work for the plantation.

MK: What have you heard about his life in LA, that time when he was working and going to school?

LH: He loved it. He enjoyed it so much, but it was a combination of being able to support himself and go to school, and learning lots of new things. He said that he delivered watermelon one time. Those days, those trucks only had little railings on the side. You had to be so careful because they would roll around, and you could lose them. But he said he put one watermelon on the seat one day, and he said that was rolling around. He said, "I almost lost that, too."

(Laughter)

But that's kind of. . . . It was mostly work and study.

MK: I think, earlier, you had mentioned . . .

LH: Oh, yes, something very important. Those days, his older—the isseis—were about his father's age, and they couldn't buy land. So they asked him. He was old enough—he was eighteen by now. So they said, "George, would you sign? Hideo-*san,* would you sign for us?" So he did for about five or six people, and they were able to buy land because he signed for them. The only reason I knew about that was when I was in Chicago, somebody came to the door—and I thought it was my roommate's friends, because she's from California—and they said, "No, we're looking for Takakura."

I said, "That's me."

They said, "We—" and they came in, and I served some tea, and they said, "We want to thank your father, because if he hadn't signed for us, we have no place to go back to. We still have the land, we have the farm, and we have him to thank for it." So there were a couple of them that stopped by—I don't even have the names.

MK: I think you mentioned earlier that your father's uncle in LA started as a farmer, but eventually ran a hotel?

LH: Yes. I think that was after my father was finished at Manual Arts. I think there was a need for a Japanese hotel. I don't think he owned it, he worked there.

WN: Do you know where the hotel was?

LH: In what they called, "Buchitown," where the Japanese lived. That would be First and San Pedro [streets], in that area.

MK: What did you call it?

LH: Everybody called it "Buchitown." They called the Japanese "Buchis."

WN: Really?

LH: Mm-hmm.

WN: Really? And it's the same Japantown that there is today?

LH: Yes.

WN: First and San Pedro?

LH: Yeah.

MK: First time I've heard that term.

LH: Is that right?

MK: Yeah.

LH: Well, all the Californians I knew called it "Buchitown." I think it stems from some Japanese word.

WN: Bushi or buchi?

LH: Buchi.

WN: Buchitown?

MK: And now, we've got to the point where your dad is in California, and your grandmother, your paternal grandmother, is begging him to return.

LH: Yes. So he does. He comes back and goes to work for the plantation. Not too long after, they thought he should get married. They knew about Masako Seki in Honolulu, because they're from the same—her grandparents, their parents—are from Shimonoseki, from Fukuoka. So they got married.

MK: Now, what have you heard about your mom and dad's thoughts on this *omiai* marriage?

LH: You know, I never asked my mother. I think it was just done, wasn't it, during that time? Most of them did not have love marriages—they were all *omiai*s. Usually it was from the same village or town or city that their parents came from. That's what I understand.

MK: So your mom and dad, Masako and George, they married, and . . .

LH: Nineteen twenty-three.

MK: Nineteen twenty-three, and then you were born in 1924, one of four children, the eldest. And by this time, where were you living, the family?

LH: By now, they decided to leave his mother's home and he bought a house in Wailuku. We were next door to the Awamuras.

MK: Now, from your memory, try and describe your old home in Wailuku.

LH: That first house, I don't remember at all except by photographs. I must have been at least five or four when we moved to Vineyard Street, which is right by 'Iao Church [Wailuku Christian Church].

MK: What did that Vineyard Street home look like?

LH: I saw a home not too far away from here that looked just like it—you know, built in the early [19]20s and [19]30s, all wood, and a front porch and a railing, about five steps. It looked like that. My mother planted *pīkake*s, and I shall never forget the smell of *pīkake*s forever and ever. It was so beautiful, and we used to make *lei*s to go to *Bon* dances. We had enough flowers to make lots of *lei*s. It was just lovely. And we went to Kaunoa School. . . . We went to a kindergarten which was right downtown Wailuku. (It was at the corner of Vineyard and Main Streets.) I have a book somewhere that shows all of these pictures. There, I have some pictures.

MK/WN: Oh, maybe later.

WN: You have your microphone on.

MK: Before we get into the kindergarten, again, I was wondering, how large was your home?

LH: Three bedrooms—and my mother—and a separate garage. At the end, my father had built a *furo*. There was enough room so that he built her a little bakery shop, because she loved to bake. She was baking wonderful coconut cakes and selling them, really selling them. People would come, order by phone, and she would sell them. Mile-high coconut cakes, just wonderful.

MK: Did she run the shop by herself?

LH: Yeah, all by herself. She started in her kitchen, and he built her this little workshop just before I left for the Mainland.

MK: Your father, what kind of work was he doing?

LH: Oh, he was working for a place called Maui Motors [Ltd.], right near the kindergarten. They sold Plymouths and Chryslers, and he was their bookkeeper.

MK: If you could, try and describe for us the neighborhood you lived in.

LH: Across the street from us was the Correas, and he was an interesting man. He loved boxing, and he trained boxers in his garage. He converted that into a boxing training area. We used to watch them practice, jump rope and—what do you call those, bell?

WN: Punching bags?

LH: Punching bags. But it was so fascinating. We would be watching every night while they trained. Next door to them was a Hawaiian family, and we were so close to them. We were there playing all the time, and Mr. Saffery was so nice, he made a swing for all the children so there were at least five swings. So many kids in the neighborhood that we'd have to take turns. Mrs. Saffery, she was so nice, always cooking things and telling the kids, "Come, come, come. Eat, eat, everybody eat." It was just so wonderful. Everybody's home was our home. It was just wonderful.

MK: So you had the Correas, you had the Safferys, the Takakuras . . .

LH: Next door to me was the Koitos, and they were a fascinating family. They had an older friend who used to come every night. We used to call him, "Chan." He had a long beard, and he had a master's degree from Stanford University. He was an issei, and he came from a very wealthy family in Japan. He fell in love with Mrs. Koito. But they had this strange relationship. He would come every night for supper, and he was everybody's friend. He was a very learned gentleman, and he would ask me to play for him. "What are you (playing) now? You sit down and play for me." He would correct me, and he would tell me, "You're not sitting straight enough, sit tall. I don't think your phrasing is very good, work on that." He was really an amazing man. He had a son by Mrs. Koito. And he went on to medical school and he finished at Chicago Med, and they lived in Chicago. So when I was there, I went to look him up and he made a home for us.

MK: So it seems like the neighborhood that you lived in was sort of multiethnic?

LH: Yes.

MK: It wasn't like the usual ethnically segregated camps of the plantations.

LH: That's right. See, the plantations were, you know, Filipino camp here, the Japanese camp, and then had the Nashiwa Bakery, the Christian church, and then downtown Pāʻia. Wailuku was, of course, next.

MK: What were the nearby businesses or other businesses in your neighborhood?

LH: Oh, downtown Wailuku? You had all these, like Maui Motors [Ltd.], and there was a bookstore, and all of Main Street with stores—lots of stores. Shibano had a dry-goods store [Shibano Store]. Do you know of them?

MK: Mm-hmm. Dorothy.

WN: Tom.

LH: Dorothy, yes. And she taught at Stanford for a little while. And Bernice's son, Tom, teaches at Berkeley. He got into computer science. But that's the family. Oh, there was a cute little Chinese restaurant, and it was run by this bachelor, all by himself. It was just, maybe about a five-table restaurant, but he ran a pretty good store. One day, he said to my father in-law, he said, "Hatanaka, I'm tired. I'm old already. I think I go back China. You help me." So my father-in-law did. He got him his tickets, got the banks all straightened out for him, and all things that needed to be done, because he couldn't read or write or speak English. So he said, "Wing, I got everything ready for you, okay you can go now."

But he said, "But I gotta give you something, so I'll give you the chair and I'll give you all my knives." So I still have all the knives.

(Laughter)

But my greatest regret is that—when he got to China, he hired a letter-writer to thank my father-in-law. It was just out of this world, it just came out of 1820, real Victorian letter-writer. It's just like reading Charles Dickens, (the man) wrote by hand—it was such a wonderful letter. I said, "Can I have it?"

He said, "Sure."

I was going to show it to all of the relatives because it was such a charming letter. Then we moved from Maui and I lost it. I was just sick about it because it was such a charming letter. My father-in-law was an insurance salesman.

There was ‘Iao Theater, which was pretty famous, because we saw all the great movies over there. Every Saturday, we always went to see Gene Autry and all the cowboy movies. They would give us ice cream, the little cup ice creams at the end of the movie.

WN: For free?

LH: Free.

WN: Wow.

LH: It was really small-town living, it was just wonderful. (Chuckles) Oh, then we would go to the store next to Wing’s restaurant [Wing Sing Restaurant]—I think it was a Japanese store, but she sold Chinese seeds, and everybody brought little brown bags of *crack seed.* Do you know what that is?

MK: Mm-hmm.

LH: Oh, okay. It’s just so delicious. It’s the best thing to eat while you’re watching a cowboy movie because when you get to the end, you just suck all that gravy out and then you squeeze some more juice out of it. Then you put the whole thing in your mouth and then you just suck it.

(Laughter)

WN: So in those days, they had it in the brown paper sack?

LH: Yeah.

WN: So what prevented it from getting all soaked at the bottom?

LH: Yeah, because had all the crack seed juices in there.

WN: So yeah, did it soak through?

LH: Yeah, soaked through. Oh, it was really delicious. Everybody was doing that. You look next door, “Oh, he ate more than I did.” You look over here, “Oh, that guy’s got two! The mother must’ve given him more money than I had.”

(Laughter)

WN: What did you do with the seed?

LH: Oh, it’s all cracked, yeah? We’d spit it out on the floor.

(Laughter)

MK: You know, you mentioned going to the cowboy movies. At that time, did you also go to Japanese-language movies, too?

LH: Oh, yeah, they used to have it at the Japanese[-language] school, and we would go see them. Oh, I loved the *obake* movies. Oh, they were so scary. That's why we made sure we went with at least three or four kids. Never go by yourself, it was so scary. (Laughs) One night, I think by the time they were done with the movies, it was twelve, and the streetlights went off. My girlfriend and I—Hinae Koito next door—said, "Hold my hand."

I said, "Yeah."

"Oh, walk slow."

"Okay, walk slow." Then we heard footsteps coming down. I was never so frightened. I was so sure it was a ghost; we couldn't see a thing. Finally, we were so frightened, we stopped and the footsteps stopped. She said, "Run, run, run! Let's run!"

(Laughter)

The guy was just going to work, that's all it was.

(Laughter)

MK: Oh, my goodness.

LH: We ran until we just ran out of breath. I just collapsed right in front of our house, and she just ran home.

MK: You mentioned like the movies, the Japanese movies, were at the Japanese-language school?

LH: Yeah.

MK: What school was that?

LH: I think that was the Hongwanji. They would use the premises of the Wailuku Christian Church, and we would sit on the grass, and they had a huge screen that they would set up a little high so everybody could see well. It was really quite a huge screen. Maybe about, ten feet, nine feet?

MK: Did you go to Japanese-language school?

LH: Yes, we did. We went to the one, they called it the Christian school, because it was run by the Kanda family, and it was held at the Christian school—the Christian church—so everybody called it the Christian Japanese school. Everybody else went down to the Hongwanji down by St. Anthony's School.

MK: How come you folks went to the Christian one?

LH: Because we lived right near by. (Chuckles) Almost next door.

MK: But in terms of your religion, what was your family, at that time?

LH: We were still Congregationalists, because my father went to the Pāʻia Christian Church, which was the Congregational church, and his parents were Buddhists.

MK: If you look back in those days when you were still a kid, how active were your parents in the local community?

LH: My father was very active in the church, and my mother was active with the women's group. They used to run all kinds of church bazaars and things like that. They would have cake bakes and cookie bakes and the like. And my father was active in the Lions Club.

MK: How active was he, say, in the Japanese community?

LH: Not much, because he was active in the church, and with the Lions [Club], and the Boy Scouts.

MK: I was wondering, you mentioned the church. What was your involvement in the church?

LH: We were all part of that, too. You know, it started from when it was down at the present—I don't know if it's still there or not, but it's a movie theater now—but that used to be the Wailuku Christian Church. I started when I was five years old. There are pictures—I don't know where they are now—but pictures of all of us in the church, in the Sunday school. I remembered that dress that I wore, it was made out of voile, they called it voile. Do you know what that is? Very thin.

MK: Uh-huh [yes].

LH: My mother had embroidered roses right across. I was so proud of that dress. It was so pretty. We used to wear stockings up to here [thigh length], and Mary Jane shoes, and all of us would dress up like that.

MK: What were some of the special activities at church?

LH: Oh, when I was five years old, Hinae [Koito] and I were assigned to be angels in the Christmas play. The nativity scene was the very last scene, and it must've been very late because my mother said there we were with our angel costumes, with our wings, and our arms crossed over our shoulders, looking at the manger. She said, much to her embarrassment, I just laid down and went to sleep.

(Laughter)

She was so embarrassed. It must've been very late.

(Laughter)

Hinae said she tried to get me up. She said, "Get up, move, move." But I was sound asleep.

(Laughter)

MK: That's a good Christmas memory.

LH: Yeah. That's all I remember—looking down at the manger and that's all I remember. (Laughs)

WN: Well, angels have to sleep, too.

LH: Yeah. (Laughs)

MK: So you had your Christmas activities, and your Easter activities?

LH: Oh, all of it was church-involved—the choir, and church picnics, and visiting other churches. All of it was church-involved.

Hinae had such a beautiful voice. Her family had decided that they would support her through music school, and she did all the solo singing. Just beautiful. I have her CD. She lives in Chicago. She went to Chicago Conservatory of Music and went on to music. But that's how active we were, just with the church.

MK: Earlier you mentioned that when you played the piano, the visitor next door would correct you on everything. Where were you taking piano lessons?

LH: There was one woman named Claire Nashiwa, and she took private students, and she lived in Pāʻia. A lot of us studied under her. She's still alive. I think she must be about a hundred years old.

WN: Is she the daughter of the Nashiwa Bakery?

LH: Yes, the daughter-in-law.

WN: Daughter-in-law.

LH: She's from California. She met, while my dad was going to school, Nashiwa—I forgot his first name. But she married him [Stanley Shoso Nashiwa] and came to live in Pāʻia. He became a dentist.

WN: Besides going to movies and things like that, what else did you folks do to have good fun as a kid?

LH: Oh, lots of hiking. We hiked into Haleakalā Crater. That is a great adventure, really great. It's a fascinating place. We did all the ʻIao Valley—we know it by heart. We used to go up to the peak, the point, and come down on *tī* leaves. You break a branch of the *tī,* and you have thick leaves and sit on it and hold the branch like a sled. Come right down the hill. And, oh, you better not meet some rocks on the way. That can be so painful.

(Laughter)

That was fun. We did the Wailuku River—we knew that by heart.

WN: What did you do at the river?

LH: There were so many things like guava—special kinds of guava—and we would bag those to bring home to make guava jelly. Ginger plants, there's some about this shape. They call it torch gingers, and we used to call it shampoo gingers and squeeze them and make shampoo—and it was really like a gel. It'd get so sticky and thick, it looked like a wig by the time we were done. Punch everybody and get the juice out of it. (Chuckles) Make pools in the river so that when you pick the buds off the ginger, you would leave them there, and you climb up, and get guava and get. . . . There were nuts, like *kukui* nuts, and we could make *lei*s with them. Take the meat out first. On the way home, you would pick up the ginger and wrap them up in *tī* leaf bags. Have you ever made those? That's fun. And then you take it all the way home. By the time we get home, we're ready to make nut brittle with the. . . . Oh, *kamani* nuts. Do you know what *kamani* is?

MK: Yeah.

LH: They're slivers of nuts. They're just like one little sliver, very thin. So we had to crack hundreds of nuts to be able to make good brittle.

MK: I didn't know that was edible.

LH: Oh, it's really good. We used to do that.

MK: And then did you go into the river, too, to do things with the crayfish or the fish?

LH: Yeah. Mm-hmm. One day, I had my little baby sister with me—she must've been only two or three—and we heard these guys yelling at us. We were sitting there eating lunch, and Tomoe had her niece, and I had my sister, and somebody—oh, Hinae was there—and we were having a good time eating our lunch. They were yelling at us, "Get out of there! Get out of there! Big water! Big water!"

I said, "What's that?" And finally one of the guys came . . .

MK: Whoa, oh, oh. Okay, hold on to that thought.

END OF TAPE NO. 55-11-1-09

TAPE NO. 55-12-1-09

MK: Now, we were talking about the time you and your friends were at Wailuku River. You can continue about that.

LH: Oh, okay. So we're having our lunch and having a good time, and the guys came, from the side of the river, they were running down, screaming at us to get out. They said, "Big water, big water!"

We looked at each other, "What is that?"

Finally, one of the guys leaped over, grabbed the babies, and he said, "Follow me!" He said, "Don't pick up your lunch, run!" So we just stepped on the side of the river, and this huge, massive water came right past us. Just seconds, just seconds, and now I understood what they meant by "big water." That was so frightening. If it wasn't for him, we would have lost the babies.

MK: I guess was that like a flash flood or something?

LH: Yeah, it was a flash flood. But they knew about it because they lived right in that area.

WN: What kind of water life was there in the streams in those days?

LH: They used to pick up *medaka,* little tiny fish.

WN: Mosquito fish.

LH: But no others, because the water would dry up and then you would have a flash flood. Little pools here and there.

MK: You know, in those days, did you also participate in beach activities?

LH: Oh yeah, because all the churches had beach parties and what they called the [prefectures] from Japan had their own communities, like the Fukuoka-*ken* and the Hiroshima-*ken.* They would

have picnics. They always found a different place to have a picnic, so we learned to know the beaches quite well, which was great fun.

MK: In those days, were those *ken* picnics like the ones we hear about, where they would have those games and prizes?

LH: Oh, that was Japanese[-language] school. I remember going because my grandmother took me to the one in Pāʻia, and I was so excited because I saw a *haole* kid. I said, "Who is he?" Plantation manager's son, he wanted to learn Japanese. It seems his father was my father's classmate in Japanese school.

My father said, "We were so jealous of him because he was the brightest kid in the class."

(Laughter)

He said, "We all wanted to keep up with him, but we just couldn't." I remember going to those. I think it was like end-of-the-year program, and they had all of these *undōkai*, and lots of wonderful prizes. You could get tablets—very Japanese—tablets and pencils and everything for learning. The last thing was, they would have these huge baskets on poles about ten, twelve feet high. They had teams—the red team and a white team—and red tennis balls and white tennis balls. They would blow the whistle. In the given time, you had to fill up the baskets, and whoever had the most would win a grand prize. That was so fun to watch. (MK chuckles.) But the best part was the picnic lunches. Everybody made such wonderful lunches—sushis in the *jūbako*s, oh, and salads and fried chicken—oh, it was just wonderful. (Laughs) Soda water, tea.

MK: Day to day, what did you folks do for fun, around the house or outside of the house?

LH: Well, most of the girls played jacks. Do you know what they are?

MK: Mm-hmm [yes].

LH: One ball and those little [jacks, little metal objects with six points protruding from their centers]. . . . I remember one day my sisters and I were playing, and my father came running through the house doing something. He stepped on the jacks. Oh, it was so painful—he was hopping around, and we thought that was so funny.

(Laughter)

We laughed, but it was really quite painful. He said, "Don't play there anymore." (Chuckles) But we did that kind of thing.

Oh, we used to play right in my lane—it was a short lane with just these families, but we were all very close. Mrs. Watanabe lived in the end house, and she was so good to us kids. She would say, "Come, going to have something for you." She would make little candies for us. She had a nasturtium plant. Do you know what that is? This nasturtium vine, it has lovely little orange and yellow flowers. The leaves were perfectly round and velvety skin. She said, "We'll wash that clean, and we'll put water in it, and that's your cup." It was so much fun to see water just—and it would just run around because, you know, velvety sheen, so it wouldn't hold. She said, "There's your cup." And we would drink water and juice from it and she had cookies and candy for us. Lot of times when we started playing—what was the name of that game?

WN: Try and describe it.

LH: Okay, you would have two teams, and one would be the chasers and one would be the hiders. You tagged them, and you're out, and then you switch sides. Blind man? No.

WN: Chase master?

LH: Steal base.

WN: Steal base.

LH: Yeah. Whoever would touch the base would win so you don't have to lose your man. But we used it right in our street, and I remember, pretty soon, kids from what they called *kawajiri*—they came from the river side. They would hear about the games and they would come. Pretty soon, we had about twenty kids on each team—a big group. I remember one day, I said, "Oh, I hear my mother cutting pineapple." So I thought nobody can see me, I sneaked in, grabbed a piece, and I'm running out. Somebody said, "There she is!" And I started running as fast as I could, and didn't see this little stubble of a plant, and I tripped on it. And you know how it is when you fall flat? I couldn't get my breath back. And I was panting and gasping, trying to get my breath back. All the guys are standing around. I heard them say, "I think she's dying." (MK chuckles.)

Another said, "Yeah, I think so. You going do something?"

"Yeah, but I don't know what to do."

I'm sitting there, gasping, and you know what was going through my mind? The pineapple, where did the pineapple go?

(Laughter)

MK: Those guys. (Laughs) Think she's dying.

LH: And then one day, it was a late afternoon, and Noboru, the oldest Koito boy, came over and said, "Did you see Isamu?"

We said, "No,"—that's the youngest boy.

"Help me find him."

We went all over, looking for him. He had had big words with his brother, and he said, "I'm going to run away. I had enough with you." He packed his bag and he left. They thought, "Oh, he ran away." We went shaking the bushes all over town, couldn't find him. Nine o'clock at night, we were all so worried, and suddenly we saw him. He came down from the tree.

(Laughter)

He had his suitcase. (Laughs) He had been watching all of us running all over, looking for him. He was at the top—it was a very tall avocado tree, and lots of leaves so nobody could see him. We still talk about it.

MK: Smart kid.

LH: Yeah. (MK laughs.) That was so much fun.

WN: Did you play games that, usually, boys played, like marbles or *peewee?*

LH: Oh yeah, but the guys wouldn't let us play. We could just watch them. My brother was always in there, trying to win. He'd lose, and he'd get so mad. (MK and WN laugh.) So I would buy marbles for him. He would say, "Find me the biggest agate you can find." He'd still lose.

(Laughter)

WN: Because once you lose, you lose your marbles, right?

LH: Yeah. You lose your marbles. Because you'd shoot—it's like pool, that'd be yours. I would buy him all of these marbles, and he'd lose them. (WN laughs.)

MK: You know, like you were the eldest.

LH: Mm-hmm.

MK: Being the eldest, especially the eldest girl, were you responsible for your younger ones?

LH: Oh, yeah, I had to look after them, and I used to take my little sister with me everywhere.

MK: You just mentioned that you'd buy marbles for your brother. How did you get your money?

LH: My grandfather and grandmother always gave me money when we went every Sunday to visit. (MK chuckles.) They knew I was doing big-sister work, so my grandfather would always give me a nickel, and my grandmother would give me a nickel. My Uncle Jimmy, he was so nice, he would always say, "You need some money, here," and he'll give me a nickel. Pretty soon, the nickels piled up and I could buy him some marbles. (Laughs)

I remember once when my parents said, "You watch after the kids. We have to go downtown to do some shopping." My youngest sister wasn't born yet. My brother was about four, and I was six. We had been watching the Christmas rehearsals (at church).

He said, "Let's play three games."

"Okay, what are we going to do?"

"We'll use the couch. We'll march up to the top of the couch, and then we'll come down, and we'll start all over again." So we'd pack some things up, and we'd sing, "We Three Kings, " and we'd go to the back of the couch. He said, "Hey, do this one," he slid down. That was so much fun. So we marched all the way up and slid right down and ended up on our feet.

I said, "Isamu, I think something's wrong with the couch, it tilted."

He said, "Don't worry." He said, "Help me turn it over." And we turned it over, and the leg was broken. He said, "Don't worry, I'll fix it." And he went running down to get the hammer and nails, and I couldn't believe it, he hammered everything back into place. He said, "You don't tell, and I don't tell."

"Okay." You know, I never told anybody this story.

(Laughter)

I'm sorry, Isamu, I told.

(Laughter)

They never knew—it was such a good job, they never knew.

MK: Oh, cute story.

WN: What kind of chores did you have?

LH: Oh, dishes, and I had to hang the laundry, and I had to rake the leaves because we had a huge avocado tree. I had to rake the leaves and help my mother whenever I could. She was a gardener, she loved gardening, and I would help her with the gardening. I think that's why I picked up my love for gardening, too.

MK: In your household, what sorts of appliances did you folks have to help out?

LH: She had one of those early vacuum cleaners. She would run that. She said, "You better not touch that," and I would do the mopping and the sweeping, kitchen, bathroom.

MK: You had a refrigerator?

LH: Refrigerator.

MK: Washing machine?

LH: Washing machine.

MK: Radio?

LH: Radio, but I don't think. . . . I remember my mother was using a scrub board, so I don't think we—we didn't get the washing machine till later because I do remember her doing that.

MK: For transportation purposes, what did your family have?

LH: Because my father worked at Maui Motors, they assigned him a car, so we always had a car.

MK: Shall we go into schooling?

WN: Yeah.

MK: You know, you were telling us about the kindergarten. Where was that kindergarten again?

LH: Do you know where the Woolworth store used to be? At my time, it was called Kress, Kress Store. It was five-and-dime. That's where the kindergarten was. Later on, it moved up to where it is now. But below that, right there where Main and Vineyard [streets] meet, that's where the kindergarten was. It was also the bus stop.

MK: Who ran that particular kindergarten?

LH: I think it was run by a group of women. I don't think it was a public school, but it seemed like everybody went there. I do remember Mrs. Engle saying to me—there were three teachers, and they just had three parts of the room. Mrs. Engle was my teacher, and she said, "You know, dear, we have three Yurikos in this class, and your father said it's okay to go by your English name. Is that all right with you?"

I said, “No, my name is Yuriko.”

She said, “Dear, there are three of you, so one of you have to change.” She said, “Please? Your dad said it’s all right.”

I cried and I said, “No, because I don’t have another name.” But finally, she talked me into accepting “Lily,” and I’ve been Lily ever since.

MK: Did you have the “Lily” from the time you were born?

LH: Yes, my father named me that, Lily Yuriko. But everybody had called me “Yuri-*chan*” for as long as I can remember, and that was my name as far as I was concerned. (Chuckles)

MK: Who were the kids who went to that kindergarten? Neighborhood kids?

LH: Everybody in the neighborhood, everybody in Wailuku. It’s pretty big. Mrs. Saito must’ve had about twenty-five, Mrs. Engle had about twenty-five, maybe thirty, and then there was another teacher, I don’t remember who. So we were one big room, and we had three spots.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

MK: Well, anyway, so you went to this preschool. And following this preschool, you went to Kaunoa [School]. Now, if you can just explain to us what kind of school Kaunoa was. We were told it was an English-standard school . . .

LH: English-standard school, yes.

MK: . . . so how would you explain it to someone unfamiliar with that?

LH: I think it was the effort of our parents who were concerned with pidgin English, and they wanted a school that would help us unlearn pidgin English. So they made an effort to start a school where there was an emphasis on speaking standard English so we can unlearn the pidgin.

MK: Now, up to the time that you went to Kaunoa, how was your English?

LH: I’m sure I spoke pidgin just like everybody else, because I know it so well.

MK: How did they select students for Kaunoa?

LH: Well, you had to take an interview. You had to be in an interview and they would decide whether they could accept you or not. If your pidgin English was so bad, they wouldn’t take you.

MK: Now, I don’t know if you’d remember, but how did you feel about going to Kaunoa?

LH: I think everybody was a snob about that, you know, to get into a school like that and to pass the interview. Everybody became a snob.

(Laughter)

“I go to Kaunoa.” You know, like, “I go to Punahou.” (Laughs)

MK: Mmm, okay. (Chuckles) Where was Kaunoa?

LH: In Sprecklesville. Do you know where that is?

MK: Yeah, yeah.

LH: That's where they have the senior citizen's center now. That was Kaunoa School.

MK: Describe for me the buildings that made up Kaunoa School.

LH: There was one building per grade, and a huge cafeteria, and lots of space so we had good physical education. Those days, they even had what they called. . . . The public schools had gardening classes, so all the boys went to gardening once a week—and that was eighth grade—and the girls had homemaking. We were taught homemaking skills.

MK: In those days, what sorts of students went to Kaunoa?

LH: Mixed, mixed. All the *haoles* went there, and those of us who passed the test.

MK: So you had *haoles,* you had Japanese . . .

LH: Chinese, some Filipinos, and Hawaiians.

MK: If you were to look at the jobs or positions that the parents of these children had, generally, what kinds of jobs or positions did they have?

LH: They were doctors, nurses, teachers, bookkeepers, shopkeepers.

MK: How about the teachers, who were the teachers at the school?

LH: They were all from the Mainland. There were no local teachers.

MK: No local teachers at all?

LH: Except for the gardening teacher, he was local.

MK: So they were all like young, *haole* teachers who came from the Mainland?

LH: Not all young. The first-grade teacher was young, the second-grade teacher was more like my mother's age. Third grade, we called her the Indian teacher because she had everybody study Indians. All year long, they wore Indian headbands.

(Laughter)

Miss Kirk, she was the fourth-grade teacher. She was old, too. She was in her forties. Miss Buffett was probably the youngest. She could have been thirty-ish. The rest were all mothers.

MK: When you look back at the subject matters taught to you kids, what were the subject matters?

LH: Reading, writing, speaking. And we had art and music. We had one teacher who gave us music appreciation, and she would teach seventh and eighth grade together. That was a good course. I loved the art appreciation course, too. That was wonderful.

MK: What was the art appreciation course like?

LH: She got little cards, I don't know where they came from, probably some education thing. She would take it chronologically, and we would look at the artists of the period, all the way up to modern times.

MK: It's like an art history class?

LH: Art history class. It was really wonderful.

MK: For music appreciation, how was that run?

LH: That, too, that was great. We started from Gregorian chants all the way up to Duke Ellington. It was great.

MK: Were there opportunities for the students to actually play musical instruments in the school?

LH: No, we didn't have anything like that.

MK: Earlier, you mentioned that the English-standard school was primarily to rid the students of their pidgin English. Now, were there any prohibitions about speaking in pidgin while at school?

LH: Well, nobody spoke pidgin. I don't know if it was a rule or that anyone said that we couldn't. I never heard it.

MK: What were your parents' feelings about your learning to speak standard English?

LH: Well, yes, that was important to my father because he had told us very early on that we would go to the Mainland to college, so it's important that we learn.

MK: So when you say that he talked about that early on, how early in your lives did he sort of start talking about that?

LH: Always at the dinner table, that's what we heard, talk about going on to school.

MK: I know that in your Kaunoa School, you studied the standard subjects. Outside of class, what sorts of extra-curricular activities did Kaunoa offer you?

LH: I joined the Girl Scouts, and that was really interesting because we went to different places on Maui to meet and to have Girl Scout activities. So I remembered this place called Puʻunēnē Plantation had a recreation hall, and only the plantation managers were allowed. They taught dancing. They had all kinds of social activities. I remember our ballet teacher said to me, "Will you come and play piano for my ballet classes?" I thought I would see all kinds of kids there, but there was only *haole* kids. Nobody else was allowed.

MK: What did you think about there?

LH: That bothered me. So I asked if other kids were allowed. I said, "other kids." She knew what I meant.

But she said, "Nobody asked." But they never offered, either.

MK: You were saying that you went into Girl Scout activities. What were some of those activities that you participated in?

LH: Oh, we had—what kind of hunting is that called? They would hide things and we would . . .

MK: Oh, scavenger hunts.

LH: Scavenger hunts. That was fun. You could put some up on trees as high as ten or twelve feet. Yeah, that was fun.

MK: The Girl Scout members were from Kaunoa?

LH: From Kaunoa.

MK: I know that after Kaunoa, after grades one through eight at Kaunoa, where did you go?

LH: Most of the kids from Kaunoa went to Maui High [School], so we went to Maui High. But Baldwin High [School] had already opened, but it never occurred to me to go there, and that was so much closer. But I had to get on a bus to get to Maui High.

MK: But it never occurred to you to go to . . .

LH: To go to Baldwin. It would have been so much easier. I could have even walked.

MK: But anyway, so you went to Maui High, and where was Maui High located?

LH: H. [Hāmākua] Poko.

MK: Oh.

LH: Do you know where that is?

MK: Uh-huh [yes].

LH: That's pretty far from Wailuku, you know.

MK: So how did you get to Maui High?

LH: Bus. By bus. All the kids from Kaunoa went there, so a lot of us from Wailuku would meet right there in front of the kindergarten where the bus stop was, and we would go to Maui High.

MK: Was it more accepted for Kaunoa kids to go to Maui High rather than Baldwin [High School]?

LH: Yeah, it was just kind of an unspoken rule. If you go to Kaunoa, you just go to Maui High.

MK: At Maui High, what kind of curriculum did you enter into?

LH: That was a public school, so we had a public school curriculum.

MK: Was it like a college-prep or . . . ?

LH: They didn't have that then. It's only after I got to San Diego High [School] that I realized there's a separate program.

MK: At Maui High, what were your favorite subjects? What did you enjoy?

LH: I really enjoyed any kind of reading. I loved reading. So the ninth-grade teacher introduced us to the *Iliad,* and that was fun. She didn't do much teaching with it—she just let us read, which was okay. There should have been a lot of follow-up material, analysis, and teaching us how to do literary work with that. She didn't do that.

MK: What subjects did you not like?

LH: Math. Oh, I hated math. I was still counting in my fingers.

MK: (Laughs) Was it required that you take X number of years?

LH: Yeah, we had to go all the way up to geometry. Oh, that was so hard.

WN: You know, coming from an English-standard and going to Maui High, mixing with the others that didn't go to English-standard, were you treated differently at all?

LH: No, everybody was pretty nice. But they did say little snide remarks about, you know, "Oh, these Kaunoa kids . . ." They thought we were snooty, and we were. (Chuckles)

WN: I was wondering, at Kaunoa, I know you weren't, you didn't speak pidgin at all, but did you know pidgin? Could you speak pidgin?

LH: Oh yeah, I could.

WN: But was there like a rule saying that you cannot speak pidgin?

LH: Yeah, it seemed like an unspoken rule, because this was English-standard. Nobody could speak pidgin. But I think a lot of the kids would do it far from earshot of the teachers, just for fun. (Chuckles)

MK: You were saying that you liked any courses that involved reading. You didn't quite enjoy your math classes, they were kind of challenging. (Chuckles)

LH: Because I'm so dumb with math. I was just so dumb, it scared me. My father tried so hard to help me. There were nights he would just absolutely throw his hands up and just give up, just walk out of the room. I just couldn't get the hang of it.

MK: With your parents being nisei, how involved were they in your education?

LH: Very much, very involved.

MK: So when you say "very much," was it like a nightly . . . ?

LH: Every night. My mother sat and worked our homework, and my dad would help us out with our math. Poor man, he just gave up on me. (Chuckles)

MK: When it came to like extra-curricular activities at Maui High, what were some of the things you were involved in?

LH: I joined a club, but I'm trying to remember what the club was. They used to have temperance clubs? (Chuckles) I don't know if you know what that is.

MK: Oh, yeah.

WN: Yeah.

LH: That was a big thing in the [19]30s to join a temperance club, and they had one like that so I joined it. (Chuckles)

MK: So what did you folks do?

LH: They had little cheers where you would say, “Don’t drink alcohol,” and all that kind of stuff. I can’t remember some of the yells. But it was just to get alcohol out of our minds, our bodies, our culture—just don’t touch the stuff.

MK: How about socializing, like dances and things like that?

LH: We had dances at the school. Our gym teacher, Mrs. Crane, was one of the best. She was such a good teacher. But today, if they were to hear her teach, they’d laugh, because now, it’s, “Slow, slow, quick, quick, slow.” She taught us, “Step together, step and step together, step and step together, and . . .”

(Laughter)

. . . so it was kind of an awkward step when you had your partners. We’re thinking, “Step together, step, and step together, step.” There’s nothing smooth about it, like, “Slow, slow, quick, quick, slow.” It must’ve been very funny.

MK: And so in those days, proms?

LH: Yeah, it was just waltzes and foxtrots. I didn’t learn to jitterbug until I got to California, because then that was the big thing.

MK: What did your mom and dad think about social dancing and parties?

LH: They thought it was great.

MK: Were they any different from any other kids’ parents at that time?

LH: I guess so, because they were so much younger. Most of my Japanese friends had issei parents, and my parents were niseis. So they used to treat me differently.

MK: Being the eldest in the family, was it easier or harder for you?

LH: No, I didn’t think anything of it. It was just kind of a natural thing.

MK: When you were in high school on Maui, what were your aspirations? What were you thinking of doing?

LH: At that time, I was already thinking about nursing school. I really thought I wanted to be a nurse.

MK: Why?

LH: I think it’s because Raymond [Masashi] Otsuka was a doctor. My best friend, Mary, her father was a doctor, and he had the hospital right near our house. When we used to go play with her, I used to watch all those people. I thought, I think nursing would be a really exciting career.

MK: What did your parents think of that?

LH: Well, they encouraged it, because my mother was interested in nursing herself. When she worked for a doctor, she had done a little nursing that she was allowed to do.

MK: Now, we know that you went to Maui High School for, was it for three years?

LH: For three years.

MK: What happened after that?

LH: Well, I knew that I would be going to the Mainland.

MK: Why is that?

LH: Because my Uncle David [Seki], who lived in California, in San Diego, they had spoken with my parents all these years. They said, "When she's ready, she will come and live with us and finish high school here, so you decide when she should come." I guess that they were reluctant to let me go until after my junior year.

Then they said, "If you're ready, you can go now."

I said, "Am I ready." I wanted to go so badly. (MK chuckles.) I left that summer. I left in June and went to San Diego and met my aunt and my uncle. Went to live with them and spent the summer learning my way around and meeting all my relatives and other Japanese kids.

MK: Why were you so eager to go?

LH: It was different. I could learn something new and different.

MK: Did you have any worries about going off on your own . . .

LH: No.

MK: . . . going to the Mainland?

LH: I was so excited about it. There's so much to learn, so much to know. There's so much to do. I was really excited.

MK: So how was that first summer on the Mainland with your aunt and uncle in San Diego?

LH: Well, it was like learning a whole new culture because the words were different—I had to learn lots of new words—and things like going to. . . . They used to go to a place called "Old Town," and you could buy all these wonderful types of sodas. You could get this kind of malt and things like that. I never saw anything like that. That was fun. I got introduced to Mexican food—that was really exciting. Tacos. Oh, I think tacos are great. And enchiladas. The Japanese community was into Mexican food, too. They were all cooks. My aunt was a good Mexican cook.

MK: With your aunt and uncle and other Japanese on the Mainland, what did you observe, any differences or similarities?

LH: Lots of differences, and they thought I was very unique (chuckles) because for them, it was a new experience. They hadn't met anybody their age that came from Hawai'i. They knew my Uncle

David who was from Hawai'i, but he's older. But here's a teenager, their age, and I'm from Hawai'i. "You sound different. You talk English different." They thought I had an accent.

MK: (Laughs) And what did you think about them?

LH: I said, "You have an accent, too. That must be Japanese." (Chuckles)

MK: Were there any difficulties or challenges for you that first summer?

LH: At that time, no, not in San Diego.

MK: Where in San Diego did you live?

LH: Right outside of the main city. I went to San Diego High School, so we took a streetcar, which took about twenty minutes, and it would stop right at the base of the school. We would walk up the one block to "The Old Grey Castle [designed by F.S. Allen, built in 1907]," they called it.

MK: When you say "we," that would be yourself . . . ?

LH: And my cousins, my aunt's nieces.

MK: What were some of your observations about going to this different school?

LH: It was a new experience being around so many *haoles* and Mexicans and blacks, and very few Asians—very few. I met some Chinese families, and they were very nice. They lived in Chinatown. The rest of us lived in and around the city.

MK: How were you treated as a Japanese American in San Diego?

LH: I didn't see much difference. I didn't feel different at all, until the war came along.

MK: In terms of the classwork or high school situation in San Diego, how did that compare with your Maui experience?

LH: I thought the intellectual level was much higher. It was very challenging. So when the war came along and we were going to be interned, my social studies teacher was a Ph.D., teaching in a public high school. Isn't that amazing? Dr. [W.J.] Lyons said to me, "When you get there, do all the observing that you can. You write a paper for me, and we'll consider that your work in social studies." Because this is December, now—that's almost the whole year. He said, "I will consider that your credit." But I didn't realize at that time that the army was censoring everything that we wrote. He didn't tell me that either, but he wrote back and said, "I have your paper, and I'm sorry I can't give you a better grade than a C because you're not here to attend classes." But my sister said to me—and this is just recently—all your letters were all, "Dear family, On the. . . . if. . . . into. . . . on the. . . . Aloha." Everything was cut out. Everything that I described about the camp was cut out. Everything that I wrote about the activities was cut out. I didn't know there was censorship going on.

MK: So the paper that you carefully wrote up and submitted to your teacher . . .

LH: It must've been censored, but he couldn't tell me that. Because nobody told me that our letters were being censored because if we knew, most of us would have stopped writing, I think.

MK: Shall we end here, and then we get to December 7th, okay?

LH: Okay.

MK: Very good interview.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 55-15-2-10 and 55-16-2-10

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Lily Hatanaka (LH)

Honolulu, Hawaiʻi

January 4, 2010

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

MK: This is an interview with Lily Yuriko Hatanaka. This is session number two on January 4, in the new year, 2010, and it's in Honolulu, Hawaiʻi. The interviewers are Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto and Warren Nishimoto.

And because this is session two, we're going to pick up where we left off last time. At the end of the last interview, we were nearing December 1941. Now, before December 7th, how would you describe how you were treated by the people in San Diego as a Japanese American? Prior to the war, how were your relations?

LH: Well, prior to the war, I thought like anybody else—it was a very happy, little city to live in. Everybody treated us like they treated everybody else. It's only after December 7th that things changed completely.

MK: And also, because you're a Japanese American from Hawaiʻi, and not one raised on the Mainland, I was wondering what differences or similarities you noticed with people that we call "*kotonks*"?

LH: Well, their lives were very different from ours in Hawaiʻi. We were treated like everybody else in Hawaiʻi. So there was no difference. We didn't feel it, except from maybe those who were extremely wealthy and had power positions.

But in San Diego, I could tell that the Japanese Americans had a kind of super humble attitude about being out in the streets. They tried to remind me that you're not supposed to. . . . They thought I was arrogant because I wasn't as humble. I could finally understand that after December 7th, when we got off of the streetcar and everybody—not everybody, but a handful of students would chant after us, climbing up the hill to get to the high school took about a block—and they would chant, "You dirty, yellow Jap. You dirty, yellow Jap." I finally realized what it was that they were experiencing that I had never, ever had in Hawaiʻi. It was frightening, because you just never know who's going off the deep end when you keep repeating it, repeating it. You know, it sounds like it's almost hypnotic.

But Dr. [John] Aseltine, our principal, immediately called an assembly of all the students, and he gave a wonderful speech about Japanese Americans being Americans and that "we should treat them that way; they are members of our society. So everybody, let's treat them like our family and don't do anything harmful to them." That set the tone—it was just wonderful. After that, when we got off the streetcar, we didn't hear too much of that chanting. But it stopped immediately. As soon as you stepped onto campus, they stopped.

MK: When December 7th occurred, what were you doing that morning?

LH: That day, I was with my friends, and we had gone to the San Diego Zoo. We had a picnic, and we threw a football around, and we were having such a wonderful time. I finally realized people sitting around the park were glaring at us. I thought, "Oh, is this part of that whole California experience?" It never occurred to me that this was the reaction of the war, because I didn't know about December 7th—none of us knew. Some people who had radios heard it, but we didn't know. We kept playing and having a good time.

MK: When did you finally hear?

LH: Well, we finally decided that it was time to go home. When I stepped into the house, my uncle and my aunt gave me that look like, "We have something to tell you, but we don't know how to begin." So, my Uncle David turned up the radio. I thought, "What is he doing? It's so loud." Finally, I heard, "December 7th, Pearl Harbor bombed," and then I realized what had happened. I asked him if he had heard from my parents, and he said no. All phones were immediately (censored), so no (civilians) could call.

But he said, "I'm sure that everything is okay on Maui, so you don't have to worry about them. It's just Pearl Harbor."

MK: But besides your worry about your family back on Maui, what were your other thoughts when you first heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

LH: I wondered what they would do to us. I just wondered what could possibly happen to us.

MK: For your uncle and your aunt and your cousins, in that home, how did they react to everything?

LH: They seemed terribly frightened. I couldn't share that fear. I felt very guilty about it.

MK: When you say that they seemed terribly frightened, what did you see in their behavior that really gave you that feeling?

LH: Don't go outside, don't talk to anybody. We'll go to the grocery store, we'll go to the bank, but we don't do anything else.

MK: Initially, you couldn't contact your family.

LH: No.

MK: So when did you finally hear from your mom and dad?

LH: Letters. We couldn't telephone, so I only got letters.

MK: When they finally contacted you through their letters, what did they communicate to you?

LH: Well, my mother was terribly worried about me, and she wondered how everybody was faring: "Will you all be together?" and "Will you help each other?" "What can we do to help?" I heard my mother was. . . . She didn't tell me about it, but she was going to a temple in Lahaina, all the way from Wailuku—it would take her an hour to get there. She would pray with the priest for my safety.

MK: I was wondering, about how soon did you hear from your family? You know, start receiving a letter or two from them?

LH: We didn't get the letters until we got to the camp.

MK: In the days that followed December 7th, I know that your family told you to restrict your movements. Were there any other changes in your living situation?

LH: All we did was go to school, and come home, and stay home. We didn't step out into the street. We were told, "Just don't do that. We don't want to cause any problems, so just stay home." The neighbors all around were very kind.

The lady next door to my aunt said, "If anything should happen, I'll turn my garage over to you and you can put all your things here." They must've expected something.

MK: You mentioned that all you could do was go to school and come home. How did the war impact your schooling?

LH: It didn't affect us because everybody was kind. All the students were doing what they could to make it comfortable for us. [Chinese American students gave Japanese American students, "I am Chinese" buttons to keep them safe off-campus.]

MK: Until you were sent to Santa Anita, were there any changes in the school schedule for you, or an assignment, or expectations?

LH: No, everything remained the same. There was only one. Dr. [W.J.] Lyons was my social studies teacher, and when he heard that we would be evacuated, the first thing he told me was, "Write a term paper for me, and we will consider that your credit for the course." I didn't discover until much, much later—years later—that all my letters, all our letters, going out from the camp, were censored. Much of it was just cut out, so all they got was prepositional phrases.

MK: So all the effort that you put into writing something to submit to him ended up being . . .

LH: Yeah, but he couldn't tell me that. But he said that he acknowledged the paper and said, "I wish I could give you an A, but I can't."

MK: So what did you end up with?

LH: C. He said, "I can give you a C."

MK: But you completed the course?

LH: Yeah, and they gave me a diploma.

MK: I know that after the war started, there was a curfew placed upon the Japanese on the West Coast. Now, how did it affect you and your relatives?

LH: Oh, there was no movement after dark. You know, you stayed home.

MK: Were there any other restrictions placed on folks besides a curfew?

LH: Well, we didn't know about. . . . Just before we left for Santa Anita, the federal government decided to stop all of our money—our money was frozen. So it was difficult for the parents.

MK: So how did people, like your family, manage with the funds being frozen?

LH: Well, by then, we were already rounded up and we went to the San Diego train station and we were boarded on trains. Amazingly, there were only a handful of little kids—about five of them—on the treetops, and they were singing songs like “Praise the Lord” and “Pass the Ammunition” and wartime songs. But there was no enmity anywhere. Everybody in San Diego felt a little—they were kind to us.

MK: In those days—I don’t know if you really know the answer—but how large was the population of Japanese Americans in the San Diego area?

LH: Oh, very small, very small. I don’t exactly remember the number, but the train was only about seven cars, so there weren’t too many of us.

MK: Most of the people who lived in that area, what kind of livelihoods did they have?

LH: A lot of them did fishing, tuna boat fishing, and others had restaurants. What else? I think there was one flower shop, but I don’t remember that.

MK: Your family in San Diego, what were they involved in?

LH: My uncle was a fisherman, and my aunt’s family was in farming. So they farmed in—what was the name of it?—Chula Vista. It’s only about thirty minutes from San Diego, and they had a huge farm.

MK: What kinds of crops did they raise?

LH: The first time I saw it, I was so impressed. As far as your eyes could see, celery. I loved celery, and I said to my uncle, “*Ojisan,* I think I can eat all that by myself.”

(Laughter)

He thought that was very funny.

MK: You were saying that you reported to San Diego train station.

LH: Yes.

MK: How were you folks informed about the evacuation?

LH: By letter. Every family got the letter, and we were told where to report and what time to report, and that we could only have one suitcase apiece.

MK: As you packed up your suitcase, what kinds of decisions did you make on what to take?

LH: All my albums, my photo albums—that came first. Everything else came second.

MK: You know, when you were told about the evacuation, what was your reaction?

LH: I thought, at first, I was a little bit—I wasn’t frightened—I just very curious about where they were taking us. About two days later, I said to myself. “This is living history, you gotta write everything down, you gotta remember everything. Take in everything you see, don’t miss a thing.” I got so excited, I forgot to write. I wanted to be everywhere, I wanted to see everything going on, I wanted to hear everything. All that went by even after we got to the camp. There was so much going on. I said, “I got to get in on it, I got to watch it, I got to hear everything.”

MK: But how did your aunt and uncle take the news of evacuation?

LH: They were so worried about me, and I convinced them they shouldn't worry about me because I can manage. This is not like, you know, we're going like the Jews of the Holocaust. It wasn't anything like that.

MK: I recall that one time, maybe you stayed back a bit with the cousins for some reason. Were they quarantined or . . . ?

LH: Oh, yes. We were to stay at my aunt's. . . . That was her brother—her older brother, and his wife.

MK: Maybe you could explain to me what happened, something about your cousins having measles?

LH: Yeah. Everyone went off (to camp) but the two little ones, Howard and Ron, had measles, so the army said, "You can't move, we'll keep you here at the farm."

So everybody moved up there, and they said, "Can we have one of the men stay with us to help?"

They looked at me, and they said, "She's good enough, she'll take care of you." So I played the role of the man of the family, and *Obasan,* who couldn't speak any English, and my aunt, and Howard, and Ronnie—the five of us.

MK: How long were you folks kind of quarantined that way?

LH: We were quarantined for quite a number of weeks until the doctor said that we were no longer a danger to the community. But I will never forget a few nights after we moved into the farm with *Obasan* and Howard. A truck pulled up in the dead of night—it must have been about nine, ten o'clock. The lights were out, of course, and we were ready for bed. I peeked out, and I thought I saw about five people spill out of the truck. It was obvious they came to pick up whatever they can, so I picked up the broom, turned the handle side up, and I stepped out of the house, I pretended that it was a rifle, and I said, "Get the hell out of here!" They jumped in the car and took off. But they were there to pick up whatever they could. I'm sure they came after we left.

MK: Was that like a common occurrence that people would come by?

LH: I think that happened everywhere, because we didn't have time to do anything, to sell anything, so they could have stolen the refrigerator, the range, and everything else.

MK: Were there any other incidents like that when you were taking care of your younger cousins?

LH: Oh, the lady down the street always worried about us, and she would drop in. She would say, "You can't go to the store." She said, "Give me a list, and I'll get whatever you need." She was so nice.

Down the street a little bit, there was a World War I veteran, a Japanese American. He had never married, and he was single. He said, "I'm not moving. I'm a U.S. citizen, and I fought the First World War. You can't make me move." He plunked himself down.

So they brought the army and a truck, and they said, "We got to make you move."

"No, you don't," he said. He sat down, so they carried him and put him on the—what do you call that army vehicle? I forget the name of it. It's like a kinda-sorta wagon. They put him, all by himself. He said, "I'm not going to move," but they carried him off.

MK: With people telling you folks not to go out, "I'll do the shopping for you," and the possibility that people would come and take items from your home, how did you hold up against all that? It was a lot to fear.

LH: It made me angry, it made me very angry. I just thought that I'd get prepared for the next guy. I was looking for stuff to throw at them.

MK: How long were your cousins and yourself and your aunt at that farm?

LH: Just a few weeks, I think, until the doctor said the quarantine was lifted. Then the army truck came for us.

MK: At that point, you were taken to the San Diego train station?

LH: No, they drove us all the way to Santa Anita.

MK: So, when you're talking about San Diego train station . . .

LH: That's everybody else.

MK: Everybody else, okay. When you were taken to Santa Anita, did you know that that would be your destination?

LH: Yeah, we had heard. Word came to us through friends that that's where they were.

MK: The last time we were here, you mentioned something about the inspections you all had to go through. How were they, as you were being evacuated?

LH: Yes. As soon as our truck pulled in, they took our suitcases, and they opened it and inspected it. There were men hired to do the inspecting. One man took my little sewing kit—you know, those little travel kits. He took that. I said, "I can't make a bomb with that, but I need it." He looked at me just like, "You don't have a right to say anything," and he put that aside. What else did he take? Nothing else. He let the rest pass.

MK: You were saying that the people doing the inspections seemed to be Okies?

LH: That's what I was told. These were people who could not read or write. Labor was difficult to find in wartime, so they hired them. They did the best they could, but you know that they were stealing.

MK: If anything like stealing was occurring, did anybody try to object, or was there any recourse?

LH: No. There was no one there. There wasn't even a sergeant or anybody in a uniform. We just went through that line.

MK: So at that time when you folks were evacuated and entering the camp, were there like security people? You're saying no sergeant, no . . .

LH: No, just that line to go through with our things. They didn't give us a body check, which was pretty decent. Then there was a fence, and beyond the fence were our families. And we could join them.

MK: When you first got there, how would you describe what the place was like?

LH: It was racetracks, beautifully kept. Of course, like everybody else, we were wondering which is Seabiscuit's stall—we wanted to see it first.

(Laughter)

But all the stables were clean—very, very clean. The army did a wonderful job. You could even smell the Lysol—it was so clean.

MK: When you first went there, where were you placed?

LH: They built enough so that there—I don't know exactly how many—but there were one, two mess halls to take care of the number of people, so enough for one side of the camp and the other. And the food was very good.

MK: How about your living situation?

LH: They gave us army cots. They were not mattresses—we stuffed them with straw. It wasn't bad. They gave us army blankets.

MK: The actual buildings you lived in, were they horse stalls or barracks?

LH: Yeah, those were the horse stalls. In-between the stalls, they built latrines and other comfort things.

MK: Like laundry and bathroom?

LH: Oh, the laundry was one big affair in the center of Santa Anita. It's a good thing, some of these women had packed washboards. That's what they used. They had big galvanized pots to do their laundry.

MK: How about like shower facilities?

LH: It was nice. They built all that for us.

MK: You mentioned that the mess halls, there were two of them, and that the food was okay.

LH: Yeah.

MK: What kinds of foods were you folks served?

LH: It's really army food. Whatever they served the soldiers. Then they turned the administration building into the hospital. So I first went to volunteer at the mess hall, and I got so bored. I said, "I think I want to be a nurse." So I applied at the hospital, and they said, "We need all the help we can get." So I went to work there.

MK: When you say that you volunteered to work at the hospital, what was your pay for being there?

LH: No pay.

MK: No pay?

LH: No pay. Not even a uniform. But they gave us patients' gowns to wear, so that we could be identified as nurse's aides.

MK: What were some of the duties expected of you, as a nurse's aide?

LH: The usual. (Chuckles) You know, bedpans, feed the patients, change bedding.

MK: At that time, what were some of the ailments being treated at the hospital that you dealt with?

LH: Well, some people were ill before they came in, so these were the patients who came in. They didn't need real hospital care, but that's better than living in the stables. So they put those patients in the hospital. So the hospital was full. I think we had at least fifty to sixty patients. All the nurses were willing to train us and to teach us. They were very, very kind.

MK: When you were at Santa Anita, besides working at the hospital as a nurse's aide, what else did you do to pass your time?

LH: Oh, that's when I had my Sunday school class. These were high school girls—I had about twenty. We decided, "Okay, what we'll do is we'll get the names of our nisei soldiers, and we'll write them letters." That would be our contribution.

MK: That was at Santa Anita, or at Poston?

LH: Well, Santa Anita. They're all San Diego girls, so we all went together to Poston, so we continued the work.

MK: And because Santa Anita was an assembly center, what were some of the rules and regulations that kind of governed your lives there?

LH: We could do almost anything we wanted. There was all that going on. Everybody organizes things. Ruth Watanabe offered piano lessons, and so many people applied that you could only have fifteen minutes with her. I didn't even get a chance to get my fifteen minutes because we were reassigned to Poston. Oh, that was so sad. I wanted at least that fifteen minutes with her, she was so famous.

MK: Ruth Watanabe was a Mainland nisei.

LH: Uh-huh, and she had taught at SC [University of Southern California]—she was a piano professor. [From 1947 to 1984, Ruth Watanabe was Librarian of the Eastman School of Music's Sibley Music Library.]

MK: I see. And so, in terms of social activities, well, sort of social activities that you had, you had the opportunity to take piano lessons; you ran a Sunday school; and did things with other young women.

LH: Yeah. Every Saturday night, somebody—I don't know if the army gave it to them or not—but we had a record player, and it was all the systems. Right there where the people would stand to watch their horse races, I don't know what they call that area, before the bleachers, there's that huge area. So we'd hold dances. Everybody learned how to jitterbug, and it was fun.

MK: And because you were a high school senior when war started, how about in terms of schooling at Santa Anita? Was there anything?

LH: No, no schooling. Everything came to a stop.

MK: At Santa Anita, what were relations like with, say, with other people from Hawai'i? Did you know other people from Hawai'i in the camp?

LH: I didn't meet them. But I was intrigued by this bunch of boys—they were eighteen, nineteen, twenty—and they had the uniforms like a gang. I found out that, oh, they call themselves the "Exclusive Twenties," and they were a gang from LA. But they form these groups in big cities just to protect themselves. They weren't gangs in a way that they were involved in crime or anything. But it was just to protect themselves. They were nice guys. One of the guys used to come to Sunday services. I used to watch him because he carried a Bible with him. I thought, "My, that's fascinating." I asked all the people about him, and they said he was quite a very bright man, and he was interested in college. But he led the Exclusive Twenties. I can't remember his name, but I can see his face.

MK: When people found out, if they found out, that you were a Hawai'i Japanese, how did they react to you in camp?

LH: Not in Santa Anita, there was no problem.

MK: And because it was a camp, I was kind of wondering, how were the guards there?

LH: The guards were at the gates, (towers were every fifty feet or so,) so we didn't see them inside the camp. So it was relatively free. Oh, and the most wonderful thing was the paper they organized.

MK: In Santa Anita?

LH: Yeah.

MK: What was the paper?

LH: I had that until I moved from Maui. I kept my collection.

WN: This was *The Pacemaker? Santa Anita Pacemaker?*

LH: Yeah, they just mimeographed it. It was really great because we could learn about other people from our neighbors and the guys who were away from home. We could get news, it was just like a hometown newspaper. The cutest thing was there was this one man who was a cartoonist with Disney. He [Chris Ishii] drew a picture of this little boy—with stiff hair and baseball cap to the side—and he said, "Name this boy and you'll get a prize." Everybody entered, and the one who won was "Neebo," for "Nisei boy." He had a cartoon [Lil' Neebo] every week. That was so cute. Really, really cute, all his misadventures in camp. Oh, that was so cute. I'm so sorry I lost that, I can't find it.

MK: So you had an in-camp newsletter, and you sort of had an in-camp music system going on.

LH: Yeah.

MK: In terms of hearing about the outside world, outside of camp, what did you folks hear?

LH: Nothing, because radios were gone, everything was confiscated. Like I told the man, "I can't make a bomb with a sewing machine, sewing kit." For heaven's sake. It was about that size, but you know it was stolen.

WN: You were saying you couldn't have any literature printed in Japanese. Do you remember seeing anything printed in Japanese . . .

LH: No.

WN: . . . in the camps?

LH: No, they didn't. It wasn't allowed.

WN: What about speaking Japanese?

LH: Oh, everybody. All the isseis could only speak Japanese. Like my grandpa, he could only speak Japanese. So they had Sunday services for the Japanese-speaking people and for the English-speaking.

WN: So speaking was allowed, but not literature.

LH: I don't think so. Because the ones who were able to do that were arrested and they were taken to New Mexico. They were considered enemy aliens.

MK: What other things that were kind of Japanese, what other Japanese things were prohibited in the camp? You can't have any Japanese things written. Were there any other activities that were prohibited?

LH: Not that I know of.

MK: Like cultural practices or, what if you were Buddhist?

LH: Oh, I never saw a Buddhist ceremony or services. I think that might have been prohibited, because that's done in Japanese.

MK: In doing some research of Santa Anita, sometimes they talk about an incident that occurred in August.

LH: Yes.

MK: You know, a routine search turned into a riot, and tanks and machine guns were brought in. Were you there?

LH: I had to go running down because I had to see it. I wanted to know what was going on. My aunt was screaming at me, "Don't you go!" But I ignored her. I got to watch the tail end. I didn't get the beginning of it. It was an FBI—from what I heard—had hired this Korean man, and he was to, I guess, spy and work among us, to learn what he could. It was the young men who discovered who he was, and they cornered him in the administration building. One guy threw a typewriter at him, from what I heard. He was badly injured. That's when the army came in with the guns and everything, because they were so afraid that it was a huge affair. It wasn't, it was just the attack on this man. But it was bad.

MK: You were saying that you heard that something was going on?

LH: Yeah, people were running all over the place. I heard, "Down there, at the ad building!" So I got there, just as the ambulance—carried him into the ambulance, and they left. So then all I could do was, "What happened? What happened? Tell me what happened!"

MK: You mentioned that this Korean man was seen as a spy or an informer. Sometimes you hear about Japanese Americans being thought of as being informers to the administration or the government.

LH: I never heard that.

MK: But in your case, other than this incident . . .

LH: This was the only incident. (I meant to include this experience. It was so important to me.

Mrs. MacFarland, wife of a navy officer, befriended many Japanese Americans. I was introduced to her by "Babbi" Toshio Yatsushiro. He was my Sunday school teacher at Wailuku Congregational Church. He moved to California in 1940 to attend Redlands College. [Yatsushiro later earned a Ph.D. in anthropology.] When I was in San Diego, he and Mrs. MacFarland came to visit.

She came to visit us in Santa Anita. She knew many niseis from Hawai'i and California. She also came to visit us in Honolulu in 1950s. She was such a wonderful person who gave so much of herself to the niseis.)

MK: I also wanted to know, I know that you folks were restricted in the assembly center. But were there any occasions when you folks would have contact with people on the outside?

LH: Kathy [Sogo] and I decided, we were up to barbed-wire fence, and we could see across the street, neon signs and it looked like a bar. So we just went up to the fence (dog barks) and put our fingers through the barbed wire. "Wouldn't it be fun to walk into a place like that and ask for a bottle of Coke?" (MK chuckles.)

Just as we said that, we looked up, we heard somebody say, "Get away from there!" We looked up, and we were looking into a bayonet. I was so scared, my knees just gave way. He said, "Get away from there!" So we turned away and we ran, and we ran, and we ran. We just collapsed, because my lungs were just burning. That's when I knew. . . .

Oh, when I collapsed, I said, "Kathy, did you know?"

She said, "No, no, I thought those were just lights! I didn't know there was a man up there!" (Laughs) You know, those tall, tall towers, just like they have in the Brandenburg Gate.

MK: So until that time . . .

LH: We didn't look up that far, because it was at least fifteen, twenty feet. So we didn't think to look up there. There were soldiers there, but we thought those were just lights. (Chuckles) We weren't paying that much attention to them, until that incident when we got to the fence.

MK: Was that your one and only time that you did that?

LH: Yeah. That's the only time. We never went back. We were so scared. (Laughs)

MK: I know that in September 1942, people (dog barks) were moving out of Santa Anita, and by October it was empty. In your case, when it was time to leave Santa Anita, what were you told?

LH: That we're going to a place called Poston III, and that it was in Arizona, and that it was going to be hot, and we will be there for an untold length of time.

MK: What was your reaction to that?

LH: Well, I wondered if the accommodations would be better than here. (Chuckles) I wondered what it was like, what it would be like.

MK: And again, when you folks were told you were leaving Santa Anita, what did you take with you?

LH: Whatever we had, we were allowed to take that.

MK: (Dog barks.) So your suitcase of belongings that you first came in with. Anything else that. . . ?

LH: Nothing else. Only your personal belongings. Nothing else.

MK: When you folks were being transported, with whom did you travel?

LH: We were on a train, and the soldiers were guarding the train until we got to Poston. It was hot. Oh, it was so hot, they passed out salt tablets so nobody would pass out.

MK: On the train?

LH: Mm-hmm, to get ready for the heat.

MK: Were the windows and the shades up?

LH: Up, but it's in the desert.

MK: And finally, when you got to Poston III, again, what was your first reaction to the place?

LH: Well, it looked pretty desolate. Lots of sand, and all the other people from the other camps came to welcome us, and to help us. The mess hall was ready for us, and they gave us refreshments. The poor chef felt so badly because he looked all over, and no tools to eat with. The guys went running out to the mesquite bushes, came back, and made chopsticks. So we had nature's chopsticks.

MK: You were saying like they weren't really prepared for having you folks in terms of having eating utensils for you folks.

LH: Obviously.

MK: What else were they not prepared with?

LH: That was the only thing missing.

MK: It was okay?

LH: Yeah.

END OF TAPE NO. 55-15-2-10

TAPE NO. 55-16-2-10

MK: Tape two of session number two.

We were just talking about Poston III. And, first of all, maybe we should find out, how come it's called "Poston III?"

LH: There were three camps: Poston I, II, and III [all in Arizona]. Poston I was [where people from] Los Angeles [were taken], Poston II was Central California, and Poston III was Southern California. So South Los Angeles and San Diego.

MK: From your memory, about how many people were in Poston III? How big was it?

LH: Quite large. Quite a number of people.

MK: When you first arrived there, you were saying that people who were already there came to help you folks out. Were they from I and II or were they . . .

LH: I and II. The army drove them in the trucks.

MK: And, again, when you first got there, you were saying that it was very desolate, they didn’t have chopsticks for you folks in the mess hall. What else do you remember, those early days?

LH: For some people it was a little discouraging, but for me it was a great adventure. When we went to find our barracks, it was A, B, C, and D. So A would be the large family—four or more—and B and C were for singles. And D was for large families. So they gave us these mattresses, and you had to fill them up with straw. That was fun, just trying to get the lumps out and trying to make it as even as possible. That wasn’t bad. My aunt was so ingenious. She made curtains for all of us, so that she gave me sort of a room to myself. She made a closet for me, and laid out my cot, and she and her husband went out—Uncle David—went out to find whatever they could from the mess hall—orange crates and things—and she made little shelves for me to put my things.

MK: She tried to put a homey touch.

LH: Oh, she did. It was really beautiful. Most people did.

MK: Because it’s out in the desert, when it’s colder, what did you folks have to deal with the cold?

LH: I wasn’t there long enough to know how cold it was, because it wasn’t too long after that, I don’t know how many months, because all together, I was there for ten months. Then the FBI said, “All those who are students who want to go on and study, you will come to building such and such, and we will interrogate you.” So I didn’t see the whole season. I wasn’t there for the whole year.

MK: But before we get into that part when you were leaving, I know that you left Santa Anita, you were saying something about you wondered how the accommodations would compare with Santa Anita. So the barracks, your aunt tried to make it kind of homey for you. How were the mess halls at Poston III?

LH: They were nice. What do you call those tables and benches that are made as one unit? You see picnic tables like that, that’s what the whole mess hall was.

MK: Were the eating times regulated?

LH: There was one man who decided to become a volunteer. He found a bell, and he would walk around the mess hall as far as he could, and ring the bell, and he would talk about the menu.

(Laughter)

He would say, “It’s lunchtime, it’s lunchtime. Today is stew and—” whatever it was. He was wonderful.

MK: Would you folks go and eat your meals as a family?

LH: Well, everybody just drifted in, because people were working at things, working at jobs, and creating things. Like Grandpa, making his vegetable beds and planting flowers, and going off to the Black Hills to pick up petrified woods. There was one man who was an amateur geologist, and he said, "Anybody want to go with me? You can come." He picked up semi-precious stones, and he taught them how to polish them.

MK: You were saying that you could go out to the Black Hills and pick up stones. When they were outside of camp, say, gathering those items, how much security was there?

LH: FBI was right close by. As one man found out—I was telling you about that man—I used to see him going down into the river, but he was never in the water. He was always among the woods. I didn't know what he was doing, but they said, he had built a beautiful raft, and those who saw it said it was a work of art. He really intended to live in it, I guess—it was [equipped with] all the amenities you could think of. The day came where he poled himself down the river, and he went down for at least an hour or so. Then he turned the corner, and there was the FBI waiting for him. (Laughs)

MK: There was surveillance.

LH: There was surveillance. We didn't know. (Chuckles)

MK: In the mess hall, in Poston III, what kinds of foods were you served?

LH: It's exactly what the soldiers had. But we had our own cooks. For example, in our mess hall, Mr. Arata had owned his own restaurant. He was a great cook. So he took whatever the army gave him and he created dishes that he felt was more palatable to us. So lots of Japanese and Chinese food.

MK: Oh, so it depended on the skill on the cook in your mess hall.

LH: So pretty soon, we noticed our mess hall was getting very crowded. Somebody said, "They're coming all the way from Camp I because they heard how good our food is." He would take canned pears and he made beautiful cobblers, and cherry cobblers. Nobody else had that. We did.

MK: You were saying that the foods would be made more palatable to your tastes. Do I take it that it could be made sort of Japanesey? How would he . . .

LH: Yeah. I think he asked for *shōyu* and he got it.

MK: Ah, okay. So he was able to get Japanese ingredients.

LH: Yeah.

MK: You mentioned that there was a man (siren in background) who announced the meals and what the menu included. What other help was there in the mess hall?

LH: People who volunteered to do work, like I volunteered to do clinical work. I worked in the clinic.

MK: You mentioned that you worked in the clinic. Again, what type of work did you do in the clinic?

LH: Well, I assisted the nurse, and this time, we got paid. The doctors got paid nineteen dollars a month; the nurses got eighteen, I think; and I got ten. I thought that was a fortune.

MK: Well, what could you do with your money in there?

MK: Well, a lot of people ordered from Sears Roebuck. (Chuckles)

MK: Were there stores or places within the camp that you could purchase items?

LH: No. (Camp I had a general store.)

MK: What would happened if you needed an item, besides ordering from Sears Roebuck? Were there other possibilities?

LH: No.

MK: Just ordering?

LH: Yeah.

MK: By this time, by Poston III, how about the education of young people?

LH: That's the wonderful thing, the volunteers, again—prenursery school, and nursery school, kindergarten, first, second, third grade. They asked me to teach the high school, and I said, "Hey, I'm only a senior. I can't do that!" But they were looking for anyone who could help. Finally, the army, I think this man who was in charge, was just such a compassionate man, he got volunteer schoolteachers from outside. They came from all over—from the east coast, and everywhere—and took the job. They were paid, of course, and they weren't allowed to associate with us. They had their own area to live in. But that was just wonderful.

MK: So like the schoolteachers lived in a different area . . .

LH: Different area, and there were barbed-wire fences separating them from us.

MK: If things went the usual way, you would've been like a senior in high school?

LH: Mm-hmm [yes].

MK: So did you continue your schooling at Poston III?

LH: No, because by this time, the army had said, "We will have this interrogation by the FBI. And you take this test, and we'll see what comes of it."

That's when all the older guys, the college men and the grad students (said), "You kids wait at the end of the line, we'll tell you what to do." As they came out, they would whisper to us, "Twenty-seven, twenty-eight, yes, yes." They walked off, so that they wouldn't be noticed. My turn finally came. Here was this thick test—written test—and all these Mickey Mouse questions. I finally came to twenty-seven, twenty-eight. Twenty-seven, "Are you a loyal citizen of the United States, yes or no?" Question twenty-eight, "If you're asked to serve, will you serve your country, yes or no?" Yes, yes. When I walked out, he looked at my answers and he gave me a packet, a piece of paper that said I was privileged for this packet. I think it was a couple weeks later that I got fifty dollars and a train ticket out of camp.

MK: Ah, I see. Now, when you looked at those questions, twenty-seven and twenty-eight . . .

LH: I laughed. (Chuckles) I said, "What is this, a Disney show?"

MK: Now, before we get you out of camp, here you are, a young woman, just a teenager. What did you folks do in camp? What did the teenagers do?

LH: Well, we had, people had organized *'ukulele* classes. I don't know exactly who it was, but they organized all these kids who had high school experience with bands. So, we had a beautiful band. Somebody wrote the arrangements, or they got a hold of the arrangements, so they sounded like T. Dorsey, Glenn Miller—(the big bands) everybody, it was just wonderful music, and the dances were just wonderful. There were ladies who taught sewing, and there was *ikebana* classes, and baseball teams, basketball teams—what else?

MK: Were there any hiking, hiking groups?

LH: (The Gila River. The army transported us to the river for swimming, fishing, and picnicking.) Nobody formed hiking. That's surprising. Grandpa was the only one that went off to Black Hills by himself. Everybody was interested in the more socializing kind of thing, activity.

MK: Where would you folks socialize? What facilities were there for you to do all these things?

LH: Well, the cafeteria became the dance [hall]. We had other rooms to meet in for *'ukulele* classes. This man—his first name is Yoshio, I think. I cannot remember his last name—but he was very talented. I learned later, he heard us sing. Kathy, and Toyo, and I had formed, just by accident, really, because we were enjoying the *'ukulele* classes. We learned to sing Hawaiian songs and we were harmonizing. He liked (our) sound. He said, "We're going to have amateur night, and you're going to sing." So we did.

We sang, "There's a rainbow, following the showers . . ." Oh, the harmony was really beautiful, and everybody loved it.

He said, "Come to my office." Yoshio said, "Come to my office. I'm going to teach you another song." So he taught us "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." "And you're going to sing with the band."

"Oh, we're going to get to sing with the band?" Oh, we were so excited, so we sang with the band, and everybody thought we were great.

Then the (administrator)—I don't remember what his title was—but he said, "You know, I think the band sounds so good, you sound so good, we're going to send you on a trip to all the camps, and you're going to perform." Oh, and that was big time for us.

We thought, "Gosh, we're going to sing with a band."

MK: You mentioned something about costuming of sorts?

LH: Yeah. The ladies got so excited—all of the mamas came around. They said, "Here. You're pin number one, and number two, so you wear these skirts with these sweaters. And you could wear a blouse with this one. But don't get them mixed up, because we don't want you to look like you don't have anything." So everything was all set.

And then, the morning came. We were to leave, and the (administrator) said, "We're sorry, but there's been an outbreak of polio, so everybody is quarantined. Nobody can move." I turned around, took my suitcase with me, and I cried. I was so disappointed. I wanted to sing with a band.

MK: So, you have this outbreak of polio keeping you folks from going on tour.

LH: Yeah.

MK: Did polio spread?

LH: It didn't. It was just that one case. So luckily, everybody was pretty safe. Then right after that, I left.

MK: And then you mentioned that this Yoshio, he had an office.

LH: You know, I don't know what he was doing, but he was an engineer. I think they gave him a job. I think he was the one who helped build the Olympic-sized pool at Camp II. It was beautiful. I got to see it before I left. Twenty-foot diving board. There were diving coaches, swimming coaches. (Olympic-sized pool.)

MK: Earlier, you mentioned how much you enjoyed the *'ukulele* classes. I associate *'ukulele* with Hawai'i, so was there a Hawai'i person?

LH: Yeah, there were a lot of people from Hawai'i.

MK: Would you remember any of the names of the Hawai'i people at that time?

LH: You see, I can see their faces, but I can't remember their names.

MK: The person who was instructing, was he or she from Hawai'i?

LH: Yeah, there were two instructors, and they had enough *'ukulele*s to go around. I had my own.

WN: Who were the other members in your singing group?

LH: Toyoko Hattori and Kathy Sogo. I still write to Kathy. We keep in touch. Toyo, unfortunately, after the war, (had) moved to Chicago and she opened a flower shop. I think it was in '72, somebody decided to rob her store and killed her in the process. So I couldn't even send her flowers because I couldn't get her address.

WN: Both Toyo and Kathy were from . . .

LH: San Diego.

WN: San Diego. Who was the one who taught you that Hawaiian song? I guess it was called "(Song of) Old Hawai'i"?

LH: "(Song of) Old Hawai'i," that's what it is. Well, the people who taught us *'ukulele*s had Xerox—not Xerox. They didn't use Xerox then.

WN: (Chuckles) Mimeograph?

LH: Mimeograph papers. We had songs. They had written them all, and all the chords—F, G, C, C sharp—marked, and that's how we practiced every night.

WN: So you had a Hawai'i song and songs like "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes."

LH: That was just special for the three of us. We didn't even have a name. (Chuckles) Just "The Trio from Poston III."

MK: Did you have a name in mind?

LH: You know, we were so excited, we didn't even think about it.

(Laughter)

WN: That day when they had the polio outbreak, where were you folks headed? Where were you going to perform?

LH: The first was, there was another camp in . . .

MK: Gila River?

LH: Gila River, yes. We were to go there first, and then to Rohwer, Arkansas, and then head north.

WN: Wow, that's a long way to Rohwer.

LH: Yeah. Two army trucks would transport us.

MK: Back in that time period, were there other groups, maybe sort of like the group that you were in, coming to visit Poston? Anybody from other camps coming by to entertain?

LH: No, nobody came to entertain. Oh, but the other exciting experience was when the educators came. There was a man named Miles Cary. I found out that he was (the) principal of McKinley High School. The reason I found out was that they had asked us to sing and we sang this "Song of Old Hawai'i," and he started to cry. So I went to talk to him afterwards. He said, "My name is Miles Cary, and I was principal at McKinley High School." At which point, I was so happy to see him. I didn't know him, but just happy that he was from Hawai'i. So that was the only visitor I knew about.

MK: Were there any visits from nisei veterans during your time?

LH: No, not. . . . Because I left so early, they must have came afterwards. Because my Sunday School class, each one had a name, and we all wrote . . .

MK: To a soldier.

LH: . . . to a soldier. One soldier was so sweet—I don't know how he did it—but he sent a cake. It came through the mail. (Chuckles) I was so surprised. It was all messed up, but it was a good cake.

(Laughter)

WN: This was a nisei soldier?

LH: Yeah. We only wrote to the niseis, the 442[nd Regimental Combat Team]. (WN chuckles.)

MK: You know, because you were so young then—a young adult—I was wondering, did the camp afford many opportunities to these young Japanese Americans to get together in a way that was not possible, had they been outside?

LH: I used to hear the *kotonk*s say, "This is wonderful. We've never seen so many Japanese." Because where they lived, they were the only Japanese, because they were farmers. It was a real opportunity for them to meet so many of their kind, and they were enjoying it. Really. At first, it was strange. I

heard them say, "Have you ever seen so many Japanese?" (Chuckles) I laughed. I said, "I'm from Hawai'i. We see a lot of them."

"Yeah, but that's different. We're from California. We don't see this." (Chuckles)

MK: If you had to characterize how the issei were faring, how were they faring in camp?

LH: They are marvelous people, aren't they? They are so strong. They took every day the way it came. They went on, doing things that they needed to do. Like Grandpa, planted the vegetables, planted the flowers, went hiking up the hill, picked up petrified wood and polished them and made pieces of art out from them. There was one man who worked all by himself. I happened to find him, because I was walking one night. It was such a pretty evening with a beautiful Arizona sunset. I came to where the barracks were laid out like this. Had a lot of space in between. This man decided to make a garden. I ran into it when he was finished with it. Nobody else was there besides me. But he (had) made a cactus garden, and he had a running stream, and he had plants of all kinds that he found in the desert. Yeah, it was just beautiful. I just sat there and I drank it all in. I thought, "If only I knew your name and your face, I would like to thank you for this spot of beauty that you made for us." It was just gorgeous. That whole length between the barracks—that's at least twenty feet long, about ten feet wide—it was gorgeous, just gorgeous.

MK: For someone to take the time and the interest.

LH: Yeah, and to go out and collect it and plant it. What an artist. Oh, it was really, very (artistic).

MK: What else were the issei doing to pass their time there? This man made a garden, your uncle planting vegetables, flowers.

LH: That was Grandpa.

MK: Yeah, your grandfather.

LH: People like my uncle heard about sugar beet farming. Evidently, they (the sugar beet farmers) cleared it through the army, and they came with their trucks and they picked up anybody who wanted to work the fields. They found jobs that way and could make money.

MK: How about the mothers, the older women?

LH: The women formed women's clubs, sewing clubs, and helped with the schools.

MK: You had mentioned earlier that one of the Postons, I or II, eventually had a swimming pool.

LH: Yeah, Camp II.

MK: How about theaters or any other type of facilities, or was it just the mess hall that was used?

LH: Yeah, the mess hall. They had sports. Hmm. I had my Sunday school. I think all the women had something else going on. And the dances. I mentioned that they had some *Bon* dances after I left.

MK: You were working at the hospital . . .

LH: It's really a clinic, because the main hospital was in Camp I, and each camp had its own clinic.

MK: In the clinic that you worked at, what sorts of problems did people come in with?

LH: You know, the everyday kind of thing—cuts and bruises, broken bones. One man came in, he was mopping the cafeteria, and he backed into a big pot of boiling water and it spilled over his arm. It was just, his whole arm was burned, and he came to have that nursed. They sent him to Camp I to the hospital. But we had a doctor, an MD and a RN. Each (clinic, each camp had an MD and a nurse).

MK: Were they Japanese Americans?

LH: Yeah, they were people of the camp. (The only non-Japanese were teachers, and they were prohibited from socializing with the internees.)

MK: In terms of equipment or supplies, were there any shortages, or was it okay?

LH: No shortages, because the army saw to that. They kept it replenished when the doctors would make requests, (food, etc.).

MK: So, if you were to assess the living situation at Poston, how would you assess it for yourself?

LH: I'm not a Californian and I didn't have to go through their experience, because my family was safe. They had their home, they had (not been) uprooted, and their money hadn't been frozen. So I was very confident. I acted like this was a big (summer camp for rich kids,) camp life.

MK: Did you ever have a feeling of, "*Chee,* what's going to happen to me? I just move when people tell me to move." How did you deal with that?

LH: I just knew that it had to be done, because these were wartime conditions, that you didn't have any freedom. So what I wanted to do was make most of this historical experience that I was having. So the night that—what do they call these people who were born in America, but educated in Japan?

WN/MK: *Kibei.*

LH: *Kibei*s. They organized a meeting one night, and we could hear these gongs (calling the meeting). This was when the 442 was being organized, too. There was a lot of controversy. People were very angry—and not too many, but there were very vociferous people. That night, when I heard the gong, I said, "I gotta go see what's happening."

My aunt said, "You stay out of it."

I said, "I'm not going to attend the meeting, I'm just going to stay on the side and listen to what's going on."

"You stay out of trouble."

So I crept up to this place where they were having this meeting and I stayed on the rim so they couldn't see me. But what the *kibei*s were saying was, "How could you possibly go off to war and leave your parents behind barbed-wire (fences)? Don't do this. You got to take care of them, or at least see to it that they're cared for. This is a terrible thing to do to your parents." You know how Confucianism is one of the first rules of all Asians, you take care of your parents. So that was their whole premise. It wasn't, "Don't go join the army." It wasn't that. It was, "Look after your parents."

WN: How did you know they were *kibei?*

LH: Because of their speech pattern. They didn't speak English that well.

WN: Oh. They were speaking in English or Japanese?

LH: In English, and in Japanese. (The word for it was *Oyakōkō*. They used that word—to care for parents; to be loyal to parents.)

WN: How many people do you think do you remember were there at that meeting?

LH: Oh, at least twenty or thirty people. I think curiosity drove a lot of them, too. They just wanted to know what kinds of arguments they would make. Whereas in Camp I, it was very different. (There) was a riot. They took the leader of the nisei group. His name was [Saburo] Kido. He had been asked to speak in Congress, and he spoke for the Japanese Americans and to let the senators and the representatives know that we are loyal Americans. One senator from Florida—I can't remember his name—he said to Kido, something about, "But you are not Native Americans. That's the difference between you and me." And Kido lost his temper.

He said, "Senator, you don't look like an Indian to me." That was the wrong thing to say on the floor of Congress. But he had his say, and we were proud of it. When he came back, I think a lot of—it could have been *kibei*s, we had no idea who did it—but there were angry enough people that they attacked him in the night with lead pipes and they beat him up. He was badly beaten.

WN: How did you hear about incidents like that?

LH: Oh, word gets around fast.

WN: You know, was there a newspaper there at Poston?

LH: No, sadly, there was no newspaper.

WN: Santa Anita had one, but Poston didn't?

LH: Yeah, Poston didn't. We didn't have the people who wanted to organize that.

MK: You mentioned that like Mr. Kido was beaten up. Within the relocation camp, were there the equivalents of, say, policemen, or somebody who sort of kept order?

LH: No, just the army.

MK: I know that, eventually, you left the camp. You were one of the early ones . . .

LH: The first to leave my camp.

MK: . . . to leave your camp. Now, if you could just tell us how all that came about, that you were able to leave camp.

LH: Well, after that FBI interrogation, we were given the fifty dollars, and the train ticket out of the camp. There were five of us, the first to leave. They drove us to this little town. I was trying to remember the name of it. I wrote it down and forgot it. It's a tiny, little town (Wickenburg, Arizona), it's just a train stop. We were to wait there (at the general store) for the train. I watched this little boy on his tricycle going up and down, up and down, and he would wave at everybody coming by. I thought, "What a cute little boy." (The train arrived. I climbed on.) I was shocked, and I was a little bit frightened because it was a troop train—all soldiers. I thought, "Oh, boy, here it

comes." So I was sure to find a seat that was way in the corner, and there were two seaters facing each other—that was the only available seat anyway. So I took the corner one so I could make myself as small as possible. I thought, "Well, any moment now, they're going to say 'You dirty, yellow Jap,' and I'm going to get beaten up," and I'm sitting there, waiting to see what would happen. We went on and on, and they ignored me. I relaxed. I thought, "Okay, they're not ready to beat me up." Then we came to Phoenix.

The conductor said, "Five minutes." I wasn't going to get off, so I just stayed in the corner and waited. They all went out, and the guys came back, and then I looked down because I thought I felt something. There's a Coke bottle with a straw in there. The friendliest Irish face, said, "Here. You must be thirsty. It's hot." He gave me the Coke. I became thoroughly relaxed. I felt that they're not going to beat me up, I'm all right. (It still is the best Coke I ever had.) (Chuckles) Then we got to Chicago.

MK: You were saying that there were five of you.

LH: I don't know where the others went. There was a married couple, and there were an older man and a young boy. But we all got separated, because we had to look for seats.

MK: There were no escorts?

LH: No. But they told us that when we got to Chicago, that there would be a group of people meeting us, and that they would drive us to a Campbellite church. These people turned over their school and the dormitories over to us, and they gave us refuge for two weeks. Then we were to find (our) way from there. But we had to report, first of all, to an organization that the government set up. They wanted to be sure that we had a place to go to, that we won't be wandering the streets. So they made sure that we had a place to stay.

MK: Besides that test that you had to take, and the question twenty-seven and twenty-eight, was there any other screening of you folks before you left?

LH: No.

MK: What did your family think about you leaving alone?

LH: Well, they knew that staying in the camp wasn't going to do any good for me. I needed to go to school, I wanted to go to school. I had enough adventure time in the camps. I was ready to move on.

MK: So your aunt did not oppose your going off alone?

LH: No, because they would be leaving pretty soon, too.

MK: Tell us about the Campbellites who helped out.

LH: It was just a wonderful experience. Those people were so kind. They turned their dormitories over for us, they turned their mess hall over to us, and the church services, too, of course. But we had at least two weeks over there, and it was comfortable. And there, you can get your bearings. So, I found a place to stay—I found an apartment—and I found a school.

MK: What was the name of the school you found?

LH: It’s called St. Xavier’s College for Women. It was a Catholic university. I thought, at first, I’d try for Chicago—University of Chicago—but they were not accepting Japanese Americans. Atomic bomb research, I found out later on, so no Japanese Americans until much later. Much later.

MK: How much time did you spend at St. Xavier’s?

LH: I was there for one year, and then I found Drake University in Des Moines [Iowa].

MK: And at St. Xavier’s, what did you take up?

LH: Because I was a freshman, I had to take all the required courses. They followed the University of Chicago program. They grouped together like social studies, and they grouped together sciences. It was required of all freshman. We used to get their speakers from the University of Chicago. The most exciting, and I didn’t realize how exciting it was, Dr. (Adler).

MK: Mortimer Adler?

LH: Yes. He came to speak at our school, and I didn’t really know who he was until much, much later. Years later.

MK: I think, for years, he used to have a column called, “The Great Books.”

LH: Yes, yes.

MK: And I was also interested in what you did for fun at St. Xavier’s—your extracurricular activities.

LH: The girls were all so nice to me. They all wanted to take me home, because we’re such a—to them, it was a neat experience to take the Asian girl home and have dinner. (Chuckles) That was nice, because I got good food. That was fun. Their parents were all very kind. Very wonderful.

MK: I believe it was at that college that you played on the basketball team?

LH: Yeah.

MK: Tell us about that experience.

LH: I needed to get some exercise, and I couldn’t get it in my apartment, and I didn’t know how to go about getting exercise at that time. So I joined the basketball team. I was the only Asian in the entire league, because it’s a small Catholic league. I think there were only about five colleges. I’m the only Asian, and they think that is so cute. (MK chuckles.) I’m so short. I’m only 5' 2". The rest are all about six feet.

MK: What kind of player were you?

LH: Terrible. I was just a lousy, dirty player. Because those days, they cut the court in half, so you were either a guard or you were a forward. Forwards could shoot for the basket, guards can only take the ball and pass it on to the forward. If you crossed the line, you lost the ball. So I learned. I watched other nisei girls play in their leagues. What they used to do was take the ball, and throw it as far as you can and run. And use your elbow all the way so get your opponents out of the way, grab the ball, and pass it on to your forward, if you were a guard. So I learned to do it that way. I thought, “Oh, good. I think I’ll lean towards the ankles.” That way, the ball will bounce back to me.

(Laughter)

WN: We only have about a minute left.

MK: Well, shall we end here, before we continue with going to Drake next time? Can we do that?

LH: Okay.

MK: That will be just one more session.

WN: One more session after this one.

LH: Oh, okay.

MK: Okay, we'll end here, then.

WN: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 55-17-3-10 and 55-18-3-10

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Lily Hatanaka (LH)

Honolulu, Hawaiʻi

January 11, 2010

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

(NOTE: Throughout interview, dog barks intermittently.)

MK: [This is an] interview with Lily Yuriko Hatanaka. This is session number three on January 11, 2010, in Honolulu, Hawaiʻi, and we're also joined by Bun-*chan* [LH's dog].

What we're going to do today is we're going to backtrack a little bit, and have you share some stories that you mentioned after the interview that related to your time at Poston III. You know, before we left, you mentioned that the Japanese Americans had occasion to do things with the Native Americans in that area, and if you could tell us about that.

LH: Oh, the Apache reservation. It was only because of basketball. It was the military commander who suggested that we go and meet the Apaches, and play at the reservation. And of course, it was accepted very enthusiastically. The guys practiced as hard as they could, and the day came. I don't know which came first—whether they came to play us, or we. . . . I think they came to play us. That was, for me, one of the most exciting experiences. I had always read how well Indians can run, and it is exactly that. It was just beautiful to watch them run. I didn't care about the game. They were so beautiful. Just to see them run was such an exciting experience. And of course, they were very good, because they could run so fast. It didn't even bother them—they weren't breathing hard. They weren't even sweating. Our guys were just gasping for breath, like, "My lungs are on fire!" A couple of guys would say that. At halftime, when somebody called a break, they'd all just collapse—just collapse on the ground, just breathing and gasping for breath. And, of course, it showed. The score was something like seventy-five to twenty, and we were the twenty. (WN chuckles.)

MK: When the Apache came to camp to do the basketball game, were there occasions where you could actually go up to them and talk with them?

LH: They didn't give us that much time, so they just came and they played, and we just surrounded them. We wanted to talk, but there was no time. They were hustled back into the trucks and off they went to camp to their homes. We went over to play them, but only the guys—the players—could go. We couldn't go.

MK: How did they fare when they went there to play?

LH: Same thing. Something like seventy-five to twenty, and we were the twenty. (Chuckles) But their exciting experience was to go to the general store. They wanted to get little gifts for their families. When they met the general store manager, they discovered that he was a graduate of

Harvard, and that he had his Ph.D. They were thoroughly excited about that, and they asked him, “Why? (What are you doing here?)”

He said, “These are my people.” That’s all he said. (It was a profound statement for them—for us all.)

MK: So the manager of the general store was also a Native American Indian.

LH: Yes. Who had gone to Harvard.

MK: I was wondering, to what extent did you, as a camp person, have a chance to be on the outside?

LH: We couldn’t. There’s no opportunity at all.

MK: How about opportunities to go out there to work or to shop?

LH: Oh, only to work. Because the sugar beet people were desperate for working hands, they came to the camps and they hired. Only the men could go. The army trucks took them there to work, and they were returned. They could only go by day.

MK: And, you know, Poston is in Arizona. What was it like for you, in terms of the temperatures and weather conditions, like wind or sand, things like that?

LH: It was a desert, a real desert life, and lots of desert flora and fauna. The winds were fierce, just fierce. So even in our homes, our camps, they couldn’t make it sand-free. So when the winds were very high, the sand would just pour right in—not lots of it, but you could feel it. It would slap you in the face.

MK: When you say that the sands would pour in, would it actually get into your living quarters?

LH: Yes, because it was lumber, and it wasn’t perfectly put together—as close as they could. But the winds were that strong—you know, desert winds.

MK: How about the heat?

LH: It wasn’t that bad. But the temperatures read very high. When I left, it was about 103 in the shade. It was hot. But it was dry heat, it was not humid heat—it’s very dry. So it’s tolerable.

MK: So how did people deal with the heat or the cold?

LH: You wore a scarf to keep the dust out of your nose and your mouth.

MK: Having come from the island of Maui, how did you deal with the change in the flora and fauna, as you saw it?

LH: Well, one big adventure. I wanted to learn everything about it.

MK: And you also mentioned that you met Miles Cary.

LH: Yes.

MK: Tell us about that.

LH: He was hired (dog barks) by the U.S. government to do some kind of administrative work with the education of the people in camp. So it wasn't just Poston. When he came to visit, he was in Poston I. We didn't know about him, and we were invited over for a party that night. Three of us, Toyo, Kat, and I sang "A Song of Old Hawai'i," and Miles started to weep. After we finished singing, we went to talk to him. He said, "My name is Miles Cary. I was principal at McKinley High, so Hawai'i is my home. You made me very homesick," he said.

MK: Before the three of you sang that song, did you know that he would be there?

LH: No. No, we had no idea. It was just this party and now, "Will you sing?"

MK: You said that you had the party at Poston I. I was curious, how far was Poston I, II, and III from each other?

LH: See, it took at least fifteen to thirty minutes to get from one camp to the next. It was spaced that far apart.

MK: And was there a freedom of movement to go from camp to camp?

LH: Yes, there was freedom. But it was just too hot if you didn't have an army truck or some kind of vehicle. It was just so hot. No roads—it was just all desert sand, so it's difficult walking.

MK: Were there any occasions that people from the different camps would get together?

LH: No, no.

MK: So basically, it was three separate camps.

LH: Separate camps, mm-hmm. And Camp I was the main hospital, so (dog barks) that's the travel connection between the three camps.

MK: I know at the hospital, you had medical treatment. How about things like dental treatment?

LH: We had dentists. Each clinic had at least two or three dentists, and they were given the chairs and all the equipment they needed.

MK: The dentists were Japanese Americans or. . . ?

LH: Uh-huh. We had enough of them, or a lot of them.

MK: Were there any services that you felt were lacking?

LH: Schools, because they did what they could with what we had, and that was just one of the—what would you call them?—the units that the army built. They converted that into classrooms. Until, I think, a few months later, they hired teachers who were willing to come and work, so they brought some people from the East Coast and all over. They were willing to come and work, and they were housed separately from us and separated by a barbed-wire fence. They were not allowed to socialize with us.

MK: I was wondering, at Poston, what was the major means of communicating with each other?

LH: It's because we had such a good mess hall (chuckles) and that's where we would all. . . . Mess hall was a good place to communicate. And the washroom, because that was a general gathering

place, and it was also the latrines. So while the ladies are doing the laundry, it became a good place to socialize.

MK: How about something as formal as a newsletter or a newspaper?

LH: Nothing. Nobody thought of making a newspaper. But the churches were active, so Sunday was a very, very active place and everybody gathered. The Buddhist had their own, and the Christians had their own. My Sunday school class sang the two songs for the services—"The Lord Bless You and Keep You."

MK: It was at Poston where you taught Sunday school?

LH: Yes. I had already organized them in Santa Anita. They were two years younger than me—they were fourteen and fifteen.

MK: When you were teaching at the Sunday school, were there any prohibitions on what you could teach or any guidance that the administration gave you?

LH: No, no. We were completely free to do as we wished. My Sunday school class decided that we would contribute to the war effort, so everyone took a name out of a—I forget who gave us that—but the names of all our soldiers, our nisei soldiers. Everybody wrote to them. Everybody had a name. One cute soldier—and I can't remember his name—but he sent us a cake, a sheet cake. Of course, by the time it arrived in our camp, it was all crumbled and just crumbs. But it was good.

MK: Did any of your students share what the soldiers had written?

LH: Yeah. We always ended every Sunday school [by reading] the letters that we got.

MK: What sorts of things would the nisei soldiers write to you folks?

LH: Well, most of them were so grateful to get a letter, just to be in touch with someone. I guess they weren't getting too many letters from home, so the general trend was, "Thank you so much for writing. We really appreciate it, and we'd like to hear about what was going on." But at that time, I had no idea—even I didn't know until very lately—that we were being censored. I had no idea. But I rather imagine that most of those letters were censored—the words were cut out.

MK: In terms of your own communication with your own family back in Maui, how much communication did you have?

LH: I kept writing. My sister finally told me a year ago, "All your letters were censored. All we got was prepositional phrases." Just "Dear family, how are you, I'm fine," and everything was cut out, and "Love, Lily." So they said they had no idea what I wrote about. I did write about the camp, I did write how it was structured and what the social structure was, and what kinds of things we were doing, and names of people they might have known. So all that was cut out.

MK: You just said that sometimes, you mentioned names of people they might've known. Were there people from Hawai'i or Maui specifically that. . . ?

LH: There was no one from Maui, but there were some people from Hawai'i. When I went to work at the clinic, the nurse there, was from Maui. She was very kind. She said, "If you want to be a nurse, I'll teach you all I can."

MK: Is that the woman that came from the Nakasone family in Lahaina?

LH: Yes. Her brother [Nobuyuki Nakasone] was a famous doctor here.

MK: Yeah.

LH: Her brother—another brother—was a famous coach at, I think, ʻAiea.

MK: Yes, yes, you're right.

LH: Toshi.

MK: Yes.

LH: Toshi[yuki] Nakasone.

MK: But other than that family, you don't quite remember anybody else?

LH: I don't know anybody else.

MK: We spoke a little bit about the nisei soldiers. In camp, what was the feeling that people had? What were the feelings people had about Japanese Americans going off to war?

LH: The only time I was really made aware of a different point of view was the night the *kibei*s called that meeting. That ominous sound I'll never forget, because they had nothing else to use as communication tools, so they hit triangles, they hit cowbells and whatever, to gather the people together. I wanted to see what it was all about, but my aunt says, "I'm responsible for you. Don't you get involved."

I said, "I'm just going to listen. I just want to hear what they got to say." So I crawled up to the edge of the—it was in a kind of like a gully, so they met at the bottom, and I stood on the hill and listened. What they were saying was, "We don't object to anything else except if you go off to war, who's going to look after your mother and your father? Are you going to leave them behind this barbed-wire fence and not do anything about their care? We're asking you to do something for them, before you go marching off." That was the whole message. I thought that was a very good point of view.

MK: How did the young men react to that message?

LH: I think they were torn. I'm sure they were torn. Because the first truck that I went to see off, the first wave, the army, very, very kindly, took only four or five at a time—they didn't take hundreds. So one truck and five—what do you call them?—recruits, and they sat there very quietly. I could almost see their brains working. "I'll be back for you. I'll be back, don't worry. I'll take care of you, Mom and Dad, don't worry." That's what I got. That's the message I got. There was a tacit understanding with everybody seeing them off—don't anybody cry. We send them off, we send them off. We don't cheer them, but we just send them off. So, we didn't say a word. I didn't dare look at their parents. I was afraid to. The trucks started, and then they rolled down, and the sand and the dust made a huge ball, and that's when we all cried, quietly. We didn't want to hurt their parents.

MK: Were there any occasions where maybe some of the men who went off were hurt or died during the time you were there?

LH: Well, I left, you see, so I don't know what happened. All I know is that I prayed that they would all come back and take care of their parents.

MK: What were your personal feelings about that?

LH: Very sad. It was the saddest moment of my life.

MK: And, changing the subject, as we catch our loose ends, you were mentioning, too, that there was a science fair, and the issei helped.

LH: The teachers got the children all interested in the flora and fauna of the desert, and so they made a study of it. The children went out to collect all the plants, and they found ways to plant them. They collected all the lizards and the Gila monsters. The grandparents and the parents and everybody went out to the desert floor and picked up twigs and vines, and they made cages. Some of them had little doors, too, with the little cage latch for the door. All the lizards and all the desert animals are collected like that. They managed to make benches with whatever logs they could find. They set them up so that it was like an art gallery. I called it, in my mind, then, I called it "the science fair" because it was just so exciting and it was just so wonderful. They were so involved. The plants were beautiful, too. They were arranged so beautifully. But those cages were a work of art. I hope they saved them, because they were so beautiful.

MK: You know, in the camp, did people have pets?

LH: No. No pets. No one was allowed to bring pets.

MK: When you mentioned that they could go out to a desert floor and collect the items, who were the ones who were allowed to go out to collect the items?

LH: Oh, we could go, because we were bordered by the river. The FBI—we didn't know then—but the FBI was watching. In fact, that one man—I think I mentioned it—he went into. . . . We would all go to the river to swim, some went fishing. But I noticed him in the trees and moving around. I never thought much of it, until much later when everybody said, "Did you know that man that was in there in the forest? Did you see him?"

I say, "Yeah, I thought he was just looking around."

"Well he made a raft."

I didn't see the raft, but everybody kept on exclaiming about how beautiful it was. He had spent so much time making the raft, and it really was like a home. They said, you could see like this was the bedroom, this was the kitchen, this was a reading room, and it must have been, really, a beautiful piece of work. When it was ready, he took the raft out to the river, and he rafted. He must've been about an hour and a half out, and then he turned the bend, and there was the FBI waiting for him. Everybody thought it was so funny. At first, I laughed, and then I thought, "Oh, that's so sad. He worked so hard."

MK: Were there any repercussions because of that, for either him or for the camp?

LH: No. It was just forgotten, and we went on our way.

MK: You mentioned that you could go to the river. . . . Well, there's this man, going out into the forest, getting things, people fishing. What else could you do at the river?

LH: That's all. Nothing else—just fishing and swimming. The army gave us transportation to the river and back.

MK: When you were in the camp, did you—this might be a ridiculous question, I don't know—but to what extent did you feel . . .

LH: Confined?

MK: Yes.

LH: There were no fences, no barbed wire, so I didn't feel confined. It never occurred to me to try to escape, because I didn't know where I really was, and where the nearest city would be, and how I would be able to get a ticket to go to someplace. So I didn't even think about it.

MK: Another thing is that, I know eventually you left the camp and you attended school. But was that something that you sought as a way to get out of camp or. . . ?

LH: I just knew I had to continue school. I can't stop. So when the opportunity came, I left. Chicago was a good place. It was. . . . The atmosphere was friendly. That surprised me, for being such a big city, and for all the activity of soldiers and sailors. They seemed to treat us like human beings, so it was a comfortable place to be.

MK: When you say, "we," was there a group of Japanese Americans that you mostly hung out with in Chicago?

LH: Well in my apartment building, there were at least one, two, three of us, three apartment people. We got together, and we used to go to the movies. The movies were grand those days, because in Chicago—I'll never forget. . . . I forgot the name of the movie, I think it was a movie with Danny Kaye. But before the movies started, they always presented some kind of whatever popular group existed then. That's when I heard about Nat King Cole. He had a trio, and I think he played the piano, and there was a drummer and a guitar. I thought he was so wonderful, just wonderful. You know that famous song, "There was a boy . . ." You know that one? ["Nature Boy."] Oh, that was my first experience with really listening to a famous group. I was thrilled to death. But they did that every Saturday. Some group would play before the movie.

MK: When you were in Chicago, I know that mainly, you were going to school. How did you manage to support yourself?

LH: Oh, my parents sent money.

MK: So that was sufficient?

LH: Yeah, that was sufficient.

MK: . . . to help pay the tuition, and the living costs? You were okay?

LH: Yeah. I was okay.

MK: After four semesters at St. Xavier's [College for Women], you ended up going to Drake [University] in the Midwest. Now how did that happen?

LH: I heard about it through a couple of other girls from Seattle, I think. They said, "That school will accept niseis, so why don't you try there?" So I did. My friend Molly, for some reason, she was able to get into Chicago. She was a biochem[istry] major, and they accepted her. But Chicago was not accepting (niseis), and I later found out it was because of the atom bomb. I guess if you were not a true science major, it was okay.

MK: When you were saying that they weren't accepting Japanese Americans at the University of Chicago because of the atom bomb, what do you really. . . . What about the atom bomb?

LH: We didn't know anything about it until after it fell. I didn't know anything about it. But then, it occurred to me. "Oh, so that's why they would not accept us." But Molly got in because she was in biochem. But all those other people I knew in physics and other pure sciences, they didn't get in. They had to get into other schools.

MK: So it was more like the Japanese Americans were seen as not eligible to come to Chicago for security reasons?

LH: More like an enemy alien, I think, because they were afraid we might send the information to Japan.

MK: When you heard word that you were accepted at Drake, how did you make your way there and everything?

LH: Just went down to the train station, bought a ticket, and then I went to Des Moines.

MK: While you were at Drake, where did you stay?

LH: Oh, they had dormitories, so that made it so easy to just get a train ticket and get to Des Moines, and take a taxi to the school, and I got my room.

MK: And there, you also got together with a family from Hawai'i—the Kagawas?

LH: Yes. Much later, but they had moved to Des Moines. It's only because Betty [Kagawa] and I were in the same class. I forget which we were in, and she invited me home to her mother's. That was so much fun because they had a big family. There was Siegfried, and May, and June, and then a young baby came much later.

MK: You were saying that Drake was one of the schools accepting nisei at that time, so was there a population of Japanese Americans there?

LH: No. All over, because Oberlin was accepting them, Pennsylvania was. Lots of schools were accepting them. Only the ones who were in atomic research did not accept them.

MK: Oh, okay. While you were at Drake, what did you take up as your field of study?

LH: At first, I thought I was going to go into nursing. But then one semester later, I decided to get into education.

MK: Why is that?

LH: I wanted to be with non-sick people, and I thought that kids would be so much fun.

MK: I know at St. Xavier's, you had played basketball. Now at Drake, did you continue?

LH: No, you couldn't, because these were really tall people, and very, very athletic. Indiana, Iowa—they're really, really into basketball, men and women. The first year I was there, there was a basketball tournament. It seemed like the entire state of Iowa was there to watch the game. I never saw so many people attend a girls' basketball game. It's that popular, and it's that good—very good.

MK: You didn't try out.

LH: Oh, I didn't dare try out.

(Laughter)

MK: At Drake, what kind of social life did you have?

LH: The dorm was a good place. We had Saturday, or Sunday dinners, and the dorm was very nice. We'd come back to the dorm, and we'd have at least an hour social time together—mostly bridge. Everybody played bridge.

MK: Your being a Japanese American, who had been incarcerated at camp, how did people react to you or treat you?

LH: Those people in Iowa didn't know anything about it, and they never asked. They treated me like one of them, like maybe I came off an Iowa farm and came to this school. (Chuckles)

MK: How about from your side, did you ever say, "Do you know where I was for the past few months?"

LH: No. I didn't want to talk about it. I was so afraid of creating any kind of controversy. You just never know when someone is going to pick up the ball and decide to become an activist, and I didn't want to start anything like that.

MK: When you left the camp, were there any instructions given to you folks about what you should, or shouldn't say, or do?

LH: Nothing like that, but they did have—the government did have—in Chicago, a group to take care of all the stats—name, birth dates, all of that, and where we were going. They made sure that we went to the Campbellite campus first for two weeks so we could orient ourselves and find our way. So in the two weeks, I found an apartment, and then I found St. Xav[ier]'s.

MK: And then after that, was there any reporting in?

LH: No.

MK: You were just free to do as you. . . ?

LH: Free to do.

MK: And then I know that in 1947, you graduated from Drake with a degree in education, and I was wondering, in what field or grades of education did you specialize in?

LH: We didn't specialize, we took all general courses. So when I came back, I had to attend all the summer school at UH [University of Hawai'i] to get into a particular area.

MK: And at that time when you graduated, did you already know you wanted to do secondary ed[ucation] or elementary ed[ucation]?

LH: I didn't know, I really didn't know. But I was. . . . I had a tendency towards junior high and high school, so when they gave me my first job, I had fifth-graders.

MK: And in terms of the subject area that you would like to teach, which way were you leaning?

LH: I was heading into social studies.

MK: And I know that after you graduated from Drake, you ended up going to LA.

LH: Yes. I didn't want to go home right away—I needed some more adventure time.

(Laughter)

I didn't feel like I was ready, so I went to LA, and I found friends—Kathy, the girl that sang with me, one of the trio. She had an apartment, so she said, "Come stay with me until you find a place of your own. Or if you don't, you could stay with us."

I thought, "Okay, let's go get a job and just get some adventure time in." So I worked for Dr. [James] Goto. He was quite a famous doctor and quite a personality.

MK: Now, who was this Dr. Goto? I heard the name, but tell us about him.

LH: It was mostly his personality, I think. He was such a strong personality. He almost had dictatorial powers, the way he did everything. When he said, "Go get this," you went double-time.

MK: He was a nisei?

LH: Yes.

MK: He had been incarcerated and let out?

LH: Uh-huh. His wife [Masako] was also a doctor, and she came from the [Kusayanagi] family, and they owned the land that City Hall now sits on.

MK: We had heard that it was quite a large parcel.

LH: Large family, yeah. The father had bought this girls' dormitory because he had such a large family. So all the girls had a room of their own. I think there were six girls and one boy. That's how big the house was. I heard this all from their cousin, who was also with me in Chicago—we were in the same boardinghouse.

MK: What was your work for this doctor?

LH: He wanted someone around just to do as he asked, so you're just in from one room to the next. He'd say, "Get this kit, bring it here," or "Take this patient to that room," so it was just a go-for job.

MK: At that time, where were you living with your friend Kathy?

LH: Uh-huh.

MK: So where did you folks live?

LH: What's the name of that street? It's almost downtown, because the bus took us from there to his office.

MK: So it was outside of Japantown?

LH: It's close, very close.

MK: I was wondering, in those days, how difficult or easy was it for someone who was Japanese American to find housing in LA?

LH: Oh, no problem, no problem with the housing.

MK: How were you folks treated?

LH: I had no problems at all. I didn't see anything. There was no controversy. I think there were more problems between Hawai'i niseis and the California niseis. They just couldn't tolerate our style, they couldn't understand it. When we walked into a Japanese restaurant run by a nisei, especially if it said, "Noodles," we would ask for *saimin,* and they would get so upset. (MK chuckles.)

They would say, "We don't call it *saimin,* we call it *udon*. When you come into our store, you call for *udon*. *Saimin* is Hawaiian." They'd get very upset.

I thought, "Gee, that's strange. So what, it's still noodles." (Chuckles)

MK: Huh. So when you were in LA, were there other Hawai'i niseis that you would get together with?

LH: No, because I didn't know them. I just knew Kathy and her family, because her sisters were all there, too. And the girl who also worked for Dr. Goto, she was a steno.

MK: How long did you stay in LA?

LH: I think about eight or nine months. He was so angry when I said, "Uh, and I want to thank you for all that you taught me."

He said, "So what?"

"I'm leaving."

"How dare you leave. I didn't even have a chance to get you over to my house for a dinner. Now you stay long enough so I can do that."

I said, "I can't. I got my ticket already." Oh, he was upset. (Chuckles)

MK: How come you decided to come back home when you did?

LH: The adventure was over. I had enough of it. (Chuckles)

MK: You had enough.

WN: How would you compare Chicago with LA, in terms of the treatment of nisei, or the whole environment?

LH: Chicago is a lot more sophisticated and a very warm place, because there were so many people from Poland and the eastern Jews. So because they come from immigrant backgrounds, the whole atmosphere was very warm towards everyone.

WN: LA wasn't as warm?

LH: Yeah. LA, you could see the division—the Mexicans here, the Japanese here, Chinese there. It just was separate.

MK: Then you made the decision that you'd return to Hawai'i. How did your family feel? What were they thinking all this time? Here you are, you come out of camp, you go to school, go to LA.

LH: My father was very, very understanding about all of this, because he'd been through it all. So he was happy that I had all of this adventuring, and that it was over, and that I was ready to come home and settle down.

MK: By that time, what were your siblings doing?

LH: I think they were awed. They just didn't know how to ask me questions. They didn't know where to begin, or what to do about it. I didn't know how to put them at ease. We just never crossed that bridge, so they never did ask, but my granddaughter did. Akari [LH's granddaughter] did such a great job that her teacher sent the report to *Scholastic Magazine,* and she won a national award for it. And they printed issues of it, and 'Iolani [School] still has copies of it, and they teach it to the second-graders. So the only reason I know they read it, when I go on my Friday duties. They all call come running up and they say, "I read about you."

MK: I know that you came back to Hawai'i, and you went to the UH [University of Hawai'i]?

LH: Yes, for summer sessions, because they were so short of teachers there, because it was right after the war. So Mr. [Franklyn] Skinner, the superintendent, he said, "I think you have enough background. We'll send you out there where we need teachers." So I went to Ha'ikū School, and had the fifth-graders.

MK: Okay. Shall we change tapes?

END OF TAPE NO. 55-17-3-10

TAPE NO. 55-18-3-10

MK: This is tape two of session three with Lily Hatanaka and Bun-*chan.*

Now we have you back in Hawai'i, and you started off teaching at Ha'ikū School fifth-graders.

LH: Fifth-graders.

MK: Now, when you look back on that experience, what stands out in your mind about that one year at Ha'ikū?

LH: I just loved it. Those kids were so cute—really, really cute. So open, but so honest, and so much fun.

MK: How was the community of Ha'ikū, the parents?

LH: It is such a small community. They're all involved in the pineapple and sugar business, so they feel like you have to belong to them, you have to be a part of their community. So one PTA

[Parent-Teacher Association] meeting, I wasn't feeling well, so I didn't go—I stayed in bed. They were upset, very, very upset. You have to come to every meeting. So at the third meeting, they all said, "Will you introduce her?"

I said, "I was here at the first meeting."

They said, "We will introduce you." They were quite adamant about my missing that one meeting. They didn't like it at all.

MK: Living there and being in a small community, to what extent were you involved in the life of the community, outside of the school?

LH: They didn't expect any of that. They just wanted you to do a good job with the children, and they were happy with what I did.

MK: After Ha'ikū School, what schools did you end up teaching at?

LH: Mr. Skinner asked me to go to Maui High [School], because there was an opening and they couldn't find a full-time, registered teacher. I was still working for my certificate, so he sent me there. That, too, was a real great adventure.

MK: That was your alma mater.

LH: Yes.

MK: When you went back, you weren't that much older than you were before. So what was it like for you to return to the school and become a colleague with the teachers who taught you? What was that like?

LH: I didn't feel much of anything, except that one teacher resented it very much. She was the only one who gave me any kind of feeling that I didn't belong. But everybody else made me feel very comfortable.

MK: Being young and having graduated from that school, did you feel any sense of oddness in working alongside with your former teachers?

LH: No, I didn't feel it, except for that one teacher. Everybody else seemed to be very cordial.

MK: Having been on the Mainland, having been in a camp, were there ever any questions about your experiences?

LH: They never asked. They never asked.

MK: Was it common knowledge, say, in your hometown, that you had gone through that experience?

LH: Yes. But nobody asked. I think they felt uncomfortable. I always felt like keeping your distance, because they felt like I didn't feel comfortable with it, and they didn't want to make me feel uncomfortable.

MK: How did your parents feel about your experiences?

LH: My mother took it very personally—she thought that I had suffered a lot. My father saw that I felt it was a great adventure.

(Laughter)

MK: Very interesting. I know that you went to Maui High, and you also taught at Kahului School?

LH: Yes. One year at Lānaʻi, too.

MK: Lānaʻi, Kahului . . .

LH: Then ʻIao School—it's in Wailuku.

MK: Also, Baldwin High School?

LH: Yes.

MK: So, you taught on Maui for, what, ten years?

LH: Haʻikū, Kahului, Maui High, ʻIao School was for several years, and then Baldwin High one year, and then I got married, and then we moved to Honolulu in '69.

MK: So you taught the elementary school grades, and intermediate at ʻIao?

LH: Intermediate.

MK: And . . .

LH: And the high school.

MK: And high school. Now, when you look back at that experience, what did you find different about being at the different levels? What were your feelings about that?

LH: The kids are just wonderful. They're open-minded, and they're so willing to learn, and so willing to learn how to ask. That was the most exciting part of it, no matter what level. The most difficult part of it was in the high school, because by now, they had some set prejudices, and they didn't know how to unravel that so they could ask questions that would begin to permeate the areas we were looking at. So it was when we first started American history, for example, I had a wonderful book by Edwin Fenton—he's one of the famous writers of American history. That was a real adventure for those kids, because they're so used to to turning to page twenty-nine, and name, date, the issue, and that's all. But this didn't deal with it like that. They just, say, like a letter from Jefferson, now they had to take that letter and learn how to raise questions. Why do you raise questions? Because you're not sure about who the author is. Do you know who the author is? They had to begin to raise questions like that, and then collect the data and then do something with that data. They had to move from that direction and learn how to make relationships. So we had to spend some time with all the sociology, the politics, all of that, then create relationships. So it was fun, it was really, really fun.

MK: Was that standard, or was that something that you brought to the class?

LH: Well, when I attended one summer school, there was a UCLA professor who came, and he gave us the plan that was, this is the plan that came out of a famous Catholic college—Pepperdine. This was developed by a Pepperdine professor, and UCLA was beginning to use it, and so we were introduced to that. It was called "the inquiry method," how to ask questions. That was really great.

MK: How did the teachers of long-standing, there, take to this kind of change?

LH: They didn't like it, they didn't like it.

MK: So how did the school deal with that?

LH: I didn't have any problems with the parents. I have a letter, yet, from one of the students who wrote me a letter after he went to the naval academy. His professor said, "You write a letter to the teacher who taught you how to think like this." So he did. When he came home for Christmas vacation, I saw somebody at my mailbox.

I said, "Doug, what are you doing here?"

He said, "I'm home on vacation, and I got something for you." So that's the letter he wrote. In the final sentence, he said, "Keep on teaching like this. It's just great."

MK: I like that way of teaching.

LH: Yeah. You aren't forced to memorize, because you just memorize because you're looking for facts. It just spins around, it's there. It's 1775, these are the people, this is what this guy did and so forth, and this was the newspaper. They just remember it like that.

MK: Because there's a purpose, yeah?

LH: Yeah.

MK: That's good. I know that in '69, you left Maui for Honolulu, and why is that? How come you left Maui?

LH: I'm kind of reluctant to talk about it, but I think enough time has gone by. But my husband was manager of Maui Pine[apple Company]. Under him were engineers and several people, "the professionals." They were all *haole*s. Maui, at this time, was still living at that, you know, the *haole*s are here, the rest of us are here. We found out much later that Toby [Hatanaka, LH's husband] was being paid less than the men he was managing. That was such a shock. So we decided it's time to leave. So we left.

MK: So you went to O'ahu, and you continued your teaching career.

LH: I went to Kaimukī Intermediate [School]. Were you there?

WN: No.

MK: After Kaimukī, you went to . . .

LH: Kaiser [High School].

MK: Now when you made that move to Honolulu, in terms of how you taught, were you able to teach the way you would like to teach?

LH: Yes. My principal was very encouraging.

MK: So you could still continue with the inquiry method.

LH: Yes. It was curious, because one week, I don't know how it happened or who organized it, but all the other teachers decided to send their class to me for one day out of the week. I gave them all different problems to set up. Like one was, "Tom Jones has decided to take an after-school job—he's going to mow lawns—and this is how much he makes," and all the problems that come with it, and they have to do problem solving with that. The kids had so much fun with that. They said, "Can we come back?"

MK: You mentioned your husband and his being with Maui Pine until you came here. What was your husband's name?

LH: His name was Toby Hatanaka, and he was hired by Servco Pacific.

MK: In Honolulu?

LH: Yes. They liked him enough, and they gave him a. . . . He was in charge of wholesale for Servco, and he really enjoyed that. He had a lot of fun. I think it was about five years later, they gave him an executive position, and he was one of the executive vice presidents before he retired.

MK: When you say "wholesale," what was the products?

LH: They sold, at the time, computers were coming on to the market, and all the small appliances like Hamilton and all of that. There was about four things that they sold. So he was always traveling. Oh, he also sold Sanyo *Denki* [Electric].

MK: Oh.

LH: Sanyo *Denki* materials, so he was going to Japan once or twice a year, and that was real fun for him. Then to the electronics show in Las Vegas every year, and he also went to Chicago and New York, I think, it was at least a couple of times. But it was fun to go to Chicago, because our son was in Wisconsin, then, so he could visit with him, and then he could visit his old friends at Wisconsin.

MK: Now, going back to the time when you first settled, I guess when you first met your husband-to-be, tell us about that. How did you. . . ?

LH: We went to the same grade school. It was called Kaunoa School, and it was what they called English-standard school. I don't know what the whole purpose was, but it was, I think, to try and create an atmosphere where everyone spoke correct English. No one was allowed to. . . . It was tacit. No one speaks pidgin English, except on the sly.

MK: What kind of background did your husband come from?

LH: His mother was a hairdresser and a dressmaker. His father was an insurance salesman. His mother was one of the most fascinating women I ever met. She was so talented. She made wedding dresses. Can you believe that—with the pearls and all that sort of thing? All the Baldwin families, they all came to Tatsue, and she made the wedding dresses. She could whip them up in no time.

MK: She was an issei, first generation?

LH: No, she was nisei.

MK: She was nisei?

LH: Yes.

MK: How about your husband's father?

LH: He was issei.

MK: You mentioned that your mother-in-law was nisei. At the time you knew them, were their grandparents still around, the issei generation?

LH: They were already dead. Tatsue, if I can get back to her, she was such an amazing woman. Just amazing woman. Probably the best gambler on Maui.

(Laughter)

She always used to say, "If I got confidence, I can play." I always thought we should just bank her and send her to Las Vegas, because she was so good at it. She had such a good business mind. She would say to her husband, "Daddy, you buy that. That's a good one to invest in."

He would say, "Nah, nah."

She would say, "You're going to be sorry, you better do that one." And it would take off. She was always telling folks things like that. She was so smart. She'd go to the horse races, and everybody would watch her to see what horse she would play. (Laughs) She was so good at it, just such a mind.

MK: She ran a business?

LH: She ran a business. It was the only beauty salon in Wailuku, and everybody went there. She hired all of these girls. They were good at it. She picked the best, and she treated them like queens. She would make wonderful food for lunch. She was a great cook. She could taste something and she could recreate it. When (we) went to New York, she went to this restaurant—and that's when the red velvet cake just came on the market. She said, "I'm going to talk to the chef." When he came out, she said, "How much for the recipe?"

He said, "$200."

She says, "I don't need it." She went home and she recreated it. They said it tasted just like the cake in New York. That's how good she was.

MK: You mentioned like she was a hairdresser, and she was . . .

LH: No, she wasn't a hairdresser.

MK: Oh, she was not.

LH: She managed.

MK: Oh, she managed it.

LH: She hired the right people, so that everybody came. The best in the community came.

MK: She was a trained seamstress, or dressmaker.

LH: Uh-huh. She had—this is a real cute story. Even my sister-in-law didn't know about it. But when she met my father-in-law, they decided to elope. Can you imagine, people at that time, eloping? She came to Honolulu, she brought her sewing machine with her, and that's how they supported themselves. Finally, their parents finally relented and said, "Come home." So they went back to Maui.

MK: Oh, what a story.

LH: That's such a cute story. My sister-in-law said, "I didn't know that." (Chuckles)

MK: I know that Toby and you knew each other in grade school, but how did you folks eventually get together as adults?

LH: When I was in Chicago, I had just gotten off the train, the elevator train, and I ran into him. He said, "How 'bout a date?"

I said, "I'm busy, I've got a date."

He said, "Oh, F you."

I thought, "I'd never see you again."

But then when I got back to Maui, he said, "How about a date?"

I didn't have a date, so I said, "Okay." So five months later, we were engaged. (Chuckles)

MK: How come he was in Chicago?

LH: He was there on a vacation from Wisconsin. We were all there on Christmas vacation.

MK: If you could, tell us about his association with the University of Wisconsin.

LH: He went because the editor, Ezra Crane of the *Maui News,* said, "You want to get to Wisconsin?" He was a graduate of Wisconsin. He said, "I'll get you to there, so we'll put you there on a football scholarship." He wasn't that good of a football player. But they used that as a guise, and he got in. He said that's how he met all his good friends on the football team. He was big enough, but he didn't have the ability.

They would say, "You ready, Toby? We gotta work out today."

"Oh, my god," he said, "I can't run like they can." (Laughs) And they both grabbed—Bob and Ken would grab his elbows and they'd run him. (Laughs) He said, "I almost died. I just almost died."

Finally, the coach said, "You know what? We need a trainer, an assistant trainer. You want that job?"

He said, "Yeah, yeah, I can't play football."

(Laughter)

So he became an assistant trainer. That's how he got to know all the guys, and they became very good friends.

MK: So long association with Wisconsin.

LH: So it's a very long association. So people like [Alan] Ameche, he came as a freshman when Toby was just beginning as an assistant trainer, and they became very close friends. He used to write in his Christmas letters, "You know, I've gone legitimate." After he graduated from Wisconsin and he was playing pro ball, he says, "They put me on the board of the symphony. Don't laugh, it's legitimate."

(Laughter)

MK: So, Toby graduated from the University of Wisconsin. What did he get his training in?

LH: He went into business ad.

MK: He, too, eventually came back to Maui, and . . .

LH: His mother said he wanted to stay in Chicago for the adventure, too—he was there for a year. His mother had called him, and he said, "I'm not ready to come home yet. Wait." A few months later, she called the Chicago police, and she says, "Go look for this kid. His name is Toby Hatanaka." She gave them the whole thing. The police came to his apartment.

"Your mother's calling you, you better go home."

"I'm not . . ."

"I don't care. She called us, you gotta go home." So he went home. (Laughs) You don't fool around with Tatsue. (Laughs)

MK: So, unwillingly, he. . . .

LH: Came home.

MK: Came home and he . . .

LH: Went to work at Maui Pine.

MK: How many children do you have?

LH: I have two sons. The older one is named Robert—[To WN:] I think you know him.

WN: I know, yeah, he knows my cousin, right.

LH: The younger one is John, and John lives in Torrance, California, and Bobby lives here. He's a CPA, and he teaches accounting at night at UH.

MK: Which one went to the University of Wisconsin?

LH: John.

MK: Where did your other son go?

LH: Bob decided to stay at UH. He liked it here.

MK: How many grandchildren do you have?

LH: Bob has two daughters, Akari and Ayami, and John has one son, his name is Toby. They named him after my husband.

MK: I was wondering, whenever you had an opportunity to talk to your children about your wartime experiences, what have you spoken about? What have you shared with them?

LH: She just asked, Akari asked me good questions about the camp, and about the structure and the socialization, what I did, and how many friends I made and what kind of things I did. But beyond that, they have not asked any questions. (She also asked her teacher at ʻIolani to have me speak to the American History class.)

MK: I was wondering, when you look back on those times, how has those times affected the way you lived your life?

LH: I think it made me different from my peers, who didn't have a camp life. It makes me so patient with people, and I understand cultural differences, and how that affects our thinking and our decision making. I don't get judgmental. I just know I can't because we all come from so many different cultures, and all that makes us make decisions the way we do because of that. I think [Malcolm] Gladwell makes that very clear in his books.

MK: I'm also wondering, for some Japanese Americans, they have very negative feelings towards that experience.

LH: Oh, yes, because their experience is not mine. I had family that was safe, I had a home to go back to when this was all over. But for many of them, their land was stolen, all their equipment. . . . It took them thirty years to build a farm, to buy those expensive. . . . You know, $30,000 in the depression years to buy one of those combines? It took so much out of them. And then in one fell swoop, it's all gone. Their money is frozen—it's just a terrible experience, just terrible.

MK: I don't think I ever asked you. How did your relatives fare, your San Diego relatives? How did they fare?

LH: Well, luckily, Mr. Kiya was a worker. He worked at the—what do you call those? Where the farmers bring in their food and . . .

MK: A co-op?

LH: It's a market.

MK: Oh, market.

LH: They packed them together for sale at the markets. That's where Mr. Kiya worked, so he didn't have a farm, but he had his own home and his own car. They decided that they wouldn't stay for the relocation. They packed up their little car and they went to Utah. So, I'm sorry for them that they missed the experience, because everybody else did, and they would have shared with their peers. (One uncle continued to farm in Chula Vista. He and his sons did very well.)

MK: Warren? Do you have any—I guess this might be the last question of the interview. Are there any statements or thoughts you'd really like to share with your children and grandchildren about your life or your thoughts on life?

LH: I think it's very, very important for all of us to understand that in America, we're a home of immigrants, which means we're a home of multicultures. It's so important for us to understand that you don't have to know it all, but you have to be aware that when you come from a different culture, you don't share certain kinds of attitudes and values. But we can be open-minded to that, and we can be respectful of each other, because we're all God's children—we have to respect each other, and care for each other, and we can do that. That's what makes this country so great. We make a lot of mistakes, but we do better than many others.

MK: I think we'll end the interview here, and we thank you for all these sessions. Thank you.

LH: I thank you. It's been a delightful experience. I wanted to tell it, and I found a place to tell it.

END OF INTERVIEW

CAPTIVE ON THE U.S. MAINLAND:
Oral Histories of Hawai‘i-born Nisei

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