ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Jean T. Fujinaga

May 8, 2009

BY: Arlene Ching (A.C.)

Jean Fujinaga is an active member of Aiealani Seniors at the City & County of Honolulu's ʻAiea District Park and a volunteer at ʻAiea Public Library. She was born in ʻAiea in 1940. She taught English at Aiea Intermediate School. She also taught at Alvah Scott Elementary School. Jean also worked as a legislative aide for Congressional Representative Patsy Mink's Washington D.C. office and State Representative Tom Okamura. Her father Satoshi Fujinaga was born in Hilo. Her mother Hatsuyo Takafuji Fujinaga was born in Kapaʻa, Kauaʻi. The family lived in a teacher's cottage at Aiea Elementary and Intermediate School. They had a poultry farm in Kalauao Valley and were successful area sales representatives for World Book Encyclopedia.

A.C.: Today is May 8, 2009. Jean Fujinaga and Arlene Ching are here at ʻAiea District Park. Jean is going to be the subject of this interview to talk about her family and her growing up in ʻAiea, and coming back to live in ʻAiea. Jean, can you tell me where were you born?

Jean: I was born here in ʻAiea at Southshore Hospital, which was located across Pali Momi Hospital.

A.C.: You were born in what year?

Jean: I was born in 1940. January 7th, 1940.

A.C.: And, um, how many children are in the family, and what is your order?

Jean: I am the second child of six. I have an older sister, a younger sister, and a sister following. There are four girls followed by two boys.

A.C.: And you have parents that settled in ʻAiea but were not born in ʻAiea. Could you briefly tell me something about them?

Jean: Yes. My dad is from Hakalau, Hawaiʻi. The Big Island. My mother was born and raised in Kapaʻa, Kauaʻi. We took, as children---we took frequent trips to Hilo, but not to Kauaʻi, because my grandmother was already here on Oʻahu.

A.C.: Oh. Grandmother on which side of the family?

Jean: My grandmother on my mother's side. The Takafuji side was here in ʻAiea when I was a child.

A.C.: And how did your parents meet?

Jean: My parents met at the Territorial Normal School at that time that it was what the College of Education of the University of Hawaii was called. They both were trying to become teachers. They both became teachers.

A.C.: And did your father board? And your mother lived at home?

Jean: I don't know. I think my mother lived in their Punchbowl house. The Takafujis were in Punchbowl because her eldest brother Shigeichi owned a service station nearby on Punchbowl. The house in Punchbowl is still in the Takafuji name and one of my cousins lives there. My father, I don't know if he boarded or what, as far as his situation, I just don't know.

A.C.: Do you know how old your parents were when you were born?

Jean: No. I don't know exactly. (Laughs) I could figure it out.

A.C.: So what were your parents doing when you were born?

Jean: My mother was a stay-at-home mom. Her philosophy was, "I should stay at home and raise the children." So she stayed at home. My dad went out to work. At the time I was born, I think he was teaching.

A.C.: Do you have some idea what he was teaching?

Jean: I think he was teaching at Aiea Elementary and Intermediate School. He was a vocational agricultural teacher but he also taught science and math.

A.C.: At that time, where was your family living?

Jean: Our first house, when I was born, was on Aiea Heights Drive. The house is still in the Takafuji family, and my cousin's daughter now lives there.

Shigeichi Takafuji

A.C.: Is it still the original house?

Jean: It's still the original house. We could see Pearl Harbor from it. A clear

view of Pearl Harbor.

A.C.: Is it currently known at Orchard Hills?

Jean: Uh, that particular house when I was born is not really part of Orchard Hills. It's a little bit below Orchard Hills, the sign and the development. That whole hillside was all Takafuji land, and it was named Orchard Hills because there were a lot of mango trees and lychee trees on the property. My uncle was basically a nurseryman and a farmer, and he sold trees all over the islands. As a result, many of the lychee trees in Wahiawa are all Takafuji trees, and the old-timers in Wahiawa will tell you, "Oh, this is a Takafuji tree."

A.C.: Oh! (Laughs)

Jean: I don't know about mango, though. A lot of the trees, the really big lychee trees, are Takafuji trees. He was very good at grafting, and eventually, he went into orchids. My cousin, to this day, in Waiʻanae, raises---his eldest---his third son has a commercial orchid farm in Waiʻanae.

A.C.: So generations still continue it. How do you suppose your uncle got started?

Jean: I don't know. But I know he had the service station. He owned the service station. He liked to fix cars, so I think, he being the eldest son, he had to support the family or pay attention to the family income. So he was very good at fixing cars. He had the gas station. I think the gas station is still there on Punchbowl and Lusitana, around in that area.

A.C.: Does the family still have some connection with it still?

Jean: I don't believe so.

A.C.: It's not called Takafuji?

Jean: No, it was not, but I think it was a Shell Service Station but I'm not sure.

A.C.: Must have been a busy man, to have all this going.

Jean: Yes. My uncle was extremely entrepreneurial and he had connections with Ben Dillingham and all the local politicians. So anytime, we had a problem, my father and mother, they would consult with him. "No worry. No worry. I'll go and fix it up for you." So my uncle was quite prominent in Honolulu politics, and City & County politics too. He knew contractors. He knew people in the various licensing and permitting departments.

A.C.: Um-hmm. Well, getting back to the land, the Takafuji land in ‘Aiea Heights then, what are your first memories of it?

Jean: My first memories are, that we would go up to my uncle’s house from the house where we—where I was born. We could just walk up because it was all red dirt on the slope and hilly. There were a lot of trees. There was a small piggery on the property. That’s where I learned when they castrated the pigs and things like that. I learned those things by watching and observing, because my cousins were--- Mainly the boys were given the task of helping. So you go up this red dirt path and so forth, and you go to the Takafuji house, which was my uncle’s house. My uncle was married twice in this lifetime. His first wife died in childbirth, so he married again. He had a very large house.

Community Evacuation to Takafuji House on December 7th 1941

The ladies in the senior citizens still tell me when the war broke out, and they saw the bombs dropping on Pearl Harbor, the community decided, “Oh, we’d better go to the Takafujis because they have a lot of land and a lot of property” and so forth. So they all went to Takafuji house on December 7th and Takafuji took good care of them by feeding them, and clothing them, and giving them baths. My cousin Mary Ann is now in her mid-seventies, a retired teacher, and she recalls going into her bedroom and all these strange people from ‘Aiea! (Both chuckle)

But they had a very large house. It was divided into two sections. There was a living room, dining room, and a kitchen. A very large, kind of like a district park scale. Then there was garage in the center. The garage was very large. I think about eight cars could be parked. Then the bedroom side and the *furo* and the showers on the other side. The bedrooms, each of the Takafuji children had their own bedroom. This was something that Fujinagas never had. We always had to share bedrooms. Takafujis had their own bedrooms.

A.C.: And did they have their own water catchments system?

Jean: I think so. I don’t know the intricacies but I know they had a furoba. You could actually take a bath in the furoba.

A.C.: Well, getting back to going up there, and you were saying you’d walk on the red dirt, was there---were you following a road?

Jean: No. It was not a road. It was just nursery land dirt.

A.C.: You mentioned about actually seeing the pigs castrated. There was a piggery there. Can you tell me more about it?

Jean: Well, my uncle was, like I said, a very enterprising person. So whatever he felt, if he needed to send things to the market, he was just going to raise it himself. Or grow them himself. So he just had pigs. He had some horses too. And to this day, his second eldest son, Bobby, is in Kahalu‘u and he still raises horses. He’s a “horse” person. That’s from his dad. His dad raised horses.

A.C.: Was the piggery big?

Jean: No. It was not like a commercial piggery. It was just like---it would be a dozen pigs or so, penned in, and so forth. But they had horses. It was just fun as a child to watch those things, animals. They had cats and dogs too.

A.C.: Did the family take care of the animals?

Jean: Yes. It was all done by the family.

A.C.: So the orchard had lychee trees, mango trees. Do you recall anything else that was grown there?

Jean: No I don’t. I think that was the basic crops that he had.

A.C.: I had heard stories of people on December 7th, going up to a house. But I literally didn’t know whose house it was.

Jean: It was Takafuji’s house, yes. I did not know that fact until I came back from the mainland in 1994.

A.C.: It’s really important, and wonderful to know. So getting back to what you remember as a child, you said you lived at this first house.

World War II Memories

Jean: Yes. What I remember about the first house is, since I was born in 1940, there were remnants of the war. I remember running out of the porch and seeing all of these barrage balloons and wire netting in the sky. I was very scared and I ran back to my mother, and she said, “Oh, that’s leftover from the war.” So I was very curious about the war, you know, because as a child, you don’t know what war is. So I just remember the experience, in that house, being very frightened.

Barrage balloons floating over Fr. Kamehameha, a few miles southeast of ‘Aiea, during World War II
(15th Air Base Wing Historian)

Then when we moved down to Aiea Elementary and Intermediate School, we lived in a teacher's cottage there. At that point in time, we were asked at certain points in time, to go to the bomb shelter, which was right on the playground. There was a bomb shelter created there. We had to use gas masks. We were given gas masks.

A.C.: What was a bomb shelter like?

Jean: It was, uh, hollowed out from the dirt. It was like a mound. It was a mound of dirt, and then you had to go in through this very small, like an igloo, only thing it was made of grass and dirt. Then you had to go inside, and there were hollowed-out areas of dirt, and you sat on that with your gas mask. I also remember we had to paint all the windows of the teacher's cottage black….

A.C.: Oh, I was going to ask you if you remembered having that.

Jean: They were painted black, and I do remember as a child, having to scrape off all of that black paint after the war was over. We were given orders to scrape off all of that black paint after the war, and that was a very hard job.

Teacher's Cottage at 'Aiea Elementary and Intermediate School

A.C.: (Laughs) Did you have to do that for just your cottage, or…

Jean: For the cottage. For the cottage, yes. My dad, I don't believe my dad had to pay rent. It was part of his teacher's contract, because he was in agriculture, and he had to tend to the chicken and the eggs while the Christmas break and the Easter break [occurred]. He had a regular system of having certain of his boys come and be monitors for the farm, and watering the plants and so forth, while the school took its break.

A.C.: How many cottages were there?

Jean: We lived in one cottage. The other cottage was the principal's cottage. So the principal lived on the premises too.

A.C.: And that was Mr. Griswold.

Jean: At first, it was not Mr. Griswold. It was at first, it was Mr. Ferreira. I think his name was Joseph P. Ferreira. I know Mr. Ferreira because when I was ready for kindergarten, I went to Charlotte Achi's private kindergarten, which was located on the premises of St. Elizabeth's Church. I told my mother, "Oh, you know at Mrs. Achi's kindergarten? They don't read books. They only play with toys and you have to stand in line, and she gives you this, what you called this ame syrup, which is basically a vitamin-molasses concoction. But they don't read books! And I want to go to the big school and I want to read books!" because we lived so close to the big school. So she went to see Mr. Ferreira, and Mr. Ferreira said, "Okay. Your daughter was born in January so she

might be able to come to first grade. But she can't be in the A class." They had A, B, and C class. "She has to go to one of the lower classes." I don't know which class I was. But I do remember the kids in that first grade experience, were not knowledgeable. I remember because my friend Billy Hazelden, whom I'm friends with this day, he sat right next to me. He lived right down the baseball park, and his job, as a child was to assemble newspapers and deliver newspapers. Billy told me that we had to draw flowers. So I drew my flowers and I put a green stem with the same green color. And I drew leaves green. And he looked at mine, and he said, "Eh, Jean! Your flower stems gotta be brown! You gotta change to the brown color crayon." And I said, "Eh, go and look at the asters and the daisies by the flagpole. It's green!" The second incident I remember---I got into a lot of arguments with the kids. The second incident was one of the gals who eventually became an elementary school teacher, whom I'm still good friends with to this day, she told me, "Oh, tigers and leopards are the same animal. The leopards are the first version, and then, as they grow older, the dots all connect and they form stripes!" And I told her, "No! That's not true. I saw it in the encyclopedia. They are two separate kinds of animals." So I would come home and tell my mom these stories. And she'd tell me, "Oh, those plantation kids. They're so ignorant." I have quoted this story to my classmates because we still have our semi-annual picnics at the ʻAiea heiau. They don't remember the details, but I still do remember the details. Every time I quote my mom, "Those camp kids; they're so ignorant," they just burst out laughing. They think it's so funny. But I had a hard time, basically, in first grade. The kids spoke pidgin and I did not know pidgin. We spoke regular English at home. Hardly Japanese. Whereas the plantation kids all had Japanese-speaking parents, and they knew pidgin. They were a group. They all had their social connections, so that by the time they went to school, they all knew each other. Whereas, I was like an outsider. So I had to go into that plantation world, and I had to learn pidgin. I remember this thing carefully. On the playground, they spoke pidgin. They spoke regular English in the classroom, but I remember this thing very carefully, because it was like a foreign language. But I learned. I learned how to speak pidgin. To this day, I can speak pretty good pidgin. (Chuckles) It was hard. First grade was hard for me.

A.C.: Who was your teacher? Did she help?

Jean: My teacher in first grade was Mrs. Tsuji. She was very strict and she required that you use a certain length of pencil. One day, I did not have that certain length of pencil, and I remember, she grabbed the pencil from me, and threw it in the trash! So I was left without a pencil. (Laughs) But I do remember it was Mrs. Tsuji, in the first grade.

A.C.: So what year were you moved from kindergarten to this first grade class?

Jean: I went to first grade when I was four or five years old, so it was 1944 or '45. So as result, I'm younger than the class I graduated with. Most of them were born in 1939. Or '38. Some of them were born in 1938. But I was born in 1940.

A.C.: Do you think, if I could go backwards, to the kindergarten experience?

Jean: Yes?

A.C.: Was that something that was typical for children, um, in ‘Aiea, to go to?

Jean: It was not required. Kindergarten at that time was not required. But Mrs. Achi, being enterprising, had her own private licensed kindergarten. It was the only one in ‘Aiea. [Three Japanese language schools were closed and Aiea Community Association was established during the war. One building housed a day care center of 89 youngsters under Mrs. Charlotte Achi, “Aiea Pioneers in Civic Leadership Through Its Community Association,” Honolulu Advertiser, Sept. 16, 1945.]

A.C.: Do you have a name for the kindergarten?

Jean: I don’t know. It was Mrs. Charlotte Achi and she had two or three sons. I just saw in the obituaries about a year ago, that the son Morton, who was two years older than me, had passed away on Maui. So I often wondered about the Achi family.

A.C.: Well, now we’re into school. Your older sister and younger sisters and brothers, also went to Aiea School?

Jean: Yes, we all went to Aiea Elementary and Intermediate. I think all of us went to Aiea Elementary and Intermediate; I don’t believe that Alvah Scott Elementary School was there, here in ‘Aiea until my mother raised all of us. When she decided to go back to teaching, she went to Alvah Scott, but to get there, she was not a certified elementary teacher. She was a high school English and Social Studies teacher. So, when she came back as a substitute, she came to substitute at Aiea Intermediate when we were in the intermediate school, and I was always scared our teachers would be absent, and my mother would have to teach us. But I never had that opportunity, whereas some of my sisters were taught by my mother as a substitute. Then she decided “Oh, those intermediate kids! They’re too sassy! They answer back! So I’d better go to a lower level of schooling.” So she decided she decided to go back and get her elementary credentials. She went back to UH, and I remember when I was a sophomore at UH, my mother came to summer school with me. We caught a ride from somebody here in ‘Aiea who was going to UH, and she and I both went to summer school. She picked up all her art credits, and I remember helping her roll a coil for the clay ceramics class. She tried to fulfill all her requirements. We were all older. My sisters, too, were all older, so we wanted my mother, of course, to get certified. We tried to help her with some of her projects. But I give her a lot of credit in retrospect. There she was going with all of the younger students and when she went to Alvah Scott to teach, her teacher friends were all in her twenties, and she was forty or forty-seven or somewhere around there. As a result, some of those teachers who are still here in ‘Aiea are now in their seventies, whereas my mother has passed away. I remember all of them, and what we did when my mother started to approach ninety, we would have them over for her birthday. Just like kids, they

would talk about their students and so forth and so on. I still see some of them. Until my mother became a hundred [years], I would have every birthday, I would invite them over or we would go out for lunch. There was an age difference, but they were colleagues, and my mother really appreciated how the teachers took her in as part of the regular, regular peers.

A.C.: So she went back to teaching, after she felt she didn't need to stay….

Jean: Home, yes.

A.C.: And at that time, your father was still teaching at Aiea Elementary and Intermediate School?

Jean: Well my father, when I was third grade, at Aiea Elementary and Intermediate, my father decided, "Uh! Teaching is so confining. You're in this room. You have to wear this white long-sleeved shirt, starched with a tie." I ironed all his shirts very religiously. He said it was too confining. So my mother said, "Well, what are you going to do?" So he decided he's going to be a farmer.

Fujinaga Farm in Kalauao Valley

And my mother was really shocked. She said, "Well we have to get land, and so forth." So through my uncle, Shigeichi Takafuji, we leased, I believe, Bishop Estate land in Kalauao Valley. It was the premises of an old stable barn. We were told we could stay on this seven acres indefinitely. So my father thought, "Oh, seven acres. Yay." So, in third grade, he said, "We're moving to Kalauao Valley." And we went, and my mother said, "O-o-oo, this is the inaka, the country, country of ʻAiea! How am I going to get to the store?" My father said, "Don't worry, don't worry. We'll figure something out." So we moved to Kalauao Valley and my uncle got contractors to refurbish the barn, a part of the barn, which was our house. It was a much larger house than our teacher's cottage. There were four bedrooms. There were two bathrooms, a luxury. We had a big kitchen, and since it was a barn, the ceilings were very high with the canec walls. That house was built for us, from a refurbished barn.

Then the stable part of the barn was where my father made his chicken farm. He marketed chickens and eggs to ʻAiea stores. Nagamine Store. Kazama Store. Essentially, the basic village stores, that were down by where the post office is today.

A.C.: And he would deliver it, too?

Jean: Yes, he would deliver it to the stores.

A.C.: And he was doing truck farming?

Jean: Yes, yes, basically. My mother, being enterprising too, went and grew

vegetables. Grew vegetables. My father grew vegetables too. So we remember having to put bags around the tomatoes and corn, to prevent the insects from getting at the corn and tomatoes. My mother planted Sweet Williams around the patches. With seven acres, I was given the duty to raise two steers. We all had duties. We had to collect eggs. I know a lot about poultry farming, and to this day, I can tell what a good chicken is like. Foster Farms® or not, in the stores, so when I went to the mainland, I'd see people who had very poor reading skills and literacy skills. That's when I found, wow, I'm really lucky I can read. They would ask me, canned goods. Some of the blacks would ask me, "What is exactly in this can?" I would explain to them. When it came to the chicken part, the poultry part, I would tell them, oh, they would stand for a long time examining the chickens and not being able to ---I'd say, "Do you want some help? I was raised on a chicken farm." (Laughs) So, some of that knowledge came extremely handy. I appreciate to this day, because my dad used to say, "You just wait 'til you get older. You're going to be living off of chicken and eggs." So to this day, when I buy chicken and I buy eggs, I think of my father's prophetic comments. We had very little meat, and when he did buy meat, my mother would slice it all up and cook it with beans or put it in sukiyaki or some other kind of dish. So we were raised quite healthy. All the tomatoes that couldn't be marketed, the corn, we ate it ourselves. Yeah, yeah. So we learned a lot about the defective products. There were eggs, for example, in which the shells wasn't calcified or hardened so it was just like a skin. (Chuckles) You would rip off the skin and there was an egg. It was a perfectly good egg but for some reason or another, it hadn't calcified. So it was like a soft egg.

END OF SIDE ONE

(Describes the farm) It was a molasses bin and my father would tell us, "Never go up there and open that bin because you're going to fall in. It's all molasses." So there was the molasses. It was a concrete structure that was used for molasses, and then, the part where the horses were kept, they were individual, so they busted all that down and that became the chicken coops on both sides. Then in the middle, there was basically a railroad track and there was actually a kind of platform railroad. That's how we fed the chickens. We put all the feed on top of that railroad cart, and then push it back and forth along this track because my father had---It was probably, at any given time, at least 5,000 birds. I don't know, but to us, it was very extensive because we all were given jobs. At Christmas and Easter, we <u>never</u> had a holiday at Christmas or Easter. We were always preparing chickens, the good chickens for the market. Preparing eggs, you know, for Easter time, especially the eggs, right?

A.C.: So, did he sell live birds only?

Jean: No. He sold them all dressed.

A.C.: Wow.

Jean: They were all dressed. We hardly sold live birds. They were for---all

taken to the market, all dressed. We put them into, what we called "sheleen" at that time. Ziploc®, no Ziploc® bags, right? There were bags that he bought in quantity, and then we used the vacuum cleaner to suck out the air and twist the bag. Put a twistum on, and there were Fujinaga chickens! Our chickens were prized. People would ask and ask Mr. (Katsumi) Kazama, "What? No Fujinaga chickens today?" (Both laugh) So he would take orders and he'd tell my father, you know? Mr. Nagamine, too. All of them have passed away. So a lot of my childhood, from third grade on, third, fourth, fifth, sixth grade was spent in a lot of labor. My mother too! My mother stayed home until my youngest brother---let's see, my youngest brother was a baby, because I remember changing his diapers, reading him stories and stuff like that. So my mother was still home at that time. My mother had to---was trained as a teacher and then she had to do all of this crummy farm work, and so it was quite an adjustment for her. And so, because she was inako, we got a peddler, Mr. Asato. He came and he brought fruits and vegetables and candies and all kinds of things in this wagon, as a peddler, and he also went into Waimalu Valley, because there were farmers in that valley too. He came to us, and opened up, ah, sides of his SUV-like vehicle.

A.C.: We used to call it "the yasai man," in Kapahulu. He'd open it up, and then swing it open, and then there would be like a roof. And there would be refrigerator part, too, and then he'd put ice. Or was it all dried goods?

Jean: I remember he had vegetables. I remember canned goods and things like that. At that time, of course, people were very generous. We'd come home and he would say, "Oh, Mrs. So-and-so gave us musubi. Or Mr. So-and-so caught extra fish." So at that time, people always gave away their extras to their neighbors, or people who were nice to them. So we were always eating. I remember one time, my father brought this back and we thought it was chicken and he fried it. We ate it with rice and vegetables and he said, "Wow, you have just eaten turtle!" We went, "Turtle?! Turtle!" My father was extremely interesting and creative. My mother was the conservative one. My father was extremely liberal, and so, he would bring the oddest things back and he'd say, "Well, be grateful, because Mr. So-and-so gave this," Dacosin or whoever it was. My father was friendly with all kinds of people.

A.C.: So you would have possibly eaten Filipino food? Not just Japanese?

Jean: Oh yes, yes. See, my uncle, when they were constructing that farm area, he hired all Filipino contractors. The Dacosin family from 'Ewa was one of them. My mother would tell us, "Now, don't be too friendly to those Filipinos." And my father would say, "What's wrong with them? (Laughs) They're just like us!" So during lunchtime, they would all take out their bentos and we'd go, and they'd say, "Oh girl, come over here." And they'd give us these mochi and coconut concoctions. That's how we learned about these different kinds of food. "Oo-ooh, it's in leaves!" uh, because, you know, we don't eat those things (Laughs) in leaves." So, it was actually a good education. I really valued that. We learned how to talk with Filipino accent. We'd imitate the Filipinos. My mother, you know, she's conservative. She'd tell us, "Watch

out, those Filipino men." There were cane fields on both sides of Kalauao Valley. (Laughs) She told us, "Watch out, you know, a Filipino man might come out with cane knife!" (Both laugh) I mean, we could care less, right, as kids? But we walked. We walked home.

A.C.: That was going to be my question. How did you go to school? Did your mom drive?

Jean: No, my mom never drove in her life. She always claimed my father held her down, didn't want her to drive. But she said, she actually told me, when she was elderly, she said, she was actually afraid of cars, because being from Kapa'a, right? My father drove us all. Everywhere. To this day, I do not know how that man taught, had the farm, and you know, at some times, when we were late for something, he would say, "You don't have to catch the bus. Okay. I'll go right now" and hurry up. He'd go and take us, and then he'd say, "Call up when you're finished," and take us to Kalihi or take us to town. I do remember once I won a scholarship and I had to go and have---it was a Watamull scholarship so I had to go and have lunch with Mrs. Watamull at the Halekulani. I was late for the bus so my father said, "I'll take you to Kalihi and you can catch the Kalihi bus and transfer to Waikiki." So I did that, and I was on time for having lunch with Mrs. Watamull and all the scholarship people. My father did things like that. I do not know how he did it, but he---he managed to do it because there were four of us girls to begin with. Then, the two boys were born in the Kalauao house. He drove us around.

A.C.: Not only were you not "plantation (folks)," when your family lived at the cottage at Aiea Elementary and Intermediate School, but you were not "plantation (folks)" when your father and mother had the chicken farm.

Jean: No, we were not. But my friends, who were "plantation," they were very curious about where we lived. They'd say, "Ooo-oh, Jean!" I do remember, on one of my birthdays, I asked----it rained, rained, rained. It was flooding water and all that, but three girls from the camp came down. They thought it was so interesting where we lived. (Both chuckle) I do remember when the Japanese schools opened again, I told my mother, "I want to go and see what Japanese school is like." So my mother said, "Okay. Everybody has to go then," So all of us four girls, after English school, we went to Japanese school. I learned a lot over there. Not only the Japanese writing and reading, but about how the plantation kids functioned. You had to walk through Filipino Camp. There was the naval air station. We lived in the cottage, so I knew that in relation to the school, but there was the naval air station there and then the naval laundry and then there was a small, skinny path that you followed along. You go behind St. Elizabeth's Church and it was called the Filipino Camp. In the middle of Filipino Camp was the Hongwanji. So we went to the Hongwanji, and that was where I learned a lot how camp life was. "Oh Jean, there's the *o-furo.* You can peek underneath on the ladies' side, and peek underneath," and all these kinds of things that the camp kids knew, and were familiar with. I did not know about cockfighting until we had to pass through the Filipino Camp.

I mean we had chickens down there but my father wasn't interested.

A.C.: So you got to know your village, by going to the Japanese school, because you got to stay in ʻAiea, instead of going straight home.

Jean: Yes. We'd walk from the elementary school to it. Then at four o'clock, my father would come and pick us up. I think at that time, when I was going to Japanese school, I remember, he had all different cars because he worked for Albers Milling Company, a chicken feed distributor. He was a salesperson for the Albers Milling Company. So he had a company car. All the kids would tell me, "Oh, Jean! Your father must be rich, man, every week he comes with different cars. " Oh no, that's provided by the company." So he sold chicken feed. I think that probably gave him a lot of knowledge for his own chicken farm.

A.C.: You could be abreast of the new things, too.

Jean: Yeah, yeah. I must say, in retrospect, he fed the chickens the best kind of feed, and when I raised those steers, oh, those steers were really well-fed. It was like whole grains. I was taught to measure how much of this, how much oats, you know, and so forth. How much bran and so forth.

A.C.: You learned math. (Laughs)

Jean: Oh yeah, yeah!

A.C.: So how did your dad get these steers? And did each child have, you know, a different animal too?

Jean: Well, we were just assigned. At the time, (Chuckles) we said "Okay!" When my father wanted to raise at least two steers, so we had two steers, and I was given the job of the steers, so I didn't mind! I did it. I had to clean the pan.

A.C.: So the steers were already adults?

Jean: No, they were small, spindly. I think he got it from Mr. Nyuha. You know, there was a dairy, the Nyuha Dairy, that was in the Makalapa area. My father was friends with a lot of people all around ʻAiea. So I think he somehow, through the dairy, he got the steers. I'm not sure. Maybe he was like a trade-off. Mr. Nyuha said, "Oh, you did this for me, so I give you this." I have no idea but these two steers were brought to us, and I was told I had to raise them. I didn't mind, you know!

A.C.: So what happened to the steers?

Jean: The steers, when they got to be about close to a thousand pounds, Hawaiian Meat Packing was called. My father announced to all of us, that the steers, say

"Bye-bye to the steers, because they're going to be meat." (Laughs) Then Hawaiian Meat Packing truck came. The men stunned the steers, and they put them in the truck, and then every time after that, we would say, "Hoo, I wonder if this hamburger is from our steer." (Both laugh) But it was *kinda* interesting to raise the steers, you know? Yeah yeah. That was my job. But the steers, often, they would bust down the old termite-eaten fences, and they'd run down Kalauao River, right? So somebody down in Kalauao from the Lau family would say, "Eh! Fujinaga!! Your cows are over here! Come get 'em!" So we'd go and we had to exercise the steers. Yeah. They weren't just roaming around the pastures. My father said they have to be exercised. We'd take the cows and run around Kalauao Valley with them and bring them back. Occasionally, they'd bust down the fence and get loose, right, and follow the path down the river and I do remember people in Cooper Tract calling, "Fujinaga, your steers are loose again!" My father would say, "Okay! Get in the car. We got to go find the steers and take all the ropes and bring them back.' We had the steers and he also had horses. We had about five or six horses.

A.C.: They were your horses?

Jean: Yes. I know how to raise horses and ride horses. My uncle Shigeichi Takafuji, after a certain point when my father decided, "Oh, the heck with the farm, too hard, and not enough money being raised" and so forth, my uncle decided, "Okay, I'll take back half of the land where there's the garden, the horses and the steers, and I'm going to make an orchid farm." So that's how he started the beginning of the business that's out at Wai'anae. I think it's called "Orchid something." My uncle was an extremely gruff---we were scared of him. He was very rough and gruff. He would say… (Sighs) "You fella, you come over here," and we were girls!! So we weren't used to that. My father was not a gruff person so we weren't used to "f-word," or "s-word," and when he would use these words, "Whoah!" It was like, part of his language. So my mother would just tell us, "He only went to eighth grade and he doesn't know manners and things like that." But he was a kind-hearted man, so he'd bring us pastries from the bakery, and stuff like that. So I have good thoughts for my uncle, because if it were not for him, my parents would be, um, not as well off as they were.

A.C.: So how long did they do that? Was it a joint decision? How long did they have the chicken farm?

Jean: We had the farm from the time I was in the third grade until the time I was, um, a sophomore in college. Yes, because I remember the first two years of UH, I commuted from 'Aiea. We had a carpool. The gal that brought me home, to this day, she would park by the big monkeypod trees by the stream, and we'd have these conversations, summarizing the day. She lived up on Halawa Heights, the Gascon gal whom I brought to the library. She was our driver. There were two drivers. Both were Punahou grads. Helena Dang now lives in Eugene, Oregon, but we alternated carpooling. After carpooling for two years to UH, I told my mother, "I can't hack this carpooling." We'd be going in our cars in our rollers. The boys had ROTC. They had to be there by

seven. So we had to leave ‘Aiea by six o’clock. I told my mother, “ I can’t hack this. I will move downtown and live near the UH.” So I found a duplex apartment. My younger sister could come and live with us. (Jean discussed her fondness for living close to work.) So we had the farm until I was in college.

A.C.: So was it a joint decision by your parents to start something else?

Jean: Yes. They always did things together, decided together, more or less. My father and mother were not similar people, but they did it for the good of our family.

A.C.: So that was the point, when she was substitute teaching, but still you had to go back home to the farm. You talked about always going back to the farm to work. Did your family ever take a family vacation or a break?

Jean: Never. I don’t remember ever. The only time, we took---if you call it a break, my father said we had to go to Hilo to visit *O-Ba-chan*. And not everybody could go all at one time. The first two went, and then the second two went. There was a system. Not everybody. So we went to Hakalau to visit my grandparents.

A.C.: You have some very nice photographs that show the [ninth grade] graduation. Your older sister Dorothy was a speaker at the school graduation. It looks, from the pictures I see, it was quite a big deal. Everybody—family would all come to the graduation?

Jean: Yes. The family and the community. It was big deal. In those days, ninth grade graduation. Going to high school.

A.C.: Could you tell me a little bit about that, because you brought some photographs of that, too? Especially the pictures that show the girls dressed so nicely. Is this ninth grade graduation?

Jean: Yes. Ninth grade.

A.C.: All of you. Each of you had your turn where you would graduate, dressed this way?

Jean: Yes. Special dresses were made for us. At our time, we didn’t carry bouquets. My sister’s class had these bouquets. They were like roses, all kinds, with a plastic thing holding them together.

A.C.: You grew up on a farm. It seems to me that the girls weren’t expected to be the typical Japanese girls.

Jean: Oh no.

A.C.: You had mentioned earlier, that your father didn't expect you, also, to carry on the family farm, or do these types of things. They really thought your future was your decision.

Jean: Yes.

A.C.: What did you decide you were going to do when you graduated?

Jean: In high school, I took basically the college prep path. I know I should go to college because my parents were very encouraging about education. My sister at that time, she knew she wanted to be a doctor.

A.C.: Which sister?

Jean: My older sister. She wanted to be a doctor. And she was very good. We'd be walking home over Kalauao Valley and she'd see this little pigeon on the side, struggling with a broken leg or something. And she's say, "Here's how you fix it." And she'd get a Popsicle stick and you know, try to make a splint. And when we got cuts or something, she would always tell us, "Oh, here's what you do for cuts. You have to make a tourniquet out of your shoe lace." And she'd put the shoe lace and stuff like that. She was always doing things like that. So it was no surprise that she wanted to be a doctor. When it came to me, I thought, "Well, I'll just go and try and be a teacher." So when I went to UH, I just took general courses, and then, when we had to declare a major, I went into the College of Ed(ucation) and I wanted to be a high school English teacher, because I was always very good at writing. When I was young at Aiea School, I did win several prizes for writing. I won a Scholastic Writing competition, and I also got $100 savings bond and so forth, from the American Legion and others. My picture was in the newspaper because I was a good writer.

A.C.: I was fascinated by the articles. You were a community writer for the [Honolulu] Star-Bulletin.

Jean: Right. My parents always encouraged us to work. In fact, the youngest experience I had, somebody gave us these Golden Records for Christmas present, or some present. And we said, "How are we going to listen to these records? We don't have anything to listen to it with." So we went to my father and said, "How are we going to listen to these records?" And he said, "Well, what do you have to listen these records?" "Oh, we have to have phonograph. We don't have a phonograph." "Well, there's one way to get one. You go and you earn your own money." All five of us, I remember my youngest brother was born, we went and somehow got about twenty dollars together. I think that was the price of this portable phonograph with a cover and a small turntable, and that's how we listened the Gold Records. And my father said "All jobs are the same. You get money from jobs. There's no such thing as becoming a doctor is better than being a teacher or digging a ditch. They were all the same. That's how you get your money to earn your living to pay for food." And so, we were used to working at

anything. We didn't care. Now how I got this job, was I think it was through the [Aiea] Community Association or somebody. Somebody quit and they didn't report the news of ʻAiea. I was told they needed somebody to report the news of ʻAiea. So I said, "Oh, I don't mind that. I know "who, what, when, where, why." And so I did that. I was also editor of the intermediate school newspaper The Aiea Cannus Speak. I was the editor.

A.C.: What was the name again?

Jean: It was The Aiea Cannus Speak, because the whole front of the school at that time, had red and yellow cannus [the canna flower has a tall stalk with showy flowers]. All along the front. No hedge bordering the view of the school. Flagpole. Yeah, it was not like it is now. But it was all read and yellow cannus. Very well maintained with ginger. You know, we lived next to the school so I never felt alien to school. Leilani Ferreira, Mr. Ferreira's daughter and I, after everybody was gone, we would stand on the benches and she taught me hula. She said, "This is how you do it." (Sings) "Lovely Hula Hands." We'd stand on the bench like it was a stage, and to this day, I think about Leilani and I. I hope she's okay and still alive and well. But she taught me how to dance hula and we felt close to schools, because we were part of the school. Right? The teacher's cottage was part of the school. My father had the kids come over, the boys come over and they'd talk to us, these older boys. When my father started the farm, the first persons he'd recruit and dig out weeds were all his agriculture boys. They all came and helped my dad, and so, some of them are approaching eighties now, but I remember those boys. We were small kids. They would tease us, and have good fun with us when we were eating lunch. That was a good experience. Now my sister, the doctor, she had the opposite experience. She never wanted to see chickens or eggs or farm the rest of her life. Now I had the opposite experience. I found the experience to be extremely interesting and extremely rewarding. You know, like I said, helping the people in D.C. choose chickens and stuff like that. I never felt it was a negative experience. Then of course, after my mother and father retired, my mother retired at sixty-five, and she said she was young enough to teach more, but it was the rule. You had to retire. They had a big party for her, then she went to community school and she taught [English to Japanese native speakers]. (Jean describes how her mother's classes of Japanese women doing Japanese embroidery, who were encouraged to speak English.) I remember that, giving my mother a second life as a career, teaching English for the community school.

A.C.: How fortunate, both ways.

Jean: Right. And then my father, after the farm finished, said, "Oh, I have to do something else." So he started selling World Book Encyclopedia®

END OF TAPE ONE

A.C.: After the chicken farm?

Jean: My father, after the chicken farm, decided we needed money because the farm was not financially lucrative. So he decided to start selling. He was a very good salesman. He knew a lot of people. I think one of his teacher-friends, a retired principal, a Mr. Okawa, was selling encyclopedias. He decided, "Oh, that's pretty good." You just go to people's homes, and they serve you coffee, tea. You "talk story" with them, and they buy this $100 set of encyclopedias. So he started selling encyclopedias, and he got to be pretty good at it. Within about a year, he was named an area manager, for sales. Then he became some kind of manager for O'ahu. Then eventually, my mother wanted to join him, too. So two of them decided to go house to house. They knew a lot of families in 'Aiea and my mother taught a lot of them. For example, on our street, Kaulainahe'e Place today, I would say there were maybe only three or four people who do not know my parents and who did not buy encyclopedias from them. So, to this day, people come up to me and say, "Oh, Fujinaga! Your father sold us encyclopedias." So my father got to the point where he was going to Chicago, where Field Enterprises was located, for conferences. Going to stay at the Palmer House (Hotel) and experiencing life in Chicago---My dad got to know Chicago like the back of his palm. He really knew Chicago. To go from Kalauao Valley to Chicago! Wow! Terrific!

H-1 Construction in Kalauao

Then, of course, in the middle of all that, we had to depart from the Kalauao Farm because they said, a super-highway is going to go right through this area in about ten years. So you'll have to move. So my parents decided, we're going to have to look for a house. They looked around 'Aiea and they found this house on Kaulainahee Place. It was on the mauka side, away from the river. My mother did not want to stay near a river because, living in the Kalauao Valley next to the river, when it flooded, we were essentially isolated. We had to go on my father's banana wagon and he'd say, "Grab ahold, girls! Let's go!" The water would be three feet high, coming through the running board of the banana wagon. The station wagon. My mother wanted to stay away from the river, so we bought this property because the family Valpoons were moving to California…That is where our home is today. My father and mother decided to sell encyclopedias jointly. They were kept busy, selling encyclopedias, because we all were in college and graduate school.

A.C.: Your mother was teaching during the day at Alvah Scott?

Jean: My mother, even after she retired; she retired when she was sixty-five.

A.C.: So she was selling encyclopedias even after she retired?

Jean: Yes. They were still quite active. My father was able to drive. My father would say, "Oh, you know this family better than I because you taught some of their children. " So they would go and they sold quite a few. It was quite lucrative. Like I said, my father kept on going to Chicago. Eventually, my mother was taken to Europe because my father would win these trips to Europe. Pretty soon, the Hawaii Field

Enterprises became well known because people like my father and Joe Tochimura, another super-salesman who lived in the McCully-Moiliili area, they were going to Chicago every three, four months! (Jean describes how her parents became well traveled through their encyclopedia work.) Of course, they were founding members of the Aiea Senior Citizens. They took field trips. They went on trips to the different islands.

A.C.: That's what used to be called the Aiea Recreation Center, now the ʻAiea District Park?

Jean: Yes. Aiealani Senior Citizens. My mother and father were among the charter members. Rita Lau and Ed Lau. Raymond Ching and Alice Sanpei who are both in Pearl City Nursing Home.

A.C.: All well-known people.

Jean: All well-known people in ʻAiea. Right.

A.C.: We had mentioned a little about ʻAiea Methodist Church. Tell me about your family's association.

Jean: My mother had good friends at the church, especially the Kawanishi family who lived in Halawa. Ayame Kawanishi became a good friend of my mother's. I don't know how, because I do remember going to the Halawa Store, Kawanishi Store, and visiting with them. But Ayame would come, and stop at the teacher's cottage, and pick us up, and then we would go to the Methodist Church. My mother, later on in her elderly years, said she had to go to the Methodist Church because there was no Congregational Church in ʻAiea. She evidently gone to one Congregational Church, but she said, "Oh, it's the same difference," So, we were taken as girls by Ayame to ʻAiea Methodist Church.

A.C.: This was Ayame Kawanishi Mitsuda?

Jean: Yes. So she was like our babysitter. She ironed clothes. One of her sisters ironed clothes regularly for my mother. Helped my mother. So, Ayame---we were quite close to her, as children growing up.

A.C.: She lived right across the street from the church [on Laulima Street]?

Jean: Well, she was not always there. She was living at the Kawanishi Store in Halawa Camp, so she'd come along Moanalua Road, and pick us up. Walking. Then she'd pick us up, and we'd go to ʻAiea Methodist Church. But, you see, she felt very much at home at the Methodist Church and eventually, when that tract area opened up for homes, she decided to buy right there, because she would be right next to the church. So my mother and father---I wouldn't say they were religious. They encouraged us to go to church and basically abide by Christian values, but my mother later on in her years,

joined the Methodist Church just because there was no other church. My father never belonged officially to the church. Yeah, he'd go to the church and attend, but only as a chauffeur or just on special occasions. He was not too religious. My mother decided to join, so to this day, she's the official member. (Laughs) The Fujinaga family is listed as a member.

A.C.: You go to this Methodist Church. You've mentioned it.

Jean: I do know a lot of members and I do go occasionally, but I have told the pastor that I'm very busy cleaning my yard on Sundays. I feel that, in order to take on a commitment, you have to be committed. They have committees, and you have to be active, going to take their caregiver classes. They have a movie group and a cooking group, and I just don't have time for that. Between the library and the senior citizens, I decided, that's my kuleana.

A.C.: Yes. When you came back here, was that when you became active in the senior citizens? You were a senior citizen at that time?

Jean: When I came back, I was in my early sixties. I came back in 1994, because my brother, who was taking care of my parents, my younger brother had passed away. So I returned. I told my mother, "I would join the senior citizens after I was sixty-five." I was not sixty-five at that time. I would bring her to the meetings, and she enjoyed the meetings and so forth, but I did not join because I felt, I had a lot to take care. I was taking care of my dad, who was unable to go. I was taking care of my mom, and the administration of the household and so forth. It was a fulltime job so I told my mom, "I'll bring you and if they say you have make sandwiches, or make a certain kind of lunch, I'll help you make it, but I can't join and be an active member."

A.C.: So your role of being very active, uh, came after your parents passed away?

Jean: Yes. I told the seniors that both my parents had belonged and had wanted me to come and be active and help them. So I decided to do that. My mother was always interested in the library, and my father too. So I think, if I promoted two of these institutions that they were active in, I would be carrying on their heritage, you know, be part of the community too, so those are my two interests right now.

Community Reporter for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin

A.C.: May I return back to when you were being the reporter for the 'Aiea for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin? You told me how that came about. How did you find the information? Would you go to the different groups and tell them, "Hi, I'm the reporter. Would you like to---?" What do you recall about this?

Jean: Not too much. I do remember that I was paid by the inch. Bud Smyser,

the editor, he told me he'd pay by the inch. Trinidad Ayau, the owner of Collectible Treasures, the sports memorabilia [store]? She was his secretary for many, many years. Yes. She knows a lot about Star-Bulletin history and all the reporters and editors. I remember I had to go see Mr. Smyser first. When I went, there was Trinidad sitting there. I said, "Trini! What are you doing here?" She said, "I'm the secretary. You're Dorothy's sister. " So I had the "in" to Bud Smyser. (Laughs)

A.C.: And it didn't matter that you were somewhat younger?

Jean: Oh no. They just wanted somebody to crank out the news for ʻAiea, so Smyser told me, "All you have to do is---we want a few interesting things from ʻAiea, because it's a community. It has a lot of activities and, um, you won't have to worry. Our editors will cut off whatever they felt was irrelevant or not necessary or not important." So I do remember going to the ACA, ʻAiea Community Association. But most of it I got, from going to these events or just knowing the key people. Interviewing the key people. I wasn't known as the reporter. I was just like a correspondent, you know.

A.C.: Did you take classes at your high school in journalism?

Jean: No.

A.C.: Did you have your own typewriter?

Jean: I had my own typewriter. We had one of our own typewriters. LC Smith. Smith-Corona. We were all taught to type in the eighth grade, so I knew how to type. I was editor of The Aiea Cannus Speak, ninth-grade editor. We hand-typed and mimeographed at that time. Every issue of The Aiea Cannus Speak. I had some background. When I went to Waipahu High School, I was on The Cane Tassel staff. I think was a page editor and I think at that time, many times in my career, I could not be the editor because somebody else, who was in a lesser capacity but needed the experience, the teachers felt would be a better person. When I was in ninth-grade in ʻAiea, I was FHA conference (representative) going to Maui or Kauaʻi. I was told that I could not go, although I had the best record. I could not go because there were other people, other girls from the plantation, who would never get this opportunity in their life, and so they should go before me. So I went home and talked to my parents. The teachers again said, "Oh Jean, you're this and you're articulate, but some other lesser person has to go." But the cream always rises to the top. I thought, oh, no big deal. My father taught. My mother taught. Never had prejudices against other people. So, um, I just went along with what the teachers thought was right, but of course, inside, I thought, "Eh, this is kind of prejudiced! This is discrimination!" (Laughs) I had all those thoughts as a child, but I didn't think anything of it. I thought, Oh it's wonderful that those girls were able to go.

A.C.: Did you ever want to go to private school?

Jean: Oh, when I was in intermediate school, there was a push on several of our members in our class to go to private school. St. Andrew's. Punahou. I asked my parents and they said, "You can go and take the test." So I went and took all the tests, and I passed all the tests. I had all these letters. I wish I saved them. All these letters from Sister Lucy, encouraged us from St. Andrew's Priory and Punahou and so forth. But my parents said, "Public school is good enough for you, and you should go to public school." So I went to public school, and to this day, I think I am the person I am because of public school. In Waipahu, I had to go to study hall with Lionel Matthias. He said, "Jean! Take this big book and put comics inside and then the teacher in study hall won't know you're reading comic books!" I learned a lot of those kind of things and to this day, I hope to see Lionel. He never comes to our reunion before he passes on. He was our quarterback of our football team.

A.C.: At Waipahu High School?

Jean: At Waipahu High School, and he taught me. These big history books. You put the comics inside and you read. You know, you're quiet and you're reading. I learned things like that!

A.C.: All kinds of people.

Jean: Right. I was on the newspaper staff and I was active in committees. I was selected in sophomore year for Honor Society. I was the only sophomore at that time and the Waipahu kids, who were Waipahu, right? They said, "Ooo-oo, how come this kid from ʻAiea gets to be chosen?" But how it happened was, I was on the elections committee, and we were voting for the next year's student body president. Someone came to vote and they gave me this small little scroll with a ribbon on it. I thought, "What the heck is this?"

A.C.: That's traditional!

Jean: I didn't know. Then I opened it up and it said, "You are invited to join the National Honor Society" and you have be at this certain place at a certain time during the lunch hour. So I just went, and later on, I found out that, the English teacher and the Social Studies teacher and the department heads had all gotten together. (Laughs) They thought that I should be the one sophomore to be inducted. But I do remember having incur riff-raff from the kids at Waipahu, who thought, "Ooo-oo, this upstart from ʻAiea!" You know, going from ʻAiea---but I had experience on that, because I wasn't "plantation," so I had to learn pidgin. Also, when I went to Waipahu, I said, "What is this? These Waipahu kids get all the privilege?" They were the largest group. Pearl City. Waiʻanae. We were all minority around the Waipahu core, and they were "plantation," right? So they had all their mores, their ways, and we had to crack the code at Waipahu. That again, was another challenge, getting into Waipahu. Getting into that community. Yes, it was a big school. But I made it.

A.C.: What an honor though.

Jean: It was an honor to be chosen, and later on, when I was an adult, several of the teachers told me that my writing was so good, that there was no way that these pidgin English people from Waipahu were even going to come close, right? As far as the writing skills concerned, I give my parents credit, because they always encouraged us to write and read and study encyclopedias. When we had nothing to do, we'd read the Sears® catalog, my oldest sister (and I). When we ran out of the Sears® catalog and other thin, three inch catalogs, we'd go to the encyclopedias and read systematically, A, B, C. I think this is indicative of my parents being educated, and my mother, when we were growing up, in elementary school, she said, "Each child, if you're interested in art," for example, my sister below me who became the art teacher, she was sent to summer session at the Art Academy. Ed Brownlee. Shirley Russell. Some of the renowned artists. My cousin, Melvin Ferreira, who lives in Juneau and is now retiring to come back to ʻAiea, he also went there to an Academy of Arts class. For me, my art sister got the Famous Artists' series and for me, my mother bought this Writer's Digest or something. It was a volume set of about twenty volumes. It was totally devoted to writing and how you can write convincingly and so forth. One of the essays I won for the Outdoor Circle (of Hawaii), it said, "Empathy Theme." You make believe you're a road or a public park and so forth. This was an essay contest you had to write for the Outdoor Circle on "green" subjects. So I made-believed that I was a road or a public park that people threw rubbish on me. I got really angry. I was able to win the first prize. I think I got a $100 savings bond.

A.C.: Wow.

Del Monte Cannery Work

Jean: At that time, one of these articles said that Jean Fujinaga and Melvin Koizumi, who became an engineer and I still know till this day, we got $180 to go to the UH (with the) Aiea Lions scholarship. When you stop and think, gee, we had a hard time earning $180 and when I went to high school and worked at the cannery, our chief goal in summertime to get into the cannery! People would tell me, "Why don't you go and see Mrs. Nakamoto, Rachel's auntie? Haruye Nakamoto. She works as a forelady but she was only seasonal. You should go see Mrs. Kanbara." The lady who came to the community session there? But I said, "I don't need pull from the foreladies!" I told my father, "I'll just go and fill out the postcard." And I was called. I remember, "Wow! I was called to go to work for cannery at a dollar-quarter an hour."

A.C.: That meant you would earn money!

Jean: Right! Just to earn $200 for the summer would enable you to earn the whole tuition for first year for UH. So I worked three summers at the cannery to earn UH tuition, and if I got a scholarship, we could supplement. Books and stuff. But I was

really struck by how $180 was really a lot of money in those days.

A.C.: Having the means to do it. You could do it on your own. Not have to ask your parents.

Jean: Right. So even graduate school. We tried really hard to not depend on our parents. I would gamble that if you're good enough, they'll give you a scholarship or fellowship. In life, I've been very lucky. All of my gambles have paid off. Of course, I stayed single so I'm never afraid to take a gamble, and my father tended to be like that. He gambled a lot in life. I think I shared some of those traits. My older sister, the doctor, became extremely conservative. She liked to dress a certain way. Whatever the fashion-style hairdo, every time I went to visit her, she had the fashion-style hairdo just-so, but I tended to be much freer. As a result, I think, my sister's temperament---you know when you stop to think of how she got cancer and so forth and so on, and died at fifty-seven years, I always think it was because, she was unable to free herself from all the shackles of society and so forth, just bust loose. I think that it has to do with partly my temperament, my father and my mother, and being a kind of writer. When you're a writer, you tend to be extremely objective.

A.C.: Oh?

Jean: You don't see things from a certain point of view. If you see from one point of view, you know it's only one point of view. So when I went to law school, they told me, "Oh Miss Fujinaga, why don't you become an administrative judge? You'd be very fair in regards to---." I remember looking at the panel and saying, "Oh how boring! You just go in the casebooks. I thought that was the most boring job." I remember earlier, when I went to UCLA, and I did my master's (degree) in English because they needed community college teachers with master's in English, and I went. I came back and no community colleges yet. I remember telling them at UCLA and they said, "Why don't you get fellowship and stay and get your Ph.D?" I went, "Ooo-oo, this place is a zoo. There's too many strange people here. I have to go back to Hawaii. That's where my roots are. I'm going to get back to Hawaii." So I've used Hawaii as a jumping-off point. Every time I needed to make a big decision, I came back. I sort of thought about it and then I went. Then I came back, and that's how I kept my foundation here. My roots here. I have done many interesting things in my life because I have not been afraid. I think when I look back on my friend that the leopard's spots turned into stripes, she stayed in ʻAiea. She married somebody from ʻAiea. She became a teacher at ʻAiea Elementary School. See, that's the difference between me and her. And the boys! The men in my class, they always said they were afraid of me, because I always said what I thought. I spoke out. I was always encouraging the students to rise up, you know, because my parents taught me. They always would tell us, "Don't come and ask us what you do for your homework. You ask your teacher. We don't know what your teacher wants. You ask your teacher." So in first grade, I would raise my hand and ask the teacher, and everybody would look at me and think, "Who's that new girl raising her hand?" (Laughs) Asking a question of the teacher, right? Because the plantation kids

tended to be very subservient.

A.C.: You were brought up to do that.

Jean: Yes! My parents. That's because my parents said, "You raise your hand and you ask a question." So I was always asking questions, and as a result, the men in my class, they just thought that Jean Fujinaga, you don't mess around with her. And to this day, they still don't mess with me! Even the engineer who got the scholarship, Mel Koizumi, we have a lot of fun together because we think of those old days, you know. Try to rise above, and still stay stuck to 'Aiea at the same time. (Chuckles)

A.C.: They say your roots prepare you for the springboard. There's a clever saying for that. This is a good time to conclude.

Jean: Yes. I have enjoyed talking to you, Arlene.

END OF INTERVIEW