

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Mrs. Umeno Onishi and Mrs. Mildred Casperson

November 11, 2009

Wife and Sister of Shizuo Onishi

by Arlene S. Ching (A.C.) and Charlotte Murakami

(Charlotte and Arlene discuss the framework for the interview. Charlotte helped with questions by repeating them to her aunt who is hard-of-hearing. Tape starts with a discussion of Shizuo's war years.)

Varsity Victory Volunteers in 'Aiea

Umeno: He didn't volunteer. He did go and take an examination but he passed. But since he had an alien father, he was told to stay home and take care of things. Because, besides himself, his two brothers were in the Army already, Army Intelligence. M.I.S. (Military Intelligence Service). During the war, he wanted to show his loyalty since he wasn't serving in the Army, he started this [Varsity] Victory Volunteers in 'Aiea.

A.C.: Were they mostly plantation people [Honolulu Plantation]?

Umeno: Yes.

Charlotte: That began his association with the late Governor Burns. Right?

Umeno: Right. He got enough boys to help him cut the trees, dig ditches, lay road, string barbed wires for the Army Engineers.

Charlotte: [U.S] Army Corps of Engineers.

A.C.: Fantastic. I had heard of 'Aiea men participating in that, and I thank you for sharing that. I did not have names. From the plantation point of view, they had mentioned it in their records...What was the work?

Umeno: It was through the Army...and every Sunday they went out to cut the kiawe trees, to clear the place.

A.C.: Um-hmm. They were getting defense ready for an invasion.

Umeno: Um-hmm. Then they had to string barbed wire for the Army Corps of Engineers.

A.C.: And they were mostly Japanese-Americans?

Umeno: Yes. That's right. That continued on through the war.

A.C.: He did that and he also worked?

Umeno: Yes, he did. They did that every Sunday.

A.C.: During the weekdays?

Umeno: Not on weekdays. He had to go to work.

A.C.: What did he do?

Umeno: He was---at the beginning, he was a timekeeper for Honolulu Plantation. Then, he worked himself to a buyer and then, a purchasing agent...During the war, it was called Honolulu Plantation. I think it was after the war, Honolulu Plantation sold it to C&H Sugar. Then, he worked as a purchasing agent for C&H.

A.C.: What does a purchasing agent do?

Umeno: He's a buyer for the company. You have to buy everything they need for the refinery and for the office.

Umeno: My first home was a plantation home. It was really small with just two bedrooms, and we had to sleep on the floor, with a *futon*. Our toilet was outside, so we had to go out in the evening with our parents to use the bathroom. The bathroom was outside.

Charlotte: Now, this was before you got married though?

Umeno: Yes. Before I got married. After I got married, we had a plantation home when we had a chance to buy our home. I think it was owned by Oahu Sugar Company. We bought that home. As you go up 'Aiea Heights, you see all those beautiful homes? Those people had a chance to buy...we bought a place near the heiau.

A.C.: Oh. All the way up the heights?

Umeno: All the way up. One thousand feet elevation.

Alvin: Hailimanu Place.

A.C.: What was it like to live up there?

Umeno: Oh, we liked it because we had a fireplace. My husband was determined to get a fireplace for Charlotte. She wanted a fireplace.

His Lions Club Work

A.C.: So. Some people remember that. Well, getting back to your husband, how did he get involved in the Lions Club?

Umeno: Well, when I got married to him, he was already a Lion.

A.C.: Your daughter said, maybe---do you know how he got started?

Charlotte: Do you know who asked him to join?

Umeno: That I don't know. He was a Lion already.

Charlotte: Originally, my dad joined the Leeward Lions, so somebody in the Leeward Lions---

Umeno: Oh. I remember. Governor Burns to be a---Governor Burns was a Lion from Koolaupoko, and he talked to my husband and he became a Lion. But Governor Burns wasn't a member of the Leeward Lions.

Charlotte: Okay, when my dad joined the Leeward Club, what I can remember is, they wanted to branch out, so he was a charter member of the 'Aiea Club. They started and he moved out. The charter members---I know Mineso Kuroda. He became president. Grandpa. John Nakano. Anyway, my dad formed the 'Aiea Lions Club. Horace was still in the Leeward Club.

A.C.: Where would they have their meetings?

Umeno: I think at 'Aiea School.

Charlotte: Because Joe Griswold was an 'Aiea Lion and he was a principal there.

A.C.: I saw the Lions were active with the carnival. Collected glasses for the sight-impaired. In 1937, the big Lions Club, this was before you married your husband, they brought Helen Keller to Hawaii.

Alvin: He met her, didn't he?

Charlotte: Yes. Later on, my father did have a chance to meet her. This would have to be on the mainland? They were—he was also part of the Helen Keller Foundation I think.

Umeno: Yes. He was.

A.C.: Did you go to the Lions Club meetings on the mainland?

Umeno: Yes. I went with him when he was the International Director. But when he was District Governor, Charlotte would have been by herself, so he went to the meeting.

A.C.: Was he was one of the first from Hawaii to get these position?

Charlotte: No. There was Noly Smith. Oren E. Long. The governor. Val Marciel.

Alvin: What about John A. Burns?

Charlotte: No, he wasn't that active. I mean he still was a member. You see, with the Lions, my dad was very active. With the 'Aiea Lions, they did a lot. Then he ran for District Governor. That meant the entire state. I don't know the entire process, but he was asked to run for the International Director. The directors from different countries and so my dad did run for International Director but he wasn't the first, now, from Hawaii but he served. The International Directorship was two years in which they traveled a lot. That's how my parents really traveled. Then after he served his two terms---

Umeno: He rested for a year.

Charlotte: They rested for a year, then an International President asked my dad to serve---what do you call that, Mom?

Umeno: Appointee.

Charlotte: He was an appointee on the International Board.

Umeno: So we had to serve another year. And we did a lot of traveling.

Charlotte: That's when my dad gave all these speeches, see?

A.C.: (Laughs)

Charlotte: They did travel, because they wanted them to visit and talk about the Lions, and talk about people to volunteer and join.

Umeno: They did about the same that we Lions in Hawaii did. Having the glaucoma clinic. Having the fundraisers like the carnival.

A.C.: I see her, as a service organization, it was the first to take women as members.

Umeno: Yes, that's right.

A.C.: It did not discriminate against people of different ethnicities. Just perfect for Hawaii. So the International Headquarters was located in Oak Brook, Illinois so you traveled to Illinois for conferences, too?

Alvin: They'd meet all over. The International.

Charlotte: This means my dad---you have to run for these offices and you have to get this many votes. But my father was elected in Japan. See, what was interesting about those years, the second year he served as International Director was when the President of Lions International came from Japan, right? When did [Kaoru "Kay"] Murakami serve?

Umeno: He served before us. A year before us.

Charlotte: But then you helped her?

Umeno: Because she couldn't speak---

Charlotte: Because the first year, Grandpa got in, that guy Ralph---

Umeno: Lynam. Ralph Lynam.

Charlotte: The second year, it was Murakami. So, what was really good about this, was she spoke some Japanese, and because the International President was from Japan and just happened to carry the Murakami name---no relations! They asked her. There was an interpreter there. Lions International had interpreter. But my mom took care of Mrs. Murakami when the ladies met. So they formed a lot of close relationships with the Lions from Japan.

A.C.: So the wives serve in a way, too? It's not just the men.

Charlotte: I mean, you people serve three years....They got to travel for three years, yeah, Mom?

Umeno: Um-hmm.

A.C.: And what time frame are we talking about?

Alvin, Charlotte: '78. That's when he got elected. So he served '78 to '80. Rested in '81. Then, Jim Fowler was '82. '82-'83.

A.C.: Well, in closing about talking about your husband, what was he like?

What was his personality like?

Umeno: Oh, he had a nice personality. Everyone liked him.

A.C.: (Laughs) Was he a joker?

Umeno: He liked to tell jokes in his speech at the beginning to keep them awake.

Charlotte: I don't know where he got all these ideas from, but he started the glaucoma clinics. I found this. They did the eye test kit for schools and they had Eye Guy. It was his idea to found the Hawaii Eyebank Foundation. I kept hearing my father talking about this nonprofit eleemosynary organization so there would be a 501(c)(3) to be able to get money. So he worked hard for that, for the Eyebank Foundation. There were a lot of things...He was active in that. Then, Hoopono. The rehabilitation. My father was one-track mind when it came to the prevention of blindness. He really zeroed in on that, which is why he served on the Helen Keller Foundation. He also got Claire Booth Luce to donate money to bring a focal coagulator, a kind of diagnostic tool, to Queens.

Umeno: Yes. That was the first clinic.

Charlotte: That was the first one. At Queens. Then, the collection of eyeglasses.

Umeno: He got involved in most everything.

Charlotte: Then there was this Vitamin A that was supposed to preserve eyesight so they got involved with Third World countries.

A.C.: That's fantastic. I have a very good idea of the participation, and his career as a Lion, so thank you very much. Is there anything you want to add before I give you a break?

Umeno: We're going to talk about the heiau later?

A.C.: Yes.

'Aiea Lions Pavilion at Keaiwa Heiau

Charlotte: There is a pavilion, a picnic shelter at the heiau.

A.C.: The Lions did that too?

Charlotte: Yes. That's my Dad.

A.C.: I didn't know that. It's used quite a bit. Actually, the Aiea School Class of

'54 rents it for their reunions twice a year.

Charlotte: It's just a picnic area, right next to the actual heiau.

A.C.: I don't know about the construction. People can rent it. You have to get a permit for it. There's a connection for them. That's where they always have their reunion, rain or shine.

Charlotte: Well, you see, the 'Aiea Lions built that.

Umeno: It was initiated by my husband. Then the Lions worked on it. I think it cost them \$900 for the materials, but the Lions paid for it.

Charlotte: They paid for it, but it was weekend after weekend for the labor.

A.C.: It's big enough for a nice-sized group.

Charlotte: It's open (air). There's a plaque up there that says something about the 'Aiea Lions. Oh yes, I remember that a lot.

A.C.: Is there anything else?

Charlotte: I do think that the Lions played a huge role in my parents' lives. (Asking her mother) When he ran for International Director, that's when he decided to retire from C&H Sugar? He was doing so much traveling. The traveling meant he would get invited as a speaker to different states and different countries, so he did. He also got the C&H Sugar Refinery involved in whatever else he was doing---

Charlotte: (Umeno mentions this.) Oh yes, my dad was also involved in the Girl Scouts. Because of me. The Girl Scouts used to sell nuts, so he made sure they had nuts. So my father was the nut chairman! (Everyone laughs)

Umeno: They needed a place to store the nuts.

Charlotte: My dad asked C&H Sugar.

Umeno: He does everything except for the house! (Everyone laughs) Did we talk about the 'Aiea Community Association? He was involved in the community association.

'Aiea Community Association

A.C.: When your husband was active in the community association, was it in a building where 'Aiea Shopping Center is now?

Umeno: Yes. It was where 'Aiea Shopping Center is. There was a building.

Charlotte: (Asking her mother) Is that where you went to school?

Umeno: I went to Dokoritsu. The rest of my family went to Hongwanji.

A.C.: Okay. So your husband was in the association along with Mr. Griswold and Mr. Nakano. What kind of things did the community association do?

Umeno: Well, they had the carnival twice a year to raise money to get an executive secretary. Finally they hired George Fox as our executive secretary.

Charlotte: They did have a building. One of the reasons I remember the piano was because they had ---

Umeno, Charlotte: A piano there.

Charlotte: So my dad had this brilliant idea that I should take piano lessons. So I had to go there. He wanted me to start and if I'd continue, then he'd invest in a piano. I clearly remember having to go there, practicing and taking lessons. That's what I remember. But he was quite active.

Umeno: George Fox was a single man, so he used to bring him home, practically three times a week, and then he used (have me) cook him breakfast.

Friendships during World War II

Umeno: During the war, he met two soldiers, and he brought them home and fed them.

Charlotte: She did the cooking. But you see, I do remember these two servicemen. They had to complete their training here. They had children and family---

Umeno: Back home.

Charlotte: So you know, like the holidays, Thanksgiving, Christmas.

Umeno: We used to invite them.

Charlotte: They used to come over.

Alvin: Where were they from?

Umeno: One was from Illinois. Wisconsin.

Charlotte: One from from Illinois. One from Wisconsin. There were three. Rosebeth, Wall and Richardson. Nebraska.

Umeno: Richardson was from Nebraska.

A.C.: Did you stay in touch?

Umeno: We stayed in touch for quite a while. But after a while---

Charlotte: They passed on.

December 7th, 1941

A.C.: Well, is there anything else? We'll talk about World War II and get Auntie Millie too. Well, (asking Umeno) where were you on December 7th?

Umeno: I was at home. That morning, we didn't have breakfast here. It was Sunday morning. Charlotte was only one year old.

Charlotte: Not quite.

Umeno: Not quite, and you see, it was a two-story building.

A.C.: So you lived in a two-story building?

Umeno: Um-hmm. It was a plantation home at that time, until we purchased it. (Turning to Charlotte) Did we purchase it when you were a baby? I don't know.

A.C.: Was the two-story home on the *mauka* side (of Moanalua Road)?

Charlotte: The *makai* side. I think the library would be our neighbor.

Umeno: Yeah. There was one house between the library and our house.

Charlotte: Could be.

Umeno: Yes. So he jumped out from bed, and he ran to the back steps and he said, "It doesn't look like maneuvers." In no time, his family—His father, mother---ailing father, mother and Harold, his younger brother, and the older brother, Katsumi, came with his son.

Mildred: Mom and Dad. Harold. They went to the mom's place.

Umeno: They came up and said they saw the battleship burning. They said it's not a maneuver; we're being attacked. But we didn't know who attacked us. So they came in.

We had to—they said, let's go up. Get out and drive up to the mountains, so we went to 'Aiea Heights. We drove up to 'Aiea Heights. Harold had the car. The young brother, because at that time, Katsumi, the oldest one, they didn't drive at all.

A.C.: So you grab Charlotte. She's just a baby, and did you get diapers and food?

Umeno: Well, we were so scared, I forgot. But I grabbed the bottle, the formula and we drove up to 'Aiea Heights, and the young brother saw the plane and he said, "Oh! Looks like Japan!" I saw the *hinomaru*, the flag, and so at that time, we were all so nervous that we're being attacked by Japan.

A.C.: How long did you stay up at the Heights?

Umeno: Until about five o'clock, I think. But then, there was a nice neighbor there. The Takafujis, who offered their stove, so I took Charlotte a bottle of milk and warmed it up there, and then gave it to her. We all came back to my place, so we had about---how many people in there? About seven or eight adults with two babies. And my sister-in-law made stew, and it lasted about five days. I got so sick of it, that I couldn't do anything. I had to eat it. After that, it was blackout. Martial law. Then, everything we needed, we had to stand in line to buy. I had to stand about a couple of hours, to get three oranges, to make orange juice for Charlotte. Same with my oldest brother. He did the same thing. He stayed in line to get oranges for his son. I hate to think about those days.

A.C.: Thank you. Let me ask Auntie Millie a few questions. Thank you. What was it like on December 7th? (Charlotte repeats the question.)

Mildred: Actually, I was living in Honolulu then. But my parents were living right at the shoreline of Pearl Harbor. Here's the Pearl Harbor shoreline, and then our home would be right on this side. Right across the ocean, like where Punchbowl is (from Mrs. Onishi's apartment in Makiki), is Pearl Harbor. So actually, that day, when war was (declared), usually that day, my mom said they always had practice. So everytime they had practice, it's only they drop something but it's only black smoke that comes up. But that morning, when they were having breakfast, they wondered, "Well, today is Sunday. Why isn't that they're having practice today?" So while they are having breakfast, and looking across, they saw it wasn't black smoke, but it was red fire. The ships were burning. So my folks, right away, said, "This is war! It cannot be a practice. Let's get out of here." So Harold had the car.

Charlotte: That's when they went to my dad's?

Mildred: No, first, they went way up the hill. Cane field. Everybody went up to the cane field. I think you people stayed at your home.

Umeno: Yeah. But I thought they came right away.

Mildred: But I know that my parents and all the rest of the neighbors, like that, they all were able to go up to the cane field. All huddled down. Afraid, you know? They all thought it was the Germans. The Germans were our enemy, we thought. Well, anyway, while they were all huddled and waiting, they saw one plane. A plane that was bombed. It was going like that. My folks were looking. The plane was on fire and going like that, you know? That is when they saw the plane, underneath, had the Japan.

Charlotte: The rising sun.

Mildred: That is when they found out, it was not the Germans but it was Japan that attacked us! And the plane naturally went down in the cane field. They stayed for some time, and then they came down. They did come direct to your place?

Umeno: According to Harold, they did.

Mildred: They weren't allowed to go back to the home, because it was right by the shoreline. The Kondo family. Kawamura. Us. Yamamoto. Then, the old man.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

A.C.: Okay. All the families went up. And they saw the plane spiraling, crashing in the cane fields. Did you see the plane?

Mildred: No. I was in Honolulu.

A.C.: Now, where were you?

Charlotte: Were you married then and living in Honolulu?

Onishi Family on Pearl Harbor Shoreline

Mildred: I was married. (Referring to the questions listed by A.C.) Parents' name. Brothers and sisters. I had no sisters, see? I had only three brothers. My oldest brother Katsumi. Tom. Then Harold. Unfortunately, they're gone now. I was the only girl, you see. Now we all lived in the same place. Born there, right on the Pearl Harbor shoreline. We were all born there. Never went to the hospital. In those days, everything was done at home. There was this old lady. (Refers to someone's mother as the midwife.) She was an ordinary lady, you know! She was the midwife. She took care of us. Your dad. My brothers. We were all home born. She was no midwife, but she took care of us. It says here, "What brought your family to 'Aiea?" My family was brought to 'Aiea because my two parents came from Japan, and when they came from Japan, my dad, first, years ago, there were so many single men that used to come from Japan to Hawaii to work in the cane fields. Then they would find someone in Japan, and that's how Mom was brought,

you know.

Charlotte: Grandma Onishi was a picture bride?

Mildred: She was a picture bride, and there was no plane then, I understand. They all came on the boat. It took so many weeks to come to Hawaii. Then when they came to Hawaii, there's this strange thing. When they came here, all the single men on this side, waiting for their name to be called. All the brides-to-be on this side of the ship. Whoever is responsible will call the name. Then Dad would come. Then Mom—her name was Yamane. Hotome Yamane. So Mom would come, you see. They all come here. (With her hands held up, then brings them together) Then they meet. There's a man there. Then they hold their hands like that, and that's how they get married already!

Charlotte: Did Grandma tell you all this?

Mildred: Yeah!

Charlotte: You must—got to be, right! (Everyone laughs) I wasn't born yet!

Alvin: They marry, right then and there!

Mildred: Years ago, I understand, they're only Buddhists in Japan. There's no Christianity then. See? Mom and Dad hold hands, and whoever married them, was a Christian man, you know?

Charlotte: Oh really?

Mildred: Yeah. Do you know who the man is? He was the founder of the Harris Methodist Church. Reverend Miyao? (Harris United Methodist Church had a Reverend Miyama.) Or something like that. He was the one that married Mom and Dad. They were married by a Christian, and that's how they got married. Mom used to sew. She used to go to cane field to work with Dad, like that, you know, but she thought, too cheap the rate, so she stayed home and sewed the Japanese *tabi*. You know what *tabi* means? She made *tabi* to sell. She didn't want to go to the cane field. She sewed *tabi*! That's what Mom said. We grew up, like that. My parents came from Japan. That's why we lived in 'Aiea. He was a fisherman. My dad and Mr. Onishi. There was another Onishi family, but I understand we were really related, but more-or-less---maybe years ago, we were related but I don't know. Dad was a fisherman with Margaret Onishi's dad.

Charlotte: When Grandpa caught all the fish, did she used to have to help him sell?

Mildred: Oh yeah! When we used to see small boat coming in, all the net on the platform, when it's shiny white, we know, all the mullet, you know, all caught in the net. We know that---

Alvin: Was good.

Mildred: Was good business, because all the fish was on. That brought in. And Margaret Onishi's father and Dad would take it off. They used to have a kerosene box, years ago. They would put all the fish in the kerosene box and then clamp it down. They would go to the station and when the train came, then Dad would go on and go to Honolulu. They would go to Honolulu, and I'm sorry, I don't remember the name of the market that they went to.

Charlotte: And Grandpa used to take the fish to the market?

A.C.: Did they sell any in 'Aiea?

Mildred: Oh yes! And then the rest, the box that they'd sell, Mom would go around 'Aiea camp, selling, you know. Mom used the---

Charlotte: The pole. The bamboo pole.

Mildred: Hold it. With a rope with a kind of a basket and both sides had the fish. That's how Mom used to go to the camp and sell.

Umeno: That's kind of interesting. (Charlotte explains that the her grandson, Umeno's great-grandson interviewed Umeno and they were talking about Grandma Onishi the night before.)

Alvin: How much did she sell it for?

Charlotte: Do you remember how much she sold it for?

Mildred: Do you know how much cheap? You know, I don't remember, because even bread was only about ten cents a loaf those days?

Alvin: How much did your father make working? On the plantation?

Mildred: I don't know how much. But I remember she used to sell the fish at the camp. That's how we were raised by my parents. (Reading the questions) "Where did you go to school?" I went to 'Aiea School. Unfortunately, I went as high as eighth grade. You know, Mom and Dad used to say, "In Japan, only boys go to have higher education."

Umeno: That's right.

Mildred: "Girls don't have to go to school, as long as they know domestic duties. That's a women's job." We were poor, in a way, you know.

Umeno: That's right. We all were.

Mildred: They didn't allow me to go to school, so I went as high as eighth grade. That's how it was.

Charlotte: Did you go to Japanese school too?

Mildred: Yes. There was Japanese school before the war, but right after the war, closed up. We used to go to English school and school used to start from 7:30 or 8:00, to 2:00. Then we would walk home and put all our books, and pick up our Japanese books and from then, we used to walk through the rice fields right up to the camp to go to Japanese school. That's how we used to learn Japanese.

Charlotte: Auntie, they had rice fields?

Mildred: Yeah! Didn't you know there were lot of rice fields? We even had—the Fukuda family, the father and mother used to raise in a big pond-like thing. What did they call? *Hasu*? Lotus. The father and mother go dig down. That's their job, you know?

Charlotte: You used to pass that?

Mildred: We used to pass that, then there's a Chinese family. That's where they had all the rice fields. All the rice fields in the small path we used to walk. Scared me to death! Everytime, you know, the birds tried to get the rice, this Chinese man would shoot! Scared me to death! Shoot those birds.

A.C.: Was that the Lau family?

Mildred: I don't remember any of their names. I used to know, there were two boys and about three older sisters I think. Yeah. One was married to Shimamoto.

A.C.: Helen Shimamoto. That's Lau family. Pete's Place.

Charlotte: PT. They called him. Was good friends with my dad.

Mildred: Unfortunately, I don't remember the girls' names.

A.C.: You remember a lot!

Mildred: Then we walked through the rice field, then, did you know in 'Aiea, we had this place where they produced soda water?

A.C.: Kaya family?

Mildred: They had the real soda water. Nakayama family had the store.

A.C.: Do you remember a store that sold ice? Yoshimura?

Mildred: Yeah, yeah. Right by—next door was Tabata Store. Next one was---

Umeno: Nagamine.

Mildred: The daughter was working---Nagamine. Tabata, Nagamine, the ice. Yoshimura. Then across was Santoki Store. Right across Santoki Store. And this side, we even had a dry cleaning place.

Umeno: Doi. That was Doi family. D-O-I.

Mildred: Doi had one daughter.

Umeno: They had one daughter.

A.C.: Can I ask about the family fishing? What kind of boat was used?

Mildred: Oh, it was small. The boat used to be about, from here to this door. The width was maybe, about this wide.

Alvin: What they'd do? They had to row?

Mildred: Yeah. Oar like that. Then Dad would oar like that. Then, Margaret's father would sit down. Then they had that, like canoe. Do you know, Dad was the only one who was permitted to go to Pearl Harbor to fish?

Everyone: Oh really?

Mildred: No one was allowed to go to Pearl Harbor to fish.

Charlotte: What kind of fish did he catch?

Mildred: Only mullet. Mullet and *omaka*. You know *omaka*? Only mullet and *omaka*. (Sound of the F-15 jets flying overhead for Veteran's Day) They were the only one who used to go to Pearl Harbor to be able to fish. They had to bribe and pay with fish!

Pineapple Freight Trains

Umeno: Oh, that's what they had to do! I didn't know that!

Mildred: Did you know that all the pineapple fields up in Wahiawa? All the

pineapple---when they brought it into Honolulu by train, freight train, and when the train is full of pineapple! On top is all that pineapple and there's always one man on each one. Everytime we'd hear the rumbling of the train, we kids we'd run to the railroad and wait, and when the train come, we'd make like that. (Throwing)

A.C.: To throw?

Umeno: He'd throw the pineapples?

Mildred: Throw the pineapple to us. Yeah! That's why we used to, you know, Tom and brother Harold like that, we'd all congregate, the family. We had a lot of fun. The pineapple, a long train, would go right to Honolulu. Go to the factory.

Charlotte: Maybe that's why father always had to have pineapple. Grandpa loved pineapple. My dad.

Mildred: We used to always run to get the pineapple! When we were kids, you know, we didn't have to have all the fancy gadgets like television. Yeah, we had our own way of playing! Yeah, Me-chan?

Umeno: That's right. We made our own toys. We made our dolls. I remember.

Mildred: She and I. We both went to school, even in the rain, and we used to go to Japanese school for sewing. (She shares how her sewing wasn't always as good as Umeno's.)

Charlotte: But you sew now!

Mildred: We used to take our lunch, and I shall never forget, she (Umeno) always used to bring milk for lunch, yeah?

Umeno: Yes. Because I was so small that my mother would (pack it).

Mildred: I don't remember what I used to bring for lunch. Those days, we didn't eat sandwich. Maybe *musubi*?

Umeno: I think that time, yeah.

Charlotte: I think so.

Mildred: We had a lot of fun. (Reading) "Who were your neighbors?" The Kondo family. The Kawamura family. The Yamamoto family.

Charlotte: So they all lived where the pavilion is, over there, in that area?

Mildred: Yes, yes. Right where our house used to be, where the (Shizuo Onishi Lions Club) pavilion is built.

A.C.: Can I ask you a sad question? I understand that Harushi Kondo died in Italy?

Mildred: Yeah. Harushi Kondo. He went to Italy. He was one of the first, the boy from the Kondo family, to volunteer when war broke out. He was sent to Italy, and unfortunately, he died. I don't know how he died.

A.C.: Did they put a star on the window?

Charlotte: Do you remember? No?

Mildred: No. I don't remember where they went to live. Kondo family, where did they live, after the war broke out> (Tape stops) (Reading) "The sugar mill." I'm sorry I don't think I ever went into the sugar mill. I never went in. But we worked in the cane field, though... The kids, you know, would apply for a job. (We would) Hoe. Then, there's a big train. Not an enclosed train. Just flat. They would pile all us kids in, all in. They would take us to the cane field where we're supposed to pull all the weeds, you know. The *luna*, you know, would tell us, "Try not to ---all the cane is growing. Try not to---baby cane is going up." At ten thirty, we'd have our lunch. After lunch, we'd go swimming... The big things. (The flumes) We all used to swim, boys and girls together! We used to swim. We'd swim. The *luna* doesn't mind. Lunch hour. After a while, we'd work. Then we'd work a little bit more. Then we'd come home. For all day's work, they only pay us fifty cents.

A.C.: This is wonderful. Thank you. I think we should close. (Turns off the tape. Asks a question if she remembers the 1920 strike. Tape recorder is turned back on.)

Mildred: I was only ten years old then. I remember that the strike was on. Mom and Dad folks, everyone wanted something. Food. They issued food out. Used to do that. I remember the strike.

Umeno: Where were you living then?

Mildred: Same place. 'Aiea. I was living over there in (the plantation camp near the mill?) 1910. (Turning to Charlotte) Your dad wasn't born yet. (They discuss that her father was born in 1913).

END OF INTERVIEW