The following oral history is from a recorded interview with Kazue Uyeda (KU) and Barbara Hashimoto (BH) conducted by Mid-Pacific Institute students Kenji and Bryce with Mānoa Heritage Center’s Jenny Leung (JL) on November 30, 2021 online via TheirStory. This interview is part of the Mānoa Heritage Center’s oral history project name.

Please keep in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the narrator.

**Beverly Hashimoto:** Say who you are, how old you are, everything, just general.

**Kazue Uyeda:** Oh, hello. I’m Mrs. Kazue Uyeda and I am hundred four years old. I was born in Honolulu on Fort Street in my Grand ...no, bachan folks, yeah. They have small shoe store and I was born there on May 22nd, 1917. And so, I’m now 104 years old. I went to the local schools and in 19... After I graduated from Central Intermediate School, I went to Japan and stayed there for five years. I went to school there and got some education, yeah \*you went to Hiroshima\*. Now, I went there in 1932, came back in 1937. Which means that I was there for five years. And, I got to speak Japanese quite well, yeah.

**Beverly Hashimoto:** Okay. So thank you. Yeah, you know, yeah. Yeah, they’re going to ask you some questions. And so, you know, she let me just to add a little bit more. Yeah, she was able to, her parents had a well-known hardware store during those days, 1920s or whatever. It was called, Iwahara Shoten. Iwahara was her maiden name and so, you know, she was busy working at that hardware store and eventually she met my dad because he had his business, their family business, which is Uyeda Shoe Store. It had it there and Uyeda Shoe Store. She worked at Uyeda Shoe Store until she was age 92 and my, and my sister took over the business, so they’re in University area. University Plaza, and my name is Beverly Hashimoto, her oldest daughter. And I was also in education, although I taught at Kaiser High School and Roosevelt High School and and retired in 2009. So I’m familiar, you know, with the situation of teaching and as I was telling Jessica, my two children graduated from Mid-Pacific in 19.. 1993 is my daughter 1997 is my son. So we have ties to Mid-Pac. Yay Owls!

**Kenji:** My name is Kenji.

**Bryce:** And my name is Bryce.

**Kenji:** So we have some just some general questions run through I guess. So I was one of the first ones is what significance does Mānoa play in your life?

**Beverly Hashimoto:** Okay, he’s asking what significance does Mānoa play in your life? You know yeah, why is Mānoa sort of important to you?

**Kazue Uyeda:** Oh, because it’s a beautiful place that people are all kind of well-educated too and hmm. It’s close to the place where I, we have the store, yeah so it was very convenient going back and forth. And, my neighbors were all very nice.

**BH:** Tell them how long were you living in Mānoa Valley? How did you get to move?

**KU:** Oh, my husband, you know, the place we were staying when I was married was in Makiki, but then I started having children and the house, we had other members of the family, you know. It got kind of crowded, so we decided to go on our own and my husband found this house in Mānoa Valley. It’s quite way in but it’s such a nice, I would say, ideal place to raise the kids. Yeah. I had well-educated people around my place. The principal of UH lived right about =next door= not even half a block away. And...

**BH:** Mrs. Miller.

**KU:** And then Miss Miller and they were school teachers at Punahou School too yes.

**BH:** She was a professor at the University of Hawaiʻi. Mrs. Miller.

**KU:** Oh Miss Miller. Oh, yeah. She was a professor at UH, yeah, and also I thought I told you that the people were very nice and they...

**BH:** They were friendly. They were friendly to you. Also about the different areas. Different shops and the stores in the valley.

**KU:** And then we do have, when we first came here, in nineteen =1948= forty... we came early, 1949. There were hardly any shops or stores. But soon after that, Longs started coming in and a Safeway. And so we have a nice shopping area, quite close to my place.

**BH:** Okay, maybe why don’t you let him ask the, maybe he can ask the questions. Okay. Maybe you can uh, he’s going to ask other questions.

**KU:** Okay.

**Bryce:** Okay. So the next question will be be about your daily life. So what were popular activities to do in your free time?

**BHy:** Okay, so he’s asking about your daily life. Daily life. Like what, popular what activities did you do in general?

**KU:** You know, I’m hundred four and I can’t do much if I didn’t have this what you call, I would gladly help my daughter. Helping her with some, you know, housework. But since I cannot move, as I’m still confined to my couch, most of the day.

**BH:** But what do you do in the morning? How do you start off your morning? Tell them the breakfast and reading the paper? How do you start your morning?

**KU:** Oh, I read the paper, you know, I enjoy sitting down and reading. So at least I would know what’s going around my place and the world.

**JL:** I think maybe the boys meant, when your mom lived in Mānoa, when she first moved to Mānoa, was she working at the store.

**BH:** Okay, what were you doing when you move into, when you’re younger? When you were in Mānoa? What was your daily routine?

**KU:** I had the family. So I had to take care of my children? Yeah. Yeah. =And. you used to work at the store yeah= And then my folks offered to watch my children. So I could help my husband at the shoe store in my Mōʻiliʻili yeah. And so, I continued helping the store. Until I was 91 years old and oh, I had to quit because I fell and I tripped and then fractured my hip. So and I had to have a surgery. So that’s what let me, I mean, forget about working already. But I worked here. I was 91 years old.

**BH:** That’s pretty good.

**Kenji:** So, next question, would be: in the past when you first moved to Mānoa a long time ago, what was your main means of transportation? Like, did you drive yourself? Or do you take the bus or was there - what kind of transportation did you take?

**BH:** He said that when you’re, you know, started, you know, in your younger days. In your younger days living in Mānoa. What was your mode of transportation? How did you get around?

**KU:** I had a car.

**BH:** Okay, so you tell.

**KU:** We had a car, so...

**BH:** When did you learn to drive? When did you learn to drive?

**KU:** Oh, I learn to drive before I got married. We had that car. We had... my parents had a store in downtown across from Aʻala park. There as a big building and my grandfather had started the business just before the turn of the century, you know, so my family was kind of well known for being an old...=stay at the subject matter. See you learned to drive= Oh, I learned to drive just before I got married, yeah.

**BH:** So about 1942? Yeah, you got married in 1942

**KU:** 1942 I think. Yeah. So it was very convenient for me to, you know, get around. Yeah.

**BH:** What kind of car did you drive?

**KU:** We had a Buick. A Buick car.

**BH:** Oh, okay. Okay, that’s good.

**Bryce:** Okay, so this is gonna be more about like your childhood. Were sports and extracurricular activities big in your childhood and throughout the generations of your family?

**BH:** He said was sports part of your childhood. What was the extracurricular, stuff out of school.

**KU:** I wasn’t too interested in sports.

**BH:** But why don’t you tell them that, you know, you when your childhood, you learn to play the koto and you learn calligraphy, but what kind of stuff did you do in your childhood?

**KU:** Oh, my mother sent me to Mrs. Kurokawa who was a koto - would you know what a koto is - a Japanese instrument yeah. So I learned how to play the koto. And I think a few times that teacher took me and another student to the military...

**BH:** Military facilities to play.

**KU:** To play here at to play for them. I mean, as entertainment yeah.

**BH:** And may I add just so, you know, is that she took koto for a while. And she, you know, she initially started with one koto, and she sold it. And she got another koto and presently, I mean, you know, she hadn’t played for a while, then she’s figured what she’s going to do with it. So she actually gifted it to a person named... her name is Sandy Tsukiyama, who does play koto and she does Brazilian music and she sings. So the koto now is a good hands to, you know, presently. And also when you were younger, what did you do? Calligraphy? Did you learn calligraphy? Did you learn calligraphy?

**KU:** Oh fude? Yeah, my mother told me that I should, you know, learn how to use the fude. And so I went to Mrs. Moribe a who was a =calligrapher= calligraphy teacher on Nuʻuanu Avenue near Kuakini.

**BH:** When did you learn to sew? Because you can sew.

**KU:** Sew? When I was in the 7th grade, summertime, my mother sent me to a sewing school. And for about two months, I learned how to sew, and I helped sew my, my sisters dresses. And also, I think I remember making one or two, sewing my mother’s dress, which was very helpful in my career. I knew how to do some sewing.

**Kenji:** Okay, this is the next question, kind of about the schools and the area. But from when you went to school a long time ago, have there been any new schools that were built since then.

**BH:** He said okay, you know he wants you to share about, you know, your elementary... well your school years. But were there any schools that were built after she or doesn’t she went to school?

**Kenji:** Were there any schools that were either are no longer here or schools that were built new that you guys see now or she sees now?

**BH:** Okay. Well, can you tell? Well you tell them what school did you go to elementary schools? They’re still here. What elementary school did you go to? Elementary Schools, Kaʻiulani. What’s your elementary? Yeah.

**KU:** Oh me? =yeah, yeah= Oh yeah, I went to Kauluwela School for one year, and then my parents decided to live upstairs of the store across from Aʻala Park, so I had to be shifted to Kaʻiulani School. And I went there fourth grade, fifth grade, and sixth grade, and then after elementary, I was shifted to Central Intermediate. And there, you know, I went to school there for 3 years and after graduating from Central, in 1932, my parents sent me to Japan. Yeah, and so I went to Japan and stayed there for five years.

**BH:** So, anyway, as far as your question is concerned, I guess you realize that Central Middle School while those days they used to call it Intermediate School but Central Middle School has since changed their name, right? It's called Princess Kaʻiulani School?

**Kenji:** Kaʻiulani. Yeah.

**BH:** So the elementary school that she went to, she said, at that time, the elementary school was called Princess Kaʻiulani

**KU:** Kaʻiulani yeah, I went to Kaʻiulani.

**BH:** So I’m not sure what Kaʻiulani is known to now. See, so that that that’s a, maybe a question mark. I don’t think she can, you know, know that part in terms of the new schools. Yeah.

**JL:** I think they renamed it after Princess Ruth, correct? So, I think it’s Keʻelikōlani.

**BH:** Oh, yeah, okay. Okay. Okay.

**KU:** What did she say?

**BH:** The name. They changed the name to Keʻelikōlani or something like that.

**JL:** Kazue, in Japan, where was your family living in Japan? What city?

**BH:** Where was your family living in Japan?

**KU:** Oh, my they just sent only me.

**BH:** Yeah, but where was your family? Your other family like your...

**KU:** They were from Hiroshima.

**JL:** My grandmother too.

**BH:** Anyway, the Koimachi is where, you know, specifically in Hiroshima. And I guess what happened was, you know, her father, before coming here to establish the hardware store, I guess through the generations, they were able to accumulate a decent amount of property. So is that my phone so sorry, I- I don’t know how to get rid of these guys. Oh I’m so sorry, excuse me. Okay, but anyway, you know, they had you know, quite a bit of land there. So they built homes. I mean, you know, I guess those are close-knit family. So one home was for where her father lived with his wife and then were other homes where his two sons are living presently. So it’s pretty much stayed there. But when she went back to Japan she didn’t live with them per se but she lived with her auntie. Yeah, you live with your auntie when you are in Japan, right? It was the auntie in Hiroshima too, correct?

**KU:** Yes. Yeah. She lived in town you to say it was very convenient for me, to go back and forth every day. Yeah,

**BH:** So even though, you know bombing of Hiroshima, she... of course she was back here, but she was so worried about her family and her father who were in Hiroshima and she said, she didn’t find out that... she didn’t find out the status of her father until one month later because as far as mail goes, there’s no email. It was all snail mail. So that was quite, you know, distressing for her at that time, and she lost, of course, some friends to the atomic bomb.

**BH:** Anything else about your school experience. Did you enjoy going to school in Japan? You enjoyed school in Japan? Did you enjoy it?

**KU:** Yeah.

**BH:** You want to express, share anything about the experience? You want to share experience about your school in Japan?

**KU:** Well. I learned quite a bit of, you know, things in life. And I also learned how to do the flower arrangement, yeah. Chanoyu, and the tea ceremony. That’s what most people learn when they go to Japan, you know, aside from going to school after they graduate school. They preferred to learn something else. And that you- you being you know, =chanoyu= chanoyu and flower arrangement.

**BH:** She has all her her various type of her various, I guess, teapots and whatever accessories that they use for tea ceremony. You know, she brought it back with her. And my sister took up the tea ceremony. She kind of followed mom’s footsteps there and I did the flower arrangement. I took that as a intermediate, middle school age time. But I guess I wasn’t too successful there, but I just culturally, I learned something there.

**Bryce:** So, about Mānoa, do wish things stayed the same from when you grew up?

**BH:** Okay, about Mānoa. Do you wish things stayed the same one when you were growing up, you know, Mānoa has changed, right?

**KU:** Yeah.

**BH:** Do you, do you feel do you wish that Mānoa was- was the same?

**KU:** It’s almost the same, hasn’t changed much

**BH:** What kind of stores. You remember the all your stores?

**KU:** It was when I left Hawaiʻi to go to Japan, there weren’t hardly any stores only that market, the Chinese market at the corner of...

**BH:** The Starbucks now.

**KU:** Yeah, that’s about the only store.

**BH:** But yeah, there were plenty other stores that that were there. In the forties, in the ‘40s ‘50s ‘60s?

**KU:** Well =Japanese school= the stores started to coming after I came.

**BH:** Okay.

**KU:** Yeah.

**BH:** Do you remember some of the stores back then? =Back then?= Yeah, remember what stores? Okay, the Mānoa Market, which is Starbucks now.

**KU:** That’s about all. =How’s about the...= And there was a barbershop =okay, barbershop and?= and...

**BH:** Dry goods store?

**KU:** A clothing store What do you call that... dry goods store?

**BH:** And there was a Barber shop. That’s about all.

**JL:** Do you remember Mānoa Grill?

**KU:** =Mānoa Grill?= Yeah there was Mānoa Grill across...

**BH:** That was like when we were going to Japanese School. Maybe I’m interjecting, I’m sorry. But, you know, I think my mom’s left some gap in terms of, there were a lot of stores. Mānoa Grill, there was Mānoa Elementary School. The first ones were where the Mānoa Valley Church is and even the fire station. What was at the fire station? Do you remember that? =Fire station?= The Mānoa Fire Station.

**KU:** That was Mānoa Elementary School and they moved there to the new school when Allen was in the second grade, I think. And then over there became... What you call, what is it now?

**BH:** You mean Mānoa Elementary School? What do you mean? The fire station? It’s now fire station.

**KU:** Yeah, the fire station came here. Yeah. Ever since then when Allen moved to the new school. When he was first...second grader, I think.

**BH:** So what was the area where Safeway is now? Was it all grass land?

**KU:** There wasn’t any CVS.

**BH:** Well, okay. What was it? Can you tell them?

**KU:** No, that was just plain... what you call grassland, I would say. Nothing. No stone. No nothing. And then after that, they started developing that area and then nani came in, Safeway came in.

**BH:** You know, before, maybe I can add, that area... that used to, that’s a lot of pasture land. =pasture land= I guess she meant to say. People would have their horses. They have their horses grazing on the grass in that area. And I remember there was even a Mormon, a little Mormon church. In the midst of all the pasture. And they would have services and somehow. I got they caught me there and they you know, would pick me up from home and take me to that church there and I remember just pasture land that whole area. Yeah.

**JL:** Do you remember War Housing?

**BH:** War housing?

**JL:** Yeah. They built, the war housing in that area. After World War 2.

**BH:** Well, maybe if that was Veterans’ Acre. Remember, Veterans’ Acre where Auntie lives and it was all from the after the war, right?

**KU:** Veterans’ Acre, where is that now?

**BH:** Where Auntie lives? Auntie, Auntie Tomichan lives there.

**KU:** That’s one came soon after we moved over here.

**BH:** Okay, so maybe the later... I don’t know if we’re talking about the right one. But Veterans’ Acre - It was known as Veterans’ Acre. And it was a development of homes, where its presently Lawa Place, Huapala, Keone, around that area is where they built homes, and I know my uncle lived in one of the... still lives. His children live in the homes there. We should just call it Veterans’ Acre. So, it probably must have been tied in or related to maybe the military.

**Kenji:** Another question we have is... were there any kind of events that happened in Mānoa back then? And if not, tying in a different question is like, what kind of traditions did your family... what kind of Japanese traditions or kind of traditions in your family kind of celebrate? Maybe from a long time ago.

**BH:** Okay, from long time ago. What are the family traditions that we observe? So you can talk about mochitsuki, having ozoni soup, Japanese tradition.

**KU:** Japanese tradition. We had mochitsuki, yeah. =You wanna explain to them?= Yeah, the family used to do mochi pounding, mochitsuki. Ever since I got married to the Uyeda family, they were all...my father-in-law used to join his sister on Fort Street, and that’s where they had, they pounded the mochi but later on, they started pounding mochi at our backyard. In Makiki.

**BH:** So, first it was Makiki. And then they actually used... you, tell them what did they use to pound mochi? Usu, explain? What did they use to pound mochi?

**KU:** Oh, that long usu.

**BH:** So she means the usu is the bowl where put the mochi in and it a round stone.

**KU:** Steamed rice. Yeah, and then they would pound with a long mallet. And we still have it in the back, you know, back compartment way on top.

**BH:** Talk about all the Oshogatsu preparation, what you did when you were young, everything.

**KU:** Oh, well, when I was young, after I got married? We had ozoni yeah. Ozoni that put kamaboko and chikuwa and =shiitake= shiitake, that’s right. It was really a tasty soup, with mochi inside. Most families had it, I think, you know. That was just like the signature of our New Year’s Day, eating ozoni. That’s what we called, ozoni. The soup that contain the mochi and the kamaboko, and all the goodies.

**BH:** Tell her about the other dishes, that you made. So they know, other dishes.

**KU:** Oh the other dishes. The oh, I made, I made the kohaku namasu. =explain that= Namasu with daikon and carrots. And then we also had kuromame. Kuromame was black beans. You cook it for many hours and I used to add in a lot of sugar to make it real sweet.

**BH:** Tell them what’s symbolic. What is the symbolic meaning? What does kuromame mean? What’s the symbol, symbolic meaning?

**KU:** Means sign of health. Yeah. To be healthy, to stay healthy. That was the =How’s about about kazunoko?= Kazunoko means to have lots of kids, children, and so that they could adopt, you know be able to raise a nice, big family.

**BH:** I can add because she’s, you know, she used to do all the preparations. She didn’t mention, but she has special lacquerware that she had acquired when she was in Japan, special bowls. So once a year, she takes out these special dishes, of course now we- we’re helping her do that. Hopefully, we carry on the tradition of using these special lacquer dishes. =Bowls, yeah= and all your other kind of fancy type of ceramic ware that she uses to put the food that she talked about the kuromame and kazunoko and you know different things like sashimi and sake. And her- the tradition in our family is, she would serve sake to everybody at the table. We have a dining table outside in the living room, a formal dining table. So, she would get sake and should go around and she would pour sake to, you know, all the people there to say “Omedetou,” and to wish them well for the year, but now that she cannot walk so we go to her, everybody goes to her and she pours the sake for us. Yeah, so, you know that’s really New Year’s tradition which she started a long time ago. And of course, she puts kasami mochi [kagami mochi]. That’s the mochi that the two mochi that’s stacked on top of each other with the tangerine. So she’ll do that with the konbu and kuri which is a chestnut. So we do that.

**KU:** Mochitsuki was a big thing for our family.

**BH:** You mentioned that. But now what happens is we do have it here, but you know for a while we didn’t have the manpower. So when my kids were young and everything, you know that we didn’t have the manpower so we stopped using the actual mallet and the bowl and what we do, we kind of modernize it, we do steam it the old way, but we have a mochi machine that you just throw the mochi in and then you let it go for so many minutes and then it creates...

**KU:** For 10 minutes, you know?

**BH:** Yeah.

**KU:** Allen was the one who took care of that. My son was the- took care of the pounding machine. So it’s amazing, you know, you know every family that used to have that they have to do a lot of hard work. But now that we have the machine it takes only 10 minutes. You start the machine and then in 10 minutes time the mochi would be pounded.

**BH:** So anyway, of course there are families presently are they actually really do it the traditional way of learning a lot of families, but I guess in our case because the manpower’s, you know, kind of less and you know, we don’t have everybody- you know some families and extended families and friends that participate, we pretty much do it within our family. So when we took about 18 people, 20 people and few of them are males that have the ability, you know, would if- if you could pound it but now which we just kind of do we modernized it a bit and we even have a mochi cutter and I was with the mochi in this there’s a machine and also that cuts the mochi to a particular size. But I traditionally do the making of the kasami mochi by hand and that’s tough because the rice is super-hot. So you know, I just kind of bite my teeth and grit and then do it. And so I do the kasami mochis for the different families and it’s all good. Of course, you put... when we make our mochi, you know, mom is still active participating, actively participating. So she counts the mochi and she packs it for us. She knows how many mochi goes in a particular plate so she writes the name of the people that are gonna receive it and packs it and she does that. So she’s at least you can still come out and she knows, she is aware of that. So she’s all, she’s all good. And she still calls the shots. She’ll still boss us around. So bossing me around and whatever. So we know that cognitively, she’s still okay. 104. Yeah.

**Bryce:** Okay. So, um About your housing, that what kind of home did you grow up in and any of the neighbors changed since you lived in Mānoa?

**BH:** Okay. So what kind of house did you live in from? You want to know when she was young as a child or when she got married?

**Kenji:** Oh, yeah. When she was a young as a child growing up.

**BH:** Okay. When you were a child what kind of house... where did you live? Maybe you can explain where you live?

**KU:** I lived in Kuakini in Huli Lane. I think the house is still there. Those days not many family had homes, but fortunately, my- my father was in business and had a big store. So we had a house. It’s still there in Huli Lane in Kuakini.

**BH:** Explain about the refrigerator. Did you have a refrigerator at the house? Did you have a refrigerator?

**KU:** Oh no, those days? There was no such thing. There was no such thing as a refrigerator. The best was the icebox, you know, the Ice Man would come every morning, maybe every other day, and my mother would wrap the thing in white rice bag, and then put it in the icebox. Most families had to do that. Yeah put- the Ice man would come to deliver the ice, and then they would wrap it in and put it their icebox.

**BH:** Anything else. Like did you have what other... you had a stove? You had a stove?

**KU:** Oh, yeah, there was a stove, gas stove. Yeah. My mother had a gas stove. But you know, most of the time we used to live in that upstairs of the store. You see that’s why? Only maybe during the weekends we would come home. During the weekends, only, we would come home and most of the time we would spend upstairs of our store. The building is- was a big store, a big building, I mean. There were 12 stores in the front, facing Aʻala Park and there were about eight or nine stores facing on Iwilei across from Oahu Railway Station yeah.

**BH:** It’s just I guess those days many of the occupants who had a shops would live upstairs, you know, so be easy to to to run the business and to live upstairs.

**KU:** Yeah, most of the people that ran business, lived upstairs of the store.

**Kenji:** If you have more than you’ve already explained, go ahead. Yeah, we have time, but we’re just letting you know, our portions are done. If you have more things, go ahead.

**BH:** Anything else you want to say. Regarding, I mean,

**KU:** I think I’ve said enough, but I’m very fortunate that I have a good family who is taking good care of me. Look. I’m hundred four years old, you know. Yeah, thank you so much for coming. Arigatou.

**Bryce:** Thank you so much.

**JL:** Thank you Beverly and Kazue and boys. Thank you so much.