

The following oral history is from a recorded interview with Clifford Araki (CA) and Paul Araki (PA) conducted by MHC Executive Director Jessica Welch (JW) with Mid-Pacific Institute students Bethany and Justin on November 17, 2021 at Mānoa Heritage Center and online via TheirStory. This interview is part of 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.

Clifford Araki: East Mānoa. Going east.

Paul Araki: Connect to the parking lot.

Paul Araki: End of that lane. That was where we live. As well as born.

Bethany: Did you guys attend school in Mānoa?

Paul Araki: Yes.

Bethany: What school did you guys go to? Like from elementary to high school.

Jessica Welch: What school did you go to first? For elementary school.

Clifford Araki: Kindergarten.

Paul Araki: Kindergarten first. Yeah.

Clifford Araki: There used to be a Kindergarten in our lane.

Jessica Welch: Oh, wow.

Paul Araki: That lane was the one that goes into Safeway.

Clifford Araki: And first to sixth grade in Mānoa. Mānoa School.

Jessica Welch: Mānoa Elementary.

Clifford Araki: Yes.

Paul Araki: That's when Mānoa Elementary was across the graveyard. You know the Hawaiian graveyard? Mānoa School used to be right across where the fire station is right now. That's where Mānoa School was.

Bethany: And then where did you go for middle school or high school?

Jessica Welch: Where did you go to high school?

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CA: Intermediate I went to Washington Intermediate School. You know where Washington Intermediate is?

JW: Stevenson now?

CA: No, no. It's on Punahou and King Street.

PA: You call it the middle school now.

CA: And then McKinley High School.

Bethany: And then you said that your brother went to Mid- Pacific?

PA: Yeah, only son.

CA: What about him?

PA: If he went to Mid-Pacific. But those days they used to call it Mills School.

CA: Mills School? He went right through graduated. He was about the first class.

JW: Wow, so he's older than you then you.

PA: Ten years. Ten years younger than him

JW: Wow, so he'd be a hundred right now. Oh hon. I'm sorry. Can you- we can't hear you? Can you say that again?

Justin: What were some popular activities that you would do in your free time?

CA: Well, I used to love to golf and play baseball.

PA: When you were growing up.

CA: When I was growing up, was mostly baseball. And used to play basketball, you know, in our small, small area in our lane.

PA: (Indistinct)

CA: Say that again.

Justin: Did you guys just play with your friends or did you guys play on a team?

JW: Did you play with your friends or on a team?

CA: With my friends at the beginning, then when I went to Intermediate. I played on a team. We used to have what they call a Novice League up to 18 years of age. We had no little league at that time. Then I played for High School, Junior Team, when I was a sophomore. And Senior Team when I was a junior and senior.

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JW: How did you get around? When you were younger?

CA: We had a- I had a bicycle.

PA: And, of course catch the bus. Used to go to school.

CA: When I was going to Washington Intermediate...

PA: Didn't have the Woodlawn bus.

CA: ...my father used to work in Mo'ili'ili. So he used to drop me off at the Varsity Theater. Used to drop me off over there and I used to walk to Washington Intermediate.

PA: That's from King and University Avenue. We used to walk to Washington from there because we didn't have the Number 6 bus when we was growing up. Only had the bus that goes, Number 5. You remember that? We didn't have the Woodlawn bus? You have to walk all the way here to catch a bus, in order to catch the bus to go to Waikīkī, the zoo. This bus...

CA: Even Pauoa.

PA: ...the Number 5 bus before used to end at the Waikīkī Zoo. Used to turn around Ala Wai Boulevard. And that's one way to go to Waikīkī for us to the zoo on the bus. Number 5 bus.

Bethany: So, we know that a lot of things have changed in the world since you guys have grown-up here. So, what- what are some significant places or things that have changed since you guys were growing up?

PA: Lot of things, the shopping center.

CA: Well, during the war, they had the Mānoa War Homes.

PA: After the war, that was after the war, when the fighters came back from the war. They had to build the housing in Mānoa. Where the shopping center is right now. Used to be one veteran's housing, like they have in Palolo. Palolo housing. Mānoa had that housing before and later they built in Palolo. Mānoa had two schools, Mānoa Elementary School, Mānoa Housing Elementary School, that's the difference. But prior to that there was a pasture and dairies over there before the housing

CA: And you guys remember that?

PA: The bomb shelter, too, remember all the bomb shelters we had to have.

CA: There were three or four dairies in Mānoa.

JW: Did you hear that, you guys. Three or four, dairies in the valley. Good.

Bethany: So during- you guys were talking about, during the war time. How did things change for you guys as Japanese during the war time?

PA: Us being Japanese how did the war, during the war...

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JW: How did it affect you?

CA: Didn't affect us at all. We didn't feel any different.

PA: They came to look for our Dad. FBI.

JW: They did?

PA: He was a community leader actually.

CA: Our father was the head of the Japanese school. There were two language schools. Japanese language schools. He was, he was in charge of the one on Huapala Street.

PA: Mānoa Valley Church is there right now. That used to be a Japanese school. That's where my family belonged to.

CA: And the other Japanese school is right now, across Toyo's.

PA: She won't know where was Toyo's.

JW: I know of just from old maps that I've seen.

PA: The fire station was the Mānoa School cafeteria. That's the school we went to. Right next to that is the Japanese school now. They have judo now there currently still. That's the Japanese school he was talking about, and the other one was where the Mānoa Valley Church is right now, that used to be our Japanese school. There used to be conflict a lot in the Mānoa schools, those things. What Japanese school you go to meant a lot.

JW: Can you guys hear? Okay, good. Good, good. Sorry, can I just ask one question about that? The so the FBI came to talk to your father during the war?

CA: Well they questioned so many people. Well, it was fortunate that the person in charge of the Mānoa Japanese, our, Japanese school was a man that had passed away. So he was everything.

JW: So he's the one who had all the information.

PA: So they said he was in charge.

Bethany: Sorry, it's a little hard to hear right now cause the wind is picking up in the mic.

JW: Okay, let me close the window.

CA: That makes a difference?

PA: (Indistinct) Didn't da kind, ..., didn't the ... have something to do with it because she ... Kawashima (?) talked to somebody and that's why he got...

CA: No.

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Justin: (Indistinct question)

JW: What is the first time they saw it? Is that the question? What is, so seeing technology, like, phones and laptops. What was your first impression when you saw like these things that have become such a big part of our lives.

CA: I was just amazed. Our time we need the telephone. Used to be only dial.

PA: And not everybody had a telephone.

CA: In our whole camp we had two phones. I know Tanji had.

PA: Kano had one too.

CA: Kano was for the house. In our camp there was two phones. When they get a call for us they'd come running and calling us "telephone for you." When we want to call out we have to go over there.

PA: Oh I see. By my time we already had a phone, so... And even FM radio. Only AM radio, we grew up with.

JW: Did you catch that? Okay. Good good. Go ahead, Bethany.

Bethany: Going back to when you guys were younger... was Japanese culture a huge thing in Mānoa? Did you have a lot of Japanese-owned stores or influences growing up?

CA: Yeah, well, I guess because we're Japanese we had to go to either the Yano Store or Okamura Store, and there was a big market right outside our lane but we never used to shop there.

JW: Because it wasn't Japanese.

PA: It wasn't. It was Chinese.

CA: Plus they would deliver. They would deliver the bread.

PA: A hundred pounds of rice they used to deliver.

JW: To your house.

CA: Yeah.

PA: Yano was right next to the Japanese school. Right where they have fast food, place right now...

CA: There's a gas station now.

PA: Oh, yeah. There's a gas station there now, yah.

JW: Did you have any, you know, Japanese festivals or do anything special for the New Year?

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CA: Well used to have mochi pounding for the New Year's, but that had to be tabled for so many years because we couldn't get the rice. You know mochi rice is different from the regular rice.

PA: And how did the East Mānoa lane they used to show the movie against the kindergarten wall. Remember those days?

CA: Oh in the Japanese school.

PA: Yah. That's the old Japanese school. Right. And that's the old Japanese school too, right?

CA: That used to be the kindergarten.

PA: But in our lane they used to show movie too. I remember. Even the (Indistinct name)...and that was in kindergarten right? Against the wall the used show a...picture. Big screen. You don't remember? You was teenager, you weren't around. I was still young so I used to go with my dad, watch the outdoor movies. Black and white of course. Japanese movies.

CA: They used to show movie too. I remember. Even the (Indistinct name)...and that was in kindergarten right? Against the wall the used show a...picture. Big screen. You don't remember? You was teenager, you weren't around. I was still young so I used to go with my dad, watch the outdoor movies. Black and a white of course. Japanese movies. And no talking. *No talking in movies*

Bethany: What kind of movies were popular back then? What kind of movies would you guys see?

CA: I guess Samurai movies.

JW: Samurai movies.

Bethany: And then you guys are talking about the shops you said that you guys would only go to Japanese stores?

PA: Mostly. Of course we used to go to KMH store a lot. Right out the lane, yah. PeeWee store. We used to go to PeeWee store a lot. That was a Chinese-owned store. Was right outside our lane. And little, little.

PA: That's where changed into a pool room, eventually. That's where we used to go every day.

JW: So it was a store during the day and at night it was a poolroom? *no no no, all day* All day

PA: Eventually, it became a pool room. They gave up the business. Because when the Woodlawn Supermarket came up right by the bridge by East Mānoa, right across the station- service station. The first Mānoa Woodlawn Supermarket was built. Right now it's all condos over there. That's when the small businesses mostly gave up. That's why the Yano store closed. Pee wee closed.

CA: Okamura Store closed.

PA: Later, but that's much much later and the Mānoa Market was still there. Right next to where the Mānoa Valley Church right now, the building there on the corner, that was built in 1930. The year he was born. That's where had a Mānoa Market right there and that's only store in Mānoa that used to

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sell meat.

CA: That's where the coffee shop is now. *Yeah, it's a coffee shop now*

JW: Very cool.

PA: And it used to be owned by Araki.

CA: Four families. Owned one fourth each of it.

JW: Oh that's fantastic. Do you guys still own it?

CA: No, no.

PA: We're not business-minded. Lost money on it.

CA: Because we sold out all I was able to build my home.

JW: Do you have any other questions?

Bethany: Yes, we have one more question.

JW: Okay.

Justin: So, if any, what aspect of Japanese culture did your parents and family teach you?

JW: What aspect of Japanese culture did your parents teach you?

CA: Mochi pounding. *Mochi pounding* Yes.

JW: Did you speak Japanese at home?

CA: Yeah. Only Japanese, because my parents speak only Japanese.

JW: Okay. Where were your parents...Were your parents born in Hawai'i or were they came-?

CA: No, in Japan.

PA: Kumamoto Japan. It's on the island of Kyushu, the southernmost island in Japan.

JW: And did they come as a couple or did they meet here?

CA: You know, they were first cousins. My great-grandfather. My mother's father and my father's father were brothers.

Bethany: So did they- were guys born when they were still in Japan and then came down, or were you guys born in Hawai'i?

CA: In Hawai'i.

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PA: Eight of us was born in Hawai‘i. And all at home.

CA: At the time it was all midwife.

PA: And my mother died at the age of ninety-something. Not one day in the hospital, not one day sick or complaining about aches and pains. That’s the kind of person she was.

CA: One day. One day she spent in the hospital. The day she passed away.

JW: Were there any other aspects of Japanese culture that they shared with you?

PA: I was the youngest, so she’d to tell me all of stories and everything with a good ending.

CA: With moral yeah.

PA: Always a moral. You gotta be nice. You gotta be good.

CA: She was a- she was a good seamstress. Nobody could sew trousers like she can.

PA: She was busy in August right before school started. Everybody in Mānoa came down to get their trousers so they could go back to school.

JW: So that was her business.

CA: My dad was a welder the time, you know, during the time, most of the Japanese men would be yard men. Going around cleaning the yards. Caretakers. And when my father was a welder that made me so proud, at school, you know, you fill out our forms. Father’s occupation: Welder.

JW: You’re proud of that. That’s awesome.

CA: And he was very smart.

PA: He was well respected. All the families in Mānoa knew him.

CA: They would argue at meetings, you know, and he’s just sitting there and listening. At the end it’s “Oh, Mr. Araki, what do you think?” and whatever he says they accept.

PA: Unfortunately, how old was he when he died? In the forties. Or younger than that.

CA: Forty-six. He died in 1946.

PA: I was nine years old.

CA: So he must have been about fifty-something.

PA: Early fifties.

CA: He died in an accident.

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PA: Going to work.

CA: Pali Highway, you go down and then you turn left at the juncture to go Kaneohe. He was a good welder. So, anytime they needed welding work, they could get somebody around there, around Kaneohe to do the work, but they trusted my father so much that they wanted him to come. And usually, he brings his helper with him. But that day his boss told him, this job is so small so you don't need a helper. So, he went himself and all the way to work. Somehow his truck just fell off of the side of the road.

PA: You know the golf course? Where Windward Community College is right now?

CA: You know how straight that road is too? So, either somebody bumped him or he must have had a stroke or something.

PA: Before, across the Pali Golf Course where Windward Community College is right now, the elevation was about 15 feet, almost twenty. But it was a cliff. So they had to fill that up before they built that Community College.

CA: There was another road inside Pali against the mountain that you could take, but he didn't want to take that road because it's too many curves, so he wanted to take the straight road. But destiny, yeah. You cannot say no. I don't want to go yet.

PA: I remember that day, in December. I was at home with my mom. The phone call came in the morning, oh he was in an accident. They didn't tell me like that, they don't tell my mom like that. I first told my mom to pray, you know. Later my uncle, who used to work for him, for Hawai'i Royal Construction Company, which is Hawai'i Dredging. He used to work there. My uncle used to work there too. My dad got him a job as a painter. So, he was supposed to come over tell us kids, but he couldn't. He just collapsed in front of us. He couldn't relay the message, but we understood. That's how we got the message. All the farmers liked him because he fixed the tools for them.

CA: No charge. So we always had vegetables and flowers.

PA: They all liked him.

CA: We all live up to him, his standards.

PA: That's right.

JW: Do you guys have any other questions?

Bethany: I don't think we have any more questions.

JW: So I know that you guys used to work here on this property when you were in middle school and high school. But you never lived here. You lived here.

PA: Well, for a year. Because when he agreed to sell the house. They agreed to give the money but after this handshake *they change their minds* Give away two weeks. So that's why we had to move above the garage. The Cooke's had the garage on this side, you know where all the bamboo plants are growing now? Right there was a garage. And above the garage was a maid's quarters. So they

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stayed there for one year

JW: And was there a furo there? And was that your- your job to make sure that was hot?

PA: And late at night, oh it was spooky. And sometimes you see the White Lady.

JW: What were some of your memories of Mr. Cooke?

PA: He was what you call, a docent at Bishop Museum. Everybody had to be paid. That was the law. So he was getting a dollar a year. So he-

JW: So he didn't take a salary.

CA: No.

PA: He was a nice man.

JW: And do you remember his wife?

CA: Oh, yeah.

JW: What was she like?

CA: She was a boss. One day I was cutting branches on a big monkey pod tree and I was balancing myself on a big branch. And, I didn't know Mrs. Cooke was watching. She says, "Little Araki, be careful!"

JW: They called you a Little Araki and then your older brother is Big Araki. They didn't know you yet. You would have been Little Little Araki. That's wonderful.

CA: Mrs. Wrenn knows him. Mrs. Wrenn knows him, because I was cutting branches and he tied a rope on, you know, we usually make a pulley especially when you're cutting a pretty big branch. And he started to cut. We pulled in the branches, the rope and yet the branch is going down, down, down, he cut the wrong branch.

PA: I was cutting the branch I was standing on. Mr. Wrenn warned me.

CA: You saw that?! The main thing is you don't cut the branch you're standing on! He was about the best attorney before.

PA: You know about the trolley that used to run here

JW: I've heard of it.

PA: The turnaround was right here, right in front of Wrenn's house. Right where the road gets narrow.

JW: I wish it was still here. I could bring it into work. Did you guys take the trolley?

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PA: No that was before our, my time.

JW: You do you do?

PA: You rode the trolley, yeah?

CA: Yeah. I rode the trolley from Mo‘ili‘ili. The stadium, everybody should just jump at the side and home.

JW: Bring it home.

PA: It always used to go up Punahou. The trolley used to go up O‘ahu Avenue from Punahou yeah? That’s why Kamehameha Avenue is wider than the other streets when basically that’s where the trolley used to go. To O‘ahu Avenue coming up to Punahou right after Punahou there’s that street going this way. Kamehameha Avenue was wider than all the others for a real long way down there. O‘ahu Avenue all the way up to here.

JW: It would be nice to have it now. Bethany and Justin I don’t have any more questions. Do you guys want to add one last question? Anything you’re curious about?

CA: As long as I’m here you can call anytime with questions.

JW: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

Bethany: What significance did Mānoa play in your life? Like how do you think my Mānoa shaped you?

JW: How do you think Mānoa has shaped you as a place? That's a good question.

CA: I was a country boy.

JW: Interesting, because it was, it wasn’t as populated as it is now. *Mostly farms* So you felt like you were in the country. *Yeah* That’s interesting. Now, it’s the city. That’s a good question.

PA: You could sit on East Mānoa road from the one 8:00 at night in the middle of the road. No cars coming in.

JW: Right, just dark.

CA: The road was made with tar and on a hot day, you would see that bubbles, you know? And because we didn’t have time to buy gum.

PA: We’d chew the tar.

JW: No, did you guys hear that? They would chew the tar from the road because they didn’t have money for gum.

Bethany: Oh my goodness.

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CA: Good that we had good teeth.

JW: Oh my goodness.

PA: That was before my time.

JW: That was before your time, Paul?

CA: He had more money than me.

JW: He could buy real gum.

PA: They were supporting me. He and his wife used to give me allowance.

CA: My wife used to give me \$5 a week. And he was getting about \$5 a day.

PA: He supported me and all the brothers supported me.

JW: Thank you. Bethany and Justin.

Bethany: Have a good day guys.

JW: You too. Aloha.

PA: Sayonara.

JW: Thank you, sir. Thank you for letting us ask you for memories and things from the past.