

The following oral history is from a recorded interview with Elaine Usui (EU) conducted by Mānoa Heritage Center Executive Director Jessica Welch on April 22, 2022 at Elaine's home in Makiki. 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.

Jessica: Okay. Okay, so my name is Jessica and I work at Mānoa Heritage Center and we're collecting stories about people who grew up in Mānoa Valley. And would you mind sharing what your name is?

Elaine: My name is Elaine. Do you want my maiden name?

Jessica: Yes, please.

Elaine: It's Kaneshiro. And now it's Usui.

Jessica: And when were you born approximately?

Elaine: You want my birthday?

Jessica: Sure.

Elaine: It's 4-24-35.

Jessica: 4-24-35. Is it okay if I put this closer to you? Do you mind? Can I put it on this right over here? *Oh alright* Okay, so I can make sure to catch your voice. We don't need to hear my voice, your voice is more important. I'm sorry, can you tell me the date again?

Elaine: 4-24-35.

Jessica: So it's almost your birthday.

Elaine: Sunday.

Jessica: Are you going to do anything for your birthday?

Elaine: No.

Jessica: Okay. Well, happy birthday.

Elaine: Thank you.

Jessica: So were you born in Mānoa Valley?

Elaine: Yes, at Kapi'olani Hospital.

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Jessica: Where did your family live in the valley?

Elaine: We lived on Isador Road at that time. That's the original house below the cemetery about halfway down. But now we live on Ka'amalio Drive. Do you know where Ka'amalio Drive is? *yes* It's a horseshoe. That's the family house now.

Jessica: What did your parents do for work?

Elaine: Well, of course, my father came from Okinawa. *Ok* To be a plantation worker, sugar cane. He first started in Kahuku. But after the strike he left and came out to town, did all kinds of jobs. And then, he was a landscaper or yard-man for Dr. Straub up Woodlawn for several years. After the war broke out, he left. Then he went into farming. You know how it is. We always had a backyard with a garden so he negotiated St. Francis Convents. There was Mānoa Valley Church, that's where we used to go, Reverend Ernest Fujinaga. He asked him to negotiate with the sister or mother at St. Francis and so he got a lease. He leased the land from them. At that time they didn't have the school. It was all bushes. *Wow* And this you come down from Pamoia Road and you going into St. Francis they didn't have a driveway. It was your own road that you made, you know. Until then he, of course, cleared the land. And he farmed there for about 10 years.

Jessica: And what did he farm?

Elaine: He grew Mānoa lettuce, cucumber, string beans, bush beans, and he would time it so when it was Memorial Day, he would plant the flower asters. *Wow, what a smart man* And then on the other side, there were other farmers. If you notice now too, you know, where Newman Center is? And there's the university...I guess that was always their land on that side. So there were other farmers like, this other farmer grew asters- no not asters, but daisies. You know those colorful daisies? Yeah, he was a daisy farmer. And other people had you know just chickens and stuff. But down the road there was a piggery.

Jessica: Was it stinky?

Elaine: No, I don't think so because my sister and her family needed a temporary house until they built theirs, my father negotiated with the owner, because they had a side house, for them to move there and then so it wasn't smelly. And in the back there, that's actually, that's where the UH had their cattle, yeah. And on the side too they had all those [unintelligible] all those things yeah. Eventually they built a road, East-West Center Road. My father, his land was big. Almost to the, yeah. If you go now to St. Francis, I think it's the parking lot I think, just past the school and the buildings...yeah he had all that *that whole area*. And he used the river in the back to water his plants. They call it Kānewai.

Jessica: And where did he sell his vegetables?

Elaine: Well, some places they would come and pick it up. *Sorry. You're talking too. He's telling his memories too. He's telling me what happened* And then sometimes my, well my brothers helped him you know. *I was gonna ask if yeah* Of course they work elsewhere but after work they came to help him. Because he did it all by himself. He used to even take out his lettuce at Mānoa Market. It was Mānoa Market then, now it's Starbucks.

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Jessica: So the marketplace was right there on the corner? *mhm* mhm

Elaine: We knew them well. Fuk- Fuk Goo. Fuk Tai Goo (sp?). Because that was a market and that's where we shopped. But then on the other side of Pamo Road, because I say St. Francis was this way, this way, the backside, there were other small farmers I think.

Jessica: So lots of farmers. Did you help?

Elaine: Well, we had to go and pick the beans, the bush beans, you know. Yeah, but the girls didn't do that much.

Jessica: What did the girls do?

Elaine: As I said, *the bush beans* they pick up the bush beans or pick the string beans.

Jessica: That's fun work.

Elaine: Yeah, so I'm the farmer of the house, of the family. I had a garden at Makiki Park, but I had to give it up.

Jessica: What did you plant there?

Elaine: Same thing. Mānoa lettuce, soybeans, green onions, and...what's that? Oh, Chrysanthemums.

Jessica: Oh, beautiful! Beautiful!

Elaine: I had that too but after my stroke, my husband did it. But I had it for so long that I said, I think it's time to give it up and then let the others have a chance to get it.

Jessica: You must miss it. Do you miss it?

Elaine: I do. I do. Yeah, because I always shared my lettuce and green onions at work. And they would wait for it! My green onions. So it was fun. I liked it.

Jessica: Where was your mother from? Was she from Okinawa too?

Elaine: Yes, but my mother passed away very early. I was two years old when she passed away. But of my father and all my siblings, I'm number 11.

Jessica: Are you the youngest?

Elaine: I'm the youngest. So my oldest sister helped take care and my brother, older brother. See we had 1, 2- two boys, then a girl, then we have 1, 2, 3 boys all the way down, then we have my sister, then we have one brother, then the three girls.

Jessica: There's a lot of you.

Elaine: Yes, but we had a lot of fun.

Jessica: I bet you did. What were some of the things that you did in Mānoa as a child?

Elaine: Well, I tell you as we were growing up, we were on East Mānoa. And I said, at that time, we had this shed where we did our laundry, we would get, this is all the girls now, we would get the ladder, put it up, climb up, sit on the roof, and we have those little round lime, green lime. We would get salt and pepper and just sit and eat it! Don't ask me to do it now! I have one sister left, she's in Mililani. And so we talk about those old days and we laugh and say "Ho! How could we do that?!" *I know how could you eat that? That sounds like fun though* It was fun. And you know I said- And when we moved, you know- And in the back of the house...it was all bushes you know up Woodlawn...not Woodlawn, Lower Road. It was all bushes, guava bushes, plants, and stuff. And there was this, I think that house is still there on Woodlawn Drive. It was a white big mansion. It was the Chings. At the bottom, you see the hill, at the bottom they had a Rosy Apple [possibly referring to rose apples aka mountain apples]. Do you know Rosy Apple? So sometimes we want to have the Rosy Apple. So, and at that time there weren't living there so the branches were all hanging down. So we would pick it and we'll bring our sack home. Then my brothers would say: "Oh, what did you folks do? That's no good, no good. You folks better throw it away. Throw it away" "Why?" "No good, that's no good!"

Jessica: You can't eat it?

Elaine: Who ate it? *You did?* They picked it up and ate it!

Jessica: That's what brothers do.

Elaine: That's what we did. I mean, you know, we didn't have all kinds of things to play with and you know, what we did even? We ate the kamani. *You ate the what?* Kamani *Oh you did? Interesting* Yeah. Because there was a big kamani tree. At that time, no houses okay. So they were just starting to build. And so we would pick the, I guess the pods or whatever you call them, we would get the stone and pound and pound and eat the meat inside.

Jessica: Is it good?

Elaine: At that time, it was.

Jessica: You guys were not afraid!

Elaine: Because that's all we had, you know, yeah. *I wanna make sure this is working. Okay good it is* That's all we had *Did you-* Oh, and we had guava trees *Guava trees. So you could eat those* We knew the sweet guava, so we would pick the sweet guavas *Smart* By then, more houses were being built along Lower Road so eventually we couldn't cut through.

Jessica: You couldn't cut through because it became private property. *mhm* Did you play in the stream?

Elaine: Yes, I did. The stream ran right in front of my house. But now, when I think about it, my dad, if he saw us, he would scold us.

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Jessica: Oh yeah, how come?

Elaine: Because, you know, if it rained in the mountain, the river was overflowed, I mean, flash flood yeah? But I used to catch crayfish and the swordtail. I would make a net (he would help me make a net) and I would just lower it, because over the bridge that we just put it down. But those were the days. There was only my house but you know, I remembered all the taro patch on East Mānoa. You know that they diverted the river. The houses are built there now. Because I- we used to go to Mānoa School, the old Mānoa School where the fire station is. So we had to go.

Jessica: Did you walk to school?

Elaine: Oh, yes. Because we- no sidewalks during those days. And so if it rained and the taro patch overflowed, we would see fishes those, you know, those colorful, sorry, colorful fishes on the roadside, along the side. Then eventually would go into the river. Yeah, and then they had those wild plum trees. And so, if we could take- if it was down enough, we would- then it was sweet.

Jessica: You would eat that too? *I'm sorry what?* You would eat that too?

Elaine: You could eat that. My older sister and her friend later on used to go around the island by Waimanalo side, just to pick those plums and make jelly! It was good, good. Yeah, but now you can't find them I guess not anymore.

Jessica: What kind of plum? Just a, a wild plum?

Elaine: A wild plum. And then they would all fall down on the pavement so our leg- We were bare- barefooted right? And our feet would turn purple. Yeah, and of course, you know, we had all those gardens in, by the Chinese Cemetery. Way inside too, there was no paved road or anything. But there were about three families in there. And then my friend lived in the lower part. But the road wasn't in there yet. Now there's a nice road that goes. It was (makes bumpy noise). So big rocks. But whenever she went out with us, we had to go through the cemetery entrance and let her off. Then she would go down, walk down to her house, but then she was so brave she said- she says, "nothing to be afraid of because they're all dead." But they had garden in the back too over there, where the houses are now. And of course, I remember all those things because as I said, it was during my time. And of course all the taro patches. And then later on, they covered it up and they built Mānoa War Homes for the veterans that were returning. So we had both and eventually they took it away and now we have all those homes.

Jessica: Do you remember who the farmers were of the taro patches? Were there different families that took care of those?

Elaine: Oh, the taro patch was the Wong's *the Wong family* because they own the land. They owned the poi factory. They're still there.

Jessica: What was the marketplace like there? You said there was the store right on the corner of where Starbucks is now. What that Toyo's or no? Was that a different one?

Elaine: No, this is Mānoa Market. It's the original building but he sold all things like vegetables, meat, canned goods. Yes, and that was only the market there. At that time because we have the superette, Toyo's, but there's all different things. I had to go to Mānoa Market quite often and across the street was the Peewee Store.

Jessica: The Peewee store? And what was in the Peewee Store?

Elaine: It was a small mom-and-pop type. More goodies. That's the entrance to Mānoa Marketplace.

Jessica: So you could go there after school cause the school was right there?

Elaine: Yes, but we didn't have money. *You didn't have money to buy candy or anything* No, but I had to pick up bread to- *for the family* family, yeah. I used to buy the bread...Top Hat. Top Hat Bakery. But then I had a brother. When he had extra money. He would buy a bag of candies.

Jessica: And would he share with you?

Elaine: Oh, yeah. *That's nice* He would bring it all. He was an older brother, so he would bring it for us. But yeah, we had Peewee store, and you know now where we have that yoga place? We had a Suburban Market and there was a pharmacy - Rexall. And after school, after Japanese School, after the war was over, we went back to Japanese School. So, on the way home depending if we had extra money, my friend and I would say: "Let's have a Green River."

Jessica: What's a Green River?

Elaine: It was so good. *What is it?* It's a drink, just like- *like a soda?* yeah, but it's green. I think the only other place that I found it is at- is around. But way down in...City, no-City Square *okay, there's a store that sells that?* there's an Okinawan restaurant there, Utage, I think they have Green River. But it's good. It was good. I think it's a lime syrup. But then it was just like a drugstore that you know, Surburban- pharmacy. They would have those stools *and you could sit at the counter* and you sit at a stool and we would order Green River. *How fun. Oh, that's a good memory* And then, there was a Mānoa Bakery by Wai Wai Kam. They were actually from Varsity they took over Mānoa Bakery because that family gave it up. That family home is right there still yet next to that building, I dunno who's in there now, the yoga place. That house there - it used to be the owner's before. And then there was Mānoa Laundry. Dry cleaning there and then the bakery. And then another land owner there was Lum Yip Kee. That house is still there I think but it's not what it is now. *They rebuilt it* They had a big V tree. V tree. You know what V is? *uh uh* It's a green fruit. And...they have this stone wall around the house yeah. There was a big V tree. But I guess people- I mean we didn't do it because we cannot climb up, but an elder man would throw it over or put it on the stone wall.

Jessica: And then you could take it from the wall? *Yeah, yeah* So you guys foraged a lot of fruit, a lot of food in the valley.

Elaine: They had, but we couldn't always eat it because we looked at it but we can't get it unless it's the wild kind, you know like guava. Of course, you know that where they have a

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Finance Factors and all that place there. Was, I guess formerly, we had a washerette there. But somehow that place is always watery so I don't know. I don't remember that being a taro patch. But I know it was always *kinda marshy* you know, California grass and stuff. Yeah, in fact, you know that house there? That's the Lum house. They're still there where they built the house. And that lane there was called Taro Patch Lane because they had taro patches. But of course I didn't go there because I was still young. But my brothers liked that, they had friends that lived inside. Because eventually they came to a river that they could go swimming in.

Jessica: I've heard about that swimming hole.

Elaine: They call it cement pond. *cement* pond. *cement pond, oh interesting* So, this river, Mānoa River that runs behind McDonald's, I guess. Families lived there. And in fact, one of the families that lived at the end still lives in Mānoa but where they refilled the land in East Mānoa. The Araki Family.

Jessica: The Araki family, yeah. I interviewed Paul and Clifford Araki. *Oh, yeah yeah yeah. They're good* So did you know them growing up?

Elaine: Oh, yes. Araki family and my family, we always had someone same age with us. *Oh, fun. So you were friends* Clifford is my brother's classmate. Lorianne, she's the youngest girl, is my classmate, the sister Nancy is my sister's classmate. Then there's Edith who is my sister's classmate. Then there's Jimmy who was a baseball player. But more my brother's age on the mainland. So he moved to California and he was- I think he was a mechanic or something. So my brother would go and visit him because it in California, my brother, one of my brother's was there. And kept in touch. So only one that didn't have any is Paul.

Jessica: He was younger, right?

Elaine: Yeah, he's younger. He's younger.

Jessica: So they worked on the Cooke estate.

Elaine: Yes. Yes, the sister. She married the Kawashima boy. *Exactly* The older sister. Yeah, so that's how I know them because Lorianne my classmate, sometimes would have to go to babysit the nephews while the sister worked at the Cooke's, you know when they entertained. She had to go and babysit. So, you know where Huapala Street is yeah? So we would walk behind the way and make our way to Oahu Avenue and she would go across the street to the Cooke entrance. And the house was there.

Jessica: And then she would help in the house. *yeah* Did you know the Kawashima family too?

Elaine: Not- *not as well as the Arakis* I think my brothers did. But I know the oldest sister married the Kawashima boy. And so she was living there. But, no. No, yeah.

Jessica: So you went to Mānoa School and also Japanese Language School after the war? And-

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Elaine: Well, I was going there but the war started *and then it closed* so it closed. Cause this was 1941. So we had to stop. But when they reopened, I was in seventh grade and so they reopened so I went back.

Jessica: And what was- did you like going to the Japanese Language School?

Elaine: I didn't mind it *You didn't mind it* I didn't mind it because I still had my dad. And although my father was a man who, he adapted to the American way. He always wore a hat. If he came up to a female, I mean a woman, he would always tip his hat. I guess that's from working at the Straub House. Eventually, he became an American citizen. And he's the one that sent us to the Christian church, *the Mānoa Valley Church* at that time in the- by the graveyard. I remember when it first war started, my sister and I was walking down the road to go to church, that Sunday. Yes, that's what happened. And then there's Kamemoto, you know they're farmers, their oldest boy was I guess in the army or reserves or something. He was driving down and he said: "Go home! Go home! War, war!" but my sister and I, we don't know what's war *you didn't know what it meant* so we ran to church, all the way down, you know from Kahaloa. And so when we went there, Reverend Fujinaga said go home because there's a war, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor so go home. So, we (running sounds) went home again and then for some reason, we could see Punchbowl, Tantalus, black smoke: boom, boom, boom, boom. They were shooting guns. Then eventually I remembered why I lived on Magazine Street. Magazine Street because of Punchbowl they had the magazine there. That's what I found out. So that was it, you know, boom, boom. Boom.

Jessica: How old were you then, do you remember? *I'm sorry?* How old were you at that time?

Elaine: I was six years old at the war, at the time of the war. Yeah, and then of course, we couldn't go to Japanese school and the Japanese school was right next to Mānoa School. There was just an opening in the stairs that we could go down [unintelligible] there was a wall and right there was the gym. It was the old fire station. They turned it into the fire station. So, my brother was a volunteer fireman during those days they didn't have regular. So one of my brothers anyway. And we used to- when it wasn't- before the war, we used to go there certain nights, weekends to watch movies.

Jessica: At the fire station?

Elaine: No, no, at the Japanese school. It was put on by Toyo. And I don't know if they still have it but they used to have this big cement tower-like that was for the machine *the projector* yeah. *That must have been fun* Those were the days yeah.

Jessica: What school did you go to after Mānoa School?

Elaine: Washington Intermediate.

Jessica: And did you go to Roosevelt too?

Elaine: No - I went to McKinley. They were, what they call English Standard. So you had to take a test. And I did pass but then I stuck to Washington. So because all my family went to Washington, McKinley.

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Jessica: And back then McKinley- Was McKinley by Thomas Square? Oh no, where was McKinley? Was it where it is now? *mmhmm* Same place, okay.

Elaine: Washington is the same place. Then, we had to ride the bus. You know where the...I am not too sure about that, but you know, the first by the UH President's house? There's a roundabout. That was where we had to get off first because it was a small bus. Yeah, then eventually we got a bigger bus. Then we went down to the Varsity Theater across the street. There was a [unintelligible] shop in the back and was the terminal. So that's where we got off to go to school. To catch the trolley, the electric, you know,

Jessica: So you rode the trolley?

Elaine: Oh, yeah *oh how fun* We had to that's what they had. So when it rained like that not only rained, you touch this you get shocked sometimes. And sometimes the cable would get off so, the busman would have to go out, and we see that he has a handkerchief and then he goes down to put it back on. Yeah, and it was so funny because I had friends that live in Mō'ili'ili and naturally Mānoa rainy so we have our raincoat. "What, why you wearing raincoat?" "Why I wear a raincoat?" "Yeah, did it rain?" "No" "That's why I have a raincoat"

Jessica: So Mō'ili'ili was not as rainy as Mānoa?

Elaine: No, that's the funny part. When you come down by the university, no rain. It stops.

Jessica: It's still like that now.

Elaine: Yeah, still. Yeah, and you know that there was a quarry. Yeah. In the back. In Mō'ili'ili. And where the parking is now, that was still farming.

Jessica: And was it taro? *no no* I heard that a lot of the flowers that were grown in Mānoa were sold in Mō'ili'ili. Were there flower vendors in Mō'ili'ili?

Elaine: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes. Okay, it's on the, you know, where Pucks Alley is. Okay on that side. So when you're going down King Street, it's on the right side. There are all of them flower shops.

Jessica: Yeah, did your dad ever sell his flowers there?

Elaine: No, no, no. No. Because it was more, his was more vegetable. And asters was the only one for Memorial Day. He had a few Easter lilies, but that was not his thing and to grow it in Mānoa was not that great. I don't know where the Nakamuras sold their daisies but too bad they're all gone now. Ruthie the grand-niece, I mean niece, is still there, but I don't think she knows anything about it because Joyce, the youngest auntie, sister was my classmate. She passed away a long time ago. So I don't think Ruth even knows what they grew, what their grandparents grew. Yeah. Yeah, but I think back down, I'm not sure where like the Kamemotos? They grow chrysanthemums. So I don't know where they sold their flowers. Yeah, but I know, when it was Memorial Day and those special days, they used to sell it from their garage because I bought from them too. *oh what a treat, what a treat. I wish we could-we still had that* Yeah, and there were two brothers. The front house is the oldest brother. Then the second, I don't think he's number seven, he's about three or number four. He lives in the back and he had his own garden. Okay, you know, where the Chinese cemetery is

expanded in there? They're trying to sell that place now. Okay, they have their chrysanthemum garden there. Yeah. Besides, I oppose that. I oppose that, and then no, there's just too many, 288, no. Better not, too many. And I know all those people that used to live there. Yeah, they were our playmates because we were one, two blocks up. They were, I never went there too much but my sister above me always went to play with them. She went to play with them and they were just home gardeners, you know. Yeah, just for their consumption. And did you know, there was a Sakamoto Dairy? That's East Mānoa, there's Kolomona and there's my friend's house and there's a blue house over there - that was the Sakamotos.

Jessica: And they had a dairy? So did you get milk from them?

Elaine: No - just a small, they had their cow and stuff. My brother, he's so funny, the one that lives in Hawthorne, California. He said "I don't like oxtail, I don't eat oxtail because I only see the cow's tail going back and forth, back and forth." He remembers that so he said, "I don't eat oxtail, it's just a flyswatter." Of course, you know, upper Mānoa we call that, they had Fujise Dairy. And then on East Mānoa, I think that was Lum Yip Kim, Lum Yip Kee's land, right below the river, was Asimos [sp?]. He kept cows, but it wasn't dairy but you could go there to buy but not pasteurized or anything. Yeah, so you cannot call it a dairy. But we used to say Simo's Dairy, Simmon's [sp?] but it's really Simo's Dairy. And he had cows and sometimes those cows would get loose from their peg and walking down the street. And here we coming home from school: "Oh No! The cow is loose!" So we're looking and then creeping by because, you know, we're not used to those cows. And they used to drag their peg. And then after that, when they did away with the cows, it became a tuberose farm. You could smell the tuberose. And so we're just one block up, I mean down, so there were times we could smell the tuberose. It was fun growing up in Mānoa.

Jessica: Did you live in Mānoa after you got married?

Elaine: No, unfortunately. We moved to Magazine Street and when it was time to buy, my children said "I don't want to move, I don't want to lose my friends." You know how it is. Of course, my husband worked in town and he said, "I don't want to have to fight the traffic coming in." So that's why we're here. You know but this is a good place. It was close to the schools. So my children went to Lincoln, Stevenson, Roosevelt, UH and we have the shopping center right there. And going to the airport took us only 10 minutes before, not now of course. But we're still, I think, in a good location *Oh yeah, its a great location, a great building* But of course, now all those high-rises are coming up. Progress.

Jessica: Elaine, is there anything else about the Valley that you'd like to share?

Elaine: Well what else would you like to know? *Let's see* I don't know what place you did with other people.

Jessica: So what- did you have any jobs around the house growing up besides picking the beans?

Elaine: Oh yeah, I did the laundry. *That's a lot when you had 10 siblings* No, but of course, they were all not there. I had a brother who was a fireman. So when he would do fires he has his overalls, right, washing those you know. But, other than that it was just us. Because like my father said you didn't seem that he had 11 children because the older ones

are away *they weren't all home at the same time* It was only the girls, because the boys were in the service and then they were relocated. Living on the mainland and one of my brothers, after the war, worked in...engineering. He's not a school engineer. Self-taught engineer. He helped rebuild Okinawa. He first went to Japan. He was in Osaka, the family joined him there, but he wasn't happy because he said this isn't what he wanted to do. So he relocated to Okinawa, then they were rebuilding because they were really bombed out. So, he stayed there for 40 years. Yeah. Helping to rebuild, and the headquarters is in Fort Shafter. I forget what engineer. I have a neighbor who lives on the 14th floor. He said, "Is that your brother?" I said, "yes." "Oh, he is well-known in the office because he used to go to the Pentagon to testify, you know. But he's all self-taught. He was very bright, I understand. When he was in elementary, he skipped grades.

Jessica: Sounds like he was a genius.

Elaine: So, he is the one that really helped out my dad, yeah. So in growing up the children after they graduate, they come to Hawai'i. We take care of them, but then eventually all his children on the mainland. But he pass away but he was a good brother. So I don't know what else- Oh, did you know that we had some Armed Forces occupying the land? Okay, you know, past the cemetery, you're going to turn to go up Woodlawn. We had the stream bed was dry. We had all guava bushes there. We had some troops in there *Were they American troops?* Yeah, American troops. Because we don't know any better. We see this trucks with all soldiers in it. "V for Victory!" We used to do that. As you say, we were young, we used to do that. And then you see them hanging their mirror to shave I guess. But they weren't there long, but they were there. *They were kind of camping out there* Yeah, and then if you go up Woodlawn, further up there was also the bushes there. They were there too *I wonder why they were there?* I guess just, I don't know, they thought that they were going to attack over the mountain, I don't know. *So that was during the war that they were there* Yeah, during the war. Because Woodlawn you go river then one went this way and down this way. I don't know it was the [?] family. He was a principal at Washington Intermediate. And right next was the bushes. Always guava bushes. And here was a Xavier family, I think. They were I think Mexican. And over here, there was a bunch of army personnel but they didn't stay long. [unintelligible]

And of course, you know, we had Motorcycle Hill. *Where was that?* Okay, you know where the- now there's over here that what you call that place now is a new subdivision? *Okay* You make the big turn. So, we used to go up the hill. We used to go pick up mountain apple, but it was the boys did that. And they used to go slide down with a ti leaf, so that it was called it Motorcycle Hill. *Oh, cause they were riding down like they were on a motorcycle. Did you ever try that?* No, no we were too young. But, yeah, so they had fun. And did you know, we had goats up the mountain too? *No!* Yeah. We could see on this side of the island, you know Mānoa here. I mean, where my house is and we look up. *There are goats* Now, what you call it now? *Wa'ahila?* All that- up Kahaloa, way up, way up, way up, way up then we would see "Is that a goat up there?" But I guess they would be caught because they weren't there very long but we would have. And then there was another boy in the neighborhood would come and catch bullfrog in the river because you could hear them [makes frog sound]. So he would come at night, with his rod and red, they're attracted to red and he would sell it to Richard Wong. *And they would eat them?* Well, they say it's very good. Delicious. *Did you ever try?* No, but they said the frog legs, it's just like chicken. I guess the frog legs is better than eating alligators.

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Jessica: Were there any Okinawan traditions or holidays that your family celebrated?

Elaine: No, my father never spoke Okinawan to us. He spoke Japanese or broken English. We couldn't talk anything bad about him because he could understand. *He could understand everything* We found that out one time because one of my sister that lives in Mililani, had a argument with her boss and she left. She used to work for the White Sewing Machine company in town. So she was telling you know what happened. And he said "you're sassy that's why." So we all went, "Oh, we cannot talk anything bad. He gon' listen, he can hear. " That's how he used to surprise us like that.

Jessica: Do you still speak Japanese?

00:59:20

Elaine: If I have to. No, the thing is because when my dad was alive, all the courtesies. When I go to school I say "Ittekimasu," he says, "Itterasshai." When I come home I said, "Kaerimashita," and he says, "Okaeri." We used to go back and forth *exchange* but now there's nobody to talk to. *So you forget it when you don't use it* Yeah. So when I used to go to church in Japan, then it comes back again. But that's only for two weeks or something. And you forget again, yeah. If you don't use it, you forget. *That's true* Which is sad, you know. Like my husband's mother only spoke Japanese so he was better, but in the end he wasn't speaking Japanese because the mother was deaf so couldn't talk to her. Because he was stationed in Japan after the war. Occupied forces.

Jessica: Your dad was stationed in Japan. *My dad was what?* Your dad was stationed in Japan?

Elaine: No, no, my husband. My dad was a, as I said, pro-American, yes. And of course, you know, the way they treated the Japanese was wrong because our principal of the Japanese school was taken to the relocation camp and when he came back, he was totally changed, you know. *That's terrible* But that's the war. You can't do anything about it. I don't know what else to-

Jessica: Well, you shared a lot. Your memories are so clear!

Elaine: Well I said, they have to ask me now while I can still remember. So my granddaughter who's gonna graduate this year, whenever she comes over to comes into my bedroom and hangs out with me. So she goes through all the albums that we have. And she asks du-du-du-du-du, so I explain to her what it is. I think she's going to be our historian. *You're so lucky to have that in your family* Yeah, it seems that she's very interested in that.

Jessica: What I'll do with the recording is- is- is I can share it with you and then you can share it with her.

Elaine: Oh, okay. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Because I said we wanted to go back to look at the place where my dad had a garden and one of my nieces was going to take us, but now she's very busy with her cousin on her mother's side who's having health issues. And she's the only survivor here. Well, she has a brother but he's on the mainland right now. So she's been helping her so I don't think we'll be able to visit Mānoa, you know the old Mānoa. Mānoa....that, oh...We used to go there and have our brunch, not brunch, gatherings. Oh, you

know the one in the Valley, they closed it down and they wanted to make it a- a tourist attraction. *The Paradise Park?* Yeah Paradise Park. *Oh, that's where you would have your lunches* We used to go just for the restaurant, Martin ran it. We always used to have, what you call- for our age, we would have Mary Murakami - she's the Araki family cousin, she would organize these get-togethers for all the hanabata days. So it was from '49 grads to anybody who wanted to come. Some older ones came too and just to get together and we used to have our lunch there. Yeah, but now that they closed down, we don't have that anymore and that's sad because this was one time that we could see one another.

Jessica: The Waioli Tea Room is open now. *Yeah* They opened, that might be a good place to go.

Elaine: But it's small compared to- *You need a big space* Yeah

Jessica: Well, if you ever need a space, we have room at Mānoa Heritage Center.

Elaine: Where it that?

Jessica: It's on the Cooke estate. *Oh, I see* So they gave the land and started an organization called Mānoa Heritage Center. *Is it in the back?* Exactly. It's behind the- below the house. So there's space there for your hanabata group.

Elaine: Oh, I see. Oh, you know the Tomonari family?

Jessica: Yeah. They worked there, too yeah? *mmhmm*

Elaine: Mrs. Tomonari always used to bring the children to Sunday school. I understand that her husband's family worked there too. *Exactly, they did, yeah with the Kawashimas* Did they work at the house? *I think so* That's what was said. She was so nice and the son...what's his name? Paul? No, Paul is the younger one. He was the Manager of Nordstrom [Neiman Marcus].

Jessica: Al, Al Tomonari. He passed away. *Oh, he did?* He did a couple of years ago. It was very sad. Very suddenly *Oh, too bad* Yeah.

Elaine: He used to come to Sunday school and I used to- I had- he was kind of big all the time. And he was such a gentle person. *He was as an adult too. He was a wonderful man.* Yeah. And Ms. Tomonari used to come to church too. *At the Mānoa Valley Church? Mhm. That's where I grew up, in Mānoa Valley Church. That was before our church was built. You know the history behind our church? *A little bit* It was a Japanese school. *Ah, that's right, that's right* We had two Japanese schools. They called that one the new school and ours was the old school. The new school was mostly children from Upper Mānoa. *Interesting. And the old one was the kids from Lower Mānoa?* Yeah, and we were from the Lower. But you see my father, he took part in the- in the community. So, when one person wanted to get all the Mānoa group together, he went to the Japanese school and got all the pictures, class pictures. And he gave me my family's, my siblings' and I see my father standing, you know the Japanese, with a big flower. Boy, if you watch Japanese program, every time they sing there's a Chrysanthemum with a ribbon. He always took part in PTA at Japanese School. *Sounds like he was a wonderful father* He was. He never remarried because he said he didn't want a stepmother for us. I think he had a stepmother because he had a half-brother

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younger than him and I think *he didn't like it* he didn't like it...So Mānoa has a lot of history.

Jessica: Sounds like you had a wonderful childhood.

Elaine: I did I did. And as I said, I still remember all those...You know, because of the war, we had trenches in our yard, in the back. See the elementary side was lower, when we were 6th grade we were on the upper side and we had all these trenches built- I mean dug. Well, of course, we didn't have to use it, but- we had that. Yeah, and we have a victory garden by the fire station, coming up the hill. We had those spinach *laughter* not the spinach that I like, it's the ugly spinach. *a bad spinach* The one that kinda crawls like. Mrs. Mitchell was the principal and our cafeteria was overlooking the- overlooking, what's that place now? Mānoa Grill. *Where Mānoa Grill used to be* Now it's Central Pacific Bank. Yeah. And Mr. Camaro was our janitor and where the fire station is, was the garage for the teachers. *Ah, that's where they parked* So when the war started, they didn't want the government to take away the *the businesses?* the school so they made Central Union trustee. So we had a real-estate broker Mister Yamamoto who negotiated and eventually got the land back. So that's how we built our church. Until then, we always...that church, Mānoa Valley Theater, belongs to Kawaiahaō Church so it's a Hawaiian Church. In fact, I think there's a plot that used to be- is the Woolsey families. *Maka Woolsey* Yes. So when I used to go to Sunday school, sometimes we see new mounds, so we know somebody *passed away* was buried there. Yeah, but I wasn't afraid. I wasn't afraid.

Jessica: Did you know the Woolsey family?

Elaine: Not that Woolsey. There were two Woolseys. *Oh, ok* There was what we called the poor Woolseys and the rich Woolseys. This one we said is the rich Woolsey. William Woolsey is my classmate, the swimmer. He lived down behind Noelani School. That- as I said there are homes there. And that's where he lived. But this other Woolsey, I think lived by up- by the Salvation Army place. something like that. *The other side* mhm yes.

Jessica: And they had a poi factory too right?

Elaine: I don't know. Maybe that's why we had all the [unintelligible]. No, even- even Lowery Avenue, where Mānoa School is, I think they had taro patch there too. *Yes, I think so too. I think so too.* Because I think- now, what's their last name? Chun. They think they have them. *They had taro patch* Ed Chun. I worked for him. I managed some apartments for them on Magazine Street. He was very nice. Very nice. Especially when he found out I was from Mānoa and he was my brother's classmate. *Then you were friends* I mean, no they were very nice but now it's 965 Prospect - a condominium. *That's where they had the* That's where they had the apartments. Well Mānoa, as I said, there's lots of things that you can go on and on. [unintelligible] But you know-

Jessica: Thank you so much Elaine. *Oh thank you. Thank you* For your time. We can do it again if you like. Well, it all depends. I think that I clued you in on the Pamoā Road you know* You painted a beautiful picture

Elaine: Oh you know there was Mitsunaga Dairy? *Yes, Mitsunaga Dairy. Where was that?* By astronomy. They had the bull. Yeah, they lived on Koaneane way down. I think just the grandson is alive now. I don't know- I know his dad passed away. His mother passed away

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and I don't know whether the uncle passed away. Yeah. But they were good friends with my- well, one of the Mitsunaga boys was good friends with my brother. But their aged so they're gone already.

Jessica: What was your maiden name again?

Elaine: Kaneshiro - typical Okinawan name.

Jessica: Well, thank you thank you thank you for all your memories.

Elaine: Thank you Jessica. Thank you.

Jessica: It was a pleasure meeting you.

Elaine: Same here. And I hope that, you know, what I've given you will help.

Jessica: It does help so much. And I'll figure out a way to share the recording with you so that you can share with your family.